Contents

3 From the President’s Desk
   From the Principal’s Desk

4 Research Publications in Journals

6 Joe

8 Photo Gallery

10 SSN College of Engineering Honours Cricketer Ashwin

11 Dream Weaver

12 The Final Blessing

14 Tamil Section

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"From the President’s Desk..."

Ms. Kala Vijayakumar

This is the culminating Quarter of the year 2010-11; teachers are busy in completing their lessons and students in their preparations for the examinations. Yet the departments of Mechanical Engg., Biomedical Engg. and Information Technology have conducted three well attended National Conferences/Seminars/Workshops during this period. As many as 13 papers have been published by our faculty in International Journals and 10 in International Conferences. Senior faculty have been invited by Anna University of Technology for finalizing the curricula and syllabi for higher semesters and it is a good exercise for our faculty sooner to frame the same for our own SSN University. I am happy to know that Mr Sendhil Kumar (ChE) and Mr Balaji (PD) have submitted their PhD theses. I am glad to know that our efforts to explore the possibility of offering consultancy have starting fructifying.

Core companies have realized the mettle of our students and started coming for recruiting our students. It will not be too late for us to achieve 100 percent placement.

We can be legitimately proud of Mr R Aswin playing in the winning Indian Cricket Team to earn the Gold for our country. He is also representing Chennai Super Kings in IPL. Mr Irfan Hussain (I yr Mech) has been awarded the Excellency Award by the Tamilnadu Tennis Federation.

I hope and trust many more such laurels will be earned by our students and faculty in the years to come.

“From the Principal’s Desk...”

Dr. S. Salivahanan

Let us gladly usher in the academic year 2011!

I am extremely happy to document the activities of SSN Institutions during the period AMJ 2011.

The 28th of June 2011 witnessed the reopening of the college for all the B.E. / B.Tech students except the first years.

It is a matter of pride that R. Ashwin, 1 MBA, was a part of the Indian winning team in the ICC World Cup - 2011 held at Mumbai. It was a privilege to organize a felicitation to Mr. R. Aswin on 26 April 2011 in the college campus. He received the most economic bowler award in the Indian Premier League fourth edition. His team Chennai Super Kings won the title and he took three wickets in the final match against Royal Challengers.

The Center for Biomedical Informatics & Signal Processing in association with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Bharath Scans Pvt. Ltd. and Precision Diagnostics, organized a two-day national level seminar on “Recent Trends in Medical Imaging Techniques”. Dr. N. Chandrakumar, Professor, IIT Madras, was the Chief Guest. The Department of Mechanical Engineering organized a one-day workshop on “Dynamic simulation of mechanical systems using MATLAB” on 20 April 2011. Our faculty attended a two-day workshop on Curriculum Development for Shiv Nadar University which was conducted by Prof. N. J. Rao of IIT Bangalore.

I am proud to mention here that SSN College of Engineering received the “Top Institute of India” Award instituted by Competition Success Review (CSR) during a function held at New Delhi on April 30, 2011. The Outlook magazine dated 27th June 2011 issue has done an independent ranking of all India top professional 75 engineering colleges, wherein they have adjudged the 38th rank for SSN.

I would like to add a message to our staff and students. Whatever success we have attained is the result of hard labour, I know. But let us not remain in a comfort zone and relax indefinitely. Instead allow our minds to work like an up-to-date computer, the operating instructions of which we learn so carefully that we can get the maximum advantage out of it. In the same way, let us learn our miraculous built-in human machine carefully so that we can get the most out of our own internal system and thus strive towards our goal.

Top Institute of India Award

SSN College of Engineering was selected for the “Top Institute of India” Award instituted by Competition Success Review (CSR).

The Principal received the award during a function held at New Delhi on April 30, 2011. The award carries a framed certificate and a shield. CSR has truly honoured our Institute with this award.

Congratulations!!!

Mr. S. Nitin, B.E.(CSE) played the Dubai Open Chess Tournament organized by Dubai Chess Association during April 8-19, 2011.

Mr. Irfan Hussain, B.E. (Mech) received the Excellency Award and Cash prize from the Tamilnadu Tennis Federation on April 2, 2011 and also won the championship title in the SSC Open Tennis Championship organized by Srilankan Tennis Association during May 14-23, 2011.
RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS IN JOURNALS


27. “Low loss optical channel drop filters based on high contrast Si/Air photonic crystals by wet anisotropic etching”, M. Renilkumar and Pritta Nair, Applied Optics, Vol 50, No.25, E59-E64, September 2011 (ISSN: 1559-128X, 2010 IF: 1.703)


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**BEST PAPER AWARD**

Anusha M., Mithra R., Geethanjali B. and Mahesh V. received the Best Paper Award for their paper entitled “Design and simulation of demand type pacemaker using labview” in the National conference on Assistive Technology, held at BVRIT, Hyderabad, from 29th to 31st July, 2011.


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**PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Dr. P. Rajesh, Assistant Professor, Physics Department, attended the International Conference on Materials for Advanced Technologies (ICMAT- 2011)- CGCT-5 from 26th June to 1st July 2011 held at International convention and Exhibition Centre, Suntec City, Singapore.

**FOREIGN VISIT**

Dr. N.P. Rajesh, AP/Physics visited High Energy Optics and Photonics lab, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan for doing collaborative research in “effect of bonding on GaAs for THz Generation” during April-June 2011. During his stay at Taiwan he also visited National Chiao Tung University and National Taiwan University for scientific interaction with the Researchers and Scientists.

**THOUGHTS...**

Asleep, awake, around always;
Light as snowflakes, even dreary and gray,
A touch of reality, whims of caprice;
Stealthy, sometimes bright, at times shadowy surprise.

A glint in the eye, laughter carefree...
Herald thoughts as happy as can be.
Blithe shrugs, the lips-a twist sardonic;
Portentous of feelings all but ironic.

Happily ever after!...this can’t be true!!!
All this and more, a perpetually wondrous to-do.
Virtual reality, an ideal place to be,
Always company, maybe three or ninety three.

Ponderous and heavy, running oceans deep;
A quagmire for sure, intense as gravity.
Quicksand to the mind-is misery,
In space so vast and empty.

A flight of fantasy, daydreams sweet and sappy;
Bouts of fury, even jolts to the memory,
Strokes of serendipity, whatever may they be-
Thoughts reign supreme, here to eternity...

Divya Kumar,
IV B.Tech. (Chemical)
Joe

In a prominent venue of Planet Mars, 234.67.87-01001 was seated in front of a monitor. His skinny fingers were shaking as he was working on the key board. He had a silvery complexion with blue coloured eyes and a nose that resembled a small scratch on a wall. On top of the antenna fixed to his head was a miniature flickering light in red. As addressing him by such a long number will hinder the flow of this narration, let us call him ‘Joe’.

Joe’s wife Sandra (234.97.87-02001 to be precise and for those of you interested in numerals) walked up to him and said, “You little creature. Have you forgotten that you have to attend a meeting with the Head of Planet Mars today?” Joe took his eyes off the monitor, slowly turned to face his wife and said, “I haven’t forgotten. The meeting is scheduled two hours from now. In fact, I am preparing a presentation for the meeting.”

Sandra smiled wryly and said, “Perhaps someone else will present and you have to operate the system, I suppose.”

“No Sandra, Believe me. The Head has given me a very important assignment. I may have to kill some people and that too, from a different planet.”

Sandra burst into a peel of laughter. “Joe, Everyone here knows that you are the most useless creation on this planet. How can the Head of Mars assign you with a task of killing people from a different planet?”

Joe was not perturbed by the indignation. In fact, he was quite used to the humiliation heaped on him by all and sundry in Mars. Everyone in Mars looked like a doll with an average height of one foot and weighed barely three pounds. Yet, compared to every other person of his age in Mars, Joe was too trivial. He was half foot tall and weighed just a pound. That was reason enough for his relatives, friends, class mates in the digital school and government servants to scorn him as a misfit.

Joe was an accident - so to say. In a planet where the creations are manufactured using ultra high precision gadgets and thoroughly validated software in a controlled environment, how can someone turn out to be out of specification? Yet, Joe had defied the odds of accuracy of hardware and software, probably due to a signal distortion that lasted for less than a nano second.

Unmindful of Sandra’s dismissal of his claims, Joe was chattering, “People on earth believe that no creation can exist on Mars. Yet they keep on doing space research and sending rockets and satellites to smell if someone is around here. Next week, a manned mission from earth is expected to land on Mars. I have been given the task by the Head of Mars of attacking this manned mission and safeguarding Mars from possible strikes from aliens later on. Now you can see the important role I am assigned with.”

Sandra replied nonchalantly, “The government has given you a helper’s job in the Defence Committee. Perhaps, you may have to clean some space shuttle.”

Outside the giant space station on planet earth, a demonstration was going on. A priest like figure was addressing a large gathering, “We condemn in unequivocal terms the manned mission scheduled for Mars, next week. How many rockets we have fired and how many billions we have burnt! How many lives we have lost! How many brave people we are going to lose? Come; let us cry halt to this Mad Mission Mars.”

A few hundred metres away from that scene, a saffron clad man was speaking to television crew, “Believe me, our stars foretell a great disaster if we send this manned mission to Mars. My grand father had correctly predicted 9/11 disaster in his younger days. I belong to an illustrious generation of astrologers. Please, for heaven’s sake, stop this mission.”

Elsewhere, in a lush green lawn, the President of Earth was addressing from podium a select gathering of parliamentarians. “Mars is a peanut for us. We have conquered everything. I want our supremacy to go unchallenged – in this planet Earth or from elsewhere. If there happens to be life in other planets, there is a likelihood of men from those planets endangering us. We have to pre-empt such strikes. Hence our manned mission to Mars next week has to go on. And let me assure you that It Will Go On, come what may. “The crowd rose in unison to a thunderous applause.

The hi-tech, state-of-the-art rocket was cruising in space at a steady pace, on course to Destination Mars. Jennifer, the lady astronaut was watching Kennedy, the captain of ‘Mission Mars 2070’ working very seriously on the computer’s monitors and tracking all parameters. All instruments unanimously agreed that everything was fine and under perfect control. Soon they would land on Mars.

Jennifer spoke to Kennedy, disturbing his concentration and focus. “Tell me, Kennedy, aren’t you afraid of this mission?” Kennedy, the lone male astronaut on board the rocket was 45 years old, sound in physique and was earth’s most experienced astronaut.

“Huh. Don’t tell me I am afraid of this mission. I have undertaken many risky assignments in life. But don’t let your mind wander. Stay focused.”

Jennifer instantly replied with a fit of anger, “Ah, I am fully focused. Look at my computer and the amount of scientific data I have collected already.”

“All right, all right. Cool!”

The spacecraft’s Mars module circled Mars and made a perfect landing in the soft soil as a result of which red dust was storming the area around the rocket.

Joe was watching from his large glass cabin located in an undisclosed location of Mars the landing of the rocket from very close quarters. “How accurate is the information that we received about this spacecraft visiting us from earth?” Joe wondered. He was watching the spectacle of a man and a woman step out of the rocket’s door. Both were heavily clad in spacesuits and carrying oxygen cylinders.

Kennedy stepped down and at once spotted the glass cabin. “Jennifer”, he shouted in ecstasy. “Look at that glass cabin. For sure, there must be aliens around.”

Jennifer turned around and exclaimed, “Ken. Just look at our module. All lights have gone off and cameras have shut down. How unfortunate!”

“Yeah. You are right Jennifer. Let us move to the glass cabin.”

available online at www.ssn.edu.in/vibrations.html
As they moved inside the glass cabin, they noticed a computer monitor with strange letters scrolling down. Soon they spotted the half foot creature with a red colour bulb flickering in its antenna. "Alien here", Kennedy shouted and took out his gun.

Joe pulled out his gun but before he could activate the trigger, the duo from earth over powered him. Kennedy laughed and with pride declared, "Captain of Mission Mars 2070 has captured the outpost of Mars and taken one dust-like creature as a prisoner." He now turned to Joe and asked him, "Tell me, Master Mars, how many more such insects are around in this planet?"

Joe spoke into his microphone of his computer in Martian language and clicked on the option - Output in earth language. "My name is Joe. 21,270 of us are around in Mars out of which 10,635 are male and 10,635 are female. The Head of Mars is a male."

"Great info. You are really a nice guy, cooperating with us perfectly. Tell us about your Defence Forces." Jennifer spoke to Joe.

"We have a Defence Committee. But I am the only frontline member - call me, soldier or captain or major, if you want - of the committee. There are 10 other members but they are all in administration and data entry side. So you see, I take care of the security of entire Mars."

Both Kennedy and Jennifer could not control their laughter. "So, one tiny insect takes care of the security of an entire planet. Oh, my God!" Kennedy looked at Joe and quipped, "Do you know the strength of our Defence Forces."

"Not really and I am not interested, either" Joe said. "All right. Come with us to our rocket. I have to set right the cameras and electrical circuits. Otherwise, we may be stranded in Mars." Kennedy took Joe in his hand and went to the rocket. Leaving him in a seat inside the rocket, Kennedy started checking the circuits but nothing was working. Suddenly he realized that the tiny Joe was not there in the seat.

"Jennifer," he shouted. "Where is that little idiot? I kept him on the seat."

Jennifer stepped out of the spacecraft and spotted Joe standing below the rocket. "Look, he is outside. But don’t worry. He is just calmly watching the underneath of the rocket. Let me catch him and come back."

Jennifer moved towards Joe and as she was three feet near him, she noticed that Joe pulled out a pen-like object and pressed it. A bullet grazed past Jennifer. "Kennedy", she cried and ran back to the rocket. "The guy seems to be unpredictable. He starts shooting from his pen or gun or I don’t know what. Let us run away. Otherwise, he may shoot our rocket."

Kennedy now pressed a button. With the sound of 'vrrrrooooom' all circuits were back in action. "How come it has started working all of a sudden. In fact, I did nothing. Is this the work of that little idiot?", he wondered.

"Ken. Don’t delay any further. Let’s run away from here. Else, that little creature may harm us."

As Kennedy switched on ignition, the Mars module took off in an instant and started its journey back to Earth.

Two days later, Joe was watching cartoon on his computer screen in his house when his wife Sandra went up to the entrance door of their house to answer the calling bell. As she opened the door, she was shocked to see some men from the department of Head of Mars. "Anything wrong?" she asked them.

"The Head wants to meet your husband, madam. He is very angry and upset that your husband goofed up our mission of capturing the men and rocket from earth."

"Oh, my goodness. For heaven’s sake, don’t tell me that the Head really assigned this job to that trifling creature."

"Unfortunately, he did Madam. We have warned the Head many times against trusting your husband Joe but he would not listen."

Joe marched on to meet the Head of Mars.

The Head of Mars was seated royally in his palace suit. Seeing Joe enter his room, he shouted at the top of his voice, "What happened Joe? You let those bloody men from earth go scot-free. I am ashamed of you. Before you are fired from your post, I’ll give you 120 seconds to explain."

"Thanks Head. Today, that rocket must be reaching earth."

Joe looked the least perturbed and was in fact enjoying his being cornered. "I set up their escape. But before that, I placed a capsule on the bottom of the rocket with a vibration switch. It is so powerful that when the module lands on ground or water, the vibration switch will activate the capsule and result in an explosion - an explosion powerful enough to rip –not just that place apart but that entire half of the globe.”

That very instant, Planet Mars witnessed a mild tremor for a nano second and then it was back to normal. "You are right, my dear Joe", the Head smiled, looking proudly at his most trusted lieutenant.

V. Madhumitha
III B.Tech. (IT)

EFFORT COUNTS

A giant ship engine failed. The ship’s owners tried one expert after another, but none of them could figure out how to fix the engine.

Then they brought in an old man who had been fixing ships since he was young. He carried a large bag of tools with him and when he arrived, he immediately went to work. He inspected the engine very carefully top to bottom.

Two of the ship’s owners were there, watching this man, hoping he would know what to do. After looking things over, the old man reached into his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He gently tapped something. Instantly, the engine lurched into life. He carefully put his hammer away. The engine was fixed!

A week later, the owners received a bill from the old man for ten thousand dollars.

“What?!” the owners exclaimed. “He hardly did anything!”

So they wrote the old man a note saying, “Please send us an itemized bill.”

The man sent a bill that read:

Tapping with a hammer... $ 2.00
Knowing where to tap... $ 9, 998.00

VIBRATIONS available online at www.ssn.edu.in/vibrations.html
R. Ashwin of SSN, a member of Indian Cricket Team, lifts the ICC Cricket World Cup 2011

A proud moment for SSNites:

YRC Volunteers of SSN visit Anai Fatima Illam Orphanage

Shiv Nadar featured as the leading philanthropist from India in the Forbes 48 Heroes of Philanthropy

Creating leadership through transformational education

Shiv Nadar Foundation

Dr.T. Asokan, Asso. Prof., Dept of Engineering Design, IIT Madras, at the SSN ISTE Seminar

Mr. Mukund Padmanathan, the Senior Associate Editor of The Hindu, at the prize-giving ceremony of the SSN Creative Writing Contest.

PHOTO GALLERY
SSN honours R Ashwin at the felicitation function on 26 April 2011

Shiv Nadar recognized by American India Foundation

Shiv Nadar appointed Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Kharagpur by the President of India

Stills from Alumni get-together – ‘Tribute 11’

PHOTO GALLERY
THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE HERO

It was with inexplicable excitement that SSNites watched the most popular sport of India wherein India was declared the premier international champions of the Men’s One Day International (ODI) Cricket. An SSNite, R. Ashwin of the Indian Cricket team lifted the most prestigious ICC Cricket World Cup 2011. What exhilaration was ours to watch an SSNite playing two matches for India in that series! We felt the win was really ours -- not that of India, or of Tamilnadu, but of SSN.

Sprucing up a thousand square foot stadium in half hour was no joke. Technicians were running wild, as SSNites waited for an hour, testing the lights, speakers fully prepared, cameramen ready, and a whole other set of heavy equipment. SSN was welcoming home its proudest laurel-bearer, the one most visible on the television screen and the hearts of millions. SSN College of Engineering, the spin wizard’s alma mater, held a grand felicitation ceremony for him on 26th April, 2011. Among the dignitaries present were Mrs. Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Mr. T.S. Krishnamurthy, former Chief Election Commissioner of India, Mrs. Kala Vijaykumar, President, SSN Institutions and Dr. S Salivahanan, Principal, SSN College of Engineering.

A crowd of students was to bear witness to the event, awaiting his arrival. Close to 1000 in the auditorium exploded into cheers and whistles when the tall and elegant Chennai Super King walked in, and life probably went into ultra-motion for him because the noise made by the crowd would have certainly enthralled the man of the moment. Once the euphoria died down for a while and the auditorium settled down, a compilation of Ashwin made by Praveen Bharathwaj made the crowd go wild again as the best moments of the off-spinner on the cricket pitch were screened. The video presented the pictures of Ashwin’s victory starting from the age of six, clips of Ashwin’s IPL wickets, the memorable wicket of Shane Watson against Australia in the World Cup 2011 quarter-final. The cheering was contagious as even the “silent” types were screaming like girls and losing their voices. A job well done to the maker of the video as Ashwin himself would later mention. The event wasn’t about the exhaustive list of achievements that he had achieved in such a short career but about the college honouring its greatest son and the son returning the favour.

As the dignitaries were seated on the stage, our Principal, Dr. Salivahanan, and Mr Balaji, the Physical Director of SSN, were articulate about Ashwin’s achievements at college and at the national levels. “Ours is a college that gives space for its students to develop various skills for a holistic development that is needed for survival in the competitive world. We encourage our students to acquire knowledge in all spheres and have an advantageous edge and the readiness to avail the opportunities for a successful life,” said Ms. Kala Vijaykumar. “Today, our Ashwin has proved it and we take pride in honoring him not only for bringing laurels to our country but also for making our college feel proud. We wish to produce more such talents in future in various fields,” she added.

Mr Chella Bharath, a classmate of Ashwin, when the cricketer studied B.Tech (IT) in the year 2004-2008 spoke about his experiences and comradeship with Ashwin. He said, “the more whippings you get, the more tougher you become”. Ashwin, during his address, said that what his classmate had said was really true. Then a second year IT student, Anirudh Kashturi, of the u-19 T.N. cricket team, who now shares the dressing room with Ashwin for Vijay CC talked about his experiences with Ashwin as a teammate and how much of inspiration he draws from Ashwin. The crux of their speeches was this in Mr. Anirudh’s own words, “big things come in small packages. Ashwin achieved success by rigorously battling injury and practising regularly.” Mementos were presented to Ashwin by the dignitaries.

Finally the man of the hour rose on the stage, to thunderous applause. The moment that everyone had been waiting for had arrived when Ashwin himself stepped onto the podium and his turn to speak had finally come much to the relief of many. He didn’t disappoint the anticipation that had built up waiting for his speech. When Ashwin himself addressed the crowd, he admitted that the video had moved him and has brought tears to his eyes. He also narrated about certain memorable experiences from his time at college. He admitted having got a ‘lot of whipping especially during lab exams’, that there was a handwritten speech ready for him; how he got through each day with a smile on his face. He recounted how “everyday travelling the 38 kilometres was with materials at hand,” which was why he decided to give the speech a rest.

Shiv Nadar, the founder Chairman of HCL, was not able to be present at the function, even though he ardently desired to attend the same. The absence culminated in a tele-conference call between Ashwin and the great business tycoon. Quite a funny incident occurred as soon as Mr. Nadar was on line.
Mr. Nadar: “Are you in a conference room?”

Ashwin: “No, sir. I’m in an auditorium.”

How blessed the students would have been to listen to a conversation between two lions-hearted men who had made it big in their lives. Indeed, the site was a blessing in disguise and inspiration for everyone. Mr. Nadar wished him success in all his endeavours.

The grand occasion concluded with the singing of the National Anthem. The students reluctantly vacated the mammoth auditorium as Ashwin on the other side of the auditorium was hurrying towards his car to catch his 12:30 p.m. flight. The next day he would play against Pune Warriors India, the same team he had played against the day before.

Down the memory lane, SSN watched him taking his first steps in Ranji Trophy cricket and making big strides in his debut season in 2006-07, leading the wickets tally for Tamil Nadu with 31 scalps ‘At Under 20.’ Another stimulating moment for us was when Ashwin made it to the Chennai Super Kings Squad in the inaugural IPL (Indian Premier League). He continued to perform consistently at the domestic level, earning a Grade D contract by the BCCI. What joy was ours when under his captaincy Tamil Nadu was crowned the Indian Domestic One-day Champions in 2009? Close behind, he earned his first call-up for India, for the home ODIs against South Africa in early 2010, after Harbhajan Singh opted out of the first couple of games due to personal commitments.

Ashwin has been a revelation in the IPL with his miserly spells with the new ball, conceding only 6.10 runs per over and taking 13 wickets. Having followed that with a near-spotless performance in the 2010 Champions League, he won the rousing Man-of-the-Series performance that helped Chennai lift the prestigious prize.

Ashwin has become a synonym for energizing competence when he became the highest wicket taker of the 2010 Champions League Twenty20 Tournament for Chennai Super Kings with 13 wickets. Delight was ours as he was adjudged the player of the tournament and earned the Golden Wicket. During IPL 2011 auction which took place on 5 and 6 January 2011, he was retained by the Chennai Super Kings for the amount of 850000$. He was the economical bowler in Indian Premier League history with an economy rate of 6.12. He received a cash award of Rs. 1 crore from the Board of Control for Cricket in India and also the state government on its part has announced prize money of Rs. 1 crore as a gesture of appreciation.

All this at his youthful 24! Ashwin has made SSN Management proud, SSN Institutions proud, every SSN student proud, nay, every SSN teacher proud of him. Let this felicitation by the college be the harbinger of many more honours and accolades he would receive in the years to come.

This is Vishnu Muralidharan and Vamsa, I ECE B, and Karthick Hariharan, I IT A, reporting for the SSN Press Club.
THE FINAL BLESSING

(The entry won the second prize in The SSN Fiction Prize)

‘It’s that dream again… The one that feels somehow… burned into my very being.’

I shiver as a chill rushes through me. Every night; it’s the same…always the same…

I can hear her voice in my head, its tone gentle, patient.

‘There are some words that can never do justice…Maybe you should…stop trying…’

I didn’t understand what she meant then, and I don’t understand her now; but somewhere…inside me…I think, I don’t want to…

The darkness seeps through my senses and I sigh. It’s time for me to remember again. Though that seems absurd. After all, when have I ever forgotten?

I can feel the light fading, sinking away as the shadows weave through, reaching out…seeking…

The thought leaves me cold. If there was ever a fear that resided within the confines of my heart, it was this one simple concept. I feared the nights. I hated the dark, the emptiness…with all its raging secrets and terrors, when I’d have to face my sadistic mind all over again and be forced to think.

I’ve realized that the darkness and silence have something in common…they’re both…empty; and alone. So alone. I shake them away, slipping easily from their hold. I’ve learnt to push away thoughts I’d rather not really…think about at the moment. A bitter smile traces along my lips. The sun has betrayed me yet again, withdrawing its comforting warmth as it does every night. Perhaps there is a purpose to these repetitive dreams? But for the life of me I can’t figure them out. The spaces between my sleeping and waking seem eternal, suspended. Every moment measured…

I slide beneath the covers, the night is warm around me, yet my body is ridged with goose-bumps. I feel cold and yet…not. The cold is my mind, my sanity as it struggles to fit my visions into the slots we humans have already prepared in our brains. Rational, real, possible…if they hold any meaning after this I will admit to my amazement.

I smile again, this time I am eager. There is a desire to walk again, to release…to fly…

There is the ever predictable, impenetrable darkness as I shut my eyes. I’ve already begun to slip away. I never know when I lose my grip on reality and enter here, for it remains dark all around. If there are any indications as to the course of my flight, I do not see them. Yet I know it is the same, it’s always the same, always her voice.

She speaks softly, urging me, guiding me forward. I hesitate for just a moment; undecided, weary and then I step forward. I already know the things I will see, but the joy that blooms to life in my chest is unexpected. I can’t explain it.

We walk on in silence for a moment; her voice is gentle as she begins to sing. It’s always the same song, the same melody; a language without words. Her voice rises and begins to weave subtly through the lilting chords. I find that strange as there is only her voice and nothing else, there is no music. But I am distracted as I detect the change, the first change in all my life. There is melancholy, a sadness barely contained as her voice grows, almost shimmering with her power and before I can so much as react, the skies sweep over me in an explosion that sends the black waves writhing away.

I lose my breath.

Somehow I already know that when I wake my pillow will be damp with the tears I haven’t shed in an eternity.

Her voice begins to dim, the melody stretching around me and then abruptly taking to the cosmos. I manage a soft smile. I will not ask her yet, I will not mention the change; I fear the answer would destroy me. Instead I let my eyes roam, letting the wonders caress my senses. Is it possible, I wonder, for a human woman to stand on the very threshold of the gods and still live? I’ve had this thought before. It no longer bothers me as it once did.

I understand then. The things I was seeing, I could never convey in the same way…ever; even if I tried for the rest of my miserable existence. All around me was nothing but vast blue, endless skies. Clouds rose like pillars, proud and gleaming in the brilliance of the sun, and soft as cotton I imagined, but I wouldn’t know. I couldn’t touch them. My fingers simply passed through. They towered and arched, creating domes and corridors for the immortals; though I never saw them. If the Gods truly existed, they kept themselves hidden…

My eyes sweep across the infinite expanse. I never knew the heavens could look so glorious, so over-powering…so permanent…and when I finally believe that I have exhausted my eyes, that I have memorized every wonder the world could show me…the sun begins to set.

This time round I feel no fear, no resentment. I seem to have left those emotions behind. Instead what I experience is a sharp ache, deep inside me. I feel the need to cry. The world around me is changing even as I step from cloud to cloud, making my way through the now glowing corridors of the Creators. To me the sun looks like it’s bleeding, its colors seeming to shift and merge as it spreads its dying fire over the heavens. There are colors I never imagined, colors I couldn’t name. They seemed to flow like an endless river into the darkening sky, combining the bleeding light of the sun with the triumph of the emerging moon. Night and day, locked in an embrace of power and passion, of love and desire; I look away. Somehow, I now feel like an intruder.

Her voice surrounds me again, laughing gently. Again she urges me forward, the force of her will alone pushing me along and even as I take those damming steps, the last shreds of doubt fall away. I gasp, my eyes widening. Before me now is a sea of stars, their soft lights seem like spirit guides. And I wonder if a legend I heard once long ago, a legend about the dead watching over us from the stars could really be true? How had I ever thought their
light cold? Up close they looked like a million tear drops, one for every horror and stab of agony our hearts had ever suffered, ever would suffer. They seemed almost... compassionate...

I spun around slowly and then froze at once. How had I missed it before? Behind me, as silent as the stars around us, the moon seemed to encompass the entire night. I suddenly understood why they always referred to the moon as a maiden. She was beautiful...

She seemed to glow, her light somehow softer than the rest, yet so much more powerful. I felt the tears fill my eyes, but I blinked them away impatiently. I wasn’t going to lose a second. Not one god damn second! I took a step forward, towards her welcoming light. Why did I feel so close to her? Why did I feel like she was smiling? I took another step, my heart swelling to fill my throat. Strangely I felt giddy, like a child on a sugar high. I wanted to laugh, and sing, and dance, and, and love!

In a way that would kill me; to give all of myself, to feel safe again...to want to live again...

And then suddenly, the world tilted and I screamed - a startled high pitch sound that seemed to have barely left my lips before it was swallowed up by the boundless beauty around me. The terror swept mindlessly through me, freezing my heart in my chest, squeezing my eyes shut. I seemed to have forgotten that in a dream you never feel, never hurt...barely had I even processed such a thought than I simply...stopped. When I finally managed to crack my eyes open, dimly registering that this was new too...different in a way it had never been before, I though my heart would leave me in that endless second.

Above and beyond me, the moon and stars seemed to be watching as the lights shifted and spun in dizzying arrays of splendor. The skies were dark and deep, powerful and secretive; almost addictive. But beneath me, was the sun... in all its glory, burning in a way that seemed to shame the misery around it. The heavens beneath my feet were a crystalline blue, the color of laughter I remember thinking. Clouds seemed to carpet its base, diffusing its rays and sending them dancing along the border of separation...

I didn’t dare stop the tears now...I felt I owed them. Night and day locked in an embrace of power and passion, of love and desire...

I couldn’t look away...

Hesitating for one agonizing minute I lean forward, brushing my fingers lightly through the intermixed colors. I wasn’t prepared for the bolt of energy that sizzled through me in that instant. It cleansed me, all of me; and the tears came harder. I wanted to scream, but it felt like my voice had lost its ability. With a soft sigh I drag my fingers across the border again, this time the energy is muted, almost understanding.

Understanding what? I wondered. The tears no longer mattered. I didn’t posses the strength to wipe them away. “Iva...” she whispers, I looked around blindly. I’d already forgotten I couldn’t see her.

I never had.

I probably never would.

“It’s time to leave now isn’t it?” My words felt hollow, cold. I could feel her sorrow, but I couldn’t understand it.

“It’s really over this time?” It was beginning. The part that would destroy me...

“Iva...” So much pain, so much mind numbing agony; I wouldn’t survive!

“Answer me. Please.” So close to panicking...

“You have to leave now.” She manages finally.

“Show me.” I beg, “I want to see you.”

Somehow I already sense that this is goodbye. I would never dream again.

Not like this.

Never like this.

I can feel her smile. I can almost see her shake her head.

“Even if you see me, you’ll never remember.”

I didn’t care.

“Show me,” I repeated.

A soft sigh slips from her unseen lips. It caresses me. It said everything she never could.

“Please.”

And there in a moment that I will perhaps never truly erase, I saw her.

All I remember is her light, her infinite, boundless stretch of light.

Hope.

She was the purest being in the universe.

I can never put down in words her grace, or her strength, or even her utterly beautiful smile.

I would cheapen the image if I tried.

I didn’t dare.

But the world around me that night was a dream, just as it always will remain.

I have reconciled myself to that fact.

I never saw her again.

I never will see her again.

Just as I would never be again.

Not alive.

Not like this.

I had been destroyed.

Mohamad Raseem, III B.E. (MECH)
வருதை

வருதை மனித உலகத்தின் போன்ற அல்லது மயிற்றுக்கோலாக மனித வாழ்வை குறக்க வேண்டும்.

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