

# *the objective* REALITY

A L I T E R A R Y M A G A Z I N E



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## About the Editor

All the written pieces compiled in this issue were authored by the editor herself, unless specified otherwise.

Nandita is the author of the book *"The Night is Still Young"* (2019). She completed her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Her internship took her to Spain where she worked as a Language and Culture Assistant for the Spanish Ministry of Education at CEIP Antonio Checa Martinez. She is currently pursuing her Master's in English Literature from India.



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“We have heard much, lately, more or less sincere, about the Crown of Hinduism. But how many Hindus have themselves any idea of what is in fact the crown of their faith? If it really deserves all the good things said of it, it will not succumb, we may be sure, to the attacks of a foreign religion. The fact that such a fate can be foretold for it, with smiles, ought to be an indication to us of how much is meant by an empty compliment. The fact is, foreigners with all their perspicacity, cannot easily or actually distinguish between our religion and our social system, bound up as that is with a network of semi-religious sanctions. But our whole social system might conceivably disappear without in any degree affecting the most distinctive and important of our religious ideas. They are indeed as applicable to the West as to the East. Perhaps the real crown of Hinduism lies in the fact that it, almost alone amongst formulated faiths, has a section devoted to absolute and universal truths, and has no fear whatever of discriminating between these and such accidental expressions as might be confounded by the superficial with their belief itself.

~ Sister Nivedita,  
*excerpt from “The Crown of Hinduism”*

# EFITI GRAFFITI GRAFFITI

I used to write on the desks in my classroom.

There were about forty of them per room in my school, and my agenda for the year was to mark the ones in my class with my poetry. That is, if you call cheesy, pretentious two-liners “poetry”.

It seems stupid now but at the time it was one of the only things getting me through school. The others included — (a) my English teacher who was pretty much my personal therapist, (b) a boy who had no idea half my poems were about him, and most importantly, (c) cheese burgers.

The burgers in our canteen were so terrific that no one even cared about the fact that the “cheese” in these burgers was actually just mayonnaise. So many love-stories in my school started with a burger in the

canteen, and now that I think of it, so many gastric episodes as well. Even so, if the rumours were true and they did, in fact, put cocaine in the mayonnaise, I ain’t even mad.

I used a blue ball pen for my literary adventures. The nib was too thin to leave an impression the first time around, so I’d have to trace my letters over like a painter does with his strokes. It gave me a silly sort of joy, a happy jiggle in my spine.

Because I had somehow landed in a class full of mature, Science students — and because we were all in Grade 12 at this point — every desk I saw was a blank canvas, unadulterated by heart doodles and surprisingly devoid of chewed bubble-gums underneath. Every so often, I would encounter an advanced mathematical equation peeping in from

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the corner which I would immediately scratch out to save everybody some insecurity.

But being hip comes with its dangers, authorities don't look very kindly upon your art. So when the strictest teacher on campus noticed something weird on every desk in our classroom, I knew it wasn't the brightest of my ideas to have signed off every single one of my poems with my initials: "by n.t.", staring right in her face.

She went around the room reading these artistic legacies of mine, mouthing every word. And as my heart sank with the realization that she would be asking the culprit to stand up any moment now, all my mind could think of was how engaging my writing would have been for a Chemistry teacher to spend a full

twenty-minutes of her class in silence, reading little scribbles on school desks.

I know now, as I knew then, that she was most likely hating the guts of whoever did this. But I was starved for optimism at that point in my life. And when you are starving, you take whatever you can get your hands on and gobble it down like a hungry raccoon.

In any case, she never asked me to stand up. She never mentioned it after she was done reading, even though it would have been difficult not to burst out laughing at some of the stuff I'd written on there.

We went back to drawing Benzene rings for the remainder of our lecture. I was never charged with Vandalism. And for once in my life, I didn't hate Chemistry class all that much.

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Varanasi, India

Photograph by Dr Manoj Kumar  
(IMS-BHU)



# WHAT IS CREATIVE NONFICTION

► In my early teens, I showed signs of a quickly vanishing spark for painting I had as a child. My father, upon noticing my sudden disinterest in something I engage in for hours without even bothering to switch the fan on, immediately enrolled me in an art class. The summer course was very generously run for free by a university Fine Arts professor who barely looked like one. My father made it a point to drive me down to the local clubhouse every week with a tan leather backpack filled with drawing supplies. And just like that, my merry Sundays were hijacked by a man in a khaki Fedora, Cargo shorts and a perpetual three-day scruff.

No matter what I ended up painting in his holistic, hippie, outdoorsy classes – a watercolour landscape of mountains, an extremely detailed wooden branch done in oil pastels, a cartoon rockstar with a Mohawk – he would only say one thing to me, “But where is the soul?”

“You know what,” he said after staring in disappointment at my nearly perfect silhouette of an Indian lady draped in a saree, carrying a large earthen pitcher on her head, “try painting with only your fingers today.”

I found myself dragging the paintbox, yet again, out from under my table. I rummaged through my drawers and dug out the thickest A3 sheet of smooth, cream paper I could and got to work. For the first time in my life, I stuck my finger in a mini glass-bottle filled with paint and ran my fingers in an incredible, relentless tailspin as my canvas hung on to the easel for dear life.

A green volcano had erupted in front of my eyes, I blended every colour: black and blue and red, with the original parrot neon and let myself go completely. When I was done, the “painting” vaguely resembled a thicket, so I went ahead and gave the treetops some slick trunks with my trusty paintbrush after all.

I picked up my work with both hands when I was sure there wasn’t a single empty speck of white left on the sheet and stared at it for a solid minute. In the seconds that followed, one thing was crystal clear to me; that painting was terrible. It was a mess and I hated it.

I still took it for my class that Sunday because, first off, I wasn’t going diving in my poster-paint set again, and secondly, I was weirdly content with my work and felt rather bullish about it.

The students met in a little garden beside the broken fountain that day, this was going to be our last class for the summer. The professor made us lay down in the grass and close our eyes. We were to draw whatever went through our minds during those five minutes of outdoor meditation. I had barely closed my eyes when I heard a sharp snap among the muffled giggles of the tinier kids. It was my professor; he was sitting cross-legged beside me and had swiped my poorly rolled-up masterpiece right out of the side

pocket of my backpack. An intense, animated grin was pasted on his lips.

I sat up expectantly, “Did you finally find a soul in there?”

He looked over the painting and laughed almost as if he had mastered a practical joke of which I was the latest victim, “No,” he said bluntly, “but I found honesty.” He patted my back and left swiftly. He never told me if he liked the painting or not. Frankly, I never thought about the painting and the wide-toothed professor for a long time. It was only years later when I rekindled my love for creativity and started writing professionally, did I realise he was onto something.

I find writing Creative Nonfiction is a lot like finger-painting. You bleed raw, honest words on a piece of paper and hope your hands will know what to do; and sometimes, when magic strikes, you end up painting the same forest you fell in love with at five-years-old when your father took you to see the cabin in the woods he grew up around.

Life happens in stories, though it may not seem like that at the moment. But when we look back at our experiences, hindsight allows for reflection and perspective. A blend of these lived experiences and personal, unbiased commentary about them makes for amazing non-fiction. Sauté that in a thick gravy of literary elements and narrative styles and voila! You have yourself a delicious, steaming-hot serving of Creative Nonfiction.

The vastness and quite frankly, vagueness of this genre (like any other) makes it difficult to define. Founder and editor of the magazine “Creative Nonfiction”, Lee Gutkind said it best in the banner of his magazine: Creative Nonfiction is “simply put: true stories, well told”.

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MOVIE REVIEW

# Genius (2016)

Directed by

Michael Grandage

Starring

Colin Firth &  
Jude Law

Screenplay by

John Logan

**"A stone,  
a leaf,  
an unfound door"**

Have you ever lost yourself in the glimmering romance of Fitzgerald, or found your own life mirrored in the hammering simplicity of Hemingway? Then you have one man to thank for putting gems like *"The Great Gatsby"* and *"The Sun Also Rises"* on the bookshelves of New York, a man called Max Perkins.

The movie *"Genius"* (2016) follows the life of Maxwell Perkins, a literary editor in the 1920s with an eye for talent and literary potential. His encounters with the carefree yet brilliant Thomas Wolfe, an author of immense renown today, lead the story forward, plunging the audience headfirst into the wild and frankly, unstable worldview of a starving writer.

**"Mr. Wolfe, we  
intend to publish  
your book."**

**"I bring you stuff  
wrenched right from  
my guts and you tell  
me it doesn't fit?"**

The troubled artist trope flourishes in its cursed glory as the movie progresses. Swirling though life at a breakneck pace, Wolfe experiences the force of a revolution inside him, something only relentless pain and unapologetic empathy can bring about. We long to be at a beach beside him, sipping the ocean one drop at a time, breathing in hurricanes.

But the pangs of idealism only carry you so far. In three short scenes featuring Fitzgerald and Hemingway, we gain a hint of possible futures for Wolfe. The former becomes a cautionary tale, the latter grounded in his advice. We find ourselves standing at the edge of a forked road, forced to make a decision. Do we root for the writer or the editor? For the free spirit or the balanced one? For the roaring Rahu or the ascetic Ketu?

**"Tell him to shut the hell up and stick to his pencil."**

**"To be a novelist, you have to select. You have to shape and sculpt."**

The genius of "*Genius*" lies in its ruthless, unforgiving insight into an artist's mind. Success isn't happiness, talent isn't perpetual, and genius is almost always solitary. The movie doesn't take sides, refraining from judgment or conclusions. It simply tells a story, like a candle in the dark, so the rest of us might not be so afraid.

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# We Are Open For Submissions!

*"The Objective Reality"* magazine is now accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Any piece received will be considered for the issue to be published closest to its date of submission. We publish under 4 categories: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nofiction and Literary Criticism. All submissions must be sent as a Microsoft Word document on the following email address:

[editor@theobjectivereality.in](mailto:editor@theobjectivereality.in)

To know more about submission guidelines and information about each genre, visit our website at the following link:

[theobjectivereality.in](http://theobjectivereality.in)

Or follow us on Instagram at [@the.objective.reality](https://www.instagram.com/the.objective.reality)

“ Visionaries  
are just  
PEOPLE  
who mastered  
*The art of*  
SEEING ”

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