

The Objective Reality Volume 3 December, 2024

The WORLD

“

A long month began. The Moon turned slowly around the Earth. On the suspended globe we no longer saw our familiar shore, but the passage of oceans as deep as abysses and deserts of glowing lapilli, and continents of ice, and forests writhing with reptiles, and the rocky walls of mountain chains gashed by swift rivers, and swampy cities, and stone graveyards, and empires of clay and mud. The distance spread a uniform color over everything: the alien perspectives made every image alien; herds of elephants and swarms of locusts ran over the plains, so evenly vast and dense and thickly grown that there was no difference among them.

-ITALO CALVINO // 'THE DISTANCE OF THE MOON'



Editing by Nandita, Aaditya Sahay
Cover Photograph by Aberrant Realities
Design and Typography by Nandita
Images and Illustrations from Pixabay.com

Office Address:
403, Ganpati Apartments,
Nagwa, Lanka,
Varanasi - 221005

Dear reader,

Welcome to the second chapter of our two-part series, an exploration of the tarot's timeless wisdom. This issue, titled *The World*, marks the end of the adventurer's journey where the Fool has remained a fool no more. If *The Fool* was about the leap into the unknown, *The World* is about finding your place within it; a moment when the paths you've traveled and the landscapes you've encountered come together to shape something entirely new.

In tarot, the World card stands as a symbol of unity and culmination, where the boundaries between the self and the environment blur. It is a card of celebration, a recognition of how far you've come, and an invitation to see how every experience, object, and horizon has contributed to your story. It is less about arriving at a destination and more about the realization that you are inseparable from the world around you.

For this issue, we asked our contributors to reflect on the environments, objects, and forces that shape their identities. You'll find tales where each journey reveals new facets of both the world and the self; stories that give life to inanimate objects; and panoramic portrayals of nature in all its grandeur. These works remind us that to engage with the world is to be transformed by it.

The World is a tribute to endings that are also beginnings, to the ways we leave pieces of ourselves in the places we touch, and to the understanding that our surroundings are not mere backdrops but active participants in our lives.

As you turn these pages, may you feel a sense of connection to the vastness of the world and your unique place within it. Thank you for being part of our adventure. Here's to discovering what's next!

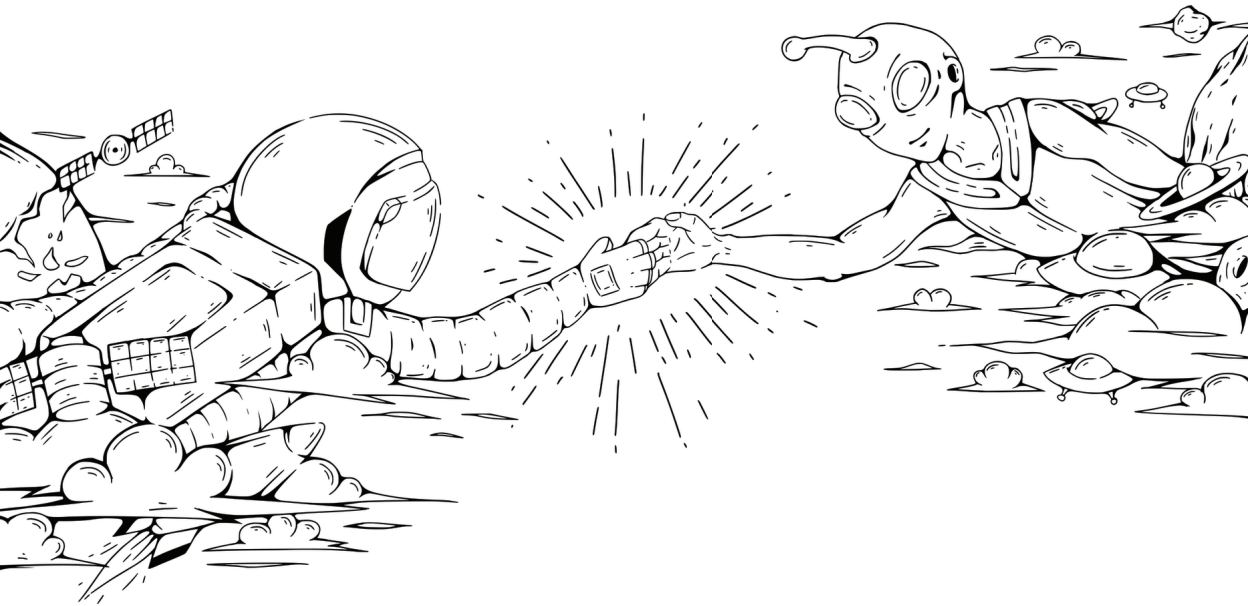
NANDITA
Editor-in-chief



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insignificant accounts

BY HARSHIT SINGH



Life begins with fusion, under utmost
sacred protection. The world begins with
the purest of all detachment.

(Yes, separations can be beautiful.)

It has a store of infinite to offer, to be carved out of, to be seen, to be left, to be imbibed—from the flow of dried leaves of autumn, to them dancing in the drizzle, to them dying in the winters, only to come up again, maybe not in the same form. Maybe supporting the life of those red tomatoes off the same or some other field. Maybe adding to the sweetness of those strawberries, or the spice of those green chilies. The world is in the chaos, waiting for that patient observer, wanting to be heard, observed, felt—maybe not for an eternity, but for a fraction of a second. It's in the adrenaline rush, wanting to explore, explode.

It's in the broadness of his smile, in the depth of her eyes, in the knot of a thread, and in the grave around the soil, in the turmoil. The world is in the desperation between the two breaths—to take one more. It's in the hands of a child holding the safest hands. It's in the waves spooning to go high,

only to get down together. It's on that shore waiting for yet another splash. It's on the floors waiting for another eruption, only to melt, yet again.

Maybe the world was never just supposed to be the songs in the rain or the dancing of the light, or the beautiful overcast winters. It was supposed to include the floods sinking them all, the droughts over all the shades of light, the magma submerging everything on its flight. Maybe it wasn't supposed to be forever, ever. It was supposed to be about death as well. The child wasn't supposed to be in the safest hands forever. The strawberries weren't always supposed to be sweet. The leaves were supposed to die in the winters. I urge you to step into the shoes of the entities around you, the entities you love, the entities you hate, and propose your view, what does the world mean to you?

*The world is in the
next second.*

Mahadevi Verma's “Animalverse”

In his introduction to Mahadevi Verma's Story collection, *Mera Pariwar*, Ilachandra Joshi states:

वैसे मेरा यह निश्चित विचार है कि
पंचतंत्र का लेखक चाहे जो भी रहा
हो, वह निश्चित ही बहुत बड़ा पशु-
प्रेमी रहा होगा



Featured: Mahadevi Verma (1906 – 1987)

I neither contend, nor accept this statement but I do have a counter belief. I believe that by giving human wit and voice to animals and then making them do sensible things, Pandit Vishnu Sharma produced a highly humanist corpus of stories called the *Panchtantra*. These stories implied that only by attaining the status of the “great lord of all things” as Alexander Pope terms humans, animals could impart life lessons. In addition, his personification of said animals surely made his task somewhat easier.

BY
HARSH
SRIVASTAV

On the other hand, Mahadevi Verma, in this collection of stories, does treat the animals as a part of her family but rather than imparting them human voice, she herself becomes a voice for each one of them. She doesn't weigh them on the standards set by humans but in a way transcends them to a different realm where they have an identity of their own with their own unique perks and problems.

In George Orwell's *Animal Farm* some animals might have been "more equal than others" but in Mahadevi Verma's Animalverse, to put it in a modern way, all animals are treated equally. This collection of stories - or rather, anecdotes - is a testimony to this fact. Her minute detailing of the features of every animal, bird or reptile, her acts of love & care for them and her impeccable understanding of their feelings, depict the length of her love for those she terms *Mera Parivar*.

Delving straight into the stories, one finds that each animal of her family is named not arbitrarily but consciously. For example:

नीलाभ ग्रीवा के कारण मोर का नाम रखा गया नीलकंठ और उसकी छाया के सामान रहने
के कारण मोरनी का नामकरण हुआ राधा

Similarly, she names her rabbit *Durmukh* because of his short-temper. And so on.

Indian history and mythology come to her aid in justifying the diverse variety of pets that she had. For instance, she validates the importance of a peacock by letting the readers know that it's the conveyance of Lord Kartikeya. She also mentions the importance Mahakavi Kalidas gives to deer in his works.

Being one of the four pillars of the Chhayavad movement in Hindi literature, her prose is full of flowery language and iconic imagery. At times she appears. She gets so involved in the description of her pets that she transcends the limits of the art of writing in a way that her pen becomes her paintbrush and the paper her canvas. The reader gets enough mosaics to collage them together and find the images only if he overcomes the difficulty of the language. One of those beautiful instances is the description of Gaura's eyes:

उसकी बड़ी चमकीली और काली आँखों में जब आरती के दिये की लौ प्रतिफलित होकर
झिलमिलाने लगी, तब कई दीयों का भ्रम होने लगा। जान पड़ा, जैसे रात में काली दिखने
वाली लहर पर किसी ने कई दिये प्रभावित कर दिये हों।

Another such heart-rending description is found at the death of Gaura. Her Sanskritized language leaves less space for commonplace humour. But she still manages to find moments of humour which are either innocent or witty. For instance, her apologies to Rishi Durvasha for calling her Rabbit Durvasha:

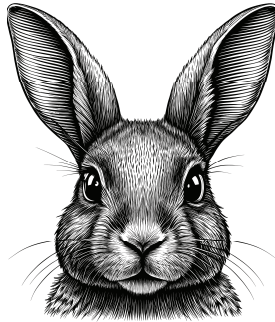
वे महर्षि निर्वाण को प्राप्त होकर-निर्विकार ब्रह्म में क्रोध की तरंगें उठा रहे हैं या किसी
अन्य लोकवासियों को शाप से कम्पायमान कर रहे हैं, यह जान लेने का साधन नहीं।

Yet another instance is the childish reasoning for keeping Nakul with her:

छोटे-से बिल में रात-दिन पड़े माता-पिता के सामने बैठे रहने में जो कष्ट बच्चे को हो
सकता है, उसका हम अनुमान कर सकते थे।

These stories are so full of animals and animal sensibilities that a passive reader might attempt the fallacy of skipping the divergent undertones that these stories touch at tangential points. So, there are subtle commentaries on social issues as well. For example, in the first story *Neelkanatha*, she gives a picture of the ruined state of the hospital & health care system in Prayag.

She also brings out the hypocrisy of humankind which fears death as a child fears darkness but finds no mercy in killing voiceless, innocent creatures like Sona's pregnant mother. So one finds that above all, these stories give a very beautiful message of coexistence, and of mutual sustainability. Rather than being an Animal farm the collection appears to me an Animalverse, to name it in an ultramodern way, "where each animal has its unique identity, ability, emotions, strength and weaknesses."

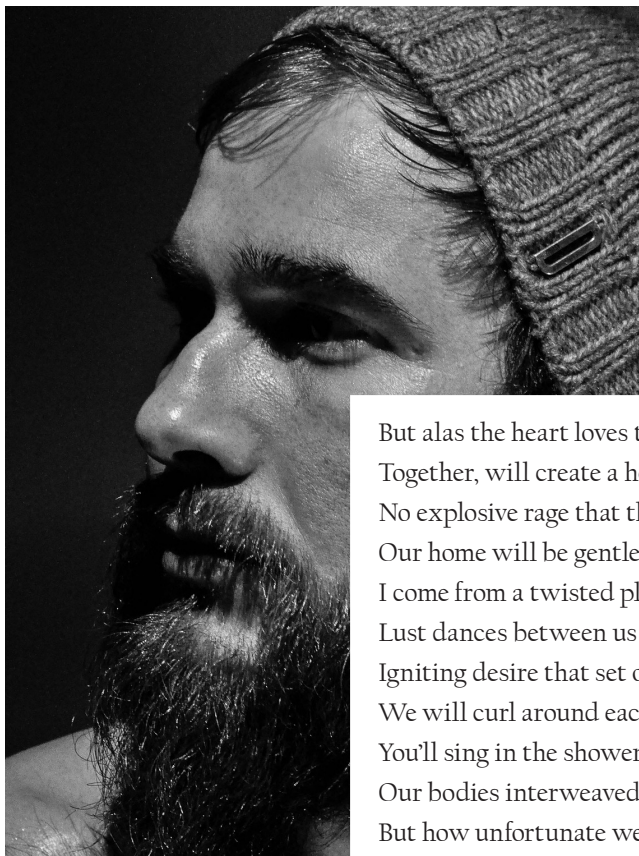


TO THE MAN I FELL IN LOVE WITH

by Kumari Vishakha

His presence feels like calmness in the storm
Black eyes filled with so much strength and dignity
Rough hands tell unsaid stories
Sculpted biceps, straight posture depicts firmness
Strong arms when wrapped provide serenity and warmth
Every day with you felt like heavenly bliss
In a chamber of my memory, your smile resides
Waiting for you was never turbulent but miscommunication was
Days where the heart was filled with sorrow
Swollen eyes gazing far memory repeating the haunting words
But once heard the voice, the rage went away
Wondering - was love always so forgiving?





But alas the heart loves the serenity of your heart more
Together, will create a home with no loud anger
No explosive rage that the foundation rocks and breaks
Our home will be gentle, warm, no fear worry will reside
I come from a twisted place but with you, I will heal
Lust dances between us - a passionate flame
Igniting desire that set our bodies on fire
We will curl around each other like a pair of quotation marks
You'll sing in the shower unveiled secrets known only to me
Our bodies interweaved in the presence of the divine
But how unfortunate we are to stay apart so far, so far
One day we will be together - me sitting in your lap,
Listening my favourite lullaby
Drinking coffee, catching sunsets,
Gazing onto the sea through rain

Lost together
Till then - cherishing the moments we spent together
In the tapestry of my heart

A Cold, Spanish Morning.

} by Nandita

- As the bus reached the city last evening, it had already started to drizzle. I wasn't prepared for the freezing air piercing through my bones as I walked to my guesthouse on one of the rainbow-roads to the Granada main. Behind Gucci, Balenciaga and Starbucks, the real bazaar flourished on the narrow streets intermingling passionately with one another, laboriously avoiding a dance of mad abandon.

At night, Chopin's *Nocturnes* played in a bar and I decided to down a quick glass of calimocho before walking over to the garden square I saw from the balcony. Rafael sat fiddling with his stool next to me. I recognised him as one of the passengers from the bus and he passed a Cheshire-grin upon catching notice of me. We clinked a *salud* with our glasses and he went back to his fiddling.

6:54 am.

As much as my heart longs for rain this morning, I pray against it for fear of freezing to death even before the Sun has risen.

**I MAKE MY RESOLUTE
WAY UPHILL TO THE
ALHAMBRA, THE
CROWN OF GRANADA,
A PLACE CLOSER
TO HEAVEN, FROM
WHENCE THE MOORS
ONCE REIGNED.**

Past the plazas and restaurants, catching whiffs of *brochetas de atún* (tuna skewers), *paellas* and *pollo asados* (grilled chicken). Past the kiosks selling hot waffles and churros. Past the souvenir stations still setting up for incoming business around ten or eleven. A man with platinum blond hair plays the guitar outside a line of sleepy bars. I long to sit cross-legged beside him and listen to him sing just for a small eternity, but my itinerary doesn't allow for that.



Overhead, an umbrella of foliage in full bloom welcomes me to the royal gates, the point where cement roads end and cobbled streets begin. There is a statue standing along the way, rather uncomfortably, on the right side of the avenue. On the bench right beside the statue, a girl is engrossed so completely in sketching the statue-man, that she doesn't even notice the sporadic crowds gathering round to peek over her work and marvel at it on their way to the palaces.

Patio de los Leones, or the Court of the Lions, seems to be the talk of the town. A woman poses in the Sevillana dress, the traditional red and black, with an ambitious frill down the waist - a confluence of the mermaid gown and an elegant evening skirt. A little boy in the crowd stands bewitched, mouth agape, looking at her in sheer awe.

**SHE BLUSHES
GENUINELY FOR WHAT
SEEMS TO BE THE FIRST
TIME IN A WHILE, THE
INNOCENT ADMIRATION
OF CHILDREN CANNOT
BE FAKED, UNLIKE THAT
OF MEN.**

Around the palace gardens, narrow streams of water flow down the carved handrails on either side of the stairs leading to several open terraces. Royal bodies in royal costumes walked here once; they stood here and created *Al Andalus* (the southernmost province of Spain), they exchanged glances under these very trees, and fell in love too.

**IN THE BAR LAST NIGHT,
RAFAEL HAD TALKED OF
PAINTINGS ; IT ALWAYS
STARTS WITH VAN GOGH.**

He spoke little English and I spoke even little-er Spanish, but our eyes and hands filled the gaps in our conversation. He was in town for an exhibition. I gathered it would feature some of his own work from the posters he showed me on his phone. I was duly invited to the gallery, and I didn't have the heart to say no.

"Cuidado!" A kind old man warns me to watch my step, snapping me out of remembrance, before I slip on an elevation bursting with algae and holds his arm out for me. Hospitality comes naturally to Spaniards.

As I grab his arm to scale the length of the tricky passage, I think of my father. Six months ago, I held his arm on the way to the airport and I could hear his heart grieving at the thought of me not being close to him tomorrow. How he would fill his camera up with every detail of this place if he were here today, and I would get to hold his arm again.

I check my phone to find the location for Rafael's art exhibition knowing I have a bus to catch before it ever starts. The Sun is at full fervor and I take an empty seat beside a medieval fountain surrounded by rows and rows of white tulips. My affirmation to visit him again was not entirely ingenuine. Maybe he had held my hand for a little too long on our late night walk back to my transitory abode, and maybe I had believed, if only for a passing moment, that I would stay in Granada for Rafael.

DID I WANT TO STAY IN GRANADA FOR RAFAEL, OR DID I WANT TO STAY WITH RAFAEL FOR GRANADA?

I can't be sure. But maybe if he had asked me last night to join him to the moon, I would have packed my life up in a single suitcase, and I would have said yes. The bus back to Málaga would have been tomorrow's problem.

Tomorrow is here, however, and they are taking us to the Nasrid Palaces of the *Alhambra*, this is what the tickets sell the fastest for. Inside, I stand in the arch of a window and look down upon the district of *Albaicin*, the grandest of the White Villages in southern Spain, twinkling in anticipation for the night's elegant chaos. I feel the dusk falling on my face as I close my eyes. If I dove into the town right this moment, would it forever let me drown in its lap?



When 'I' Write

BY SANCHARI DAS

*When I write,
The emotions onto the paper,
I think of murders,
I think of being silenced by the echoes;
Of the fixities of history demanding answers,
To my idle hours of contemplation.*

*When I write,
The world beckons itself into a paper,
In crumbled, crooked, sly ways,
Trying it's best to straighten my conscience.
As the pencil drives into it, the hole enlarges
And becomes the big void of exclusion.*



*When I write,
Faces overlap one onto the other,
I try to distinguish the ache, the stakes
Running deeper than my blue veins,
Smile at me, mocking the silences
Of anger, of acceptance and suppression.*

A Gilded Casket

BY NANDITA

Stepping out of the hot shower, covered carelessly in her pink terry towel, she glides a soft hand over the bathroom light switch to turn it off, and with the other, touches the little silver chain around her neck to make sure it was still intact. Lines of steam still rose from her hair, still wet and dripping on the floor, let down to her shoulders. The window-wall facing her stood partially draped as she slipped into a large red oversized t-shirt, long enough to make a dress.

With a practiced foot, she glided towards the dresser, lined with a stock of nail polishes, face creams, perfumes, hair sprays, and little glass bottles of certain potions for the skin. At the very edge, in a nook under the hood of the shelf, lay a transparent glass box, uncharacteristically devoid of dust compared to the shelf itself, lined on the sides with shimmering, pink metal bearings. A box is never just a box, however. She slid it out and placed it quite scrupulously in front of her, unlocked the little clamp latch, and raised the top as if opening a treasure chest. A broad smile usurped her face as she glanced over the contents:

A rose gold pendant. Her mother had always wanted her to wear precious metal on her body. It just so happened that she never could wear gold, it made her head feel heavy. She had tried gold rings, gold chains, gold earrings, everything made her work less and wonder more, speak less and sleep more. Gold was hypnosis for her, and so when her mother had found out about rose-gold-coated silver jewelry, she had asked her to pick her favorite neckpiece. She chose this one, and has worn it for almost every day since it arrived. It had tasted the sea-salted breeze from most nights on the beach and she felt her mother's smile near her heart when she was wearing it. No headaches, no lack of focus. Silver seemed to be her element.



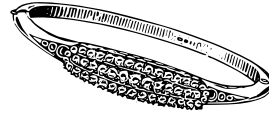
An overwhelming statement choker made of oxidized silver, complete with a pair of jhumkas. This was more a costume piece than something she could wear on a whim. She had been gifted a lehenga a while ago, deep blue and peacock green, a gorgeous specimen that hung like a cardboard cutout on her body. She felt like a clown in the dress, but when she wore the heavy silver necklace, somehow the absurdity of the dress mellowed down and her face glowed despite the weight of contrast on her petite frame.



A pair of diamond ear studs. If gold made her dizzy, diamonds made her crazy. Not the sort of crazy Marilyn Munroe would affirm at the mention of a diamond, but a crazy that is almost sinister. She would start showing signs of paranoia only after a couple of hours of wearing them and within six, she would have cried at least once. She doesn't remember ever wearing these studs for more than six hours, and never for interviews where she needed a level head. She wondered what would happen if she wore them long enough. Diamonds are cold, hard glass-cutters, what else could they destroy?



A bracelet, bright yellow gold. One of her grandmother's classic finds. It was a chic, minimal piece which adorned her wrist in a fashion well worth the toll of wearing gold. Besides, she only wore it on days she needed an extra boost of confidence. Cinderella knew when the clock would strike 12 on her gold bracelet and refused to wear it for more than a day. It was as if her grandma held her hand every time she slipped it on, as if she approved, as if she was proud of her.



A golden ring with gilded leaves, a pair of tiny golden hoops. If she could choose to wear one piece of jewelry every second of her life, she would wear these. She remembered going to the jewelry store with



She looked at the clock and touched the silver chain on her necklace to make sure it was still there. Kept her gilded casket back under the hooded shelf, and began dressing for work. Her apartment was rented and she was unsure when she would have to leave this one in favor of another, maybe one in a new provincia altogether. Spain was the love of her life, but Spain wasn't home. She had gathered up her memories in a box of jewelry, a box is never just a box, indeed, sometimes . . .

her dad, when she was in the ninth grade, to get them. She remembered his choice, immaculate, precise and unwavering. His choice was always her choice too, an inherited aesthetic sensibility she couldn't be more proud of. She had her father's nose and refused to get it pierced, not now, nor when she gets married. She had her father's nose and she wanted to preserve it that way. She put the ring on, still a tad large for her finger, flexed her hand and sighed in relief. She wanted to hold her father long and tight, possibly forever, but he was back in their home country, five hundred miles away.

*it's a portal
back home.*

meet the authors

Harshit Singh

The author is all about a couple of observations and stimulations. He finds an untamed pleasure sinking in to the sea bed of raw emotions, coming up with the solidified rocks/pieces of texts.

Harsh Srivastav

Harsh has completed his master's course in English Literature from Banaras Hindu University. Poetry and Nostalgia for him are, more than any complex aesthetic & psychological phenomena, the "Anywhere Doors" which open to the vibrant mess of biotic imaginations and unsettling chronotopes of simpler times. So, more than a creative endeavour, writing for him is a cosy refuge from the heavy rain drops of reality.

Nandita

Nandita completed her Master's degree in English Literature from University of Delhi. Her internship took her to Spain where she worked as a Language and Culture Assistant for the Spanish Ministry of Education. Currently, she is working as a creative writer and English language analyst.

Kumari Vishakha

Kumari Vishakha is a Research Scholar in University of Lucknow. As a passionate literature enthusiast, she explores diverse literary traditions and contemporary narratives. Her academic pursuits reflect a deep love for storytelling and critical analysis.

Sanchari Das

Poems to Sanchari is like water to a plant! She has so far published three poems under JEC Publications. One of her poems is launching soon under the poetry collection, "Power of Solitude" edited by Ishani Bhattacharya. She has completed her Masters in English from Banaras Hindu University.

This featured poem encapsulates the world and its order in a piece of paper, where writing as an act becomes the only confrontation that one has to offer.





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Website: theobjectivereality.in

Email: editor@theobjectivereality.in

Instagram: www.instagram.com/the.objective.reality