

# CAMPASTIMES

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SAIKAT

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MADRAS



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Our heartfelt thanks to Mr. P.S. Sridharan, Dean, Students' Office for the excellent typing of this issue. - Eds.

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## EDITORIAL

"They serve only those who stand and wait", said our pal Milton with an insight that beats us for he might have been talking about the travails of the CT editors. Bearing his sagacious words in mind we stood and waited for the quill drivers of the campus to "serve". (The ball was certainly in their court, you see). For some reasons beyond our naive imagination they had 'double faulted'. (They had let two deadline calls expire). We don't wish to intennisify our pun any further for fear of causing a "racquet". Those of you who are game enough will see the point.

Before we cross courts we would like to thank all those "sports" out there who took the cue from our ads. at OAT and came forward slowly but surely with their articles. As for the others, well there's one more issue coming up by the end of March. So prod your lazy gray cells into action and rush in your articles by the 24th of March '87. Our efforts to elicit comments and suggestions from you have come to nought and save one Campastimes regular nobody seemed to even care!

THOUGHT FOR THIS ISSUE: "Having a mag full of boring articles is bad.  
But having too many poems is verse".

While fun and laughter don't seem to have gone out of our lives, what with the elections around, they certainly seem to have gone out of CT. So turn on the laugh track. Tickle your funny bone and try to make it as humerus as possible. You may caricature individuals, events, institutions (I.I.T., Doordarshan etc., why, even CT).

This brings us to ...the next paragraph (Ha! ha! Howzzatt?) A few words on the contents of this issue: Apart from the above mentioned contributions we've included material from the MG 87 Creative Writing Competition. (The stories are based on the picture on the back cover). As you can see the I.I.T.ian entries are among the best. We've also included some exceptionally good non-IITian entries to expose our readers to the standards of the other colleges.

Life has its ups and downs (It doesn't take a whiz kid to see that.) Sometimes we start at the top and end at the bottom as in the case of writing editorials. To our discerning readers who read between the lines.

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THE DEADLINE IS A LIVE CONCEPT.

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And for those who hear between them

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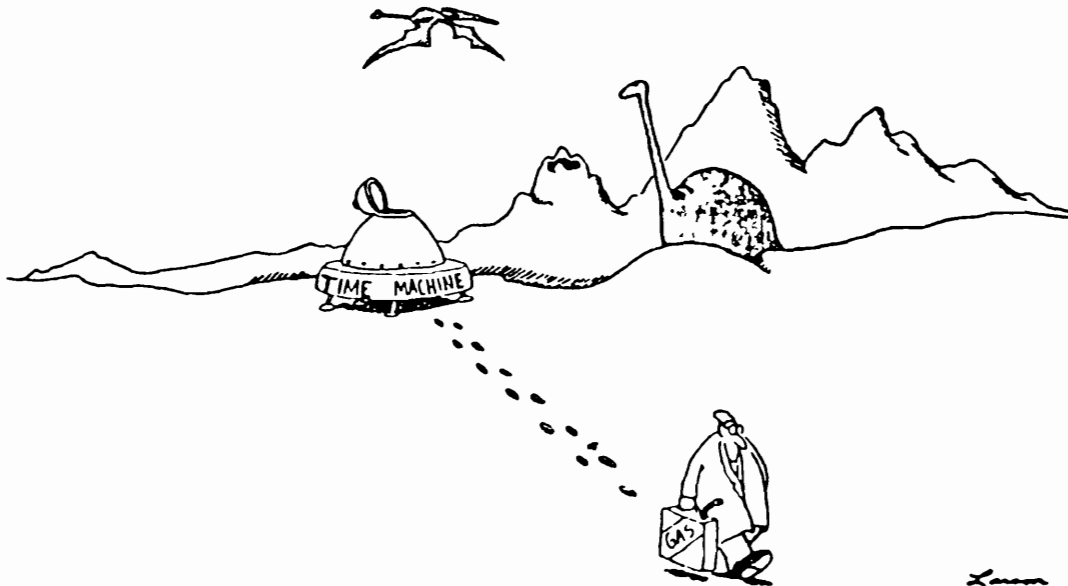


## ONCE UPON A TIME ...

- Karthik.K.  
Mandakini.

Dr. Gasser had always been very imaginative. From his youth, he'd also possessed a fascination for time; he wanted to know how to spend it. Fate ordained that on one of his trips to the library, his eyes fall on a copy of H.G. Wells' "Time Machine". The fat book was soon in his hands, and time travel in his head. His imagination took over where his fascination for time left off; his career was determined. He applied himself to his quest and the course of time found him in possession of the impressive title 'Dr. of time.' To make ends meet, he taught at the university nearest to his home town, so that he wouldn't be too far from home, and his mother's food. That brings us to his second fascination: Food. Food was next only to time on his list of favourites. In fact, before he read 'Time Machine', the only thing that he used to kill time was food. That was Dr. Gasser, a fat man and with time in his head and on his hands.

When he was not making life miserable for his students, Dr. Gasser liked to fiddle around with the odds and ends at home - magazines, old spare parts, broken chairs, tables etc. It was during one of his lazier days, when he read the magazines, that his eyes fell on an advertisement for some soap. The words 'Timeless beauty of sandal' punched him between his eyes. His head reeled with the implications of what he had just read.



Millions of fascinating possibilities opened up before him. It seemed to him that maybe he was near the end of his long research. With all his new-found fervour he began to try the ultimate - the construction of a Time-Machine.

It was no easy job. Dr. Gasser spent the best part of five years (but then, what are five years to a time traveller?) on research alone. Then he commenced the actual construction. This was nothing arduous, for his design was simple. The only problem was that his machine would have to support his considerable mass. Five years of thinking required a lot of food for thought, which simply meant that he was huge. Another year passed before Dr. Gasser could safely announce that his time-machine was ready for use. As a gesture of his gratitude he named it 'Sandal'. He called the local reporters and showed them his creation. The following days saw his picture in all the papers, a huge man obscuring the machine behind him. He became a local media figure,

and often expounded his views on various topics in the inside pages. His first trip through time was scheduled to start on the first day of the summer vacation. Where was he going to go? His first trip would be a short one into the future, to see how long the world would last before it was blown up.

The appointed day came. The time-craft was loaded with food supplies and of course, gasoline. Thousands of flashlights popped as Dr. Gasser's bulk ascended the steps to the top of the craft. Opening a latch, Dr. Gasser began to descend into his machine. The gathered crowd cheered as he waved and shut the door. The crowd became silent. History was being made before their eyes. As they watched, the craft became brighter and brighter, ultimately so bright that they had to shield their eyes. The light's intensity then decreased. The craft was disappearing. Finally there was a man in time-travel. The crowd gasped at the empty area where the craft had been. And then - what was happening? The craft was coming back into view. There was no doubt, the same machine was back.

What had happened was quite simple. Dr. Gasser had merely come back to the same day and the same time as he had left. The crowd refused to believe this fact then, no one believes an honest man. Dr. Gasser told them what he had seen. A major disaster in twenty years time would completely destroy civilization.

This made him a media celebrity once again. Headlines across the globe praised Dr. Gasser. "Time traveller predicts end of the world", was one. Another was "Traveller in time becomes prophet of doom." Dr. Gasser was endlessly interviewed and became a TV star of sorts.

All the glamour went to Dr. Gasser's head. He began to wonder what would happen if he changed the course of history. His second trip came soon after this idea. He went back to 1964 and averted Kennedy's death. Then he was back in 1986 to see what had happened. What he found was - nothing! An unknown man had saved Kennedy's life. That was all. Dr. Gasser's ego suffered. He wanted to do something desperately. So he paid a visit to H.G. Wells' time and gave him a copy of his own book, printed in 1980. When he returned after this trip, he felt a bit better. An unsolved mystery was in all the books. How had H.G. Wells gotten a book that he had not finished?

Dr. Gasser never looked back after that. (Not literally, of course). He began to tamper with the pasts of people he disliked. He even changed his tax forms and tax-returns. In short, Dr. Gasser had become a fiend.

He couldn't keep silent about his accomplishments either. He bragged and exulted in his power. From public hero he became public enemy No. 1. Hatred for him grew daily as his increasingly egoistic comments swayed the press. Groups formed against him, and the parliament tried enacting laws to bar time-travel. But what was the use? The laws would be enacted and Dr. Gasser would simply go back a few days and steal the bill.

As Dr. Gasser became more and more demonish his hatred for those around him began to grow. He began thinking in terms of destroying civilization. Over a period of months he decided what he would do. He would go back to the far past. He would cut the beginning of civilization in the bud. Then he would have the last laugh. The thought that there wouldn't be anyone to laugh at never occurred to him. His plans were fixed. He would leave these people to their ultimate doom.

But the world did have one weapon against him - he needed food and gasoline for his craft. This became his undoing. Food and gas were not sold to him any more. He became slowly desperate and hungry. The breaking point came when he began to chew his buttons. He got into his craft and decided to search for food and gas in the past. His many trips had, however, made him an all-time fiend.

However hard he tried, he could get no fuel any where. His hunger forced him to one decision. He would make a trip to a time when there was no human. He travelled back 300 million years. Getting out of his craft, he noticed that even his fuel stocks run out. Looking around, Dr. Gasser noticed one thing - there was nothing which looked edible.

So there he was, empty fuel can in his hand and nothing in his stomach, while dinosaurs watched and pterodactyls flew.

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A FAREWELL NOTE

- P. Seshu, Ph.D.

The occasion - 213 Tapti.  
That was so far, is so near:  
Written it is, we are to part  
Reconciliation doth seem impossible.

To live, for me, is not to leave you;  
To live, you are to leave me.  
How subtle it is all -  
I bid thee farewell, dear.

Morrow comes  
Sun dawns on the world, not unto me dear  
The shrubs, our companions,  
The trees that saw us when we knew no time  
Standing under them,  
The paths we tread together,  
Ask me in one voice -  
'Where's he?'  
Where am I to fetch you,  
The lamp of my life,  
Without you, void is my life.

Yet -  
To live, for me, is not to leave you  
To live, you are to leave me.

How subtle it is all -  
I bid thee farewell, dear.

§§§

Most people would succeed in small things,  
if they were not troubled with great ambitions.

- H.W. Longfellow.

§§§

HOW I SURVIVED

(An entry in the diary of Time)

- Venugopal Menon  
JIPMER

I've seen the dawn of creation  
I've watched the birth of man  
I am the 4th dimension  
I am .... TIME.

I saw you walk on four legs,  
Then watched you stand on two,  
As you swept your way to supremacy  
How I admired you ...

... For here was a creative species  
Who could my powers preen  
You can imagine my apprehension  
When you wrote of a Time Machine.

... Came along a man called Einstein  
Who talked of the Relativity Law  
Now I was getting worried  
My power beginning to thaw,

Just as my apprehension  
Began to rise and swell  
You discovered the A-Bomb  
And rang your own death knell...

The people asked for PEACE  
But the message wasn't clear,  
Gorbachev and Reagan were deaf  
So they heard NUCLEAR.

Came the weapons stockpile  
And away went my fear  
I knew I had won this battle  
For the 21st Century was here.

Then one day some old loony  
I won't mention his name  
Put his hand on the button  
And that was the end of the game.

There was a big explosion  
And you were blown away  
To disappear forever  
While I remained to stay.

\$\$\$

Publishing a column of verse is like dropping a rose  
petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo.

- Don Marquis.

\$\$\$



THE DIOGENES LAW OF DIMINISHING DAMAGES.

Over two years ago, September 1984 to be precise, Campastimes had encountered Diogenes investigating the research scenario in erstwhile Arcadia. In the interval he turned his attention to sundry other aspects of the campus, among them such esoteric topics as the meaningfulness of education. Ultimately he garnered sufficient evidence (selective of course, for an earlier study had established that research consists of carefully presenting information consistent with preconcieved notions) to propound the Law of Diminishing Damages.

Stated very briefly it says that commercial value of an IITian is inversely proportional to the contact hours actually spent in the classrooms and departments. Diogenes himself, with his penchant for pompous verbosity, is unlikely to recognise this statement, which is also to the good. In fact this is a special scoop by Campastimes based on purloined material (all's fair in love and journalism, eh., what?) which had to be deciphered and translated by the hostel mess cat (original sense: furry animal, four paws, long tail, etc.).

Diogenes may go on to become Minister of Education in the Twenty First Century for all we know, but the arguments concerning his Law seem to go something like this: About a quarter century ago the UG curriculum in IITM involved a five-year course, a six-day week, alternating weeks of theory and workshop in the first year (35 hours of filing the channel without any change of routine), no off periods unless one cut classes, no choice of subjects except for an elective stream in final year, no MG, and no nonsense generally, on account of the surprise periodicals. What was the result? Only a few made it to El Dorado. Job offers were limited, and some blokes ended up doing M.Tech (mostly elsewhere).

What is the picture like now? Five-day week. Lots of off periods, free afternoons, and holidays, besides MG. Liberal grades. B.Tech label in 4 years or M.Tech in 1.1/2. Etc. etc. And in spite of (or because of?) Westward Ho being the rule rather than the exception (with strong encouragement from the authorities) there is great activity on the placement front, even for PGs. Rules have to be devised to prevent individuals from landing too many jobs at a time.

Well, what Diogenes did was to extrapolate the situation by simulation studies on the IBM 370 whenever it functioned. (An off shoot of the study was that computers produce results only ten percent of the time, and with only 0.1E+02 percent accuracy.) According to his parameters for the rate of change of the rate of change, a decade from now will find us with a 3 semester B.Tech and a 1 semester M.Tech.

By that time organisations from all over the world, including the Mafia, the SS, and the KGB, will be eagerly competing with each other to grab any unsuspecting boulder with an IIT label provided he displayed the 'right' talents. A campus interview by the well known firm of Arson and Thudrow, specialists in international collaborations, may very well include some exchanges like the following:

A&T : No, we don't want to know your grades. But how much attendance have you put in, and what is your JEE rank?

Student: Well, my attendance has been rather low, mainly because of MG work, but my...



A&T : Ah, what was your role in MG.

Student: I handled the ads for the brochure, and organised the Western music show. I also participated in JAM and came second.

A&T : How much money did you collect through company advertisements?  
(File noting: good potential)

.....

(another student)

.....

A&T : What do you consider to be your major achievement in the past year?

Student: Based on my special interest in electro mechanics I constructed a working model of a gyromatic autoproximator.

A&T : Thank you. Next. (File noting: nut case).  
(to colleague): He probably thinks we came here looking for engineers.

.....

The further prognostications based on the Diogenes Law are slightly less reliable, but we present them all the same. By the turn of the century the IIT will only conduct entrance exams for which a ranking certificate will be given. Anyway everyone would have realised that the only worthwhile instruction in this country is provided by the likes of Agrawal and Brilliant Tutorials.

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#### DISTANT STRAINS

As she stood, stilled by chill  
The distant mullahs called to Allah  
The strains straining to reach her  
The wind blowing right across her.

In stillness we see things clearly.  
Turbid waters become pure mountain streams  
And muddled minds become cleared up.  
She saw the primitive, undiluted animal in man.

Did she pray to the Gods for help?  
Did she think of her husband and children?  
Her body was rigid, eyes dilated,  
Her sari crumpled under her fingers.

Nothing moved in that one moment  
A sudden wind brought the prayers  
Loud and clear to her ears  
And took away with it her fears.

- P. Ganesh.

\$\$\$

ONE AND THE OTHER

- P. Ganesh.

The train moves slowly now  
It's nearing its destination  
A journey, unforgettable,  
Yet not remembered now, as the end nears.

The luggage is packed  
And the bags ready.  
The burden is heavy to carry  
And the train is old. Real old.

Uncertainty in the new Lands,  
Insecure, Nervous.  
Who will carry my burdens, the results of my desire,  
Accumulated during my journey?

"You'll have to carry them yourself  
My son," says our Father in Heaven.

"I'll carry them for you, Sir" -  
I turn around and look to find  
An old man, his back bent by age and load,  
His eyes pleasing and pleading.  
His stomach, empty.

The train whistle was shrill  
It cut into his hazy thoughts.  
And shocked him into reality,  
He, of his dreams, of his youth, faded away.

He, who lifts the burden of others,  
Albeit for a paltry sum,  
He, who was the shell of the egg  
The ubiquitous but still the mysterious,  
Useful and useless.

Man carries another's burdens,  
He is called a Martyr.  
Give your sins unto me  
Give your luggage unto me.

Both demand a price,  
One subtle, another gross.  
One threatens you with hell  
Another knows your luggage.

Both save you trouble.

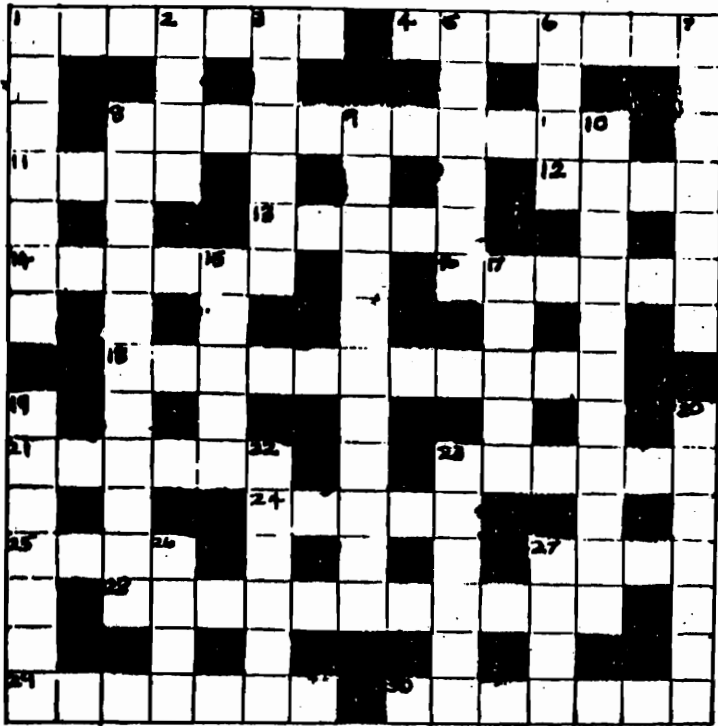
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Women are born in Wiltshire, brought up in Cumberland,  
lead their lives in Bedfordshire, bring their husbands  
to Buckingham, and die in Shrewsbury.

- Fuller.

Eds.: The staple wit of this saying is in the similitude of  
sound.

\$\$\$



ACROSS:

1. Write a hundred directions for absolution (7)
4. Affluent but without a source of water (4-3)
8. Boor between one undergarment and another. That's gibberish (11)
11. Mongrels swear endlessly (4)
12. Reverse tide and publish (4)
13. Kid's cry from table (5)
14. Tony gets conditioner to announce (6)
16. Void with points makes me gloomy (6)
18. Accelerate love line that can't be cancelled (11)
21. May be twins love being born thus (2,4)
23. She can perhaps get money (6)
24. Metrical stress is cut badly (5)

25. Possesses snow possibly (4)
27. Hit music (4)
28. Cake not for those who dislike gaudiness (11)
29. Hug Tory to get custard like food (7)
30. Strutting of a dealer in stolen goods (7)

DOWN:

1. Possibly no price for being swinelike (7)
2. Bars state owned houses (4)
3. Peevish like the crustacean (6)
5. Demands used to be play parts (6)
6. Role changed for the story (4)
7. Not opposed to music? Good luck (7)
8. Brandishing weapon? Such coercion won't bother contortionists (11)
9. Speaker after a bad lime is a better worker (11)
10. Grown up before age and Theodore debased (11)
15. Preferring a bid, yet do without (5)
17. The least rustic of Popes (5)
19. Large love bid? That's fanaticism (7)
20. Where the least amount is on woman (7)
22. Scorching musician (6)
23. Third party required for transaction ending in bird (6)
24. His note may be a deep breath (4)
27. Explosive hairstyle (4)

(Solutions on Page No.16)

WAIT UNTIL DARK<sup>+</sup>

- Anuradha Chitrapu, Ethiraj College

As the sun set and gave way to the first rays of the moon, a semi darkness descended on the town called Asansol. Children rushed back to their houses, mothers ran here and there to see if their children were in, and before the moon could come up the town was steeped in silence. Not even a single day was there any change in the town. No shop was open after sunset and no person walked the street after this time. It was as if darkness was the supreme master of the town and nobody dared challenge him.

Into this strange unfriendly town a stranger entered just before sunset. The bag on his shoulder and the file in his hand showed that he was a journalist. Walking by the lamp in the corner of the pavement he looked around for someone, someone who could tell him where he could get food and shelter for a few days. But apart from the ominous black cat peering at him through its white eyes there was no living creature on the deserted street.

The massive wall, enclosing a huge building which looked like a church, aroused his curiosity. The people seemed quite human as there were quite a few scribblings on the wall, in spite of the notice which ordered the contrary. The church bells chimed the sixth hour and the lonely journalist ran towards the sound. Turning around the corner past the lamp post he climbed over the wall and reached the church. Certainly someone would have to be here to toll the bell! The figure beside the bell was certainly not quite what he expected to see. With the lines of age firmly stamped across her face and a stout stick giving her a foreboding look, the crone stared back at the journalist through the hollows of her eyes. Her unflinching stare made him stammer through his queries. No answer did she give him, save the unblinking stare. After all his requests remained seemingly unheard he sat down near the wall under the huge leafless tree, staring into the night and wondering what place he had entered. But he was not totally surprised for he was warned that this was not any ordinary placid assignment he was given. He had come to get a story for his magazine from this town. Apparently no stranger returned from this town. If he went back alive there was lots of money for him, if he didn't, there was still lots of money for his family. Sleep overcame him and before long the church bell announced the morning. Hearing the noise from the street behind, the journalist looked around for the old lady but she was not to be seen. In the morning he managed to find a room in the adjacent street. People still looked at him suspiciously but now he was used to it. The whole day passed in bathing and resting and the evening brought the same gloom to the town. The servant in the single hotel came to him and sat down by his bed after closing all the doors and windows. The journalist decided now was the time to find out the secret of this town. Phrasing out his words carefully he enquired why people remained so aloof and unfriendly. After much hesitation the secret was unfolded to him. He understood why people never returned alive, but now he had the story and he would return alive. Well after sunset he set out with his file in hand to check the truth of the story and get the entire story for the old servant at the hotel had only told him where the secret lay.

Arriving at the well built main road of the town, he sat down below the lamp writing a description of the street which looked so human and friendly but hid a mystery behind the wall, of the lonely old lady

+ Story based on picture on back cover.

in the lonely church. Clambering over the wall he climbed the leafless tree and waited up there till the hour between night and day was announced by the bell. Using the moonlight and the little light from the lamp that was filtering through the cracks in the wall, he wrote of what he saw. The inscriptions on the walls, the overflowing dustbin, the funny shaped structure near the lamp which he mistook for a post box and the scary owl trying to focus in the darkness, the flapping bats which kept blocking the light now and then, and the black cat which he still couldn't look at.

Suddenly the silence was shattered by the incessant sound of the bell. The cat started crying like a human, the owls hooted in fright and beat him with their wings, the bats flew helter skelter and the church gate opened wide, creaking with a strangely frightening sound. The journalist almost fell out from the tree with the sudden activity. Somewhere far away he could hear someone sobbing, and the sobbing turned into crying and then it was someone shrieking. Through all this noise, he held on to the branches of the tree and gazed across at the church. The old lady stood with a smile on her face, unperturbed by all the noise, as if waiting for someone. Suddenly the clatter of wheels on stone made him turn to the street. A carriage drawn by two pure white horses carrying a pretty girl came by. She kissed the old lady and they chatted for a while. All the time the church bell kept ringing. Then the girl clad in white, hugged the lady, cried for some time and then waving to her ran to the small wicket gate leading to the cemetery. She disappeared and along with her the carriage, the horses and the unearthly noise. The journalist wrote for sometime, climbed down and ran to the church building. Once again the lady was staring into the darkness but this time she was not stony. She was crying, silent tears ran down her cheek and she was making no effort to wipe them. She was saying something, of how strangers were not to be trusted and that she would kill any one new who entered the town. The journalist sat down behind her listening and writing. Her only daughter whom she had raised from a tiny infant to a beautiful young lady, had committed suicide.

One evening a well dressed man had come to the town. The people offered him their homes. He was a stranger to the town and was given treatment befitting a king. He stayed for a month and during his stay met her daughter. The entire town was happy for a wealthy young man was to marry a daughter of the town. And then he disappeared never to return again. No one knew where he had gone till the head of the town brought the news that he was married and had gone abroad. The news shocked the village and her poor young innocent daughter hung herself on the church bell and she was found, her gentle neck strangled by the rope from the bell.

The journalist slipped past the old lady with mixed feelings, he was happy he had got a story but the story had had an impact on him. Suddenly a noise made him turn. The empty carriage was rushing towards him. He grabbed his file and ran toward the gate but just as he reached it, it closed not with a creak but swiftly and smoothly. He turned as he dropped his file and screamed out in terror. The papers in the file were strewn all over the street. His shrieks were heard by the people in the houses nearby but everyone understood and nobody stirred from their seats behind locked doors.

The journalist never returned to his room, and nobody questioned his absence. The papers were found in the street the next morning plain and white with not a word written on any of them.

OH VENUS, HERE I COME.<sup>+</sup>

- R. Sridhar,  
I.I.T.M.

It was one of those dark, dreary, lonesome nights - with a romantic full moon that pulls young lovers out of their minds and into lonely park benches. I was one of those lovers - I mean lovers of the Night - who stepped out for a melancholy walk down lonely lanes and shady avenues to enjoy the splendour of a cool night. I am a hater of mankind; I am appalled at the destruction that Man has wrought around him, to him, to his fellow living beings - at the moment I was despising myself for being a Man. I want to run away from it all - get away, flee to a different world, a different planet - even a hostile planet would do, as long as the beings there were reasonable and rational. But the only solace came in the form of Mother Earth; nothing could be more beautiful, more pleasing, more fawning and more miserly than her. She was the Jewel of the Milky Way - the Nipple from which the milk of Goodness spurted out. That was the only reason why I continue to live today. My sole burning fire of ambition - to stop that half-baked species calling themselves humans to stop destroying Mother Earth and themselves also in the process.

It was while mulling over these thoughts that I was suddenly jolted out of my skin by a small, gnarled hand that tugged at my sleeve. It was needless to say I was startled. It was then that I came to realize that I was standing on the pavement - if a few flat stones at the edge of the road could be called a pavement - of a very narrow and dark lane. The street light at the far end cast long, gloomy shadows and a gentle breeze was heralding the rising of Venus just above the horizon.

'Saar?'

I turned around as the tug came again. I looked down at the old bundle of rags sitting at my feet. As he looked up, the full moon shone on his face. Oh God! He must be at least a hundred years old. I'd never seen such a gnarled, shrunk face before and the number of lines scarring his blunt features - it was horrible.

'Alms, Saar,' it whispered through toothless jaws. It could hardly speak; it didn't have enough strength to spew out the words. I looked down dolefully.

'Two days since I ate.' Again the whisper.

'Alms, saar?' it said and tried to raise a thin and feeble arm up - a bony, hard hand came up and its fingers unclenched to reveal a lone 10 paise coin glinting as it caught the light of the moon.

I looked down at it. Here, I thought, in this man one can see what humanity has done to itself. All his aspirations, desires, hopes, needs, love - all personified, magnified out of shape by that held-out arm. Is that what he was born for? Is that why he should live out a whole lifetime? Is that why he should allow others to climb the ladders instead of him? Who is responsible for this? Not me, I say to myself. It's all been my brothers, the humane humans, so to speak.

I sit down beside him. A few of the lines in his face turn up, showing surprise. I look at him silently. In the silence, an owl hoots and a distant dog barks. I feel a deep down pang in my heart. I feel pity welling up. Immediately it changes to anger, anger at myself, anger

+ Story based on picture on back cover.

at humanity for doing this to him, and anger at the old man for having let this be done to him.

'What is your name?' I ask.

'Veerasami' he mutters slowly.

He takes his hand slowly to his hat and removes it. The few streaks of hair left hardly cover his head. He looks away, resigned and a black cat runs across the street. He probably thinks I am one of those reporters come to hear his story. Probably he accepts the futility of it.

I don't want his story. I know his story will end. So will humanity's. Then History will be complete - no more additions or deletions - a huge textbook for future Life to learn from.

I take out my wallet from my trouserpocket. I search among the notes and come out with a fiver. I hand it across to him. He is amazed. A toothless smile creates a gaping hole across his face. I put the wallet back in my pocket.

'Thank you, Saar!' There was a sudden gush in his voice. A sudden spright that he knows that he can extend his tenure by a couple of days. His hands come out, clutch me and try to hug me to him. As I lean close, I can smell him - the stink of humanity.

I feel a sudden pang in my heart. My eyes well up with tears. Maybe, there is love left in this world - maybe, it can save humanity. Then, all is not lost. I pat the old man on the back and go away with a sudden lightening of my heart.

I turn into an adjacent street. Ah! There's a cigarette shop. Nothing like eating a banana before you go to bed. I reach for my wallet and feel an empty pocket. Oh no!..... Not that old scoundrel!

I rush back. The old man is gone. Only his hat is there, set against the wall, and inside it is a 10 paise coin glinting as it caught the light of the moon. Dejected and angry, I stare at the wall - the writing on the wall. There, it's all there. Just a matter of time before the History textbook is complete. I look up at Venus - warm, glittering and beckoning. Oh Venus, here I come.

\$\$\$

It is not fair to visit all  
The blame on Eve, for Adam's fall  
The most Eve did was to display,  
Contributory negligee.

O Mongoose, where were you that day,  
When Mistress Eve was led astray?  
If you had seen the serpent first,  
Our parents wouldn't have been cursed.

- Oliver Herford.

\$\$\$



LOG OF AGENT-PC/XT

- Satyanarayana

Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one - touch-down. I had landed! After four lonely years aboard the Esmeralda with nothing but sick I.I.T. jokes and hostel grub to keep me company (as you can see, I didn't touch any of the grub!), I was at last on a planet. Not the earth - but a similar one. My ship's sensors had detected life and the automatic steering had got me down. I found I didn't need a space suit. I walked out of the porthole and looked around.



There was life here! They even spoke English! Did they crack P.J.'s? I had to find out. There was this wall in front of me covered with graffiti. The biggest one exhorted hoi polloi to read something called Campastimes. There was even an owl on a tree behind the wall. Some bats were circling around my 'SUPER X8 spherical flash gun'. (Ed. The sole picture he sent back is attached. The big white circle is the flash).

Presently I saw something written on the road surface. ERBS - I was mystified! Before I could think about this, one of the bats landed in front of me, clattered a lot and produced sheets of paper. It croaked, 'Fill this up in triplicate, please!' My surprise knew no bounds and I asked him, 'What's the fundas?'.

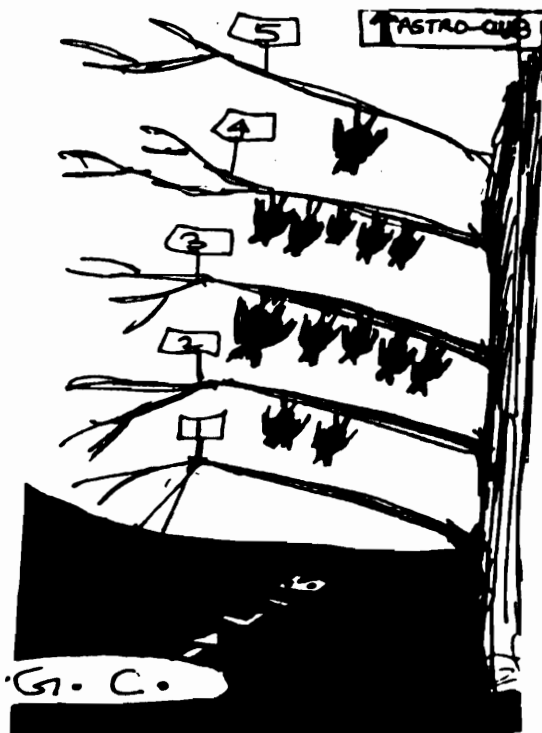
I had landed in a planet of bureaucrats! Their favourite magazine was COME-PASS-TIME (shortened to CAMPASTIMES) where they were provided with 30 sheets of double spaced forms. The objective was to fill up the forms. ERBS actually meant (as I found out later) Eagerly Read Back Sides - exhorting people to turn to the reverse sides of all their forms and fill those up too.

I later discovered that this was actually a haven for bureaucrats who had passed away on the earth. God had actually put them in heaven, but had them removed in a hurry when people began queueing up outside His door to get Him to sign their various forms in triplicate! The bureaucrats became bats for short. They would be bats for long too!

Ed.: - At this point the narrative becomes incoherent. It seems PC/XT was being swamped with forms to fill in triplicate and quintuplicate. Even with his incredible capabilities, he was tiring. Some samples from his diary -

15th August 2215 -(Earth time) A.N.H (After Nuclear Holocaust): Must fill up the reservation forms in quintuplicate. My pink card has been lost. I think I left it in the tree.

( Ed.: He was living atop a tree)



30th August 2216 A.N.H.

.... no time for sleep. This year's stock of fresh air supply reservation is gone. I may be fined for breathing extra air soon.

Ed:-Apparently air was not free - supplied only against fresh air coupons. Each coupon had to be obtained by filling in one form. As people consumed more air while filling in the forms, they were continually filling up these forms.

At this point the narrative ends. PC/XT turned into a bat and was recovered buried under a file of forms by a routine patrol party. We have not been able to communicate with him so far. We haven't found his body, so he is legally missing.

\$\$\$

21st Century

- Sriranjana Chaudhuri.  
St. Joseph's, Bangalore.

When mango trees  
grow shorter than man  
And when buildings shoot up  
without man  
When children grow up  
Unlike man  
And when life is lived  
Like half a man  
It must be the 21st Century.

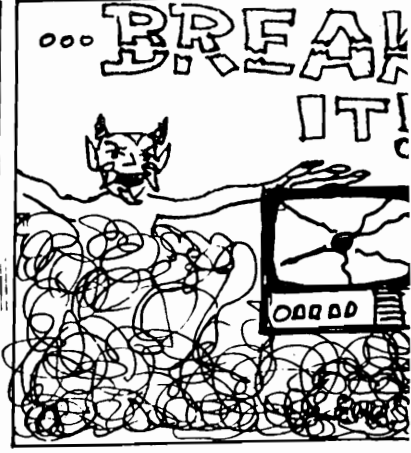
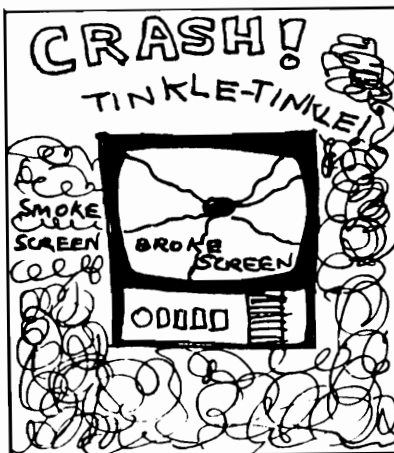
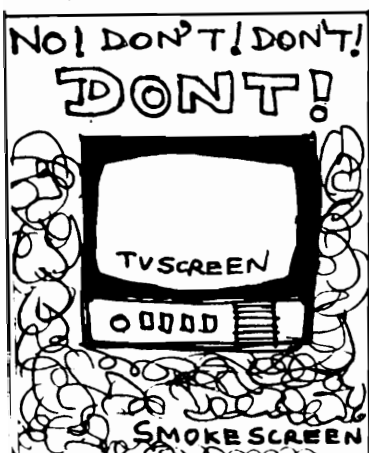
When books are written  
Not by man  
And food is eaten  
With the help of man  
When rainfall comes  
With a wish from man  
And when man is treated  
Like half a man  
It must be the 21st Century.

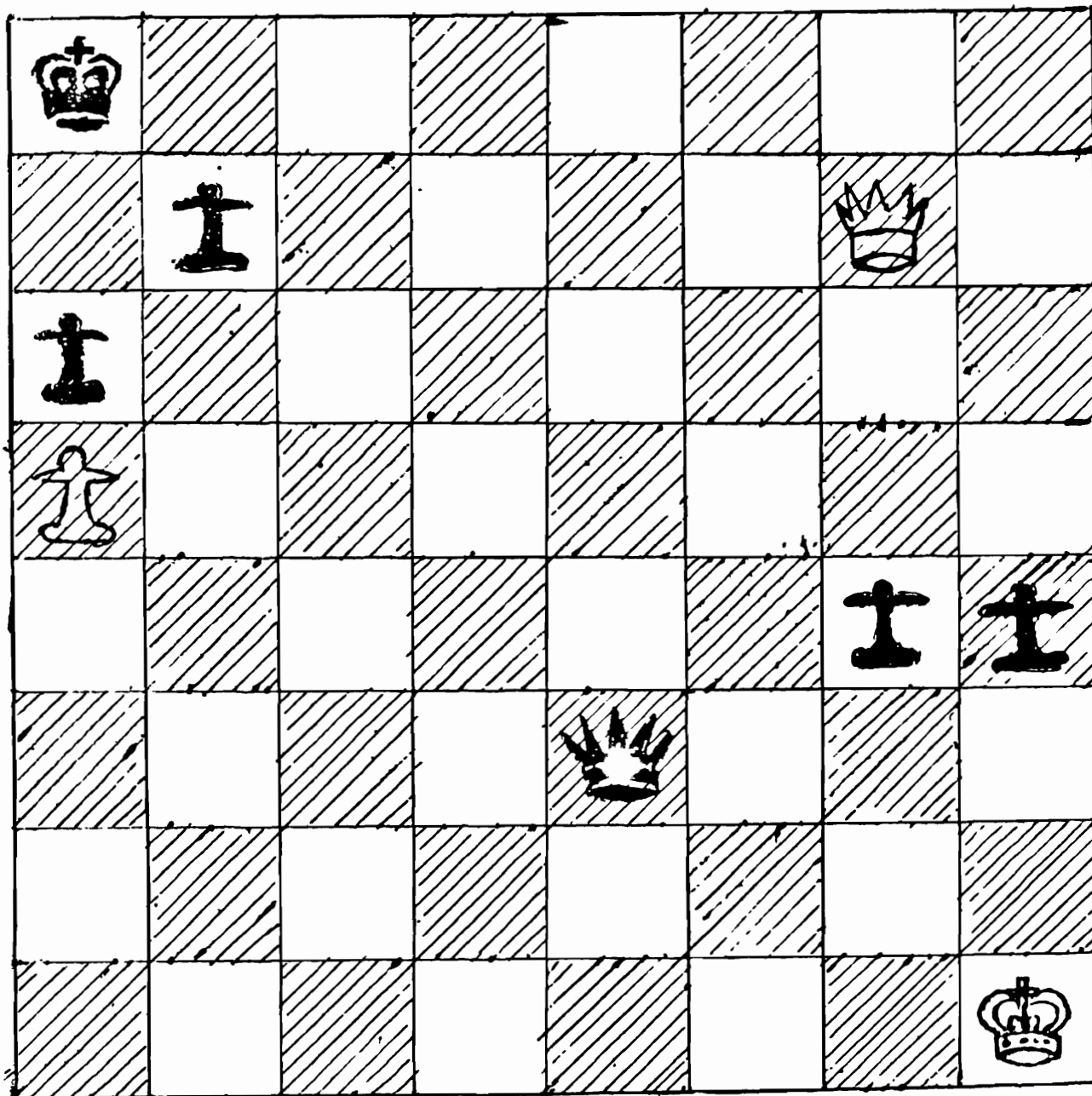
When I don't understand it  
And I ask why  
It must be the 21st century.

\$\$\$

AD-VERSE CRITICISM

By BORE - DARSHAN





Problem: White to play and draw (Solution at the bottom of the page).

§§§

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across:

- |                  |             |                |                 |          |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Penance       | 4. Well-off | 8. Abracadabra | 11. Curs        | 12. Edit |
| 13. Bleat        | 14. Notify  | 16. Sullen     | 18. Irrevocable |          |
| 21. In twos      | 23. Encash  | 24. Ictus      | 25. Owns        | 27. Beat |
| 28. Ginger bread | 29. Yoghurt | 30. Swagger    |                 |          |

Down:

- |            |                |                |                 |            |
|------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1. Porcine | 2. Arbs        | 3. Crabby      | 5. Exacts       | 6. Lore    |
| 7. Fortune | 8. Armtwisting | 9. Ameliorator | 10. Adulterated |            |
| 15. Forgo  | 17. Urban      | 19. Bigotry    | 20. Whither     | 22. Singer |
| 23. Escrow | 26. Sigh       | 27. Bang       |                 |            |

§§§

Solution:

1. Qf8+, Ka7 2. Qf2!! QxQ 3. Stalemate  
 (After obvious 1.Qxg4, 1... Qe1+ 2.Kg2, Qg3+ 3.QxQ, PxQ 4.KxP, Kb8  
 5.Kf3, Kc7 6.Key Kc6 7.Kd4, Kb5 8.Kc3, KxP  
 Now white can't stop black from queening its pawn.)

ADVENTURES OF A RESEARCH SCHOLAR

(These adventures are purely imaginary; resemblance, if any, to anyone living, dead or doing research is accidental.)

Power went off again. Arjuna felt dejected. What a day! A late morning (he had to work in the lab till late in the night), a horrible breakfast (stale bread and no butter), a quarrel with the supple ...

Situation was bad in the lab too. Nitrogen was not available, work-table had been disturbed and the most crucial instrument borrowed out. And now the power-cut! Luckily, he had remembered to switch off the pump.

Arjuna looked at the letters on his table. From home, they had asked whether he had started typing his thesis. How many more years to settle down' ...? A friend wrote asking why he didn't see Arjuna's name in the Physics Abstracts Author Index so far. You may find it soon in the Subject Index of Psychology Abstracts, if the situation persists!' thought Arjuna. Today's mail contained an information sheet on certain experimental set-up from the manufacturers - versatile, microprocessor-based and all that. All these years he had been trying to make a similar set-up in the lab. If only I were having this to work with!

Suddenly, the door opened and his guide, Dr. Krishna entered the lab. The characteristic smile vanished from the guide's face as he saw the expression on the face of his student, Arjuna. "What happened, my dear young man?" he asked.

"Sir, I want to quit." said Arjuna, "no equipment, no facility, no encouragement, no satisfaction and no atmosphere for research. Only hard work and frustration for years. How am I supposed to work? I'd better go home and write some bank exam."

Dr. Krishna listened patiently and smiled. "Come with me. Let's talk over a cup of tea." Reluctantly, Arjuna followed his guide to the canteen.

"We all have our own moments of glory and agony, Arjuna," Dr. Krishna explained, "But, in life, one has to learn to rise above them and make the best out of the available situation. Analyse the situation logically, as we physicists ought to. Do you really think that counting money and calculating compound interest all the day behind a bank counter will make you feel better?"

"Sir, that is not the point at all. What about the research situation?" Arjuna interjected.

"I am coming to that." Sipping his tea, Dr. Krishna continued, "Ph.D is only a training. Your worry should be about research and not about getting a degree, which, in fact, is not that difficult, you know. You should always aim at some ambitious work, some significant advance, some definite contribution. Of course, even if after a few years of sincere efforts and hard work you are nowhere near a degree in a particular problem, then you may relent a little bit and settle for something less ambitious. But then, the experience gained through the hard work and the training will surely prove to be of great use to you in future. You know about many of our previous students who have made bright careers, both in India and abroad, based on the experience gained

here. You must have the right attitude, enthusiastic motivation. In general, I do find it lacking in many students."

"But, Sir, why? Haven't you ever thought why the students, having joined through tough selection procedures, lose motivation at the young age? You know there are many of us who have ignored other lucrative opportunities and come for research. The real problem lies elsewhere."

"I can understand your emotion, Arjuna," Dr. Krishna said, "I know about it very well. To be on the frontiers of research, we have to compete with the sophisticated labs of abroad, with our limited facilities and funds. I can tell you that this is about the maximum one can get in an Indian situation. We simply have no option except to take it as a challenge and make the maximum out of the facilities available. With hard work and dedication, we still can achieve a lot. Can't we? We can assure you a good probability of being selected for post doctoral fellowship in some good lab abroad where you get all the necessary facilities to fulfill your academic ambitions and to prove your real worth. Many of our students have done so, as you know. With the insight and experience you gain there, you may come back to improve the Indian situation."

Dr. Krishna continued, "I also agree that the research atmosphere ought to be much better. I know that some of the guides are not taking due interest and involvement in their students' research except at the publication stage. Nor are they trying to be informed about the frontier areas in their fields. Guides should understand that this leads to frustration among the students and actually amounts to murdering the enthusiasm and spirit of the research scholars towards physics, research, and life in general. Apart from that, more meaningful discussions and interaction should be there - among the students, staff, among the various departments etc. You yourselves can do something about that. You have your associations which can and should act as forums to wake up the guides and the whole department towards a better research atmosphere. All of us have to make sincere efforts to make our atmosphere more conducive to research. See, enthusiasm is contagious; no matter who starts it."

After finishing his cup of tea, Dr. Krishna continued in a lower tone: "Arjuna, I'll tell you from my own experience that seemingly unsolvable problems will frequently haunt us in life. But our own strength lies in making sincere efforts within our best ability to meet the challenge. Rather than getting disappointed, one should try to improve the situation to the maximum extent possible. Is it not this aspect that makes man great? You would not have been selected here unless you had a good knowledge of the subject and the capacity to think scientifically. So, make the maximum use of it. I agree that I too have been slightly lazy these days. But, you have brought me back to my full senses and I'll make good for my lapses."

Arjuna felt his hopes reviving. He said, "I feel better, sir. Thank you. Sorry for the outburst." Dr. Krishna said, "Oh! come on. We all are humans. Now forget it all and go to hostel to take some rest. We will discuss about your progress in work tonight, let us say at eight. --- Or, would you rather watch Chitrahaar?"

"No sir, I'll come by eight if it is convenient for you." Both parted, smiling.

'Yatra yogeswarah krishnah; Yatra Partho dhanurdharah;  
Tatra sreervijayo bhootir dhruva neetir matir mama.'

THE RAHU COLUMN

By Fingerer Future-wrist.

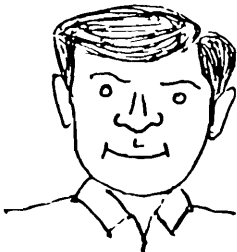
The "Hand"some \*astro-palmist.  
\*The Star palmist - For stars,  
Of stars,  
By stars.

A	F	D
Q	G	C
P	E	B

Now writes for you in Campastimes.  
Ha! You now are seeing stars! Eh?!!

---

THE RAHU COLUMN (THIS SEM FOR "U")  
Jan '87 - May '87.



is ahead of you. You will not have much time for friends and relatives till the vacation.

Important nos:- 10,30,10,50.

Important dates:- Quiz, mid sem & End sem dates.

Prominent colour:- One colour dominates your mood-Blue.

I years (July '86 - June '90) - This sem. sees computing and Thermody. moving into the A-slot. Pisku and Resnick & Halliday remain in their old slots. But Shames moves into ascendancy by entering the D-slot. When combined with Humanities in the C-slot he loses some of his toughness. But NCC/NSO moving into the Sunday slot shows that a very hectic and tiring period



branch courses leave most students in the lurch. Of course, the muggoes manage to find themselves a perch.

II years (July '85 - June '89) - In this sem. Physics, maths(Core) and Chemistry move out of your slots and this shows signs of a good time ahead. The possibility of cool electives enhances the above viewpoint. But Elec. Sciences II having remained in his B-slot dashes all your hopes. The maths elective shows that he is not as easy as you thought he was, while the two

Important nos.:- 10,30,10,50 (Marks you can't get in ESII).

Important dates: Registration date for next sem.

Important colour: Pink, yellow & green (Colour of Registration cards).



III years (July '84 - June '88) - This sem. ushers in numerous labs in the afternoon slot. N category courses like Comp. Sim, AFMC, OR, CAD, marketing, Med Physics, etc... vie with each other to enter your slots, you succumb to their temptations. But category restriction intervenes in the form of your Faculty Advisor and changes all that. The thought of the impending "Final" year strikes terror in many a heart. Desperate discussions and goodals are carried out to ensure a good project. GRE, AGRE & GATE join the other slots in adding to your tension. Your project-mania may make you run from

your class's "Pillar" to the depts. highest posts (HOD, Prof., etc..)

Important nos.:- 800, 800, 800, 990, 99%ile.

Important dates:- GRE and GATE test dates.

Prominent Colour:- White (Blank future).



IV years (July '83 - June '87) - Your patience of the last 3.1/2 years has paid you handsomely. All the painful courses leave your slots and cool branch courses and innocuous humanities courses keep you in good humour. Your project keeps you busy. Your normal schedule is disturbed by Job interviews (who wants to shave every other day, eh?) and by fear of "bumps"! You will spend a lot of money (what with apping and treats!), but with jobs and/or "aid" you will get returns too. A deciding part of your life.

Important nos.:- \$750 p.m, Rs.3,500 p.m., etc.

Important dates:- Interview dates.

Prominent Colours:- White (Shirt, full-sleeve), Black or grey or dark blue (Pants, preferably with pin- stripes).

§§§

#### WHICH PATH DID I TAKE

(A poem written by a young poet of fourteen years, M. Suresh Majella, IX B, K.V.I.I.T)

Why did you search for me,  
Beloved Lord,  
When I, devoutly knelt,  
Before your shrine,  
Praying for your blessings...

The path I pursued,  
Though the one  
You yourself gave us,  
Was so unfortunate  
That it did not touch  
The fringes of yours...

If only did I know  
That you to my humble abode  
Would arrive,  
I would have eagerly  
Prepared my heart...

Now, so abruptly  
You are  
Before me.  
Lord  
I offer you  
My gratitude  
For that is all I have with me.



THE PHOTOGRAPH

- Rajat Mukherjee.

It wasn't really as beautiful as it had been a year before. Or maybe it was that the beauty was all there, but I could not perceive it. Maybe the trees had aged. Maybe the season was different.

- \* - \* - \*

I had met her at the very same place. She was playing badminton inside, When I went in. She didn't see me, and I could see her scurrying about the echoing hall, stamping loudly on the protesting wooden floor, the hall filling with the dull, yet ringing noise. She pranced about, retrieving the shuttle with skill. She was good. At the game, and otherwise too. She saw me, and her game went awry. She didn't put in any effort after that, and after a few minutes of listlessness on the wooden court, she drew away from the lights. She walked up to a chair at the side and picked up the track suit top, wearing it as she sauntered towards me.

'Hello !' 'Hello! You play mighty well.'

'Oh' just for fun! .....

. . . we walked out into the mild sunshine, a cheery breeze blowing about us.

That was the time she had refused my love. Love? Maybe. It seemed so then! It seems so now!

- \* - \* - \*

It was a year since I last saw her. That day - that very day was a year ago. I could not keep away. It was a Saturday, and knew she would be playing. I wanted to see her. Just see her. But I planned to take my camera along, so that she would be with me always, whenever I wanted.

I walked up the driveway. Dried leaves flitted past my feet in the springy breeze. I walked slowly, apprehensively.

She was playing, and I was quick about it. Only the flash told her that something had intruded into her privacy. She turned, looked at me, and stopped playing.

She stepped quickly towards the chair, wore her track-suit top and walked in my direction, her face a little perplexed at what had happened. 'Hi!'.

'Hello ! You stopped playing?'

'Oh! just like that. It was getting boring anyway'.'

We did not go to the clubhouse for a drink as on the other day. That day, we had sipped fresh fruit juice as the beads of sweat on her forehead had captivated me. She had never looked at me at a stretch. Her eyes probably hadn't had the strength to meet mine. We had made flimsy conversation, for each one of us was wondering who would begin.....

We walked down the drive, till we reached a bench on the lawn edge, under a good tree.

'Why did you come? I thought it was all over!'

'I thought so, too. But I couldn't help myself. I wanted to see you and I could not keep the feeling away.'

'Why did you take the photograph?'

'Because.....Well, I wanted to see you whenever I felt like, and since you don't want to see me, I thought this was the best way out. And anyway, I don't stay here!'

'Is it a polaroid camera?'

'Yes'.

'May I have a look at the photograph? If you don't mind!'

'By all means, go ahead. It's come out pretty well.'

She took it hesitantly out of my hand, looked at me straight and long for the first time, then looked closely at the photograph, and closing her eyes, she tore it up into two. Then, each of those pieces into two. I could see a solitary tear drop out of her eye.

'Please go away! Please!' Please don't ever come to see me or want to see me again. It isn't good for you or for me. It's all over'.

She got up and walked away, never looking back. She had taken the bits of the photograph with her.

I sat there for a long time, blank. Then, I walked down the drive, the leaves blowing against my feet, but causing no impediment to the motion. I went back into the mild sunlight and balmy breeze.

\$\$\$

RE-QUEST

- R. Balaji, 251 Jamuna..

Sitting in class one day I thought,  
It was high time I found the girl I sought,  
Thus began the everlasting search  
Which I have carried out without a lurch.

And find her I did, one day -  
Going with her boyfriend for a sundae.  
Disappointed I turned back to the multitudes on Earth,  
Amongst whom, I must say, there was no dearth  
Of beautiful, nubile girls to suit my taste,  
From whom I was afraid to choose in haste  
One, who would sit and be my friend-  
Till my very end.

Nubile girls are not hard to find,  
Even if the one who searched for them was blind,  
They are, everywhere, floating around  
As headswill on a merry go round.  
But the most difficult task I found  
was to accost them, when they are around,  
For if they don't like your sound,  
Their slippers would make you bound.

The fear of a slap on my face  
Has considerably slackened my pace,  
And so I stand today  
Without a girl to keep me gay.

I'm sure that there is amongst you now,  
Someone who would like to be my lady love,  
I would like you to write and say -  
Whether you would like to make my day.

TV - THE IDIOT BOX

They sit like ruminating cattle  
Chewing their daily cud:  
Of inept actors and newscasters.

Jarring jingles - ad mantras  
Tired dramatics - strained cliches  
Token murder, desperate crime  
Prodigal son, pregnant daughter.

And they see him smile:  
Reassuring lullaby of rhetoric -  
'Education Policy', 'New Attitudes',  
'21st Century' - all platitudes.

Avoid the gawkers on the streets  
Craning by the TV stores, peering  
Masala magic, inspired bore:  
Cricketers run casually on the pitch  
Politicians promise dreams without a hitch  
Detectives chase women and crack lousy jokes.

Children starve, cooked food burns on stoves  
People die of emptiness, every where  
How much food has the flickering box bestowed?  
Just tired truths, clumsy lies,  
The fatal fascination of fairy tales.

Some starve and die  
Some thief or murder  
Most find bosses to kill them  
Others embrace the troubled streets  
Find their gin and cause.

Above them all reigns the New Pied Piper  
Piping his prescribed tune for the masses  
As they creep slowly, surely, towards the lake.

§§§

Candy  
Is dandy  
But liquor  
Is quicker.

- Ogden Nash.

§§§

Think with the wise but talk with the vulgar.

- Bacon.

It is wit to pick a lock and steal a horse,  
but wisdom to leave them alone.

- Howell.

§§§

Women and cherries are painted for their own harm.

- Torriana.

§§§

THE MOOD (TARAMS POLAMAA?) - FLASK, 127 Narmada.

One could feel it. Almost touch it. Think it? definitely. It was in the air that night, then. The mood. The mood for a break. To break away from whatever was on hand. Mugging? Maybe. But one thing was sure. It was there. Came a call - Shattering, piercing - rending the silence of the night like a hot knife would butter. 'Tharams Polamaa'? 'Hang on I'm coming'.

It had begun. The exodus. To the Mecca of the midnights. That revered place. Oh! for a cup of single SP chai garam garam! The stones, the dogs, the buffaloes. But then the pigs, the shit and damn- the mosquitoes.

At 10.00 p.m. began the vigil. Two dhothi clad figures walked out of the darkness into the light. "2 SP coffees, one less sugar." Simple, short, but effective. The chaiwalla got to work. Two glasses emerged to do duty. Chop! chop! Two spoons of coffee. Chop! chop! two spoons of sugar. Whirr! A stream of milk poured in. As he 'stretched' the milk, now one with the coffee they wondered. "Why tharams, why now?" But they couldn't answer. The vigil was on.

Retired on stones, discharged by that behemoth: The structures lab under trees of tranquility they continued the watch. Sipping coffee no not just that, but Tharams SP coffee; they waited.

The smaller of the two sensed it. First it was on them. The mood! A tingling! Up his spines! It was coming nearer. Wait, he could hear it. 'whir! Whir!' As spokes went up, then down like a wheel of fortune. Voices! Two! one high, one low, one loud, one muted. Was it them?

They consulted in hushed tones.

'Is it them?'

'Yes?'

'Sure?'

"Never more than now!"

He was right. He could see them now as they came in coasting, braking, hopping off - grins on faces. Yes it was them. The mood was in the air.

'Two SP teas, two bun omelettes'.

Simple, short but effective. The couple retired to blocks near the path.

The vigilantes hid. Their time wasn't yet come. They had to wait, for the mood was on them.

The omelettes and SP's came. The couple munched hungrily unaware of human presence. Lost in thoughts of spokes whirring up, then down, up then down. Behind them foot steps. Short, swift, muffled whispers, raised hands 'glinting' in the moonlight. It was on.

Heads turned. Mouths opened. Silent screams as hands thrust violently. As he thrust the smaller one the vigilante gasped. For he had seen it - his face masked with death. He screamed....

---

"Tarams Polamaa...Hey! Gopsi are you sleeping? Wake up".

He arose. What? He had crashed? Then he saw his hands. They were red. In the corner lay a shattered mirror. Victim of the Mood -  
Tarams Polamaa.



