

# CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

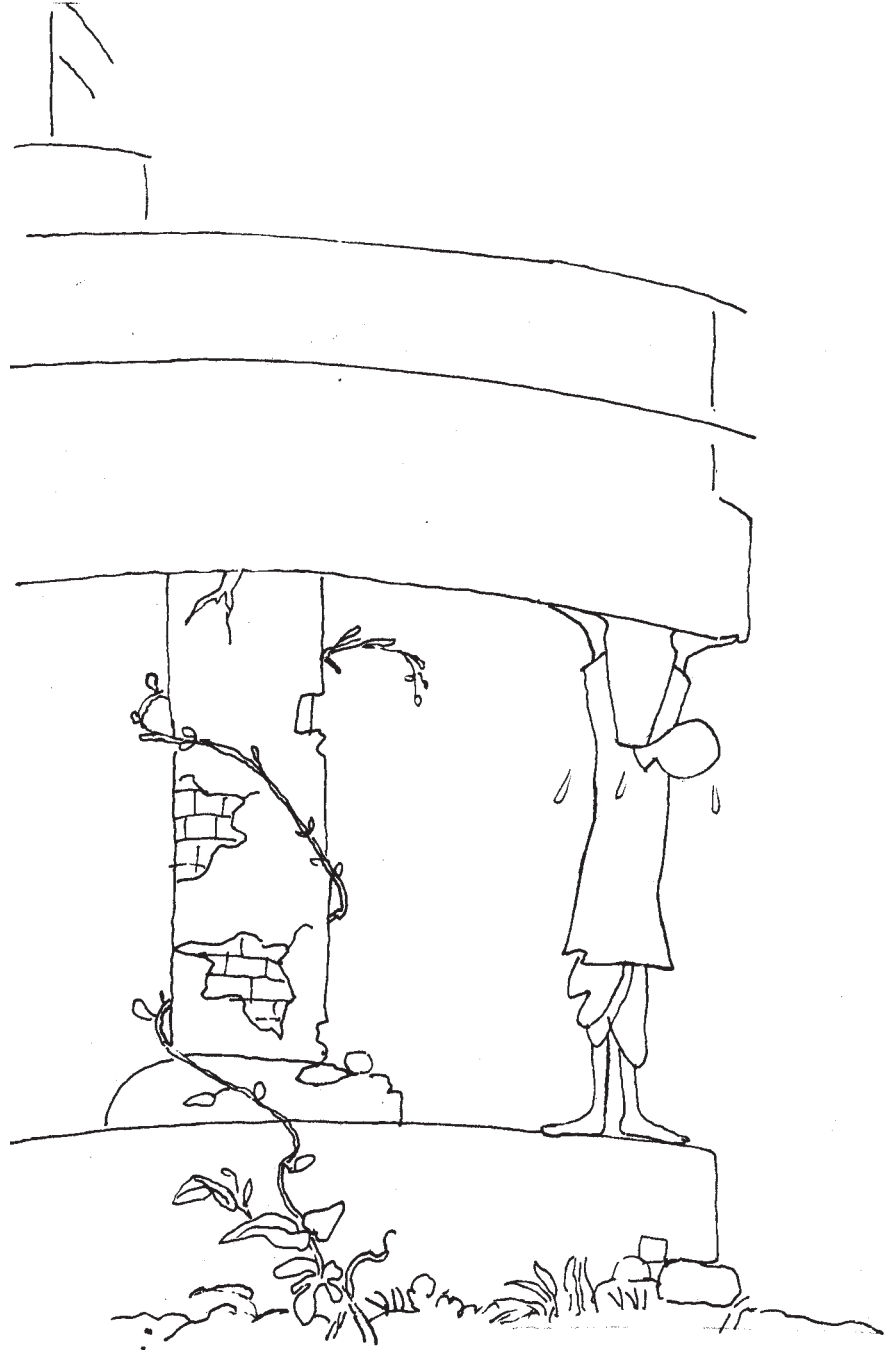
• P. S. DEODHAR •

Art  
Shyam Joshi

Tech Publications

## *Dedication*

*The Common Man,  
who is being ruled over and carries the burden of  
Functional Anarchy that we, the elite, acknowledge as  
Indian Democracy*



## MOTIVATION

I spent four years in Delhi, the Capital, from 1985 till the end of the Rajiv rule, in December 1989. The memories of those years make me sad. Sad, because I progressively realised that the ever widening gap between what we can be as a nation and what we are, would never be bridged because of the way Delhi operated. Sad to notice that a whole nation has remained chained; and under the oppressive rule by a system even after being liberated 45 years ago. Sad because public servants continued to rule over the ryot. Even the victimised seemed to derive a strange pleasure in victimising others. Sad, as there were no role models any more for our youngsters to look up to. Sad & also mad that the solutions were either illusive or the system aborted the few, that I could offer. Sad also that the Capital was so different from the country. Almost no one appeared to be concerned about nation building. Bureaucrats were busy with their careers and the politicians preoccupied with retaining or regaining their chairs. Everyone appeared self centred, insecure and insensitive. The most painful part is that things continue to remain unchanged.

My stay in the capital was educative. It made me learn to be tolerant. To survive here, one has to develop tolerance for hypocrisy, for lies, for stupidity, for delays, for wasted time and money. It was amazing to see, how so many well read, accomplished and competent individuals could together be so foolish and counter-productive. It also helped me watch the 'system' from close quarters. I could feel its vice-like grip over everything that could have become our tools of development. I occasionally saw even a well meaning bureaucrat himself becoming a victim of the accused system. My four years in the capital were indeed, a punishment. I call it the 'Capital Punishment'. It is strange however that such confinement also helps one to search inside, meditate and think, think positive.

While in Delhi, I held an impressive title. For that, I was respected by some, feared by some, envied by some and hated by others. Most of them however did not know that the position was essentially an empty title; for, so it was created by the system lords. The title however, had a shadow power. Even though I hated to wield it, its possession helped me to watch the drama from close quarters and to learn first hand how the Government works or rather avoids to work. There were people with no 'title' but very effective in doing what they wished just with a shadow power. I was amused to find that, the players of the game were greatly confused by simple honesty. Truth was strange to them. My decision to search and look for only the solutions and ignore the surroundings, however, proved to be rewarding.

Three years have passed since. The system has taken its toll. Rajiv reached the point of no return and is gone forever. A friend is lost. I am back in Bombay at my old desk. Yet I deeply, and probably pointlessly, still worry about where we are going and where we should have been.

The lines I have written in this book reflect that mood and mirror sentiments of many of my friends. Their responses have given me the courage to put these thoughts before you. Many amongst the senior bureaucrats, who, I hold in great esteem, also share my disappointments. There is nothing personal against anyone. In fact that precisely is the problem before us. The system is faceless. It allows one to generate files & notings which cannot be faulted and yet its sum total spells disaster. The System enables everyone not only to avoid any blame but also enables everyone to blame everyone else. What else then can one do but indulge in poetry?

I am presenting here some of the anguish and the pain that I felt during those years and which I continue to feel. It's intensity is debilitating and all consuming.

Shyam Joshi is an accomplished and acclaimed artist and cartoonist with a firm grip on his pen. He has given a charming expression to my concepts of embellishing the lines with lyrical sketches.

I cannot end without appreciating the tolerance and ungrudging acceptance by Ami, of my wild endeavours and long absence hurting our togetherness.

Ramnarayan Patroji is, in any case indispensable.

Finally it was Bapusaheb who not only persuaded me to publish 'Capital Punishment' but also readily agreed to write a foreword to it. Throughout my stay in Delhi, Shri Sathe has emboldened me to say what must be said and encouraged me to move forward and be positive.

# FOREWORD

## Shri Vasant Sathe

'Capital Punishment' is a book of poems written by Shri Prabhu Deodhar over a period mainly during his stay in Delhi, the capital of India, where he spent four years during an important period of late Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister from 1985-89. Basically, Shri P.S. Deodhar is an expert in the field of electronics and mass communication and is essentially a man of science. But every scientist does not necessarily have only a scientific temper. Shri Deodhar combines in him a rational scientific temper with every sensitive humanitarian heart. It is the second aspect of sensitivity to injustice created by the system, of which organised society becomes slave, that has influenced these poems of Shri. P.S. Deodhar.

Being a Technocrat and inspired by the vision of changing the society with the help of the growing techniques of communication, Shri Deodhar had found a common wave-length with late Rajiv Gandhi, who also had been fired by the imagination and vision of taking India into the twenty-first century as a modern nation, standing at par with the best in the world. Rajiv, therefore, took the help of men like Shri P.S. Deodhar, Shri Sam Pitroda and others in his mission for a new technological revolution. But, very soon these Technocrats as well as the late young Prime Minister Rajiv realised the stranglehold which the status-quoist bureaucratic machinery had on the entire administrative system. The system was so rigid and wooden that it nearly became impossible to implement even simple progressive plans. This, naturally, resulted in a sense of suffocation and frustration. All these experiences find their expression in these poems. It is this feeling of strangulation to creative endeavour which Shri Deodhar has described aptly as 'Capital Punishment'.

The readers would find most of the poems not only of contemporary interest but describing the feeling of a man dealing with the Government at the highest level. In the very first chapter about 'The Vision That Isn't' the poet says,

"But if this new tech  
fails to enrich the lives  
of our rural folks  
& enhance their work & art  
or if it just grooms  
the keyboard baby  
out of our rural lads  
putting them in city slums  
chasing dreams & fads,  
its no technology  
it's an apology  
to our wisdom".

He laments in the next poem about distant vision and says about our television,

"But the Doordarshan,  
our own distant vision,  
is more distant  
with less of vision".

Having dealt with how the electronic media should be put to the service of the rural people and also the urban poor as a basic objective of modern technology, we find in the next chapter his lament about the frustrating rigidity of the bureaucratic system.

He beautifully expresses the feeling which is the common experience of everyone when he says in his poem 'Smile File & Wait',

"Smile, file & wait,  
wait long enough  
for the enthusiasm  
to wear,  
for the patience  
to exhaust,  
for the memory  
to fade,  
for the technology  
to be obsolete,

for the person  
to be transferred!  
Everything by them  
gets resolved!  
Some babu keeps  
Feeding the files,  
and the Nation  
drags along,  
with a limp,  
as the 'Smiling Waiters'  
play with finesse  
their filing game!"

Shri Deodhar comments about the tax system & about a new 'Megacorp' as well. His poems entitles 'Dollar Bhushan', 'Power Game' are all commentary on a system that has led to the 'great security scam', which is an example of the disease of wide-spread corruption.

In the following chapters 'Caged Within' and 'In Solitary Confinement', we find the Poet expressing himself and his hope that goodness can still prevail and dreams of the noble minds could still be achieved. In the poem 'Dream Merchant' he says,

"Let's Dream, my friends  
of better things  
clever clues to rewarding life,  
adding to comforts by  
dreaming of solutions  
leading to a fuller life.  
Dream! Indeed it is  
A nurturing force.  
Come on, let's forge  
a determined force,  
because,  
it is one thing to dream  
and altogether another  
to make it real.  
Only the dreams of  
the men who act,  
a dextrous lot  
could deliver reality  
working hard  
and working smart."

In the chapter 'The Journey of the Captive', the poet has given expression to his feelings about great leaders in whose contact he had come, like, Smt. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. We find them in his poems 'Inheritance', 'Growing Up' and others. While describing Rajiv in the poem 'No Sure Cure', the description of young Rajiv when he took over as Prime Minister, is so apt and beautiful. Shri Deodhar says,

"Sad & Serene  
he looked every inch  
a prince charming.  
Swan in the midst of  
political crows,  
sleepy opportunists!  
& uninspiring halfwits!  
In that face  
they saw a ray of hope  
some one who might  
give the nation a rare scope,  
to wipe out the corruption  
& snap the unholy bond  
between the crime and  
the politics of slime."

But having lost this young leader, we find Shri Deodhar in his characteristic manner commenting on the helpless passivity of our people hoping for the arrival of some great supreme leader. And in the poem titled 'Wanted – A Great Leader' he says,

Strangely,  
the Japanese never needed  
anyone to lead –  
no super leader for them  
to built the nation  
making its success  
a sensation.  
Nor do the Germans  
anymore find  
need for Hitler's kind;  
ordinary leaders are  
making miracles  
uniting the nation  
without commotion.  
But in our Mother India,  
Country of brown masters  
& brown slaves,  
we kid ourselves.  
Without a super leader  
We all shiver & shudder  
Like orphaned imbeciles”.

This book of Poems thus is an expression of anguish and anger of an honest, sincere and technically competent person who while criticising the faults in our system wants to stir the conscience of our people to stand on their own feet with a sense of self-respect and self-confidence to build a strong, united and modern India. I wish to congratulate Shri Deodhar for this beautiful book of poems which makes not only interesting but a moving and inspiring piece of literature.

28.12.92

**Vasant Sathe**

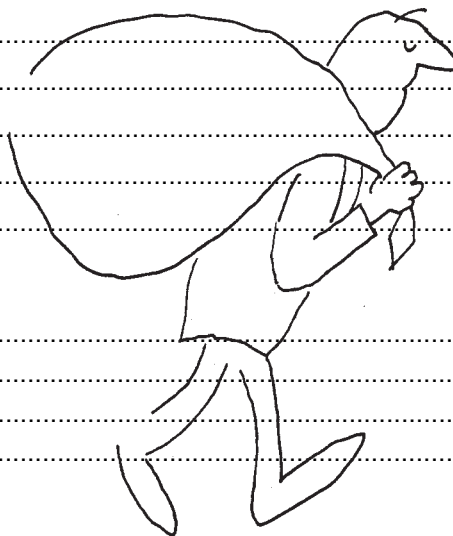
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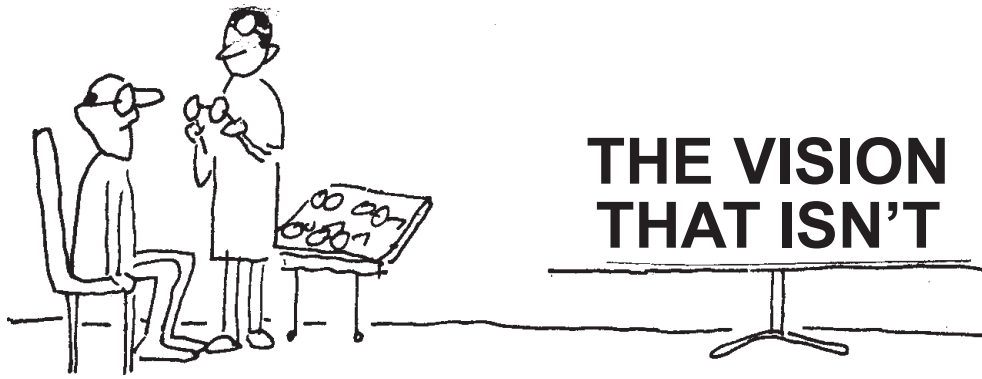
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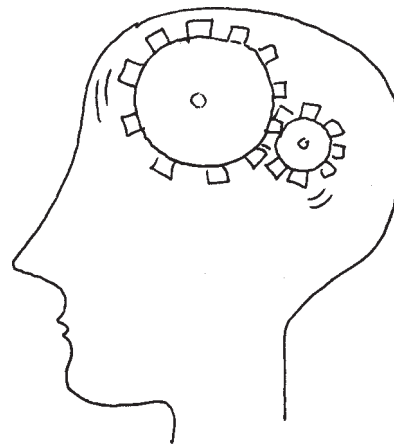


## A CHALLENGE TO WISDOM

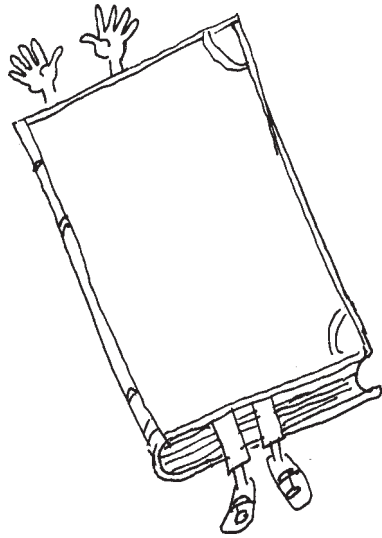
What's the use of  
Any data to me,  
if it can't collate  
into some information?  
And, is the information any good  
If it adds not  
To my knowledge base?  
and is my knowledge  
of any consequence  
if it overwhelms & clouds  
the wisdom within or  
does not lead to action?

T.S. Eliot asks  
In pages of 'The Rock'  
"where is the life,  
we have lost in living?"  
Let's wait & think  
Allow the idea to sink;

Our rural folksy life,  
and its culture  
is almost immortal,  
having far outlived  
our fickle urban craze,  
the kingdoms, the empires  
the invaders & what not!  
Of what use then,  
is the info-tech  
if it can't make me  
a better farmer  
or a better weaver  
or a skilled carpenter  
in my own environment?



Many talk today  
of Education Technology.  
We, the city bred,  
Enthusiastic & earnest  
Are at it with  
missionary zeal & zest.  
But if this new tech  
fails to enrich the lives  
of our rural folks  
& enhance their work & art  
or if it just grooms  
the keyboard Babu  
out of our rural lads  
putting them in city slums  
chasing dreams & fads,  
it's not technology  
it's an apology  
to our wisdom.



## DISTANT VISION

"The most awesome Godless force"  
Paddy Chyersky chose to call it.

Indeed TV is a force,  
but whether it is  
awesome or Godless,  
shall depend on  
the men behind the steering,  
their vision & their bearing!

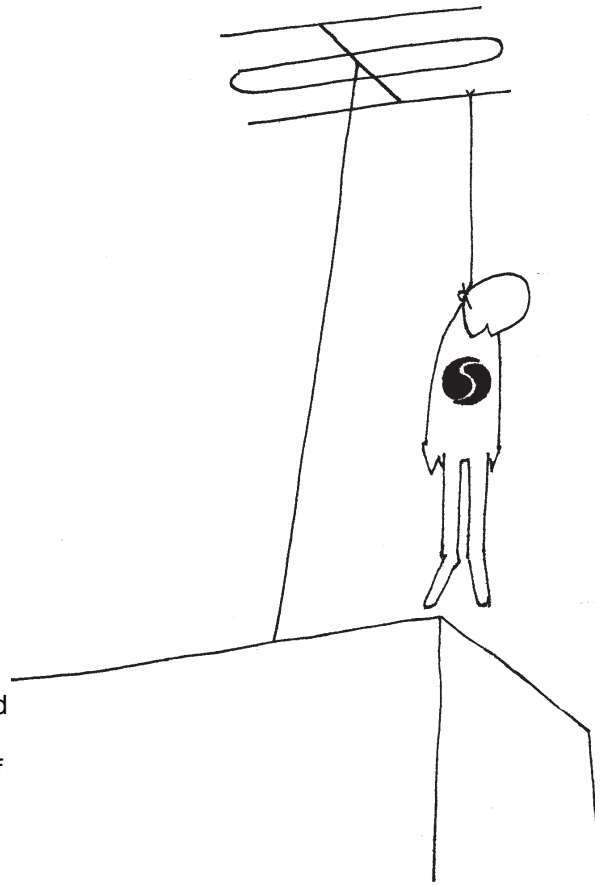
Idiot box, you may call it,  
But it does manage minds,  
Influencing our work,  
play and food  
and, of course, our fun!

Styles & fashions  
Fads & even fears,  
It's the Television  
that puts them in gears!

But the Doordarshan  
our own distant vision,  
is more distant  
with less of vision.

Sad & disillusioned,  
The creative & the envisioned  
Are dumped in closets  
in the suffocating company of  
Bureaucratic skeletons!  
For a long time now,  
the images we make  
have been, at best,  
well intended but naïve  
interspread with  
middleclass morality,  
& at worst,  
uninspiring & dull  
frivolous and even mindless!  
For some time now,  
we are digging a grave,  
turning our television  
into a plug-in weapon,  
to aid a political kill!

But let us remember,  
in the hands  
of the crude  
& the cussed  
this country-grenade  
might explode  
a moment too soon  
hurting not just the one,  
but all who stand around!



These are sad times indeed,  
and perhaps confusing,  
Because, on one hand,  
There are joyous wonders  
As we reach the very core,  
Wishing to divest  
Power to the poor  
and on the other,  
displaying insensitivity,  
towards the new media  
that could build for us,  
a nation unified & sound!

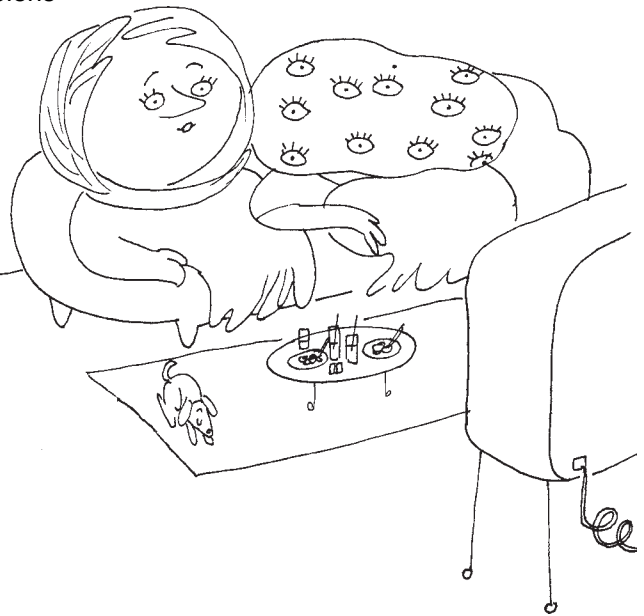
Credibility & trust  
are hard to come by!  
Glass vessels they are  
& indeed, brittle as much!  
Oh! Friend, be courageous,  
please keep awake,  
Eternal Vigilance  
on every front  
is 'the price of liberty'!

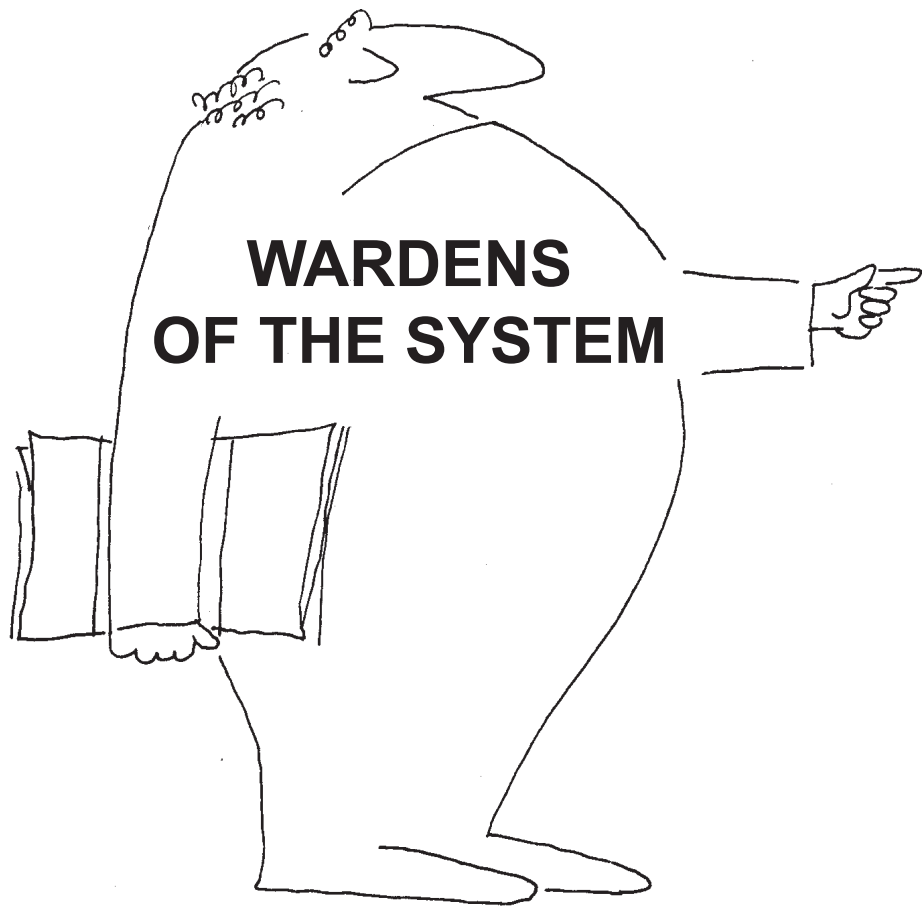
## POTATOES & CABBAGES

Slowly but surely  
all humans will turn  
into potatoes,  
with as many eyes  
as the channels on the 'box'  
and appropriately develop  
lots and lots of carbo  
around the bulging self.  
The TV addicts will  
soon start looking  
like layers of Amul  
spread over a sofa set!  
Some of us, the crazy ones,  
want people to make Tele-video  
a learning medium,  
wanting them to think  
& even to respond!  
But we have been told  
By cynical intellectuals  
that the modern homo sapiens  
is a Televisionary!

He watches TV or Video  
Just to avoid thinking.  
It is too much work  
To be responsive,  
& be bothered with  
applying his mind.  
Why should he rather not  
gather the chums & chat  
or simply concentrate  
on the comics  
or the gossips  
in glossy mags?

Then it struck me  
that these literate rich,  
their life well stitched  
are already in a ditch.  
They have little use  
for any information to enrich!  
To know 'how'  
and to know 'why'  
That's the need  
of illiterate Bharat  
of an inquisitive farmer,  
a village artisan  
or any rural Insan.  
Brain of our own  
self-proclaimed intellectuals,  
aping the West,  
may soon, however,  
resemble a cabbage,  
with lots of fluffy foliage  
like memorised information  
sans wisdom,  
a mere storehouse  
of impotent knowledge.





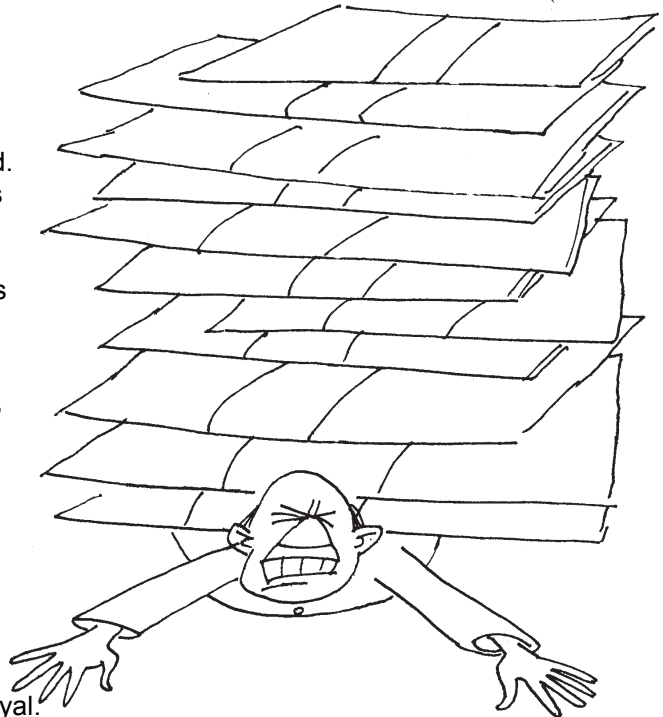
## SMILE FILE & WAIT

“That’s a very good idea”  
“Prepare a detailed scheme”  
said the boss,  
wearing that winning smile!

The gentle grip and  
the warm handshake  
was sending me  
on a trip!  
And then, like someone  
Possessed  
I began my work  
with zeal & zest  
pushing my men  
to do their best  
demanding nothing less  
than the finest!

With our efforts full steam  
prepare we did  
a proposal, a plan  
comprehensive, clear,  
neat and well-knit  
A worthy document  
well researched & vivid  
founded on figures  
and revealing facts!  
Everyone working on it  
thoughtfully adding  
this and also that!

On a landmark day  
We were ready  
with our document  
impressive & well bound.  
Our joy knew no bounds  
as we heard him say  
‘Very Good’  
a reward that pleased us  
like nothing else could!  
Then silently came  
a comment benign,  
‘Give it to my Secretary’  
Never could I fathom,  
what those words  
really implied.  
At that moment  
in that room  
I could never  
forsee the doom!  
After that,  
Started the treatment royal.  
A query was always  
Answered promptly  
With a toothy smile  
‘We are looking into it!’



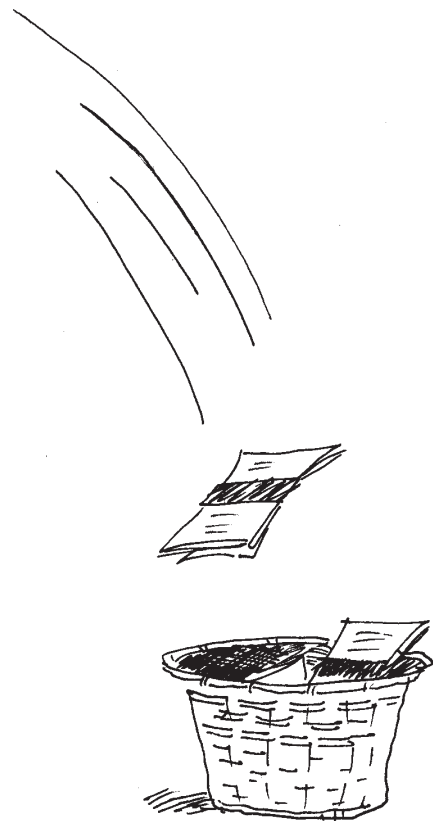
Several months passed  
and a few days more  
the whole suspense was  
making me sore!  
I took to pen  
& wrote a plaint  
knowing not then  
all was in vain!

As the worldly wisdom  
Turned me sober  
Uncomfortable anxiety  
Replaced my anger!  
I realised soon  
One could never fight  
The bureaucratic might  
& never to lose sight  
that power is ever right!

I consoled myself  
'Patience can never go wrong'  
File treatment had begun,  
Never reject  
Never contradict  
simply administer  
a babu treatment  
Operation-Plain-Neglect

Smile, file & wait,  
Wait long enough  
for the enthusiasm  
to wear,  
for the patience  
to exhaust,  
for the memory  
to fade,  
for the technology  
to be obsolete,  
for the person  
to be transferred!

Everything by then  
gets resolved!  
some babu keeps  
feeding the files,  
and the Nation  
drags along,  
with a limp,  
as the 'Smiling Waiters'  
play with finesse  
their filing game!

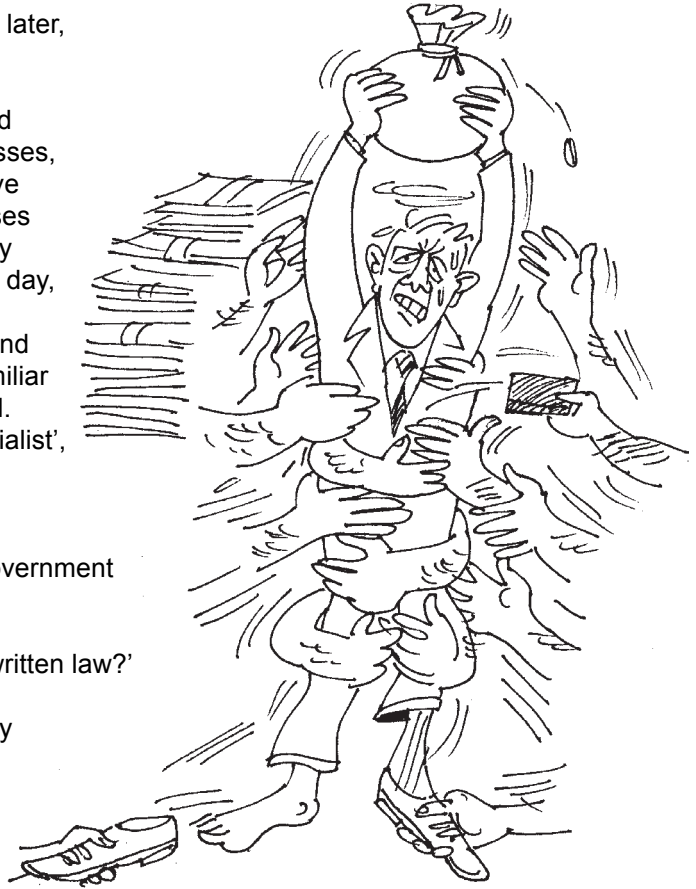


## TAXES & DUES

Since I started this S.S.I  
it was difficult to know why,  
I see more inspectors a day  
than customers in a month!  
There was one this morning  
computing the sales tax  
another one arrived little later,  
to catch me using FAX!

One just left, investigated  
Our environmental excesses,  
the Government, I believe  
must suspect all successes  
I became very very angry  
when an inspector, other day,  
demanded a bribe.  
He too was shocked to find  
that I was actually unfamiliar  
with creatures of his kind.  
'You, Small Time industrialist',  
roared the inspector,  
'do you really believe  
that you could get away  
by merely paying the Government  
their taxes in full?  
How do you forget me?  
'Don't you know the unwritten law?'  
only part of our salary  
is from the Govt. treasury  
You provide the butter  
with that, the bread  
will taste better!  
Then on, any matter  
Can slip through  
without any flutter.

Then one day,  
my old man  
Scolded me at home.  
Said he, 'Why don't you pay  
all the inspectors dues  
and remit taxes  
before the Govt. sues.  
Thank your start, Sonny,  
our taxes are rather high  
but these Sarkari Angels  
merely ask a percentile charge  
Why get upset?  
Look back into our history  
& thank the God Almighty  
that today's public servants  
once paid, never grouse,  
unlike their historic cousins,  
never demand  
your daughter & spouse!  
So, don't you ever wail.  
All our taxes & dues  
are yet only in cash  
and that too  
on a small scale!

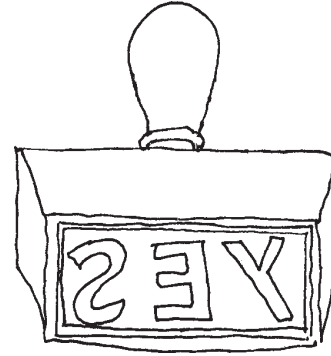


## ALL IS WELL SIR

All is well, Sir  
People are happy  
& very contented  
Prices are stable  
Army strong & able!

All is well, Sir  
Young brides are safe  
Not even one burnt  
Dowry is not in sight,  
No more Sati stunt!

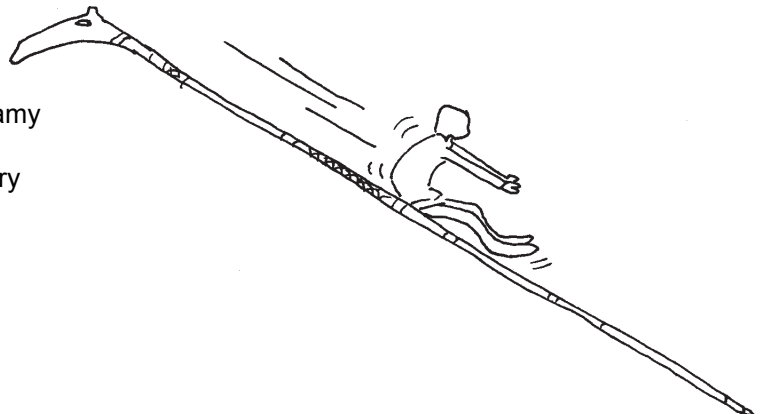
All is well, Sir  
Hindus-Muslims  
move together  
hand in hand  
what's Khalistan  
none even knows  
& to Shivsainiks,  
Muslims are no foes!



Please Sir,  
could you sign here,  
Oh, here is the pen Sir,  
no, Sir, not there,  
on this dotted line!  
Oh, what's this file?  
No, nothing special Sir,  
it's strategic import!  
My Mother's  
grandson's firm  
helping the Nation  
with urgent import  
as a precaution!  
Wise diplomatic move,  
isn't it Sir!

All is well, Sir  
Collectors & Magistrates  
Are all in place  
Law & order inland  
Is under the grip  
Of a firm hand  
Politically we now have  
Indeed a strong base

One last thing, Sir  
I am planning  
to move Gunduswamy  
from Finance  
to Animal Husbandry  
No sir,  
He is 54 batch  
There is no  
Supercession.  
No problem!  
All is well, Sir



## MEGACORP

In Delhi, I stumbled upon  
A mighty megacorp,  
Whose only capital  
Is its close grip over  
Delhi, The Capital.

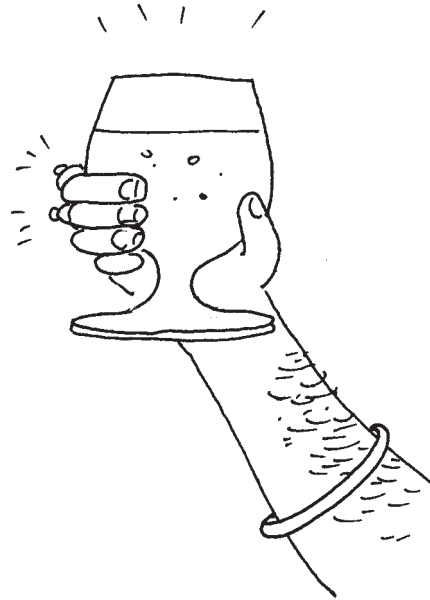
It has, on its Board  
A few top bureaucrats  
& some politicians,  
old crooks & young brats,  
A horde of Govt. babus,  
middle level saabs  
and Society biwis  
are its shareholders.  
Some retired Generals  
& lesser Militia men  
and, of course,  
superannuated technocrats  
& some pretty young things  
are the commission agents.

Megacorp board is mighty ;  
handles that move the Govt.  
it has on its payroll  
greedymen with masks  
playing important role  
bartering nations' soul  
They have sprawling mansions,  
fabulous farm houses,  
Comfy candos,  
All always available  
For deals small or big  
At a price  
Anything they would dig or rig.

Their clients  
Are even mightier,  
big names in trade,  
Industrialists, business magnates,  
some have yuppies,  
business school grade  
from Harvard or Yale  
hired to deliver  
& never to fail.

These myopic pygmies  
are affluent but blind  
money & profiteering  
only things on their mind  
samples of human race  
normally hard to find.  
Megacorp men,  
Complement well,  
Smooth operators  
courteous and competent  
with uncanny knack  
to survive and  
an ability to revive  
even the dead.

Megacorp, nameless  
And faceless may it be,  
Is a force to reckon  
with a turnover,  
someone said,  
in excess of  
thousands of crores!



## DOLLAR BHUSHAN

I feel rather foolish  
these days,  
My friends laugh at me,  
Certain Money Matters  
are indeed  
beyond my comprehension!

Would I have paid  
all the taxes on time  
taking care to keep  
my accounts Tinopal clean,  
had I recognised that  
Our Mai Baap Sarkar,  
every now and then  
HAS to accommodate  
politicians & friends,  
bureaucratic brown saabs  
and buddy business men,  
by announcing  
amnesty to all tax dodgers  
& help the lot to legalise  
or otherwise regularise  
their secret earnings  
made in disguise.

The current one is  
A master stroke indeed.

With 'Hawala' legalised  
& corruption regularised,  
Donors of Dollars  
are being honoured as  
our country's saviours,  
as the economic rescuers,  
with a taxfree regime!

My sons say sullenly,  
Dad, Aap ne to jhak mari  
Itni sari tax bhari  
Had you evaded taxes  
worth millions you paid,  
used your 'contacts' &  
avoided possible IT raid,  
joined the gansters  
and brought in sacksful  
of crisp green bills,  
it's possible,  
on the 26th Jan,  
you could have been  
decorated with  
a 'Dollar Bhushan'!



## POWER GAME

Politician, the leper,  
With his thick  
Desensitised skin  
Will, once again,  
Wear his wide grin  
& be at our door step,  
with some new ploy to win,  
He plans to be 'there'  
with fraud, foul & mean!

Decaying nation shudders  
as its callous corrupt leaders  
gang up their brigades  
for a thuggery game.  
Hold people to ransom  
without a trace of shame

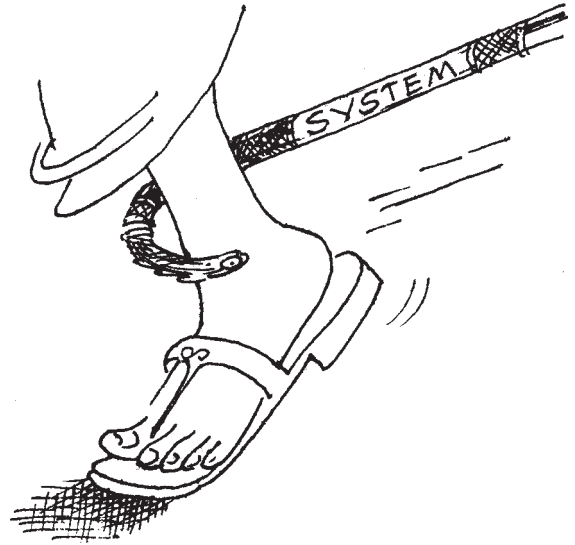
in the backrooms of  
their sprawling Sarkari bungalows,  
they hatch plots,  
forge dubious alliances,  
betray old friends  
& design schemes so insane  
that even Al Pacino will  
hand his head in shame!

Strong stable nation  
has to be, now  
a forgotten notion  
we, unmistakably,  
seem to hasten towards  
an undeserved doom,  
as the mafia conspires  
to seat on  
that prize 'chair'  
a friendly political goon!

A divided nation  
drags through chaos  
people without the present,  
or the future,  
are provoked  
to live in the past.  
Simple met & women are  
Confused & totally aghast  
While, the thoughtfals  
are at a loss;  
What's in store?  
who would remove  
the albatross?



It's irony indeed,  
While the desensitised skins  
& the thick skulls  
donning the party caps  
red, white, blue or green  
are very keen  
to rule after the win,  
The real bosses,  
who never face an election  
or move up the ladder  
without serious selection,  
are in full control  
of every function.  
Either head or tail,  
it is they  
who would win  
and rule  
without fail!



## MY LORD

Almighty Bureaucracy  
daughter of British legacy  
step-mother of democracy  
thrives on the inadequacy  
of our own political anarchy.

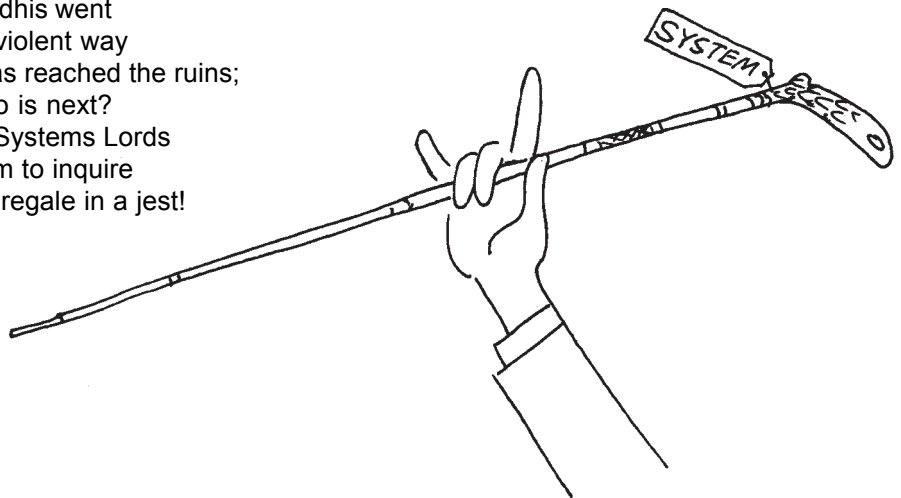
Almighty bureaucracy  
talks of meritocracy  
but is cunning & dicey.  
Dispassionate & unmoved,  
it loves the authority  
bordering autocracy  
serving sermons  
with utter hypocrisy.

Looking obedient & servile  
Bureaucracy hides its smile  
When, in a Don Quixote style,  
Proud politicians pronounce  
systemic overhaul  
to make the administration  
responsive & agile,  
Even the God knows,  
in India, that is Bharat,  
such ideas are futile.

Almighty bureaucracy  
knows from inside  
how to divide  
or engineer a tide  
& watch the slide  
of political reformists  
into oblivion.

Politicians may come  
& politicians may go,  
Almighty bureaucracy  
Enjoys perpetuity  
& continued prosperity.

Gandhis went  
the violent way  
Rajas reached the ruins;  
'Who is next?  
the Systems Lords  
seem to inquire  
and regale in a jest!



## MEERA BHARAT MAHAAN

For a country  
with a dying spirit  
it is quite natural  
to live in the past  
and bask in its glory  
it's no wonder, therefore,  
that the politicians crafty  
would turn to  
our old star cast –  
- Shivaji or Netaji,  
Panditji or Bapuji  
or some cleverer ones  
skillfully use  
the awesome grip of religion  
promising the bliss.

Also it helps to give  
slogans of pride  
in our hefty heritage  
or to brag about  
our glorious greats.

That's a sure way  
to fill the present hollow  
luring gullible millions  
to blindly follow.  
'Mera Bharat Mahaan'  
is a good TV P.R.  
Appealing visual  
well crafted images  
soulful rhythms  
striking the inner chords  
forcing a surge of adrenalin  
causing a caressing high.

For those few, however,  
who live in the present  
and work for the future,  
it is all a cultured trash  
an emotional hogwash  
craftily concocted  
to whitewash & hide  
our impotent inaction  
our failure to deliver  
a promising present –  
a positive & creative present  
vibrant & proud present.

The present that could  
have our shining past  
as a glorious backdrop.  
highlighting our actions  
and achievements of today!

Mera Bharat Mahaan  
may be a historic fact

but for a Habitants of India today  
it brings no 'shaan'  
nor, for it all,  
we deserve any 'sammaan'.  
In a country of nepotism,  
greed, insensitivity,  
casteism, and fanaticism,  
How dare we say  
'Mera Bharat Mahaan'?

"Turn off that TV please  
for the present  
let me do some work".



## DELHI DRAG

Dullness has settled  
deep pessimism & fear  
choke the pores.  
But, somewhere deep within  
I know its time  
to roll up the sleeves  
and hold the bull by the horn.

Shouldn't one step out  
and bring to book  
these bunch of crooks  
and opportunist thugs?

Fortunately the nation progresses  
by the hardwork of commoners –  
simple men raising no banners  
nor throwing any spanners  
in the wheels of the chariot.

As I moved through the field  
invigorating & lush green,  
wobbling around in a cart  
thrilled by the morning chill,  
I felt deep within,  
the Green Revolution was  
no New Delhi creation  
it was the sustained action  
of men who spat on hands  
and took a fresh hold  
on the hull and  
moved forward.

Nothing comes simply to us  
hardwork, sincere efforts,  
vigilant mind no hocus-pocus.  
Nation's progress  
is no election poster  
Or a promise by  
some vile imposter  
in the garb of a patriot.  
Creating wealth  
by making toys or trucks  
or writing music or  
by building bridges,  
seldom has  
any relation to politics  
or 'climate' of Delhi.  
Nations survive on  
men & women  
who soil their hands  
and toil in the field.

So why not  
dispense with Delhi,  
the citadel of  
corrupting power  
and energy sapping  
of parasites who live  
on commissions  
and positions ?



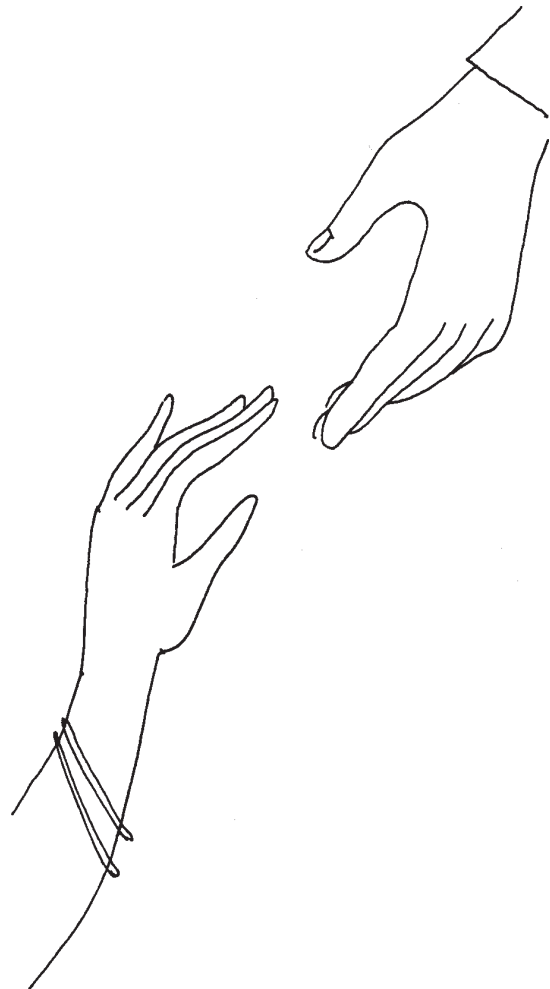


## HOW ?

With you dear,  
I wish to share all  
joys and sorrow  
strengths & weaknesses  
hopes & fears  
successes & failures;  
share with you  
the intimate feelings  
with deep honesty  
and transparency.

But  
fear holds me back  
fear of rejection  
fear of my own anger  
fear of humiliation  
fear of losing you  
fear of being left alone  
so instead  
I manipulate,  
Intimidate and  
Induce guilt in you.

I know for the love  
to blossom again  
to let it remain  
exciting & vibrant  
intense & honest  
we must share  
but how ?  
I don't know.

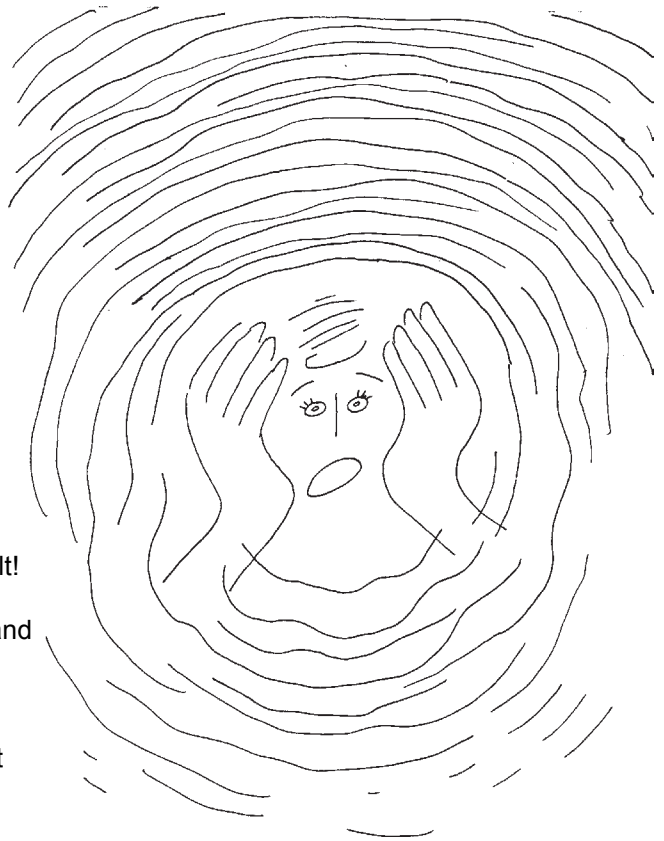


## NIGHTMARE

Nightmares, I know  
are nasty, nagging  
futile, and very fearful!  
I have witnesses  
you shuddering from them  
even on, a quiet night!  
So when am not around  
there is guilt about  
feeling like a thief,  
stealing the time away  
leaving you alone  
when nightmare strikes!  
Listless I get  
not ever knowing  
how to respond to the guilt  
risking togetherness we built!  
Can I disband myself  
and get across this quick sand  
regaining the horizon lost  
to unify the life!

But the most awesome guilt  
And the weird chilling fear  
is that, the dreams  
themselves have now stopped  
feelings themselves are trapped!  
A futile faith, a fantasy  
Has possessed me,  
Invading the privacy  
& enveloping my very  
existence!

This I must fight  
& give it a break  
because something  
very precious  
is at stake.

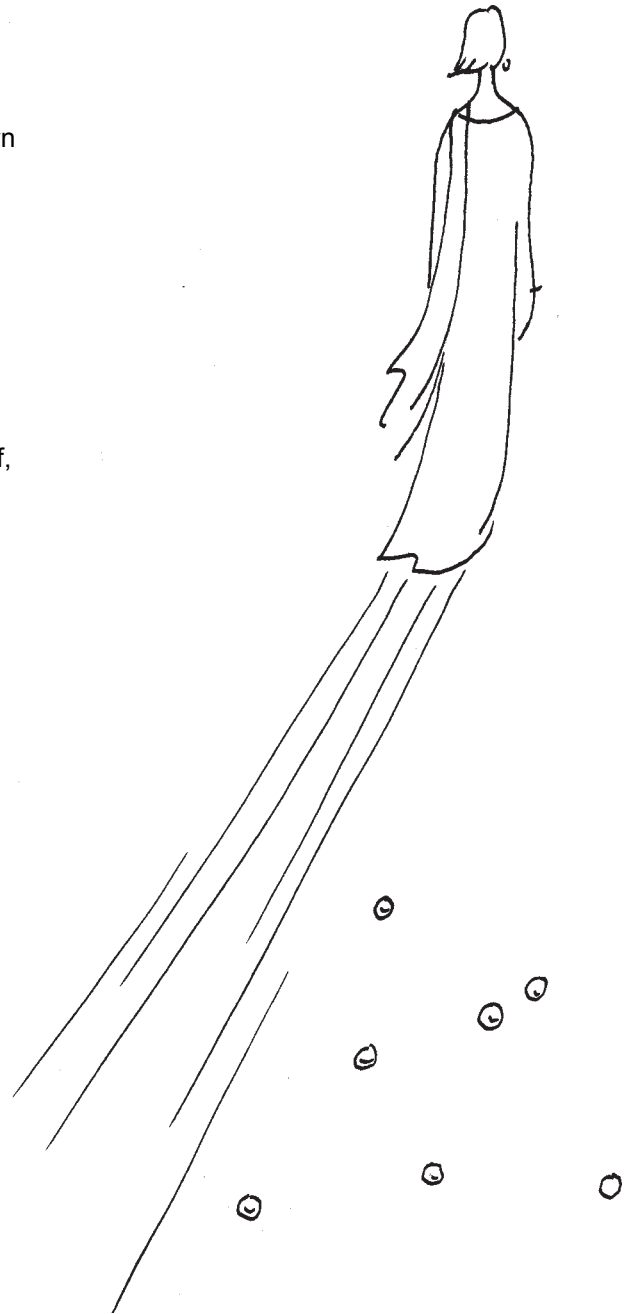


# LOST

We met  
long long ago  
but, I,  
with my alter ego,  
let you go.....  
When I snapped  
that thread  
of togetherness  
& mutual fondness,  
holding the pearls  
of shared moments  
I never noticed,  
those pearls rolling down  
From your crown,  
into the dust  
of my selfish lust!

We indeed met  
long long ago,  
but I,  
with my ego,  
let you go.....  
So involved with myself,  
I didn't notice  
your sadness & pain  
or your loneliness  
as you waited behind  
caring & kind.  
Locked inside a cage  
I myself built,  
With lunatic lust  
& pointless pride,  
I never realised  
I foolishly lost  
my own guide.

I am still  
painfully picking  
those lost beads  
scattered around  
looking for a thread;  
pitiable effort indeed  
to recast the past  
& to relive  
what is lost



## SMILE MEMOIR

The Boeing was full  
the evening boring & dull  
Then, like a nymph descending  
along she came  
with a sudden smile!  
That look, that smile  
placed the face  
in my memory file!

Memories were fading  
but one day again  
a golden chain shines  
around the neck  
of that Vendor of Smiles!

Looking up from a book  
'Love, Medicine & Miracle'  
there I find again  
the pair of eyes  
with a familiar twinkle  
offering chocolates,  
sweets and the smile!  
The contents of the book  
churned my soul inside  
spreading sad gloom  
as I read of cancer doom  
It was then  
that broad benign smile  
took the sadness away,  
even if, just for a while!

Life was eating days away  
And, in a routine way  
Time kept flying  
Like I did, on Indian Airline!  
One one very chilly morning,  
When two obnoxious  
Fat businessmen  
On either side of  
my middle seat  
were giving me an angry fit;  
suddenly came a warm cup  
of steaming coffee  
with that knowing smile  
like the way it could come  
from none else!

That was many flights ago  
I still keep moving, in & out  
but there never has been  
another encounter  
with that smile of renown.  
What is left now is  
commonly known IA frown!  
The face has faded & turned  
into an ancient fresco  
but that simple smile  
somehow is yet fresh  
in my cluttered mind!  
For reasons unknown  
Memories of mental bonds  
Seem to be more durable  
Than those of the flesh!





## IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

### THE TRANSIENT

The lights are glittering  
lending depth to this dark night  
mighty men in their slumber  
ever so vulnerable,  
With a flick of switch  
darkness will pervade  
all around!

Pride, pomp, Presidency  
Powerful premierships  
Are, in real, so fickle;  
One single hit  
Or a cracker on a flight  
Is enough to tumble  
A mighty Moghul

What are we fighting;  
Injustice?  
Cruelty?  
Inhumanness?  
Aren't all these  
mere expressions  
of someone's weakness?

No one can  
always be right,  
or achieve anything  
with a pointless fight.  
Let's now lose the sight  
What wise every knew,  
'what is transient  
is never the truth'!



## CONTINUED EDUCATION

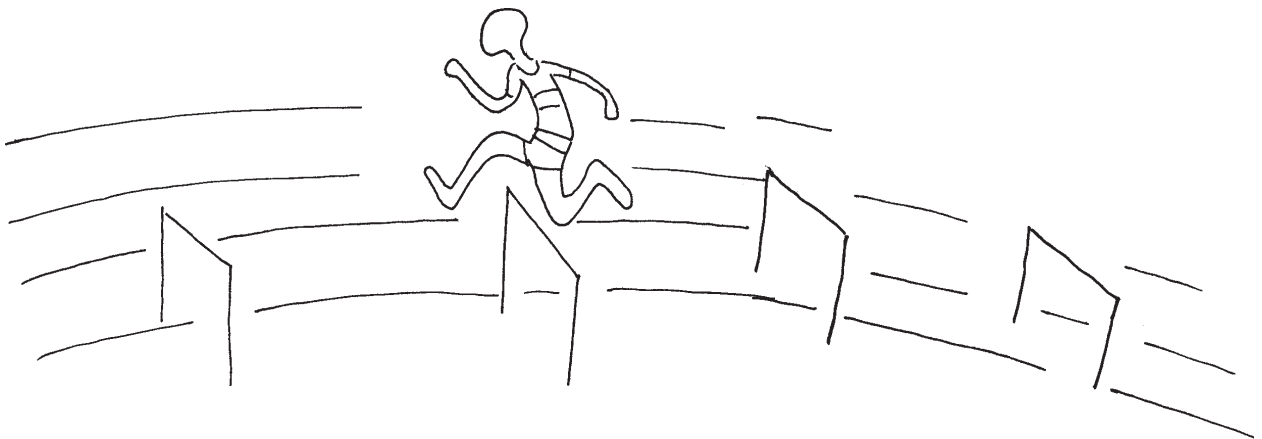
Every tomorrow is my exam  
leading me to a degree  
better than I am!  
No formulae to mug  
nor any text to learn by rote  
this exam involves  
facing the challenges,  
bringing forth my best  
& working with a zest.

This sleeplessness  
could help me harness  
thoughts within,  
gathering myself together  
and stop disasters  
which could have been  
if only emotions  
were to prime  
my actions to win.

Today prepares us  
for tomorrow  
helping to learn  
to live with sorrow.  
Unfathomable happenings  
have taught us long ago,  
probability of failures  
leaves no room for  
arrogance or ego!

My successes today  
have a backdrop of  
failures of yesterday,  
it tempers the celebration  
tutoring me gently  
to rejoice in moderation.

Tomorrow is my Exam.  
If I remain calm,  
Syncing my thoughts  
With words & deeds,  
It would indeed  
Turn any exam  
Into a grand slam!



## NEW MATHS

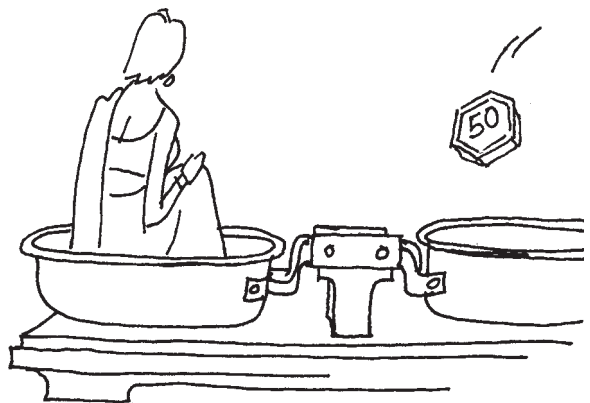
One science  
that has been  
turned into an art  
is the new maths  
of relationships.

There are equations  
in a friendship  
checks & balances  
in a kinship,  
debits and credits,  
in a relationship,  
gifts and discounts  
in a worship!

Calculated relationship,  
measured love and  
matching gifts,  
all reflect  
pettiness & imprudence  
yet one cloaks them with  
affectionate warmth,  
cheating oneself  
hoping to give the lie  
some credence.

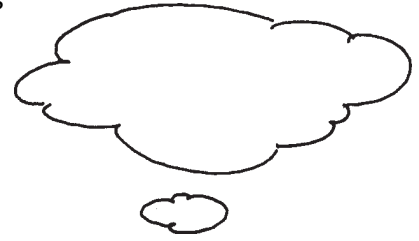
It may be new to me  
but the equations,  
proportions & calculations,  
for time immemorial  
have worked always  
in managing relations!

Accountants of  
relationship  
believe in the delusion  
of having struck gold  
but they know not  
that their crafted  
balance sheets  
will always be decoded  
by the audit of  
their own mind.



## I LOVE PRIDE

I love Pride  
Pride that helps little ones  
grow & blossom  
and be a force!



I love pride  
Pride that angers  
And pushes one  
To work hard  
& show results!

I love Pride  
Pride that makes one glow  
& endear oneself  
as a challenger  
a confident winner!

I love Pride  
Pride that does not consume  
That hurts none  
& that turns  
no one off!

I love pride  
Pride on which  
Nations survive  
Pride that turns  
weaklings into workhorses  
& timids into teamsters!

I love Pride  
Pride in you  
even if it spells  
to me a personal loss  
so long it helps you  
to forge ahead  
& be a winner!

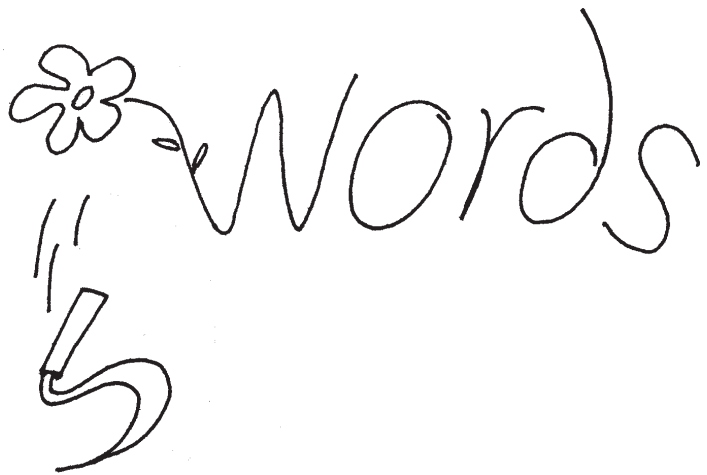
I love Pride  
Pride that motivates  
& sets one up  
to perform, and deliver!



## (S)WORDS !

'Words are weapons  
use them with caution'  
Wisdom like this  
often dawns after  
an ebb of passion.  
Silence is golden  
We are often told.  
For the cautions, the cool  
and the crook & bold  
it is indeed the rule of gold.

Words become weapons  
as our wagging tongues  
lash with languor  
the growing lads,  
poor ageing moms  
or dependent dads.  
But what's that  
fleshy movable  
mouth organ  
that whispers  
the love jargon?  
The one that's  
Silky smooth &  
Sounding sooth?  
The one that  
Invigorates,  
Enthuses,  
& encourages?  
They indeed are  
The words, not (s)words.



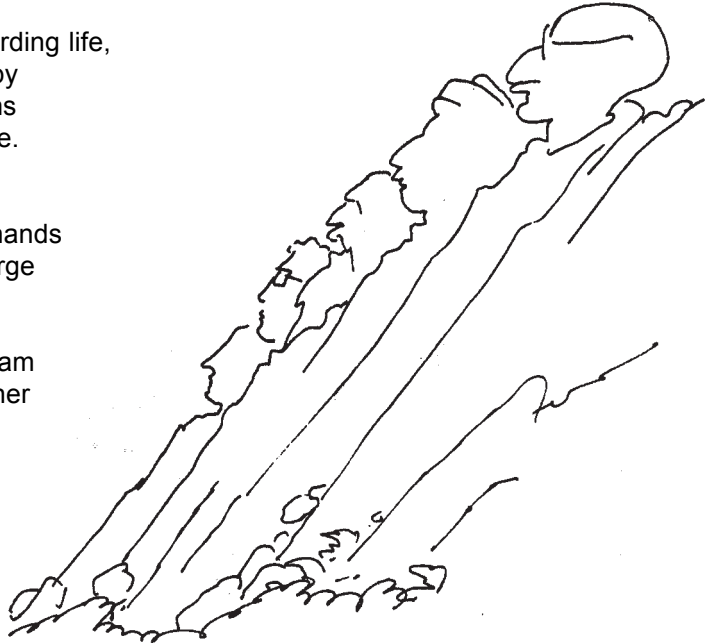
Carved on my mind  
is a question benign.  
Why is the vocal chord  
placed in between  
the head & the heart?  
Could it be  
to remind us  
to route the words  
from the heart  
through one's brain  
before we start  
or tell us to balance  
our temper short  
with a cool thought,  
before throwing  
our verbal dart?

The way we are built,  
anatomically speaking,  
when we swallow  
we can't shout!  
or spill out  
our angry bout!  
so my friends  
I am learning  
to swallow anger  
That way, may be  
one can live longer!

## DREAM MERCHANT

Oh my friends, engineers,  
dexterous buddies,  
Let's dream!  
Victor Hugo said thus,  
"There is nothing like dream  
to create the future".

Let's dream, my friends  
of better things  
clever clues to rewarding life,  
adding to comforts by  
dreaming of solutions  
leading to a fuller life.  
Dream! Indeed it is  
a nurturing force.  
Come on, let's join hands  
and together let's forge  
a determined force,  
because,  
it is one thing to dream  
and altogether another  
to make it real.  
Only the dreams of  
the men who act,  
a dextrous lot  
could deliver reality  
working hard  
and working smart.



Our babu scientists  
breed scientific papers  
by the ream, but  
rarely ever dream a dream  
that's bursting at the seams  
to deliver answers.  
Forty four years and  
five thousand crores after,  
the poor souls,  
our scientific 'talents'  
are as barren as  
desert lands  
Not a single product,  
no unique invention  
that would make one  
a proud Indian !

Someone called me  
the other day  
a dream Merchant!  
I would love to be one  
and be in touch  
with tomorrow.  
While I have  
a few dreams to sell,  
my young friends,  
I want to buy many  
from you & you  
and also you.  
Dreams of today  
are the realities  
of tomorrow!

## ADMIRATION

I love those who get deeply  
involved,  
& admire those committed  
to a noble cause.

I love clean, bright  
& the beautiful  
the boisterous & the bountiful

I love the scholars  
Who wear the scholarship  
With dignity & point  
Knowledge turning them  
Gentle & wise

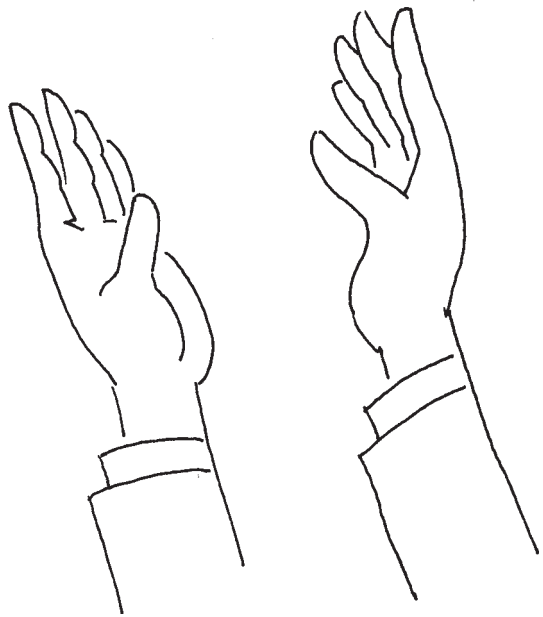
I love innocence,  
childlike simplicity,  
and uncluttered mind  
specially in grownups  
of a mature kind.

I like the bold  
& courageous  
the adventurous  
The risk takers,  
Who live to the hilt

I love the gentle  
the tender and tranquil  
the caring souls  
silent, sincere,  
the quiet queens  
& the kings of heart.

I love those  
who hit hard,  
jump the highest  
run the fastest  
swim the swiftest  
and yet are  
simple and modest

I envy those  
who live full  
and die bold



## RELATIONSHIP

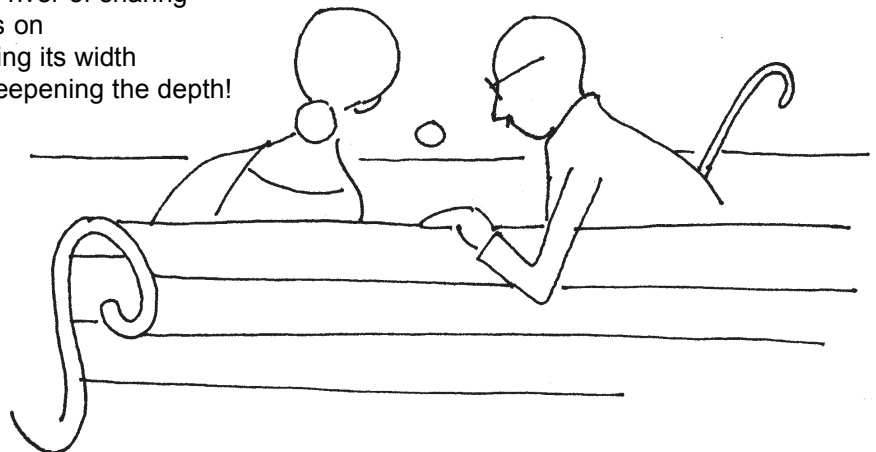
It's not simple  
for anyone to tinker  
with a relationship  
especially when,  
one knows not  
what's the want-  
giving, taking or  
abundant sharing!

Often a relationship  
just happens.  
an acquaintance blossoms  
into a friendship,  
suddenly like a  
flushing syphon,  
as concern deepens,  
fondness ripens  
& sharing widens!

Relationship,  
when young  
has an excitement  
of discovering &  
exploring each other  
& also the restlessness  
befitting the youth.

Like a river,  
It might spring  
And speedily rush  
Down the mountain slopes,  
Gathering streams  
Of experiences  
New  
& learning to flow  
together as they grow!

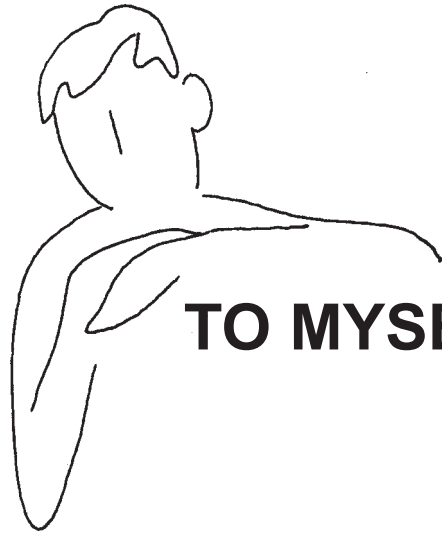
Also like the river,  
it slows  
as it reaches  
the pains of  
maturity.  
Mutual respect  
gives the confidence  
to each other.  
as the river of sharing  
moves on  
widening its width  
and deepening the depth!



Then starts the time  
of abundant share  
giving away love  
till nothing is left  
To worry any more.

Let the water flow  
Its natural course  
From high to low.  
Let the greens grow,  
let it sprout slow,  
That way,  
one needn't bend  
the nature's trend  
Life, by itself,  
will later show  
its endurance  
or the end!

Relationship is  
no burden then  
It's a responsibility  
for each other  
not a transaction  
between the two.



## TO MYSELF

### THE CLOWN

Do you want to see  
the most enlightened  
Joker in this town  
Resembling a circus clown?  
Someone who is handing around  
watching the absurd  
without a frown?

Mentally naked  
The only thing he wears  
Is a title  
And his authority  
A mere shadow!

Like a rapacious coward,  
he loves the authority  
over the weak  
and the helpless!  
But, knows he not,  
just a prick of a pin  
will deflate the ego  
or a nod from the top  
will rub the title off  
just like  
when the light  
is removed  
shadows vanish

Position might give him  
a gown or a crown  
but inside,  
he is a mere clown.



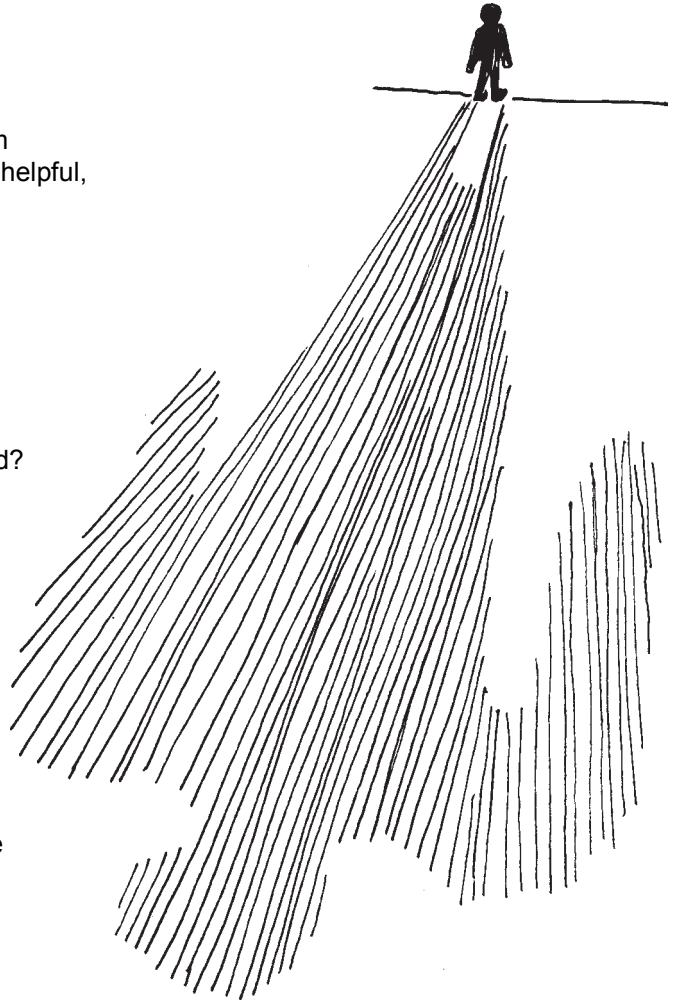
## STRANGE ANIMAL

A strange animal indeed  
this man, with his  
capacity to think  
and to comprehend  
is yet  
driven by sentiments  
What a man.....

Oh! Of course  
there is this pride;  
of he being great,  
of being human & warm  
of being considerate & helpful,  
Ultimately however  
he bares himself  
merely as an impulsive  
sentimentalist:  
getting disappointed  
by even a non-event!  
A strange person.....

Is he being manipulated?  
Of course, not!  
considered inferior?  
Being used? Never!  
Or may be  
it is just he himself  
giving the signals  
of being so,  
of being untrustworthy,  
even undependable.  
Merely a small man  
with a big shadow  
someone who can't see  
the way others can  
a Myopic indeed!

Some people, really,  
never learn  
Why can't they remain  
detached within,  
while being  
attached without?  
Strange animals!



## MATURITY

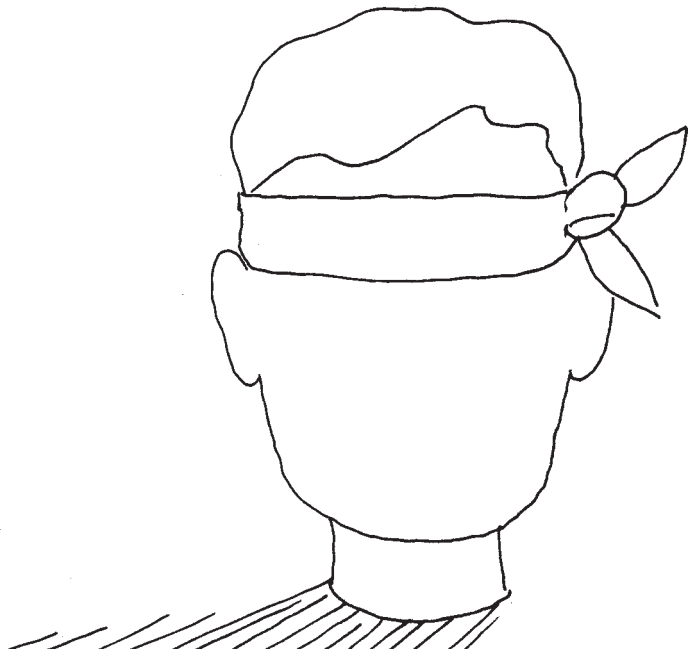
I 'matured'  
When I learn  
Not to intervene,  
Turn my face  
& walk away  
even when I saw  
the weak & helpless  
being butchered  
tortured & killed.

I 'matured'  
no sooner could I  
explain & convince myself  
why not to reach  
to provocation  
tolerate injustice  
and  
'for a larger good'  
passively accept  
arrogant exploitation

I 'matured'  
When greed  
Blinded my sight  
And selfishness killed  
My will to fight.

I found Maturity  
blunted my intensity,  
life's drive,  
& vivacious vitality.

I son died  
a mature human  
unsung, unwept  
leaving no trace  
of my being.



## LESS THAN FULL

I feel incomplete  
And a wee bit inadequate  
So many things missing  
& so many yet sticking!

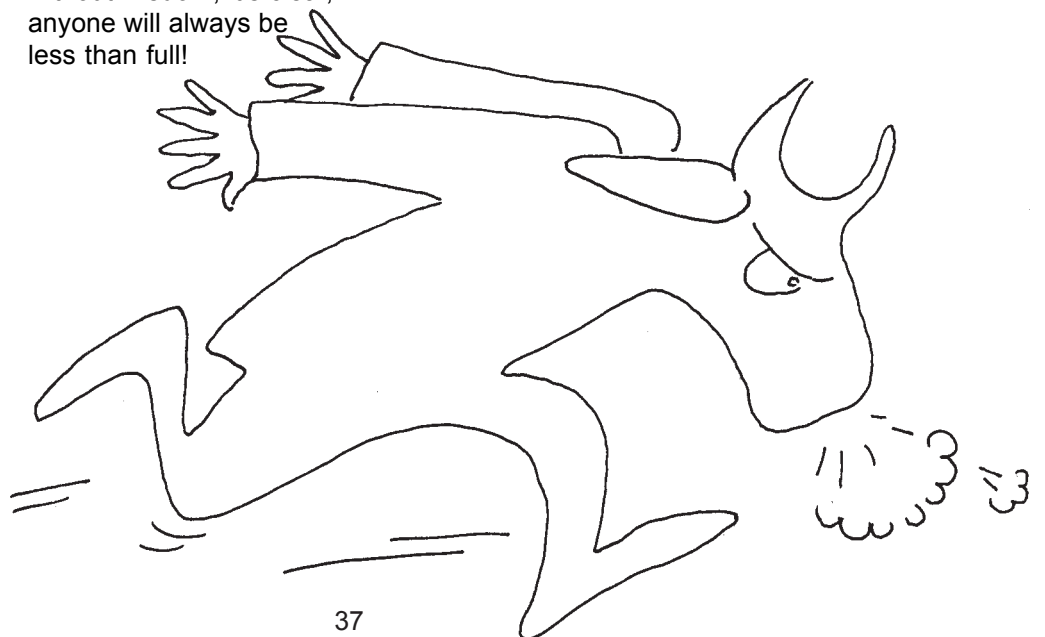
Anger, intolerance and  
impatience in excess  
have always been  
road blocks to success!

Knowledge can be acquired  
& experience gained  
but it's the wisdom  
that remains elusive,  
without the virtues  
of compassion & restraint!

The search is always on  
for the wisdom  
that dispels the fear  
& emancipates the 'informed'  
but important of all,  
I realise now  
restraint & patience  
are just the first two rungs  
of the ladder  
that leads to wisdom!

Free mind, clear vision  
No passion  
but compassion  
oh, for Christ's sake,  
Won't I need  
patience too  
to reach the deck?

Nothing, I am now sure,  
can be achieved  
by charging like a bull  
and being like one.  
without wisdom, it's clear,  
anyone will always be  
less than full!



## SHADOW

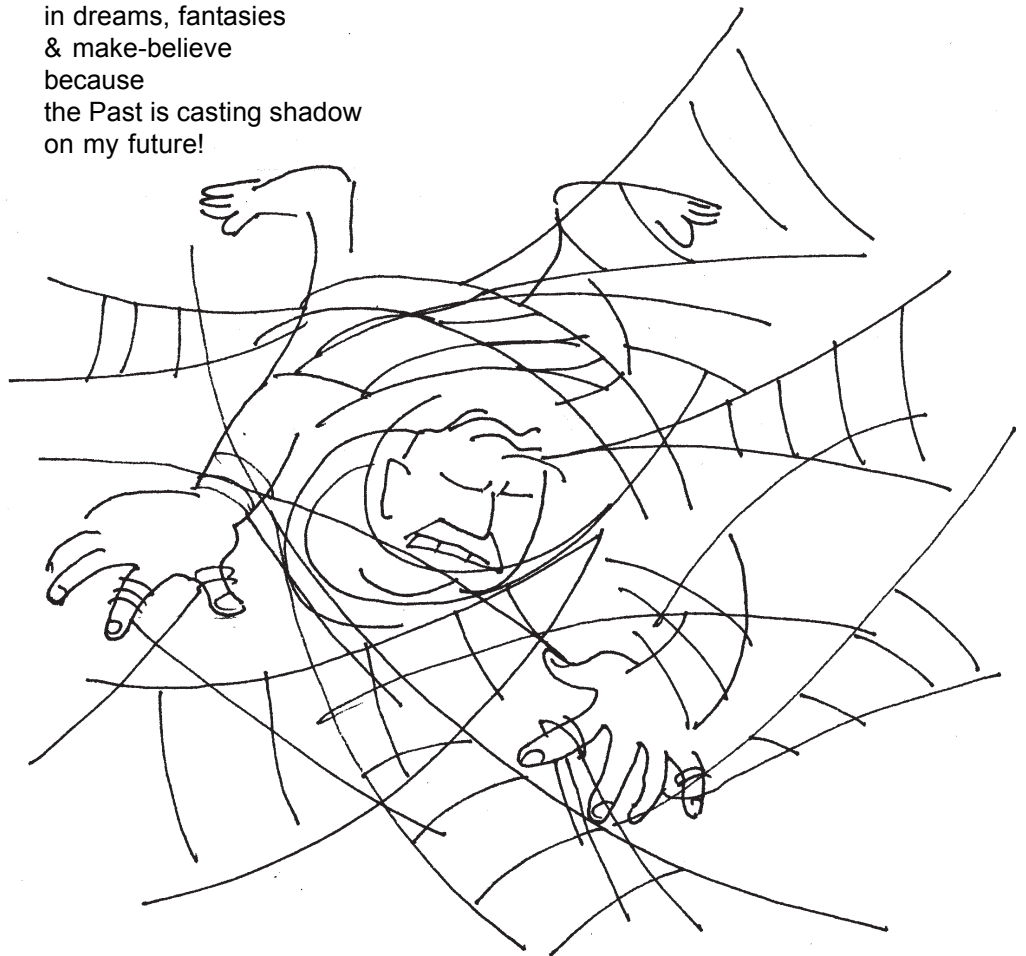
The past is casting shadows  
On the future:  
& as if to aid it,  
the present is prosaic,  
mundane & uninspiring!

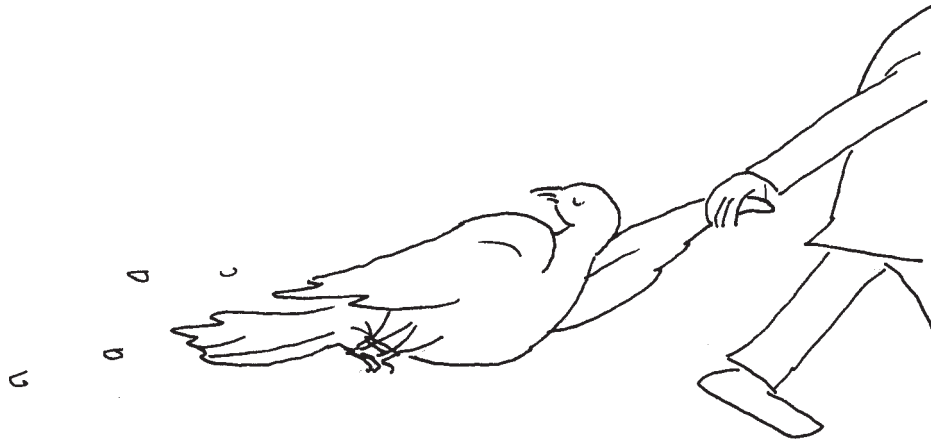
All my relations,  
My near & dear ones  
Know me by my past  
Dotted with immaturity  
Which I can't ever wipe!

The naked familiarity  
Polluted with bias  
& misunderstanding  
is too cluttered and  
getting beyond me!

Even in my love  
Those little blunders  
Keep intruding –  
Unknowingly, vaguely  
& sadly,  
dampening the feelings  
diluting the intensity!

In my 'present'  
I, therefore, love  
to live  
in dreams, fantasies  
& make-believe  
because  
the Past is casting shadow  
on my future!





## **THE JOURNEY OF THE CAPTIVE**

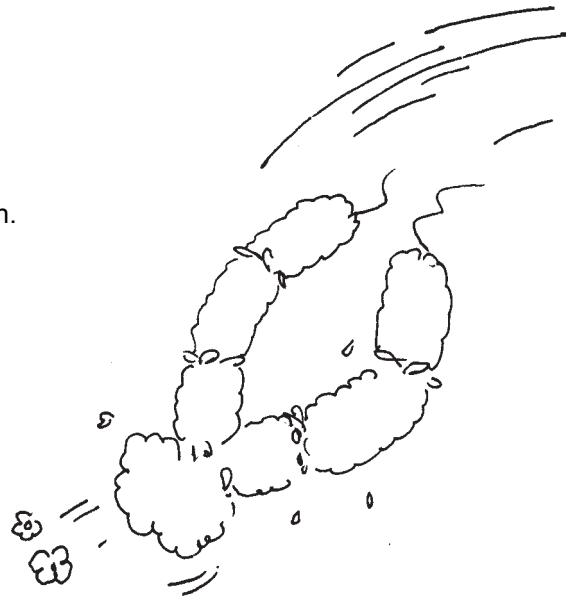
# THE JOURNEY

## A. Inheritance

She, his mother,  
reigned supreme.  
A great performer,  
with a rare gene!  
The only daughter  
of the superstar,  
a confident fighter,  
intense, philosophical,  
romantic & theatrical!  
Seventeen years each,  
they cherished a dream  
Glorious performance it was  
with adorable intensity!  
Both cherished ideals lofty,  
blending them with beauty,  
with Intellectual's pastime  
of dreaming equality,  
universal justice  
and global peace!



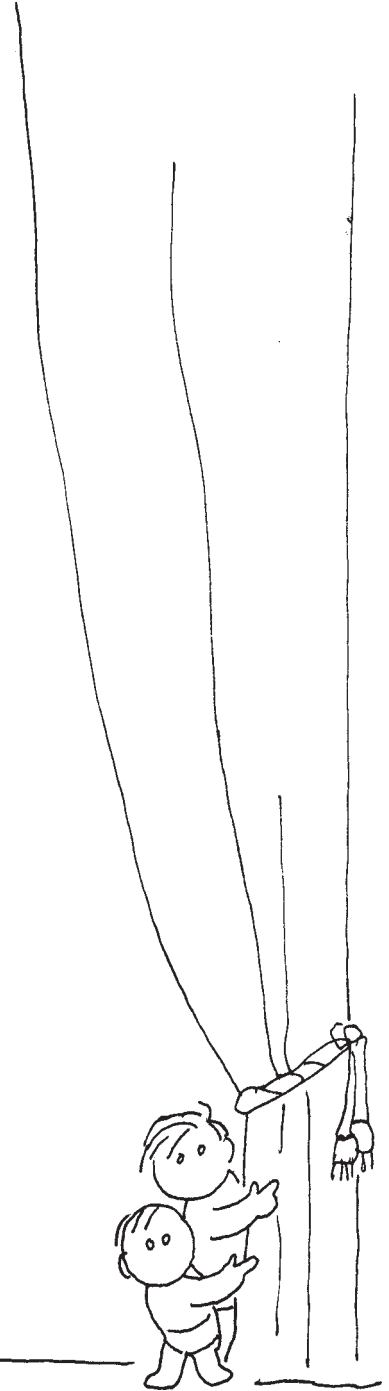
Both, the father & the fil  
served the stage  
lovingly,  
selflessly,  
firmly,  
shrewdly  
and carved out  
for themselves,  
a coveted place  
on that biggest stage,  
the World.  
Rural audience  
was her great fan  
as she skilfully controlled  
her spineless political clan.  
Everyone endorsed,  
and proudly  
acclaimed;  
in her troupe  
she was the only man!



## B. Growing Up

On the back stage,  
were growing  
her two little cubs.  
Life they lived  
in the greenroom unique  
chiselled their mind  
grooming them to be  
two of different kind!  
They watched together  
the actors, small & big  
in crazy costumes & wigs.  
All suspicious of one another  
indulging often, in nasty digs!  
From their seats in the Wings  
the two witnessed  
the drama unfolding.  
Law, justice, equality  
catchy dialogues unending;  
songs of peace & tranquility,  
some soulful singing!

Then, back in the greenroom,  
they saw the real thing.  
Performers unmasked;  
glamourless, sans the paint.  
Some looked exhausted,  
some with faces drained.  
Some bootleggers, they noticed  
& scheming scoundrels too,  
hiding well  
behind the masks respectful.  
Some were known giants;  
people of great intellect  
mature & thoughtful  
Some not so bold,  
timid, acting as are told,  
some jealous, envious & cold.  
Some angry & biased  
& some made out of Gold.  
It was an education,  
Both saw so much, so close  
that none else could  
ever imagine or disclose!



## C. Living & Learning

One Sunny day  
The elder stepped out  
Into the world, real  
lively and congenial.  
Unlike the stage,  
he found  
it neither had  
the front,  
not the rear!  
He looked all around  
and saw everyone  
uniquely engaged  
in conducting life-  
some more successfully  
& some others less.  
City bred & educated moved  
in technological wonder  
& sons of the soil,  
steering through instinct  
in their magical splendour

Some, blissfully ignorant  
rested in material opulence.  
Some, rich in thought,  
enjoyed divine obeisance.  
Some struggled with a smile,  
living in poverty with defiance.  
The people were busy  
stitching one day to another!  
He watched it all  
with great delight  
never had he seen  
such exciting sights  
of angry street fights,  
men battling for rights,  
it was earthy & bright.  
Anger & intense passion,  
Sentimental love,  
Nobility & compassion  
Gradually changed  
His life's impression!

He was creating  
around himself  
a brave new world,  
as he learnt soon  
the passionate art of  
living, loving & learning,  
giving him rare insights  
into the depth of human minds  
so difficult to fathom!

He took off  
like a bird uncaged  
majestically flying around  
learning to risk & share  
freedom and fresh air!  
Broken away from  
the suffocating political scene  
he overviewed  
the great land beneath  
draped in a  
romantic bridal green!-

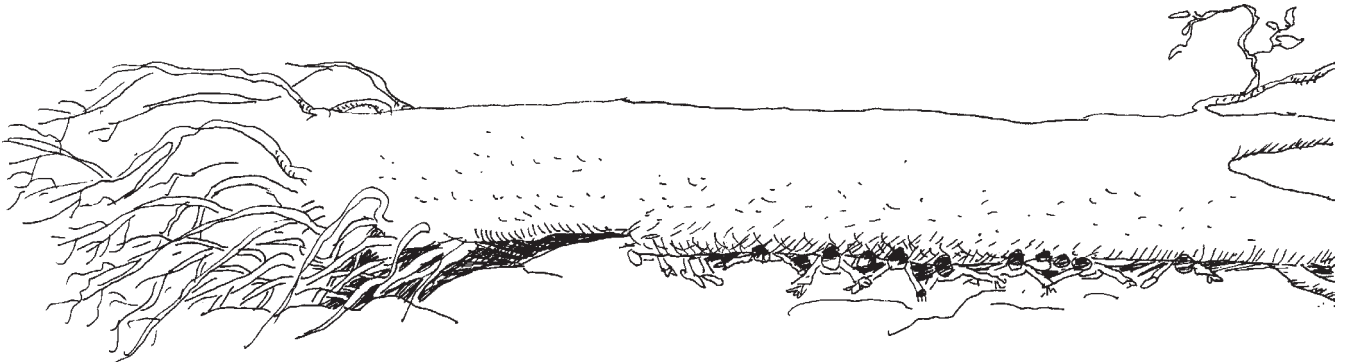
The clay  
was getting moulded  
in a new cast;  
with no links to the past  
roasted and toughened  
by real life's blast!  
The young man  
soon turned into  
a prince charming  
good looking, gentle,  
with mannerisms disarming!  
Yet, surprisingly,  
almost none noticed  
the young commoner  
as he shouldered thru'  
the streets,  
& the check  
as if hiding  
behind shyness, modesty  
and common sense.

All those proved to be  
the learning days  
of hearing, seeing  
& feeling  
all of which later pays!  
Experience & upbringing  
turned him into a man,  
disarming, soft-spoken,  
kind & compassionate,  
& yet somewhere  
within him  
was the solid steel  
of a bright sword  
in a velvety scabbard  
of his gentle shell!  
those were the days  
my friend,  
of freedom & fresh air  
of dispelling the despair  
of friendship & care!

## D. Destiny at Work

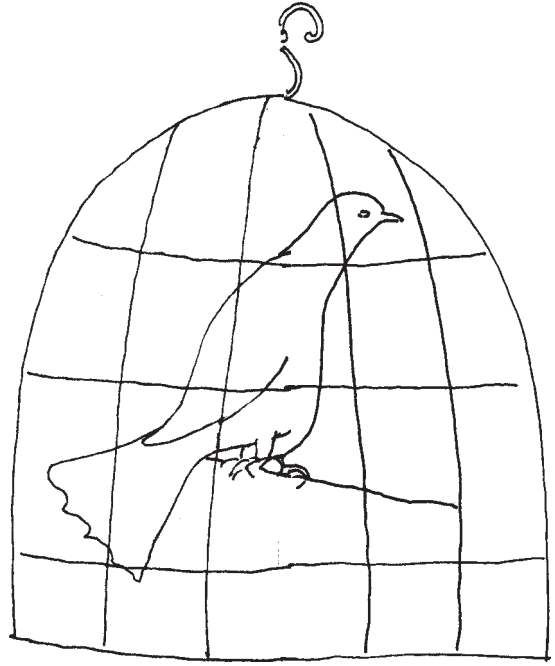
Then all too sudden  
the curtain went down.  
the Younger one,  
who stayed behind  
acting, tough,  
helping his mother  
over the rough,  
suddenly crashed down!  
Close on the heel  
came another disaster  
when the queen herself  
fell to a design sinister!  
within hours,  
on that fateful day,  
the 'theatre'  
burst at its seam  
all the vile and  
the vicious vitriol  
flooded the streets,  
endangering the people  
leading to chaos & din.

A very precious life  
Was nipped in the bud!  
Intense anger fomented  
& gave way to a strong  
sentimental flood  
uncontrolled mobs,  
and also  
the clever crooks,  
drew a lot of  
innocent blood.  
Elsewhere began  
the stage intrigue  
which lasted not long.  
The ego of the despots  
claiming the chair  
burst without a bang  
All 'Hands' unanimously went up,  
like a theatre grand  
lifting the Prince up  
to take command!



## E. The Captive

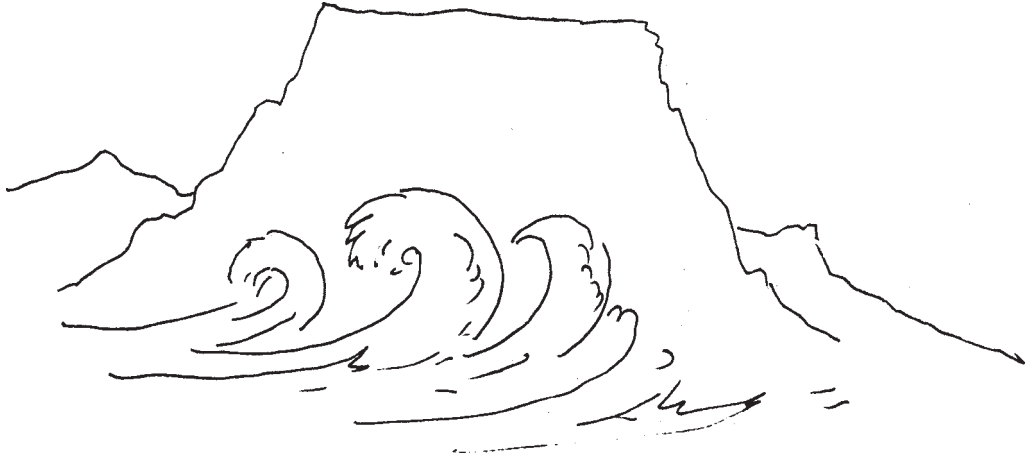
Very next day  
the Prince went  
into the golden prison  
No more aerial sights  
of east turning crimson!  
Stage had turned into  
a security prison  
anyone dare pass by  
could be tried  
for treason!  
The product,  
roasted  
& toughened  
by real life's blast,  
was being remoulded  
in a new hot cast-  
A die, specially made,  
by the theatre artisans  
of great disrepute,  
cunning, crude & shrewd.



The young man,  
once a liberated bird,  
was often defiant,  
Severe security meant  
living in captivity,  
hurting mobility &  
forcing disability.  
Grooming the children  
without their childhood  
was an absurdity!  
But there he was,  
with the same warmth,  
the winning smile  
and the witty style.  
One could, yet,  
occasionally glimpse  
the shimmering steel  
of the sword half-drawn  
next moment, however,  
prevailed the familiar calm!

The loving tutor  
Was gone too soon!  
The lantern that  
lit the path was  
snatched by the goons,  
interrupting the  
unique apprenticeship,  
making one depend on  
frivolous friendship.  
And yet, like a rock,  
Undisturbed & unswayed,  
he faced the onslaught,  
of disruptive tidal waves,  
and shattered the hopes  
of cunning men in caves!

Those early days  
of freedom & fresh air  
that had given an insight  
in ordinary people's lives  
helped him to find  
and fight the brutal battles  
winning them all at the end.

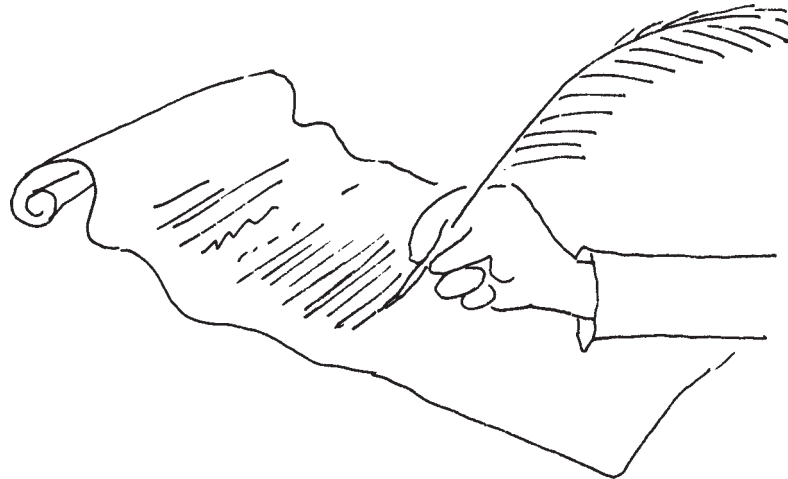


## F. Compass Stuck

The guarding group,  
as in the past,  
is breaking the vital  
feedback loop,  
causing  
oscillations spurious,  
leading the leader  
into a piping hot soup!  
Loudmouths & leeches  
create the breaches  
flooding the ground  
with reckless words  
leading to deadly hitches,  
hurting badly, the plans  
to take the people  
from rags to riches  
let's forget not  
a historical thought  
opponents are visible  
traitors are not.  
And then  
there are buddies  
who melt away  
like a summer snow  
on sighting  
any tempting dough,  
these guys are  
worse than a foe.

## G. Show will go on

The show will go on.  
It neither has the beginning  
nor the end.  
Calling it immense Journey'.  
Loren Eiseley observes  
"We move on,  
continuous & relentless,  
winding our own way,  
moulding, growing  
& remodifying  
our defined course"  
But lest we forget,  
in our journey  
we perform acts  
we can never re-do  
and we go along paths  
we can never retrace.  
Let's be awake  
& be consciously alive,  
we are today writing  
tomorrow's history.



## NEW DEAL

What's the deal?  
six and a half crores?  
whether it's spice or rice,  
at a right price  
we shall put a royal seal  
on any good deal.

After all, we are the friends,  
we can always bend  
any law, if we see  
crores at the other end.  
'His' reputation or image  
notwithstanding!  
Why not?  
It is our upbringing  
Dwivedi does it  
Trivedi is in it &  
Chaturvedi does it too!

Commision is so common,  
it's a normal business here.  
My uncle lives on it  
& his chacha too  
Half of the Country's wealthy  
have thrived on it  
with blessings from the top.  
You, dear friend,  
are a strange fellow indeed,  
immature and naïve.  
With friends like us around,  
Why did you have to claim  
That there was none?  
Creating unnecessary headaches  
For yourself and us too!

## 'NO SURE CURE'

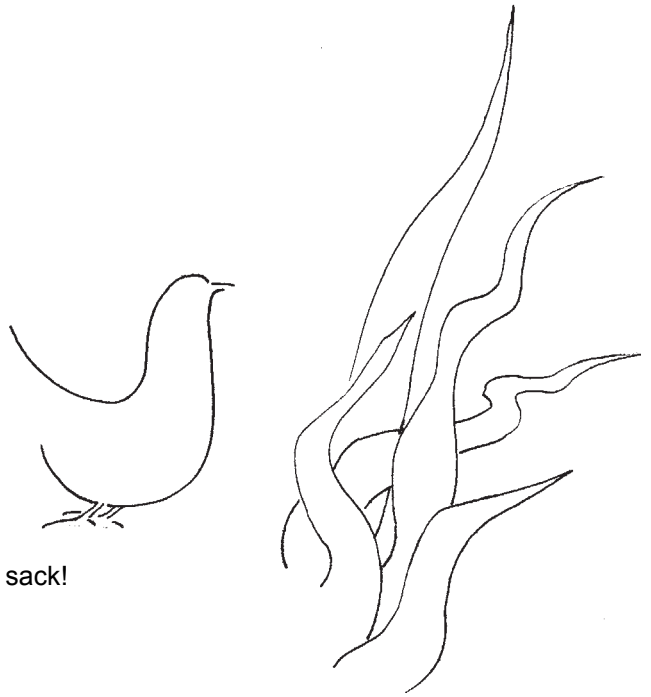
On that fateful evening,  
in the twilight  
His handsome face,  
lit by her flaming pyre  
appeared like  
a clean sheet,  
uncluttered & pure,  
Answer at last,  
people thought,  
for country's cure.

The man, everyone felt,  
was no pushy brat but  
a thorough-bred compatriot.  
deep within, one believed  
democracy would  
now be on the right track,  
political interference  
no one would ever back  
no culprit would escape  
without severe flak  
& everyone corrupt  
was bound to get the instant sack!

As they say  
through the dying flames  
his sad face,  
a deep empathy  
towards the man  
was no surprise.

Sad & serene  
he looked every inch  
a prince charming.  
Swan in the midst of  
political crows,  
sleepy opportunists  
& uninspiring halfwits!  
In that face  
they saw a ray of hope  
someone who might  
give the nation a rare scope,  
to wipe out the corruption  
& snap the unholy bond  
between the crime and  
the politics of slime.

Sick of the politics  
infested with  
slowly rot,  
that evening, they thought,  
li him, we have got  
someone to  
get rid of the rot!



But he was he;  
not what, in their mind,  
they wanted him to be!  
they forced on him,  
an ideal image  
hoping he could comply.  
But how could he?

Expectations unearthly  
always end  
in disillusionment  
and in misery.  
Can one live in  
castles built in air?  
Should we, the dreamers  
blame him?

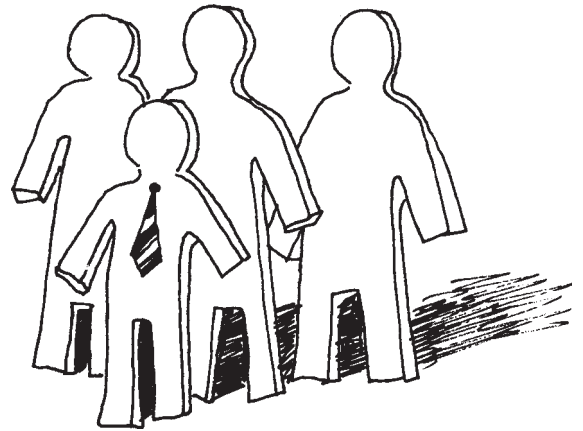
Only illusions  
result from any magic;  
believing in them  
is unfortunate & tragic.  
One thing is sure,  
no one has  
any sure cure!



## FRIENDLY ADVISORS

My dear friend,  
why are you trying  
to be a Manager?  
You just continue to be  
a charming leader,  
Manage, we will!

And why haven't you  
changed to being a leader?  
You still are gentle,  
restrained and refined  
Look around at others,  
Potbellied, smug, unmoved  
You are so unlike!  
How can our rural folks  
& we, the mine leaders  
identify with your image



My dear friend,  
please wear this mask,  
Come, let's play-act.  
Remember, here no one  
can be a leader  
unless one has sacrificed  
or has an image  
of suffering a great deal.  
If you are so relaxed  
& appear so comfortable  
our entire leadership  
feels very uncomfortable!

We want a leader  
on the fighting front  
facing the firing squad.  
We shall all keep  
close behind you (so that)  
in case the squad fails,  
we shall be there!

These terrorists risk  
their lives for nothing,  
with your friends  
doing what they are  
with such a great finesse  
they needn't fire a shot.  
To hurt you badly  
aren't friends enough?



## WAKE UP

Dark stains of corruption  
are spreading around  
under the white cloak  
of a clean image

Be weary of courtiers, friend  
they are mortgaging  
the future of the land  
for petty personal gains  
Inflated expectations  
encouraged by them  
in the past years,  
has fuelled the passions.

Halo effect is dimming,  
what was found larger than life  
is being cut to size  
Sense it soon, my friend,  
Let's not be oblivious  
to the thunder storm  
gathering on the horizon.  
The virus of pessimism  
is engulfing the nation  
You can do it, I know  
you have challenged the  
current order in politics  
of power brokers & bookies;  
don't hesitate anymore  
or be baffled,  
odds are still  
favourable to you

Friends are the foes  
Get up and  
get at them  
Rootless they are,  
corroded by money  
Vanity & loose tongue,  
We can't be  
insensitive to the  
concerns that matter  
to the common people  
Respond to them.  
Observe, understand and  
care for their travail

Your gentle smile  
and a steely determination  
can still do it.



## WANTED – A GREAT LEADER

We need a leader  
to lead our leaders;  
political leaders  
social leaders  
labour leaders  
business leaders,  
religious leaders,  
South Indian leaders  
North Indian leaders,  
Gulli leaders &  
the bully leaders!

There is a dire need  
for an illustrious leader  
whom leaders won't swallow  
& whom people could follow!  
A dynamic, intense &  
Competent leader,  
Who would decentralise  
Rather than centralise  
Who would  
Work through networks  
Than promote hierarchies;  
Behave stateless,  
Becoming equinear  
To the north & the south  
To the east & the west;

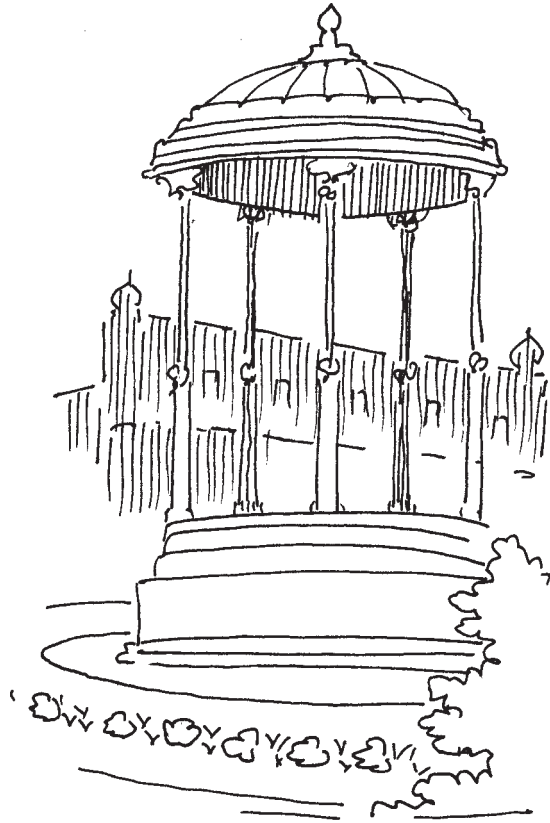
The hunt is on  
for a Supremo  
who would  
promote self help  
than dole out  
institutional help  
Who would  
Harness hightech  
making it a vehicle  
for rapid development.

Strangely,  
the Japanese never needed  
anyone to lead-  
no super leader for them  
to build the nation  
making its success  
a sensation.  
Nor do the Germans  
anymore find  
need for Hitler's kind;  
ordinary leaders are  
making miracles  
uniting the nation  
without commotion.

But in our Mother India,  
country of brown masters  
& brown slaves,  
we kid ourselves,  
Without a super leader  
we all shiver & shudder.  
like orphaned imbeciles.

If you, my Lord  
can't reincarnate  
there will be  
neither salvation  
nor a redeemer!

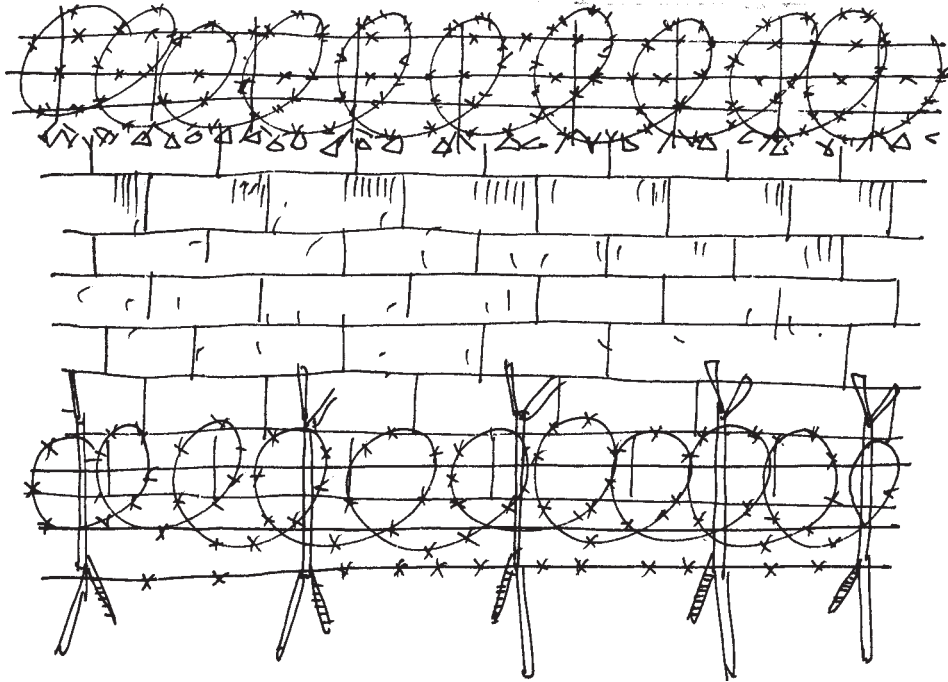
Oh! the Superstar,  
Where art thou ?



## ANXIOUS DAYS

How true, how very true  
the new 'India' crew  
will need an experienced pilot  
with a better flight plan  
matured skill and  
determination to go on & on  
we would need our man  
with a crew that's new  
those with words few  
with better diplomacy,  
empathy and wisdom.  
Some with imagination  
and with a correct vision.  
He certainly doesn't need  
wise cracking yuppies  
& those with a mental skew  
send them out without fear  
with a foot-print on the rear  
Its month of May  
a merry month of May,  
month of mangoes  
cherries and alphonsos.  
But, in 1991, for India  
Its 'May' or 'Maynot'  
None can say  
how far is the doom's day  
or whether it will bring,  
as we all pray,  
a joyous June Day  
when all sing and dance  
with abundant gay-  
Let's pray, Let's pray  
for a sharp opinion sway,  
for our stateless pilot,  
to offer a better action play.

# BEYOND THE WALL



## SURPRISE

Thoughtless men  
fought a war  
fury & fire  
annihilated all  
sparing not  
even a blade of grass!

Poor Green Pastures,  
before they knew  
turned dead & brown,  
like an animal  
led to the altar  
they became  
unintended martyrs

Why this premature kill,  
they wondered,  
when  
Winter, the killer  
was months away!



## FLASH BACK

You want me  
To give it straight  
Narrate it  
Chronologically!

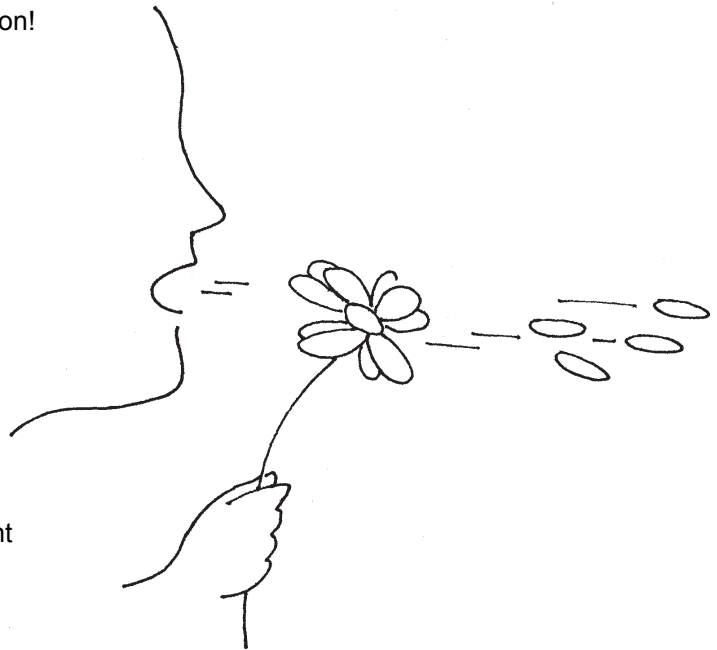
But when  
The whole world around  
Is upside down  
'the end', on occasions  
creeps in  
even before the beginning!

Continuity & coordination  
gives way  
to cognitive confusion!

But fear not,  
I can resort to  
Flashback!

Disorderly order  
that takes me  
much farther  
as a story teller!

It's a pity  
bygone is bygone  
and one can't  
flashback,  
turn the clock back  
to relive the moment  
that one so  
cherished!



## THE PACK YOU SHUFFLE

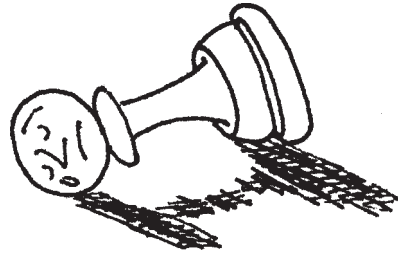
Pride & prejudice  
happiness & sorrow  
anger & love  
do these sentiments matter  
when 'You' strike?

You allow us  
to believe  
in our might  
& feed the ego  
by allowing us to win  
an occasional fight!

But the real insight  
we get  
when You shake up  
& announce  
forget me not  
I, the supremo!

Like all the strong  
You rarely hit  
but when You do,  
you make us sit  
And make us think.

Young or old  
timid or bold  
fast moving  
or on hold,  
we are mere pawns  
it's Your hand  
that turns us cold.  
It's Your game  
that always tames  
all our aims!  
Oh, Almighty!



## 'GOD's GIFT

Midway on my  
Constitutional walk,  
As I reach the hill top,  
A bungalow nameplate  
Announces 'God's Gift'.  
I say humbly, 'Ya!'  
And smile to myself.

Being alive  
Is worthwhile  
If one could smile,  
Keep agile,  
Control the bile  
& walk tall  
till the last mile;  
without forgetting  
that our being  
is just an idea  
and, therefore,  
as dreamy  
& as Fragile!

