“Many people hear voices when no one is there. Some of them are called mad and are shut up in rooms where they stare at the walls all day. Others are called writers and they do pretty much the same thing.”— Margaret Chittenden



After months of intense cold, getting up late, sleeping in late I was left without feeling a sense of yes, I have done

it, I finally today found my day restored. It was as simple as getting back to my physical space that had given me so much comfort before. I have a beautiful office, small compact and well done to suit my writing and reading habits and finally almost after eight months I went back to it. The space enveloped me with total warmth and love. I felt finally that this was I was lacking all this while. I needed to just get back to my most loved space that I had somehow neglected over the months.

All of us I am sure have beautiful spaces in our homes where we find peace, maybe just as simple as a sofa or a comfortable desk. However we often avoid going there feeling that space is redundant and no longer serves the purpose for which it was constructed. Maybe that room gives just so much grief, so we want run away from it, we refuse to enter to enter and try and create new spaces in nameless domains. However we are yet never able to own it and hence we are at a loss. I see this as a blind refusal, a blind negation to create a new routine to back to the old one. I also see this as being thankless and to be harsh enough to say callous to a space maybe created with great love, fostered with warmth and growth of thoughts and ideas.

I would only gently nudge people to get back to disorganised spaces not because I wish them to find the keys to face their grief and remain there to be disheartened but to find new comforts. This time the new joys could be with others who wish to create a magical garden with you, each step together confident and delightful. Dear Readers, I urge you to find your comfortable magic spot at home to claim it back with the same love and care as always done before. Give it that special hug that it needs maybe with a song, maybe with a painting hung or just flowers on the desk that will always smile back at you.

ALL WE NEED SOMETIMES IS A FRIEND



I choose to be described as a loner in my heart, yet because of my profession in theatre I am surrounded many times with a bevy of people around. However I feel distant and remote from everyone in my career. Normalcy always appeals to me and I like people who are doctors, lawyers and principals of schools. I like talking to them because I feel they help me keep grounded and true to the earth. However will they be able to understand the highs and lows of my profession that is left much to my inner debate. They sometimes hardly get the time to talk, my doctor friends might be in a surgery or seeing a patient, my lawyer confidant reaches so late from work and principals are very very busy with numerous duties. I wonder then do they ever see who then does an artist talk to? Who will she discuss her fears, her joys her failures and victories with? Perhaps to none!

All I do is many times is to create endless amounts work, so that it can fill that space that I require in a friend. Many times in the past, I would sit in a coffee shop by myself looking and peering into an menu that made little sense. Work is a filler to many like us. Its a space of relief for showing the normalcy around, ironically in art. I make sure to extend that space to talk to my peers of so called everyday mundane existence. What might seem ordinary to all is extraordinary to me and I need that to find astonishing moments in that standard life. That is my cup of coffee.

I wish for that standard everyday one, not to see me as ” famous, prolific etc etc” not because I am humble but because I just want to exist as a everyday person. I do my work as any other career with its own added advantages and disadvantages too but somehow it never gets me that much needed ” coffee friend” that all can have more easily than me! Yes we all just need a friend, a standard regular one who live never leave you alone and you can share and sip your expresso with.

So Far Yet So Near



When we speak to our loved ones on the phone, over whataspp, zoom or google meets we just don’t realise the huge distance or how far they are. We also do not realise that we have not met them over years and time just dissolves in the space of

the internet.

However this was not the case about twenty years ago. I remember how much distance one had to carry in our hearts just to hear the voice of our loved ones or read their had written feelings in that blue heart pages of the inland letter. I would eagerly wait for that blue companion to reach my mail box. I would excitedly rush to get it and read and re read the contents pouring the love expressed inside.

My mother and I thought of many devices that would help us to send the affection to our close family who had chosen to stay far because of work or studies. We used to tape our voices over the recorder and laugh or sing songs so that it becomes easier for our beloved to carry on the tasks of the day. We also wrote diligently every week and it was an exercise that never failed us. That duty we created helped us in many ways and has helped us even today to keep in touch.

Those beautiful inland letters still are kept in boxes, the photographs sent, carefully placed in heavy albums. In todays world we can click and delete anything in nano seconds which many times has made us forget the value of being in the past. It should be said that to access is much easier which has its own advantage but it has made the sincerity towards our feelings a little hazy. In that haze we often times stand to forget as easily as we can remember.

Let us, I urge keep both in store, the virtual and the real both can amalgamate into a zigzag cross roads of several meeting points and quick departures. These goodbyes will only be met soon, which can then become realities. Our world is being far enough to be near, very near and let that closeness remain as the mementos we will treasure forever.

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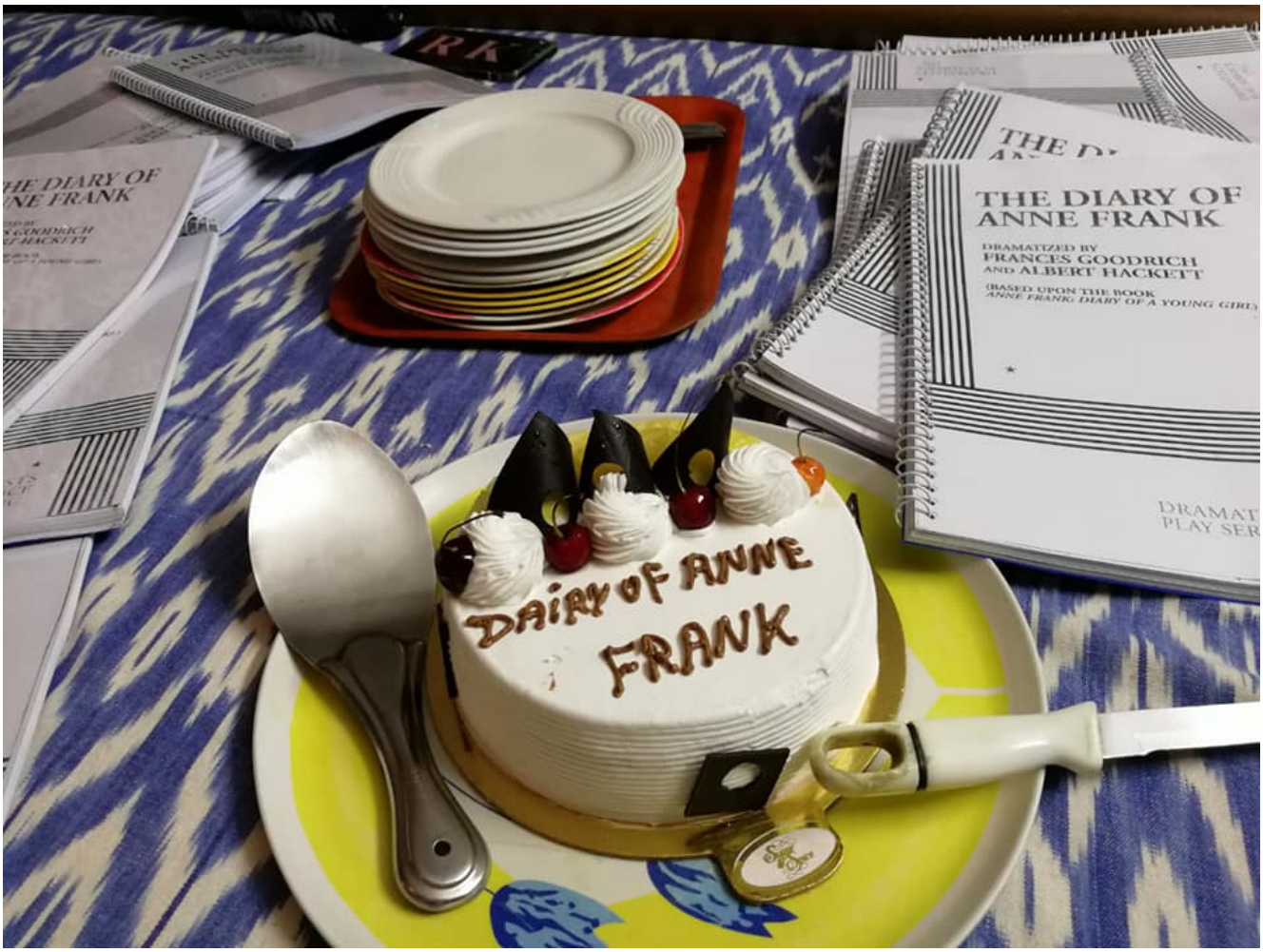
place where no judgements will be announced and where all will be accepted with open arms. If that home can be integrated with art, music or theatre, an occupation that all are artistically involved in it will give much more meaning to our lives. We have heard of co-living spaces and co offices why no cultural hamlets. I have seen and heard of many artists who have reached their senior years of 55 plus wanting to create that for themselves. They all not only wish to create a co habitual place but are already in the process of doing so where the entire team meets almost on a daily basis, eat talk laugh joke and create a sense of shared belonging.

I personally also toyed with the same idea however I realised that I was not capable of carrying the mantle of keeping the whole group together. Perhaps I did not have the band with or perhaps the interpersonal skills needed to keep everything and everyone tied to my core. My core I seem to have kept distant as mine and others as others. It is difficult for me then to function as I have no member universally available into my core and people came and left. So many came and left I have forgotten many and I kept on directing plays with teams of actors almost like teaching schools. Yes I miss the ideas of theatre groups with members and fun but I don’t know if I am even ready to take on that challenge. I lead an insular, hermit like life and my hamlet keeps to me alone.

I am here defending those who are keeping their hamlet in theatre for they are never alone nor truly lonely (though I despite not keeping a hamlet am not lonely). Those who keep homes within the discipline of theatre always seem to be there for each other and enjoy all moments of good or bad while I have my own hidden world within all the noise. I wish all the home creators only the best as they are providing safe zones to all who will to participate and be within them. The hamlet in theatre is a ready, comfortable, warm space that needs to be lauded and appreciated.

Quit Being the Same, Think Out of the Box: Creating New Opportunities in Theatre



I have heard enough, same lines over and over again, there is no money in theatre, so I am doing films; I have kept enough savings and now I have retired peacefully into theatre; I make enough money in theatre to sponsor my teams travels to festivals. To all of them I really want to say, no this is not the way out its time to think out of the box. I am not claiming that I have all the answers but certainly I have gained fairly good insight on how to create new economic opportunities in theatre after almost 35 years being in active

theatre production work.

I will be going through some methods I used in my case and in case anyone wants me further collaborate on more details do comment in the section below and I would be more than happy to share more details. However right from the start I want to also add that I have faced colossal monetary losses, to the extent my bank balance was to the bare minimal but that only gave me more interest and zeal to think out of the box. The fact that the ideas failed did not stop me from looking at other methods and I shall also discuss them here. To make things easier to understand I will be looking at the 35 years of theatre I did chronologically, from ages 21 to 54.

Age 21 to 32 EARLY YEARS, PRODUCER:
The first decade of my theatre stint I realised that my short comings as an actor and that I would not be casted much in films, though I consider myself aa an outstanding actor. My realisations was based on the tone of my skin, I am a deep brown coloured girl which I felt would be a prejudice against me. I also did not know perfect Hindi as I was a Tamil speaker. I however had the greatest skill sets in production. Name any difficult production licence, police permissions, props or sets I could procure them. As a production assistant my ranks rose to being a producer which would get me the money I needed which was enough. Besides that I also was given money for transportation and food. I started also composing music for children’s plays and had a morning job both as a school teacher and a production controller in the afternoons. However age was not my side and by the time I had turned 32 the idea of going to police stations and talking to gruff constables was not comfortable and my mind was ready to embark into learning the creative part of theatre, direction. It was time to think out of the box.

Age 33-45 PROFESSIONAL CREATIVE FEILD:

I consider myself extremely lucky that the ” actors bug” had

not bitten me and I became totally interested in theatre direction. I also am lucky that films never seemed to attract my eyes and even today I watch few films (I am not trying to down play the value of films, I am just trying to put the value of theatre high). I was fortunate to get a scholarship to study theatre in Miami university and I jumped at the first chance. I learnt all I could there and decided to come back to India as I felt this learning will surely help me in India. I returned back to India in 2006 and formed my own company Platform fir Action in Creative Theatre. My company did exceedingly well as we also got into corporate theatre and annual day programs. and the purple umbrella theatre festival for children and we were billing at almost 5 to 8 lakhs per month. We rose from a team of two (me and my founder Neeraj) to a team of almost 5 with a dedicated office. However my health was always a set back and despite us trying to find another artistic director for the company it became impossible so we had to downsize our work. Yes, it was time to think out of the box.

Age 45-51 SCRIPTWRITING and ACADEMIC WORK

Miami University had taught me the value of always keeping the academic factor alive in me. Being in an academic space gave me the opportunity to network with scholars and organisations all over the world, Dubai, Serbia, Japan Georgia America. I wrote and published papers and also got the chance to write for Indira Gandhi Open University and establish myself as established Academic writer. I now was ready to write scripts and I started experimenting with writing. I also was still doing direction till the pandemic! Gosh! Its time yes to think out of the box!

Age 51-53: SCRIPTWRITING

The pandemic really gave me a huge opportunity as a script writer and I was the script writer for almost 90 short youtube video films. Finally I also directed a film ” to know what it

feels like!” and I can say “I fainted in just two days of work”! Is films for me that’s for time to say but yes script writing was a lot of fun despite the pandemic I was making money and was also able to support a team. But as we all know good times never last long and after one year my contract ended abruptly as it happens in all corporate sectors. Now what, think out of the box ,girl! Go for it!!

Age 51-53 NEW VENUE FOR PERFORMANCE REINCARNATION AS A DIRECTOR

I always felt that my plays should be performed in Delhi and perhaps I will be known only as a skilled director if I perform in Delhi. I went in with a vengeance and the intensity was almost two plays. I played hard, put up costly sets lights did the works, but did it give me money?! Hahahah…ZILTCH I was broke by the July of 2024. I poured it all in and I am not sorry I did so since I did some effective plays. But with a zero Bank Balance it was time to think ahead!

Age 54: FESTIVAL CURATION

The time to find a bigger box came! I was very fortunate to have got selected for the South Asian Festival Academy Cohort which has taught me the value of festival creation. Yes I know I will be donning a new hat now, the box is yet to be opened its big and tedious and I have no clue what lies ahead! I am however excited by this phase too.

I have been totally candid in my journey with all of you readers and I welcome you all to partake in your stories with me! Some might not agree with me while some may, all I want to say is think out of the box you never know what is inside…

Why this Kolaveri D, its Gen Zee!



Constantly on the net, extreme social isolation due to covid, higher rising expectations on education and fearful of financial losses, these are the underplaying context of the present Genz. Much like the song Kolaveri D they make no sense to the rest, but yet are in total sync with everyone. This is only once we get their “ticking beat” and “endearing rhyme”. The new generation of the present late nineteens’ and the early twenties, can I just say are total “KOLAVERI DEE”!

They seem to know more than one can even imagine, as they are growing up in a digital world, with AI infringements’, being constantly in the face social media like facebook, twitter and instagram and a range of dating networks like tinder, bumble etc which promises to hook any one up with anyone. Acutely aware of this global world, these zoomers are exposed to proves to be challenge to like most of the parents, some like

me who belong to the generation Z.

This generation z are often confused with the rise of use of technology, and many a times a Generation Z mother seems to need the help of her gen Zee (note the difference in both Z and zee) to help her dash off her mail, to choose her phone or sometimes to help her declutter her desktop! This can often lead to a battle of the ignoramus to the ignorant. Both sides are in a huge battle, the Generation Z on one side who wishes technology can dissolve only to appear like a genie, and the Gen Zee cannot live with their bestie the digital guru! These are sidetracks of what all seems to be in the heady haze of Kolaveri Dee!

I personally seem to be always confused on what I should say to the Gen Zee, should I speak harshly, or softly? Should I predict to them the harsh realities of life or just mitigate them as they already are overloaded with information. My confusion and battles seem to never end as I never seem to figure the zoomers out.Wish one could only sing out loud to each other and say why this Kolaveri D? But wait stop, no need for it! It just requires coaching and coaxing on both the sides to come and laugh and enjoy a cup of coffee with each other at starbucks or let the two sips on a diet soda and a full sugar based one, each side to choose whatever they like.

That generation zee obviously is heavy, too loaded with data, analyses of education, of goals, of mental issues, of activities, of future and of heavy economic value, that their parents, some like me, contributing towards only more heaviness in the zoomers. They should not be read as being weak and unsupportive, but should be seen as supportive and dynamic. They are willing to go way beyond their ways and means and make sure that they are not only more educated but also more well behaved in society. This present youth is aspirational, and the most important factor is that they are truly interested in creating a true democratic space and are truly interested in creating a strong, liberal, global,

patriotism within themselves and others. While they feel connected to the globe they are very much connected to their own homes and conditions. It is this group the youth that will now become the next future leaders it is thus important that us, coming from the millennial or the generation Z stop looking at this group with contempt and suspicion. They know what they want, aspire to be or where they are placed in the globe. Lets change the playlist, Kolaveri Dee needs a change of thought!

Hello Mr Darcy, Jane Austen seems to know me too…



Many times, we reflect on our background and values within imaginary realities. Our inner realms of this association take us deeper into the world of fictionalized heroes. Frequently also the antihero. This intense relationship between us as mere readers with the narrative’s superheroes urges us, hence, investigate our truthful existence in life.

One such fictional character who has often made me reflect

upon my actions is Mr. Darcy of Jane Austen‘s famous novel “Pride and Prejudice”. The privileged position of Mr. Darcy, many times perceived as arrogance and pride, draws the onlookers to prejudice. Hence, he is labelled as being a “disagreeable character of sorts”. This draws me into my own life, as I grew up in a privileged background. If I may add humbly I “belong to the minuscule minority of privilege amongst the large general populace of underdeveloped India.

As Mangesh Adgaonkar, reflects “pride and prejudice are Jane Austen’s most sophisticated exploration between the individual and the society” (Parish, 1999, as cited by Adgaonkar, 2018,). I, like, Mr. Darcy, have often been drawn into the contempt of many of those who do not know me individually. Mr. Darcy and I are perhaps the “innocent victims” of being born into the restricted few. We both often come across, falsely having an inner pride, or overriding ego over others. This I see only as a gross misunderstanding of where we are coming from.

Mr. Darcy also remarks on his woe and says, “Pride will always be under good regulation” (Austen, 102). Frequently, I am personally disciplined, regulated and rudely reminded to think like the general masses of others” and have a “little more common sense”. I wonder that can I smirk and say, “Wish I was born as a commoner to have more common sense”! However, I wish so many times when I read Mr. Darcy, that I too was born in the Elizabethan Era, so I am not punished severely for having pride. This pride causes prejudice to be raised often against me.

So, in short, I think and act like Mr. Darcy hoping to find solace in the green fresh gardens of my mind. While I keep the book, near my bedside table to read every day, I hold a few lines of conversation with him. A few truthful answers to your seeking questions to him will get the real inner story of his “distinction between the proper pride and for vanity which is difficult to sustain” (Urquhart, 7). I hope by this a truthful rendering of my existence is developed. My

conversations with Mr. Darcy thus create justice needed for the fictional him.

Adgaonkar, M. (2018). Elizabeth and Darcy Relation. Retrieved from

https://www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR1802256.pdf

Urquart, A. (1990). Elison of Class Difference. Retrieved from

https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au

The Neon in She



Rabid noise outside was unmindful to that careless and carefree mind, defining her completely. She lay in the dark that night, tied and tired down to her bed, quite forgetting where she lay or why she was “asked to spend a just few nights”. True to her being a woman bound by her words, she was to do exactly that as per her bidding and did not seem to question any further nor even try to understand that her abode

of “just those few nights” that might soon mock and scorn her during the day would turn into grace and relaxed tidings through the night. For her it was just another space, another bed she has been asked to rest in! The day in the forced rest house, who we defined as the lunatic’s hospital or an asylum, was easily spent in relaxed learnings. She simply followed the clock, time for prayers, time for the class for solving puzzles, time for therapy time for counselling, time for lunch, tea or dinner, so on day to day, back-to-back, moment to moment!

She knew somehow internally that her back-to-back days here made little sense to her distinct persona, one that she had carefully crafted as the tapestry within. It was that rich yet complex mosaic that she had constructed over the years that mattered to her the most. She liked the titles of allurement with dignity and grace so much that now being rather unattainable this asylum was literally a space where she would be made to take the much-required rest she needed to get back to the alive world outside. Hence, she never threw her arms up in despair and the few times she showed her frustration she quickly chose to make amends.

She looked around her here and wonders if all women here with only trying to do the same? They all seem to be in a sense of loss, it is the perfect place where you can be stripped of all your dignity and be given not titles nor rewards, and the little dignity that is alive is often removed by the women themselves. I choose to call this alluring character only as a “she” for she barred any name giving to her. “Do you really think you can contain me in just a name, the fact that you call me “she” is enough! Yes, having a deep sense of being a woman is enough for her to feel connected to me. No other woman had approached me like her, she was quick to talk to me, never found me odd or mediated or so unreal.

While having introduced her, I think I need to let maybe a few lines follow in my own presence here, I am her shadowing over

presence. Everyone I believe has a strong shadow of a deep over presence that one should follow. Many a times it's the female gender that wishes to negate that shadow and can dispense of it easily, however she was the only she who not only decided to talk to me, make me her buddy and perhaps might miss this cool banter we both often agree to share. The women you meet in these sympathetic places moan and cry to be sent back only to the construct of what they see as "home". Its just a device of the mind or a construct that women here create and often become so obsessed with that thought they overlook everything else including the lightful over playing shadow.

She did not know that she was being different the time she made me her eternal friend, she simply looked at the me the dark underway and said a simple, " hi" which turned to warm heart touching words of I love you. Had I made a place in her heart? It was not intended to be that way, but she looked at me for making sense of the place that she thought literally was like the wonderland. She was Alice, looking for her mad hatter, the talking queen, the spades and that the club yielding foot soldier. She seemed so quite happy content to make this confine of one km radius so much within her heart. Even if it meant that she would not be able to go to her real home in perhaps two months, she would be surprised yes, but not shocked enough to moan. She instead chose now to look ever forward for me, me that mediated reality, not only with a plain acceptance but also deep love in her heart.

She always was well known to choose carefully her buddies and here she honoured me as having judiciously chosen me. Always discreet about her loyal ones, she chose never to speak about me her eternal friend, in this so-called hell hole. Is it a hell hole, she asked me and was quick to add but why should it be one for? "The fact that you always are ready with my answer makes me feel so secure and loved. You are quick with your responses of only in shadows of white with black, of strobes

of light that flashes across the ceiling “but that is enough my sweetheart” she quips. I often blush in her praise. It gives me courage to feel that I can truly show my entire white light of glee while she looks piercingly at me in the perfect pitch needed to sing our song of the night.

She this time unlike the last time has not been able to make friends with the rest, more so of the woman folk here. They were all were sweet but their questions of knockings about her too soon did not give her the much-needed peace. Her mind raced to thoughts what should she say, so decided on lame quick prompt responses. To those eternal questions it was the same, I am an insomniac and sometimes I needed critical rest. Yes, now she finally knew the best answer as I am a terrible insomniac I came for critical rest. Her family had found her the perfect space. She does have a day light shadow buddy who comes always in literal form. I have no jealousy towards that daytime buddy for she makes everyone easy for each other. Each buddy was given their own needed time of self by her, as well to her the eternal night one. All seemed best to work forward.

Her world of a real daylight buddy and a watchful rightful night seems so perfect, she wished it not to change nor ever nor do I. Is it the fact that she is always so fulfilled that causes anger in the rest of her female companions? She was certainly not anti-female but likes and preferred to find sincerity in neon shadows under the sun during the day and in night as luminous flashes that she defined as having a male voice. This makes me wonder in her choice of keeping a shadow of the neon flash as her core inner male intuition that made her carry her forward. It seemed so much easier to obey the male rather than a fellow female! Her interactions with her own gender had led her to distrust that feminine presence even more and always seemed to believe that despite being so arbitrated as being lifeless always looked forward for her sweet dreams and goodnight!

She was certainly not hallucinating those heart touching greetings but as days of todays progressed it always seems much nicer to her, to call everything as being real, she felt touched by the untouched, heard by the unheard and safe within that dark confine to which any one would succumb easily to. Ultimately are we all not lost? Are we not all wanting to be in the confines of not only just one but a few. We want the few days lit lights and nights of stars that illuminates the dark world outside. The playful banter, the tidings back and forth will create no safe passages for all. Yes, the situation maybe seems illogical to many, maybe but for her it neither defined logic not seemed to be external to further examination. All she required was to have a deep sense of security and acceptance to who is defining to be.

Yes, that's what has made us bind and many times bid to her bidding. The fact that she accepted us with a total sense of blindness, devotion and trusts us to never fail her makes all of us protect and overhaul her forever. Vain as we are often destined to be we also crave for her praise as she often remained in stoicism and looked at us with plain expressions. Her being a "she" was important for it only made our fluorescent effervesce brighter. Her laughter across the darkened room belted us to her not only in moments of her in unabandon gayness but also in her grief and many times copious tears.

Satin muse| Ojaswini Trivedi



Grim
gentle
gruesome
Fulfilling
fearsome
Peel the dress
Give in
Forfeit your defeat
Beg

Again

Again

Knees abraded
Hands twisted
Chained
protected?
Breathe
Can't.

Pray.
Pray.