

the objective REALITY

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



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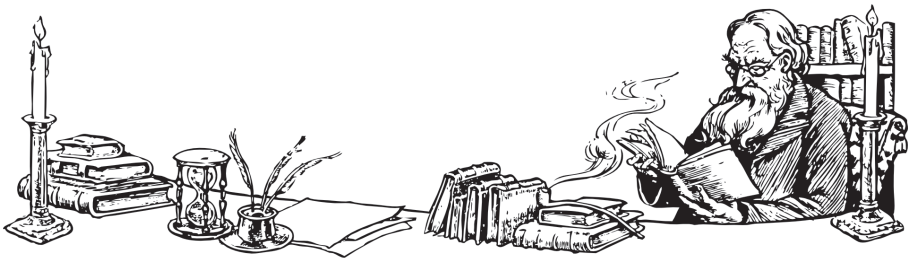
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Besides the obvious personal sources, creative fantasy also draws upon the forgotten and long buried primitive mind with its host of images, which are to be found in the mythologies of all ages and all peoples. The sum of these images constitutes the collective unconscious, the heritage which is potentially present in every individual. It is the psychic correlate of the differentiation of the human brain. This is the reason why the mythological images are able to arise spontaneously over and over again, and to agree with one another not only in all the corners of the wide earth, but at all times.

-CARL JUNG // 'COLLECTED WORKS, VOL. 5'



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Dear reader,

I have been thinking about humanity's connection with storytelling for quite some time now. In my mind, stories have always served as an instruction manual to the world, a hack to decode life itself. Unsure if that was the case for most people, I turned my attention to scholarly research on the nature and history of storytelling. It was clear in no time that since the beginning of conscious thought, stories have been a remarkably fruitful source for people to make sense of what is, was, and could be. Contemplation of the past and future depended on a series of dos and don'ts passed down to us from yore, made compelling by use of symbolism and metaphor - the first inklings of literary inspiration.

I make the case, then, that writing is the socially anxious cousin of the more scientifically extravagant *time capsule*. Scribes, writers, translators, transcripts are the reason Newton could stand on the shoulders of giants in order to see further after all. Through this magazine, we have rented a tiny corner of this time capsule to bring you narratives from writers who look rather kindly upon the past. Every piece enclosed herein is a study in nostalgia.

Little vignettes of the past made a home in my memories while I worked with these pieces. I let them get cozy in there, let them grow old for a while. For it is true that even the greatest of sculptures don't become antiques until they've acquired their patinas. I let remembrance ruin me for a moment, then gathered it softly in my arms and walked on ahead.

I present to you, dear reader, the second issue of *The Objective Reality's* second volume. Here's hoping that these pieces hold your hand and take you down memory lane!

NANDITA
Editor-in-chief

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I've always loved the sunshine,
Bright days melting into the clear nights,
Twittering birds
And scampering squirrels-
All reminders of a thriving life.

raining Today



Monsoon irritates me-
The dark, damp, cloistered life,
Gloomy sky and the pitch-black night,
I hate the muddy roads and the mossy walls
All lulling me to inaction.

But sometimes the showers are a relief-
From the burning flames of day,
Just like the yellow sun holds
A winter morn's chill at bay

by arya raja

Those days the rain doesn't bore me,
Staring at falling droplets
The entire day,
I can watch how the trees bathe
And how the soil rejuvenates.

And sometimes I can't move,
nothing to rise to-
Sometimes I find staring at walls
Is the easiest thing to do



I welcome the gloom these days,
And imagine myself drown
All day long

what are men
to rocks and
mountains?

a truth universally
acknowledged

feminine sensibility in Austen's Novels

BY ANIKITA VERMA

faultless in spite
of all her faults

half agony,
half hope

JANE AUSTEN IS A CORNERSTONE OF 19TH CENTURY

English literature, a novelist who won praise for her limitations. Her novels not only demonstrate an acute domestic life of her time but also talk about the wider social issues of the day through strong female characterizations. Breeding in the atmosphere of feminist sensibility, Austen strongly felt that the moral order of conventional faith was lacking something essential. Therefore, she used her imagination to shatter all boundaries that prohibited female independence. One may say that her fiction was mainly concerned with a depiction of women as liberal and self-confident characters in a social context with strict moral and social codes of behaviour. She puts women forward in her novels to speak their minds, signifying her strong belief in the revolution they can bring with their excellence. The six novels written by Austen express and embody the awakening of independent female consciousness. Keeping in mind that they are not completely bloomed to escape the narrow scope of love or marriage, she permits her heroines to grow along the path of self-knowledge by learning from their faults.

**Marriage
was the most
important
concern of the
period**

For most of her heroines, money is a basic criterion for choosing a husband as in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Marriage was the most important concern of the period for both men and women. Not only young men, but also young women wanted to marry a suitable person. Austen's introductory remarks in *Pride and Prejudice* stress the contemporary importance given to marriage: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."

In the novel *Emma* (1815), however, the character of Emma attempts to stand out among Austen's female protagonists as a counter to irrational notions, rather than being a passive participant in them. She states, "I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry [...] I believe few married women are half as much mistress of their husband's house [...]" It was common for people in the 18th century to believe that the only thing women were useful for was to be good daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers. They had to be as good as they could in those roles and they had to be excellent ladies who behaved perfectly and were well-instructed in all accomplishments suited for ladies, such as singing, playing musical instruments, and painting. This notion is strongly presented by Miss Bates who tries her best to lure Mr. Knightly into her home to hear Jane Fairfax playing the piano. Mr. Elton's interest in Emma also increases when her ability for drawing is revealed. Isabella, another character in the novel *Emma*, is a representation of a stereotypically feminine, soft-hearted, dependent, and a woman devoted completely to her family. Harriet shares the same mindset of dependency when she asks Emma about her old age. Emma states that she can remain a single woman all her life and still maintain her respectability in society because, unlike poor old maids, she will always have money. Austen writes: "A single woman with narrow income must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! But a single woman of good fortune is always respectable, as may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else." The inclusion of 'poor' before 'old maid' suggests that there is an important distinction to be made on the financial well-being of the unmarried woman. Having money, thus, grants a single woman agency in her life and marital decisions.

Having money, thus, grants a single woman agency in her life and marital decisions.

Austen values personal success, accepting the fact that the best of us commit mistakes as a part of life. Considering Emma in this light, despite her brilliance, confidence, and independent nature, she commits mistakes that threaten to significantly affect the lives of those around her in a detrimental fashion. She doesn't realize that being committed to staying single, as she always claims, she is in love with Mr. Knightly and wants to marry him. She also understands her mistake of mismatching a couple which threatens their happiness. She, therefore, becomes faithful to what is right and is capable of gauging what she should do. Ultimately fortune turns in her favour. Virtue is rewarded. For this reason, "Emma is a masterpiece of feminine understanding." Austen's novels are about young women who find true love after some experiences. She suggests that happiness depends on having a lively, candid perception of things and imagination that will help to achieve connection and harmony between the self and the world. With such representation in the feminist-realist perspective, Austen is able to substantiate her novels as expressions of feminine sensibility.

THOSE *lights*



BY DIWAKAR
GAUTAM

Those little sparkles, sparked something in me,
I am just a humble being, not hind-sighted,
I see those stars before me, I feel something I cannot explain,
Let it be the scene of peace and of utter tranquillity
Or be it of the course of a beautiful journey—
I am too deep sunk in this moment, so don't disturb me,
This is my pleading,

hey stranger, yes you,

You, you who are reading this, let's go on a journey,
I took the bus, as I sat at the window seat, it was approx. 1 AM,
I was feeling myself retiring yet I wanted to stay awake
Because this is the thing I was waiting for,
This, a proper memory to etch in my mind, peace in my time,
Though it is temporary but I do want to savour the scent of this night,
The reasoning of this night's calling, it is so numbing
But hey, we both don't want to move, do we?
The bus started its engine at 1:30 AM exact
As I put on my earphone and selected "So Far Away" by Carol King
And closed my eyes, just for a moment,
But those lights, those twinkling lights brought me back,

hey, you awake?

Look outside, the stars are raining down
They're like a meteor shower, angels playing,
The dew is so fine, it is subtle winter season and it is cold
Outside, but the constant blackness outside outshined by street lights
Is just so mesmerizing that I forgot I am in a moving vehicle,
It was almost 2:45 AM, the driver turned off bus lights inside,
Most of the passengers are fast asleep,
And here we are, a swift head tilt on the window side
Smiling while staring into that emphatic dwelling dark
The phlegmatic atmosphere is intimate and
Welcoming the soft breeze on my hair and face, its kisses are lovely,
My hair started dancing
And my heart began to fill with heartbeats so melodious,
It is when the time the driver put किशोर कुमार on,
First song that came on was "फिर सुहानी शाम ढली"
And I was calmly swimming with the melody, so pure and curing,
I know you are loving it too, stranger, but I suddenly started to cry

Yet they were not sad tears, they were, exiting, so much baggage piled up in,
Those pearls rolling down, I begin to become nostalgic,
Those pretty memories that I left behind,
Those loves to which I bid farewell,
Those memories that I could've made but helplessly chose not to,
That peace where I invited chaos, my memories showed me flashes
Where I am with the person I am truly in love, in those flashes
We were giggling and staring into each other's eyes,
We call it किलकारी in Hindi,
Like infants do and we remember the faded shade,
My eyes are getting foggy, as I see those lights
It felt like I am swimming in amniotic tranquillity, bewildered
But thrilled, storm of memories making me crackling gasp and left me in awe,
I am smiling as the speed of vehicle became fast, I felt like a bud, blooming
Once again, the music just made it more powerful,
It was defiance, sheer, ironclad, I felt at ease after a long time
Such beauty, tears don't stop
And the lovely smile made a home on my face
क्या ही कहूं उस पल के बारे में, दिल को जो भर दिया उसने,
End can come and I wouldn't even care for a bit

As I was synchronizing with the rhythms of the sorrow and felicity combined,
I realized that this was the journey I was craving for so long,
It is just so fearfully beloved to me now, I don't want this moment to end,
I always loved night travel but this is the first time I'm living it,
Make me one with it, I want to swim in it for eternity
वो किलकारियां जो अब तक गूंज रही है मेरे कानों में,
मैं उसको बेइंतहा खुद में कैद करना चाहता हूँ।
I don't want this moment to end,
I am ready to travel this road alone,
For eternity, forever and ever going on,
I am just a single boulevard walker,
I don't want to be a sooth seeker.

Hey, your stop arrived, hope you enjoyed the journey,
If fate is merciful, we will meet again
I don't know where and when or how our lives will turn out
I just know, we will be happy to see each other,
So now—

i bid you farewell



COTTAGE IN THE WOODS

BY
NANDITA

Far inside the thickening woods, in the lap of three majestic pine trees, there sits a tiny hunting cabin, double storied to accommodate unexpected guests, every pane of glass in the cottage-styled windows layered over with thick roll-up blinds.

A plume of smoke rises through the chimney when the fireplace is at work, embers die down quickly in the cold. The slanting roof covered in thin snow shows from the hilltop that hails close to the cabin. A brook flows along its length, disappearing into small streams that bide home to otters and their little dams furrowing along the green meadows.

Once in a while the old lady visits the cabin. She fires up the hearth and dusts the mantelpiece, she opens the windows to let the sunlight in, she climbs up the creaky stairs with her tiny legs and checks the guest rooms, she sits at the reception desk at least a few hours every day and returns to her armchair by the fireplace to knit.

The house comes alive when she is in there, the sun shines a tad brighter, the wind almost cradles the drapes. Hunting rifles sit in glass shelves, more so as antiques than tools. Chekov never owned them, and they never went off. That is how the old lady likes it too, she lets them rest as if unaware of their existence.

Once in a while the bell at the little cabin rings. Guests take refuge though they never go hunting, they watch birds and admire the collectibles, the woodwork, the flooring, the redbrick walls. The old lady fires up the oven and bakes.

They sit together by the mantel place and eat and talk and laugh. The guests leave in a few days. The old lady does too. But she always returns to feed the fireplace, to knit, to bake. To tend to the cottage in the woods.

*a phoenix
is born*

BY SUSHMITA
BHATTACHARJEE

Ask yourself:
Is a broken Utopia
better than
a polished Dystopia?

You flip your toes high up in the sky daring for an adventure and you realize, with a start, that you are 'scared.' Isn't the very word an invocation of doom? You stare at the apparently guileless clouds and a sudden gust of wind robs you of your neatest art - the mask of happy satisfaction that you have crafted so precisely over your face, only to remind you that your real self is scared! You admire the steps when the trees dance at every rhythm of the wind, you try to mimic the freedom of the birds flying beyond your reach, you love to dream of the moon where stories were born and romances were knitted when you were young, but time and again you are censored by the infinite murmurs of the word *scared*.

Now allow me to hit the real chord: it's *you*, and only *you* who knows too well what you're actually scared of. But then you're too arrogant to accept it, aren't you? Arrogant, perhaps because you never wanted to peek at the reality that had long been waiting in your patio like an uninvited guest. Do you know what you have done by defying the traditional Hindu-Buddhist philosophy of *Atithi Devo Bhava*? You have caged yourself within the four walls of illusion. At every stink of reality, the heavy beatings of your heart pumping blood to every tissue of your body just to save you from mortality, reminds you that it is all an internalized reverie. Perhaps I am too candid in avowing that, just like you, we all are scared. This postmodern universe leaves only narrow fissures for bonding, for trust, for love and there's no shame in confessing that.

Yes, we're scared! Poignantly scared to tear the pages of our million handwritten love songs, to let go of the uncountable dreams that we once shared, to erase all the smiles, to wipe the tears which paved the way for our wrinkles, and finally, to shatter the carefully built euphoric world in one harsh stroke. The age-old adage, "Every dark cloud has a silver lining" also comes under heavy scrutiny when our Id whispers, *some clouds only become darker and darker, never to rain, never to fill your sky with a rainbow*.



If this be true, just for once, break the clouds, make it rain, paint the rainbow with your favourite colours and the world would halt to stare at your sky. It's high time we teach ourselves to shun the mirage of being on cloud nine, to terminate our fond exercise of idealizing our lives on social media and to bury the world of toxic bliss. Take a leap to the other side. Breathe more, laugh more - excesses are often worth it. It may cost you your heart, but I hope you will not mind burning a frightened heart for a daring Phoenix to be born. And if you ever decide to keep the ashes of the past, let it only be for laughter.

A DREAM OF DEATH

BY AMITAANSHU MIDHA



my eyes slowly opened,
as I fell asleep,
an awakening end,
my own soul I could reap;
wreathed in my own skin,
a blanket that seemed so distant,
have I committed an eternal sin,
angered a god so nonexistent?
standing in a glass hallway,
the carpet molded of marble,
myself I have been looking at, always,
never have I seen my eyes sparkle;
my eyes are moist,
yet vision so dry,
staring at a reflection,
of a man who cannot cry;
stuck in a place where,
all I feel is nothingness,
for my soul I do not care,
for my heart has been blessed;
dreaming of reality,
living a dream all the while,
feel like I've lost my sanity,
laying stranded, all alone on this glass isle;
standing barefoot,
on the cold floor,
I wish I could lie,
I wish I could die.

Arya Raja

Arya Raja is currently pursuing his Post Graduation from University of Delhi. The pieces of literature he writes are, more often than not, fragments of internal dialogues he has with himself. The possibility of someone completely unknown reading them and finding them relatable is the most thrilling outcome, he imagines, that can come of these endeavours.

Diwakar Gautam

Diwakar Gautam, 23 y/o graduated in English Literature and Sociology major from a State University. He loves writing poetry and storytelling because of the cathartic feeling they give, and making characters and scenarios which are able speak to the unheard are his personal aesthetics. He aims to become a fantasy and supernatural genre novelist. He loves anime, movies, video games, and hip-hop music.

Sushmita Bhattacharjee

Besides being an avid reader and a transgressive dreamer, Sushmita Bhattacharjee is currently pursuing M.A. in English from Banaras Hindu University (BHU). Scribbling her thoughts and hankering for fixities in an otherwise uncertain world have been her most treasured hobbies.



meet the authors

Anikita Verma

Born and brought up in Dhanbad, Anikita is currently pursuing her Masters in English at Banaras Hindu University. Writing comes rarely but naturally to her which she calls in Wordsworth's words, "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." In her undergraduate training, Anikita contributed to *Story Mirror*, a global multi-lingual platform for creative minds. She received the 2019 Author of the Year nomination for her work *Maira*. Apart from writing, she loves poetry, cooking, doodling, and non-fiction!

Nandita

Nandita is the author of the books; *The Night is Still Young* (2019) and *Tales from a Spanish Classroom* (2022). 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 University of Delhi.

Amitaanshu Midha

Amitaanshu is an ardent poet and lover of poetry, whose poetry is not just influenced by the works he reads or the literature he interacts with; but is heavily drenched with whatever he sees, does and knows about. As someone whose hobby is exploring as many new things as he can, his poetry is as diversified and abstract as his personality.

“*Even the*
Greatest of
SSCULPTURES
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antiques
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