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THE

# PEACOCK

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What other publication ever featured daily columns by the reigning Jnanpith Award winner like *The Peacock's* own Damodar "Bhaiee" Mauzo? Where else can you read new verse every day from poets of the calibre of Maaz Bin Bilal and Pragya Bhagat? Have you seen original artwork produced afresh on the level of our covers by Govit Morajkar, like today's tribute to the written word? Team Peacock scatters and reassembles annually – we've been doing it for nine years – but its identity has always remained unshakably rooted in the literature and art of our profoundly rich cultural location in Goa and India. That is the theme of today's 16-page special edition, and collective labour of love. We hope you enjoy every word and line.



# A Certain Tenderness

BY PRAGYA BHAGAT

Prior to meeting Alvina Joshi, I watched *My Grandfather's House* (2023) and felt an immediate kinship to the young filmmaker. Both of us were close to our grandfathers, and as we grappled with the grief of losing them, we documented our family histories through our work.

When I asked Joshi to describe herself in five words, her answer was almost immediate: "Anxious. Control freak. Sensitive. Passionate. Persistent."

Though she studied editing at Whistling Woods International in 2020, Joshi enjoys directing more. "I've made one short documentary. Now I'm working on my first feature documentary which I'm pitching here at the Co-Production Market."

Her project, *Tokora Sorai'r Baah* (*A Weaver Bird's Nest*), is an Assamese feature, co-directed by Rahul Rabha. It is one of twelve projects chosen by the Film Bazaar as part of the Market, which hopes to provide collaborative opportunities that will turn features like Joshi's, into powerful films. *A Weaver Bird's Nest* has already won the "Best South Asian Project" award at the Dhaka Doc Lab, and it was selected for the Sundance Ignite Fellowship for which Joshi will be mentored and funded for. Other alumni of the Sundance Ignite Fellowship include Charlotte Regan, whose debut feature, *Scrapper* (2023), had its India premiere at IFFI this year.

Joshi is twenty-six years old, and she already knows what she brings to the table: "A certain tenderness in the gaze. That's how I like looking at my subjects. And a lot of love for the characters. I don't like loud and aggressive. There's a lot of power in softness." Her current cinematic inspirations include the South Korean *Burning* (2018), the Vietnamese *Inside the Yellow Cocoon Shell* (2023), and the Indian *About Love*

(2019). "I really like Asian and Southeast Asian cinema." This is Joshi's first IFFI. The festival, she says, "is great exposure to what's ticking in the industry right now."

Critics often call out the self-indulgence in those who use their lived experiences for creative expression. In *My Grandfather's House*, Joshi is a protagonist. So is her grandmother and deceased grandfather. Why should viewers care about her story? "I'm not special enough or important enough. I'm just like all the women around me. It is the story of the Indian family. The more authentic and vulnerable you are willing to be, the more relatable what you're making becomes." In her documentaries, Joshi adds, there is no suspension of disbelief. "I like it when people tell me their own stories. I like it a lot more than imagined realities. And I like engaging with the world around me."

The criticism of naval-gazing, Joshi says, "stems from looking at cinema as a means to escape. It's part of the narrative that after a long day, we go home and watch an action film. I don't think cinema should be just that. Art is your means to engage with the world around you and to make sense of it. If we are not telling our stories, how are we making sense of this already very uncertain world?"

Joshi acknowledges both the challenges and opportunities for her generation. "For starters, we don't seem to have winter anymore. The biggest challenge is what's happening to the world at a very physical level. It's frightening." Global warming aside, she speaks of the mindset that Gen Z operates with. "We are unafraid. We are able to speak truth to power." Joshi asks aspiring young filmmakers to not give up on their dreams. "The one thing that will never change is that your stories matter. If you don't tell your stories, then all the publishing houses and production houses and theatres and YouTube, they will have nothing on their plate."



Photo by Michael Praveen

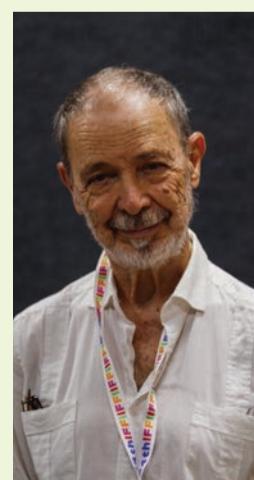
Films started with literature, all over the world. *The Godfather* is probably the best adaptation of a novel.

**Shekhar Kapur**  
IFFI Jury  
Mumbai



They're two different languages. In film, everything is in the present, and in literature you have the inside voice.

**Catherine Dussart**  
IFFI Jury  
Paris



Poets try to form images with words, and if you make a movie about poetry, it is particularly important to get that image across.

**José Luis Alcaine**  
IFFI Jury  
Spain



If you adapt a book, the journey to creating a film is statistically more successful. The film adaptation of *Catch 22* is really strong.

**Helen Leake**  
IFFI Jury  
Australia



Photo by Michael Praveen

# From IFFI to MUBI

BY JESSICA FALEIRO

**S**vetlana Naudiyal began her career in cinema as an IFFI intern in 2010 and is now the Programming Director for Asia at MUBI, the streaming platform for cinema fans.

*Tell us about your role?*

I select South Asian content to show on our platform in India. I'm also responsible for presenting our global films in thematic ways that can be relevant to our audience. We recently did a theme called 'Millennial Meltdown' which showed films where the central characters are facing something akin to a quarter-life crisis. It was relevant to a lot of people and became a popular campaign of ours on MUBI.

*What excites you most about your job?*

As a cinephile, there are certain kinds of films I love, and I'm thrilled that I get to wake up every day and work with the kinds of films that I love watching. I studied Engineering, then moved into Advertising, but my first job was as an intern at IFFI in 2010. After that I worked at Katha Centre for Film Studies in Mumbai where I learned a lot about curating films.

*Could you tell us about MUBI's presence in India?*

Over four years we have received a lot of love from the film and art community in the country. Whenever I go anywhere, people approach me to talk about how much they love and value the platform. The numbers aren't crazy, but growing steadily. Our main demographics are college students to mid-career professionals, and people who are interested in arts and culture. This includes, those who don't mind reading subtitles! We are very popular with engineering college students, too.

*Tell us about MUBI's distribution role?*

We were distributors for *The Settlers* (2023), which is showing at IFFI. Our tentpole titles in the last two years are films like *The Worst Person in the World* (2021) and *Aftersun* (2022), which were acquired by our global team for everybody, including India. The conversations come to me when

the films are handled by a local distributor in India. For example, films playing at the festival like *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), *The Zone of Interest* (2023) and *About Dry Grasses* (2023) are handled by local distributors, so, I start the conversation about acquiring them for India.

*What's your strategy for acquiring content in India?*

It has to be a good film. In India, we're looking for finished films only, whether Indian or global. Ideally, they will have already started their journey with the audience and had a theatrical release or gone to film festivals.

*What kinds of titles have you acquired in India so far?*

We recently acquired *Pokhar Ke Dunu Paar* (2022) by debut filmmaker Parth Saurabh which explores a couple's relationship in the wake of the pandemic. We also have *Priscilla* (2023) directed by Sofia Coppola, coming from the global team. We've partnered with PVR INOX Pictures for its first theatrical release in December, hopefully. We're very excited about this first for us, after four years in India.

*How have you managed to carve a niche for yourselves?*

Two key things differentiate us. Every film has been carefully hand-picked with a personal touch by someone in the team who has watched it. We add 'Our Take' to every film, where one of our team members says why they think you should watch this film. We also have a service called 'Movie Go' which no other platform anywhere else in the world has, where we have partnered with a theatre chain. In India, it's PVR. Through MUBI, a member can get a free ticket to see our movie of the week in theatre. We believe that streaming and theatrical viewing can co-exist because they both serve different purposes.

*Is MUBI looking to produce films here?*

Although we do keep an eye out for talent and projects, we don't produce films in India and we don't have any plans to venture into production for a couple of years. I'm always in research mode though.

Very often films are adapted from books; they inspire stories and scripts. I particularly enjoy French literature.

Jérôme Paillard  
IFFI Jury  
Paris



## SHORT TAKES

I enjoy the writings of Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Dharamvir Bharati, and Shakespeare.



Arpit Sarve  
Actor  
Pune

I liked Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster*, where he explores whether or not the mountain is worth the climb.

Aishwarya  
Singhi  
Architect  
Goa



My favourite book-to-film adaptation is *Charulata*, where the filmmaker was able to connect with the soul and theme of the book.

Manish Sharma  
Film-maker  
Mumbai



# "Women are natural producers"

BY SAACHI D'SOUZA

**M**onisha Advani is sitting with *The Peacock* after an exciting session at the Film Bazaar on the technology behind her TV series *Mumbai Diaries* (2021). Along with Madhu Bhojwani and Nikkhil Advani, she co-founded Emmay Entertainment which produced *Rocket Boys* (2022), *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway* (2023), and *D-Day* (2013), among other films.

*Why films?*

It's a personal relationship. My brother Nikkhil Advani seldom asks for help. He'll be completing 30 years in this industry in a week, and he likes to do things himself. So, when he turned to me to start this company, I realised this was important. Madhu and I saw this as an interesting challenge, particularly because our industry acquired sectorial status in its last several years, and we've seen a sort of renaissance in the last 15 years. I'd like to think it's the preparation for the real renaissance. It's also about serving an audience."

*What are some of the basics of producing?*

Because I'm an entrepreneur at the core of things, my commitment never stops. It's a 24/7 machine that's working inside my head. Being a good producer means being a good enabler, and to do that, you need to be a good listener. Sometimes you have to listen to all the stories to find the right one that will resonate with you. And I think that if you bring authenticity to that listening, and you transfer it into being organised - because a producer has to realise that a creative mind doesn't like to stay within the lines - a good producer can create a productive ecosystem for a film. A producer is a glue in this process.

*You're one of the few female producers of your level in the industry.*

I credit my mother for telling me that "the world will tell you that they can run faster than you, but it's up to you to prove them wrong." I believe that it is possible to put your

professionalism first. I often tell other women, and would want this for all marginalised groups: put yourself forth. Commit and show up. Your competency can be seen before your gender. I'm aware this is not always possible, and it might work for some people and not for others, but what will be left of us if we don't try? And being here in the Bazaar, I'm so excited for the future. I'm constantly learning from people half my age. There's hope here.

*What would you say about the industry's need for more women producers?*

Today on the panel it was said, "women are natural producers because we're nurturers," and I thought that resonated. I think women producers bring a specific gaze and inclusivity to the industry that cannot necessarily be introduced by anyone else. When we started our company I once brought my niece to our office and asked her what she thought. She said, "what do YOU think about it? You're two female producers and all your posters on the wall have men," and that struck me hard. In one sentence, she taught me an important lesson.

*What do you look for in a story?*

Emotion. If a story doesn't have emotion, if I can't connect with it, I can't produce it. And by that, I don't mean I need to feel happy about it, I should be able to feel outraged too. A story is like a tuning fork, you knock it on different surfaces, and it has a different sound each time. I should be able to feel the vibrations of a story.

*How do you balance the left brain with the right?*

I'm blessed with Madhu and Nikkhil, where Madhu is the left brain and Nikkhil is the right. It's a yin and yang relationship. I often find myself at an impasse, which is common, but I think that there's creativity in managing a budget as well as in creating a story. We're all creators in many ways. The best part about filmmaking is how the business side coincides with the creative.



Photo by Michael Praveen

I tend to enjoy literary works that incorporate surreal aesthetics and dystopian worlds.

Tusshar Sasi  
Advertising  
Mumbai



Literature impacts every generation and that's how cinema evolves. As society shifts, so do its stories, and its cinema.

Aishwarya  
Karekar  
Marketing  
Mumbai



I don't read a lot of novels, but I liked *Sacred Games*, which was an adaptation of one.

Ugam  
Zambaulikar  
Actor  
Goa



I really liked *The Kite Runner*, but the book was more visually challenging and beautiful. The movie didn't match the vision I had in my head.

Sangramsinhi  
Gaikwad  
Film-maker  
Goa







# Shared Secrets

BY JESSICA FALEIRO

**A** cool breeze blew in from the Arabian Sea, casting a chill over the upper deck of a casino boat anchored on the Mandovi river. It whispered through the palm trees dotting the site of the 54<sup>th</sup> International Film Festival of India and slipped through the open hallways of Goa Medical College as Vasquito D'Silva was bounding up the main staircase. He felt the chill wind and was still speaking into his walkie-talkie when he bumped into Francis. He snapped the radio back on his belt.

"Show me," he said to Francis.

Vasquito slowed down to walk beside the elderly caretaker. They were only a few days away from opening night and Vasquito's team suddenly seemed to have forgotten how to do their jobs. He hated the sounds of the radio crackle. It meant trouble.

"Where is it?" Vasquito asked.

"Old Annex."

"I thought it was cordoned off years ago."

"It was."

"Then what exactly is the problem?"

"The Director said he could hear a dripping tap."

Vasquito frowned. "We shut off the water in that section decades ago."

Francis was silent. They reached a tall wooden door covered in white chipped paint. Francis pushed the door open and they entered.

The room was illuminated only by stray rays of sunshine streaming in. Dust motes disturbed by their entrance floated on the air. They both stood still, listening for the sound of a dripping tap. Nothing came.

"I don't hear it. Do you?"

"No sir."

"Then why am I here?" Vasquito exclaimed, turning to leave.

"Because it isn't from a tap, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"The dripping sound"

"Well, where is it from then?"

"It's a ghost, sir."

"Explain."

"Sir, this was much before your time, but one of the reasons we closed off this area was because people started complaining they could hear noises and no one could find the source."

"What noises?"

"Well...at first, it was just the dripping. But then, there were wailing babies."

"Did you say...wailing...babies?"

"Yes, sir. And also, a woman."

"Okay. What's unusual about that?"

"Well...she was dead, sir."

Vasquito folded his arms across his chest. "What do you mean?"

"People saw her floating around the



Annex and when they got closer, she'd simply vanish."

"I told you if you don't stop drinking, I'll have to fire you."

"I haven't touched a drop since the last time, Sir."

"Vasq!" Vasquito jumped when the radio crackled to life.

"What?"

"Bosco messed up again! We need more red carpet."

"Send Bosco out to get more and tell him I'm not paying extra!"

The crackle died off. Francis had wandered off and Vasquito was alone. He glanced out the window from the first floor and realised it looked onto the courtyard. He could see the shortfall of carpet spread across the courtyard. He shook his head and sighed. His radio crackled again and he rushed out the door.

The radio crackled again. He was annoyed by the sound. Vasquito said sternly into it, "I have one hundred other things to worry about, don't add to my list."

At the top of the stairs, the crackle

came to life for a moment, then went silent and he heard a sound.

"Francis?"

No one replied.

He had one foot on the top stair, when he heard it again. It was a deep-throated howl. He ran back, pushed open the unlocked door and went inside.

His radio crackled, fell silent again. He felt a chilly breeze on his face and shivered. One of the windows on the left had a huge gap between the expanded wood and the glass pane.

Just when he had convinced himself that Francis's story was all rot and his brain had been triggered into hearing things, he squinted to see something in the dark beyond the room. It was another door. Vasquito entered a much larger hall. It had probably been a sanatorium in the past. He shut his eyes for a moment and imagined it painted yellow and white, to cheer up the inmates as they recuperated from illness or surgery. He imagined the patients lying in pain, healing alone, or worse, dying alone. He shuddered and

opened his eyes. A diaphanous white thing was moving quickly towards him. He backed away, then turned and ran to the door but it seemed wedged shut.

Vasquito felt the room temperature drop. He turned and saw the woman hovering, about two metres away from him, just staring. A baby wailed in the distance. He glanced out the window and saw Bosco laying carpet down. He banged hard on the window for help but Bosco was too far away. The window cracked suddenly and broke. He stared at his bleeding hands, then looked up. He was alone again. His heart was racing and he could barely catch his breath.

He recalled the time his grandmother held him tightly after he thought he'd seen a ghost in his bedroom. She'd told him, "Ghosts are just lost souls trying to express themselves to us in whatever ways are left to them. They haven't been able to leave their earthly abode properly or enter the afterlife. They don't know they're trapped and they don't want to harm you. They're just lonely and reaching out the only way they can." The memory calmed him down.

The door opened and Vasquito rushed out.

Out in the corridor, Francis saw the look on his face and knew. Then he saw the blood on Vasquito's hands.

"Just superficial cuts. I'm fine."

"She's never done that before."

"You've seen her?"

"Yes sir. Plenty of times. Also heard the wailing babies, the dripping tap."

"Francis, I can fix a dripping tap but not this. Why did you call me?"

Francis looked sad. He went to the door, pulled out a bunch of keys from his pocket and locked the door. "I'll come to the clinic with you, Sir."

"I'm not going anywhere until you tell me."

"It's Anton..."

"Anton...? The other caretaker? The one who had been here longer than you?"

"Yes. He passed away a few months ago."

"Yes. I know."

"He was my friend and the one who first shared this secret with me. After he died I just wanted someone else to know. I won't live forever, Sir."

"I'm sorry, Francis. I didn't know he was your friend."

At the clinic, the doctor disinfected and band-aided the cuts. "No more accidents. The Director is relying on you, Vasquito."

"I'll be more careful."

Vasquito's radio crackled as he started to walk off, carefully manipulating the device with his band-aided hands. He saw Francis walking away and caught up with him.

"I'll come upstairs for chai later."

Francis grinned, and slowly walked away.

# Villa Borghese

BY AJAY KAMALAKARAN

“Mamma, James Bond’s in Goa,” Victor said, dashing into the living room of their home in Fontainhas. Philomena looked at her 14-year old with a sense of levity. “Okay, what about your homework?”

The young man, whose enthusiasm for films was significantly higher than that for his studies, went on to explain how every single person was talking about the actors who had come to Goa for a shooting. “It’s not just Roger Moore, there’s David Niven and Gregory Peck! Some film they’re calling *The Sea Wolves*. ”

The last of the big Hollywood names shocked Philomena, and she drifted into a trance. Did those two hours in Rome 26 years ago really happen? Was it a memory that was totally invented by the mind? A story to be told to future grandchildren?

Victor’s words and enthusiasm faded away as Philomena went from being the wife of a politician to a young, lively Portuguese Indian who was living her dream as a student in Italy.

“Oh, My Lord, it’s 7 already,” she said to herself, as she ran past her paying guest accommodation in Trastevere to the tram stop. Philomena had regularly been admonished by her professors for being late to class and she feared a more severe punishment this morning.

There wasn’t any time to have an espresso and brioche this morning. Despite her natural fitness, running on the cobblestoned streets of this enchanting part of the Italian capital was an arduous task. The tram was now within sight. As she tried to make one final sprint to get on, her legs failed her. 30 metres still separated the Saligao beauty from her potential ride when the tram departed.

As she stopped to catch her breath the wind blew hard enough to add insult to mental injury. Philomena was clutching her white polka dot dress as she felt the studying glance of a man.

“Do you speak English, Signorina?” The accent wasn’t anything like those of the British officers that she had encountered during her visits to Bombay. With her genes that had the best of Portuguese and Indian features, the 19-year old was more than used to attention from young Italian men, but this man who was sitting on a bench looked like he was on the other side of

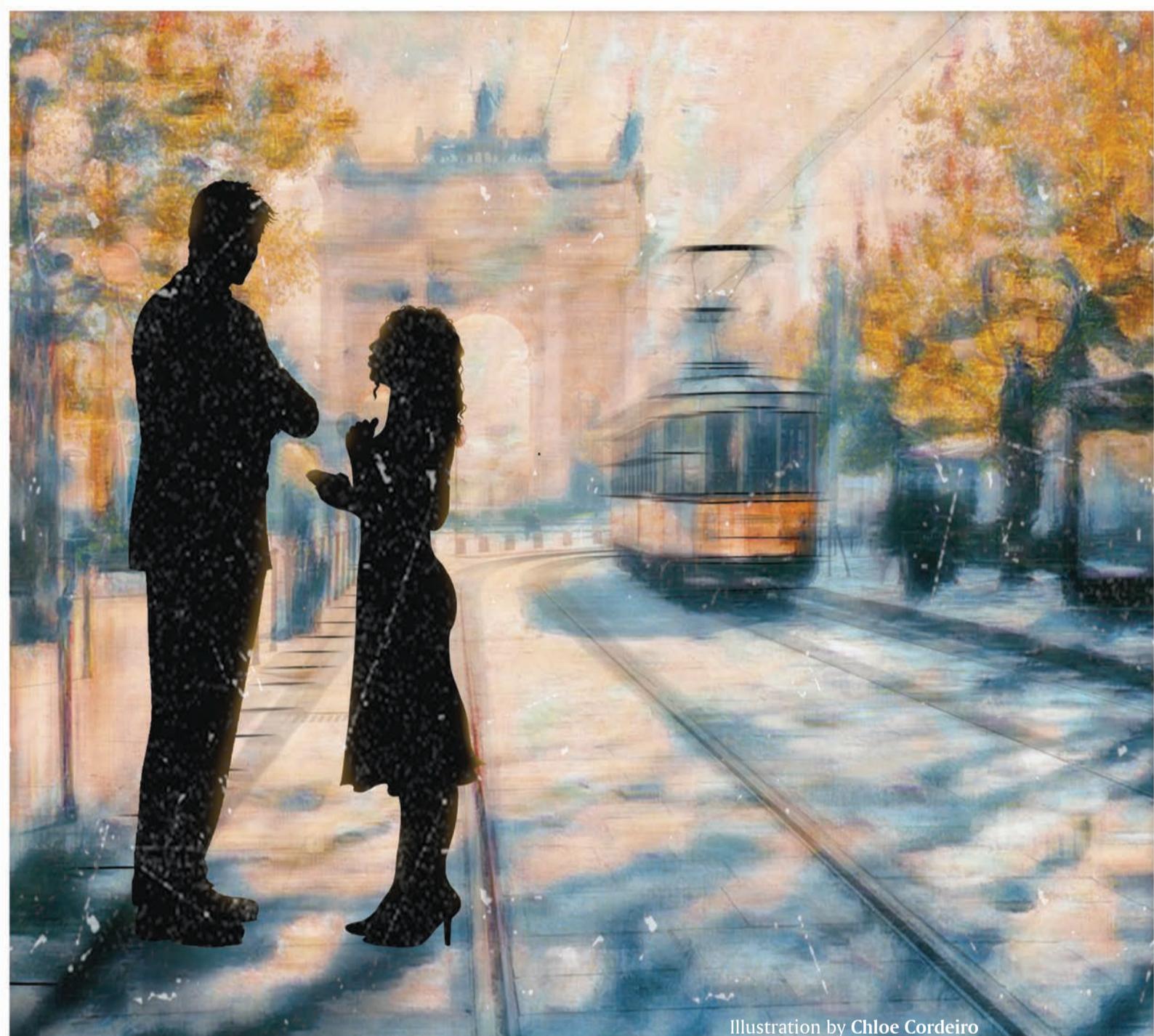


Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

35.

Yet, there was a magnetic attraction she felt to this stranger with piercing dark brown eyes and a jawline that could have only been crafted by Roman gods.

“Yes,” Philomena said, looking away almost immediately the way she would as though she saw the bright sun. “I couldn’t help but notice you running for the tram and was wondering if I could give you a ride.” After 6 months in Italy and being the recipient of propositions in varying degrees, she was about to refuse.

Then the stranger with the unusual accent stood up. This man towered over almost any local and the petite Goan tilted her head like a person sitting in the front row of a cinema hall. “I’m Gregory!” She didn’t want to give her name away but Philomena simply could not get over how handsome the man was.

“I have a Vespa...if you know the way, I can drop you,” he said. The Goan student knew that it was already late and was in two minds about just

walking back home. Just when she was about to turn down the offer, Gregory spoke again. “Would you let me buy you breakfast?”

Maybe it was the warm sun that sliced the milky white clouds on the turquoise sky, maybe it was the calm of that morning or the fragrance of flowers that the wind carried with it, or maybe Cupid just happened to call in on Trastevere and work his magic. “Yes.”

Saligao, with her conservative parents and irritating relatives, was thousands of kilometres away. Philomena sat on the back seat of the Vespa, putting her arms around this tall, dark and handsome American stranger.

Despite the large age gap, they seemed to be of a similar mental wavelength. Being a Catholic himself, the American was keen to know more about Portuguese India and its unique culture. What greater joy for a famous actor who was being chased by the paparazzi throughout his stay in Rome than to spend time with a gentle and

kind brunette who had no idea who he was.

The two walked in Villa Borghese and went to a spot from where the Rome cityscape and St. Peter’s were visible. As a warm breeze descended on them, their eyes met before their lips. Philomena was awestruck, but she knew that this was as far as it was going to go.

As she got off the Vespa, Philomena put her arms around Gregory’s back and held him tightly one last time. And then he drove off.

Philomena only found out who Gregory Peck was several years after her romantic encounter, when *Roman Holiday* was screened at a cinema in Panjim, by then a part of the Republic of India.

“Mamma, mamma...where are you?” Victor realised that his mother had long stopped paying attention to him. Shaken out of her flashback to 1953 Rome, the wife of a politician and the mother of a cinephile teen was mentally back in 1979 and asked her son to go and do his homework.

**Braz Gonsalves,**

a living legend in the realm of jazz, possesses not only unparalleled musical prowess, but also a humility that sets him apart. Despite his remarkable achievements, he refrains from claiming credit, embodying a rare modesty. His belief in the potential of young musicians is inspiring, especially given his seasoned life as a musician. In an era where some of his peers may dismiss contemporary music, Braz stands out as a beacon of open-mindedness. He perceives the evolution of music with a keen eye, recognizing the beauty of jazz from its origins to the present day.

What distinguishes Braz is his ageless musicality. In an industry often influenced by "trends", he remains a timeless force. His ability to appreciate and adapt to the ever changing landscape of jazz reflects not just a connection to the past but an understanding of its future. It's a rare quality that not only makes him a living legend, but also a source of inspiration for the youngsters privileged to

collaborate with him.

As my team embarks on this journey to capture Braz's life story, our hope is to do justice to this extraordinary saxophonist. We aspire to weave a narrative

that mirrors the depth and richness of his experiences, ensuring that his legacy resonates with audiences for generations to come.

Text by  
Nalini Elvino de Sousa

# No Film-Country for Poets

By Maaz Bin Bilal

It wasn't always like this.

So many aspired  
to be poets.

From Bombay too,  
we'd hear the poet's call,  
and not just  
in the film songs.

Our (film) hero was often  
the poet.  
And sometimes  
heroine too.

Manto wrote the screenplay  
*Mirza Ghalib*—the master poet  
portrayed by  
Bharat

Bhushan.

Sahir wrote songs  
for a bunch of films—  
*Pyaasa*, *Barsaat ki Raat*, *Gazal*,  
and *Kabhi Kabhie*,  
and also, Shakeel Badayuni  
wrote for *Mere Mehboob* and *Palki*,  
where the protagonist only  
ever wished to be  
a poet (and lover).

But with the 70s  
came the Angry  
Young Man, and poets  
became less frequent,

*Umrao Jan Ada*  
a courtesan,  
and the lame man  
of *Saajan*.

*Muhafiz* adapted  
Anita Desai's *In Custody*,  
A tragedy of the rift  
between Urdu and Hindi.

Shashi Kapoor played  
a degenerate poet  
wallowing in the loss  
of poetry.

Instead, we got 'action,'  
as globalism found traction,  
*Gundaraj* became truth  
that is *Satya*.

By then there were  
fifty six,  
*Ab Tak Chhappan*.

A brief flutter with Farhan  
whose heart wished  
that *You Only Live Once*,  
so, Imran recited,  
through his father's voice,  
some poetry on the sea.

But the fearless cop *Dabangg*  
came swiftly  
(and not just once),  
and the lion copper *Singham*,

along with Marvel and DC,  
until Tiger(s) sprung,  
and we had no longer our poetry  
but a spy (uni)verse.

Although I must admit,  
verse has had one more moment,  
when from the ghetto emerged,  
*Gully Boy*,

whose time came and went,  
with lyrics originating  
in the Black man's bent  
of resistance,

but now like all rap  
he too wished to tap  
and crack  
global contests.

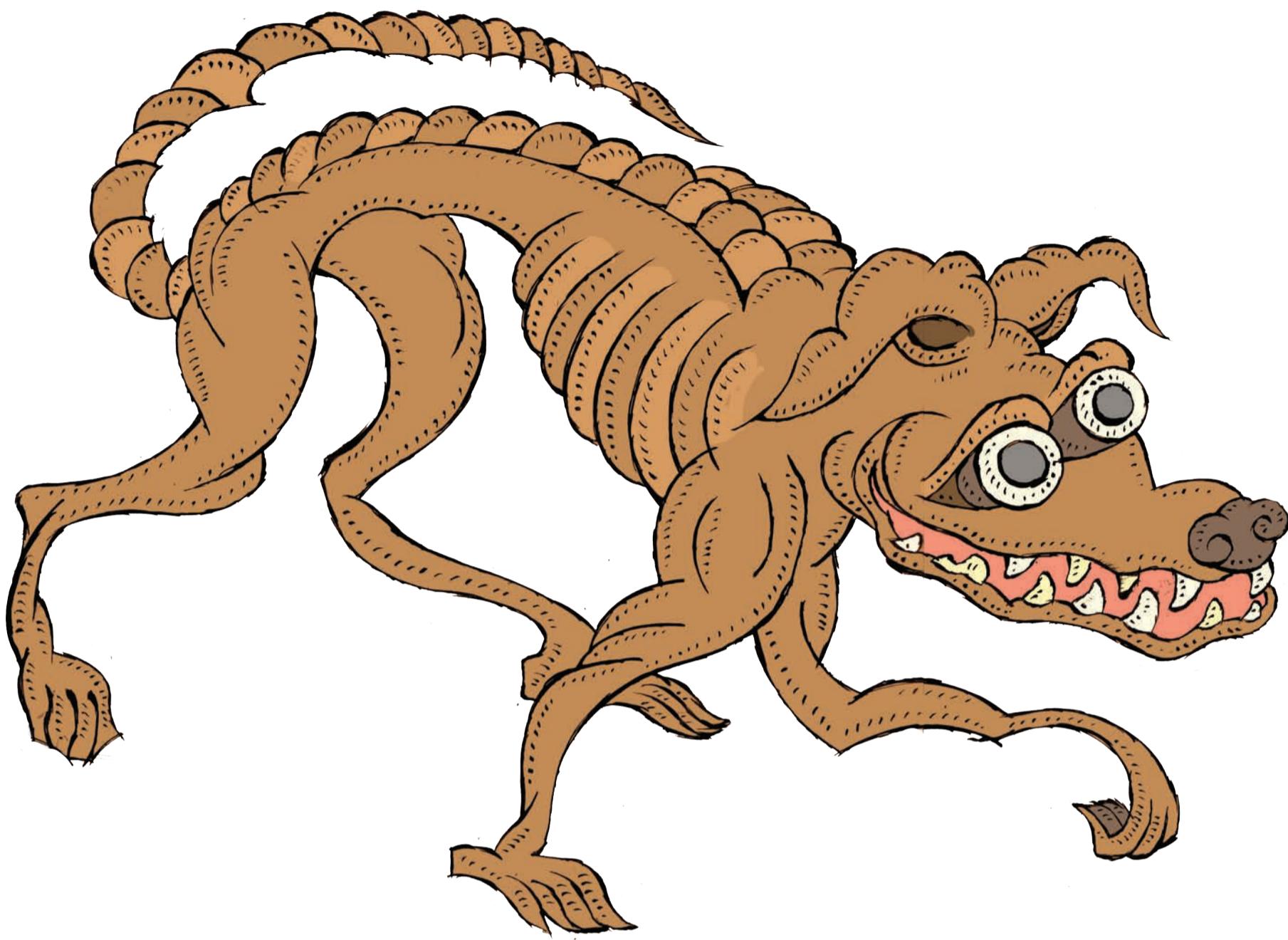
So, you see, there is no rest  
for, nor the restlessness of,  
poetry, no one for whom profound  
brevity is enough.

Perhaps, all this  
just goes to show  
that in our (film) world  
it is violence that sells,

not verse,  
not poetry.



Illustration by Nishant Saldanha



## ‘मरणयात्री’ हे दिर्घकथेचो एक वांटो

दामोदर मावजो

**त** का मरपाक तेंकिले एक सुणे तेवटेन हेडटना दिश्टी पडले. तिरायत आसून्य ताका पळोवन सुण्याचे पोट आंवळून फाटीक दशिल्ले. बोरीन बोर मेजूंक मेळटाली. सुणे आसा जाल्यार गांव लागींच आसू ये, ताणे येवजिले. सुण्या फाटल्यान चलपाचो विचारुय मनाक आफुडलो. पूण मार्गीर ताका उगडास जालो. म्हामारी गांवात हाडीत ह्या भयान भायल्यांक गांव लागीं करना. फाटीं एके कडेन आख्यो गांव फातर गुणे घेवन ताचे फाटीक लागिल्लो ते यादीनच तो निन्वळ्लो. म्हणसर ताच्या कानार आवाज पडलो, ‘आयलो?’ खरें आपणे आयकले काय तसो भास जालो काय! कोण नदरेत आसपावलो ना. ‘यो, यो’ पर्थन क्षीण आवाज ताच्या कानार पडलो. आवाजाचे दिकेन पळयले. तितल्यान एका निश्पर्ण झाडापोंदा कोण तरी उठून बसपाचो येत करता तें दिश्टी पडले. पडंग जमनीचेर रसरशीत वाडिल्लो कवाथो बावून गेल्लो पळोवचो तशी ती जुवान कूड थंय धडपडून उठापाचो येत करतना ताच्यान पळोवं नज जाले. दोन पावलां सडसडीत मारून तो तिचेसरीं गेलो.

“तू?” तिणे दोळे फडफडावन ताका पळयलो, “तूं तो न्ह्य-“

“तो कोण? तूं कोणाक सोदता?” ताणे विचारले.

तिणे दोळे ताणून ताचेकडेन पळयले. “तूं कोण? किंतो जाय?”

तिची आवतिकाय पळोवन तो थंड रावलो. “खावंक हाडलां?” तिणे विचारले. स्वता भुकेल्ल्याकडेन खावंक आनी किंतो आसतले! पूण तिच्या प्रस्तान ताची निहून पडिल्ली भूक मात चाळवली. जीव खासावीस जालो.

“तूंय म्हजेच भाशेन दिसता -” तोंडार किण्ण हांसो हाडपाचो येत करीत ती उल्याली. सांगात मेळटकच जियेवपाचे आशेक उमळ येवची तशी ती उठून बसपाचो येत करूंक लगली तेन्ना ताणे तिचे फाटीक तेंको दिवन बसपाक आदार दिलो.

“खावंक हाडां म्हून गेल्लो. ताची वाट पळयताली.” “येतलो.” ताणे तिका धीर दिलो.

“घडये येवचो ना.” तिच्या क्षीण सुरांतूय निर्शेणी स्पर्श दिसताली.

“गेल्यार कितलो वेळ जालो?” ताणे चवकशी केली.

“वेळ? अं! तो वचून चंद्रीम आयलो. आतां दीस जालो-”

“कोण? घोव तुजो?”

“ना. घोव ना म्हाका.” थोडो वेळ रावन फुडें सांगले.

- “हांवेन खावंक मागिल्ले. ताणे दिता म्हळे. पूण ताका पयलीं हें जाय आसलें.” तिचो हात पोटावयल्यान सकयल देवलो. तो समजुपाचे समजलो. “घेवन येतां म्हणी. येतय-”

ते तरणे अस्तुरेच्या कमिजाचे बुतांव उकते आसले. एक थान उकते दुसरे अर्दे... ताणे लहवूच बटन काजांत घालीत विचारले, “तुजे वांगडा आनीक कोण ना तर?”

जाता-नज करीत ती उल्याली. तिचे वांगडा तिची

आवय आसली. वाटेर ट्रक मेळिल्लो. पैशे घेवन लोकांक फडल्या शारात पावयतालो. आवयन हिका बसोवन दिल्ली. तितलीच ती गांवाक लागीं पावतली म्हून. फुडें तिच्यान सांगूंक जायना जाले, “नज म्हज्यान. न्हीद येता.... तूं उल्य. तुजी खबर सांग.” अशें म्हून तिणे ताचो हात हातांत घेतलो - तो आपणाक सोडून वचत हे भिरांतेन.

“सांगतां. बापूय मुळचे बिहारचो. भुरगो आसतनाच ताणे गांव सोडलो. गवंडीकाम जाणा आसलो. गोंया ताका काम मेळ्ले. थंयच लग्न जालो. म्हजो जल्म जालो.... बापून म्हाका स्कुलांत घालो. शिकयलो. हांव कॉलेज शिकलो. पूण काम मेळ्ले ना. मेळतूय आसले.... पूण अकस्मात हें कोवीड जाले. कोवीडांत म्हजो बापू...“

मदींच तिणे ताचो हात दामलो. तो थांबलो. “तें सांगुनाका.... म्हाका एक पद म्हून. कसलेये.”

ही कसली नाका जाल्ली पनवत आपणे ओडून घेतली असो विचार आयलो. पूण फुडल्या खिणाक ताणे तो फाफुडलो.

खूब सिनेमा पळयिल्ले, खूब गीतां आयकलीं. पूण ह्या खिणाक जें येवजले तें म्हळे, “ए, चंदामामा अरे आवो, पारे आवो, नदिया किनारे आवो, सोना की कटोरी मा दध-भात लेने आवो...” गीत म्हणां म्हणां तो भुर्गीपणांत पावलो. बापू आपणाले भोजपुरी मायभाशेंतले गीत गावन ताका निहूयतालो. ताकाय खूब आवडालें. त्या गितांत फुडे ‘बबुआ का महुआ मे घुतूं र....’ अशें किंतो शें म्हणटालो. पूण तें किंतो तें

विचारून बापूक मदीं आडावप ताच्या जिवार येताले. आतांय तो थंय पावतकूच थारलो. ती हात दामून फुडे म्हण म्हणटली शें दिसून ताणे वाट पळयली. ती न्हिदून पडिल्ली. ताणे तिच्या माथ्यावयल्यान केसांत हात भोंवडायलो. ती इतली शांत कशी म्हून पळय जाल्यार स्वास बंद.

खीणभर कच्च जाले, ‘आसा’चे ‘ना’ जावपाक कळाव लागना अशें बापू म्हणटालो, ताचे पर्थून एकदां खरेंपण मेळ्ले. पूण आता फुडे किंते?

हिका अशीच साडून वचप?..

तो किंतो तिका घेवन आयिल्लो तर?

पूण... ताणे चोंय वेटेन पयस मेरेन नदर भोंवडायली. कोणच दिसलो ना.

ना? तें सुणे चिके पयस वचून गोठेल्ले. पूण नदर हेवटेनच आसली. ताकाय भूक लागिल्ली. तो उठून गेलो जाल्यार तें तिचे कुटीचे कपचे तोडून चाबडायत बसतले. कुटीचेर किंतेय धांपपाखातीर मेळत काय म्हून तो पळोवपाक लागलो. कांयच ना. आनी धांपचे तरी कित्याक? ती कांय जिती जावची ना. तिची कूड मातयेक लावपाची शक्त ताच्यांत नासली. सुणे खातले हाची चिंता ताणे करची कित्याक? तिची कूड कुसून वचचे परस खाव दी. सुण्याचे तरी पोट भरतले. नाजाल्यार तिच्या वांगडा सुण्याचेय मरण थारिल्लेच आसा.

भूक! विसरायर घालतलो जाल्यार चलत रावपाक जाय. भिरकेत तो उठलो. सूर्य अस्तमतेकडेन लकिल्लो. वोत मोव जातां जातां घडये पावतलों एखादरे सुगूर सुवातेर, अशें येवजून तो वाटेक लागलो.

# The Death Traveller

TRANSLATED BY XAVIER COTA

**H**e saw a famished dog on its last legs, wandering about aimlessly. Though he was a stranger, the dog neither wagged its tail nor did it bark at him. The dog's belly had shrunk so much that it seemed stuck to its back. Each rib could be counted one by one. He surmised that if there's a dog, there must be a village close by. The thought of following the dog came to his mind, but he discarded it. He remembered. Ever since the pandemic had struck, outsiders were not welcome in most villages for fear of the disease. He recalled that some time back, an entire village had chased him away with stones and sticks. He shuddered in fear just thinking about it.

He heard someone say faintly, 'Have you come?' Did he really hear it or was it his imagination? He couldn't see anyone. 'Come, come'. Again the weak voice. He looked towards the sound. Suddenly he noticed that underneath a tree bereft of leaves, someone seemed to be attempting to sit up. Just like a sturdy young coconut sapling which had withered away on the barren ground, the young woman flush with her youthfulness, was struggling to sit up. Unable to bear the pitiful sight, he rushed to her side in a couple of strides. "You?" She asked him blinking her eyes. "You're not the one -- "

"Whom are you looking for?" he asked. Squinting her eyes, she stared at him. "Who are you? What do you want?" Seeing her predicament, he remained silent. "Have you brought something to eat?" Can those who are themselves starving, have anything to eat!

However, his own hunger which had fallen asleep all this while, was aroused by her questions. He became agitated. "Oh! You too are sailing in

my boat -" she said in a momentary attempt at humour. The prospect of company, had sparked a hope in her and she attempted to sit up. Seeing her struggle, he supported her back and helped her.

"He had gone to fetch something to eat, and I'm still waiting for him."

"He will come," he said reassuringly. "Perhaps he will not come." Her disappointment was palpable in her bleak tone. "How long back did he go?" he inquired. "How long back? Well! After he went, the moon came up and now it's morning -"

"Who is he? Your husband?"

"No, I don't have a husband." Pausing a while, she added, "I had asked him for something to eat. He promised that he'd get me. But first, he wanted this- " She ran her hand over her midriff till it stopped below. He felt pity for her. The buttons on the young woman's kameez were undone. As he gently buttoned her kameez, he asked, "Was there no one else with you?" Struggling to speak, she said that her mother had been with her. On the way, a truck had stopped which would take people to the next town on payment of money. Her mother had sent her in the truck because she would reach nearer to their village faster.

She couldn't speak anymore. "I can't. I feel drowsy. You speak. Tell me your story," she said as she put his hand into hers, as if she feared that he would go away. "I will tell you my story. My father was a native of Bihar. When he was still a youth, he had left the village. He'd trained as a mason, so when he came to Goa, he got a job. He got married there. Then I was born. Bapu got me admitted to school. He saw that I got an education. I went to college. But I couldn't get a job. I might have got one, but all of a sudden this Covid happened. Covid ...my Bapu..." Gently she squeezed his hand. He

stopped.

"Don't say anything more. Sing a song for me ...any song." He wondered what sort of a weirdo he was saddled with. But in the next instant, he had dusted off the thought. He had seen a lot of movies. He'd heard hundreds of songs. But he sang whatever came to his mind, *He Chandmama, Are avo, Pare avo, Nadiya kinare avo, Sona ki katori Ma Dudh bhaat lene avo...* As he was singing the song, he was transported to his childhood days. Bapu would sing the lullaby in his native Bhojpuri to put him to sleep. He too liked it a lot. He felt that she had pressed his hand for him to continue. He glanced at her. She'd fallen asleep. He put his hand on her head and ran his fingers through her hair. He was wondering how she was so peaceful, so he examined her closely and found that her breathing had stopped!

For a moment he was shocked. But, what now? Should I just leave her here and go? But as he looked in all

four directions till the furthest points, nobody could be seen. Only that dog was squatting a short distance away, looking in this direction. He too was hungry. Were he to get up and go, the dog would rip off chunks of her flesh and eat her up. He got up in search of something to cover her. He couldn't find anything. But then, why cover her up? She won't come back to life? He didn't have the strength to bury her. Why should he feel bad about the dog eating her body? It's better if the body is eaten rather than letting it rot. At least the dog will fill his stomach. Otherwise, the dog's death too will be next on the list.

Hunger! To forget about hunger, he had to keep walking. He got up hastily. The sun was tilting to the west. Hoping that as the sun's rays turned gentle, and he would be able to reach a safe place, he set out once again.

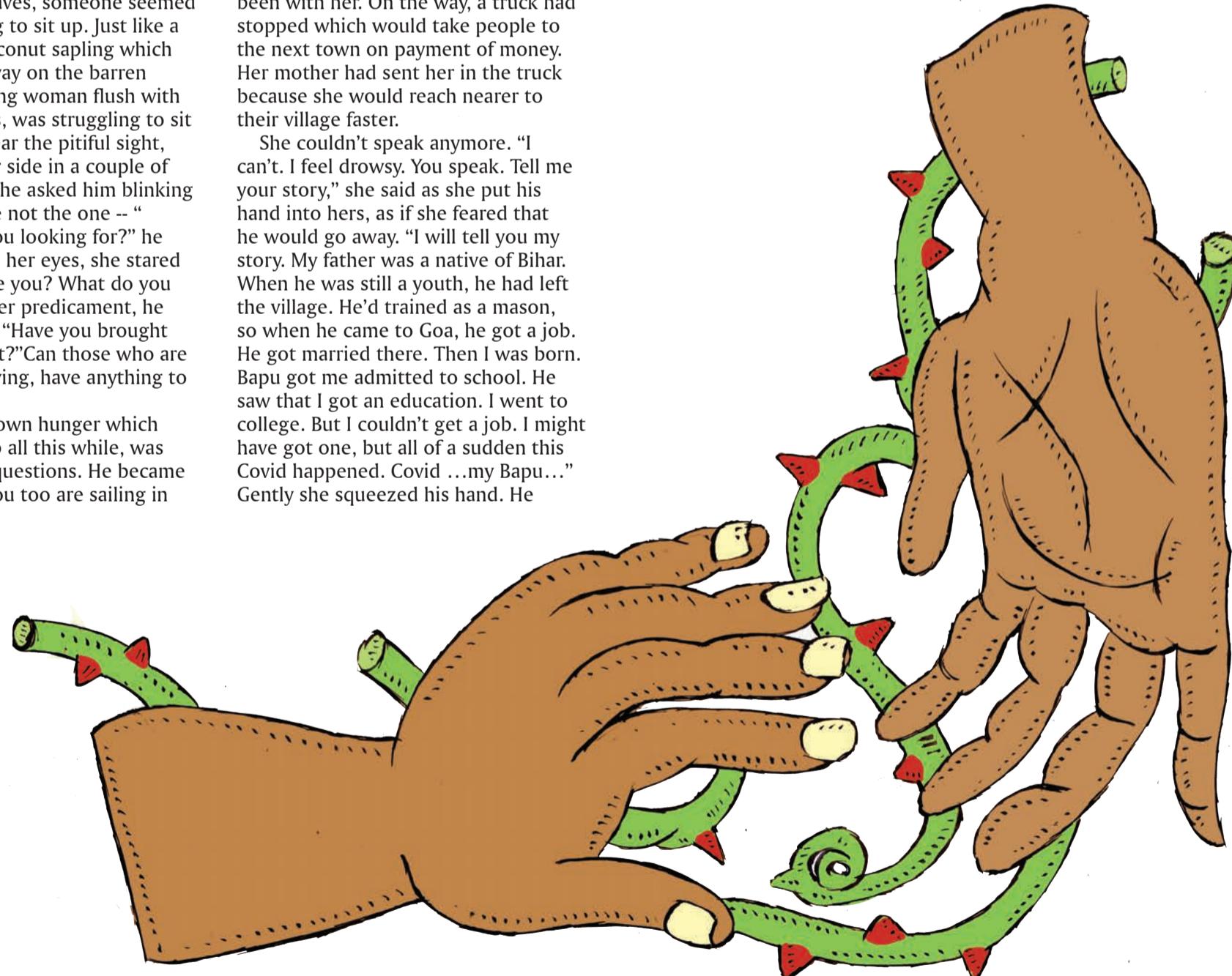


Illustration by Nishant Saldanha

# IFFI Screening Schedule - 26th November

INOX SCREEN-I PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-II PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-III PANAJI	INOX SCREEN-IV PANAJI	MAQUINEZ PALACE	INOX SCREEN-I PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-II PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-III PORVORIM	INOX SCREEN-IV PORVORIM	SAMRAT AUDI	ASHOKA AUDI	KALA ACADEMY
FA1 FOUR SOULS OF COYOTE 9:00AM - 10:47AM ANIM	FB1 KATHABOR /NEELA NIRA SOORIYAN 10:00AM - 12:02PM	FC1 UPON OPEN SKY 9:15AM - 11:12AM FKF	FD1 SHARP WOUNDS 9:30AM - 10:50AM CW	FE1 PRABHO SHIVAJI RAJA 9:00AM - 10:45AM A-AVGC	FF1 CONCRETE UTOPIA 10:00AM - 12:09PM FK	FG1 ALEMANIA 10:15AM - 11:39AM CW	FH1 ALL WILL BE REVEALED 10:30AM - 12:15PM CW	FI1 THE REEDS 10:45AM - 12:48PM CW			FK2 DELIVERING CONMPELLING PERFORMANCES 11:30AM - 12:30PM IN-CV
FA2 ME CAPTAIN 11:30AM - 1:32PM FK	FB2 ARAARIRAARO 12:45PM - 2:50PM IP-F	FC2 ALL TO PLAY FOR 11:45AM - 1:37PM CW	FD2 MY AUNT GILMA 11:50AM - 1:12PM CW	FE2 SIRF EK BANDAA KAAFI HAI 11:00AM - 1:13PM IP-F, AI-AF	FF2 LOST COUNTRY 1:00PM - 2:45PM CW	FG2 SOMETIMES I THINK ABOUT DYING 1:15PM - 2:46PM CW	FH2 ENDLESS BORDERS 1:30PM - 3:21PM IC	FI2 LET ME GO 1:45PM - 3:17PM A-BD		FL1 MALIKAPPURAM 10:00AM - 12:01PM IP-F, ICFT	
FA3 ENDLESS BORDERS 2:30PM - 4:21PM IC	FB3 2018 - EVERYONE IS A HERO 4:30PM - 7:00PM IP-F	FC3 DHOOCHA 6:00PM - 7:00PM GP	FD3 CEYLIN 2:45PM - 4:31PM CW	FE3 ALMOST ENTIRELY A SLIGHT DISASTER 2:50PM - 4:18PM A-BD	FF3 #MOG 2:00PM - 4:24PM GF	FG3 MEMORY 4:00PM - 5:40PM FK	FH3 DRIFT 4:15PM - 5:48PM ICFT	FI3 BOSNIAN POT 4:30PM - 6:14PM IC	FJ2 THE TRIAL 2:00PM - 4:57PM D-M		
FA4 THE ZONE OF INTEREST 5:00PM - 6:46PM FK	FC5 PARTY OF FOOLS 8:00PM - 10:02PM IC	FD4 BRAND BOLLYWOOD DOWNTUNDER 5:30PM - 7:14PM CW	FE4 RAIN TOWN 5:00PM - 6:56PM CW	FF4 4:45PM - 6:45PM CW	FG4 DRIFT 4:15PM - 5:48PM ICFT	FH4 BOSNIAN POT 4:30PM - 6:14PM IC	FI4 MONTEVIDEO UNIT 4:45PM - 6:45PM CW			FK5 INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL MOTION PICTURE PRESERVATION 2:00PM - 3:38PM IP-F, A-BD	
FA5 LUMBERJACK THE MONSTER 8:00PM - 9:59PM MD	FB4 BACK TO THE FUTURE /LAST MEET 8:00PM - 11:05PM	FC6 TWILIGHT 8:00PM - 10:38PM CW	FD5 TZADIK 7:30PM - 10:41PM RC	FE5 PATALA BHAIRAVI 7:00PM - 8:49PM CW	FF5 PALIMPSEST 7:15PM - 8:52PM CW	FG5 SUNDAY 7:30PM - 9:06PM CW	FH5 THE CHAPEL 7:30PM - 9:06PM CW	FI5 SLEEP 7:45PM - 9:20PM A-BD		FL2 DHAI AAKHAR 2:00PM - 3:38PM IP-F, A-BD	



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**Endless Borders**  
13:30  
INOX Screen-III Porvorim



**The Zone of Interest**  
17:00  
INOX Screen-I Panaji



**Me Captain**  
11:30  
INOX Screen-I Panaji



**Bosnian Pot**  
16:30  
INOX Screen-III Porvorim