

TRECENTO



EDITION 25

THE ENGLISH LITERARY SOCIETY
SHRI RAM COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

AN INTRODUCTION TO TRECENTO

Trecento - literally meaning 'Three Hundred' - is a name that reflects our commitment to reaching new heights and embarking on challenging journeys. With over 2000 readers, trecento consists of engaging literary articles, insightful book reviews, author interviews and captivating poetry. It has established itself as a trusted and knowledgeable resource for literary enthusiasts.

In this issue, we embark on a journey to explore the theme of 'New Beginnings' – a topic that resonates with the idea of the potential within each of us to learn, grow and evolve as individuals with simultaneous growth around us.

We are a part of a world where changes are inevitable. Thus, the concept of 'New Beginnings' takes center stage in this edition of Trecento highlighting the same. It is a theme that encourages us to embrace change as a chance for growth and renewal. Whether in the realm of finance, business or personal development, new beginnings are the catalysts for innovation and progress.

Throughout this newsletter, we will explore poems and articles dedicated to the theme. We have also explored the inspiring stories of many who have had new beginnings and presented it to our readers in a short and crisp manner. As our readers go through the pages, they will dive deep into the many facets of new beginnings.

Thus, let us help you discover how you can harness the winds of change to steer your course towards a brighter future.

INDEX

Together? Always. **1**

Fragemnets of Home **2-4**

The War of Life **5-6**

Our Nature- Connect **7-12**

TOGETHER? ALWAYS.

We were one
Before the pain, before the woe
Each of us made of a million cells
Functioning for the sole purpose of living
Kind, compassionate and giving.

Then came a difference – a misunderstanding
In the pursuit of peace, we fight, blood spills
Several die – several burn
Those who haven't even had the chance to live are snatched
from the option to
And why? Because we couldn't understand
Some were blinded by the greed for power, but affected by
their consequences were all
What drives us to inflict suffering on one another? What
causes us to fall?

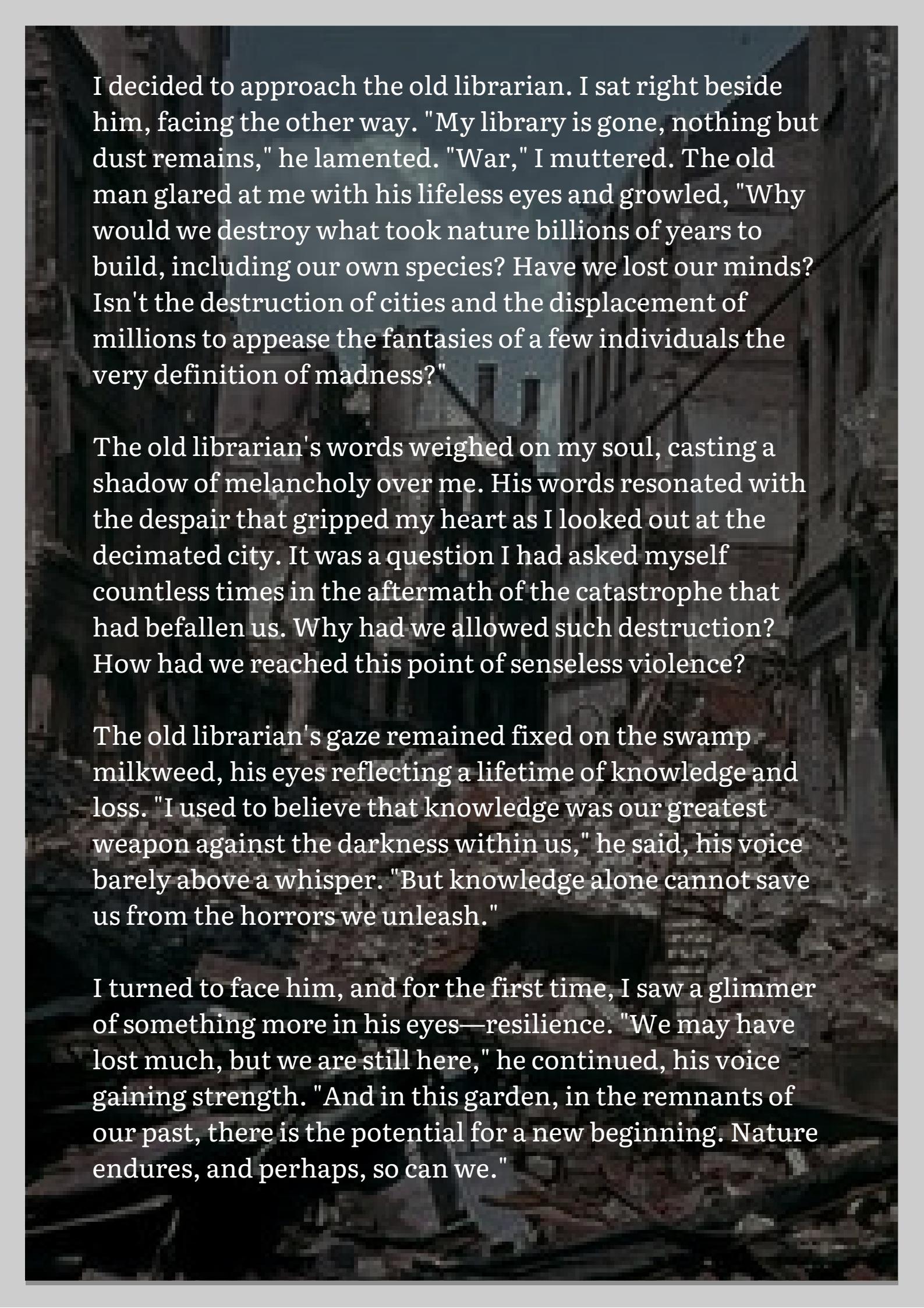
And then we became one – one with the land,
A billion pieces of dust particles, together once again
I wonder why we couldn't be together then?

-Dhwani Arun

FRAGMENTS OF HOME

I emerged from the shelter and made my way back to the last place I had been before losing consciousness. All that awaited me was a fragile wall. Amidst the debris of our house, I spotted the rotting remnants of our last dinner – mushrooms and fish, which my sister had bought just for me after her first performance. Then, everything went blank for what felt like an eternity. I clutched onto what I had come for and decided to behold what remained of us.

The air was heavy with the acrid stench of burnt wood and metal. Every step I took through the ruined streets was a painful reminder of what we had lost. But I couldn't let despair consume me. I had to see my sister. My crippled body found its own way towards the city, once beautiful and filled with joy, now shrouded in grief. I couldn't accept that this was the place where I used to play tag, where I used to buy sweets. My home, a place where nomads often wandered and found rest, now not even an animal could find peace here. I reached the outskirts of the city, where the remnants of a once-proud civilization met the untamed wilderness. Here, nature had begun to reclaim what was lost. As I ventured deeper, I found a glimmer of hope in the form of a hidden garden, a sanctuary of life and beauty in the midst of chaos. I stopped by the lake, the same one where I used to skip stones. With my tunnel vision, I saw him, still as a statue, staring at the swamp milkweed.



I decided to approach the old librarian. I sat right beside him, facing the other way. "My library is gone, nothing but dust remains," he lamented. "War," I muttered. The old man glared at me with his lifeless eyes and growled, "Why would we destroy what took nature billions of years to build, including our own species? Have we lost our minds? Isn't the destruction of cities and the displacement of millions to appease the fantasies of a few individuals the very definition of madness?"

The old librarian's words weighed on my soul, casting a shadow of melancholy over me. His words resonated with the despair that gripped my heart as I looked out at the decimated city. It was a question I had asked myself countless times in the aftermath of the catastrophe that had befallen us. Why had we allowed such destruction? How had we reached this point of senseless violence?

The old librarian's gaze remained fixed on the swamp milkweed, his eyes reflecting a lifetime of knowledge and loss. "I used to believe that knowledge was our greatest weapon against the darkness within us," he said, his voice barely above a whisper. "But knowledge alone cannot save us from the horrors we unleash."

I turned to face him, and for the first time, I saw a glimmer of something more in his eyes—resilience. "We may have lost much, but we are still here," he continued, his voice gaining strength. "And in this garden, in the remnants of our past, there is the potential for a new beginning. Nature endures, and perhaps, so can we."



His words gave me a flicker of hope. It was true that our city had been reduced to rubble, but in the hidden garden and the spirit of survival I saw in the old librarian, there was a chance for rebirth.

As we sat in silence, the subtle sound of nature's reclamation surrounded us. Birds chirped, and a gentle breeze rustled the leaves. I realized that even amidst the chaos, life persisted. I finally got up and headed towards my final destination. On top of a hill, there stood a poorly made cross. Under it lay my sister. As I approached the gravesite, the weight of our shared memories and the gravity of the situation bore down on me. The devastation of the city seemed insignificant compared to the loss I felt.

With trembling hands, I gently placed the violin, the one she would never play again, on her final resting place. It was a token of our shared dreams, of the music that had once filled our lives with joy and harmony. As I looked down at her resting place, I whispered my final goodbye.

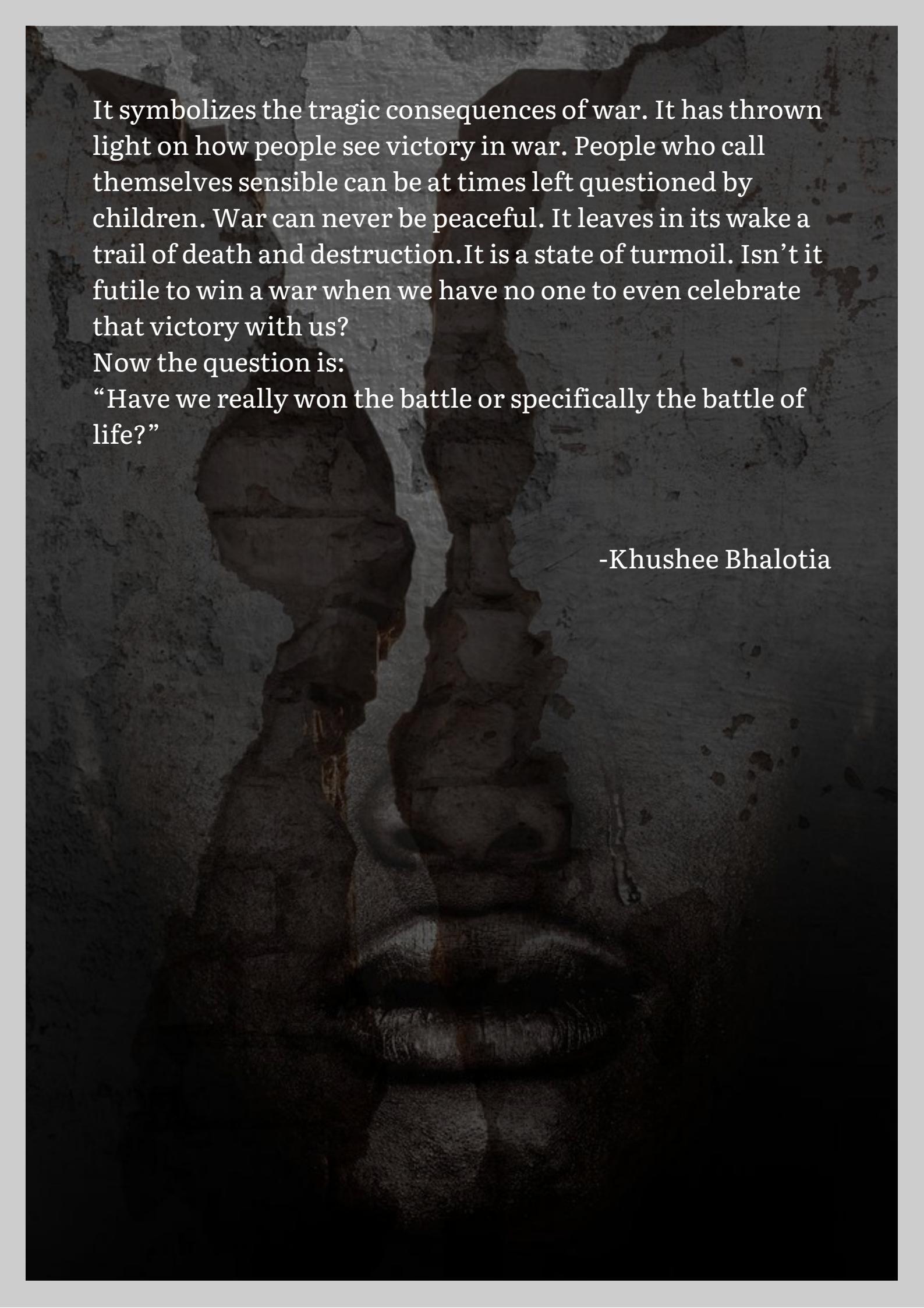
-C Lalmalswama

THE WAR OF LIFE

“Bravo! We have won the battle.”

A voice soared amidst thousands of carcasses that lay in the scorching heat. There came a child so hopeful looking for his mother. The same morning she left, instructing her son not to covertly have the sweet she had made for his “Special day.” At the end of a large stretch of flesh, a child could be seen wrapped in the blood stains of her mother, trying to wake the latter up so that she could be cuddled. A groom carrying the dead body of his fiancee to the graveyard which was to be accompanied to the temple marking the start of their new life. An old man strong at heart weeping miserably at his son’s demise asking God for his dear son’s life in return for his own. A newly married woman shedding tears on her not so faded henna. A woman moaning because she still has chances to live, not for herself but for the life unborn in her womb. But no help! People are more interested in pitying her rather than saving two lives. A child passing by the dreadful sight asked his father, ”What’s the matter over there?” The father was rather ecstatic to announce that, ”The battle is won by those who were right.” With sheer innocence, the child had a simple question to ask, ”Who is there to celebrate the victory?”

This reminds me of a famous quote by Bertrand Russell- “War does not determine who is right, only who is left.”



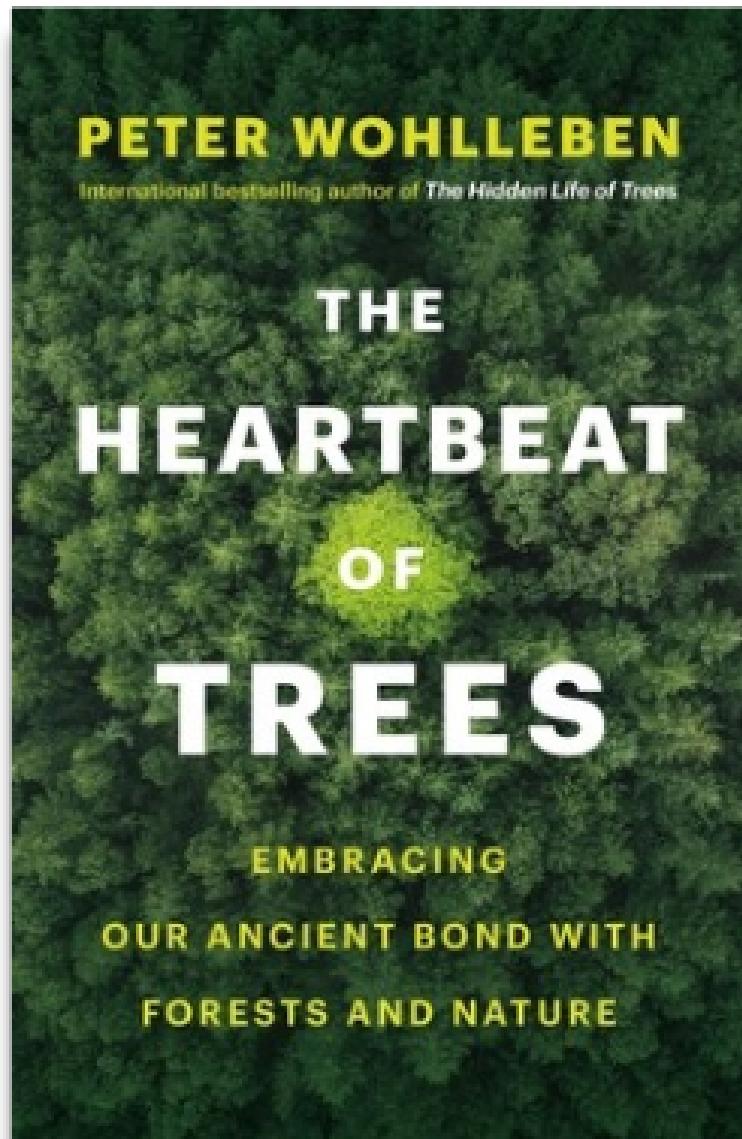
It symbolizes the tragic consequences of war. It has thrown light on how people see victory in war. People who call themselves sensible can be at times left questioned by children. War can never be peaceful. It leaves in its wake a trail of death and destruction. It is a state of turmoil. Isn't it futile to win a war when we have no one to even celebrate that victory with us?

Now the question is:

"Have we really won the battle or specifically the battle of life?"

-Khushee Bhalotia

OUR NATURE- CONNECT

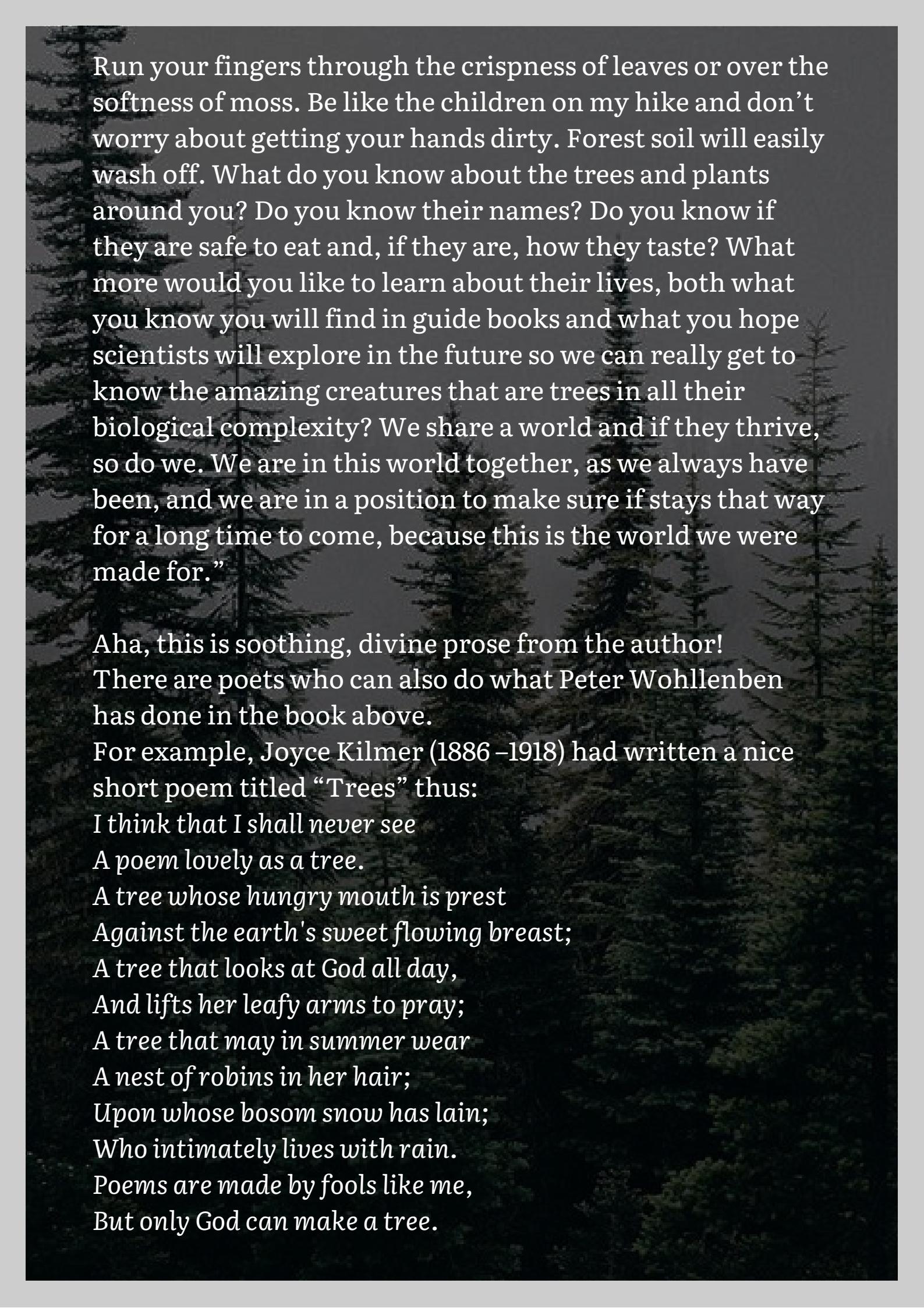


The book I have taken up here, for review, and its author are simply out of this world. A persuasive case is made for us to have a genuine relationship with forests and trees so that nature and our life are protected.

“When people look at a tree, they normally compare the tree with their own body. The crown, because it is at the top, corresponds to the head, and then the trunk is the body, and the roots, because they help support the tree, correspond to the feet. That view is mirrored in the technical language, as well, where foresters and scientists talk of the foot of the trunk (at the bottom) and the crown (royals wear them on their heads, as well). However, if there are brain-like structures in the roots, if memories are stored there, and if they carry on clear and effective electric communication with their neighbours via their roots, aren’t those organs most comparable with our head, perhaps even with our body? The part that grows solar cells, the trunk with its branches and leaves, is most like—well, not most like our legs. These areas are where food is produced and processed, where the tree sees, and where it breathes. And this upper part of the tree can regenerate, because many trees grow new shoots when the main trunk is cut down. If, however, you cut away only the roots, the above ground part of the tree will also die... Given all this, it is more accurate to see the tree as standing on its head. What this perspective does above all is help you better understand these giant beings and have empathy for them. This empathy is extremely important if we want to protect nature. We can all see the effect of laws and regulations just by looking around: the carbon dioxide content in the air continues to rise, the oceans are full of garbage, and forests are shrinking.

A quick course reversal of the kind we need today must come from somewhere else. Think of whales or elephants: we protect them because we have empathy for them. Aren't trees the whales and elephants of the plant world?"

The piece of advice to us from the author is profoundly this: "If there is a forest near you, make that your destination. If you live in a city, find a park or even just a tree-lined street where you can take a walk. On this expedition into the natural world, try to have no fixed destination and no pressing engagements you need to rush back to. Simply take the time you need to engage as many senses as you can. Stand and feel the air on your skin. Is there a soft warm breeze blowing over your arms and legs, or are you all bundled up with just the prick of frosty air on your cheeks? What can you smell? The gentle, earthy aromas of old leaves gently decomposing on the ground or the tangy, brisk scents of new growth? What can you hear? The scratching of squirrels scuttling up trunks or the rustle of leaves as birds turn them over to find insects underneath? What do you see if you look up close? Maybe a spider picking its way across the ridges on a trunk? Or if you look far away? Maybe the pattern of light as sun shines through leaves swaying in the wind? Is your sixth sense at work? Can you sense there is more life out there just hidden from view? Can you sense a change coming in the weather as the breeze freshens or the sun heats up the ground? What about your peripheral vision? Are there other people enjoying the park with you or are you completely on your own? Shut your eyes and feel that this is a place where you belong. Take a moment to just sit—on a stump or a log or a carpet of leaves. Does that bring you even closer to feeling part of the forest?



Run your fingers through the crispness of leaves or over the softness of moss. Be like the children on my hike and don't worry about getting your hands dirty. Forest soil will easily wash off. What do you know about the trees and plants around you? Do you know their names? Do you know if they are safe to eat and, if they are, how they taste? What more would you like to learn about their lives, both what you know you will find in guide books and what you hope scientists will explore in the future so we can really get to know the amazing creatures that are trees in all their biological complexity? We share a world and if they thrive, so do we. We are in this world together, as we always have been, and we are in a position to make sure it stays that way for a long time to come, because this is the world we were made for."

Aha, this is soothing, divine prose from the author! There are poets who can also do what Peter Wohllenben has done in the book above.

For example, Joyce Kilmer (1886 –1918) had written a nice short poem titled “Trees” thus:

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;
A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;
A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.
Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

And there is “Song of the Trees” by Mary Colborne-Veel (1861-1923). It goes like this:

We are the Trees.

Our dark and leafy glade

Bands the bright earth with softer mysteries.

Beneath us changed and tamed the seasons run:

In burning zones, we build against the sun

Long centuries of shade.

We are the Trees,

Who grow for man’s desire,

Heat in our faithful hearts, and fruits that please.

Dwelling beneath our tents, he lightly gains

The few sufficiencies his life attains—

Shelter, and food, and fire.

We are the Trees

That by great waters stand,

By rills that murmur to our murmuring bees.

And where, in tracts all desolate and waste,

The palm-foot stays, man follows on, to taste

Springs in the desert sand.

We are the Trees

Who travel where he goes

Over the vast, inhuman, wandering seas.

His tutors we, in that adventure brave—

He launched with us upon the untried wave,

And now its mastery knows.

We are the Trees

Who bear him company

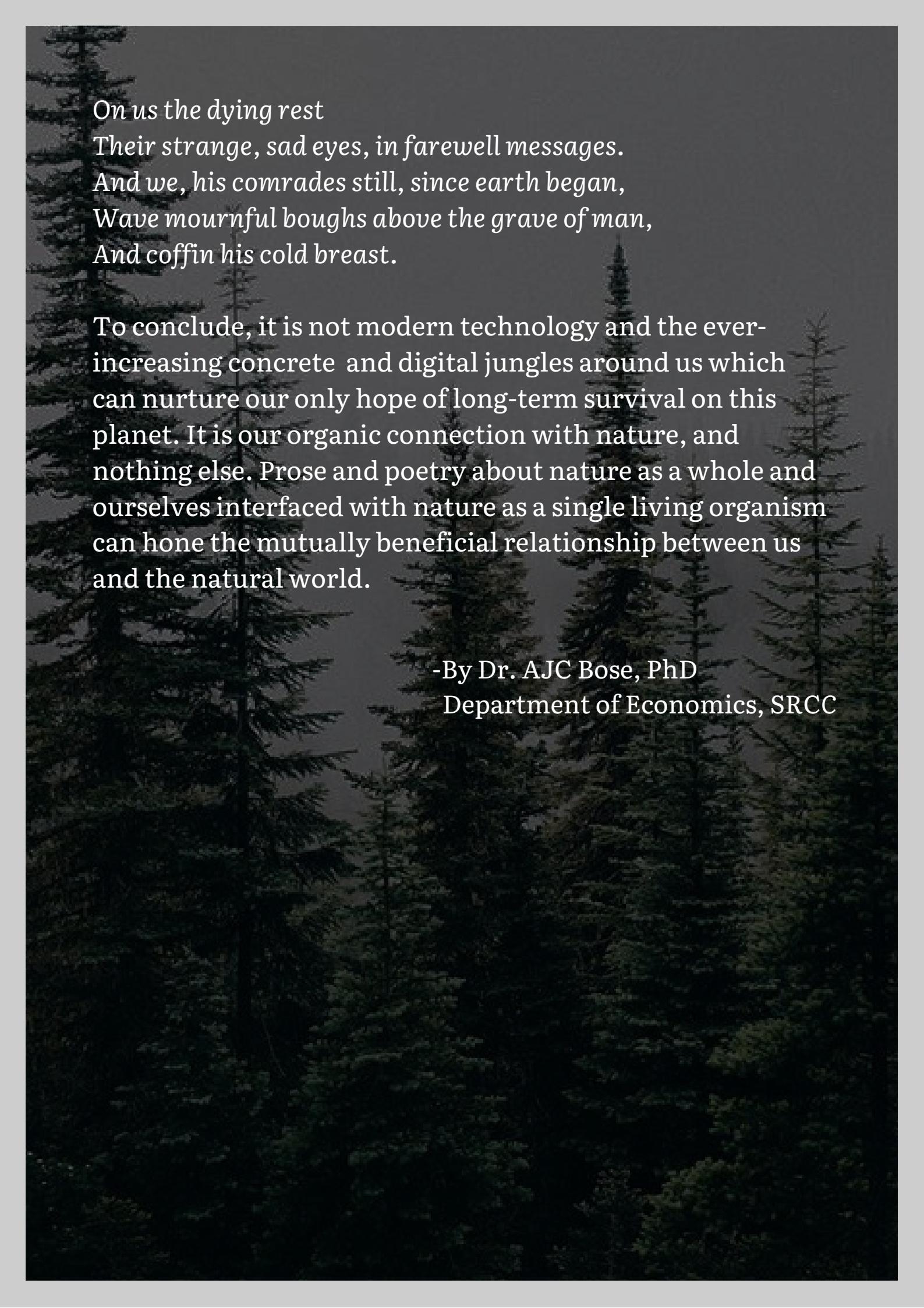
In life and death. His happy sylvan ease

He wins through us; through us, his cities spread

That like a forest guard his unfenced head

’Gainst storm and bitter sky.

We are the Trees.



*On us the dying rest
Their strange, sad eyes, in farewell messages.
And we, his comrades still, since earth began,
Wave mournful boughs above the grave of man,
And coffin his cold breast.*

To conclude, it is not modern technology and the ever-increasing concrete and digital jungles around us which can nurture our only hope of long-term survival on this planet. It is our organic connection with nature, and nothing else. Prose and poetry about nature as a whole and ourselves interfaced with nature as a single living organism can hone the mutually beneficial relationship between us and the natural world.

-By Dr. AJC Bose, PhD
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