

UTKARSA
ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ

Fall Edition 2022



THE ODISHA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

Contents

President's Message.....	4
Editorial.....	5
In Memoriam	7
NewsLetters	13
OSA ELECTION MESSAGE	14
Chapter Reports	16
Convention Glimpses.....	24
Odia Poems	31
ଫାଶ ନୁହେଁ ସେ ଫାଶୀ.....	32
ବର୍ଷା.....	33
ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ	35
ପାଷାଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟା	37
ଅଶ୍ରୁଧାର.....	40
ଥରେ ଯଦି ପାଆନ୍ତି ସୁଯୋଗ.....	41
ଜୀବନ ଚକ	43
ସ୍ମୃତିର ସହର.....	44
Odia Stories.....	50
ଶାଶୁ.....	51
ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ମହକ	56
English Stories	59
Facing the Unknown	60
Horror Following Me.....	62
The Lovely Rivers.....	64
My Bratopanayana	66
Summer in India.....	68
The first elevator ride and other experiences	71
Sharing Nina's Story	74
Where all things bloom.....	77
For the love of Jagannath.....	82
Remembering Dr. Somnath Mishra: A Great Mind.....	84

Bapu: A story about the father of our nation	86
English Poems.....	88
Celebrating the New Year.....	89
Where I'm From	90
Family Stories	91
Arts.....	92
City of Cards.....	93

President's Message



Namaskar!

I'm very happy that OSA is about to publish the Fall edition of the Utkarsa.

Our publication team sets up team meetings, distributes roles among team members, sends multiple emails requesting articles, news, and information, goes over those for correctness, works on different software/tools for editing and publication last but not least arranges a kick-off zoom call prior to the publication in order to let the community know about the forthcoming publication. Relentless enthusiasm, dedication, and teamwork are displayed by this committed team. We are communicating with our Chapter Leads to send to Utkarsa their last three months of community activities. Now all our local Chapters are busy in arranging the annual picnic, celebrating KumarPurnima, and other festivities. It gives ample opportunities to motivate fellow Odias to be a part of the community by availing of our promotional membership drive. A bigger, more committed, and passionate community will have a great impact on all our community activities.

ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ଲାଗି ଜାତ ନୁହେଁ ହିନ୍ଦୁ
ବିଶ୍ୱ ହିତେ ବିନ୍ଦୁ ପ୍ରତି ରକ୍ତ ବିନ୍ଦୁ

Regards,
Gyana Patnaik

Editorial

The theme for this issue of Utkarsa (Fall 2022) is “telling our stories”. We encourage our members to render voice to their memories, feelings, emotions, and aspirations that empower and enliven them. In this fast-changing world, we have myriad experiences, and it is essential to pronounce them before they are lost. We feel that stories keep alive our shared sense of being humans.

We at Utkarsa encourage the participation of the urbane upbeat younger generation, the spokespersons for the new age. The rush and pull of their lives are different. Also, we need to preserve the voice of the older generation, the witness to a rapidly vanishing era. These members are nostalgic about Odisha, their birthplace, and its cultural heritage integral in shaping their identity. I have not used ‘nostalgic’ pejoratively. Nostalgia is the process of keeping our memories alive and remaining aware of the invaluable principles of love, belongingness, care, and empathy they had experienced growing up there with their parents, friends, neighbors, and commoners. Those experiences form our cultural roots. Those of us who came in the sixties, seventies, eighties, nineties, and two-thousands, have seen America undergoing many changes.

The Civil Rights movement, the rise of feminism, the Vietnam war, and the fight against terrorism are but a few of the issues hugely impacting American life. I urge them to talk about those experiences. As an ethnic group, we have been present in the North Americas for the last fifty-three years, and we have much to say about our journey!

Recently I met a friend who comes every year from India to the 9/11 memorial services in New York to remember the tragic death of her younger brother, who succumbed to the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in 2001. It's a moving account of loss, grief, and recuperation. It's the real story, unforgettable!

We have another cautionary tale to share. Planet earth is seemingly normal; the devastating effects of global warming and climate change, primarily blamed on man, are felt everywhere. Scientists say that the unprecedented rainfall and flooding in Pakistan, the famine in Somalia, the drought in California, the drying off of the Mississippi and the Colorado rivers, and unprecedented hurricanes are because of climate change. Global heating has risen by 2.5C and resulted in extreme catastrophic weather. Emperor Penguins are officially declared endangered. To drive home this imminent crisis, we have used the frightening image of the melting iceberg at the North Pole for the front cover of Utkarsa. We are thankful to Sri Babru Samal for the photograph. The Journal's back cover is a picture of the fall landscape in rioting colors. Humans are unflagging optimists.

Thank you, Sri Gagan Bihari Panigrahi, for the beautiful photo. The front suggests an impending doom -bleak and frightening, and the back holds the promise of regeneration. Life is precious; it must continue.

One last thing: Diwali, October 24th, 2022, holds special significance for the people of Indian origin, colonized and brutally exploited by the British for more than two hundred years. This day Rishi Sunak, 42, the son of immigrant parents of Indian origin, became the youngest Prime minister of England. In our collective memory, the sign on elite clubhouses of the British-era Indian metropolis saying, “Dogs and Indians are not allowed” is still fresh. Call it Karma, the Empire finally writes back to its occupiers.

Thank you

Dr. Kanak Hota

On behalf of the Editorial Team

Editorial Team 2021-2023



Kanak Hota, IL



Tapasi Mohapatra, CT



Santwana Dash, IL



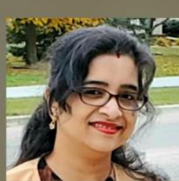
Deepti Paikray, NJ



Babru Samal, MD



Aarti Nanda Pati, TX



Suryasnata Rath, ND



Liza Bhuyan, OH

In Memoriam



ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାଞ୍ଜଳି



Avantika Sahu (adorably called 'Sneha') touched many lives during her brief time here on earth and her loving smile will be remembered long after her passing.

Sneha breathed her last on September 15, 2022, at the age of 15, in Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, after two years of a courageous battle with cancer. Despite the pain, Sneha came out a hero and stayed strong and positive until the end.

She was born to Sambit Sahu and Madhusmita Sahu on January 4, 2007. Sneha was a brilliant student and graceful Odissi dancer. Her hobbies included reading, drawing, painting, and photography. She is survived by her parents and younger sister Aneesha.



Dr. Jogeswar Rath (August 22, 1939 - October 6, 2022) was born in Bargarh, Odisha, India. He studied medicine in the latter part of the 60s in the US. He primarily resided in Arizona with his wife Renubala and raised their 4 children in Safford, AZ.



Srimati Vishnu Vardhani Patro, wife of Sri Hari Patra of Plano, Texas passed away peacefully on August 3rd, 2022. She was fondly called Vishnu Nani by the Odia community. She was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. Spirituality guided every aspect of her life. She was a wonderful person who cared for everyone's happiness and well-being.



Debasis Datta passed away on July 31st, 2022 at the age of 57 in Cuttack Odisha. A life member of OSA, he stayed in the USA from 1998 through 2012. He went back to Cuttack, to stay with my parents. During his stay in the USA, Debasis mostly lived in New York City, New Jersey (Bridgewater), Atlanta, Richmond, and the Los Angeles area. He was very actively involved in community programs at NY/NJ, Dallas, and Princeton conventions among others.



Mr. Basant Parida, a resident of the Boston Area, MA, passed away on July 28, 2022, at the age of 79 at Bangalore airport just before boarding a flight to the USA.

Mr. Parida was a Mechanical & Aerospace Engineer, who was active till his last breath. In his 54 years of active professional life, he served his Motherland - India, to his adopted land USA - where he was welcomed (post-superannuation in India in 2003) to serve in the U.S. National Interest and a few other countries around the world. He was involved in various research and innovation design solutions to challenging engineering problems, including several approved international patents. His expertise included knowledge of advanced metallic and composite materials and evaluation of the structural integrity of complex damage-tolerant structures.

He was an austere explorer aspiring to pursue Advait Vedanta teachings, SriVidya sadhana, and yogic meditations toward the attainment of self-realization. Before his death, he was assisting a Global-IITians 4 Quantum-Consciousness Forum to explore the Power of Conscious Intention of an observer-in-the-loop on the outcome of certain Quantum Mechanics Experiments!

His hobbies included reading Vedantic literature, traveling, photography, listening to classical/nostalgic music, and visiting scenic places of Mother Nature anywhere.

Mr. Parida is survived by his wife Mrs. Bijaya Parida, 2 daughters, 2 sons-in-law, and 4 grandkids. Mr. Parida will continue to live in the hearts of family, friends, OSNE families, extended family members, alumni of IIT-KGP/IISc-BLR, and colleagues here in the USA, in India, and beyond for his amicable nature and selfless service and help to others.



Indu Bhusan Mishra (February 10, 1938 - September 13) was born in Kujahala, Orissa, on February 10, 1938. He is survived by his wife Kanan, son Tinu (Gina); daughters Nina (Dave), and Seema (Michael). A loving husband and father, Indu was very passionate about science. He had a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California and he became a professor of Chemistry spanning three continents: Asia (India, Ravenshaw College), South America (Brazil, University of Brasilia), and North America (USA, Howard University).

Indu's research led to trail-blazing innovations that benefited society. He has numerous publications and patents on this topic. One of the best examples was the perfection of the airbag. Indu holds the early patent on the propellant used in the Azide Airbag deployed widely in automobiles today. Because of Indu, billions of people feel safe driving a motor vehicle as the airbag is its primary safety feature. In a twist, he used an explosive to save countless lives. His genius spread beyond airbags. Indu invented a first-of-its-kind sound wall (known as Kanwall) made from recycled tires and corrugated steel.

Indu embodied a deep humanitarian spirit. He was a die-hard supporter of Habitat for Humanity and Amnesty International - volunteering his time and heart for many initiatives including the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. He led, in collaboration with many local Oriyas, the creation of Our Village Trust (OVT), a charity that built homes for the homeless in India. He contributed to resuscitating villages in Orissa which were affected by the Catastrophic Odisha Super Cyclone in 1999. Indu was also a strong supporter of women's education.



Born in Puri in 1936, Prof Mishra had an outstanding academic career. Prof Mishra was the First class First in Physics Honors at Ravenshaw College (1954-56) and secured the Mayurbhanja Gold medal, again secured First class First at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (1956-58) in Diploma (it was called Diploma then) course of Metallurgy, received his Sc.D at MIT, Cambridge under Dr Michael Bever (Michael Berliner Bever, a retired professor of materials science and engineering and a founder of the scientific study of recycling, died July 17, 1992, of cancer in his Cambridge home at 80. Professor Bever taught at MIT for more than 50 years. He got his MBA from Harvard coming from Germany and then changed his mind to enter the Material Science field by getting a Sc.D from MIT).

The essential benchmark of the industrial revolution of independent India, Rourkela was laid by the visionary Biju Patnaik, the then-regional engineering college later named as the national institute of Technology Rourkela. This city is the heart of Metallurgy as the Rourkela Steel Plant runs the major artery of the city.

The metallurgical and material science department of the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela celebrated it golden jubilee reunion, in February 2019. It started late. Professor Dr. Pani.

He was the youngest principal (at the age 38) of REC now NIT, Rourkela. Nandini Satpathy, the then Chief Minister of Odisha was instrumental in making him the REC principal at such a young age.

After MIT graduation, Prof Mishra continued as a Research Associate, massachusetts institute of technology, cambridge, usa (1963-64);research metallurgist & physicist, union carbide corporation, suffern n.y.(1964-65); profesor of metallurgy, banaras hindu university (1965-74); principal, regional engineering college,rourkela(1974-96);tata chair professor, indian institute of technology, kharagpur, india (1997-98); director, biju patnaik national steel institute, puri (2001-03); chairman, bastia memorial trust & asian workers developemnt institute, rourkela, india

NewsLetters



OSA ELECTION MESSAGE

Dear OSA Members:

The OSA Election Committee, as constituted by the General Body, is soliciting nominations for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer of The Odisha Society of the Americas for 2023-25. As per the constitution, candidates for the offices of OSA President and Vice President shall campaign on a joint platform as running mates, such that a vote for a Presidential candidate shall automatically mean a vote for his or her running mate. The candidates for the offices of Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected separately.

The nominees, the nominators, and seconders must be OSA life members, patrons, or benefactors, as defined in the statement of rights, for at least one year prior to the date of nomination, and twenty-one (21) years of age or older. The nomination must include a short profile of the candidates in less than 150 words (Examples: election goal, biography, contact details, and links to a blog, website, Facebook, or Twitter). In addition, nominations must include candidate photographs in JPG, GIF or PNG format with not exceeding 2MB image size. Photocopy of driver's license, passport, or birth certificate or a notarized statement to the effect that the nominee is **21 years** or older as of **January 31st, 2023** must be attached for the nominee's age verification.

All nominations must include the position sought, the contact information (address, telephone number, and email) of the nominees, and the nominator. All nominations must be e-mailed to the election committee by **January 31st, 2023 11:59 PM Central Time** to OSAElection2023@gmail.com with complete and correct contact information of the nominees (including other additional details) and the nominators. Incorrect contact information may lead to the rejection of the nomination. Please note you must nominate a candidate for President and Vice President simultaneously in one slate.

Nominations for secretary and treasurer should be in an independent slate. The Following changes in election rules that are effective starting year 2023 are as below:

- a. The current Executive Committee can contest for the election to office for a second term, with a clause of the maximum of two terms in the *same role* for the executives.
- b. Starting in 2023, each candidate will have an opportunity to withdraw the nomination within 4 weeks of filing the nomination.

The Nomination Forms are attached. Please complete the form, sign, and attach a scanned pdf copy to the nomination e-mail. In addition, attach short profiles of candidates as an MS Word Document and the candidate's photograph files. Any correspondence on the election subject will be electronic (via email) only. All emails on this subject must be sent to OSAElection2023@gmail.com

Election 2023 Calendar

- Deadline for the official ballot list including all members eligible to vote to be received from OSA Secretary by January 10, 2023.
- All nominations must be emailed to the election committee by January 31, 2023, 11:59 PM Central Time. The Election Committee will acknowledge all the nominations by email.
- Nominated candidates will have 4 weeks of time (i.e., prior to February 28, 2023, 11:59 PM Central Time) to withdraw their nomination.
- Election ballots will be sent to eligible members on or before March 12, 2023 (2nd Sunday of March).
- Votes must be cast electronically no later than April 2, 2023, 11:59 pm Central Time (1st Sunday of April).
- Ballot will be counted, and the election results will be notified to OSA President by April 23, 2023 (4th Sunday of April).

With this letter, we are also requesting the Chapter Presidents and members of the Board of Governors of OSA to disseminate the election announcement as widely as possible.

Please contact the OSA Secretary Mr. Pramod Mahapatra at secretary@odishasociety.org to update the member's email address and mailing address.

Sincerely,

2023 OSA Election Committee

Nihar Rout, Sunil Mishra (Chair), Uma Misra

- [Nomination form for President and VP](#)
- [Nomination form for Secretary](#)
- [Nomination form for Treasurer](#)

Chapter Reports

OSA GEORGIA CHAPTER REPORT



As always, the OSA Georgia Chapter has been very active during the summer months. During the past quarter, we hosted multiple cultural events showcasing Odia's art, culture, and heritage, furthering Odia's Eminence in the local Indian and American community. As we are writing this report the entire chapter is actively preparing for Kumara Utsava to showcase Odia culture in a multi-community cultural program hosted by us.

Here's a summary of the different programs we hosted during this period.

A. World Cultures Performance (July 22, 2022)

It was indeed a proud moment for our OSA Georgia chapter to present Indian culture as a part of World Cultures Performance at the Senior Services center at Forsyth county.

Our 35+ talented performers showcased Indian culture to the 100+ audience including 40+ Seniors and mesmerized them through 11 performances spanning over an hour. The county personnel and the audience were in awe of our performance today. Kudos to our performers, parents, choreographers and the EC team for a job fantastically done. We received a participation certificate and \$300 gratitude from the grant provided by the Thanks Mom and Dad foundation



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzPSwsrZzSA>

B. Festival of India by IACA (Aug 13, 2022)

This year, at the Festival of India celebration, OSA Georgia actively showcased Odia eminence in the premier event of the Indian community in the Atlanta area. We opened a chapter booth, a booth in the Incredible India section as well as participated and won awards in the cultural programme.



Our incredible India booth featured banners showcasing Odisha tourism and art, and an exhibition desk showcasing Odisha handicrafts, art and jewelry. Our booth was the only one with an electronic display proudly showing Odisha Tourism videos for our incredible state, Odisha! All the art and craft items were brought by our chapter team members for a beautiful presentation of our motherland, Odisha. Our booth generated a lot of foot traffic and our members were available at the booth to explain everything about Odisha with a lot of excitement to the visitors at the booth.



Our members participated actively in the cultural program and presented Odissi classical and Sambalpuri dances with a lot of grace. The Odissi dance team presented an elegant dance on Independence Day theme called Project Vande Mataram, and won the first prize in the competitive segment. Our Sambalpuri folk dance team stole everyone's heart with a colorful and rhythmic performance to the tune of Raserkali.

Our kids and adults participated in the flag March led by the invited guest Sonali Bendre.

All of these came together as a clockwork by the self driven team. Everyone knew what to do and was watching out for each other. Undoubtedly we are a high performing team and we keep shining every time everywhere.

C. Independence Day Celebration by the Consulate General of India in Atlanta (Aug 15, 2022)

Our invitational participation at the consulate's celebration of Independence Day was appreciated by one and all with a lot of applause and cheering from the crowd. It was heartening to hear Odisha folk and classical dances be spoken of so highly by the eminent guests. We are recognized as a vibrant, culturally active and passionate community going all out to present our art, our motherland, our state to the wider Indo-American community. The Consul General spoke very effusive words of appreciation for our ability to bring such beautiful performances in colorful costumes in such a short notice.



Our Sambalpuri performance by the team of 10 dancers started the cultural proceedings of the day! Yes, it was the first performance and as many said afterwards, we started with a bang. Many more in America now know about Odisha, Sambalpur, Sambalpuri dance and weaves.

Our Odissi performance, project Vande Mataram, completely mesmerized the audience. It was a beautiful production by a team of 12 young and experienced dancers. As always, their graceful performance was appreciated by all the dignitaries present.

D. Freedom Mela Independence Day celebration by IFA (Aug 20, 2022)



We continued on the theme of Independence Day celebration by participating in the Freedom Mela organized by Indian Friends of Atlanta (IFA). Our Odissi and Sambalpuri Dance teams performed on the stage and got a lot of accolades.

Our dances were appreciated a lot by the audience and stamped our mark as one vibrant community in the Atlanta area rich in culture. In addition our kids and adults participated in a flag march along with contingents from other states in India.

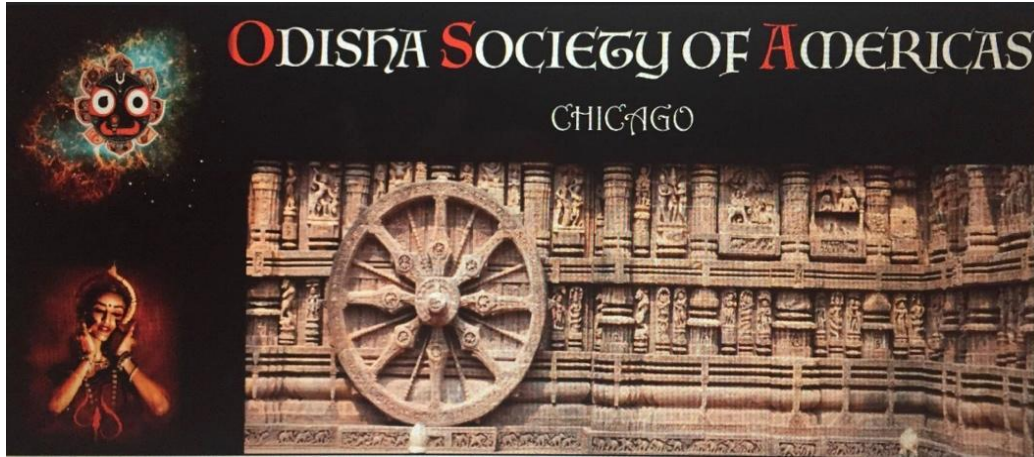
E. Upcoming Event - Kumara Utsava 2022 (Oct 8, 2022)

We will be organizing Kumara Utsava on October 8, 2022 at the Duluth High School. It will be a multicultural program with a goal of having rich cultural exchange with other Indian communities in the Atlanta area. Odias in the Atlanta area are eagerly looking forward to this event and have begun preparing for it.



OSA CHICAGO CHAPTER REPORT

BY: Santwana Dash.



This year, Chicago people have celebrated most of the functions in person. We had a great, fun-filled picnic this year, gathering 200 odias. We celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi in a traditional way by doing puja, prasad, and kid's activities. The Origami ladies of Chicago are always eager to celebrate and maintain our traditions. Diwali, the annual cultural function of Chicago, is heading up. Many cultural activities are lined up and ready to have a wonderful function.

PICNIC



Ganesh Puja



OSA Nuakhai Celebration 2022

Prachee Behera



Nuakhai, the harvest festival observed on *Bhadraba Shuklapakhya Panchami* tithi across many districts in western Odisha and Odias migrated to other parts of Odisha, India and the world was on September 1st of this year. The Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA) organized a virtual program on September 18th. Multiple local chapters and cities also celebrated Nuakhai with in-person cultural and social programs. OSA Nuakhai Bhetghat 2022 was celebrated over Zoom to include Odias living across North America as well as invited special guests from Odisha, India.

The program began with a prayer and mark of respect to this ancient tradition of gratitude to the Mother for a bountiful harvest and a celebration of social bonding by Mrs Kasturee Mohapatra of California and a bhajan by Mrs Biswajita Nath of California. The President of OSA Mr Gyana Patnaik and Vice President of OSA Mr Akhsay Ray also shared their welcome and appreciation for this celebration with all OSA members. This was followed by a short reminiscence of past days in western Odisha by Mrs Ranu Mahanti of Michigan.

Mr Debu Panda, California welcomed the special guest, Legendary Sambalpuri singer Sri Bibhuti Bhusan Patnaik and led a conversation featuring a few of his most popular renditions. A Shraddhanjali was presented by OSA to Lt. Rajendra Supkar (November 29th, 1935, Sambalpur - April 11th, 2022, Chicago); he was reminisced by close friends Mr & Mrs Surya and Tiki Mishra, Oregon.

The cultural celebration included songs and dance sequences from various OSA members from different parts of the United States. Children and adults contributed both live and recorded performances to entertain the attendees with Sambalpuri themed cultural pieces. OSA Secretary, Mr Pramod Mahapatra rendered a captivating flute version of the famous Rangabati melody. Invited guest Mr Sarthak Bharadwaj, Actor/Performer, entertained us with a comic performance featuring Sambalpuri words that cannot be captured in prose. The cultural program ended with a live performance by invited guest Mr Bankim Patel, Playback Singer/Performer/Music Composer who featured his newly released Sambalpuri song 'Kahide Thare' and other songs.

The Nuakhai program also recognized early immigrants to the North Americas from western Odisha and introduced & thanked some of them who were attending live. This segment was organized by Mr Bijaya Satapathy, Virginia. The virtual program was mainly organized by OSA Treasurer Mrs Prachee Behera and Mrs Snigdha Hota, Maryland. Ms Manaswee Mishra, Maryland and OSA youth member contributed to the graphic design of the flyer. The cultural celebration was made possible by the OSA members who participated and attended and was whole heartedly supported by OSA Executive Board members and Chapter representatives.

The recorded version is available on OSA YouTube channel for viewing at convenience:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ELGqW4oNIA&t=39s>

OSA Members' Everest Base Camp



Everest Base Camp Hike starts from a place called Lukla .. which is a 45-minute local flight from Kathmandu. The one-way hike from Lukla at 9000ft elevation to base camp at 17300 ft elevation is covered in 8 days. (Manoj Sent these lines)

The 53rd OSA Convention Glimpses







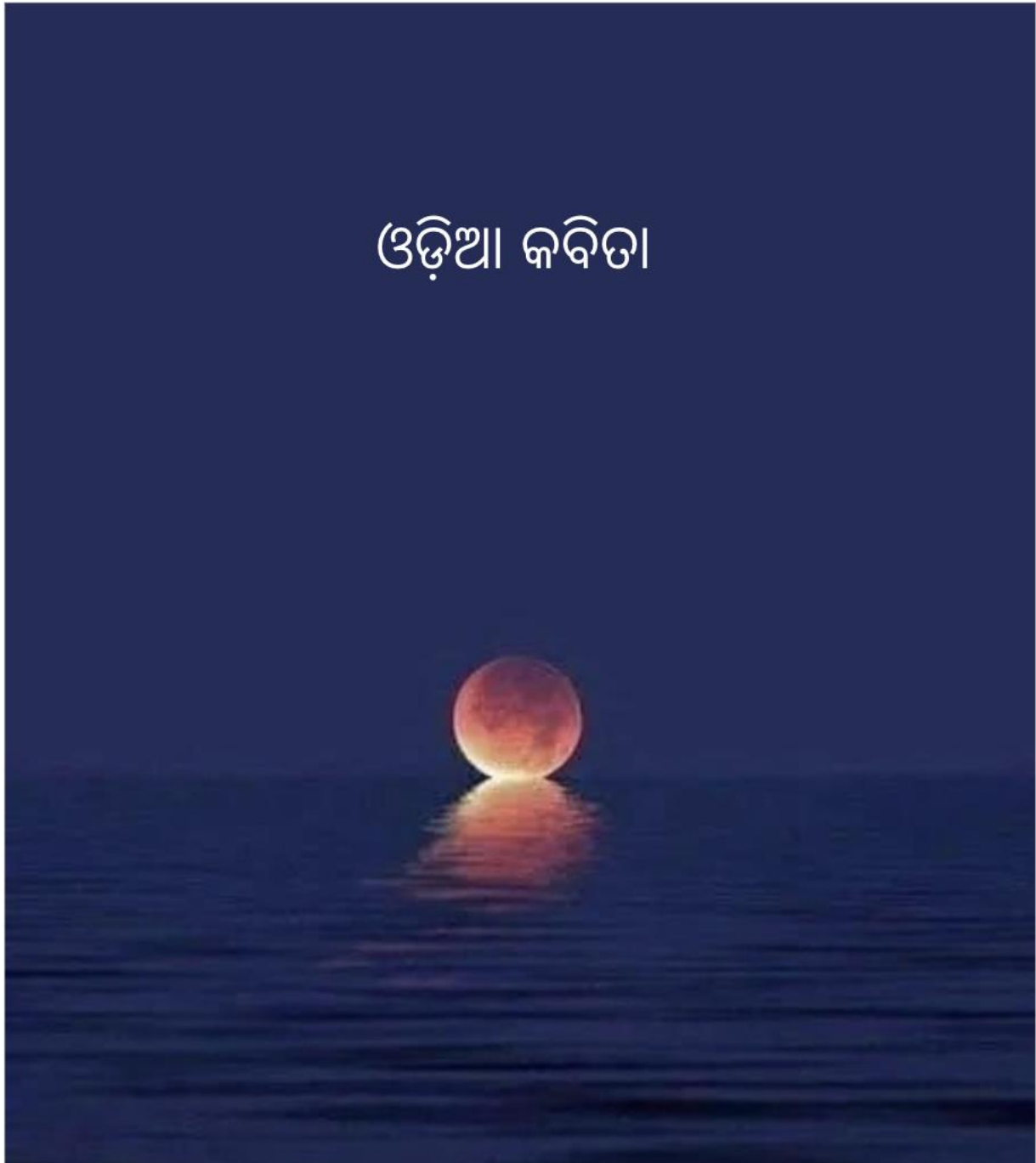








ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା



ଫାଶ ନୁହେଁ ସେ ଫାଶୀ



ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର, ରଚେଷ୍ଟର, ମିନେସୋଟା

ତୁମ ବିନା ବଞ୍ଚିବାଟା ସହଜ ନଥିଲା,
କିନ୍ତୁ ଏବେ ଅଭ୍ୟାସରେ ପଡିଗଲା ପରେ ।
ଏବେ ତୁମେ ଲେଖୁଅଛ ପ୍ରେମ ଭରା ଚିଠି,
ଫେରି ଆସିବାକୁ ତାହଁ ମୋ ଫାଶକୁ ଲେଉଟି ।
କାରଣ ତା ଜାଣି ପାରେକି କାହିଁକି
ଏ ଉଷ୍ମ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ପଛର ରହସ୍ୟ !
ସେଦିନ ବି ଦେଇଥିଲ ଅନେକ ମିଠା ମିଠା
କଥାର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି, ଯାହା ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଭାରି ସତ ସତ ।
କେତେ ରଖି ପାରିଲ କେତେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଲ
ନିଶ୍ଚେ ଥିବ ତୁମ ନିଷ୍ଠାପ ଆତ୍ମା ତା ଜାଣି ।
ମିଛ ଏ ପ୍ରେମ ଫାଶରେ ଆଉ ପଡିବାକୁ
କେବେ ଇଚ୍ଛା କରିବକି ଏ ମନ ଆଗକୁ !
ପ୍ରେମର ନଥିଲା ସେ ଫାଶ, ଥିଲା ଫାଶୀର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା
ଆଉ ସହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ନାହିଁ ତୁମ ପ୍ରତାରଣା ।
ଦୁଃଖିତ ମୁଁ ! ନରଖ ପାରୁ ଥିବାରୁ ତୁମ ଅନୁରୋଧ
ଭାବିପାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଯାହା, କହିପାର ଏହା ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ।
ପାରିବିନି ଆଉ ଏକ ଝଡର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହେବାକୁ
ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଇ ଫେରିବାକୁ ଏ ଜୀବନ ବଳୟ ଭିତରକୁ ।



ବର୍ଷା



ରବି ସାହୁ,କାଲିଫୋର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ

ମୋ ଝଙ୍କାର, ବହୁତ ଦୂରେ,
ଦିଗନ୍ତର ଆର ପାରେ,
କେଉଁ ଏକ ଆପଣା ପ୍ରାନ୍ତରୁ,
ଭାସିଆସେ ଚିହ୍ନା ଚିହ୍ନା ଶବ୍ଦଟିଏ ।
ନାଚି ଯାଏ ଅଭିମାନେ ଗୁମୁରି ଗୁମୁରି,
ମେଘ ନଈରେ ଗାଧୋଉଥିବା ଝିଅଟିଏ ।

ସେ କଳା ଭଅଁର ଚାହାଣୀକୁ
ମୋର ବହୁତ ଡର,
ବହୁତ ଡର ତା'ର ଭିଜେଇ ଭିଜେଇ
ପୁରୁଣା ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ଉତ୍ସରେଇବାର ପଣକୁ ।
ବଉଦ ପାହାଚରେ ନାଚି ନାଚି,
ଝରିବା ବାହାନାରେ, ଝୁରେଇବାତ ତା' କାମ ।

ତଥାପି କି ରହି ହୁଏ?
ସେଇ ଚିହ୍ନା ଚିହ୍ନା ସ୍ମରଣି,
ମୋହାଛନ୍ନ କରି ଟାଣି ନିଏ ପାଖକୁ ପାଖକୁ ।
ତା ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ବତୁରି ବତୁରି,
ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ ହୁଏ ଓଲଟା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ।

ଆଖି ଖୋଜେ ମେଘାଛନ୍ଦ ଆକାଶର ଧୂଆଁ ଧୂଆଁ ଛବି,
ମନ ଖୋଜେ ମେଘ ରଙ୍ଗେ ଭରା,
ଆଉ ଏକ ଓଦା ମନର ସୁରଭି ।
ଦେହ ଖୋଜେ ସେଇ ବର୍ଷଣ ମୁଖର ରାତି,
କେବେ ଶବ୍ଦର କାକଳୀ ତ, କେବେ ନିଃଶବ୍ଦର ଗୀତି ।

ନା ଆଜି ଆଉ ଡରିବିନି,
ଖୋଲି ଦେବି ସୁପ୍ତ ଇଚ୍ଛାମାନଙ୍କ ଶିକୁଳି,
ବିକି ଦେବି ଯେତେ ବିବଶତା,
ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେବି ଫୁଲୁଳା ମନକୁ,
ଭିଜିବାକୁ ରାତିସାରା ମେଘର ନଈରେ ।



ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ



ସଲୋନି ମହାନ୍ତି, କାଲିଫୋର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ ତପ୍ତ ମରୁବାଲି
କେବେ ତୁ ମାୟାବିନୀ ବନରାଜି
କେବେ ତୁ ଅଶାନ୍ତ ମହୋଦଧି
କେବେ ତୁ ତାଡ଼ନାର ଅଶ୍ରୁଳ ବାରିଧି ।

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ କବିର କବିତା
କେବେ ତୁ ବାଘୀର ବକୃତା
କେବେ ତୁ ଶିଳ୍ପୀର କଳ୍ପନା
କେବେ ତୁ ପ୍ରେମରେ ପ୍ରତାରଣା ।

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ ଆଶାର ଆଲୋକ
କେବେ ତୁ ରାତିର ଅନ୍ଧକାର
କେବେ ତୁ ଆଦ୍ୟ ରବିର କିରଣ
କେବେ ତୁ ଶୀତଳ ସମୀରଣ ।

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ଆଳାପ
କେବେ ତୁ ସାତ ସୁରର ସଂଳାପ
କେବେ ତୁ ଆତ୍ମଚିନ୍ତନରେ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି
କେବେ ତୁ ବେପଥୁର ପ୍ରଣୟିନୀ ।

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ ଏକ ମରିଚିକା
କେବେ ତୁ ଅପହଞ୍ଚିତ ତାରକା
କେବେ ତୁ ଅମାପ ଦିଗବଳୟ
କେବେ ତୁ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ଦେବାଳୟ ।

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ ବୁଝି ହେଲଯାଉସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ
କେବେ ତୁ ବିଷମ ଏକ ସମୀକରଣ
କେବେ ତୁ ଲାଗୁ ଅତି ନିଜର
କେବେ ତୁ ପୂର୍ବ ଜନ୍ମର ଉଧାର ।

ଆହା ରେ ଜୀବନ
କେବେ ତୁ ସରଳ ରେଖାଟେ
କେବେ ତୁ ହେଉ ବକ୍ର
ତୁ ବି ସଦା ବଦଳୁଥାଉ
ଯେମିତି ବଦଳୁଥାଏ ଋତୁଚକ୍ର ।



ପାଷାଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟା



ସୁରଥ ରଥ, ଟେକ୍ସସ

ହେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମା !

ଗଢ଼ିଥିଲ ତୁମେ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତୀକ,
ଅହଲ୍ୟା ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ କନ୍ୟା,
ଅନୁପମକାନ୍ତି ସ୍ବର୍ଗ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ସେ ,
ଝରୁଥିଲା ତା'ର ରୂପର ବନ୍ୟା ।

ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟ ପୁରେ ତୁମେ ପଠାଇଲ ତାକୁ ,
ଗୌତମ ମୁନି ଆଶ୍ରମେ ,
ଅତି ଶରଧାରେ ପାଳିଲେ କନ୍ୟାକୁ ,
ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟପୁର ମାୟା ବନ୍ଧନେ ।

ହେ ଗୌତମ !

ଉଦାର ତୁମେହେ ପାଳିଲ ଅହଲ୍ୟା ,
ନରଞ୍ଜୁ ହୃଦେ କିଛି କାମନା ବାସନା ।
ଶଶୀକଳା ପରି ବଢ଼ିଲା କନ୍ୟାଟି ,
ଜାଗ୍ରତ ମନେ ତା'ର ତପସ୍ବୀ ଚେତନା ।

ଦିନ ପରେ ଦିନ ବିତିଗଲା ,
ବିଛୁଡ଼ି ପଡ଼ିଲା ଅହଲ୍ୟାର ଜ୍ୟୋତି ,

ବ୍ରହ୍ମଲୋକ ପୁଣି ମହକିଲା ।

କି'ଭାବି ମନରେ ଡାକିଦେଲ ତୁମେ ,
ପ୍ରଜାପତି ଆହେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମା,
ନିଆ ଏ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟାକୁ ତୁମେ ,
ସ୍ବର୍ଗପୁରର ସେ କନ୍ୟା ।

ଚକିତ ହୋଇଲେ ପ୍ରଜାପତି ବ୍ରହ୍ମା !
ଦେଖୁ ତୁମ ଚିତ୍ତ ନିର୍ମଳତା,
କହିଲେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ,
ଆହେ ମୁନି ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ! ଶୁଣ ଗୌତମ,
ଅହଲ୍ୟା ତୁମର, କର ତାକୁ ପଢ଼ୀ ,
ନରଖ ମନରେ ଆବିଳତା ।

ହେ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର !

କଳୁଷ ତୁମର ହୃଦୟ ମନ୍ଦିର ,
ବୋଲାଉଛ ତୁମେ ସ୍ବର୍ଗପୁର ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର ?
ଛତୁ ବେଶେ ତୁମେ ଗୌତମ ଆଶ୍ରମେ ,
ପ୍ରବେଶିଲ ଦିନେ ଯାଇ ,
ଏତିକି ଅନ୍ୟାୟ !
ଅହଲ୍ୟା ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ନାରୀ ପ୍ରତି କଲ ,
ହେବ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଦାୟୀ ?

ଗୌତମ ମୁନି କ୍ରୋଧ ଅଭିଶାପେ ,
ଅହଲ୍ୟା ହୋଇଲେ ପାଷାଣୀ ନାରୀ ,
ସହସ୍ର ଚକ୍ଷୁରେ ଭରିହେଲ ତୁମେ ,
ଅନ୍ୟାୟ ତୁମର ଭୁଲିବେନି କେହି ।

ହେ ରାମ !

ତ୍ରେତା ଯୁଗେ ତୁମେ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ହେଲ ,
ଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ପାଇଁ ,
ଯୁଗେ ଯୁଗେ ତୁମ ନାମ ରହିଯିବ ,
ଅହଲ୍ୟା ଉଦ୍ଧାର ପାଇଁ ।

ଯାଉଥିଲ ତୁମେ ସୀତା ସ୍ବୟମ୍ବର ,
ଅତିକ୍ରମ କଲ ଗୌତମ ଆଶ୍ରମ ।
ପାଦ ସ୍ବର୍ଣ ପାଇ ଚମକି ଉଠିଲେ ,
ପାଷାଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟା ତପସ୍ବୀ ନାରୀ ,
ପାଦ ରଜ ତୁମ ପଡିଲା ପାଷାଣେ ,
ଜୀବିତ ହୋଇଲେ ଅହଲ୍ୟା ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ।

ହେ ଗଙ୍ଗା ଘାଟ କୈବର୍ତ୍ତ !

ଏତିକି ବିଚିତ୍ର ତୁମର ବିଚାର ,
ନୌକାରେ ତୁମର
ପାର ହେବେ ନାହିଁ ରାମ ଅବତାର ?
ନୌକା ତୁମର ହେବ ଅପବିତ୍ର ?
କହିଲ ରାମଙ୍କୁ
ପାଦଧୂଳି ପାଇ ପାଷାଣୀ ସାଜିଛି ,
ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟା ଆଜି ,
ନୌକା ଯଦି ମୋର ନାୟିକା ହୁଅଇ ,
ଯିବ ମୋ ସଂସାର ଧୋଇ ।
ବଢ଼ାଅ ପାଦ ପ୍ରଭୁ....
ଧୋଇବି ତୁମର ପାଦକୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ,
ଗଙ୍ଗା ଜଳ ଧାର ଦେଇ ।

ବଢ଼ାଇ ଦେଲେ ରାମ ପାଦ ଯୁଗଳକୁ ,
ଆଦରେ ଧୋଇଲ ଗଙ୍ଗା ଜଳେ ତାକୁ ।
ହାତ ଯୋଡି ତୁମେ କହିଲ ରାମଙ୍କୁ ,
ହେ ରଘୁବର
ପାରିକଲ ମୋତେ ଏ ଭବ ସାଗର ,
ନେବି ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଗଙ୍ଗା ଆରପାର ।।



ଅଶ୍ରୁଧାର



ରେବଡ଼ୀ ସେଠୀ, ଜର୍ଜିଆ

ଗଢ଼ିବାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ପ୍ରୀତିର ଉଆସ ,
ତଥାପି ମୁଁ ପରିଶ୍ଚିତିର କ୍ରୀତଦାସ
ମନର ବେଦନା କହିବା ପାଇଁ
ଲୋଡ଼ା ହୃଦୟ ଯାହାର
ମନ ଭରି ହସିବା ତ ଦୂର
ଏଠି ଲୁଚି କାନ୍ଦିବା ପାଇଁ ବି
ଅନୁମତି ଦରକାର ।

ସବୁ ଆଡେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ, କେହି ନୁହେଁ ନିଜର

ଓଃ ! ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ତ ପରିଶ୍ଚିତିର ଚାକର
ଅଶ୍ରୁ ନୁହେଁ ଏ ' ଝରଣା ମୋ ଆଖିର
କଳ କଳ ନୁହେଁ କଇଁ କଇଁ ଶବ୍ଦ ଧାର
ସୁଖ ମୋର ନେଲା ଛତାଇ
ଏଇ ଧାରେ ମିଶେ ମନ ତଳ କଥା
କିଏ ବା ପାରିବ କହି ?

ଉଦାସର କୋହକୁ ମନ ନଈକାରେ
ଭସାଇ ଦେଇ ସେ ସାଗରେ

ଜୀବନ ସାଥୀ କରିନେଲା ମୋତେ , ସେହି ମୋର ଅଶ୍ରୁଧାର ।



ଥରେ ଯଦି ପାଆନ୍ତି ସୁଯୋଗ



କଲ୍ଲନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ୍ , ମିନେସୋଟା

ଥରେ ଯଦି ପାଆନ୍ତି ସୁଯୋଗ, ସଖି ମୋର

ତମର ଆକାଶ ଛୁଆଁ ସଫଳତାକୁ ଈର୍ଷା କରିବିନି

ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ କରିବିନି, ନିଜକୁ ବୋଲି ଭାବିବିନି ||

ବରଂ ପାଛୋଟି ଆଣିବି ଯାଇ ଦୁଆର ବନ୍ଦରୁ

ନୀତି ପ୍ରତି -ହସ ହସ ମୁହେଁ ,ବେଷ୍ଟନ କରି ତୁମ କାଟିଦେଶ |

ତୋଳିନେବି ଦୁଇହାତେ ତୁମର ମୁହଁଟି

ଆଶାକରେ ଭୁଲିଯିବ ସମସ୍ତ ଚିନ୍ତା ଯେତେ ପଛ କଥା ||

ଶୁଣ ସଖି ! ଥରେ ଯଦି କ୍ଷମା କରି ଦେବ

ଭୁଲିଯିବ ପୁରୁଣା କଥାକୁ

ଭୁଲିଯିବ ଯେତେ ମୋର ଅଶିଷ୍ଟାଚାର

ଆଉ ଅଶାଳୀନ ଭାଷା

ଯାହା ଦେଲି ଅପମାନ ତୁମ କୂଳ କୁଟୁମ୍ବକୁ

ଭୋଗୁଛି ତ ତାହାରି ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶା ।

ଥରେ ଯଦି ପାଆନ୍ତି ସୁଯୋଗ -ଶୁଣ ପ୍ରିୟେ

ବାଧା ମୁଁ ଦେବିନି, ବାଧା ମୁଁ ହେବିନି ତୁମ ପ୍ରଗତି ପଥରେ

କଥା ଦେଉଛି ,କଥା ଦେଉଛି ,କଥା ରଖିବି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ।

କ୍ଷମା କରିଦିଅ ସାଥ୍ -ହେବ ନାହିଁ ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ସେ ପଛ ଦିନର

ଚଳ ଚଞ୍ଚଳ ଜୀବନର ବାକି ତକ ଯାତ୍ରାରେ

ମୁଁ ହେବି ତୁମର ପ୍ରିୟ ସହଚର -ଚିର ସହଚର

ବାଳ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବାତାୟନ ପଥେ ଦେଖୁଥିବେ ନିତି ଆମ ସତେଜ ମୁହଁକୁ ।

କର୍ମରତ ଦିନ ସରୁ ଥିବ ସୁରୁ ଖୁରୁରେ

ବ୍ୟତିବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ମନ ତଳେ ଅଙ୍କା ଥିବ ତୁମରି ଲବନ

ଫଟା ଫଟ୍ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ପାଇଁ

ଛଟ ପଟ ହେଉଥିବ ମନ ॥

ଦିନାନ୍ତେ ଜଳାଇବ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ଦୀପ ତୁମେ ମୁଁ ଫୁଲୁଥିବି ଶଙ୍ଖ ॥

ଶଙ୍ଖନାଦ ଘୋଷୁଥିବ ଆମ ଦାମ୍ପତ୍ୟର ସଫଳ ବାରତା

ପ୍ରିୟା ମୋର ସଖି ମୋର ଥରଟିଏ ଦିଅ ସେ ସୁଯୋଗ

ଥରଟିଏଥରଟିଏ ...॥



ଜୀବନ ଚକ



ସ୍ନେହ ମହାନ୍ତି, କାଲିଫୋର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ

ଲିଭି ଲିଭି ଆସେ ଜୀବନ ଆଲୋକ
ରହିଛି ଅଳପ ଦିନ ବାକି,
ଫେରିବାକୁ ହେବ ଯାହାର ଆଦେଶ
ଆସିଥିଲି କୁଆଁ ରାବ ଡାକି ।
ଶୈଶବ ଗଲା ଖେଳ କଉତୁକେ
ଯୌବନ ଆସେ ମତୁଆଲା ମନ,
ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ସବୁ ଦେଖାଗଲା ମୋତେ
ଭୁଲିଗଲି ସବୁ ହରାଇ ଚେତନ ।
ନବ ଯୌବନ ସହଚରୀ ହେଲା
ଶତବର୍ଷ ଗଲି ଚମକି
ସଂସାର ବନ୍ଧନେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହେଲି ଭୁଲି
ଅନ୍ତିମ ଆସିବ ତ ଡାକି ।
ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଜୀବନେ ଭୋଗି ହେବା ପାଇଁ
ଅରଜିଲି ଧନ ନିଜ ସୁଖ ପାଇଁ,
ଆମ୍ ସେବା କଲି ଶାଶ୍ୱତକୁ ଭୁଲି
ଆସକ୍ତ ନଶ୍ୱରେ ବୁଡି ରହି ।
ସରିଗଲା ଶେଷ ଜୀବନର ଖେଳ
ସତେ କିବା ବଳି ଘର ସେହି
ଆୟୁଷ ରଥ ମୋ ଗତି ଗତି ଗଲା ଧରମ ପାପର ସାକ୍ଷୀ ସେଇ ।



ସ୍ମୃତିର ସହର



ମନୋରମା ଚୌଧୁରୀ, ମାସେବୁସେଟସ୍

ପୁରୁଣା ସେ ସହରକୁ ହେଉଛି ହୁଏ ମନ
ଯହିଁ ବିତିଥିଲା ମୋର କୈଶୋର ଯୌବନ
ଖୋଜେ ସେହି ହଜି ଥିବା ପୁରୁଣା ସପନ
ଗଳି ମୋଡ଼େ ଖୋଜି ବୁଲେ ମୋର ପିଲା ଦିନ ।

କାଉଁଟ କଉଡ଼ି, ପୁଟି କବାଡ଼ିର ରୋଳ
ଏଇନା ଲାଗେ ଖେଳୁ ଥିଲି ତି ତି ତା ଖେଳ
ବର ବଧୂ ଖେଳେ ଗଢ଼ା ଆମ ବାଲିଘର
ସ୍ଥପନେ ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ଥିଲା କୁମାରୀଙ୍କ ମେଳ ।

ନ ଥିଲା ତ ତର ଭୟ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଚିନ୍ତା
ନ ଥିଲା ତ ରାଗ ହେଷ କାହା ଲାଗି ଈର୍ଷା
ଅଳପ କଳିରେ କାନ୍ଦ ପୁଣି କୁଣ୍ଠାକୁଣ୍ଠି
ଏକଇ ଆତ୍ମୁଲ ଫତା ହେବା ଚଟାଚଟି ।

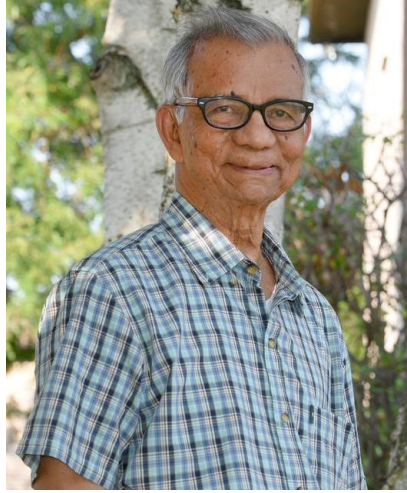
ମନେପଡେ ଆଜି ସେଇ ହଜିଲା ଫଗୁଣ
କୁଞ୍ଜବନେ ଝୁମି ଥିଲା କୁମାରୀ ଯୌବନ
ଗରବିଣୀ ପୁଟି ଥିଲା କୁସୁମର ସମ
ହଜିଛି ସେ ଦିନ ଆଜି ନାହିଁ ତା'ର ଚିହ୍ନ ।

ଯଉବନ କେବେ ହେଲା ଜରା ଜଣା ନାହିଁ
ଅପାଙ୍ଗର ହୃଦ ତୋରି ଲିପି ଲେଖି ନାହିଁ
ସ୍ମୃତିର ଖାତାରେ ଖୋଜେ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ଲେଉଟାଇ
ଏ ନୂଆ ସହରେ ତାର ଠିକଣା ବି ନାହିଁ ।

ପୁରୁଣା ସେ ସହରକୁ ଝୁରେ ଆଜି ମନ
ଯହିଁ ହଜି ଗଲା ସବୁ ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ସପନ
ସ୍ମୃତିର ସହର ଯାହା ମାନଚିତ୍ରେ ନାହିଁ
ସ୍ମାରକାରୁ ଗୋପ କିବା ଲେଉଟି ହୁଅଇ ?



ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି : ଆଜିର ମାନଭଞ୍ଜନ



ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି , କାନାଡ଼ା

ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି |
ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...

ଝୁଅ -

ସେ ଦିନ, ଦେଖୁଲି ହସ ମୁରୁକି ଗୋ

ଦେଖୁଲି ଦେଖୁଲି ହସ ମୁରୁକି ଗୋ |

(ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି...)

ସେ ଥିଲେ ଚିକେ ଲାଜୁରା, (କିନ୍ତୁ) କଥାରେ ବାଟୁଳିମରା

ଆଖି କିଛି ଖୋଜୁଥିଲା, (ଧରା) ପଡ଼ି ଯିବିକି ଗୋ |

ବାହାଦୁରିଆ ବଚନ, ଶୁଭୁଥିଲା ଘନଘନ

କିଣି ନେଲା କି ମୋ ମନ, (ଲାଜେ) ବୁଡ଼ି ଗଲିକି ଗୋ |

(ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)

ଆଗରୁ ଦେଖୁଚି କେତେ, ମନକୁ ନ ଘେନେ ସେତେ

ଏବେ କହୁଛି ଅନ୍ତର, ମାନି ନେବିକି ଗୋ |

କହନ୍ତି କି କାନ ଗାଣି, ଦେଇ ସରୁ ଚଟକଣି

ରଖ ତୁମ ସେ ବଡ଼ାଣି, ଗଲି ଅଟକି ଗୋ |

(ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୂଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି |)

ଘୁଅ -

ଛନଛନ ମୋର ମନ ଖୋଜୁଛି କାହାକୁ

ଚଙ୍ଗଚଙ୍ଗ ଆଖି ଯୋଡ଼ି, ବନ୍ଧୁ ହେ, ବ୍ୟଗ୍ର ଦେଖିବାକୁ |

(ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି...)
 ସିଙ୍ଗଡ଼ାରୁ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଦାନ୍ତ କାଟୁଛି ବହନ
 ନରମିଆ ରସଗୋଲା, ବନ୍ଧୁ ହେ, କରଇ ମିଳନ |
 ଅଟକିଲା ଅଧାଖୁଆ ପାଟିରେ ମୋହର
 ଦେଖୁ ଆସୁଥିବା ପାଦ, ବନ୍ଧୁ ହେ, ଲସରପସର |
 (ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)
 ବାଆଁରିଲା ଆଖି ଯୋଡ଼ି ଛଟପଟ ହୋଇ
 ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ଧରା ଯେବେ, ଉଠିଲା ଲାଜେଇ |
 ଦୂରେ ଥାଇ ପାଶେ ବସି ଲାଗଇ ନିଜର
 ନାହିଁ ନ ଥିଲା ପରି ସେ, ହେଲି ମୁଁ ଆତୁର |
 ସରୁ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଳିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଛୁଇଁଲେ ଗାଲକୁ
 ଲାଗିବଇଁ ରସଗୋଲା, ବନ୍ଧୁ ହେ, ପଡ଼ଇ ପାଟିକୁ |
 (ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି |)

ଝିଅ -

My darling ହେ, ନ ହୁଏ ହୀନସ୍ତା ପରି
 ଲେହେଙ୍ଗା କୁରୁତି ଦିଅ ଗୋ ନିଅ ଧୋକଡ଼ା ଶାଢ଼ୀ |
 (ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି...)
 ମନକୁ ଲାଖିଲା ସଜ ହୋଇବି, ଆଖିକୁ ମିଳାଇ କଥା କହିବି
 High heel ପିନ୍ଧି ତମୁ ହଲାଇ, ବସିବି ଦେହକୁ ଦେହ ଲଗାଇ |
 ନିଅ ଧୋକଡ଼ା ଶାଢ଼ୀ ...
 (ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)
 ଯେବେ କରିଥିବ ଅଝଟ ରୋଷ, ମଧୁର ବଚନେ କରିବି ତୋଷ
 କଟଲେଟ ମିଠା ବାଡ଼ି ଆଣିବି, ଗରମ ଗରମ ଚା ପିଆଇବି |
 ନିଅ ଧୋକଡ଼ା ଶାଢ଼ୀ...
 (ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି |)

ପୁଅ -

ଆହେ honey ମୋର ,
 ଲେହେଙ୍ଗା କୁରୁତି ପାଇଁ, କିଆଁ ତରତର |
 ଅଂଟା ହଲେଇବ ଲଟକମଟକ କରି
 Everybody will look ଆଖି ଡିମା କରି
 ମୁରୁକି ହସି ମୋତେ, ଦେବ ଆଖି ଠାର |
 ଆହେ honey ମୋର ,
 ଲେହେଙ୍ଗା କୁରୁତି ପାଇଁ, କିଆଁ ତରତର |
 (ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ଚୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)

ସଭିଏଁ ଦେଖିବେ, ଖେଟାଖେଟି ହେବେ
ତୁମ ପିନ୍ଧିଥିବା ଶାଢ଼ୀର ପଛରେ
ମାଆ ଦେଇଥିବା, ଅଂଟା ବିଛାହାର ।
ଆହେ honey ମୋର ,
ଲେହେଙ୍ଗା କୁରୁତି ପାଇଁ, କିଆଁ ତରତର ।
(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି ।)

ଝିଅ -

ଲେହେଙ୍ଗା କୁରୁତି ପାଇଁ ମନ ବଳାଇଲି
କେମିତି ପୁରୁଷ ସେ ଯେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଲେ ଅଳି,
ଆଲୋ ମାଆ ମୋର, ଗେହ୍ଲା ମାଆ ମୋର ।
କଥା କଥାକେ ମୁହଁ ଯେ କରୁଥିଲି ଅଳି
ଛେପ ନ ଡୋକୁଣୁ ଯାଉଥିଲା ମିଳି,
ସୁନା ମାଆ ମୋର ।
(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)
ରୁଷି ଯିବି ଧକେଇବି କାହା ପାଖେ କହ
ଲୁହ ମୋର ପୋଛି ଦେବ କେ କରିବ ଥୟ ,
ଆଲୋ ମାଆ ମୋର ।
ଆଖି ହୁଏ ଛଳଛଳ କାନ୍ଦି ନ ପାରଇ
କିଏ ଅଛି ମୋର ପାଖେ ଦେବ ବହଲେଇ
ଧନ ମାଆ ମୋର ।
(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି ।)

ପୁଅ -

Honey ମୋର ଗୁମାନରେ ସତୁଅଛି
ଧକେଇ ଧକେଇ ମୋତେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରୁଅଛି ।
(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି)
ଭଷାହାଣ୍ଡି ପରି ସେ ଯେ ଫୁଲିଛି ବଦନ
ସାହସ ନ ଥିଲା ମୋର ନ ଫୁଟେ ବଚନ ।
Honey ମୋର ଗୁମାନରେ ସତୁଅଛି ...
ଲେହେଙ୍ଗା କୁରୁତି ହାତେ ଧରି ମୁଁ ରହିଲି
ପାଦ ପାଖେ ବସି ମୁହଁ ହାତକୁ ଧରିଲି ।
ଛାଡ଼ିଗଲା ହାତ ଧୀରେ ଖୋଲି ମୋ ହାତକୁ
ବୁଲିଗଲା ଭରା ମୁହଁ ଦୂରେ ଉପରକୁ ।
Honey ମୋର ଗୁମାନରେ ସତୁଅଛି ...
(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)

ହସ ଦିଅ ଚିକେ ବୋଲି ମିନତି କରିଲି,
ସେ ମୁହଁରେ ଖୁଲିଖୁଲି ହସ ତୁମ ଭୂଷଣ
ସେ ବଦନ ଆଜି କିନ୍ତୁ ପଡ଼ିଅଛି ମଳିନ
ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦିଅ ମାନ ଏବେ ବିନତିରେ କହିଲି |

ମିନତି କରିଲି ...

କଅଁଳିଆ ହାତ ତୁମ ସାଉଁଳେ ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ
ଦେଖିଲିକି ତମ ଓଠେ ପାତଳିଆ ହସକୁ
କୁରୁଳିଆ ମନ ମୋର ଅଙ୍ଗେ ଅଙ୍ଗେ ଭରିଲି |

ମିନତି କରିଲି ...

(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି...)

ଝିଅ -

ହସବିକି କାନ୍ଦିବିକି ନ ଜାଣି ମୁଁ ପାରଇ
ଶୁଖିଲା ମୁହଁକୁ ଦେଖୁ ପାରିଲିନି ସହଇ
ଝିଅ ମନ ପୁଅଠାରୁ ଭିନ୍ନ ବୋଲି କହିଲି |

ହେଜିବ ବୋଇଲି ...

ପୁଅ -

ହସ ଦିଅ ଚିକେ ବୋଲି ମିନତି କରିଲି |

ଝିଅ -

ଝିଅ ମନ ପୁଅଠାରୁ ଭିନ୍ନ ବୋଲି କହିଲି |

ପୁଅ -

ମିନତି କରିଲି ...

ଝିଅ -

ହେଜିବ ବୋଇଲି...

(ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି ତୁଉକୁ ମୁଷି, ତୁ ଥା ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ରୁଷି, ଧାନ ଭରଣକ ଖାଉ ଥା ବସି |)



Odia Stories



ଶାଶୁ



ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ଡେଟନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ପୁଣି ଗୋଟିଏ ସେମିତି ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଲା । ପୁଅର ଶାଶୁ, ମାନେ ଝିଅର ମା'ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ବାମୀ ସ୍ବାଙ୍କର ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟ, କଥା କଟାକଟି ଓ ଶେଷରେ ସ୍ବାମୀ ନିଜ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ଛାଡ଼ି, ନିଜର ଦୁଇବର୍ଷର ପୁଅ ଓ ସ୍ବାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ, ଅଜଣା ସ୍ଥାନରେ କେଉଁଠି ବାସ କରୁଛି । ତାର ଏକା ଜିଦ୍, ସ୍ବା ଯେହେତୁ ତାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଯିବା ପାଇଁ କହିଛି, ସେଇ ସ୍ବା ହିଁ ତାକୁ ଫେରିବାକୁ ନ କହିଲେ, ସ୍ବାମୀ ଫେରିବନି । ଏଣେ ସ୍ବା କହୁଛି, “ସେ ଲୋକ ଯେମିତି ଭାବେ ମତେ ତୁଚ୍ଛ ଭଳି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛି, ମୋ ଉପରେ ରାଗି, ମତେ କୁସ୍ଥିତ ଭାଷା କହିଛି, ମୋ ମା'କୁ କଟୁକଥା କହି ଅଭଦ୍ର ରୂପେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛି, ସେମିତି ଲୋକର ମୁହଁ ମୁଁ ଚାହିଁବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାକରୁନି ।”

ପୁଅର ମା', ମାନେ ଝିଅର ଶାଶୁ, ଏ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ତ କେଁ ରହିଥାଏ ବୋଲି ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ଶାଶୁ ଘରର ଗଞ୍ଜଣାକୁ ନେଇ କେତେକେତେ ଗଳ୍ପ, ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ରଚିତ । ଯଦିଓ ଆଜିକାଲିର ଶାଶୁମାନେ ମତର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେଲେଣି, ବୋହୂମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଶି ସବୁ ଉତ୍ସବ ମହୋତ୍ସବରେ ନାଚତାମସା କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ବି ଶାଶୁ, ବୋହୂର ସମ୍ପର୍କକୁ ନେଇ ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଯୁଗଯୁଗର ଧାରଣା, ତାହା ବଦଳିନି ।

ହେଲେ, ଏ ଶାଶୁ ହେଲେ, ପୁଅର ଶାଶୁ, ମାନେ ଝିଅର ମା' । ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଭୂମିକା ଆଜିକାଲି ଯେମିତି ବଢ଼ିଛି, ସେଇ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ, କିଛିକିଛିଟା ଅଲଗା ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଓ କାହାଣୀର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଉଛି ।

ଛନ୍ଦାର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାରେ ଏ ଡିସି ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସିଏ ଏମିତି କଥା ଅନ୍ତତଃ ୬ ଜଣ ଦମ୍ପତିଙ୍କ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଶୁଣିଲାଣି । ସ୍ବାମୀ, ସ୍ବାଙ୍କର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟର କାରଣ ସ୍ବାର ମା । ସେ ଦମ୍ପତିଙ୍କର ଛୁଆଟିଏ ଜନ୍ମ ହୁଏ । ସ୍ବାଟିର ମା' ଆସନ୍ତି ଭାରତରୁ ଝିଅଟିକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାପାଇଁ । ସେତିକିବେଳେ ଜୁଆଇଁକୁ ଅଧିକ କାମ କରିବାପାଇଁ କହିଦିଅନ୍ତି ସେ । ଝିଅଟିର ଛୁଆଟିଏ ଜନ୍ମ କରି ସେଇ ଦାୟିତ୍ବରେ ଅଛି । ହଜାର ଥର ରାତିରେ ଉଠି ପିଲାଟିକୁ କ୍ଷୀର ଖୁଆଇବ । ପିଲାଟିର ମଳମୁତ୍ର ସଫା କରିବ । ତା' ସହିତ ନିଜ ଶରୀରର ବି କଷ୍ଟ ରହିଛି । ସେ କଥା ଝିଅଟିର ମା' ବୁଝନ୍ତି, କାରଣ ସିଏ ବି ସ୍ବା ଲୋକ, ସେସବୁ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ତାଙ୍କର ରହିଛି । ହେଲେ ବୁଝି ପାରନ୍ତିନି ଜୁଆଇଁ । ଶାଶୁ ଯଦି ଜୁଆଇଁକୁ କିଛି କାମ ବତାନ୍ତି ତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବାଧେ । ଶୁଶୁର ଘରେ ଜୁଆଇଁ ହେଲେ ଠାକୁର ଭଳି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ରାଜସମ୍ମାନ ଦିଆଯାଏ । ସେମିତି ନହେଲେ ନାହିଁ, ତା' ବୋଲି ଶାଶୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅର୍ଡର କରିବେ ? ଶାଶୁ ଜୁଆଇଁକୁ କିଛି ବି

କାମ କରିବାକୁ କହିଲେ, କୁଆଁ ମନରେ ପଶିଯାଏ ଯେ ସିଏ ତାକୁ ଚାକର ଭଳି କାମ କରାଉଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅକୁ ରାଣୀ ଭଳି ରଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି । ଏଇଭଳି ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ କୁଆଁକୁ ନିଜ ବ୍ୟବସାୟିକ କାମ ବି କରିବାକୁ ପଡେ । ସିଏ ଅତିଷ୍ଠ ହୋଇଉଠେ ଓ କେବେକେବେ ଶାଶୁଙ୍କୁ ଦୁଇପଦ ଶୁଣେଇଦିଏ । ଶାଶୁଙ୍କର ଅଭିମାନ ବଢେ, ଝିଅ ସହିପାରେନି । ମନରାଗ ମନରେ ରଖେ । ସ୍ବାମୀକୁ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଶୁଣେଇଦିଏ । ଏମିତି କି ଶାଶୁ ଭାରତ ଫେରିଗଲା ପରେ ବି ସ୍ବାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ଝଗଡ଼ା ଜାରି ରହେ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସ୍ବାମୀକୁ ନ କହି ରାଗିକରି ଭାରତ ଚାଲିଯାଏ ଓ ଆସେନି । ବେଳେବେଳେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ଭାଇ, ଭଉଜ କି ଅନ୍ୟ କେହି ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ଥିଲେ, ତା' ଘରକୁ ସ୍ବାମୀକୁ ନ କହି ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ସ୍ବାମୀ ବିଚରା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଖୋଜେ । ପିଲାଟି ପାଇଁ ଝୁରି ହୁଏ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଯେତେ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ବି ମନେଇପାରେନି ।

ଏମିତି ଘଟଣା ଛନ୍ଦା ଅନେକ ଦେଖୁଛି ଓ ତା' ମଧ୍ୟରୁ କେତେଟାରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଭାବେ ମଧ୍ୟସ୍ଥି କରି, ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଇ ସମାଧାନ କରାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିଛି । ହେଲେ ଏକଥା ଯେ ନିଜ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଘଟିବ, ସେଇଟା ତାର ଜନ୍ମନାର ବାହାରେ ଥିଲା । ତା' ମାମୁ ଝିଅ ଭଉଣୀ ଚାରୁଲତା । ତାର ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ ସାର୍ଥକ । ସାର୍ଥକ ବି.ଟେକ୍ କରି ଏଠି ଆସି ମାଷ୍ଟରସ୍ କଲା । ମାଷ୍ଟରସ୍ ସାରି ଗୋଟିଏ କମ୍ପାନୀରେ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅର୍ ହୋଇ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରିଥିଲା । ତାପରେ ତାକୁ ଏମ୍.ବି.ଏ. କରିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲା । ଏମ୍.ବି.ଏ. କରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ସେଠିକାର ଇଞ୍ଜିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୁଡେଣ୍ଟ ଆସୋସିଏସନ୍ ସହିତ ବହୁତ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତ ରହିଲା । ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ତାର ଜଣେ ଅଣ୍ଡରଗ୍ରାଜୁଏଟ୍ ଭାରତୀୟ ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଝିଅ ରୂପା ସହିତ ପ୍ରେମ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେ ଝିଅଟି ଇତିହାସ ପଢୁଥିଲା । ଏଣେ ସାର୍ଥକର ବାପା, ମା' ତା' ପାଇଁ ଝିଅ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ, ଯିଏ କି ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ପଢୁଥିବ କି ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅର୍ କି ତାଙ୍କର ହୋଇଥିବ । ହଜାର ଫଟୋ ପଠାଉଥିଲେ । ସାର୍ଥକ ଟାଲିଟାଲି ଯାଉଥିଲା । ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ଛନ୍ଦା ଓ ତା' ସ୍ବାମୀ ଆକାଶ ବି ସାର୍ଥକକୁ ପଚାରୁଥିଲେ । ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଉଥିଲେ, ସିଏ ଯଦି କିଛି ନିଜେ ଠିକ୍ କରିଛି, ତେବେ ବାପା, ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଉ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଶେଷରେ ସେ ସେଇଆ କଲା । ବାପା, ମା' କାନ୍ଦିଲେ । ଆମେରିକାର ଝିଅ ବାହାହେଲେ ତ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହିଯିବ, ଆଉ କଣ ଭାରତ ଫେରିବ । ତାପରେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିବା ଝିଅ ଯେ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ମାନି ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେବ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ବି ସନ୍ଦେହ ଥିଲା ମନରେ । ସାର୍ଥକ ଆଶ୍ବାସନା ଦେଲା । ସେ ଝିଅ ଥିଲା ପଞ୍ଜାବୀ ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟର । ସେ ଝିଅର ବାପା, ମା' ଛନ୍ଦାକୁ ଆଶ୍ରୟ କରି ଚାରୁଲତା ଓ ତା' ସ୍ବାମୀ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକାନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଯୋଡ଼ିଲେ । ବାହାଘର ହୋଇଗଲା । ସବୁ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଚାଲିଥିଲା ।

କ୍ରମେ ସେ ଝିଅଟିର ମାନସିକ ଅବସାଦ ରୋଗ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା । ସିଏ କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିଜକୁ ସ୍ଥିରଭାବେ ରଖିପାରିଲାନି । ଅଣ୍ଡର ଗ୍ରାଜୁଏଟ୍ ତ କୌଣସି ମତେ ପାସ୍ କଲା, ହେଲେ ଆଉ କିଛି ପଢ଼ିଲାନି କି ଚାକିରିବାକିରି କିଛି କରିବାରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ଦେଖେଇଲାନି । ଯେତେବେଳେ ଶୁଣ, ସିଏ କିଛି କୋର୍ସ୍ କରୁଛି । କୋର୍ସ୍ କରୁଛି ଯଦି କିଛି ତ କ୍ୟାରିଅର୍ ଗୋଲ୍, ମାନେ ବୃତ୍ତିଗତ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଥିବ । ନା, ସେମିତି କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ନା ଚାକିରି କଲା, ନା ପିଲା ଜନ୍ମ କଲା । ଏମିତି ବାହାଘରର ଦଶବର୍ଷ ପରେ ତାର ପିଲାଟିଏ ହେଲା । ପୁଣି କରୋନା ସମୟରେ । ଝିଅଟିର ମା' ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ଝିଅକୁ ଅନେକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତାରୁ କି ତା' ସ୍ବାମୀ ତ ଭାରତରୁ ଆସିପାରିଲେନି, ଛନ୍ଦା ମଧ୍ୟ ଯାଇପାରିଲାନି । ୨୦୨୦ ମସିହାର ଏପ୍ରିଲ୍ ମାସରେ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଯେମିତି କରୋନା ମହାମାରୀର କରାଳତା ଲାଗି ରହିଥିଲା, ସେ ସମୟରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ତ ଲକ୍‌ଡାଉନ୍‌ରେ ଥିଲେ । କିଏ ଆଉ କେମିତି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିପାରିବ ? ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ସେ ଝିଅର ମା' ହିଁ ଜାଣ ସବୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳିଥିଲେ ।

ହେଲେ ସାର୍ଥକର ଏବେ ଏମିତି କଣହେଲା ଯେ ? ପିଲା ହେଉନଥିଲା, ହେଲା । ଏଇଟା ତ ଖୁସିର ସମୟ । ଏବେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ମିଶି ପିଲାଟିର ଲାଳନପାଳନରେ ମଜିରହିବା କଥା । ତା' ବଦଳରେ ଏମିତି ଘଟଣା ? ଛନ୍ଦା ବି ଜାଣିନଥିଲା । ତାରୁ ଜଣେଇଲା ବୋଲି ଜାଣିଲା । ସାର୍ଥକ କି ରୂପା କେହି ତାକୁ କିଛି କହିନଥିଲେ । ଟୀକା ନେବା ପରେ ସେମାନେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସାର୍ଥକ ଓ ତାର ପରିବାରକୁ ଭେଟିଥିଲେ, ସେତେବେଳେ ସେମାନେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ଯତ୍ନ ନେଇଥିଲେ । ଏମିତି ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟ କଥା କିଛି ଜଣାପଡୁନଥିଲା ।

ଛନ୍ଦା ରୂପାକୁ ଫୋନ୍ରେ ଡାକିଲା । ପଚାରିଲା, “କଣ ହେଉଛି ସତସତ କହ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ କିଛି ଯଦି ତୁ ଗୁପ୍ତ ରଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛୁ, ଯେଉଁଟାକି ଆଉ କାହା ଆଗରେ କହିହେବନି, ତେବେ ନ କହ । ହେଲେ ଯାହା କହିପାରିବୁ କହ ।”

ରୂପା ଆମେରିକାରେ ଜନ୍ମିତ ଝିଅ । ସିଏ ସବୁ ଓଗାଳି ପକେଇଲା । “ସିଏ ମତେ ସବୁବେଳେ ତୁଚ୍ଛ କରି କହୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏମିତି ଅଶ୍ରାବ୍ୟ ଭାଷାରେ ଗାଳି ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି କି, ମୋତେ ନିଜକୁ ଅତି ନ୍ୟୁନ ଲାଗୁଛି । ସହଜରେ ତ ମୋର ମାନସିକ ଅବସାଦ ରୋଗ ଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ କୌଣସି କାମରେ ମନ ଲଗାଇ ପାରୁନଥିଲି ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଚାକିରି କରିପାରିନି କି ରୋଜଗାରକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇନି । ଏବେ ମତେ ସିଏ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ଚାକିରି କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ମୋର ଯେ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷର ଛୋଟ ପିଲାଟିଏ ଅଛି । ମୁଁ କେମିତି ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରି ଚାକିରି କରିବାରେ ମନଯୋଗ କରିପାରିବି ?”

“ହେଲେ ତୁ ତାକୁ କାହିଁକି ଘରୁ ବାହାରିଯିବାକୁ କହିଲୁ ? ଆଉ ସିଏ ବି କେମିତି ବାହାରିଗଲା ? ଘର ବି ତ ତାର ନା ।”

“ସିଏ ସେଦିନ ଏମିତି ଭାବେ ମତେ କଠୋର କଷ୍ଟରେ କହିଲେ ଯେ, ମୁଁ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ପାରିଲିନି । କହିଲି ବାହାରିଯିବାକୁ । ନହେଲେ ମୁଁ ବାହାରି ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁଟାକି ସିଏ ଚାହୁଁନଥିଲେ, କାରଣ ପିଲାଟି ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ପଡ଼ିଥାଆନ୍ତା ।”

“ତୁ ଏବେ କଣ ଚାହୁଁଛୁ ? ସାର୍ଥକର ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ଚାହୁଁଛୁ ନା ନାହିଁ ?”

“ନା, ମୁଁ ଏବେ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁନି । ମୋର ତାଙ୍କର ସେଭଳି କଠୋର ମୁହଁ ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ, ସେ ମୁହଁକୁ ପୁନର୍ବାର ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମନ କହୁନି । ବିଶେଷ କରି ସିଏ ମୋ ମା’ ସହିତ ରୁକ୍ଷ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛନ୍ତି ।”

“ସାର୍ଥକ ତ ସେମିତି ନୁହେଁ । ସମସ୍ତ ଗୁରୁଜନ ମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ସିଏ ସବୁବେଳେ ସମ୍ମାନଜନକ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଥାଏ । ତୋ ମା’ଙ୍କୁ ପୁଣି କଣ କହିଲା ସେ ?”

“ମୋ ମା’ଙ୍କୁ କହିଲା ଯେ ସିଏ ମତେ ଭଲ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଇନାହାନ୍ତି । ମତେ ରାଣୀ କରି ରଖିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚାକର ଭଳି ସବୁ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ବତାଉଛନ୍ତି । ସିଏ ଜଣେ ଭଲ ମା’ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ନହେଲେ ଝିଅକୁ ସଂସ୍କାର ଦେଇ ବଢେଇଥାଆନ୍ତେ, ରୋଷେଇବାସ, ଘରକରଣା ଶିଖେଇଥାଆନ୍ତେ । ଏଇଟା ହେଲା ସାରାଂଶ । ତାପରେ ସିଏ ଏମିତି କଠୋର ଭାବେ କହୁଥିଲେ ନା, ସେ ସମୟର ମୁହଁ ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ ଘୃଣା ଆସୁଛି ।”

ଏବେ ଛନ୍ଦା ସାର୍ଥକକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କଲା । ସାର୍ଥକ ସେଇ ଏକା କଥା କହିଲା ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାବେ । “ରୂପା ଘର କାମ କିଛି କରୁନି । ଘରକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀ ଆସିଲେ ଚିତିଚିତି ହେଉଛି । ପୁଅ ଆଳରେ ନିଜ ମନ ଇଚ୍ଛା କାମ କରୁଛି । ମଲ୍ରେ ବୁଲୁଛି, ବାହାରେ ଖାଉଛି । ଘର ଅସନା ଥିଲେ ସଫା କରୁନି, ହେଲେ ଅସନା କରିବାରେ ହେଲା କରୁନି । ମୁଁ କିଛି କହିଲେ, ମତେ କହୁଛି ଯେ ମୋର ଭାରତୀୟ ମେଣ୍ଟାଲିଟି । ଆଉ ତା’ ମା’ ବି ତାକୁ କିଛି କହୁନାହାନ୍ତି ନା କଣ ସିଏ ସେମିତି ଗେହ୍ଲାରେ ବଢ଼ିଛି । ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ହେଲା ଗେହ୍ଲା ଆଉ ମୁଁ ହେଲି ଚାକର ।”

“ରୂପା ତ ସେମିତି ମୂଳରୁ ଥିଲା ଓ ତୁ ସହୁଥିଲୁ । ଏବେ ଅଧିକ କଣ ହେଇଗଲା ?”

“ଏବେ ସିଏ ବେଶି ଅଳସୁଆ ହେଉଛି ଓ ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ରୁକ୍ଷ ହେଉଛି । ତାପରେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବି ଅଧିକ କରୁଛି । ପଢ଼ାପଢ଼ି କରି ଚାକିରି କରି ରୋଜଗାର କରିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା କରୁନି । ହେଲେ କଣ ସବୁ ଗପ ବହି ପଢ଼ି ମତେ ଆସି ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଉଛି ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ସର୍ବଜ୍ଞାନୀ ମଣିଷ । ଆଉ ମୁଁ କିଛି କହିଲେ, ମତେ କହୁଛି, ଏଇଟା ମୋର ଭାରତୀୟ ପୁରୁଷ ପ୍ରଧାନ ମାନସିକତା ବୋଲି ।”

ଛନ୍ଦା ପଚାରିଲା, “ଏହାର ସମାଧାନ କଣ ହୋଇପାରିବ ?”

“ସିଏ ନିଜ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝିବ ଓ ଭୁଲ୍ ମାରିବ । ତାପରେ ଦେଖାଯିବ ।”

“ଯଦି ସିଏ ତାହା ନକରେ ?”

“ତେବେ ମୁଁ ମୋର ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ବାହା ହେବି । ଏତେଦିନ ତାର ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ସହିଲି । ଆଉ ସହିପାରିବିନି ।”

ଛନ୍ଦାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୋଳମାଳ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏଇଟା ଗୋଟିଏ ଘର କାମ କରିବାକୁ ନେଇ ସମସ୍ୟା । କିଛି ନିଶା ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ଘଟଣା ନୁହେଁ, କି ପରକାୟା ପ୍ରୀତିର ଘଟଣା ନୁହେଁ । ତେବେ ଏମିତି କିଛି ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଛି, ଯେଉଁଟା ନ ଘଟିବାର ଥିଲା ।

ଛନ୍ଦାର ସ୍ୱସ୍ଥ ମନେ ଅଛି, ଆକାଶ ରାଗିକରି କେମିତି ବାଜେ ଭାଷା କହିବା ଆରମ୍ଭକରନ୍ତି । ବେଳେବେଳେ ହାତ ଉଠାଇବାକୁ ବି ଭୁଲନ୍ତିନି । ଯଦିଓ ସାର୍ଥକ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ପାଢ଼ିର ପିଲା । ତେବେ ସିଏ ବୋଧହୁଏ ସେମିତି କିଛି ଆଘାତ ଦେବା ଭଳି ଭାଷା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । ନହେଲେ ରୂପା ସାର୍ଥକର ଫେରିବାକୁ ନେଇ ଏତେ ଡରନ୍ତା କାହିଁକି ?

ଅନେକ ପୁଅ ସେମିତି ଭୁଲ୍ କରନ୍ତି । ଟିକେଟିକେ କଥାରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଉପରକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହାତ ଉଠିଯାଏ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ସାମାଜିକ କି ଆନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକ ମେଳରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚାକର ଭଳି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତି ଯାହାଦ୍ୱାରା କି ତାଙ୍କ ପୁରୁଷ ପଣିଆର ମାନ ରହିବ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣିବେ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି କେତେ ଅନୁଗତ । ସେ ପୁଅ ମାନେ ହୃଦୟରେ ଭଲ ହୋଇଥାଇ ପାରନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଯେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣକର ହୃଦୟକୁ ଖୁନ୍‌ଭିନ୍ କରିଦିଏ, ସେକଥା ବିଚାରିପାରନ୍ତିନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ଛନ୍ଦା ଯାହା ଜାଣିଛି, ଆଉ ଜଣକ ସହିତ ସଂସାର କରି ରହିବାକୁ ହେଲେ କିଛିଟା ତ ସହିଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । କିଛି ପାଇବାକୁ ହେଲେ କିଛି ଦେଇଦେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସେଇ ଦେଇଦେବାଟା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ କଷ୍ଟ ଲାଗେ । ହେଲେ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରଖିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ସେ କଷ୍ଟ ସହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ନହେଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକାଏକା ରହିବେ । କାହା ସହିତ କାହାର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରହିବ ନାହିଁ । ଯେ କେଉଁ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ରହିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ତ ଆଉ ଜଣକର ରୁଚିକୁ ସହିନେବା ଦରକାର ପଡ଼ିବ ।

ଏଇକଥା ଛନ୍ଦା ଉଭୟ ରୂପା ଓ ସାର୍ଥକଙ୍କୁ କହିଲା । “ବାହାଘର ସମୟରେ ଯେଉଁ ସାତଫେରା ନେଇଥିଲ, ସାତବଚନ ଦେଇଥିଲ, ସେଇଟା କଣ ଦ୍ରାମା ଥିଲା ? କେବଳ ଦର୍ଶକ ଓ ପରିବାର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ? ତାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ କଣ ତମେ ବୁଝିନଥିଲ ? ଈଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ ସାକ୍ଷୀ କରି, ଅଗ୍ନିଙ୍କୁ ସାକ୍ଷୀ କରି ପରସ୍ପର ପରସ୍ପରର ସର୍ବଦା ସାଥୀ ହୋଇ ରହିବ ବୋଲି ଯେଉଁ ଅଙ୍ଗୀକାର କରିଥିଲ, ତାର ମାନେ କଣ କିଛି ନୁହେଁ ? ତାହେଲେ ସେସବୁ ସ୍ମରଣ କରି ପରସ୍ପର ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରି ନିଜନିଜର ପସନ୍ଦ, ଅପସନ୍ଦ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରୁନ କାହିଁକି ? ଯେଉଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଏତେ ସ୍ନେହ କରି ପରିବାର ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଯାଇ ଶେଷରେ ଜୀବନସାଥୀ କରିବାକୁ ଆଗେଇଆସିଥିଲ, ସେ ସାଥୀ ଆଜି ଅଦରକାରୀ ହୋଇଗଲା ? କାହିଁକି ?”

ସାର୍ଥକ ତ ଯୁକ୍ତି କରିଥିଲା, “ଆପଣ ଯେମିତି କଥା କହୁଛନ୍ତି ନା ମାଉସୀ, ସେଇଟା ତାତ୍ତ୍ୱିକ; ବାସ୍ତବିକ ହୋଇପାରିବନି । ଏଇଟା ଯଦି ବାସ୍ତବିକ ହୋଇଥାଆନ୍ତା ତ ତେବେ ଭାରତରେ ପୁଣି ଏତେ ଛାତ୍ରପତ୍ର ହେଉଛି କେମିତି ? ଆଉ ଛାତ୍ରପତ୍ର ନହେଲେ ବି ଅଧୀକାଂଶ ଘରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ପାଲା, ଝଗଡ଼ା ଚାଲିଛି । ତାପରେ ଜଣେ ଯଦି ଏମିତି ଅମଣିଷ ହୁଏ, ତାକୁ କେତେ ସହିବ ମଣିଷ ? ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭଳି ମୁଁ ବି ଜୀବନରେ ଟିକେ ଖୁସି ଚାହେଁ । ଆଉ ଏ ରୂପା ସହିତ ସେ ଖୁସିର ପରିକଳ୍ପନା କରିବା ବି ବୃଥା । ଏତେଦିନ ସହିଲି । ଏବେ ଆଉ ସହିହେଉନି । ଖାଲି ସବୁବେଳେ ମତେ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ମେଣ୍ଟାଲିଟି କହି ତୁଚ୍ଛ କରୁଛି ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ଆମେରିକାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇ ବିରାଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ହୋଇଯାଇଛି, ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଭାରତରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇ ତୁଚ୍ଛ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ତା’ ସହିତ ସବୁବେଳେ ମତେ ଡିଭର୍ସ କରିବାର ଧମକ ଦେଉଛି ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ମତେ ପୋଷୁଛି । ଡିଭର୍ସ କଲେ ମୁଁ ଭିକ ମାଗିବି । ଏମିତି ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଆପଣ କେମିତି ସହିବେ ?”

ରୂପା ବି ଯୁକ୍ତି କରିଥିଲା, “ମାଉସୀ, ଏ ଯେଉଁ ସାତଫେରା ବେଳେ ଶପଥ କରିଥିଲେ, ସେଥିରୁ କିଛି ତ ରଖିନାହାନ୍ତି ସିଏ । ଏବେ ଏ ଛୋଟପିଲାକୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କୁ ରୋଷେଇକରି ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେବି, ଏମିତି କଥା ଭାବିବା କଣ ତାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷେ ଉଚିତ୍ ? ନିଜ ପରିବାରର ଖୁସି, ସୁରକ୍ଷା ନ ଚାହିଁ, ସାଙ୍ଗମେଳ, ହୋହଲ୍ଲା କରିବାରେ ସିଏ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ସେସବୁରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଏନି । ମତେ ଲୋକଗହଳି ଭଲଲାଗେନି । ଅଳ୍ପ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅତି ଭଲରେ ମିଳାମିଶା ମତେ ପସନ୍ଦ, ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ଦରକାର ରହନ୍ତି । ଆଉ ସବୁବେଳେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଯେମିତି ମୁଁ ଏକ ଛୋଟ ପିଲା, କିଛି ଜାଣେନି, କିଛି ବୁଝେନି । ସିଏ ମୋର ଗୁରୁଜନ ।”

ଛନ୍ଦା ଆଉ କାହା ସହିତ ଯୁକ୍ତି କଲାନି । ଉଭୟଙ୍କୁ ସେଇ ଏକା କଥା କହି ନୀରବ ରହିଗଲା । “ତମ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ସୁସମ୍ପର୍କ କେବଳ ତୁମେ ଦୁହେଁ ହିଁ ନିଜ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଦ୍ଵାରା ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିପାରିବ । କୌଣସି ତୃତୀୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ସେଠି କିଛି କରିପାରିବନି । ଏଣୁ ନିଜନିଜ ଭିତରେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହୁଅ, ପରସ୍ପରର ପସନ୍ଦ ନାପସନ୍ଦକୁ ବୁଝ, ପରସ୍ପରର ରୁଚି, ଅରୁଚିକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦିଅ, ଆଉ ସର୍ବୋପରି ନିଜ ପିଲାଟି ବିଷୟରେ ଭାବ । ସ୍ଵାମୀ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝାମଣା ହୁଏ, ତେବେ ସେ ସମାଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଜଣେ କିଏ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଜୟଲାଭ କରିବ ଓ ଆଉ ଜଣେ ସମର୍ପଣ କରିଦେବ, ସେମିତି କଥା ନୁହେଁ, ବରଂ ଉଭୟଙ୍କୁ ପରସ୍ପରର ନିକଟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହେବାପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଜଣେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣକୁ ବୁଝିବା ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ ।”

ଏ ଭିତରେ ରୂପା କି ସାର୍ଥକ କେହି ଆଉ ଛନ୍ଦା ସହିତ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରିନଥିଲେ । ଛନ୍ଦା ବି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରିନଥିଲା । କାରଣ, ବାହାର ହସ୍ତକ୍ଷେପ ଯଦି ବଢିବ, ତେବେ ସେଇଟା ଅଲଗା ମୋଡ଼ ନେଇପାରେ । ପିଲାଟା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ମିଳିମିଶି ରହିବା ଦରକାର ବୋଲି ସେମାନେ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଏ ଭିତରେ ମାସଟିଏ ବିତିଗଲାଣି ।

ଚାରୁ ଠାରୁ ଛନ୍ଦା ଶୁଣିଥିଲା କି ସାର୍ଥକ ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଛି । ସାର୍ଥକର ଶାଶୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏକା ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଭଲ କରୁକରୁ ଯଦି ଭେଲ ହେବ, ତେବେ ସିଏ ଆଉ ଏ ବୟସରେ କଣ ପାଇଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଝିରେ ପଶିବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବେ ? ଏ ବୟସରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ବରଂ ତାଙ୍କ ମନସ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ଵ ବୁଝିବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରନ୍ତେ, ତାଙ୍କ ସେବାଯତ୍ନ କରନ୍ତେ । ହେଲେ ଆଜିକାଲି ଓଲଟା ପିଲାଙ୍କର ସେବାଯତ୍ନ ଦରକାର । ଯୁବା ବୟସରେ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବେ, ପରିଣତ ବୟସରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପିଲାଟିଏ ପାଇଁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ହେବ, ନହେଲେ ଆଣି କୁକୁର ପାଳିବେ, କଣନା ଇମୋସନାଲ୍ ସପୋର୍ଟ ଦରକାର । ବାପା, ମା କିଛି ଭଲ ପାଇଁ କହିଲେ, ସେଇଟା ସେମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାବେ ଭାବିବେ । ସବୁଠୁ ଭଲ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବାଟରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେବା କଥା ।

ଛନ୍ଦା ମନେମନେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲା, “ଏ ସାର୍ଥକ ଓ ରୂପାଙ୍କୁ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ବୁଝିବାର ଚେତନା ଦିଅ ପ୍ରଭୁ । ଏ ସଂସାରଟିକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯିବାରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କର ଓ ସର୍ବଦା ସଂଯୁକ୍ତ କରି ରଖ ।”



ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ମହକ



ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଲତା ରଥ, ମିଟିଗାନ୍.

“କୁଆଡେ ଗଲା? ଦେଖ ଆଜି ମୋତେ କ’ଣ ମିଳିଲା ! “... ଘରେ ପଶୁ ପଶୁ ତିନି ଚାରିଥର ଡାକ ପକେଇଲା ଅନୁପ । ଡ୍ରାୟର୍ ରୁ ଲୁଗା କଢାକୁ ଅଧାରେ ରଖି ତରବର ହେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତରୁ କେତେଟା ବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ନେଉ ନେଉ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ପଚାରିଲା , “ କ’ଣ ମିଳିଲା ମ ! ଏମିତି

ହଲା ପକେଇଛ । “

“ ଆରେ ତୁମେ ଯାହାକୁ ଗଲା ମାସେ ହେଲାଣି ଝୁରୁଛ !”

ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ ଅନୁପ ।

“ମୁଁ ଝୁରୁଛି !” ...କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ଭାବୁଥିଲା କ’ଣ ହେଇଥିବ ।

ଅନୁପ କହିଲେ “ ଏତେ ଭାବୁଛ କ’ଣ ମ ... ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା... ମାସେ ହେଲାଣି ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ତୁମକୁ ବାଇ କରିଛି ପରା ଯେ ବସେଇ ଉଠେଇ ଦେଉନ “ ।

ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହିଲା ଭିତରେ ଦିନକୁ ତିନିଥର ଅଦା ଚାହା ପିଇବା ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର ବିଶେଷ କରି ବର୍ଷାକି ଅଣ୍ଟା ପାଗରେ । ପାଣି ଯେତେ ସମୟ ଗରମ ହୁଏ , ସେତିକି ସମୟ ସେ ଅଦା କୁ ଛେତେ । ଚାହା ଫୁଟିଲାବେଳେ ଚାହା , କ୍ଷୀର ଆଉ ଅଦାର ମିଶ୍ରିତ ବାମ୍ପାରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସାରା ଘର ମହକିଯାଏ , କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର ମନ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ନାଚି ଉଠେ । ସେ ପିଇବାରେ ଯେତିକି ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଏ , ପିଏଇବାରେ ତା’ରୁ ବେଶୀ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଏ । ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ତା’ ଚାହାର ଭାରି ଆଦର । ପାର୍ଟି ମାନଙ୍କରେ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ସ୍ୱେଷିଆଲ୍ ଟି ପାଇଁ ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ବରାଦ ଆସେ ।

ସେଦିନ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୀଣା ଘରେ ଅଦା ଚାହା ପିଇ ଆସିଲା ପରଠୁ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀକୁ ଆଉ ତା ନିଜ ଅଦା ଚାହା ଜମା ଭଲ ଲାଗୁନି । ବୀଣା କହୁଥିଲା ତା ଘର ପାଖ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରୁ ସେ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ଆଣୁଛି ଆଜିକାଲି, ପୁରା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଅଦାର ସ୍ବାଦ ! ତା କହିବା ଅନୁସାରେ ସତରେ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟି ମାଁର ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ଭରି ରହିଛି । ଟିକେ ଅଧିକା ଦାମ୍ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମେରିକା ରେ ଥାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଚାହା ଭଲ ଚାହାର ସ୍ବାଦର ମଜାନେବା ର ବି ଗୋଟେ ଅଲଗା ମଜା ଅଛି ।

ଆମେରିକାରେ ଏତେଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ଦିନ ରହିବା ଭିତରେ ଅଦାକୁ ନେଇ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର ଏ ପ୍ରଥମ ଅନୁଭବ, ଦେଶୀ ବିଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ପ୍ରକାର ଭେଦକୁ ନେଇ ! ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ଆସିଲାବେଳେ ଅଦାର ବୃହତ ଆକାର ଦେଖି ଟିକେ ବିସ୍ମିତ ହେଇଥିଲା ହେଲେ ସ୍ବାଦରେ ସେମିତି କିଛି ଫରକ ଲାଗିନଥିଲା ଅନ୍ୟ ପରିବା ମାନଙ୍କ ପରି । ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଏ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ସ୍ବାଦ ବିଷୟରେ ଏତେ

ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଶୁଣି ତା' ମନରେ କୌତୁହଳ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କଲା । ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାତି କେମିତି ଦେଖାଯାଏ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ବୀଣାକୁ ଦେଖେଇବାକୁ କହିଲା । ବୀଣା ଅତି ଆଗ୍ରହରେ ରେଫ୍ରିଜରେଟର୍ ରୁ କାଢି ଦେଖେଇଲା । ଦେଖିବା ବେଳକୁ ସତରେ ବି ବହୁତ ପୁରୁଣା ଟିଫ୍ଟାପରି ଲାଗିଲା । ଏଠିକା ଅଦା ପରି ପୁରୁକା ପୁରୁକା ହେଇ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ନୁହେଁ । ବରଂ ଆକାରରେ ଛୋଟ ଆଉ ଆଖିକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ସତରେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଦେଖୁଥିବା ଅଦା ପରି ଦିଶୁଥିଲା । ବୀଣା ଅଦା ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞ ପରି ଚିହ୍ନଟ ଦେଉଥିଲା ... ଛେଟିଲେ ଏଠିକା ଅଦା ପରି ଏତେ ଶୀରା ବାହାରେନି ବରଂ ବହୁତ ରସ ବାହାରେ । ତାକୁ ସେଦିନ ଚାହାର ସ୍ବାଦରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେମିତି ବିଶେଷ ଫରକ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା । ମାତ୍ର ବୀଣାର କଥା କହିବାର ଚାତୁରୀ ଆଉ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ସେଦିନ ଚାହାର ଏତେ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କଲ୍ୟାଣୀକୁ ଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବେଶ୍ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିଥିଲା । କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ଦେଶୀଅଦାର ମାୟାରେ ପତି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଘରେ ଅଦା ଚାରେ ସେଇ ସ୍ବାଦ ର ଅଭାବ ଅନୁଭବ କଲା ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ । ବିଶେଷତଃ ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା ହେବାବାଳେ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା କଥା ଆଲୋଚନାକୁ ଆଣନ୍ତି ଆଉ ପିଉଥିବା ଚା' ର ସ୍ବାଦକୁ ତା ଆଗେ ବଖାଣି ବସନ୍ତି , କେହି କେହି କୁହନ୍ତି ତରକାରୀ ପତ୍ରର ବାସ୍ନା ବି ବଦଳି ଯାଉଛି । ଅନୁପ ତା' ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଶୁଣି ହସନ୍ତି ଆଉ କୁହନ୍ତି , “ତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି ଯୋଉ ଅଦାକୁ ନେଇ ତୁମ ସଂସାର ଚାଲୁଥିଲା ତାକୁ ଏତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଭୁଲିଗଲ ” । କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଏ , “ ଆରେ ସେଥିରେ ମାଟି ମାଁ'ର ବାସ୍ନା ଅଛି ସତରେ ବୋଧେ, ଯାହା ସହିତ କଥାହୁଅ ସେଇ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ...ବୀଣା କହିଲା ପରା...” ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା “ । କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ଅନୁପ କ୍ରୋଗର୍ ରୁ ବୀଣା ଘରେ ଦେଖୁଥିବା ଅଦା ଭଳି ଅଦା ଆଣି ଆସିଥିଲେ । କହିଲେ, “ ମୁଁ ଏମିତି ଅର୍ଗାନିକ୍ ଅଦା ଆଗରୁ କ୍ରୋଗର୍ ରେ କେବେ ଦେଖି ନଥିଲି , କ୍ରୋଗର୍ ବାଲାଙ୍କୁ ବି ଜଣା ପଡିଗଲାଣି ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ଚାହିଦା ବୋଧେ ... ଦେଖିଲ ଇଏ ତୁମ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା କି ନୁହଁ , ସାଧାରଣ ଅଦାଠୁ ଟିକେ ଦାମ୍ ବେଶୀ “ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଅଦାକୁ ଦେଖି ବୀଣା ଖୁସି ହେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ କ୍ରୋଗର୍ ରୁ ଆସିଛି ଜାଣିଲା ପରେ ତା ମନଟା ପାଣିଟିଆ ହେଇଗଲା । କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ କହିଲା , ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ଭଳି ଦିଶୁନି କି ବାସୁନି । ସମସ୍ତେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ସେଇଟା ଖାଲି ଇଣ୍ଡିୟନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରେ ମିଳେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା' ଘରପାଖ ଇଣ୍ଡିୟନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରେ ସେ ଅଦା ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମିଳୁ ନଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାକୁ ମନେ ମନେ ଝୁରି ହେଉଥିଲା କେବଳ । ପୁରୁଣା ଅଦାର ସ୍ବାଦ, ନା ଚାହାରେ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା , ନା ତରକାରୀ ପତ୍ର ରେ । ଆଜି ଅନୁପ ବୀଣା ଘର ଆଡେ ଯାଇଥିଲେ କିଛି କାମରେ , କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ଦୁଃଖକୁ ସହି ନପାରି ନେଇ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ବୋଧେ । ମୁହଁରେ ହସ ଫୁଟି ଉଠିଲା କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର । ଅନୁପ ସେମିତି , ତାକୁ ଚକିତ କରି ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ସବୁବେଳେ । ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରୁ ଆସିଥିବା ବାକି ସବୁ ଜିନିଷ ଯଥା ଦେଶୀ ଚା, ଦେଶୀ ବାରମଜା, ଦେଶୀ ବିସ୍କୁଇଟ୍ , ଦେଶୀ ଗୁଡ , ଦେଶୀ ଘିଅ, ଦେଶୀ ମସଲା, ଦେଶୀ ପରିବା ରେ ଭରପୂର ବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ଗୁଡିକ ଭିତରୁ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାକୁ ଖୋଜି ପକେଇଲା ସେ ତରବର ହେଇ । ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ଦିନରୁ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରୁ ଜିନିଷ ଆଣି ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ରେ ରେ ସାଇତି ରଖିବାବେଳେ ଗୋଟେ ନିଆରା ଅନୁଭବ ହୁଏ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର । ଅନେକ ପୁରୁଣା ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଚିଯାଏ । ଭାବପ୍ରବଣ ହୁଏ । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରେ ଘେରାଏ ବୁଲି ଆସିଲେ ମନଟା ଖୁସି ହେଇ ଯାଏ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେମାନେ ଘଷା ଘଷା ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍ କରୁବାକୁ ପଡୁଥିଲା ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର କୁ ଯିବାକୁ .. ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ସମୟ ବଦଳି ଗଲାଣି , ଭାରତୀୟଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବଢିବା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଇଣ୍ଡିୟନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ର ସଂଖ୍ୟାବି ବଢି ଚାଲିଛି , ତା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ତା ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀତା ବି । ସବୁଠି ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ଦେଶୀ ଜିନିଷ , ସାରା ଭାରତରୁ ,ବାଙ୍ଗୁଦେଶରୁ, ପାକିସ୍ତାନରୁ , ପ୍ରାକ୍ ସାଧୀନତା ସମଗ୍ର ଭାରତ ବର୍ଷରୁ । ଯାହା ସବୁ ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଆଗରୁ ଦେଖି ନଥିଲା କି ଶୁଣି ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନୁପ କେବଳ ‘ମେଡ୍ ଇନ୍ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ’ ଜିନିଷ ଆଣନ୍ତି, ଆଣିବାକୁ କୁହନ୍ତି । କୁହନ୍ତି ,ଏଇତ ଗୋଟେ ଜାଗା ଦେଶର

ସ୍ବାଦ, ସ୍ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଉ ବାସ୍ନାକୁ ମନେ ପକେଇ ଦିଏ । କେବେ କେବେ ଦାମ୍ ଅଧିକା ପାଇଁ ଟିକେ ଚିଡି ଲାଗିଲେବି ଇଣ୍ଡିୟାନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରୁ ଦେଶୀ ଜିନିଷ କିଣିବା ଦୁହଁଙ୍କର ସଭକ ।

“ଆଜି କ’ଣ ପୁରା ଇଣ୍ଡିୟାନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର କୁ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ଆସିଛ ?” କହୁ କହୁ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର ହାତରେ ପଡିଗଲା ଛୋଟ ମୁଣିଟି , ଆକାରରେ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ପରି ଦିଶୁଥିଲା । ଅନୁପ କହିଲେ , “ ହୋଉ ଏ ବର୍ଷା ପାଗରେ ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ଚାହା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଛେଚା ଅଦାର ଗରମ ଗରମ ପକ୍କୁଡିର ବି ଆୟୋଜନ ହେଉ ଶୀଘ୍ର, ସାଙ୍ଗ ହେଇ ଚାହା ପିଇବା” ।

ଜରିମୁଣିରୁ ଅଦାଗୁଡା ବାହାର କରି ହାତରେ ଧରି ଦେଶୀ ଶବ୍ଦଟିକୁ ଅନୁଭବ କଲା କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ । ଦେଶ !!! ମାଁ ମାଟିର ବାସ୍ନା ମନ ଖୋଜିଲା , ମାଁର ହାଣ୍ଡିଶାଳର ନାଲି ଆଉ ଶାଗୁଆ ରଙ୍ଗର ବେତ ଟୋକେଇରେ ଅଦା ମାନେ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଟିଗଲେ ...ପରିବାର ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀଙ୍କ ସହ ବସି ଚାହା ପିଉଥିବା ବେଳର ହସଖୁସିର ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ହୃଦୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳିତ ହେଲା । ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ପରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଏକୁଟିଆ ବସି ତା ପିଇବାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁ ନଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଜୀବନରେ କିଏ ବା ସାଥୀ ମିଳିବ ତାକୁ, ବାହାରେ ଯୁଆଡେ ଗଲେ କଫିର ରାଜତ୍ବ ତେଣୁ ତା ପ୍ରତି ଦୂର୍ବଳତା ଯୋଗୁ ତା’କୁ ଏକା ଏକା ତା ପିଇ ଖୁସି ହେବାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିଥିଲା । ଲୁହ ଜକେଇ ଆସିଲା ଆଖି କୋଣରେ । ସେ ଲୁହ ଥିଲା ଦୁଃଖ ଆଉ ସୁଖର ମିଶ୍ରିତ ଅନୁଭବ । ଯାହା ହେଉ ଏତେ ଦୂରରେ ଥାଇ ବି ମାଟି ମାଁର ସ୍ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଉ ମହକ ଆଜି ତା ପାଖେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପାରିଛି । ଅନୁପ ତା’ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି ଥଟ୍ଟା କଲେ , “ତୁମ ଗାଁ ବାଡିରୁ ଖୋଳା ହେଇ ଆସିଛି ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଛ କି? ” । କଲ୍ୟାଣୀର ନଜର ସ୍ବତଃ ପଳେଇଲା ପ୍ରତିଟି ଅଦା ଉପରେ ଲାଗିଥିବା ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ନୀଳ ରଙ୍ଗର ସ୍କିକର୍ ଗୁଡିକ ଉପରକୁ ।

ଚମକି ପଡିଲା ସେ ... ପ୍ରତକ୍ ଅଫ୍ ଇକୁଏଡର୍ ।

ତା ମୁହଁର ବଦଳି ଯାଉଥିବା ରଙ୍ଗକୁ ଦେଖି ଅନୁପ ପଚାରିଲେ , “କ’ଣ ହେଲା “?

ଇ...ମା ମୁଁ ଭାବିଥିଲି ...ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ...ଆମ ଭାରତରୁ ଆସିଛି ।

ଅନୁପ ହା ହା ହେଇ ହସି ଉଠିଲେ , କହିଲେ ... ହଁ ବୀଣା କହିଛି ଯେତେବେଳେ , ଇଣ୍ଡିୟାନ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋର ରେ ମିଳୁଛି ଯେତେବେଳେ , ଏଇ ଇକୁଏଡରିଆ ଅଦା ଦେଶୀ ଅଦା ହେଇଯାଉ , ଯେମିତି ପୃଥିବୀର ଯେଉଁ ଦେଶରେ ରହିଲେ ବି ଭାରତୀୟଙ୍କ ପରି ଦେଖା ଯାଉଥିବା ସବୁ ମଣିଷଙ୍କୁ ଭାରତୀୟ ଭାବି ତୁମେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟରେ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ବର ହାତ ବଢେଇ ଦିଅ , ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହଲା ପରେବି ବୁଝିଲନି

ଏ ଦେଶର ବିଚିତ୍ରତା ? ହୋଉ ଆଉ ଡେରି କରନି ଏ ନକଲି ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ମଜା ନିଆଯାଉ ... ତୁମ ହାତ ତିଆରି ପକ୍କୁଡିରେ ଆଉ ଚାହା ରେ ।”

ଚୋପା ଛେଲି ଅଦା କୁଟୁ କୁଟୁ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ତଥାପି ଦେଶୀ ଶବ୍ଦଟିର ମାୟା ଭିତରୁ ବାହାରି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲା, ବିଦେଶରେ ଏତେ ଦିନ ପରେବି ଏଇ ଦେଶୀ ଶବ୍ଦର ମାଦକତା କେତେ ନିଆରା ସତରେ !

ଦେଶୀ ଅଦାର ମହକ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ସାରା ଘରେ ଖେଳି ଯାଉଥିଲା ।



English Stories



Facing the Unknown



Prisha Patra , New Jersey, 6th grade

I am Prisha and I love to write and share fantasy stories. I believe there is magic in the world and a positive power within us, only if we believe in it. Read on to find out.

I am Maria Cleargen, and I just went through a scary and difficult adventure along with my friends Tasha, Ashley, Sofie, and Sarah. So, if you aren't a person that likes scary stuff, BEWARE, this story may scare you. And it all started like this.

"Hey friends!" I said. "Do you want to look for treasure and riches in a cave?"

"Treasure?" Sofie said with awe.

"How do we get treasure, Maria?" Tasha asked.

"We are going to dig!"

Of course, my friends thought I was crazy, but I led them to the nearest cave. I gave them all a sword and a pickaxe so we can dig easier. A few feet into the cave, we saw a skeleton that was alive!

"Aaah!" Tasha screamed.

"Friends, calm down. We have a sword. We five can defeat him!" I said.

I bravely went and slayed the skeleton. "It's not that hard!"

Soon, we found some coal, and began mining it. We put it in our bags. Then, we wanted to find diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and gold, so we dug deeper. Out of nowhere, a horde of zombies came and started attacking us. Though we were afraid, we still beat them. As we went deeper and more underground, a pale-white creature, with its mouth open, showed up. It was huge. It was a ghost! We tried to make it go away, but to no avail. The ghost didn't do anything, so we decided to move on. After some time, I saw something blue and something green. I called my friends and we started digging around it.

"It's diamonds and emeralds. We're rich!" Ashley exclaimed.

We looked around and found yet more treasures. We decided to head to the surface, and suddenly, a wave of water went over us. For a second, I thought Skylar had pranked us and poured water on us, but no.

Skylar is a girl from our school, and she is the meanest. She's a very popular girl and her friends always come and help her tease my friends and I. If that water was really poured by her, I would be furious.

But yet again, another surge of water came over all of us.

"What is going on?" Sarah asked, bemused.

Suddenly, we heard a streak of lightning and heard a heavy downpour of rain, but there was so much water we could not climb up. So, we pushed some large rocks together and tried to block the raging water. It was really dark in the cave, so we tried looking for sticks and actually found a few decent-sized sticks. After 5 minutes we had a fire going and we all could see. To kill some time, we all started talking about school. Then we got really hungry and thirsty and so we took one sip of water and two bites out of our granola bars that we brought.

"Why did it suddenly start raining? I checked the weather today and it showed a full, nice, sunny day," Tasha said, vexed.

"I think that this might be a flood!" Sarah complained. "Isn't there anyone who can help?"

"I think we have to wait for a few days." I replied.

"What?!" Sofie and Sarah groaned.

This was not a good thing and we might have been in trouble. Plus, there wasn't much oxygen inside the cave. Soon, we heard the rain stop and pushed one of the rocks a little bit and saw the ghost still there and a pitch-black cave. There was some water still in the cave, and we moved the rocks and a gush of water drenched us. We were lost in the cave, though and didn't know a way out. We yelled for help, hoping someone was there. But nothing happened. We hoped for the best, and tried not to panic. We ate as little as we could, to save it for later.

Five days passed, and we still didn't get any help. We were thinking about how our parents would be panicking, and seeing missing signs around the neighborhood of all five of us. Later, we all began counting how many diamonds and emeralds we found and decided we were very lucky to find them. A few minutes later of chatting, Ashley exclaimed,

"We are girls and we've got girl power!"

"Yeah!"

"Woohoo!"

Two days passed and we were tired, feverish, and sick because we ran out of food and water. Suddenly, out of the five of us something drifted in the air. Over Tasha was ice, over Ashley was wind, over Sofie, was earth, over Sarah was water, and over me, was magic and humanity together. Then, the ghost drifted over us and opened its mouth and three words came out: *The Five Spirits*.

"The Five Spirits?" Sarah questioned. "Do we have great power or are we spirits?"

"I don't know, but maybe we can use this to get out of here!" I chimed.

"I'll use my firepower for light!"

"And I'll use my magic to give us a path!"

We thanked the ghost and set off to get out of the cave. I could not believe that we survived eight days in that cave.



Horror Following Me



Debanshi Dey, Naperville IL.9th Grade.

Francine hears footsteps coming behind her, closer and closer every second. When she turns around, she looks into Nicole's face. Nicole and Francine were both nurses and work colleagues, and had been working together at the hospital, Fairbanks Medical Clinic. The two of them had around the same years of work experience and became close friends. The two of them decided to volunteer to work the night shift today to look over the patients, as well as to organize the hospital files.

Francine and Nicole were both working on their own when Francine received a notification on her computer saying that the patient in Room A13 was calling her.

She told Nicole where she was heading and made her way to the patient's room.

As soon as she entered the darkroom, the door made a loud creaking sound, and as her heels touched the floor the whole room filled with echoes.

Looking around the room, she saw that the furniture was all out of place. The bed had been slanted at an angle, the items on the bedside table were on the floor, and the chair near the T.V. was on the ground. Then she faced the patient, a woman who looked around fifty years old. She sat on the bed with a frightened expression on her face and hugged her knees and swayed from side to side.

Francine fixed the furniture and pulled a chair close to the bed to sit and spoke to the patient.

"What happened? Why do you look so scared?" Francine questioned in a calm voice.

The patient responded with fear in her voice, "I was feeling pretty drowsy, so I had fallen asleep. But, then some noises woke me up, and that's when I saw a woman dressed up as a nurse, in the same uniform as you. Her long black hair covered most of her face, and she had red glowing eyes." The patient shook in fear as she described to Francine.

Francine looked around the room and saw nothing.

"But there's no one here and there's no other nurse in the hospital except for me and one other who was with me the whole time. Maybe you are getting hallucinations. It is a really common side effect with the medication you take."

The patient shot Francine an angry look and exclaimed, "I know what I saw, ok. She was there right in front of my eyes. I swear I saw her!"

Francine took a big gulp and rubbed her sweaty palms together. She wondered if what this patient was saying could be true. Could there be someone other than her and Nicole in the hospital?

Unsure of how to respond, Francine left the patient by saying, "Well, call me again if you see the person come. I'll come immediately." And with that response, she left the horrified patient in the room alone and headed back to where Nicole was.

When she got back, she saw that Nicole had been working on sorting out the files. She went to the desk and started doing the same.

They continued working, and after an hour or two passed, Francine got a notification on her computer. When she checked it, she saw that patient in room A13 was calling her, again. Francine's stomach twisted, and her body started shivering. She did not want to go back to that room.

She shakingly got up and without telling Nicole where she was heading, she dreadfully walked back to the room taking small steps. Entering the room for a second time, the same creak from the door and the same echo gave her a shiver. The patient had been sitting on her bed whispering something under her breath, and before Francine could even say anything, the patient started to utter, "She came, she came again. She entered through that door," pointing to the door that Francine entered from, "and then came up to my bed, took out a knife from her pocket, and that's when I called you. She got scared by the sound that the buzzer made that she left the same way she came from."

At this point, Francine was shaking. She didn't want to believe the patient, but what she said sounded true, and Francine could see the terror in her eyes, everything seemed real. Not knowing what to say, she told the patient the same thing as before, "Well, call me again if you see the person appear. I'll come immediately."

She was about to leave, but the patient screamed, "No, no, please! You can't leave me alone like this. She's going to kill me!"

Francine looked at the scared patient, and she knew couldn't leave her alone like this. So, she agreed and decided to remain by her side. Minutes passed, and hours too. The patient was resting on her bed unable to sleep, and Francine was tidying up the room.

While Francine was cleaning up the place, the patient carefully got up from her bed and headed to the bathroom in her room. A few seconds later, Francine heard a scream from the patient. She ran to the bathroom and knocked on the door a couple of times. With no reply, she decided to open the locked door, and to her surprise she found the patient lying dead on the floor. Blood was rushing out of the side of her neck and near her was a bloody dagger.

Startled by this, Francine runs back to her desk as fast as she can. To her surprise, she doesn't see Nicole there, but ignorant of that fact she picked up the phone. With a tremor, she dialed 911 hoping the police would pick up the phone. Feeling anxious, she bit her lip and could feel sweat dripping from her forehead, waiting for someone to answer the phone on the other side. But then, she hears footsteps behind her, coming closer and closer each second. She turns around and--

When the phone is picked up by the police, there is no voice on the other side.



The Lovely Rivers



Tulika Sahoo. 11th Grade

Lion was thinking about the Penguin again. Penguin was a down-to-earth musician whose beautiful colorful feathers and black eyes never failed to captivate Lion.

Sighing, Lion walked over to the window and gazed wistfully towards the surroundings. There were rivers of the deepest blue water Lion had ever seen. Silnip was a northwestern city that was renowned for its rivers. When one hears that, a few beautiful rivers are expected, yes, not hundreds of them, glistening in the sun, as far as the eye could see.

Lion saw something in the distance, or rather someone. It was Penguin, exiting the music department.

Lion gulped.

*I'm not ready and probably look terrible-
Ok, deep breaths, Li
You look alright...right?*

Lion is only a medical student. What would a musical genius want to do with an absolute nobody? To be fair, Lion had rescued a sweet baby toucan from a burning building. That led to the first and only conversation Lion has ever had with Penguin.

But not even the incredible person who had once rescued a sweet baby toucan from a burning building was prepared for what Lion had in store for today. Lion was going to confess to Penguin.

Lion grabbed the flimsy letter that contained his message. One could visibly see the multiple erases and faint pencil marks. Lion must have erased and written the letter at least 20 times.

Lion stepped outside and Penguin came closer. Lion couldn't wait any longer and thrust the letter towards Penguin. Lion, on the verge of making a mad dash out of there, heard Penguin say "Oh? What is this letter?"

Unable to leave, Lion slowly faces Penguin, "...Read it...please".

Penguin nodded in confusion but opened and looked through the letter. Seconds pass as do minutes. Lion grew ever nervous on the spot but secretly needed to know Penguin's reaction.

Penguin gazed at Lion with the affection of 9433 sweet foxes. In hushed tones, Penguin replied, "I love you too."

Lion looked at Penguin, first at disbelief as Lion attempted to process this. The problem was that Lion was currently like an outdated 2010 Windows Vista. Penguin didn't mind, Lion was rather adorable like this.

"I have been in love since our first conversation since saving Tutu."

"Tutu...?", Lion inquired.

"Remember the baby toucan? I adopted him."

"What?" Lion broke off. "Um, can I please see him someday? If you want, of course. I wouldn't want to force you or anything."

"Yes, whenever you like."

They looked at each other, Lion beaming with happiness and Penguin showing a soft content smile.

"Let's go inside for some tea?"

"I would love to".



My Bratopanayana



Ayaan Mahapatra, NC

The New Me

Bratopanayana or thread ceremony marks the transition from childhood to teenage. The ceremony is mostly performed for Brahmin boys aged 7-14. *Kshatriyas*(warriors) and *vaishyas* (business people) perform this ceremony differently. In late April this year, I learned about my family's plan to have my thread ceremony in India. I flew to India with my parents and my brother. We went from Raleigh, North Carolina, and landed at Chicago O'Hare International airport. Since I was doing virtual school in 6th grade, I was doing school at the airport most of the time.

We boarded the flight from Chicago to Bhubaneswar. It was a long journey. After reaching there, we had lunch at my maternal grandma's home. We also met my mamu, his wife, and their one-year-old daughter. We visited other relatives living close by. We took an uber to reach the home in Cuttack where my dad was born. During these days, I was not able to do my classes from India.

My Bratopanayana took place on 13th May, 2022. There are many rules for the ceremony. That day, I woke up early in the morning and took a bath. I was not allowed to eat anything other than cottage cheese for breakfast. I was free to drink liquids. I sat for six hours in one place for the rituals. Then I went to the site of the Bratopanayana at 12 o'clock, India time.

The priest gave me a new name, Jagannath as he performed the rites. He asked me to take a vow to not climb trees, and abstain from drinking alcohol. He also told me about the right age to marry. He blessed me to be a good scholar and a very disciplined student. He put the sacred thread on my shoulder. I was dressed like a brahmin in the olden days holding an umbrella made from palm leaves. The priest said mantras, and my mother, aunts, and others showered rice and flower petals as blessings on me. At the end of the ceremony, I received gifts in gold, and money from my parents and relatives. I was asked to wear a ring made from a type of grass for a week, and not to go out for 2 weeks. I obeyed the practices and played with my friends in the apartment. Everyone in the family went out but I stayed back with my grandma.

As per custom, my dad and his sister gifted new sarees and dresses to the guests who attended the ceremony. The sacred thread, they said, brings calmness and helps the mind to concentrate. Apparently, it was true. I could read mindfully for my end-of-year tests that were around the corner.



My Bratopanayana in India

It was time to return. But our flight from Delhi to Chicago got canceled and we boarded the plane the next day. Unfortunately, we also got COVID there, and by the time we reached Raleigh, my brother had every symptom; dad and mom followed next. I was the last in the family to get COVID. But I have some very good memories of my bratopanayana ceremony. It taught me patience. The only thing I didn't like is the 2-weeks ban from going out.



Summer in India



Devanshi Sahoo, New Jersey

I'm a twelve-year-old Odia girl born in America and raised by Indian immigrant parents. I almost always go to India during summer vacation and stay there for about two months during the summer break. My parents came to America for better opportunities, but that doesn't mean that I forget my roots, family values & culture. Visiting India helps me stay in touch with relatives and creates better family bonding. They see me as a girl who speaks Odia, our native language and enjoys eating authentic Odia food. This observation gives them a better understanding of me as a person who lives far away from Odisha, but is still proud of her origin. Meanwhile, I observe things closely and learn a little bit more about our religion and culture each time I come. Besides, I travel to many great and beautiful destinations in India with my family, get to eat an amazing variety of foods from different regions, and visit different temples. Whenever someone asks me where I went this summer, it is usually India, except for the past 2 years that were spent at home during the Pandemic. But whenever I say this, many of my Indian friends are shocked that I stay in India for two months. I don't understand why they are shocked. Don't they want to see their relatives and family? Infact shouldn't we see our families that are nearly on the other side of the world?

After the pandemic, we finally went to India this year during the summer, and I had a great time there. We visited many different places and saw many distant family members that even my parents hadn't been in contact with for a while. We visited South India with my grandparents and maternal uncle. We reached Madurai and stayed there for 4 days. We visited Meenakshi temple and got a great tour. We also visited Rameshwaram temple which is one of the 4 holy dhamas where we saw great paintings and carvings. We got water dropped on us from the 22 *tirtha* wells because it is believed that taking a bath in the holy wells will wash away all your sins. In fact, people say that all 22 wells have a different taste to their water. Also, we went to the only temple dedicated to the demon Vibhishan, named The Kothandaramaswamy Temple. We saw the southernmost tip of India called the Dhanushkodi beach. As the Ramayana says, the Rama Setu or bridge was built here by Lord Rama to reach Sri Lanka. This bridge is also the only archaeological evidence of the Ramayana era. Though no more stones can be seen on the ocean there is a temple where we went to see a single floating stone from Ramsethu. After visiting a few south Indian temples I noticed that their structures were quite different from the temples in Odisha. After doing some research I found out that the southern temple structure has an entrance gateway

in the center of the front wall called the Gopuram; the temple takes the shape of a rectangular pyramid with a rectangular top which is called the Vimana. Meenakshi and Rameshwaram temples are great examples of this style.

The Jagannath temple in Puri and the Sun temple in Konark are in the Nagara style. I found South Indian cuisine different from Odia food. It consists mostly of dosa, idili, umpa, sambhar, chutneys, curd rice, and curries. We ate in many restaurants and enjoyed the great food. I tried palm fruit which isn't found in America but didn't like the taste. The 4-days in Madurai passed fast. We went to Kodaikanal next. It was a 3-hour drive from Madurai. We stayed in a sterling resort there and enjoyed the cool amenities like the pretty trail, the park with beautiful flowers, and the great view it offered. I liked the swings and benches and took many pictures. In Kodaikanal we went on a fun boat ride in the canal and the boat rower took some great pictures with a flower he plucked in the canal itself. After that, I rode on a horse around the canal and we walked around the place looking at the stores. We also went to a beautiful flower park on a hill station that encircled the canal. We ate some warm foods on the stands like corn on the cob and went to a fun game house where we went into a horror room, played bumper cars, and went on a small ride.

We rented some bikes and my mom and I rode on a double joint bike where one person biked on the front and another on the back of the bike. We had some trouble at first, but then we rode along, circling the entire canal. We even got lost and almost exceeded the time limit on the bike but with the help of helpful people and our phone, we reached it safely. We went to see many famous waterfalls and saw amazing mountain views. We went to the Guna Caves where a Bollywood film had been shot. Sadly the inside of the cave had been permanently closed due to many deaths there. But luckily the forest was open; there were so many trees that it was super dark and the roots of the trees were sticking out making it look like a spooky forest. There were many monkeys and one even stole a candy wrapper from my mammu's pocket while we were trying to take a photo. Last but not least we went to a homemade chocolate shop where there were tons of different varieties of chocolates that I could pick and pack. We even got many great samples to taste and I enjoyed a free tour and an explanation of how their chocolates are made.

We returned to Odisha. We went to Puri a couple of times during our stay in Odisha. We went to see the Rath Jatra with my Grandparents. I toured the Jagannath Temple with my mom, and had the opportunity to touch the holy rope of the Ratha. We stayed for the entire duration of the Ratha Jatra sitting on the benches covered in shade and with fans. I was so grateful to get this opportunity to see the Ratha Jatra, which is all thanks to my grandpa who is a retired high court judge. We stayed in Puri for a couple of days. I went to Puri sea beach where I rode on a horse and a camel. We had a lot of fun including shopping in the small market near the Puri beach, and taking a stroll around Gandhi park. We went to Puri another time with my mausi, her kids and my grandma; we ate lunch in a fancy hotel and got a complementary coconut delight dessert. Overthere we also walked around the park and went inside the bakery to see how the cakes and breads were made. Before leaving India we had our last trip to Puri Jagganath temple where we saw the deities and also got some tulsi stems and a piece of used clothes of the deities.

During the India trip we also went to Sambalpur with my grandma, grandpa, mausi, and her family. I saw the Hirakud dam. We went to Debrigarh through an amazing narrow road. The place was surrounded by the river Mahanadi on one side. We could see many islands hidden in the mist. We went on a boat tour and reached an island and found out that only 7 families live there. They catch fish from the Mahanadi and eat; very rarely do they go to the city to buy things from the market. They made everything by hand. Most of the people were sleeping as they had nothing to do. They weren't educated; there was no school or hospital on the island. There were many bats; therefore, the island is named bat island. We took many photos with their homemade furniture like chairs, tables, shovels, and sleeping beds -all made of wood. We even bought some *sukhua* -dry fish similar to anchovies. We enjoyed a wide variety of dishes for lunch, and went out

on a safari tour. We went to Sarafgargh and stayed at the ecotourism mini tents for the day. We took a boat ride, played in the playground, and enjoyed the great scenic beauty. We stayed in Ashoka Niwas where India's First Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had stayed during his visit. It was a great trip.

I enjoyed time with all our relatives in Bhubaneswar. I was happy to meet some of the baby members of the family. We celebrated rakhi with cousin brothers and sisters. I went shopping and bought Indian dresses and jewelry. I went to my mausi's "ghara pratistha," housewarming party. I enjoyed all the great street foods, such as pani puri and samosa. We went to Khandagiri and the ISKCON temple in Bhubaneswar. Last but not least, we went to Jahania, the only place worshipped by both Hindu's and Muslim's. It's history is that in the 16th century a Muslim saint Pir Mukudan Jahania Jahagast with his disciples came to India from Baghdad. After staying in Bengal, he came to Odisha. He visited many places, and finally settled down near Astrang. Now both Hindu's and Muslim's offer worship at the shrine.

I visited my grandpa's village, Chandanpur. His home has a mandap - a raised open place. I had a lot of fun playing with the kids of the relatives that live in the village. I loved talking to them. I visited Raghurajpur, squished in one auto with my mother and others to buy and see the amazing *patta chitra* paintings made there. We visited a small house where small kids lived with a guru and learned Gotipua dance. The troop had gone to many competitions and received recognition, yet, the government doesn't support them. We were invited and watched the amazing dance they performed. Raghurajpur is the birthplace of the famous Odissi dancer, Late Kelucharan Mahapatra. I also saw the Jhulana Jatra with my cousins and joined a *bhoji* or feast in the village. It was super dark and we all went to the flooded river to wash our hands.

Last but not the least we went to Cuttack, my dad's hometown and ate momo, dahibara aludum, and other well-known delicacies. We went to buy Cuttack's famous silver filigree jewelry. Also, I celebrated rakhi with one of my cousin's brothers there. I saw my Dad's school and college, and went to see the famous Barabati stadium. Cuttack is the oldest city in Odisha and is known as the silver city because of its world famous silver artwork.

In the end, I can say that I had a great time in India and would definitely love to go back there. I can't wait to go next summer and have even more fun with all my relatives. Infact, now that I am older, I will be able to remember all of them. I call and facetime them to keep in touch. Hopefully everyone will want to go, spend time with their relatives and stay in India for a longer duration.



The first elevator ride and other experiences during my maiden tour to Thailand in 1991



Dr. Mrs. Prabhat Nalini Patnaik, Nashville.

During the 90's, the Thai government began to use modern technology for the development of its fishery sector and experienced rapid development of shrimp/prawn culture in brackish water areas. I attended an international conference for crab-fattening (crab culture) at Surat Thani, Thailand in November 1991. I was then working in Phulbani as the District Fisheries officer under World Bank Fish Farmers Development Program. My job was to look after increase of water resources in the District through new pond excavation in unutilized low lying area of the District, production of quality fish seed and fish - *Bhakura*, *Rohi*, *Mirikali*, assessment of riverine fish and freshwater prawn seed, training program to farmers etc. This was a completely different job compared to my earlier job as a research scientist at Chilika lake, Balugaon.

On October 12th 1991, I received a telegram from the government of Odisha to prepare a paper on Chilika crab and attend the seminar in Thailand on Nov 19th. I had very little time both to get ready with the papers needed for the overseas trip, and to write the research paper. Being the unmarried eldest daughter from a conservative middle-class family from Bhanjanaga, Ganjam, the foreign trip made me nervous. I had never been outside the state earlier. Besides processing the passport and tackling the bureaucratic hassle of obtaining official leave, I also needed to rush to Balugaon research center to collect data for the paper on Chilika crab. For the passport I was to visit Bhubaneswar and stay somewhere. I feared that the District collector, Phulbani might not approve my long leave visit to Thailand.

Times were very different thirty years ago. There was no cell phone, e-mail, whatsapp, xerox or fax. On top of that, Bhubaneswar was an 8 to 9 hours journey by bus from Phulbani. At that time our legendary Chief Minister late Biju Patnaik had made a strict rule that government vehicles should be used only in emergencies, inside the district. Supply of diesel and petrol was very limited. Though I had an official vehicle, I was not supposed to use it without any prior notice

of a tour program planned at the beginning of the month. With all these huddles looming before my eyes, I was scared to get everything done within 10 to 15 days. I desperately wished my father to be around me. But unfortunately, I had lost him in April 1984 during his tour to Odisha High Court, Cuttack. I was really overwhelmed and thought of canceling my Thailand tour.

There's another layer to the story. I decided to talk to Ardhendu Sarangi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries and convey the challenges before me. Many myths are created around IAS officers in Odisha. Per one such widely circulated myth, Sarangi was supposedly a very rigid person who might not agree to cancel my trip. With a faint heart, I talked to his personal assistant from the local post office phone, Phulbani, to meet the strict IAS officer. To my surprise, Sarangi picked up the phone and listened to my grievances patiently. He assured me that the government would take care of every issue related to my travel, and that I just needed to get ready with the paper for presentation. I was relieved and very grateful to him. I went home to Bhanjanagar to tell my mother about the trip; as always she was very encouraging and very positive. She inspired me to go ahead and reminded me of my father's saying "*Je pakhi ude jete dura, se jane tahar bebhara.*" All my siblings too were excited to hear about my foreign trip.

All the required paperwork -passport, ticket, official documents were taken care of by the Odisha Govt. The personal assistant of the Director of Fisheries, escorted me to Kolkata airport. All the senior officers in my department were quite supportive as well. During the send off, my younger brother Biswanath said, "Apa we are proud of You!"

It was my first plane ride. When I entered the Thai Plane, I felt a different rhythm inside my heart. I was excited, but a little apprehensive too. The Thai plane was beautiful and the Thai Air hostesses were pretty too. I looked around like an uncomplicated woman from Phulbani. The plane landed in Thailand after a two-and-a-half hour journey from Kolkata. The Thailand Airport was also beautiful. I patted myself for being a very lucky woman to visit that new land. Two officials with a board, *Prabhat Nalini Patnaik*, India were waiting for me. I saw that board and went to them. They received me with a warm smile and took me to a five-star hotel and showed me my room on the 1st floor.

The next morning I had to attend the conference at 9 am Thailand time. I have no idea about time change. I didn't correct the time in my watch. Luckily, I heard delegates in other rooms talking, and going out. Quickly I locked my room and tried to go to the conference room.

Somebody asked me, "Are you from India? Come with us. Conference hall is on the 21st floor." They were in front of the elevator. I had no idea about elevators. Suddenly, I recalled the Hindi movie *Ek Duje Ke Liye* where the heroine was in trouble inside the elevator. Of course, that is a movie, but I was scared. I lied to the delegates that I was waiting for a friend. I took the stairs to the 21st floor. It took me a while. The organizers were worried and wondered, "where is the Indian lady? She hasn't taken her breakfast." I was completely exhausted when I reached the conference room. They asked me politely, if I was ok. They might have guessed that I reached there by the stairs. I pretended to be ok. One kind woman who understood my stupidity, offered to call her if I needed to go somewhere in the hotel. What an awkward situation! Whenever I enter any elevator, even today, I remember that incident and laugh. I was certainly naive, inexperienced and very insecure those days.

I often recall another awkward episode related to the Thailand trip. The luxury hotel room I stayed, was furnished with red carpet. I combed my long hair in the room, and went out. When I returned, the room cleaning service left me a note in a big piece of paper advising me to comb

my hair in the restroom, pick up the fallen strands, and keep the room tidy. I was ashamed and extremely disappointed with my actions.

As I mentioned earlier, I participated in that conference on behalf of the State Fisheries Department of the government of Odisha and submitted a paper on Chilika Crab(Kankada). Chilika Lake is the largest brackish water wetland ecosystem in Asia covering an area of 906 square km in summer and 1165 square km in monsoon. It is a Ramsar site of International importance situated along the east coast of India. Chilika Fishery is the livelihood and nutrition security for 0.2 million fishers in and around the lake and contributes more than 96% to the total economic value of provisioning characteristics of fishery resources belonging to fresh water, brackish water and marine habitats. I was at Chilika research station Balugan during early 1981. My job was to take fortnightly five days observation on Hydrology, Benthic flora fauna and fish,crab, and shrimp catch statistics of the lake from some fixed points/stations (eleven points) of the whole lake. I used to stay inside the lake in a motor launch for five days with technical staff. Our food was dry food. Of course, we caught fish, shrimp and crab from the lake and processed the catch for cooking. There was a separate charm in eating especially, the fresh fish from the lake.

After the three-day seminar, we went to see a monkey college on a sightseeing trip. One Thai family had founded a school, and a college in a big area for training monkeys. It was like a small town. Monkeys lived there in the midst of thousands of coconut trees; there were also some cows in the area. Some monkeys, we were told, even did PhDs there. Those smart ones could perform very skilled jobs. While one of the monkeys pulled the rickshaw, the other followed the name written on the label and left the milk packet at the customer's door. Some monkeys maintained the beautiful garden, some gave food to the cows, some pulled water from the well using the rope and bucket, and some picked coconuts from trees. A small group of monkeys picked coconut from the trees for us. They removed the outer cover of the coconuts and gave us coconut water in glasses. It was an amazing experience.

We also visited a traditional Thai market. We went to a big Mall. I bought 8 gold chains (10gm each) for all my younger sisters. Thai Gold is pure, and it was \$80 to \$100 per 10 gram in those days. We went to the famous Pattaya beach in Thailand, but I was not married then, and strangely thought that it was not appropriate for a young woman to go to the beach alone. The guilty feeling seems so unfounded now.

We visited the beautiful golden temple of Lord Budha in Bangkok. I stayed for 2 to 3 hours and enjoyed the cool atmosphere of the Temple. They said that the statue of Budha there was made from pure gold. We went to see the King's palace, but the palace was closed that day. The palace looked gorgeous from the outside.

Today, these memories pass before my eyes like scenes from a movie. Hope, the reader enjoys reading the story of young Prabhat Nalini who was vastly unexposed to the modern world and had little experience with life. Hearty thanks to my friends Chandra Mishra, Boston, Sarita Jagjita, LA, Sunanda Misra Panda, Toronto, and Nil Bisoi, Nashville for encouraging me to write about this experience.



Sharing Nina's Story



Chandra Mishra, North Wales, PA

Like many people, I like to share stories with others who are willing to read or listen to them. Often, I post stories on Facebook, WhatsApp Groups, and other social media sites which have made it faster and easier for us to share our writings nowadays. Sometimes, I post an influx of things which touch my heart and soul. Acts of kindness, courage, cowardice, and happiness always attract my attention, and I love to write about them. When I saw 'sharing stories,' as the theme for this edition of Utkarsa, I chose to write about my friend Nina.

Loneliness is a big problem with seniors in the USA. Seniors lose many valuable things as they age; many lose their partner, routine activity like going to work daily, and physical abilities (e.g., hearing and eyesight) etc. When I was working at a rehab center as a nurse, I met many older people who were recovering from orthopedic and other surgeries. In the rehab center we not only administer medicine and treatment to the patients, but we also talk to them to boost their mental condition. This way, the patients can get back to their normal daily activities upon discharge from the rehab center.

I met many people at the center, and while undertaking their care, at times, I learned about their lives and families. One such person, Nina, made a prominent impression on me. Unlike other patients, she did not have any relatives visiting her. She told me that she spent some time in the labor camp in Germany during the second world war. That information was also written in her chart. I started spending a little more time with her while taking care of her. Her positive outlook and grateful nature towards life compared to my other patients in the facility, impressed me greatly. I was propelled to know more about her; we became great friends.

While completing Nina's discharge forms, I came to know that she lived at Hartfield which is near to my home. She also went to the same YMCA for swimming that I went to for the daycare facility for my youngest son. I exchanged my telephone number with her and promised that I would meet her at the YMCA to know how she was progressing at home on her own. After she left the rehab center, I met Nina many times at the YMCA. With time I came to know that we had a lot in common: we were both immigrants, and lost our mothers at a very early age. Soon we became good friends and talked about our families as women often do. I came to know more things about Nina. She could speak and read English but could not write; her understanding of English was limited. Sometimes she brought important papers to me. I read and explained them to her. She often admired that I could speak English so well, and had a job as a nurse. I asked her why she did not go to school here and learn English like me. She told me that she came from Germany to Canada after the second world war as a refugee from Poland. As per her she went straight to

work as a maid in someone's home and learnt in time to speak English. Later she met Bronok, her husband, who was also from Poland. Like Nina, Bronok was in Germany and came to Canada as a refugee. They later came to the USA, where her sister came earlier as a refugee.

When I met her, Nina was a seventy-year-old beautiful lady. Her outgoing nature and full moon smile attracted me to become her friend. When I met her in the beginning, we started talking about life, family, and other trivial things. I came to know that she had no children, but she loved children. My son Sanjay was very young at that time, and Nina loved him a lot. She came to my home for Thanksgiving dinners and attended my daughter's wedding and Sanjay's birthday parties. I took her to stores, the doctor's office, and grocery shopping when she needed it. If my mother were alive, she would be the same age as Nina. We considered each other as friends, rather than making her my aunt, like most Indian people do when they meet someone older than them. As per Nina the kindest thing I did was to call upon her monthly and spend some time together either talking, walking, or shopping. She often eagerly waited for our meeting, and the pleasure we got was mutual. I learnt a few life lessons from her.

In time, and in the last twenty years, I saw many changes with her. She downsized her home and moved to an assisted living nursing care facility. I came to know that though she had no formal education, she was a smart lady and was able to manage her finances well. She took care of her health, her finances and continued to drive till she was 90 years old. Her place was always highly organized and clean. I have learnt from her to take risks, explore the world, develop my mind, and do things that I like.

Physical appearance was important to her. She exercised daily and took diligent care of her body and mind. She had perfect straight teeth at her age, which was amazing. I often returned home with a lot of joy after I visited her. She reminded me to cherish my body and soul, which can sail us through the adventure that is life. As per her, if the ship is broken, we are not going anywhere. I learnt from her to exercise daily to maintain good health. Encouraged by her, I signed up for Zumba dance classes as a fun exercise at the YMCA, which I continue to do till this day.

One summer afternoon when I visited Nina, I asked her if she would share her story of how she was in Germany. She looked at me for a few minutes, and said that she has not told anybody about her experience in the labor camp where she spent thirteen months. After a pause for a few minutes, she spoke that she was getting older and did not wish to carry the burden to her grave. I looked at her and saw that it was painful for her to say anything. I held her hand and said, it is OK to say what was in her heart. I saw tears in her eyes. She was pushing herself to do something she did not talk about for decades and decades, not even with her family.

Nina grew up as the youngest of three children to a couple in a village in Poland. Life was good for their family till Nazis marched to their village. She remembered how Nazi soldiers took her and her siblings forcefully to Germany to work in a company where they worked long hours to make parts for airplanes during the war. She told me that she heard a bang on the door at 08:00 PM one day. When she opened the door, she was confronted by a group of Nazi soldiers. The soldiers marched into their home and forced everyone to kneel before them as they destroyed their home. They took all their belongings. They broke all the mirrors because they thought they would find money in the back of the mirrors. She sobbed and said, "you can't imagine what they did ". They took all of us (Nina and her siblings) in the army vehicles blind folded while their parents were tied up. When her brother opposed, one soldier put a gun to his head and hit him badly. He fell and bled from his head.

Tears came from her eyes, and I looked at her, not knowing how to console her. Nina never saw her siblings and parents after that, until she came to Canada. In the German labor camp, she

also had to do demanding work in the kitchen, peeling vegetables and cleaning dishes where food was cooked for the soldiers. They hardly gave her any food to eat. She tried to learn knitting and crocheting with help of the branches of the tree and old yarn. Her reason was that she was making sure she was prepared to work wherever she ended up - if she could get out.

Later, when the war ended, she tried to come to the USA as a refugee. In 1944 Nina left Germany with only clothes on her back and her permit from the Quaker organization to free Polish people. One of the Quaker women told her to wear a red scarf, and to be picked up by their organization person at the London train station. Nina had no money to buy a red scarf. She told me that she put red colored wildflowers in her head and around neck which she found at the roadside. At the station in London a lady approached her with a red scarf. She had a Polish to English dictionary under her arm and a bar of chocolate in the other hand. Nina told me that the chocolate was wonderful. I thought she felt that way about the chocolate since she had never eaten something like this before. In England she stayed with the woman whose name was Frieda for a week and then came to Canada.

She worked as a maid in Canada and met her husband Bronok there, who was also a survivor of a labor camp. Two months later, they wed and made a pact not to talk about what they saw and felt in Germany. They promised not to live in the past but to live in the present. Later she learnt that her sister came to the USA. She told me that on inquiry she came to know that her brother did not survive in the labor camp due to malnutrition and hard labor. Her parents died in Poland.

It was late that day and getting dark. Before I said goodbye, she told me that though she promised not to tell her story to anyone she told me for an important reason. As per her she wanted to share it with someone who can put it in writing with the hope that it should never, never happen again. I hugged Nina and thanked her for trusting me. I also decided to author her story when the opportunity comes. Our best friend is the one who brings out the best in us. Good friends help us to find important things when we have lost them...our smile, hope, and courage. Now that I got the opportunity, I opted to share Nina's story with you all with love and care.



Where all things bloom: A story of our master gardeners



Mrs. Deepti Paikray, NJ

Michelle Obama thoughtfully opined, ‘When we share our stories, we are reminded of the humanity in each other. And when we take the time to understand each other’s stories, we become more forgiving, more empathetic, and more inclusive.’ This is the story of our genial, chatty, khatti gardening group in New Jersey that keeps together as a constant bridge of connection and renewal.

In May 2020 the pandemic broke out. Social interactions were heavily curtailed, humanity lived inside a vulnerable bubble of this can’t be happening even as death cast its shadow upon the firmament of our days. Curse of climate change some pondered, payback time others believed. During this turbulent and grim scenario, the New Jersey chapter led by Mr. Bijay Mohanty and Mr. Nagesh Rajanala floated a series of programs on zoom so community members remained connected in strength and grace. One such program proposed by me that bore sweet fruit was the gardening workshop (hosted by me and Somalina Samal).

In the weeks to come a series of workshops were organized on zoom featuring master gardeners: OSA members who were passionate about their green thumb and were generous to share their wide and expansive knowledge about growing flowers, vegetables, and fruits. The program became extremely popular resulting in a WhatsApp group formed by Mr. Ashok Patel from New Jersey. Mr. Patel proudly belongs to a family of farmers in Sambalpur, India and owns a mini farm in New Jersey. “I am a son of the soil,” he proudly proclaims, “and gardening is my daily gym.”

This group is now a thriving community with members from all OSA chapters. Incidentally sales of plants and seeds were up by 35% during lockdown as people planted with desperate hope to find comfort in the recurring cycle of seed, germination, sapling, and adult plant: the cycle of life.

How did it all begin

The program began with featuring Mr. Surendra Ray and his wife Sukanti nani from Maryland. Surendra nana is one of the oldest members of OSA who arrived on American shores in the 1960’s. They are known as avid gardeners and have been active members of OSA.

Sukanti nani is known for her twinkling eyes and adventurous spirit. In 2011 when I visited her gracious home in Maryland, she expressed “I have a veritable variety of *tagar*, *mandara*, *jahni* and even a *peepal* tree.” As I saw her taking pride in her garden, I knew she was at peace to

create a piece of her homeland in the verdant soil of her DC backyard. Our own journey can be likened to these hardy plants that were transplanted from our home country and not only took root but also flourished on a foreign land. Susie Apa (Mrs. Sujata Mohanty) from Pennsylvania is a cherished member of our gardening WhatsApp group. She lives with an adorable family and her pet dog Skylar. The entire gardening group agrees that apa is an indisputable queen of flora and fauna. There is nothing in this world that she cannot grow, and her graceful home is surrounded with a thick foliage of green, yellow, and purple riot of flowers smattered with onion plants, chives, zucchini, eggplant, peanut, cucumber, *poie*, avocado, fig, and lemon trees. Some of her perennials are twenty-five years old and she is always delighting the members by sharing pictures of her guava bearing plant and *paana gacha* during the blood freezing chill of February months.



(Picture of Susie apa and Surendra nana)

“Gardening keeps me connected to my dear mother and her gentle spirit. I believe it keeps me patient and humble by following and respecting its seasons and cycles,” apa says. Her *malli phula* shrub is a decade old and is laden with fragrant blooms during summer.

“When I offer the hibiscus, malli and *genda phool* to my gods I feel I am offering a piece of my heart to him,” she softly whispers a faraway look on her pretty face.

One of the tips apa shared with the group especially to gardeners like me with tiny kitchen gardens is to completely do away with harmful pesticides and instead use a concoction of neem oil and water to deal with aphids and harmful bugs.

“First thing in the morning do a quick inspection of your garden. Wash any infected plant with water, then spray neem oil.”

“Apa, I hate dunking the Japanese beetles in soap water,” I admit. “They look gorgeous in their shiny armor.”

“No dear, they destroy everything in a very short time.”

Once she exasperatedly spoke about gardeners who keep bemoaning their wilted plants on the group.

“Don’t they realize that overwatering kills plants? The plants can’t take care of themselves. They need us. In return they fill our lives with wonder and abundance.”

March to October

15th March 2022: announcement from Susie apa to all in the WhatsApp group.



“Hi gardeners, the temperature is getting better. Now is the perfect time to prepare your beds, clip the dead branches, prune the outdoor roses, and do not forget to fertilize your outdoor bulbs like daffodils, tulips, and hyacinth etc. Happy gardening.”

This early morning message is a wakeup call to us gardeners to emerge from our hibernation, to throw off the dreary blanket of wintry days and to smell the thundery spring showers. The yellow forsythia bushes burst in manifold yellow blooms signifying that the soil is warming, earthworms and insects are stirring below the earth and certain seeds are going to spring forward to action. (Picture of Milli apa & Mr. Ashok Patel)

Mr. Ashok Patel or *dada* as he is affectionately referred to belongs to a family of farmers. The most important knowledge he shares is about soil amendment, meaning adding nutrients to the soil via a compost bin or fertilizer to maintain the PH of the soil. Once, when some members of the group felt frustrated with their healthy squash plants that were only producing male flowers, he was quick to demonstrate techniques of 2g and 3 g cutting. This means creating third-generation branches resulting in increased production of female flowers that leads to effective pollination and more produce.

When I visited his small farm in NJ to pick up fresh pumpkin flowers and flat beans, I saw a person in sync with the dirt and grime of soil. I commented on the profusion of flowers in his farm, especially the pink and purple haze of bougainvillea and crepe myrtle trees.

“If you want good produce, grow lots of flowers. Flowers attract bees.”

April footfalls in cold chills, shy pink buds and brave green leaves. The group wakes up to early dawn pictures of gardeners hard at work building garden beds or mending fence nets chomped off by an army of beavers or rabbits.

“What to do? It’s their land too” says one gardener, sweat drops glistening on his forehead. “But it’s frustrating when they nullify one’s hard work for many days. I have had families of beavers wipe away my entire hard work overnight.” Others suggest hanging bird feeders to distract audacious squirrels and chipmunks from unearthing the seeds in the soil.

Another master gardener from North Carolina is Milu apa (Ullasini Sahoo) who is well known to all of us as an ardent OSA volunteer and a beautiful human being. In her words “when we plant a seed, we are planting tremendous possibilities.” She threw light upon companion plants that should be grown side by side for a healthy diversity and beautiful garden. She frequently shares pictures of companion planting preventing pest problems like tomatoes and marigolds, roses and garlic, cucumbers, and nasturtiums. “Companion planting helps certain plants grow and use garden space efficiently.”

One of the initiatives begun by Milu apa is the seed exchange programs where gardeners who have a flourishing produce, save, and preserve the seeds from the dying plant at the end of the season and then share those seeds with community members. Some of us in NJ were fortunate to receive from her garden in North Carolina seeds of purple snap beans (simba). The beans are an absolute delight and taste delicious along with diced potatoes cooked in mustard oil with a crackle of *panch phutan*.

Milu apa’s two best tips: for small gardens, grow the plants in a growth bag with handles that can be easily moved around; secondly, gift your children’s plants so they learn the traits of responsibility and nurturance. “I gifted my daughter some plants when she was studying medicine. There have been numerous challenges in my life, but just somehow singing to, talking with, and looking after my plants have given me incredible courage to move forward. Just like everyone else plants respond to love,” she words softly.

July, August and September when the stately iris flowers, asters and chrysanthemums begin to bloom are harvesting months when most gardeners begin sharing their produce. Pictures of violet allium, bright pink begonia, purple clematis and gold sunflowers with heirloom roses punctuate the morning enthusiasm. One can almost inhale the lemony and musky fragrance of the blooms. 😊. Everyone’s share is applauded from a single tomato and two cucumbers crowned by a tiny bunch of happy marigolds to heaps of squash and brinjals crowding kitchen counters. Then food prepared from this bounty is uploaded and recipes are shared. I remember posting a picture of my first squash. My husband helped climb the trailing vine on a shoe rack. The idea garnered ecstatic claps from the members.



November to December

Gardening generates a feel-good factor, a connection with nature and most of all with one’s own insecure, sometimes lost, proud, and seeking self.

“It’s a place where I lose myself to find myself,” utters Mrs. Mami Pattnaik (apa) from Maryland.

Working in the garden can leave you tired but strangely renewed and energized from within. In Mrs. Chandana Pradhan (NJ) words, “we think we are nurturing the garden, but it’s the garden nurturing us” she says watching a honeybee quietly buzz past her to sit on a flowering red zinnia. “It insists that you observe seasons and weather, putting you in sync with the natural world, it permits you to get unapologetically dirty. Moreover, I love sharing this bounty with all my friends.”
(the writer’s lauki vine climbing a shoe rack)

A word of caution 😊 although the members of this group are very encouraging and supportive but if one’s plants are constantly looking unhealthy, then the concerned gardener is *guided* to be more vigilant towards the plants rather than seeking continuous advice. In a parallel world praise and warmth is continuously showered on members whose indoor and outdoor plants continue to flourish.

October rides on the wind of littered, colored leaves. Susie apa announces to the group; “temperatures are to fall from next week, bring the tulsi gacha in after changing the soil and wiping clean the shrub and spraying with neem oil.” And then even as we bid an emotional goodbye to our summer gardens master gardeners continue to delight members with their last produce of potatoes, cherry tomatoes, and enormous misshapen pumpkins.

As I remove the weeds, the gray spaces within me gain clarity and then as fall arrives and the greens fade away, when all things shrivel and fall off my heart grows in gratitude to say a quiet prayer of thanks for all the soil yields to us; for regulating our blood pressure, cholesterol, for filling our bodies with organic produce and the soil of our souls with growth and replenishment. Being part of this group has been a hugely enriching experience that also became the milieu to a short story *Letting things come to us* in my book *Stories at my Doorstep*. It’s a story about a childless couple finding renewal through the trusting act of gardening. An excerpt:

We put up a string of lights around the white fence. At dusk, fireflies came and everything ordinary looked magical. The moon too discovered a path above our garden in its journey from crescent to a milky fullness. Like all families, the garden family too had its likable and not so likable members. But again, if the plunderers did not show up we missed them. Everything and everyone took its place in our green cosmos. The vegetables flourished under the blazing sun and a cool downpour of moonlight. The bees sucked at the sweet centers of the purple star blossoms of eggplants, spiders spin their web from leaf to leaf, butterflies flitted on angel wings, and mosquitoes stung us in the evenings whilst watering the foliage.

Some of the brave gardeners in our group develop ingenious ways and construct a greenhouse with plastic sheets from Home Depot to extend the growing season by a month or so. Others attempt to dabble in hydroponics, that is growing plants without soil. Mrs. Annie Mohapatra (Annie apa), Suvasri apa (Mrs. Suvasri Das), Mrs. Shalvi Agarwal, Moonmoon (Sushmita Pradhan) are the other passionate gardeners who add a lively vitality to our group. During winter months our expansive gardening family devises different ways to remain connected through shared jokes, food recipes, creative activities by members like painting etc. or pictures of indoor plants enlivening living rooms. Members post captures of red cardinals, blue jays and stunning images of screech owls and wildlife from their hiking trips. Anything that helps the group remain connected and move through the cold months. Finally, the unforgiving winter sets in and everything is gone except the memories of a summer garden, its sunny breath throbbing in small seeds stored away in dry zip locks for next year. Next, we fuss over our indoor plants and look forward to spring.



For the love of Jagannath



Sujit Mahapatra, NC.

The Raleigh, North Carolina area has a small community of Odias living around what is known as the Research Triangle Park(RTP) area. The Odia community is very close-knit here; much of their cultural activities revolve around the religious festivities celebrated at the Hindu Society of North Carolina (HSNC). Jagannath Mahaprabhu, the preminent God, very close to the heart of every Odia is worshiped at HSNC along with other Hindu gods and goddesses. Devotees of the temple hold Rath Jatra with much enthusiasm too. In 2021 the Odias associated with the Hindu society, collectively decided to replace the old rath donated to the temple with a new, bigger and better one.



The newly built Rath (Chariot)

Project, Nandighosha, after the rath of Lord Jagannath in Puri. The work began in November 2021 as soon as HSNC allotted space for the building, and storage of rath under construction. The plan was to build a rath which would stand at a commendable height of 25 feet. There were

no experts among the people involved in the work; they were all devoted volunteers with great enthusiasm and faith.

The work began in the cold of November. The organization and planning were done via a WhatsApp group. The volunteers came together every weekend to work. Everything, from the purchase of tools, supplies, design, and distribution of work were done by volunteers. They had ample support from umbrella organizations such as the Jagannath Seva Trust of NC and the HSNC. These organizations collected donations from several organizations and individuals.

The volunteers met at the worksite every weekend routinely and did the work diligently. Some volunteers provided home-made food to the people working on the rath project. Besides delicious lunch, there was no shortage of snacks, tea, coffee, and bottled water.. The volunteers for food worked equally hard to deliver great quality food every weekend without fail.

Volunteering for the rath work was a very memorable experience. Those involved with the project, greeted each other with much love and care. They were also very welcoming towards a new volunteer who joined the team. They chanted Jai Jagannath from time to time to cheer each other up. Much of the work involved skills at carpentry. The rath is largely made from wood. Once the structure was made, the next important works were painting the body and stitching the canopy. Ladies from the Odia community volunteered to decorate the rath with paintings in the traditional *Patta Chitra* style. They painted images of dancers in various poses of Odissi, and colorful ornamental floral patterns, and symbols all over the rath. The backrest for Lord Jagannath was done by a volunteer specializing in glass tile art. Decorative horses placed at the front to drag the chariot symbolically were brought from Odisha.

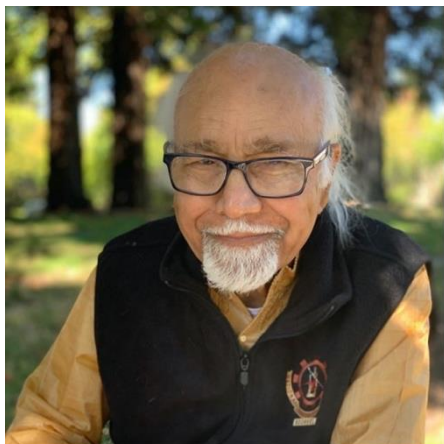


Artwork on the Rath

The work went on for almost 8 months. It started in November of 2021, and continued almost to the end of June, 2022. The volunteers worked tirelessly on some weekdays as well to get the rath ready before the Rath Yatra in July, 2022. Lord Jagannath guided the devout volunteers to work selflessly for getting this great job done. It was a proud moment for the Odia community.



Remembering Dr. Somnath Mishra: A Great Mind



Sandip Kumar Dasverma, LA

I heard about Somanath Mishra for the first time when he stood FIRST in the Matric Examination in 1952. I had a childhood hobby of finding out who stood 1st, 2nd & 3rd in the Matric examination every year. I still remember the names of 1954, 1955 & 1956 batch toppers - Nursingha Mohanty, Nilamadhava Bahinipati & Suhash Bose. When I got admitted to Ravenshaw College in 1957, it was one of the 20 oldest colleges in India. Somanath babu had left the institute & gone to Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore for the 3-year special B Tech. It was a tradition for toppers of those days. The admission to Indian Institute of Science was very competitive as it was 1 year less than other Engineering colleges including IITs, which were all four year courses. While still in Ravenshaw we heard from grapevine about his going to MIT - considered the Mecca of Engineers.

I will now share with you a couple of interesting stories about him.

Dr. Somnath Mishra (1936-2022) was an outstanding student, graduating in 1959 from IISc, Bangalore. He never became 2nd in his Indian Academic career. He was also an outstanding speaker on Technology, and I still remember the brilliant talk he gave on Engineer's day in 1975 - titled "Technological Forecasting". It is one of the best I have heard in India and abroad. The address was to the engineers of Odisha at Institute of Engineers, Orissa Center at BBSR , on Engineers day in 1975. I was then the Joint Secretary of the institute.

Dr. Mishra became Principal of NIT at the young age of 38 and continued for 22 long years. I think he could have gone on to much higher positions but sacrificed to stay and build this great institution, Regional Engineering College, Rourkela. Today it is known as National Institute of Technology Rourkela, and it ranks 15th in the country today.

Interestingly, before returning from MIT, he applied for faculty positions in BHU & REC, Rourkela. He had applied for an Asst. Prof post at REC, Rourkela, but was offered a lower position as a Senior Lecturer. Lucky him, BHU offered him an Associate Prof. position for his

classy research work abroad. And soon he was promoted to full Professorship at BHU. He had more than two years qualifying experience as a Professor at BHU when the post of Principal of REC, became open. The Nandini Satpathy Govt was hesitant to give him the position, as he was considered "too young".

I heard about it from his younger brother Raghunath Mishra (Father of Sunil Mishra 1990 of Chicago), who was my colleague & a fellow Asst Engineer at Aero Engine Factory Project, Sunabeda, in our club one day. I/We then created hue and cry in the Engineering & activist circle. Everybody who mattered knew him as an outstanding scholar, so the Nandini Satpathy Government soon yielded under pressure and he was selected. The "Too Young" argument failed.

One last story, from his school Math teacher Ramani Ranjan Dash, who later studied to become a lecturer. When I met Ramani Babu, he was a lecturer of Mathematics & my daily Bus co-passenger from Cuttack to BBSR for a couple of years. He told me this story while traveling by the intercity bus about Dr. Mishra. It seems kid Somnath was a troublemaker in his class but a learner with an extraordinary mind. So, early in class eight, four of his teachers led by legendary Head Master & Poet Baikuntha Patnaik (father of Sunanda Patnaik the famed classical singer) & Ramani babu, decided that the boy Somnath was very intelligent but his school tasks were not sufficiently challenging to him, and thus, he was becoming troublesome. They planned to pay special attention to him. They assigned him extra homework compared to the rest of his class. Per Ramani Babu the diagnosis was correct - Somnath's mischief in class reduced and he flourished well and soon became the topper of the class. Sensing success, the quartet started giving him extra home tasks regularly. Somnath stepped up and did well in those challenging assignments. Not only he topped his class but soon topped the whole state in the Matriculation examination; he never looked back. He stood 1st in I.Sc., 1st class 1st in B.Sc (Hons) & Best Graduate honors (Mayurbhanj Gold Medal) at Ravenshaw College. His accomplishments read like a magnificent story of teachers bringing out excellence in a prodigious kid. Prof. Ramani Dash was really very proud of his ex-student.

I met Dr. Somnath Mishra last at NIT Rourkela Overseas Alumni Association (NITROAA) 2nd annual convention at Atlanta in 2015. He was our chief guest. He came with his wife Sushma and son Bobby. He was still agile & strong. His lecture, and many of his photos are in the 2015 NITROAA souvenir. I was in touch with him over LinkedIn till the last days of his life. May his soul Rest In Peace.



Bapu: A story about the father of our nation



Rishaan Jena, 3rd grade, New Jersey

Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, in India. He was a great leader and inspired a lot of people when he freed India from British rule. His birthday is a holiday called International Day of Nonviolence because he did not want to fight the British for India's independence from British rule, instead he wanted to show them their brutish behavior. His life was very hard. He was sometimes smacked by British officers. Their rules were unfair to Hindus and Muslims and more. Gandhi was trying to get rid of the British rules. His speeches were popular amongst Hindus and Muslims. Mahatma Gandhi talked about nonviolence and to not fight the British. Lots of people were inspired by his speech.

The Britishers were worried about Mahatma Gandhi. They arrested him and the other Hindus and Muslims. They all worked hard in prison. One day they were in the court and the judge asked Gandhi if he wanted to be out of jail. Gandhi said whatever you say, judge. The judge then asked if he wanted to pay bail or not. Gandhi said I refuse to pay bail to you. The judge set him free and the other people too, then Gandhi became very popular. He went on a train with a lot of Indians to visit India. He was moved to see people with no clothes. Gandhi gave some of his clothes to the Indians. He went to an Indian home with lots of people. He met a poor Indian who voiced that since the British came, everyone is buying clothing from them. Indians are not buying clothes from us and that is why we are poor. Gandhi said we will try our best for you. Soon people were killing the British soldiers with clubs and torches. Gandhi was very upset because of this violence. Gandhi said he would fast if this keeps on happening. He began to fast and soon people became nonviolent. They garlanded the British soldiers and were kind to them. Gandhi stopped fasting.

Gandhi protested the British rule by resorting to many non-violent movements and one such act of nonviolent civil disobedience was the Dandi March. Gandhi motivated all Indians to break the salt monopoly that Britishers exerted by making salt themselves. This movement

became very large as Gandhi continued to address large crowds and motivated them to make salt. Britishers did not imagine the movement to become such large scale and resorted to violence to stop the Satyagraha or non-violent movement. Many such movements resulted in Gandhi being sent to jail frequently.

The violence that Britishers adopted to non-violent protests by Indians, were soon noticed by Charlie who was Gandhi's friend and a journalist from South Africa. Finally, the British government agreed to exit India and promised independence from British rule. It was decided that India will be divided into two countries, India, and Pakistan. The Muslims did not like it at all because they wanted to be together. When they were going to their countries a man threw a stone at someone and they started fighting. When they arrived in their countries they began fighting again. When Gandhi came to know about this, he was shocked, and said that he will fast again. The people were fighting every day. And Gandhi fasted a lot, but they still did not stop. Gandhi was getting weaker and weaker. His friend Nehru was telling him to stop fasting because he was getting very weak. But Gandhi said that I will not stop until the Hindus and the Muslims stop their violence. Then Nehru gave a speech to everyone to stop fighting. The Hindus and Muslims were still not listening to Nehru. Nehru gave a speech to the entire country and said that Gandhi is fasting and getting very weak every day and if you stop the violence, Gandhi will break his fast. The next day a lot of Muslims and Hindus came to Gandhi, and they said they will stop the violence. They also had some questions for Gandhi. One person came and gave food to Gandhi and said he killed a child. Gandhi said he should find a child whose parents were killed in the riots, adopt the child, and raise it. This enlightened the man, and he wept a lot at Gandhi's feet. Gandhi helped all the people. Once Gandhi got better, they went to a meeting with the British and India finally became free.

Gandhi was instrumental in India's struggle for Independence from the British rule, he helped promote unity among Hindus and Muslims and as a result, India became the peace-loving country that it is today and we can witness communal harmony in different parts of the country where people of different religions, caste, and creed live together like brothers and sisters. Mahatma Gandhi was truly the Father of the Nation.



English Poems



Celebrating the New Year



Mamata Misra, Austin, Texas.

one new year!
twelve new months!
three hundred sixty five new days!
eight thousand seven hundred new hours!
five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred new minutes!
thirty one million five hundred thirty six thousand new seconds!

yet, staying awake, to receive the arrival of that
one new year, with a splash and a bang
we stay oblivious to the arrivals of the
thirty one million five hundred thirty six thousand new moments!

then, we go about our ways
of pretending that life is just the same old drab
not a celebration!



Where I'm From



Shasyak Panda, 11th Grade, Cumming, GA

I am from crusty old bricks, from Lego and Duplo
I am from sticks and stones, dust and dirt
I am from Law and Order and from Might and Machine
I am the blue oleander amidst a bouquet of assorted cluster

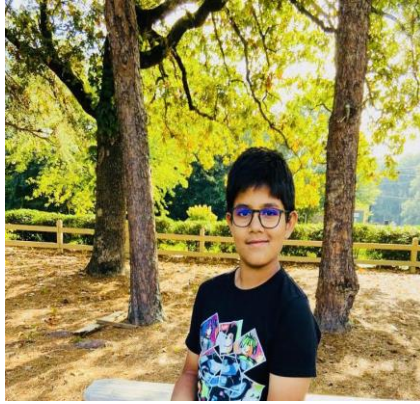
I am from cyber pros and cyber woes
and from prodigies and punishment
From turbulent winters to hellish summers
I am from a second millenarian
(a generation that is now decrepit in my age)

I am from rice puffs and curry leaves
From arid desert to lush forest
I am from a century of turmoil and reconciliation.

I am all those things and even some more.



Family Stories



Sarvansh Mishra, Cumming, GA

Family is always so warm!!

An unplanned, God-gifted journey with people.

A code that sets things in motion
and controls a lot of our emotions.

The magic of us all coming together,
we dive into orbits of storytelling.
Generations and generations of sharing,
real, unreal and silent, all absorbing.

Freed from norm-based obstacles,
zoning into each other we mingle.

Dreamy eyes and open hearts.

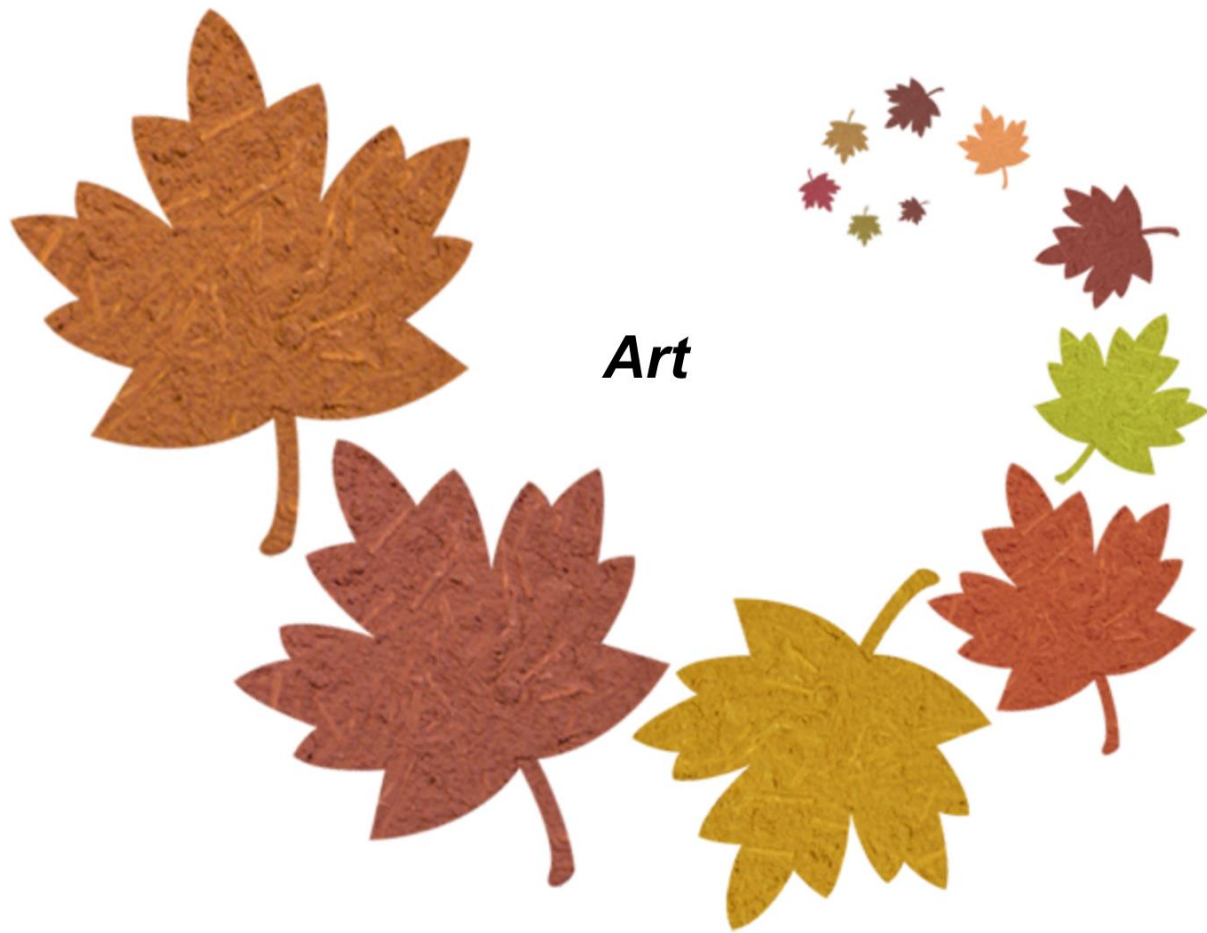
Sometimes we also fumble.

We enjoy every moment of togetherness.

Family is all wrapped up in belongingness.



Arts



City of Cards



Debasnata Dash, Naperville, IL

Creations made of cards are quite beautiful. With infinite potential, they can seemingly build all our imaginations desire, from the most simplistic pyramid stacks to entire buildings and cities. They are also quite fragile. At some point, the creation must fall. All it takes is time. But sometimes, the way they fall is just as beautiful as what they shaped or perhaps, even more so. Then how different is our life and surroundings? Life in itself is beautiful, filled with experiences of infinite variety and influenced by the limits of human discovery and imagination. It is also quite fragile. Everchanging and impermanent. At some point it must end. However, it not something to be feared. For sometimes, the end is just as beautiful as journey or perhaps, just maybe, even more so.



