

Sharodiya Sheuli

2023



*Yaa Devi Sarva-Bhutessu Shakti-Ruupenna Samsthitaa |
Namas-Tasyai Namas-Tasyai Namas-Tasyai Namo Namah ||*

Dear Abha Family -

Tritiya, Chaturthi, Panchami... the Countdown to Durga Puja starts in our heart from the very first whiff of Autumn. As the rain clouds recede and the golden sun shines behind the white autumn clouds, we know that Durga Puja is not far behind. *Ma Ashchen!*

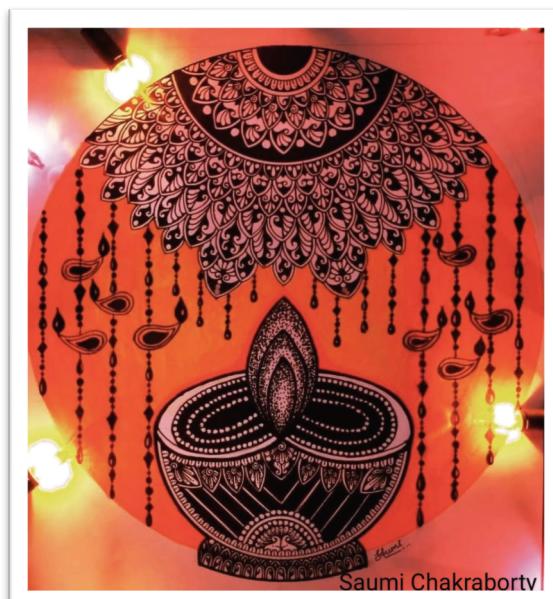
Thousands of miles away from home, the sight of bunches of kaashphool swaying in the wind fill the heart with happiness. Near or far, wherever we may be, the fervor, joy, and 'madness' of Pujo is felt the same everywhere.

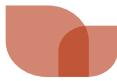
ABHA family comes together to celebrate these two days which keeps us recharged for the rest of the year. We have a lot of old and new creative talent this year who made sure our *Pujo Sankhya* reading wishes do not go unfulfilled! Hope you enjoy!

May the Goddess Bless us with Peace, Prosperity, and Happiness always!

Malobika Khanra

Abha Editorial 2023





EKTI APRAKASHITO CHITHI - SUTAPA DAS

একটি অপ্রকাশিত চিঠি

সুতপা দাস

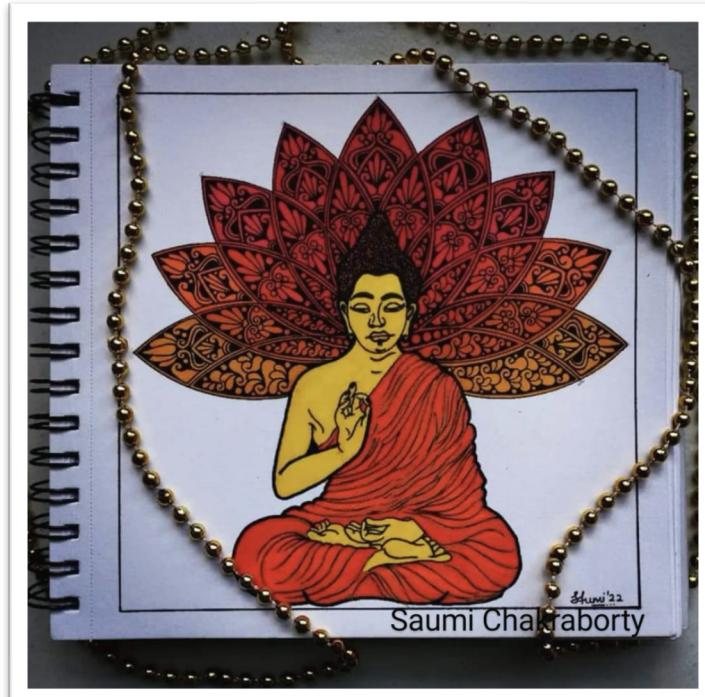
তুমি রোদুর হতে চেয়েছিলে
দুর্গম পর্বত শিখারে তাই
বৃষ্টিতে ভিজেছিলে একা -
সেদিন আকাশে বেজেছিল বীণ
তুমি নেচেছিলে তার ছন্দে
বনফুলের মদির সুবাস সারা গায়ে মেখে।
উচ্ছল ঝর্ণার জলে সিক্ত তুমি
হেসেছিলে -
বুকের মধ্যে জমে থাকা কষ্টগুলোকে
পাথর চাপা দিয়ে।
ওগুলো আমাকে দাও..
আমি ওদের ভেলা বানিয়ে
ভাসিয়ে দেবো সুখের সায়ে।
ছোটো ছোটো কষ্টগুলোকে
মুক্তেদানার মত লালন করব
ঝিনুকের খোলায়, সমুদ্রের গভীরে
একা!
তোমার বিষমতার ব্যথা
কষ্টের ফানুস বানিয়ে উড়িয়ে দেবো
নীল আকাশের বুকে -
ঝিলের ধার ছাড়িয়ে, আকাশ ছাড়িয়ে
মিলিয়ে যাবে তারা দিগন্তরেখায়,
যেখানে আকাশের অসীম মিলেছে
ঘন নীল জলের মোহানায় -
বিনু বিনু অভিমানগুলো তোমার
আমি মিশিয়ে দেবো
ছুটে আসা সমুদ্রের ফেনিল সলিলে

টলটলে চোখের জলে জমে থাকা বেদনায়
 আমি অবগাহন করবো
 ঝরোঝরো বৃষ্টি ধারায়
 মিশিয়ে দেবো না বলা ব্যথার আল্পনা
 আকাশের কানায়।

 সবুজে মাখামাথি গাছের পাতায়
 ওরা হাসবে, দুলবে ফুল হয়ে
 সুন্দরের প্রতীক্ষায়।

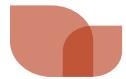
 তোমার জমাট বাঁধা দুঃখগুলোকে আমি
 সুখের পংক্তিমালায় সাজাবো যতনে -
 কষ্ট আমার, গর্ব আমার
 সহস্র সুখের বুননে
 মিলেমিশে একাকার হয়ে যাবে
 রাত্রি পেরোনা উষার
 প্রথম আলোর আলিঙ্গনে..

 বুকের গহনে তোমার ভালোবাসাগুলো
 আগলে রাখবো আমি
 পরম মমতায়, নিবিড় পরিচর্চায়
 কুসুমে কাননে।



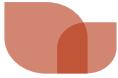
ABHA Durga Pujo 2022





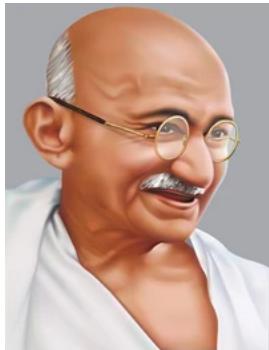
COURAGE – PRATITI DUTTA

All you need is courage.
Courage to take a call,
Courage to make a difference, for all.
Courage to do the right.
Courage to fight the might.
Courage to be different,
Courage to be seen,
Courage to seek the truth,
Courage to be keen.
Courage to be alone,
Courage to be lost,
Courage to have hope,
And fight at all cost.
Courage to believe,
When you have no-ground,
Courage to wonder,
And love with no bound.
Don't listen to what all say,
You know that artificial light,
Takes away the mysteries and truth,
Hidden in the deep dark sky.



MAHATMA GANDHI - ARMAN KAZI

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow; learn as if you were to live forever"



Mahatma Gandhi, a renowned advocate for nonviolence, once imparted these words of wisdom: "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." This timeless quote encourages us to seize each day and never cease our pursuit of knowledge. It serves as a reminder that life is fleeting and precious, and that we should strive to make the most of it. These sentiments still hold true today and can inspire us to become better versions of ourselves. By cherishing each day and continuously striving for self-improvement through learning, we can lead fulfilling and noble lives.

The first half of Gandhi's quote implores us to live each day as if it were our last. This means we should focus on what truly matters and not squander our time on trivial pursuits. We should let go of grudges and resentments and instead seek forgiveness and reconciliation. We should express gratitude for our blessings and cherish those we hold dear. Above all, we should follow our passions and dreams, pursuing what brings us joy and fulfillment.

The latter half of Gandhi's quote encourages us to learn each day as if we were to live forever. This means we should never cease our pursuit of knowledge and self-improvement. We should embrace challenges and failures as opportunities for growth. We should remain curious and open-minded, respecting diverse perspectives and cultures. And we should share our knowledge and wisdom with others, striving to make a positive impact on society.

By embracing Gandhi's words, anyone can achieve a balanced and fulfilling life. By living in the present and not dwelling on the past or worrying about the future, we can fully enjoy each moment. By continuously striving to develop our true potential and talents, we need not limit ourselves or settle for less. By cultivating positive relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, we can enrich our lives and those of others. In just two sentences, this powerful quote provides a roadmap for leading a contented life.

In conclusion, Mahatma Gandhi's time-tested words offer a profound blueprint for leading a fulfilling life. By living each day as if it were our last, we can cherish the present and all that it offers. By learning as if we were to live forever, we can continuously strive to better ourselves and make a positive impact on the world. Gandhi was a beacon of non-violence and an unwavering advocate for freedom. If we all heed his advice and embrace his philosophy of living fully and learning ceaselessly, just imagine what a safe, happy, and wonderful world we could create.

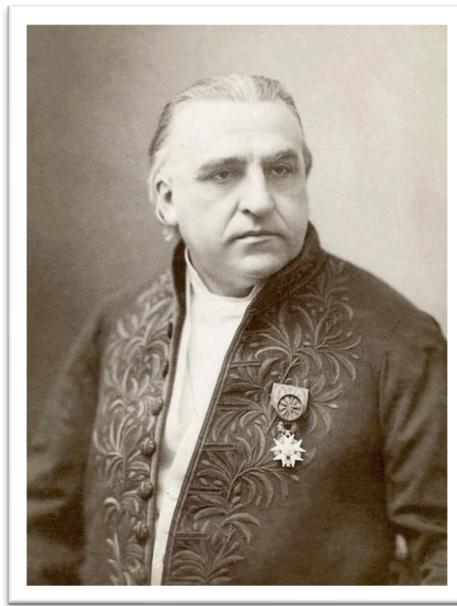


Saumi Chakraborty



PHYSICIAN AND BASEBALL PLAYER SPARKED RESEARCH FOR A DEVASTATING DISEASE AND INSPIRED ME! – ARMAN KAZI

The Father of Neurology, Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot, was a key figure in the discovery, history, and study of many incapacitating neurological diseases. Dr. Charcot was a French neurologist and professor of anatomical pathology who lived from 1825 to 1893. He is considered one of the founding fathers of modern neurology and is best known for his medical work in the fields of neurological diseases: – Hysteria, (year 1880), Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in 1868, Amyotrophic Lateral Scherrosis (ALS) in 1869, Charcot's Joint, and Charcot-Marie Tooth Disease. In the USA since 1941, ALS is also known as "Lou Gehrig's disease," named after the famous baseball player, as the disease ended the career of one of the most beloved baseball players – Lou Gehrig.



Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot

Charcot was born in Paris and studied medicine at the prestigious University of Paris, where he was influenced by the ideas of the French Neurologist - Guillaume Duchenne. After completing his medical degree, Dr. Charcot went on to work at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris (one of the largest hospitals in Europe at the time). It was here that he developed his interest in the study of neurological disorders and began to study hysteria, a condition that was poorly understood, and he is credited with transforming it into a recognized neurological disorder. He also introduced the use of photography to document the symptoms of his patients.

A mentor and a highly charismatic and inspirational teacher, Dr. Charcot had many students who went on to become prominent figures in the field of neurology. He encouraged his students to think critically and to challenge traditional views in the field. Dr. Charcot was also known for his innovative approach to medical education, and he was one of the first to introduce the use of live demonstrations in his lectures to illustrate the signs and symptoms of various neurological conditions.

Dr. Charcot passed away on August 16, 1893; however, his impact on the field of neurology was immense, and his legacy will certainly continue. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest neurologists of all time, and his work has been recognized and celebrated by the medical community for over a century all over the world. Dr.

Charcot's innovative approach to medical education continues to inspire new generations of neurologists to this day.

I have a very strong personal connection to the topic of neurological diseases. As a middle schooler, I have a passion for science; however, my interest in this field was sparked by my grandmother, who suffered from a neuro-degenerative disease that left her unable to communicate with her family and caregivers. I wished I could do something to help her. I was hoping to see her and spend my summer vacation with her, but unfortunately it did not happen, as my grandma passed away on June 20th, 2022. The heartbreakingly loss of my grandma inspired me to explore the worlds of science, health, and medicine.

I am particularly interested in ALS, which is a terminal disease. ALS is a debilitating, progressive neuromuscular degenerative disease that affects the nerve cells, or neurons. The motor neurons in the brain send electrical messages to the spinal cord that get transmitted to the muscles. In ALS, the neurons that control the muscles, called upper and lower motor neurons, die and can no longer send messages from the brain to the muscles. Eventually it affects the arms, legs, mouth, tongue, etc., making it harder to walk, talk, chew, swallow, and breathe. As the muscles of the chest and diaphragm weaken, it becomes hard or even impossible to breathe, eventually leading to death. The ultimate loss of ability to communicate with family members and/or caregivers results in a "locked-in state," which adversely affects the quality of life and care for these patients. Most ALS patients live only 3–5 years after their symptoms start. Medical research and literary evidence suggest that people who have served in the military, our veterans, are at a greater risk of being diagnosed with ALS. Unfortunately, one is at a greater risk of dying from ALS than if one had not served in the military. Therefore, ALS research will serve the community and national interests.

There are many of us who may not realize the devastating effects of ALS as a deadly disease. However, we may know some of the famous personalities, who suffered from ALS, such as the theoretical physicist, cosmologist and author Dr. Stephen Hawking, Pitcher - Jim "Catfish" Hunter, Senator - Jacob Javits, Actor - David Niven, SpongeBob SquarePants creator - Stephen Hillenburg, and Sesame Street creator Job Stone. I have seen my grandma suffer from neurological disorder in the last 7 years of her life. I wish I could do something to help her communicate and make precious memories together.

My current science project involves creating and using devices like Brain-Computer-Interface (BCI) and eye tracking technology to enable people with ALS to communicate with their caregivers at a much lower cost. The device allows patients to type words by looking at a display, which is translated into natural speech, or even paired with digital assistants like Siri, Alexa, Google, and Cortona to initiate actions such as switching on heating or cooling, light or fan, reading a story or playing a song, controlling volume at will, or making a call for help! It would allow the patients to communicate while innovating and lowering the cost of communication devices.

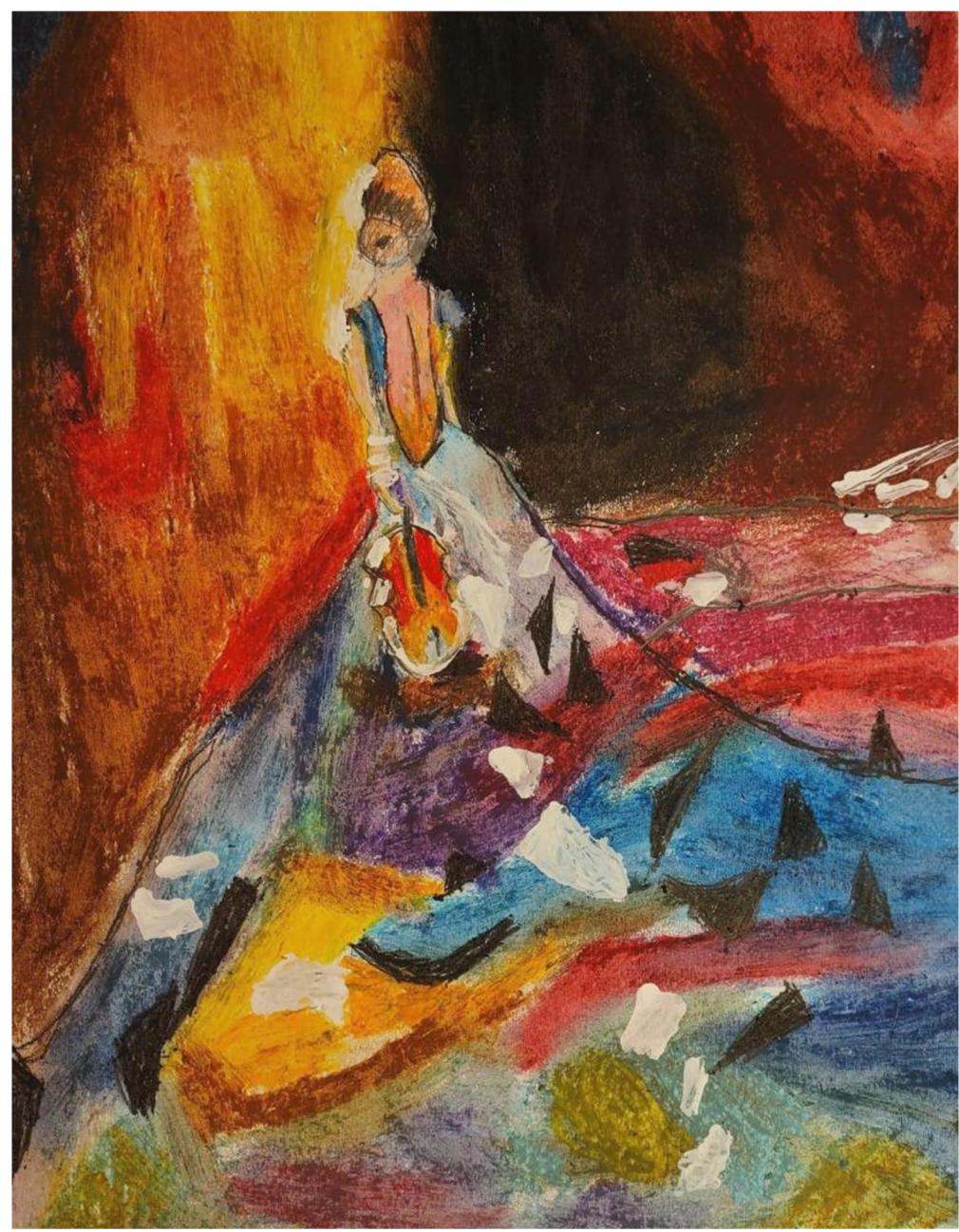
I hope to build on the legacy of pioneering leaders like Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot, who paved the way for new generations of scientists to make a positive impact on the world. I wish that I had more time to make memories with my grandmother, and I hope that my science project helps patients improve their quality of life, allows them to participate in their own treatment planning, and, more importantly, allows families to make a lifetime of memories!



Artwork by Elina Das



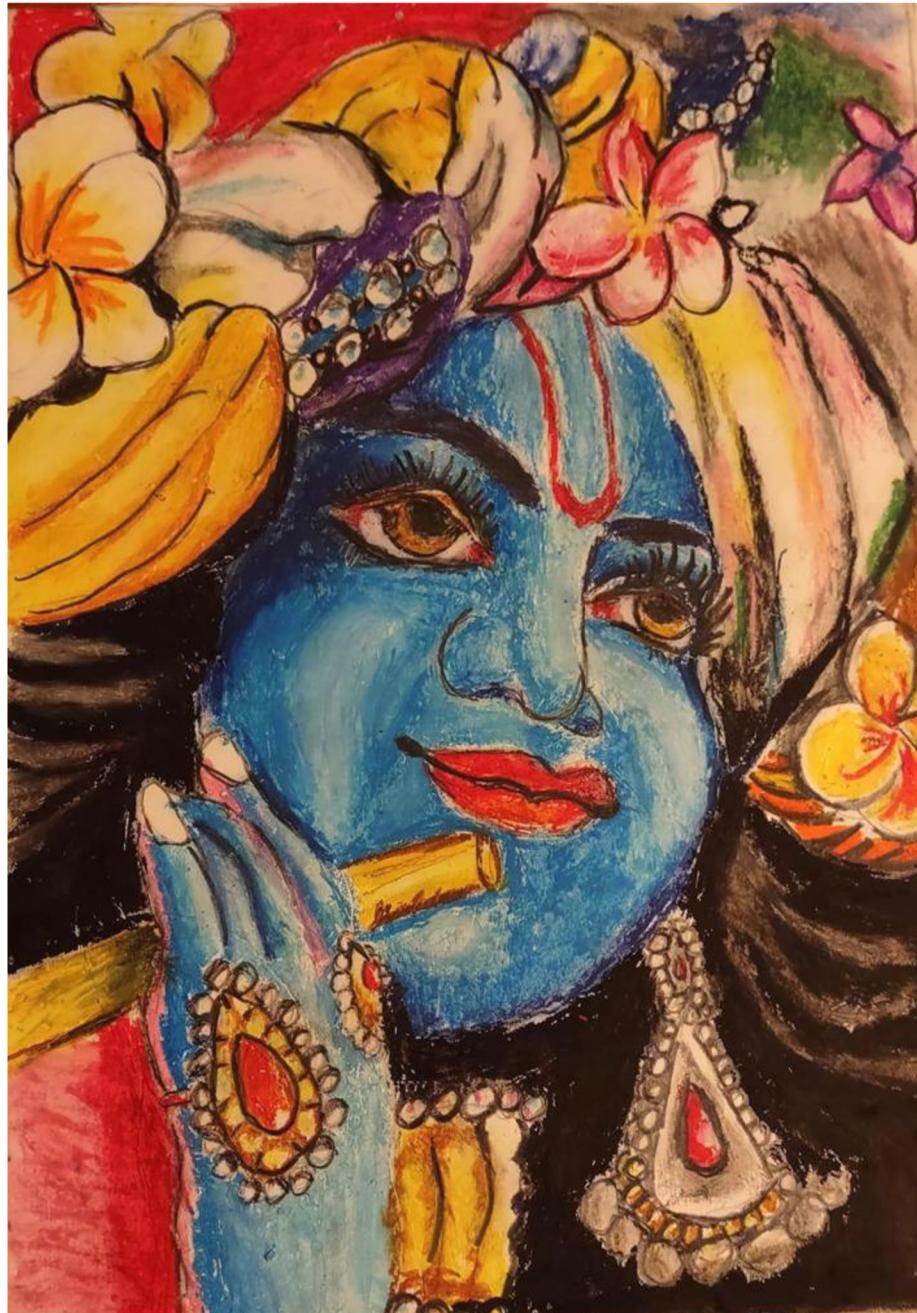
Artwork by Elina Das



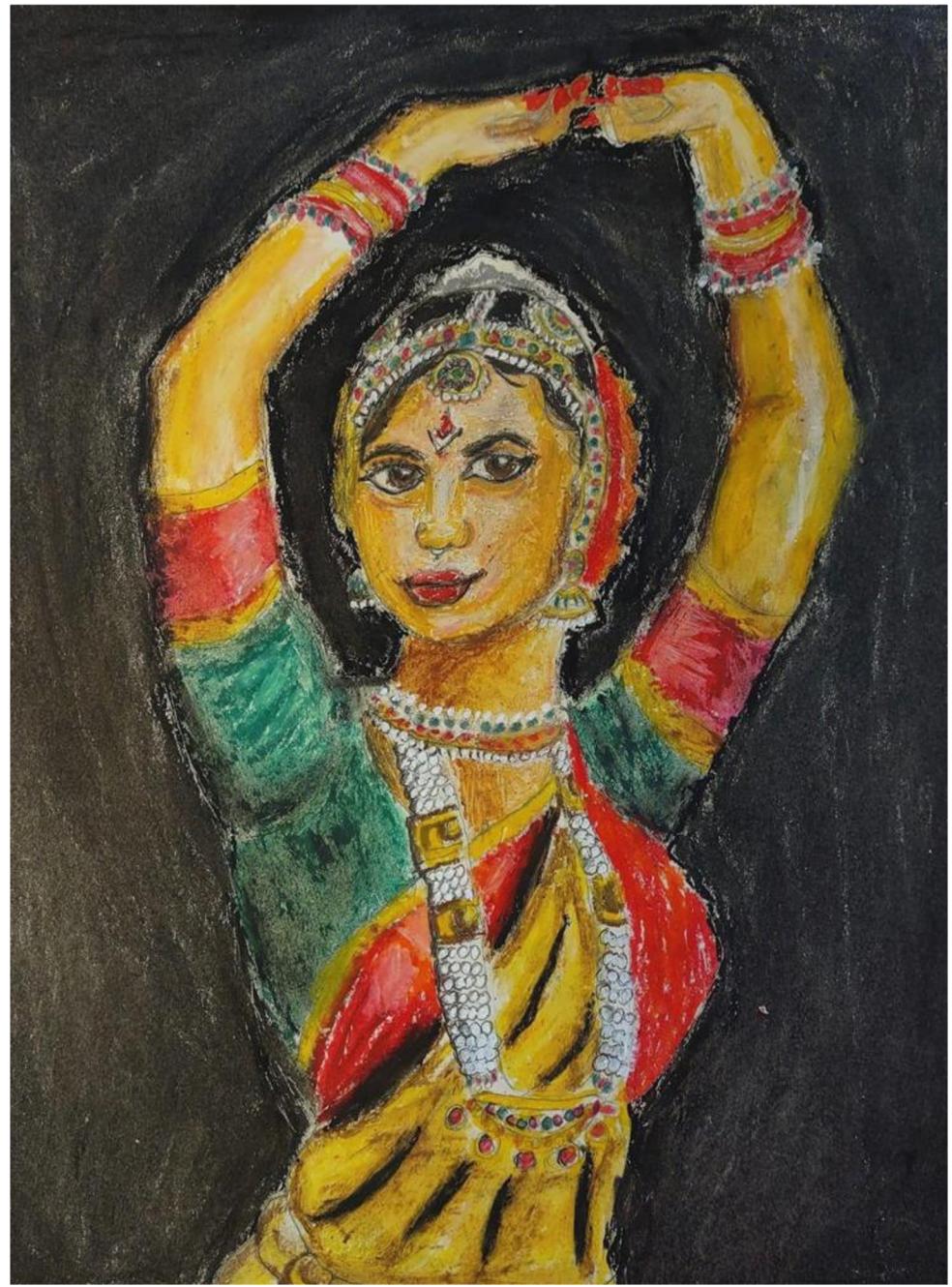
Artwork by Dhruv Das



Artwork by Dhruv Das



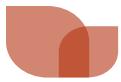
Artwork by Darsheel Das



Artwork by Darsheel Das



Artwork by Reyna Roy



আজ কাল এই Netflix , Hot star, Instagram , Facebook এর জগৎ এ থেকে মনে হয় বেশ যদি জীবন টাও একটা web series হতো বা একটা reel হতো; সাজানো ঘটনার কয়েক ঘন্টা এর অভিনয় - short and sweet - চিত্তা, দুঃখ ভয় সব এর একটা একটা easy সল্যুশ্ন।

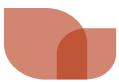
কিন্তু জীবন - সেই তো আসলে এতো সহজ নয়; এর চেয়ে অনেক বড় - রীল এর পর রীল , এপিসোড এর এপিসোড - কিন্তু কি হোরে কেউ জানে ন। আর আমরা, কিরকম সুখ দুঃখ সব মিলিয়ে নিখুঁত অভিনেতা অভিনেত্রী এর মতো অভিনয় করে চলেছি - হাপিয়ে যায় মাঝে মাঝে, মনে হয় র পারছি না - কিন্তু টাও এই বিশ্বাস এ এগিয়ে চলি - agar ending theek na ho to woh the end nahi hain , picture abhi baaki হাই মেরে দোষ - হাপিস এন্ডিংস।

N.B. Mukherjee

ASSOCIATION OF THE BENGALICABAA DURGAPUJA TO
Durga Ma



Artwork by Akshita Moitra



I am old now and I have gone through a lot in my life. But I want to record the moments of my life that were the most important. More than my amazing job, loving husband, and the cutest little children in the world. So, that is why I have now spent my last few days writing down what I would have written almost 80 years ago. That is if I could have. I would encourage you to read this short journal and share it with others. But always let this knowledge be alive, "That difficulties may come because that is life. But where there is darkness there always has to be some light". - Hope

Dear Dairy,

My name is Hope. But only my parents call me that. Almost everyone else I know calls me "girl". I hate it, but I can't do anything about it. This is the way of life for us. We're slaves. In our world, blacks must serve the whites. We're known as property not people. I think it should be different and I think other slaves think so too. But no one ever talks about it. It's forbidden and we'd probably get beaten. There is also another thing no one ever talks about. Another person. This information is so forbidden that I've only heard whispers. I don't even know if it is real. But, if this person is real, this would be life changing! Her name is Harriet Tubman. The rumors were that she had escaped slavery but had come back to rescue other slaves!

I don't know if many other people know this rumor. But, if I told someone, they'd probably tell me to go away, and stop staying forbidden and dangerous things like this. Most people would say that it's just some tale and that no sane human would risk her life again, come back, and save other people. But, I hoped it was real and I hoped for something else too. That night it came true.

I was in the field with my parents. It was almost 8 o'clock now. They had been working all day outside under the scorching heat of the sun. I had been commanded to do chores inside the house. I had spent the whole day scrubbing the floors and windows. Now, I was outside helping my mother carry the baskets of peanuts in and out of the house. Father was still uprooting the peanuts from the ground. I looked up at the sky. The sun had gone down long ago and clouds were beginning to form overhead. The whole sky had gone dark. And that's when it happened. There was a slight rustling from the forest that bordered the peanut field. Mother and Father looked up expectantly, their expressions unreadable. But they didn't look afraid. Mother put a hand on my shoulder as if to reassure me. And then a man in all black was suddenly visible and he motioned to be quiet. Father nodded and he glanced back at our master's house. And then the man signaled for them to follow him. I looked up at my mother, but she shook her head. She beckoned me to go on. I felt the fear and excitement battling inside me. It was really happening. We were escaping. We walked on for a long time through the woods. Suddenly we heard shouting in the distance. The man who was guiding us looked up and for the first time I saw the fear in his eyes. Yet, he still motioned to be quiet, pointed in a direction, and started off in a quiet sprint. Father followed him and so did my mother and me. But it was impossible to keep quiet with all the branches and fallen logs in our way. The shouts seemed to be getting louder and closer.

Finally, we reached a structure, and a man quickly opened the door from inside. We all hurried in, and the man pointed to a trap door that was impossible to see if you didn't know it was there. We all hurried inside, and the man shut it from the outside. Hours seemed to pass by. We heard the commotion above us, but no one dared say a word.

Finally, the man opened the trapdoor and beckoned for my parents. Mother told me to stay here, and she then followed father. After a few minutes, a girl just my age slipped in. I looked up, startled.

"Hi! Don't be afraid. I live here. The man upstairs is my father. What's your name?"

"Oh, hello." I said hesitantly. "My name's Hope."

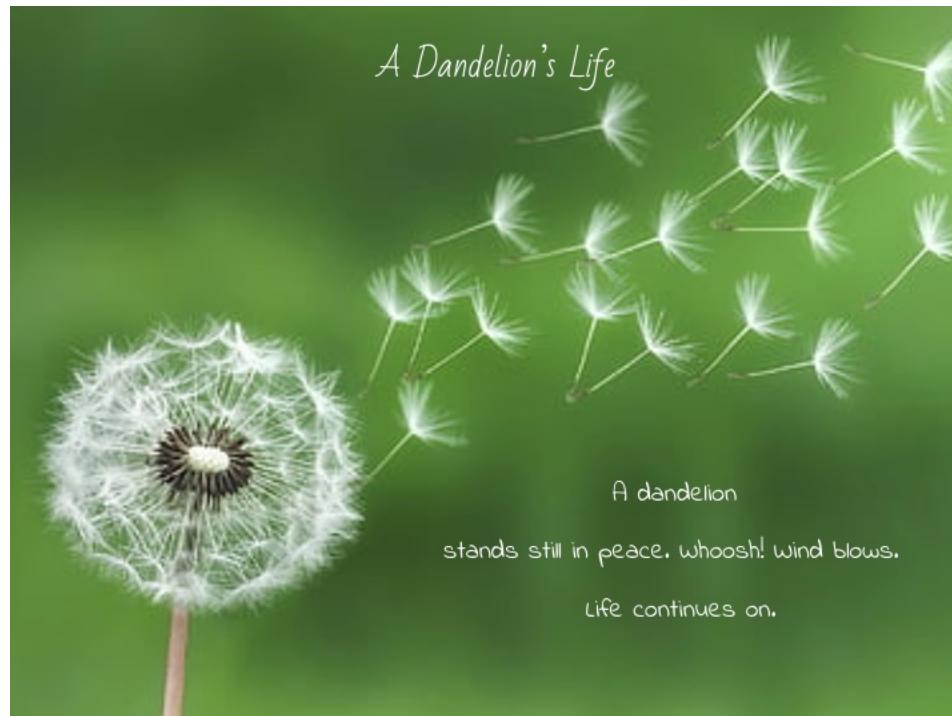
"Oh wow! Hope! That's an amazing name. My name's Alessa. It means defender. I will always defend people who are treated unfairly. And I will always fight for justice!" She said enthusiastically.

"I agree," I replied, and I meant it.

The next morning, we had to get moving again. Just as we were leaving Alessa came running up to me. "This is for you." She gently placed a small box in my hand. It was delicately carved with ornate designs. But in the center, it said "Hope". "I'd thought you'd like it. It's something you can remember me by during your journey ahead." She looked up at me.

I smiled and said, "I love it."

I am in an unknown place, with unknown people, smells, and well everything else. My whole life has changed within a blink of my eye. It has taken a different course, one where there is a light forth but much difficulty to pass through first. Like trying to reach the sun but having to go through all the millions of miles and obstacles. The journey ahead seems impossible, but there is no turning back. We must keep going, but I know we can do it because now we have HOPE.





DREAMS? - JEFFERY D. LONG

Note to the Reader:

At the height of the covid pandemic, I was invited by a friend in Kolkata to contribute a poem to an anthology he was compiling. The theme was the pandemic.

I was nervous about contributing. I had never written any poetry! But some inner voice told me to say, “Yes!” So I did.

After a few days, I felt inspired and wrote the following poem. Many of the images are drawn from the Advaita Vedanta tradition. The image of the funeral pyres evokes the horrors of the worst days of the pandemic as they unfolded in India.

The poem responds to the question, “How should we respond to suffering—that of others, and our own?”

I hope you enjoy it!

Dreams? - Jeffery D. Long

I awoke from my dream, a set of disjointed images, with no narrative,
Like life, before we turn it into a story.

I saw an elephant, standing patiently, as seven blind men felt his various parts,
And argued amongst themselves about his true nature,
Which only he really knows.
Or perhaps even he knows it not?

I saw a snake in a darkened room, coiled and ready to strike,
But then someone turned on the light,
And it was only a rope.

I saw a lighted lamp in an empty room,
Illuminating not only the room, but itself as well.

I saw ten men on a riverbank, soaking wet,
Their leader frantically counting,
To ensure no one was left behind.

I awoke to another dream,
Of countless burning funeral pyres,
Of Ma Kali, dancing Her dance,

As it has always been.

When we encounter the suffering of others,

It is real.

It is no dream.

The only right reactions to it are compassion and service,

Seeing Lord Narayan in the one who is suffering.

Do not turn away.

Do not say, "This is not real."

When we encounter our own suffering,

That is a dream,

To be viewed with a detached mind,

As though gazing through a telescope,

At a distant star.



ABHA Past Participants



Suman Mridha, Smriti Dey Mridha, Surashthi, Srithik



Suman Adhikari, Moupiya Das, Aaradhy, Aarshi



Thank you for all your participation and contributions!