

ISSUE III

APRIL

2015

ASHVAMEGH... the literary flight!



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APRIL (Issue III)

4/10/2015

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Publisher Details

April 2015 (Issue-III) 'Journey Continues...'



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April 2015 (Issue - III)

Published from New Delhi,

India - 110008

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Editorial

April 2015 (Issue-III) 'Journey Continues...'

Alok Mishra (Editor-in-Chief)

Life is always moving. We can stop or at least persuade ourselves that we are still, not moving with life. However, all about this journey of life is based on perceptions. We can think whatever the time compels us to do. When we are trapped, we think our life is not moving; it is stopped and we have to face the burden for a protracted period of time (that seems never ending). When we are happy we plead that life should be still; we wish the silver-moments stayed with us forever... One can understand why both the situations are ironical. In both cases, we doubt the flux of eternity! On the one hand, we expect life to drift away during a blink of eye and on the other, we try to hold it forever. Nevertheless, life is more powerful compared to the capacity of simple human being. Life has the company of time, time that once Marvel heard coming on 'winged chariot' and warned us about. Life keeps on flowing with time and it does not wait for anyone or moves ahead if someone is not happy with it. It has the pace, a uniform pace that neither lessens nor increases.

We do have 'hard times' in our life. However, it must not compel us to submit and accept the defeat. True, man cannot defeat time; but man can defeat the factors causing hard times! With a positive attitude and determination, anyone can continue in the journey of life to the point it is destined to last. (Yes, something is there to be controlled not by Physics but by Metaphysics.)

Our readers and visitors must wonder why such thoughts linger in editorial space. It is due to a reason that I have relocated to a new place (New Delhi) with my friend, Ravi. We are having the same test – hard times. I thought to share these experiences with all of you. Now coming to our literary business, I appreciate the enthusiasm with which creative authors from every corner of the world write to us. In addition, I have also seen some complaints from our contributors and as I promised, I have and will take care of all those suggestions. I would like to mention the name of a creative boy (a student) who has submitted some works to us. He is Sabeet from Pakistan, and he has dedicated his work to his teachers. I become assured of the future of creative writing after seeing this sort of zeal in younger generation. Moreover, I would like your precious feedbacks regarding some new features we have added to our journal. You are requested to go through the additions and post your feedback. On the request of a contributor, I have managed to add 'your comments' section with the issues. If you love any piece or have suggestions for improvement, you can mail your comment to us and we will publish it along with the name of work you commented on.

Hope you like our new additions and the April Issue. Do not forget to leave your comments. Happy reading; happy writing.

Alok Mishra (Editor-in-Chief)

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Poems (Poets Included in this Issue)

April 2015 (Issue-III) 'Journey Continues...'

1. Mamta Agrawal
2. Timothy L. Rodriguez
3. R.H Peat
4. Michael Judkins
5. Fran Sheehan



At the sunset Hour

Unwinding on golden sand dunes at Oshiya in Thar,
To watch the Sun set, we eagerly waited for an hour.
Camel humps, clumps of dry grass, thorny stumps,
Goatherds on their way back to the cluster of huts.

Caravans, jeep safari, local children watching keenly,
As first time travellers exclaimed on seeing the beauty
Of sand dunes - a sea of endless patterns, beneath the sky;
One is simply stunned into silence after the first joyous cry.

Half moon poised in the sky, gazing steadily at the Sun,
As it poured bubbly champagne to quench our thirst.
Spellbound, I watched as if by a stroke of magic,
The stark landscape turned into a bed of desert roses,

In hues that would make a gardener chuckle in delight.
I just couldn't believe what I saw with my naked eyes.
Gold, amber, saffron, fuchsia and syrup of strawberries;
Sun teased, saying the banquet is over, now I must scurry.

Soon Sun ducked, was swallowed by the far off horizon.
I let out a sigh, as my hand fell on a stump of spiky shrub.
I always maintained I loved seaside and scent of pines.
Now, my freewheeling spirit wants to join a local tribe!

A dusky lass, budding breasts, was watching shyly.
I walked up to her, do you live in a hamlet nearby?
She nodded, blurted am so weary of shepherding,
In spite of school, mobile not much is happening.

There was hunger in her clear eyes, I could empathise;
At her age I too dreamt of moving to a mega metropolis.
The guide beckoned, she waved as I climbed into the jeep.
Dusk sauntered in, in grey; it became cold, eerie and bleak.

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Poems

(Mamta Agrawal)

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My shoes were filled with sand, air chilly for November.
As we came on the highway, I saw the road led to Jaisalmer.
Certainly next time, I shall go there early next autumn,
This day safari to Oshiya had completely won me over.

There was something about the barren, arid landscape,
That made me feel I was with one without any pretence.
As long held tears had fallen on the grains of sand,
It didn't cringe, comforted me with total acceptance.

What made me opt to escape to a desert with few trappings,
After I saw autumn winds cavort on my home, a heap of ashes?

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Poems

(Mamta Agrawal)

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Dusk

When I look out of my panes
As dusk unfurls its curtains
Wistful, with a twinge of pain
Night queen riding on wind's mane

Brushes past, and the fragrance
Takes away the heaviness
And your music, soft strains
Remind me of your elegance

Your vivid portraits of autumn
And your voice soft and solemn
You captured nature in images
Compelling on introspection,

Reflect in meditative silence.
Poetry elevating to a higher realm
Every one you touched, speaks of you
With reverence, in hushed tones!

Am learning my alphabets
From eternal songs you left,
For ever my revered almanac;
It's the hour you sang of with eloquence!

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Poems

(Mamta Agrawal)

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Mamta Agarwal has been working as a free lance writer, journalist, editor, creative writer and literary critic for several decades. Her areas of special interest are poetry, short stories, Children's Literature, Essays, nonfiction and photography. Mamta Agarwal studied English Literature for Masters Program at Punjab University, Chandigarh. Subsequently, she taught in Govt. College for Women and MCM DAV College for Women few years in Chandigarh. Later, she joined a publishing house in New Delhi, as an Associate editor. After a few years took up free-lance writing, and contributes articles, short stories in journals for the last 35 years. Her first anthology of poems titled 'Rhythms of Life' was published in 2008. Her second book titled 'Voices of autumn and other short poems' came out in August 2010. Her latest anthology of poems titled- An Untold Story of a Pebble- was published in 2013. Her poetry has been published in major print and online journals in India and abroad. She has been recognized for her work at home and abroad. She is associated with a few organizations working for peace and change through poetry and other visual and performing arts. She organized in Noida, two events on behalf of '100 Thousand Poets for Change.' She is International adviser to World Poetry, Canada She has worked with visually impaired and street children. (Currently she resides in Noida, UP.

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Poems

(T. L. Rodriguez)

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Newly minted eyes

So we talked about how
We ran under a riding rainbow
And how we dash-splashed
In the shower of gold coins
Which we didn't trouble to collect
As we were already rich.

And then we spoke of how
We jumped to yank off strands
Of violet, lowest hanging bands,
And how we swung from one side of fortune
To the other, all the great while
Giving our glee a jubilee.

Now we ask ourselves when--
When was the last rainbow?
It wasn't until the snow fell
that we came up with an answer:
Back when we were young and rich
And being high was between you and the wind.

So then we had to ask when--
When was the last the wind?
Eventually it came down to a guess.
-- when there were answers in it.
Not the rot and slop trotted out to make
The truth more diverse so as to be correct.

Since we don't dare or care
To look ahead to more of the same
We sought a new bent, one
To celebrate our vision, bypassing
The gods who begged for our belief
basing it on something as dusty as a faith.

And then we took the one-vision
And made images, which we dropped
As if in water and we watched them spread
From nowhere out to everywhere.
Even now they continue to radiate
And we of newly minted eyes can see.

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Poems

(T. L. Rodriguez)

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Timothy L. Rodriguez was a journalist when newspapers counted, he is a poet when poetry doesn't count for much, and he is a novelist when the fate of fiction is uncertain. He has published in English and Spanish. His most recent novel—Guess Who Holds Thee?—is available on Amazon. He makes loose change selling his seascapes. He is a practitioner of Robert Frost's line—the only certain freedom is in departure; he has traveled widely and assumed many walks of life. For the moment he lives on a barrier island in North Carolina.

His stories and poems have appeared in: 2015 Oracle Fine Arts Review, Heyday Magazine, the Celebrating Poetry Anthology, Main Street Rag, Candle of Hope Anthology (UK), New London Writer's (UK) and award winner in international short story competition sponsored by The Writer's Drawer (UK) and the 2014 poetry anthology called Remember, published by the UK literary group Paragram.

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Poems

(R. H. Peat)

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Dreaming In Ink

A desert with little symbols,
squiggles on a lilted terrain,
turns into a limitless landscape;
Dawn lifts shadows
to see the breath as a mist.
A yawn becomes a catalyst
for an entrance
upon a tiny stage—
the glint off wandering black ants.
An arena were imagination
rules personal will.
To craft ink, is to map
another's unexplored heart.

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Poems

(R. H. Peat)

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The Seed

Tomorrow's horizon finds
what today never reached
and what yesterday
never understood
to allow the heart to hold
eternity within
the present moment.

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Poems

(R. H. Peat)

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Philosophic Aptitude

Privileged, I had it all,
 yet life was empty;
I hungered to know
 what was beyond
 the castle walls.

What I found left me in
 despair!

I wanted to squat in mud
 play with turtles.

I reached a point
 where I had
 to sit under
 a *tree*—
just think.

I decided
 I wasn't going
 any further
until I had it *right*.

The illusion
 was difficult at first;
when I came out
 the other side,
 I knew.

I offered a friend
 my understanding;
by holding up
 a flower in reply.

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Poems

(R. H. Peat)

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RH PEAT, lives in California foothills, he's been published in the USA, New Zealand, India, England, Canada, and Japan. He's taught workshops and read his work on radio & TV. He's been listed in top 100 in Writer's Digest Annual Poetry Competition on several occasions; he's operated poetry readings sponsored by Poets & Writers Magazine.

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Poems

(Michael Judkins)

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The greatest feeling!

To be love,
For me,
Through the eyes,
Only you can see.
To be held,
As tight a glove,
Without a single budge,
Or a tug;
To be seen,
As tall as the maple tree,
Long as the rivers deep,
Tangled in the sea weed;
To be loved by you,
My confidant in times of need,
My strength when I'm weak,
And my beloved friend,
When my soul unforeseen.
The greatest treasurer's one man can see,
Is the greatest feeling?
My best friend gives me.

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Poems

(Michael Judkins)

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Michael Judkins is a poet from USA. He has released his first collection *Sentimental Me* in recent. This collection describes his emotions and feelings.

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Poems

(Fran Sheehan)

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THE POET.

He sat, the Poet, upon a rock
And gazed into thought
Seeing and sound.
He knew the Wind in all its voices
The whispers and the sighs.
He heard the dew sing
And touched fire diamonds
In the Sun.
He glimpsed a wren, and gathered in the wings of a
Butterfly.
Felt the rain and gentle sea
And bathed in the waters.
He went to joy and laughter
And understood sorrow and pain,
And he knew the echo of the world!
Smiling,
He lifted his eyes to the sky
Dreamed and reminisced,
His words lyrical in their Oneness;
Birth, life and death
Complete
In its perfect Harmony.

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Poems

(Fran Sheehan)

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SPIRIT

I come from the wind
The rain and the sun
And my eyes have seen ages pass
Down through the length of Time.
I walked with the Great Bear
And danced with the Caribou.
My hands touched the flight of Eagle
As he winged his way
To the abode of the Gods.
I know the name of every rock
And the souls of the trees
Speak to me, Ageless stories of their kind
Before Man walked the Earth.
And Grasshopper and Snake
Whisper silent tales of Yesterday;
Stirring mists of woven memory
From my youth
In the cradle of Mankind,
When the valleys were green
And rivers flowed sweet and pure,
Unhampered even by Beavers meddling.
I remember sunrise over golden peaks
And snow glistening like crystals

In a Spider's web.
And I know I am at One with it all
For it forms part of me.
And it will rise again
As the Wind rises in Autumn
And I will see my beloved land Returned!
This I know, this I feel,
For I am born of it,
And acknowledge the
Breath of the world, as it
Sighs across the acres of Being!

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Poems

(Fran Sheehan)

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Fran Sheehan (Crenelle) was born in Melbourne Australia. She is a mum, a grand-mum and a great-grand-mum.

As a child her mother encouraged her love for Literature and Writing by providing her with many be-loved and well known children,s books, the authors of which included Australias Ruth Park and Englands Enid Blyton.

With a rich education including University where she studied Literature, The Classics,Philosophy,Religious Studies, Sociology,Journalistic studies and Myth and Ideology, she has written

prolifically for the past three decades in many genres.

the Australian Bush and its flora and fawna inspired much of her writing , including short stories for children and small novels which were inspired also by her own young childrens imagination and their love of reading.

Fran also holds a Dip; Herbal Medicine: Q.I.N.S. (1990) Australia.

She now lives in Adelaide South Australia with her pet cat: Mr.Magic..

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Short Stories (Author's Included in this Issue) April 2015 (Issue-III) 'Journey Continues...'

1. Apoorva
2. Murray Alfredson

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Short Stories (Apoorva Chathukutty)
Hope that is all We Need

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Hope That Is All We Need

He watched her sleep, though he could only make out her silhouette. He fell asleep right next to her, holding her hand, her small fingers latched on to his hand. He felt immensely content with himself. As the sun shone on to their bed through the light pink curtains, he picked it out just for her; he lay there silently smiling at how content she looked at this moment. To him she was an angel sent from above, she always would be, circumstances made it difficult for him to be with her. But deep down, he knew someday, somehow they'd make it through all these hurdles. She'd be walking soon, she'd start talking too. She just needed a lot of energy foods, mashed food, she'd get her energy and with time he'd be able to watch her walk, talk and live life to the fullest.

As he lay there in bed watching her face contort probably some dream, he couldn't make out what was troubling her. She couldn't talk; her only way of communication was through her eyes. The way her face contorted sent pain down his heart, he couldn't bear seeing her in pain. He went back into time, when he'd brought her home from the hospital. His parents refused to accept her; they asked him how could they keep her? What will they tell society? What about his future? No one will marry him! And the list went on! He couldn't understand his parents! How bewildered he was at that point, he packed his bag bid farewell to his parents and his house. Before he left, he told his mother, that he would never ever marry again. She is his life; she can leave any hope for another marriage. If he has to, he'll live his entire life taking care of her. And with that he left his house and shifted to a studio apartment on the other side of the city. He changed his job to a one closer to his house, though the pay was less. He had to be around her, just in case she needed him. For the few hours of the day that he wasn't around, a maid would take care of her. He would bathe her, feed her, brush her hair, tell her stories about the outside world, put her to sleep and in small ways he would make himself believe that she loved him and understood whatever he was doing.

His thoughts were broken as he felt his hand move and that's when he realized she'd woken up. He looked at her in the most loving way any man could look at any girl! Damn, wasn't she a lucky girl! And he got bustling from brushing her teeth, bathing her, brushing her hair, making her put on some clothes! Kissing her forehead he lay her on the centre of their bed and rushed to get ready for his day. After his shower, he went to make a nice breakfast for him and her. That's when he heard the noise, a squeal, a thud! He rushed to their bedroom, and his worst fear had come true! She was on the floor, face down! Fears creeping up his body, he rushed to her aide picking her up and placing her on the bed carefully! He was slowly checking for bruises over her body careful not to hurt her! When he heard her say something, she called out his name! She was talking! Joy, confusion, shock all overwhelmed him together. Emotions engulfed him; he just looked at her, tears falling from his eyes! And meekly she called out his name again! He kissed her, he kissed the tears away that trickled down her cheeks, and his wife could talk again! She was getting better; he believed she would get well soon! She fought through the paralysis for him, oh how he missed her voice!

Oh how he missed everything, now they just needed to work on getting her back on her feet.

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Short Stories

(Apoorva Chathukutty)

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Hope that is all We Need



Apoorva Chathukutty is a 20-year-old CA aspirant, studying in Bangalore. She writes poems and short stories, which are emotionally driven. Uploading all her writings on creativecred.it, she has slowly become more confident about her writings. When she isn't writing or studying for CA exams, she's listening to music, baking and catching up with the outside world.



George

George

'Do you know you have a resident ghost here in your house?'

Martin turned to her. 'No! How do you know?'

It did not always do to ask Nadia how she knew. She simply knew.

'He's an old man who follows around behind you with a scowl.'

'Is that a problem?'

'It can be if he drains your energies or if he doesn't like what you are doing.'

'Yeah, well I am often rather tired when you are not around.'

'And I don't think he likes you meditating and your meditation meetings here. When ghosts get upset things can end up thrown around. It can get very noisy.'

'I wonder if that's why the Tibetan prints fell off the wall before the meeting a week ago? I had a lot of broken glass to clean up in a hurry before people arrived to sit on the floor. Real pest! The hooks were straightened right out.'

'I don't know. Possibly.'

'I think we'll call him Mr. Polter.'

Martin tried a few dodges after that, to calm the old chap down a bit. He thought it would be hard for him to refuse some loving kindness meditation. He tried in his usual way. He sat cross-legged and concentrated on his in-breath and his out breath until he was virtually floating on that calm. He took that calm and wished it to himself as an act of friendship. He sat with that well-wishing until it became well established and he was dwelling in it. Then he directed the goodwill outwards to other beings, to friends, family, neighbours, to strangers wherever in the world, to animals in all directions and in the air, the soil and the water. He sat dwelling in that goodwill. He visualized among the other sentient beings Mr. Polter and his suffering. He felt the hairs on the back of his scalp and around to his temples rise and prickle, and a cold shudder shook him between the shoulders.

Once he directed thoughts of loving-kindness to the unhappy Mr Polter behind him as he stepped under the shower. It felt as though an icy mountain stream were running down his back.

'I am not really surprised. I don't think he likes that sort of thing,' Nadia replied next time she visited. 'He gets uncomfortable when you generate spiritual power around him, let alone when you direct it at him. That's probably also why he broke your pictures. He did not like people coming to generate even more power together.'

'So, what do I do? Perhaps nothing? Just let him be and live along with him? I can do that; I suppose I have been doing that all along. But it feels a bit creepy. Can't even take a leak or wipe my bum without feeling he's watching me.'

Nadia chortled.

'I don't know. I've tried to exorcise once or twice, but that can be very nasty. I don't want to try that again. You can end up making things far worse. If you don't get it right the first time it's not the pictures that get thrown around. It's you. Best left be, I suppose, till we think of something. Can be very draining, though. They can feed off your psychic energies.'

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Short Stories

(Murray Alfredson)

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George

'How does it happen? I've really not taken much interest in psychic matters. You've challenged me quite a bit since I met you – in more ways than one, that is. I rather like your challenges, all of them. O my God, I more than like them.' Martin opened his arms.

She smiled, put up her arms and took a step closer. To hell with Mr. Polter's gaze!

They lay together afterwards skin to skin; hands wandered gently over more and less private zones.

'I think it has something to do with people not knowing they are dead and not knowing what is going on. When I lived near a cemetery I used to hear them screaming and wailing, particularly at night when everything else was quiet. Dying does not seem to be very easy on either this side or the other. The spirits get earth bound because they don't know they have died, and because they don't know to move on. They get attached to things and places and manage a sort of approximation to a body to half manifest themselves. I don't really know exactly what happens, but I think it is something like that. That's how I read it anyway.'

'Do you think that's what happened to Mr. Polter?'

'Might have been.'

'Funny how the mind works on, even at blissful moments like this. But I'm going to change the subject back to us. You know, I think we should get married. I want to marry you anyway. You're the most exciting lover I've ever encountered. Never have I felt so much like making love as with you. But you are also such an interesting person, your mind is so alive. And you are very, very loveable. And we have a lot to teach each other. I think we could shake along well together for a very, very long time. If that's not a strong case for living together and marrying I don't know what is.'

She leant over me and began kissing him. Knees stroked. Flames began to flick again round dainty places. Whether her further bout of 'Yes! Yes!' screams were exactly meant in answer to his proposal, Martin somewhat doubted. But they served quite well. Very well! Lovely!

'Who cares about stretch marks? Come to think of it, I honour yours. And Jesus, you are a great lover! And I love you! My God I do!'

'And you have a great armpit for snuggling right now.' She wriggled in closer and smiled into his eyes.

'You're welcome.' He reached down with his left hand and stroked the small of her back. 'I've started to think about where we might live. This house is rather too small for me and a study, as well as for a workspace for you and rooms for each of your children. I think I will have to sell and buy another.'

In the new house there was room to rattle round a bit. Martin had thought their ghostly companion would stay behind with the place where they met him.

'There's a ghost in this house.' Chris was a strapping lout of sixteen. 'He seems strongest down at the back.'

'Mr. Polter's followed us here, you know. I think he came across with your furniture.'

'My grandfather's bookcase is down there. He was a country schoolteacher. He died back in 1944.'

'He's called George.' Chris again.

'But George was a young man. George died young.'

'I still think his name was George. I don't know how; I just sense it. That's his name.'

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Short Stories

(Murray Alfredson)

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George

'George was only 24. Buried in the sand at Cheltenham. Grandpa and Grandma went in on top of him. He was an athlete, a harrier. Very fit. The story runs that he got sick quite quickly with what

must have been hepatitis. He went jaundiced, fell into a coma and died. That was in 1927, long before I was born.'

'Because he died young doesn't mean that he would have to appear as a young man.' Nadia. 'And if he died in a coma he might not have known.'

'I doubt this conversation will help him much. He was my uncle, and Dad's closest brother. They used to go rabbiting together. If it *is* him I feel very sad for him. Over sixty years and still stuck! That sounds pretty bitter to me. I wonder what we can do for him.'

Martin caught his father's eye across the room.

'Tell us about George's death, Dad.'

Nadia and Martin had gone to Melbourne to visit his parents in the old people's hostel suite they had chosen to live in for their closing years. His parents had retained just a few items of furniture from their old house: Grandfather's old armchair; Dad's favourite cane chair; his secretaire ... Though the walls were of bare concrete blocks, their little suite still had the feel of home.

And Dad loved to tell a story.

'It was at Easter. George had just got engaged to a girl and had taken her from Melbourne to Bairnsdale to visit our parents where grandpa was teaching. I caught the same train down with them. That was on the Thursday. On the Friday afternoon he was starting to feel a bit off-colour and he didn't want much to eat for tea. He was inclined to put it down to a lingering tiredness from traveling. He went to bed very early that night. The next day he became quite sick, so the doctor was called in. On the Sunday he was worse and had turned quite yellow. We called in the doctor again, who said we would have to get him to the Royal Melbourne Hospital. An ambulance could not take him that distance, and the only way was by train. There was only a goods train going that evening. The stationmaster made arrangements for the train to have priority all the way, and George's stretcher was put in the guard's van that night. By then he was much worse and had slipped into a coma. He died on the train before it reached Melbourne.'

'It must have been terrible for the girl, Dad, and with a family she hadn't met before.'

'Yes, she was very distressed. She went back with him in the guard's van. Terrible to be a widow before you are even married! We traveled straight away to Melbourne and arranged the funeral there. She came with her parents. She was even more upset than we were.'

Martin's father drew out a handkerchief and wiped away a few tears. Nadia reached out and took the old boy's hand. Martin was glad he had not told him why he had asked.

'Something must have happened last time you guys were in Melbourne.' Chris looked up from his food. 'I haven't noticed George around for a while. What did you do?'

'I just asked my father to tell us about George's death. I didn't have the heart to tell the old boy why I asked. We didn't convince George, ourselves, did we? I thought there was a chance he'd take notice of his older brother.'

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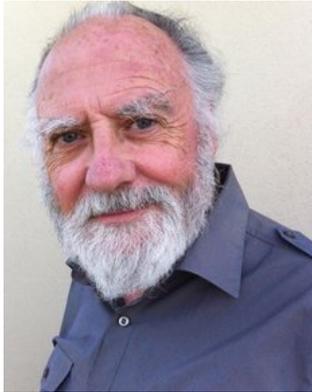


Short Stories

(Murray Alfredson)

April 2015 (Issue-III) 'Journey Continues...'

George



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Appeal and Message

(Ashvamegh Team)

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Due to the relocation of our offices, it has been late in publication of this issue. We have currently some books for review and some articles for publication. Those items will appear in our next issue. Thank you for your support and help.

Keep spreading about us; keep reading; keep writing.

Thank You

The Ashvamegh Team