



THE OLIPHANT

NO. 118

WELHAM BOYS' SCHOOL

1st September, 1991

THINK ABOUT IT

The richness of life lies in memories we have forgotten.

-Cesare Pavese



EDITORIAL

The average sleeper here at Welham has averaged a little more than the average on his sleep and has therefore lost the battle of excuses. In case you're puzzled I refer to the absentees and late-comers at school. Sleep is what the above categorised do and are best at, while remaining absent or coming in late for their classes. in short - bunking classes.

The classic "Sir, I was having a headache but nobody was there to attend at the hospital" (following that, he resorted to sleeping in the hostel) doesn't work any longer. However, ~~as the Welhamites are~~ (as if they weren't already enough) one of them decided to pen down his excuse on paper, and so he went of

"Dear Sir,

You're probably wondering why I didn't attend the Economics class today and yester-

day, well the day before that too...all right, the past week. Last week Anurag and I went bowling. I carelessly forgot to let go of the ball. Well, after I had knocked all those pins down bodily and the automatic pin setter put me down the ball rack...I didn't feel too good

Nevertheless I recovered (that was four days later) and I was on my way to the Economics class when I slipped and fell down the PH steps - was nearly smothered to death by the over-motherly dogs at PH. I pushed them and made a dash for your class. It was there that I ran into an angry herd of green-eyed, grass-eating cows at the corner of the academic block (just when I thought I had made it to your wonderful class). I couldn't just stand there and watch all that greenery disappear from the campus! So, as duty demanded, I set forth chasing them out. Needless to say, just the opposite happened and would you believe it - they chased me all around the school and to the hostel! So that explains why I missed your school yesterday and as for today, the cows still stand guard.

All this because I am a good and loyal student and wanted to attend your lectures. However, I can't help but wonder.....do you appreciate it?

Yours,
Student-in-Pain"

Impressed and challenged, the Economics master read the letter. However, as the student decided to pen his excuse down on paper, so did the master his thoughts, and so:

"Dear Student-in-Pain (painful student, otherwise),

How are you? I say, do those 'licks' that you received from the 'over motherlies' at PH still haunt you? I was worried when I read that those four-legged, green-eyed grass eating monsters took a liking to you. You really ought to be more careful with all that fan following, but dear student, my encounter with the ringnosed aborigines (the ones that carry the 'late book' around) was a harrowing experience. They threatened that if I didn't mark you absent they'd HEAD HUNT you!

You realize of course how tempting the offer was but then my responsibilities as master surfaced. I sincerely feel concerned, student.

By the way, I hope you will be able to slip past at the changing of the guard tomorrow and make it to class.

Your
Solicitous Teacher

Editor
VARUN BHASKAR

PS Welcome Back to School, all of you.

FROM THE OLD BOYS' DESK

- Gautam Punj (ex-232 C) is in his final year at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, England and is preparing for his A-Levels.
- Manpreet Hora, Manjot Chugh, Nikhil Kripalani, Rajiv Lath and Ankush Bansal are in their second year (B.Com) at S.R.C.C.
- Durgesh Bhatia (ex-60 C) managed to get into S.R.C.C. owing to his super sports skills.
- Samar Rautela (ex-47 K) has got into St. Stephens College and is doing his B.A.
- Mohinder Bedi (ex-404 J) is in his second year at G.C.M., Chandigarh.
- Bharat Bajaj has got into the Punjab Engineering College, Chandigarh.

- Gautam Wahi has just returned from Michigan, USA after completing a course in commercial flying.

- Rajesh Mookerjee (ex-174 K) is in his final year at Modern School (Vasant Vihar), Delhi.

- Manu Rajvanshi secured admission at the University of Nebraska.



The Literary Affairs of Welham

MEMORIES

It was a pleasant Sunday morning and I was sprucing myself for a friend's party. I was rummaging for my keys when I discovered an old album, neatly covered with a shiny metal foil, I sat down on the floor and opened the album. The memories flashed through my mind.

The first photograph was of my first film. I still remember the premiere on 2nd of October, 1964. After the show I was petrified by the huge crowd surging towards me. Suddenly, I felt someone pinch my backside. I yelled. Raj Kapoor who had come with me, led me out, whispering "Don't worry, this is only the beginning."

In that movie I had to do a lot of scenes with animals - an elephant in particular. I remember how the baby elephant we had hired from a circus ran away from the suburban studio to its home in town, with everyone in hot pursuit.

For the shooting of 'Rehale Manjish' I had high temperature and a severe rash. Yet I went for the day's shooting. Luckily the rash had not shown on screen. I glanced into the album to make sure I looked normal. One of the photographs showed my nervousness as I sat next to my mother while 'Josh' was running in the Bombay Talkies.

In 'Amar' only I was supposed to die in the film according to the original plan but Babitaji insisted on dying too. She laid a bet of one hundred rupees with me that the audience would

prefer it this way. And she was right. The film was a hit. She actually took the one hundred rupees from me along with a copy of the next photograph, which was taken by my cousin.

I was tickled to see one photograph in which I was disguised as a girl. I had had great fun that day because one boy had actually thought I was a girl and had started following me around!

These photographs are the testimony of my struggle, happiness, amusements and sorrow. The next one was the most valuable one as it reminded me of the incident when I had first met Rakshita, my wife. Both of us were sharing an umbrella waiting for our cars. It was raining heavily. When her car finally drew up she dashed into it taking the umbrella with her leaving me to be drenched in the rain! I was left speechless. I stood there looking at her until she came out and vowed that she would never leave me alone. We walked in the rain for quite a while. We married soon after. Those were the happiest days of my life.

The last time I saw her was a few days before her death. I had been shooting for a film in Amsterdam when she died. We all knew and so did she that her end was near, but there was never a trace of self-pity in her conversation. She never gave us a chance to think about her end. She spoke with affection of our happy days and one could sense the contentment in her tone which only comes to those who have spent their lives well. I was lucky to have had such a woman for my wife.

My eyes moistened; my vision blurred. I sighed. Just then my son came up to say we were getting late for the party. I got up and locked the album in my safe after looking at her face. It seemed to say "Go, there are people waiting for you."

- Nitin Jain

* * *

FLAMES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Being a farm boy living in the countryside, I thought I had seen some pretty frightening things in life which the average city-slicker is not accustomed to. Cows caught in the barbed wire fencing, thrashing about ensnaring themselves

even further, their skin being torn and ripped by the sharp barbs. A dog accidentally caught in the tractor's ploughshares. Cattle sinking in the quagmire, their plaintive cries heard by everyone till death silenced them. This illusion was dispelled the day the German plane crashed in Harper's meadow.

The year was 1940, the height of the *blitzkrieg* which terrorized all England. I had been lying in the fields among the wheat stalks when suddenly I heard the scream of a Stuka Dive-Bomber, the pride of the Luftwaffe. I shaded my eyes against the sun and searched the skies for the aircraft.

All I could see were thick black plumes of smoke billowing from under the engine cowling and the aircraft dropped lower with every passing moment. With a deafening roar it passed over our fields and ultimately crashed in Harper's meadow. The crash shook the earth. I ran towards it. I stopped, horrified by the wreckage. Tongues of flame licked the fuselage and the black crosses were barely distinguishable. The surrounding area was black, the grass burnt. There were bits of metal strewn all around. Entire sections of the plane had been blown away. The perspex of the cockpit was smashed and the propellers warped.

The overpowering stench hit me. It was the stench of charred flesh. I have never smelt anything like it and I doubt I ever will. The sickly-sweet smell of a burning fellow human being. My head reeled and I fell down on my knees.

Amid the crackling of the flames I heard a faint and feeble cry. It was a cry of pain but not in any language I knew. Somehow I managed to get into the flaming wreckage and there right next to the door was the body of a man. He was probably the rear gunner as I found him right under the rear gunner's bubble. With utmost care, so that I did not hurt him, I brought him into the fresh air and laid him on the grass. I felt something wet on my shirt. Something which reeked of the coppery smell of blood. It was just that. Fresh blood; blood of a German airman. His face was seared, the skin hung loose exposing the muscle and tissue. His uniform was in shreds and there were patches of blood on it. He babbled in his native tongue and clutched at my shoulder. I wondered what to do when I felt his grip on my shoulder slacken. I

looked down. An inert body met my eyes - bloody, broken, undignified and ugly in death.

Somehow I managed to get home. I threw up in the bathroom. I removed my bloodied clothes and burned them. I wanted no reminder of what I had seen.

- Ashish N. Deb Roy

Welham Now

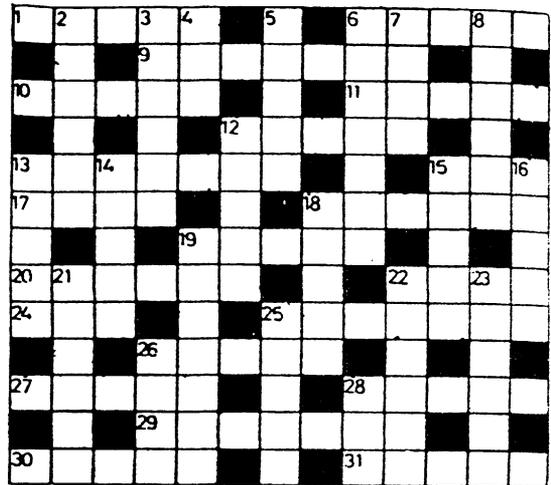
- We welcome the following teachers and hope they enjoy their stay at Welham:

Ms. S. Bhattacharya for English (Senior School)
 Mr. D.K. Jain for Computer Studies (Senior School)
 Mr. R.W. Walia for Maths (Senior School)
 Ms. Saskia Van Es EVS (Middle school)

- A new dark room is under construction near the Physics lecture room.
- Ms. Saskia Van Es has joined us for a term on a teacher exchange programme.
- We welcome back Mr. V. Painuli who has returned from England.
- The top floor of the LRC is operational and has been made into the reference section.

Little Known Facts?

- The human mouth contains more bacteria than any other orifice in our body.
- The most expensive writing paper in the world, a handmade writing paper from Finland, sells at Cartiers (New York) at the rate of \$8000 for 100 sheets (envelopes included).
- Tomatoes were originally called 'love apples'.
- Damascus is the oldest inhabited capital city of the world.
- A baby whale gains about 200 lbs. a day.
- Each hair of a man's beard is as strong as a copper wire of the same dimensions.



Brain Teasers

ACROSS

1 Conflict (5), 6 Mixture of rain and snow (5), 9 Whim (7), 10 Begin (5), 11 Academy Award (5), 12 Flies upwards (5), 13 Item of footwear (7), 15 Range of knowledge (3), 17 Give up (4), 18 End of a show (6), 19 Musical instrument (5), 20 Wild ass (6), 22 Wan (4), 24 Friend (3), 25 Underwater-breathing device (7), 26 Beam (5), 27 Military council (5), 28 Assistants (5), 29 Having no goal (7), 30 Long (5), 31 Martial art (5).

DOWN

2 Small (6), 3 Rasp (6), 4 Item of headgear (3), 5 Mistake (5), 6 Zodiac sign (7), 7 A smaller amount (4), 8 Type of paint (6), 12 Cut off (5), 13 Exclusive story (5), 14 Perfect (5), 15 Canoe (5), 16 Winding-staircase pillar (5), 18 Stone (5), 19 Sure (7), 21 Essential character (6), 22 Laud (6), 23 Inscription (6), 25 Sullenly rude (5), 26 Celebrity (4), 28 Enquire (3).

Last Time's Solution

ACROSS:

3 Spade, 8 Still, 10 Otter, 11 Emu, 12 Finch, 13 Captain, 15 Tease, 18 Tin, 19 Forged, 21 Forever, 22 Eden, 23 Self, 24 Essence, 26 Legate, 29 Rue, 31 Manic, 32 Manners, 34 Shoal, 35 Era, 36 Belle, 37 Trend, 38 Edict.

DOWN:

1 Steak, 4 Pain, 5 Doctor, 6 Ether, 7 Lease, 9 Imp, 12 Finesse, 14 Air, 16 Agree, 17 Edify, 19 Federal, 20 Realm, 21 Feign, 23 Scenery, 24 Etched, 25 Nun, 27 Easel, 28 Aisle, 30 Frank, 32 Marc, 33 Ere.

INNER VIEW

She had her schooling at Loretto Convent, Asansol and Darjeeling; College at Loretto, Calcutta. She taught for a while in Calcutta and has now joined us at Welham.

Her interests are varied. She likes drama, and has received awards in it during her school days. She also enjoys reading and dancing. On books she agrees with Francis Bacon when he said: 'Some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few chewed and digested'. She is a voracious reader and reads almost everything from encyclopedias to comics.

Her favourite writer, "indisputably Shakespeare".

As for music she loves to listen to Western classical, and her favourites are Vivaldi, Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, Zubin Mehta and Strauss.

She loves films and prefers Hindi and Old classical. Naturally, she is a regular attendee of film festivals. Films depicting unusual themes and old Bengali comedies rank among her favourites. She is a fan of Satyajit Ray and Steven Spielberg and has an aversion to action-packed thrillers and war films.

Another interesting facet of her personality is her interest as well as participation in sports such as basketball and swimming (her added interest in aerobics probably helps in warming up!)

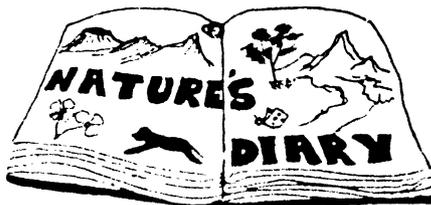
She insists that English should be taught differently at different levels. Against systemization, text books and prescribed syllabus, she likes to stimulate interest in the subject and act as a guide rather than a teacher, showing the path than dragging the students on it. However, she feels has no choice but to go according to the regimentation and set methods.

She states that many things can be done to make the subject more interesting. Audio-visual

aids for language prove to be more interesting and helpful. She enjoys teaching poetry out in the open and would like to teach English through dramatization and discussion

On being asked about her opinion of the Welhamites: "They are very shy and well behaved but unresponsive and not willing to work hard". She believes that the reluctance to work hard is the reason why Welhamites are unresponsive in class as they have little to say. (If you guys are wearing socks, it's time to pull them up!)

One thing which has greatly impressed her is the school and its peaceful and tranquil locale. We can chalk one up for Welham on hearing that!



TREE PLANTATION ON THE CAMPUS

Some plantation work was done during the summer vacation. About 160 saplings were planted to increase the greenery on campus. The saplings planted were Kachhar, Surai, Siris, Khair, Silver oak, Acacia, Cassia Glauca, Bottle Brush, Amaltas, Shisham, Champa, Jamun, Kokil and Camphor. They have been planted in various parts of the campus - near the boundary wall of the lower field, middle field, on the way to the new basketball courts, near the volley ball courts, opposite the hospital, between the Assembly Hall and Woodseats.

The hard work put in by the nursery and quarry groups in the past year has resulted in the healthy growth of saplings of various species. As a gesture of fraternity in the first week of August they were donated to the 'Eco Task Force'. This is a defence organization which is trying to bring back the lost greenery of the

Mussoorie hills. The total number of saplings planted by the Force was 5640. Species like Cassia Glauca, Khair, Jamun, Tun, Camphor, Surai, Amaltas, Kachhar, Koelretia apiculata, Champa, Michelia, Subabul, Silver oak, Dudonia and Karanta were planted.

We hope to continue this work in the future with greater zeal.

- S.S. Khaira
(Geography Dept.)
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THE EARTH'S FREEZER

The realm of ice extends far below the earth's surface. Early in the 19th century, a merchant in the Siberian town of Yakutsk decided to sink a well in his courtyard. He hired workers who dug for days, but they found water. The merchant spent all the money he had hoped would be enough for digging the well but since no results were obtained, he abandoned the project.

The well caught the eye of scientists who noticed that the ground remained frozen through the entire depth of the pit.

How much deeper would it be necessary to dig for water? None of the scientists knew this. To find the answer they asked the workers to continue digging. Ten years passed by, the well developed into a deep shaft, but no water was found the ground was frozen solid. Finally the digging was stopped at a depth of 116.4 meters. The ground still remained frozen. This meant that in northern Siberia the ground remains permanently frozen throughout the year. This has been term permafrost.

What does permafrost look like? In summer, the top soil is covered with green grass, trees and bush, but below the thin, sun-warmed layer lies permanently frozen ground pierced with thin veins of subsurface fossil ice. In some areas, permafrost lies very close to the surface; in other places it is dozens of meters deep.

The first studies of the earth's natural freezer brought some unexpected results. Large tree trunks, the remnants of primeval forests which grew there ages ago, and some fossil bones and whole bodies of extinct animals were found in Siberia and other permafrost areas.

Permafrost has proved to be an excellent deep freezer, working for thousands of years, reliably preserving the bodies of some long extinct animals complete with flesh, skin and hair. On the Berezovka river in Yakutia, for example, scientists once extracted the carcass of a mammoth which had died thousands of years ago. The dead animal was found with a wisp of green grass in its mouth!

Scientists have studied the earth's natural freezer well and have established that such freezers occupy one quarter of the land surface of the globe, and in the Soviet Union almost half its territory.

Builders have a particularly tough time in construction work in permafrost. In such areas buildings are raised above the ground on piles, and do not have the usual foundation. The water supply lines in permafrost areas are sheathed in wooden casing and also laid above the ground. Sometimes the land for a housing project is defrosted and drained while constructing a large administrative building before construction in a city beyond the Arctic.

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TEACHER - A Welhamite's View

If anyone wants to take lessons in handling teachers, ask a Welhamite. Nowhere can a person be found who is more adept at handling teachers than a Welhamite.

A Welhamite, if asked, will categorize teachers into three groups:

- (1) The Goodies,
- (2) The Put-on Baddies, and
- (3) The Toughies.

The most liked (and troubled) group is the first one: The Goodies. Their classes are usually interesting but can sometimes be a drag. If one happens to be standing near a classroom and finds boys missing or sleeping or talking or singing or laughing or any such thing, he can deduce one thing for sure - either the teacher is missing or is a 'Goodie'. At present the majority of the teaching staff belongs to this category.

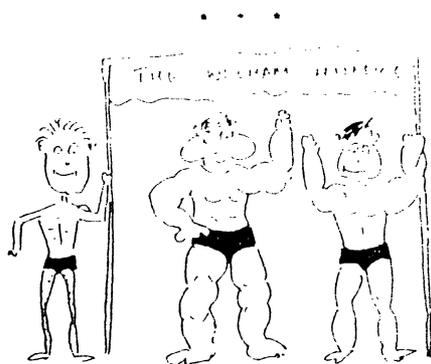
The second category is also present at Welham (though not as much in number as the first one). Each and every boy in school knows

its members inside out - literally. They are soft inside and have a temporary 'Welhamite proof' front. And I mean it. They act as if they are tough. But ask a Welhamite - he knows better. Soon you'll see students successfully twisting these temporarily 'tough' teachers around their fingers. A certain teacher of the English language is the latest addition to this group. On joining, her requirement from her students on entering the class was "chest out, hands by your sides and a cheerful Good Morning/Afternoon". All that was missing from this military conduct was the salute. Now all that she requires is a "Cheerful Good Morning/Afternoon". Ask a PH-ite and he'll say "She was easy. She learnt fast."

The last group is the most formidable one. Its members are the 'tough' people. No one dares to act naughty with them. Their classes are, amazingly, always full, quiet and serious. Though it is against the moral principles of a Welhamite, he has to do the above mentioned things. A very minor part of our teaching staff belongs to this group. Their mottos are 'Work is Worship' and 'Take it or Lump it'. The one and only male Doctor on campus (apart from the medical one) belongs to this category (though I, alongwith some other boys would put him in the first one). The best example of this category is the teacher of land maps. Amazingly, even the coolest Welhamite feels too cold in front of him. His wish is everyone's command. For him the word 'no' does not exist.

The above discussed were the main categories. Apart from this if someone would like to add one or two more, they are welcome. A very open-minded view has been taken to write this article.

- Varun Sood



IN THE ARENA OF SPORTS

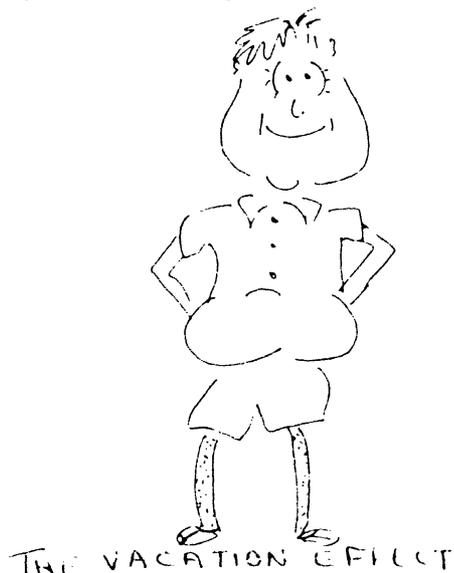
Football, the most popular game in the world and at Welham, started with a bang.

Welham took on St. Joseph's Academy in the opening match of the season, just managing to beat it 1-0. Anurag Kumar scored the lone goal in the opening minutes of the match. After receiving an excellent pass from Rajneesh, Anurag shot a powerful left-footer into the net. Later the opponents tried their best to score but did not manage to penetrate Aziz Rawat's rock-like defence.

Welham took on the Gurkha Military Academy next. Due to their co-ordination and shooting skills, they trounced us 6-1, Sharib Khan scoring the only home team goal.

The next encounter had Welham pitched against St. George's Mussoorie. Welhamites once again found themselves in a helpless position. From word go the Georgians camped themselves in Welham's half of the field. They tore apart our defence and were up by three goals at half time. Had it not been for Vikrant Lamba, our goalkeeper, the situation could have been worse for, although a few shots got in, more did not, due to his excellent keeping. The visitors won by a reasonable margin 5-0.

Congratulations to Anurag Kumar on winning the games scarf this year.



हिन्दी अनुभाग

विवशता के आंसू

वह एक मजदूर था। संध्याकाल वह मजदूरी करके घर में चार पैसे ला रहा था। उसकी बेटी का जन्मदिन था। वह बीड़ी के पैसे बचाकर उसके लिये लड्डू ले जा रहा था। खुशी के अवसर पर उसने थोड़ी भाँगी भी पी ली थी। मदहोशी में मडक पाए करने वह एक लॉरी के नीचे आ गया। घटनास्थल पर ही तत्काल मृत्यु हो गई। लड्डू मडिन और घूमिन हो गए।

इस अप्रत्याशित-अप्रिय हादसे ने उसकी पत्नी को बुरी तरह तोड़ दिया। उनके पास फूटी कौड़ी भी न थी। पति को पिछले चार दिन से मजदूरी न मिलने के कारण, उनके घर में चूल्हा भी न जला था। आस-पड़ोस, जान-पहचान के सभी लोग ताजी कमाकर खाने वाले थे। महायत्ना कोई कैसे करता? अपने पति की अंत्येष्टि के लिए उसने भीख मांगना ही उचित समझा। अपनी एकमात्र छोटी-सी बच्ची को लेकर वह निकल पड़ी।

एक गेट के पास जाकर वह गिड़गिड़ा कर बोली "मेठजी! मेरे पति की दुर्घटना में मृत्यु हो गई। उनकी अंत्येष्टि के लिए मेरे पास कुछ भी नहीं है। आप थोड़ी मदद करेंगे-बड़ी मेहरबानी होगी।"

सुनकर मेठजी क्रोधित हो गए। गुस्से से भरकर बोले, "अंत्येष्टि के बहाने भीख मांगना तुम लोगों न एक धधा बना लिया है। चल भाग यहाँ से। पाजी कहीं की।"

मेठजी की दुत्कार सुनकर वह सहम गई। हताश हो, मुड़कर चलने को हुई।

अकस्मात् उसकी बच्ची बोल पड़ी, "गाली मत दो, मेठजी। मेरी माँ सचमुच बोलती है। वाकई मेरा बापु मर गया है। हमने कई दिन से गंदी भी नहीं खाई है।"

बच्ची की मासूम बातों से, उसकी माँ फूट-फूटकर रोने लगी - तथा मेठजी का दिल बिध गया। वे सोच में पड़ गए। कुछ विचार कर बोले, "ठीक है! मैं तुम्हारी एक शर्त पर मदद कर सकता हूँ। मैं तुम्हें नकद कुछ भी नहीं दूंगा। अंतिम-संस्कार के लिए शमशान - भूमि में चार सिवटल लकड़ी गिरवा सकता हूँ। बोलो, क्या तुम्हें मजूर है?"

उसने कृतज्ञापूर्वक हामी भर दी। मेठजी ने अपने कड़े अनुसार शमशान-भूमि में लकड़ियाँ गिरवा दीं। लकड़ियों के ढेर को देखकर उसकी भूख जाग उठी - जमीर सों गया। अपने पति को लाश को अधजला छोड़कर, उसने बाकी लकड़ियाँ बाजार में बेच दीं।

बाजार से लौटते समय, अपनी माँ के हाथ में पैसे देखकर बच्ची बोली, "अब तो मुझे गंदी मिल जाएगी न माँ।"

सुनकर उसकी आंखों में विवशता के आंसू छलक आए।

अविग्न गिर

"फागुन आया"

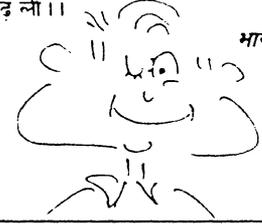
फागुन आया पाहुना, रुका आम के बाग।
मैं कोयल सी टेरती, देखूँ मन के दाग।।

तुम थे तो हर रंग थे, अब बस खाली अंचल
उतरे चेहरे को भला, क्या गुलाल के भेंट।।
बसनी सनु हर दिशा गई रंग में बोर
वस पीली बीछार ही फेंक गई इम ओर।।

पीली भी कैरी रही तन-मन वसन अंचल
जेपे जग में समा गए हों सरसों के खल।।
अड़हुल फूला द्वार पर, पिछवाड़े कचनार
गंगा आगन घर कर डरता है हर सिंगार।।

दिन पकड़ूँ तो उंगलियों में आ जाए गन
गन समेटूँ, जी जला, दिखला जाता प्रातः।।
गाँव हुआ है बावला कूप में बोली भंग
बदला-बदला लग रहा मुझको तो रंग-दंग।।

मीते तुम फिर आ नहीं सकते इम होली
अनपढ़ थी तो भली थी,
क्यों चिट्ठी पढ़ ली।।



भारत भूषण गर्ग

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Printed at PRINT WORLD, DEHRA DUN.