

# TRECENTO

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# ORDER IN CHAOS

As humans we dwell in predictability. To be able to predict every turn of one's life is all we so deeply desire. We find comfort in familiarity, for familiarity is a safe haven. The Chaos Theory as propounded depicts our present as an accumulated outcome of millions of patterns. While we experience reality, we cannot predict with certainty what comes ahead based on our past experiences. From reading tarot cards, horoscopes, palms and even the weather forecast, what the future has in store for us has been a maddening puzzle to solve for ages. We dwell in chaos, yet desire order. We thrive to know the unknown yet fear. We love surprises and yearn for happy accidents yet resist change.

Us Humans have a tremendous ability to find order against all odds. Be it stories of humanity in war and crisis, to stories of resilience in a pandemic. Remember, our world started with a big bang, we owe our very existence to chaos. So don't burden yourself with the probabilities of future rather embrace the pure pursuit of the present. We are afterall a speck in the universe among billions of lives under zillions of stars.

By Sara Bapna



# OPINION

## Art of letting go

The feeling where you feel trapped, like there's no way out but we have been in it for a long time. We get stuck in relationships, careers, lifestyles, and entire ways of existence.

The massive weight holding you down— a sense of familiarity and comfort you got is now lost. But it is hard for you to accept the undeniable.

The month comes to an end but it never seems to end for you, the feeling of emptiness grows on you and soon you can't differentiate between the rights and wrongs.

The part you probably fear about starting over was just being at zero. Being alone. Being unsure of who you are for the first time in a long time.

Was the not knowing that killed you?

Shout it out loud to them, you are rude. Shut your mouth, you are hiding.

Does it ever end? Let go and move on, how?

Life teaches us to let go. Life is the course.

Problem does not lie in letting go. It lies in not letting it go properly, because then it will hurt even more.



The ridiculous truth of life is that you need to let go first to truly find the art in it.

That doesn't feel fair, why is there no easier way to switch it off because letting go feels like dying.

Then, there's this type of letting go where you can't avoid when you hold on too fierce and too long to things you love, that gives you security, that feeds your ego.

So accept it or not, life eventually will teach you to let go of exactly that, by taking away those very things from you.

Now is the moment you look in the mirror, cry and shout: It's Not Fair.

The essence lies that life is trying to make you trust itself. Don't stay stuck there, try not to become a victim of a loss of life.

It's all in the game. In fact, it's a gift in disguise, change is the seed for growth.

Take that deep breath. Stop questioning it. You did a good job

By Khushi Kaul



# POETRY

## A Fluttering Feather

Back in the day,  
When I didn't do as I was told,  
I beheld a feather flail,  
Through the breeze biting and cold.

I darted through the field  
To accompany it in flight,  
We both stumbled together,  
It was a fitting delight.

I clasped it in my tiny hands,  
And mused as it would flutter,  
I pressed it into my ears  
To hear what it had to utter.

So obstinate it was, it was silent-  
As the clouds above me flying  
It pushed my hands to glide again  
And I let it soar again, sighing.

By Anirudh Damani

# Elizabeth Arden

Mum, are you there?  
I opened my eyes and watched you  
put your hair up.  
I wondered where you were off to but I  
pretended to sleep instead,  
You left within a minute but Elizabeth  
lingered in the air.  
She does so, even now.

You come back late,  
Dinner? You never had any.  
You come and sit by me, your perfume  
rubs off on my cardigan  
I have it still for you never gave me  
anything more.

December 24th, I held your hand the  
entire day  
Christmas brought you peace,  
something dad never could.  
We opened our presents together, a  
rectangular box in your hand  
I knew what it held as it did each year,  
Elizabeth.

Christmas always went by swifter than  
it should have  
You went back to your laptop and your  
hurried goodbyes,  
Smiles grew rarer as did your presence,  
I'm no longer at home now, do you  
notice my absence?  
Does it bring you grief?

Childhood comes back to me in  
fragments,  
You are more distant than you seem,  
My memory holds on to your fragrance  
but not your touch,  
I crave it now more than I ever did.

I gave you everything I could but you  
never came home,  
A bottle of Elizabeth Arden remains in  
my clutches as I lie weeping,  
Your fragrance haunts the life out of  
me,  
I want you to know, I wear it still as I  
shall, forevermore.

How can I miss you mum?  
I have never known what it feels like to  
have you.  
Don't worry, I shan't ask you to return  
For I know that you don't understand  
and I fear, you don't even want to.

By Srishti Singh  
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B O O K

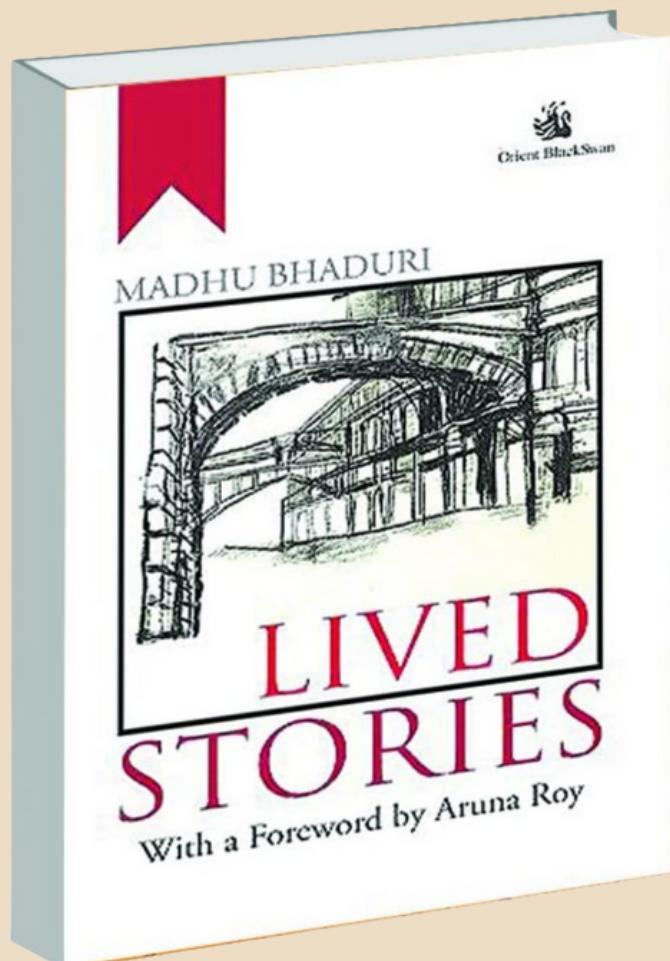
# REVIEW

## Book: Lived Stories

By Annavajhula J.C. Bose, Economics Department, SRCC

This book is the memoir of Madhu Bhaduri as an ex-diplomat. As an assorted narrative, it is a must read for civil service aspirants, and students of history and international relations.

As Aruna Roy has pointed out, like all good writers, Madhu “spins her stories within the complexity of ordinary and extraordinary lives, making facts state their case, with an emerging understanding of the mesh of socio-political and economic pulls. Madhu writes as Madhu is: straightforward, honest, and committed to the values she promised to protect...These simply told tales have much to teach us. The message is straightforward. Power and privilege bring responsibility with them –to stand up to the morally deviant everywhere. They are reminders that evoke the fundamental onus of a representative of the government to adhere to these principles—of ethics and of the Constitution—a pledge we take when we enter the civil services.”



The experiences of Madhu recollected here as an early woman diplomat of the Indian Foreign Service constitute in a way a statement of how she had sustained her integrity as an ambassador of ethical governance. They also testify as a critique of the pressing issues of our time: majoritarianism; religious and ethnic prejudices and persecution; and the crisis of democracy.

The book gives an organic feel of foreign places such as Vienna, Vietnam, Mexico City, Hamburg, Minsk and Lithuania, and Lisbon where Madhu had worked. Her observations and comments about these places are related to the Indian context.

During her Vienna posting, for example, on being told not to allow screening of two films, viz. Calcutta by Louis Malle, an internationally celebrated French film-maker, and The Flute and the Arrow by Arne Suckdorff, a Swedish film-maker, it is interesting to know Madhu's empathy with the underdogs of India by her comments on the reluctance of Indian government to show and even see the other India. The Swedish film was made on the life of tribal people in Bastar, which is now in Chhattisgarh and was then in Madhya Pradesh. It was a sensitively made film which captured the natural environment in which people lived in harmony with nature. The Adivasi people here are the original inhabitants of the forests in this area. The size of the area is vast and much greater than the mega-cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru combined. It spreads over Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and parts of Maharashtra. The struggle of the Adivasi communities to retain their own ways of life is seen as 'anti-development' and labelled as 'internal terrorism'. What has made things worse is the more recent discovery of vast natural resources under the forests, which have been home to the Adivasis for as long as one knows. "What I wanted to know then was why the government was in denial; why it refused to admit the existence of this part of India and its people who live close to and in harmony with nature. Although census data may not admit it, Adivasi communities are not Hindu. They do not have caste divisions. Perhaps that is also why their hamlets and villages are clean. The cleanliness of Adivasi areas is in stark contrast to the villages, towns, and cities of India. Santhal Adivasi villages in Bengal are in fact aesthetically very appealing. Not only do the Adivasis not have caste divisions, but the gender divide is also much less sharp among them. Perhaps the cleanliness of Adivasi life could be attributed to the fact that there are no 'higher' castes among them who have the privilege of creating filth which the 'lower' castes alone are obliged to clean up.

The drive towards cleanliness and a ‘Swachh Bharat’ today seems to me unlikely to succeed till the caste distinction between the ‘privileged’ creators of filth and the ‘lower-caste’ cleaners is removed. Till the time that maintaining cleanliness becomes everyone’s equal responsibility, a clean India is not likely to emerge.” The French film was “a powerful depiction of a city burdened by poverty and inequality, by filth and the remains of a colonial legacy. The camera showed mountains of garbage on the streets and wide avenues where children and pigs together searched for something they could eat, even if it was mango seeds already sucked clean. The film captured the crowds at heavily decorated Durga Puja pandals. It showed the destitute state of daily wage earners, who lived and cooked under the sky on footpaths next to towering buildings which they constructed. Unlike normal documentary films which have background music, Malle’s camera captured the actual sounds and noises of the overflowing city.”

During her Vietnam posting, Madhu’s observations as follows are very touching. “One of my most memorable experiences in Hanoi was the celebration of victory in the Vietnam War in September 1975. The entire population of the town and the villages surrounding it came to the central lake of Hanoi on their bicycles and watched a magnificent display of fireworks...It was a befitting celebration to mark the end of a long and devastating war. There were no speeches, no patriotic songs. It was just a bewildering spectacle, one not easy to forget. At the end of it, people gradually moved away and rode back home on their bicycles. There were no police in uniform. There was no one to supervise the people who had assembled and no one to ‘control’ and ‘unruly’ crowds in a hurry. No one was in a hurry...I had noticed this at the railway station as well. No one was in a hurry. People were confident that they would get their turn to carry their bicycles into the empty train carriages. It struck me that a nation which had fought an unequal war was less violent than Indians committed to ‘nonviolence’. Perhaps we needed a lesson in nonviolence more than other societies...Like Bangalore, Hanoi is a city of many large and small lakes. But unlike Bangalore, Hanoi’s lakes are clean and clear. In the race towards development, they have not been used for sewage disposal like the lakes and rivers of India. The markets of downtown Hanoi are no less crowded and bustling with activity than our markets. But they are clean, again unlike our markets.”

Equally impressive is Madhu's writing and resentment on the gender discrimination and the fight against it in Indian Foreign Service of her times. Madhu's social justice activism via her involvement in the Right to Information movement in India, and her joining and quitting Aam Aadmi Party are also fascinating stories, among many other things, in the book. All in all, the book is a good example of how to unleash the power of the personal story as to how to be human and humane in the 21st century, given the pulls and pressures of power, position and money on one's character. Taking off from reading books like this, one can benefit from workshops, events and consultancy as well as resources and contacts in relation to personal story skills and experience, at

<https://www.centreforbiographicalstorytelling.com/>