

NULL & VOID | OJASWINI TRIVEDI

You're lost in a fantasy
A dream maybe
Where I cease to exist.
You seem peaceful,
I seem greedy.

SLING SHOT: Let's say we loved each other! Ojaswini Trivedi

"Let's believe
the two birds
lived in a
seamless crave for freedom,
where the abyss
melted into the horizon"

A Battle of Life That I Will Win | Bansi Kaul

I have been unwell and have been detected with cancer of the brain as well as the lungs. Yet I am sure I will pull through and that we will soon meet again. Your good wishes are my

Aradhana's Pacific Adventures with Crustaceans

Her name is Aradhana and she is a prospective 7th grader at the International School of Panama. Her most prevalent learned behavior during these initial months of Covid-19 has been "Science Curiosity", be it in Physics, Chemistry, Biology or Zoology. We were pleasantly surprised when she was recognized as ISP's "Most Independent Thinking Student in Grade 6".

The stranger across my mirror- Have we met? | Ojaswini Trivedi

The continuous falling back into the comfort, the familiar sensation, the treaded path we walked for weeks together. We feel the urgency to crawl back into that. Our memory cells aching to sprint through those lanes, actions and people. Again.

Erebus and I / Ojaswini Trivedi



Night Sky

Who saves us? What protects us? Or are we just living our lives with the illusion of being protected. Of being saved.

Hurt is the chalice of nothingness, writhing through the voiceless screams. The mind crawled up in a desperate embrace, bleeding, shivering, hangs itself from the ceiling.

With nothing to hold on, with everything to let go. What is the truth? What is right? Who decides what our conscience speaks? Who lives through, who survives the maelstrom of starlit sighs.

I remember that night, alone, terrifyingly-complete. The lights turned down and the darkness eager to consume me. For a first, it didn't charge at my insecurities with vengeance but tip toed with a docile ambiguity that allowed me to accept it with arms wide open. Night was kind to me. Maybe the moon was watching.

The background rhythm played in sync with my closing ventricles, expanding lungs and perhaps possessed arms. The sanctity of its beauty transcended into every cell, each tissue. Unbiased with the form or function.

Only one song played that night.

"Bottom of the Deep Blue sea" by MISSIO. *The* song. Ironical? I know.

My feet ached, and I swayed endlessly. Almost as if the night was my guide, the security man outside my window. Convincing me that Pain and Anguish would have to cross the seven seas, climb the tallest peaks, jump across the chasms, speak the strangest of languages to reach me.

I was safe.

As if maybe for the first time, being numb was equivalent to being happy. Maybe sometimes feeling everything is like feeling nothing at all. Like a snake swallowing its tongue. Or a snowball exploding against a Pine tree.

Au contraire, I never felt more alive. Like the first breath of air after plunging out of the water. Gasping, lungful of the escaped nuances- All gushing back into the realms of my truth.

The soothing audacity of hurt comes in unabashed like the lust for love. It's heavy. It's bored. It's engraving.

Dancing barefoot on the wooden floor, with nothing but a mirror around me. It broke my heart in a different way. It crumpled my soul in an unfittingly. I felt distorted, perfectly.

All of a sudden in those frail moments everything I did and didn't do made sense to me. Almost as if a gospel truth unravelled beneath the sheaths of my eye lids, trotting through my veins, into the earth.

With every move, my heart imploded, it succumbed to the bliss, the night had to offer.

Is that what love looks like? Oh the shear godliness of it.

Somewhere through my illicit affair with the night, as I laid on the floor, breathing the earth, staring into the sky across the translucent concrete above me.

My toes crinkled.

The desire and occurrence of complete degradation followed by the innocent upheaval of honesty, lastly toppled with the cool embrace of bliss.

I gasped.

Maybe, this felt like love, after all.

Celebrating 150 years of the

Mahatma | Manohar Khushalani

Gandhi Ki Dilli at IIC, featured plays films and the festival was also replete with discussions on topics and ideas ranging from Sustainable Living, Sparrows to Gandhi's favourite Bhajans and

even his nutritional philosophy expressed through a lunch curated by Pushpesh Pant, with unfamiliar cuisine, like Bajre ki Khichri, Methi ke Theple and many such minimalistic gourmet items

“Phansi se pehle Corona ki antim ichha” by Sudhir Mangar

A writer and thinker, Sudhir Mangar, makes a very perceptive, video, on lessons to be learnt from the current Pandemic.

A thought on many things in our lifestyle which we are viewing due to corona impact and some aspects of change in society and our thinking perhaps require introspection.

Shabd Leela – The Interplay of Words / Manohar Khushalani



Text of The Review by Manohar Khushalani Published in IIC Diary

Directed by K K Raina, conceived, scripted and narrated in Hindi by Ila Arun, '***Shabd Leela***' is a partially dramatized reading of the script, which contains selected extracts from the works of the well-known poet and playwright **Dr. Dharamvir Bharti**. Picking up prose from his works, such as, '*Kanupriya*', '*Ek Sahityik Ke Prem Patra*' and '*Andha Yug*', Ila Arun created a biographical sketch of Bharti, focusing on his relationship with two women. Trying to see a resonance from Krishna's life, wherein, even though Rukmani was his wife, yet, only Radha's name is linked with Krishna and taken together with his. Ila justifies Dharamvir's simultaneous dalliance with his first wife, Kanta Bharti and Pushpa Bharti, his paramour, who became his spouse in an informal unconventional ceremony. The three, Dharamvir Kanta and Pushpa, took a vow on the banks of Ganges, that they will always be inseparable. That is why the unconventional consensual bigamous wedlock had a certain mystical piety about it. Yet, in the construction of the play, Kanta, his first wife, and the third arm of the triangle, was largely ignored.

Ila took up the role of the '*Sutradhar*', allowing Raina to dramatize the play, unsuccessfully though, because the

blocking had a static quality about it. A symmetrical set consisting of two desks on either side of the stage and a covered bench in the middle added to the monotony.

However, the visuals projected on the cyclorama were really beautiful and carefully chosen by the Director to enhance the beauty of the poems. The script was well crafted, interspersing quotes from the letters, poetry and drama, with Ila's own critique about them. Actors Rajeswari Sachdev, Varun Badola and all the others read out the pedantic Hindi verses and prose with well punctuated, clearly pronounced dialogue delivery.

The finale of the play was a performance of Andhayug. It highlights the last day of the Mahabharata war, when Kurukshetra was covered with corpses, the ramparts were in ruins, the city was in flames, while vultures hovered menacingly above. The few hapless survivors of the defeated Kauravas were overcome with grief and rage. Written immediately after the partition of India, the play is a profound commentary on the politics of violence. True, Andhayug showcases Bharti's versatility as a writer craftsman, but, the conclusion appeared to be a departure from the overall theme of the enactment of a complex relationship between three creative and sensitive souls.

Despite everything, the pristine beauty of Bharti's Shabd Leela is what remains with you after the performance

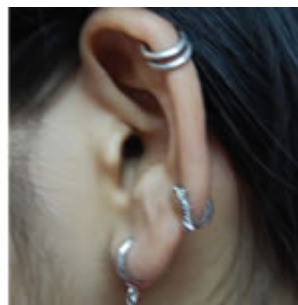
Let the whole world know that Radha;
was not merely a note in your Song-
Radha was The Melody, The Music;
I have come to you my Dearest!
You who weaved fiery blossoms into my tresses!
Tarry not anymore;
To weave meaning into History!

Acoustic spaces of a Delhi Neighborhood

Acoustic spaces of a Delhi Neighborhood

by

Joya John



When we think of solitude we associate it with silence. It is in the sounds that we generate that our sociability is located. Voices, speech and other sounds linked with living indicate so much about people. Generating sound is an extension of our socially constituted selves. Luxury is the ability to choose the kind and extent of sounds we hear. It is however a luxury few can exercise in a metropolis. For some the cacophony of other sounds is comforting, the confirmation of community. For others sounds can be 'invasive', 'crude' or just simply 'noise'. Sounds demarcate the public from the private spaces.

My neighborhood is a plethora of sounds and voices. Its middle class status effortlessly strides the uncomfortable gap between the westernized university student tenant and the more conservative Punjabi families, who lease out houses for rent. Houses climb up to four storeys and sounds carry easily from one home to the other. Brawls break out between families over

parking place, children's fights taken up by over anxious parents and the highly contentious issue of where garbage gets thrown. Late evenings are often marred by violence behind closed doors. High pitched voices and shrill screams indicate a marital dispute that assumes catastrophic proportions, sometimes in full view of neighbors. Fake walkouts are staged, while neighbors intervene piously and send women back into the same hell. Loud crying often gives a moral vantage point to the battered wife and generates some embarrassment for the erring husband. The violence abates for sometime until one day- the shrill cry of the woman -and the same cycle begins again.

Indra Vihar also has pretensions to religious fervor. The temple priest commands respect. In the festive season families compete with each other to organize bhajans that can be heard on loudspeakers. Intra familial rivalries are temporarily put aside and the dholak takes precedence. Sound functions to establish a community of listeners all governed by the nucleus of the temple. Religious ceremonies blend into political affiliations, when the local magnates organize a charity function with loud music. For the elderly woman, early evenings are spent in the temple, singing songs of the licentious frolicking of Krishna- A contradiction that nobody seems to notice or mind. Outside the temple, groups of young men listen to music loudly on their cell phones, furtively eyeing young women students, like modern day avatars of Krishna. Bollywood kitsch competes with Enrique singing mournfully somewhere close by.

On Saturdays a wandering ascetic winds way his through the neighborhood, asking for alms to propitiate the vengeful god Shani. Added to this is the plaintive sound of the beggar woman, who pretends to be blind but can be seen counting her earnings in the neighborhood park later in the day. Vegetable vendors have each cultivated a distinct sound to alert potential buyers of their arrival. Hard bargains are driven

over the prices of each item between them and the women of the colony. Both lambaste the government and the escalating prices.

Morning is the time for women. Relatively free from the demands of children and husbands, they chat loudly, cajole babies to eat and gossip. As evening approaches they are heard less. The sounds of the returning male folk takes precedence. Ribald jokes along with a generous splattering of swear words can be heard. Words are said with abandon, in front of women or total strangers.

On the other side of noise are those who are the 'outsiders'.

Qualises drive in nosily honking to alert young college students call centre employees, of their arrival. A boisterous party, with drunken students, invites censure from the neighborhood. People gather outside, tempers flare up and often someone has the sense to call the police. Racist undercurrents come out in the open. Loud pronouncements are made on "chinky" students and their rampant immorality. Assumptions about their wealth however make them the most profitable tenants.

This neighborhood has drawn a sharp line between sanctioned and unsanctioned noise. The decision of who makes noise and who doesn't is sometimes challenged however most of the time it is let be. In the meanwhile people get on with the daily processes of living, talking behind paper thin walls, while others listen in, voluntarily or involuntarily.

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