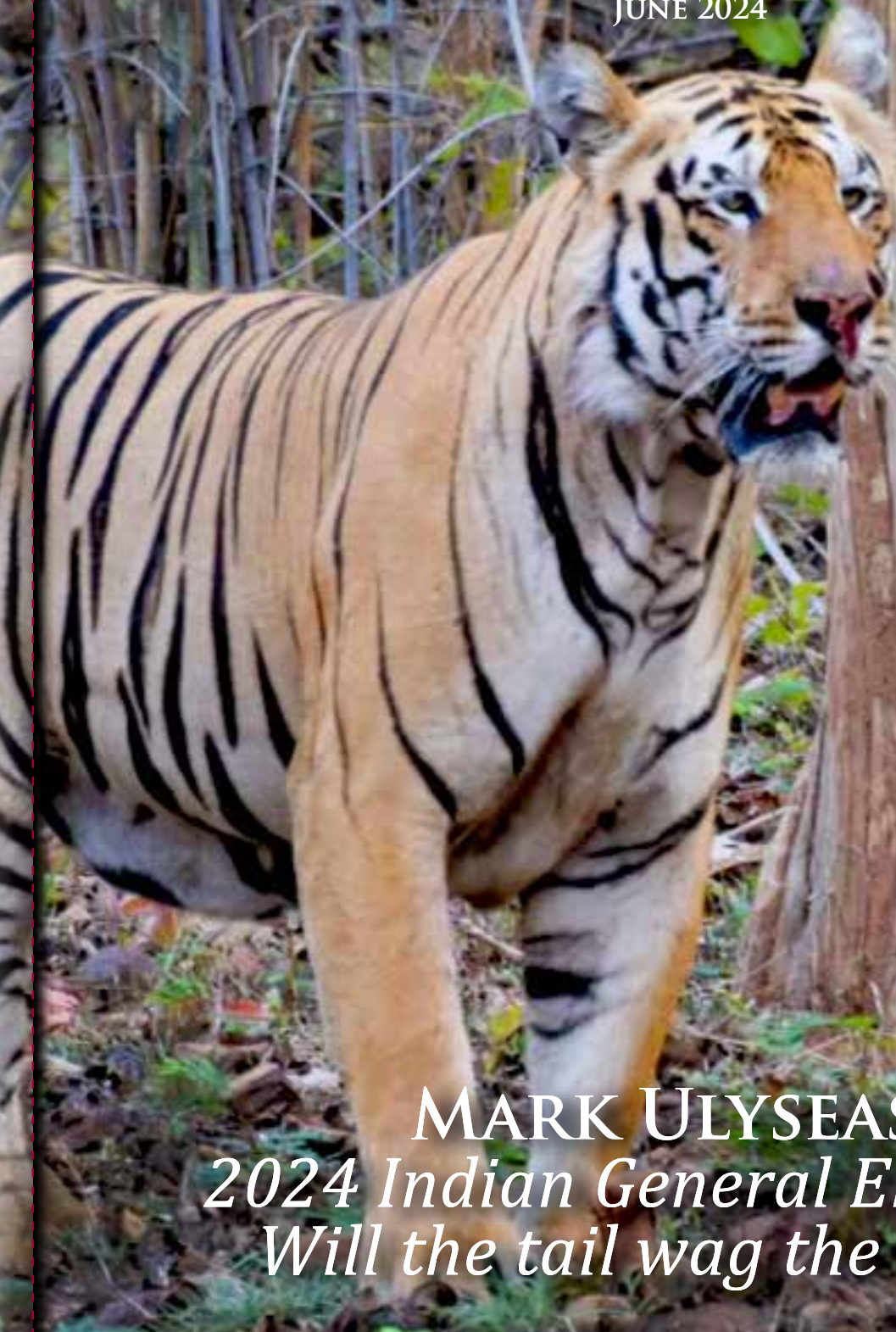


2010 - 2024



Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
JUNE 2024



MARK ULYSEAS
*2024 Indian General Elections
Will the tail wag the tiger?*

COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF YUVRAJ BY ROYDON CEREJO



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Bubur Ayam (Chicken Congee), Indonesian. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.



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Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of:

Live Encounters Magazine (2010), *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* (2016), *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* (2019) and now, *Live Encounters Books* (August 2020).

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Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

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Mark Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photo-grapher. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine*, in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry*, which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. In February 2019 the third publication was launched, *LE Children Poetry & Writing* (now renamed *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers*). In August 2020 the fourth publication, *Live Encounters Books*, was launched. He has edited, designed and produced all of Live Encounters' 299 publications (till June 2024). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher*; *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey*.

<https://liveencounters.net/mark-ulyseas-publisher-editor-of-live-encounters-magazines/>
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MARK ULYSEAS

2024 Indian General Elections

Will the tail wag the tiger?

Religious chauvinism, caste-based politics, regionalism, language, nationalism and influences from USA, Canada, Germany, Israel and China can make a motley crew of politicians into leading lights in the country. It is now not about eliminating poverty but about who will be the next Prime Minister and what portfolios would the inner coterie be gifted. This is not in reference to the incoming coalition government.

Shri Rajiv Kumar, the Chief Election Commissioner, announced that 642 million people voted, of which 312 million were women.

It is believed that not long-ago China had announced that it could break India into little countries anytime it wished. Perhaps the first step is the result of the 2024 Indian General Elections. This is in reference to the secret MOU that the Indian National Congress had signed with the Chinese Communist Party in 2008.

Shri Narendra Modi, the strongman of India, is, in a manner of speaking, cut down to size with the result of the elections. USA, Canada, Germany, Israel (AI) and China have worked hard to dismantle him/his party's influence so that they can weaken the Indian State, a State that has stood up to Western Powers and China on many fronts this last decade.

The only other Indian leader on the same level, or perhaps on another level was (late) Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, the iron lady of India, a PM who was despised by the (late) US President, Richard Nixon who called her an 'old witch' and in the same breath termed all Jews as spies.

Close-up of a photograph taken by Valmik Thapar and previously published in Live Encounters Magazine
<https://liveencounters.net/january-2014/05-may-2014/valmik-thapar-guardian-of-the-tiger-live-encounter/>

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Between Indira Gandhi and Narendra Modi there is a gap of approximately three decades. And during these three decades, India was run by a menagerie of leaders, each pandering to the erstwhile first family of India. The Indian mindset of genuflecting before power lies embedded in the historical figures of Emperors, Maharajas, Rajas, High Castes and the Gora log (white people).

Switch to present day Indian political figures and it is evident that nothing has changed.

The foreign countries that have worked surreptitiously to create this situation may want their pound of flesh. Now it is up to certain political leaders in India to decide whether to remain on the same path of compliance with the foreign countries that supported them, or to create their own vision of India that may or may not be the same as the previous government, that is, if the previous government/PM do not come to power, or if they are ousted a few months down the line.

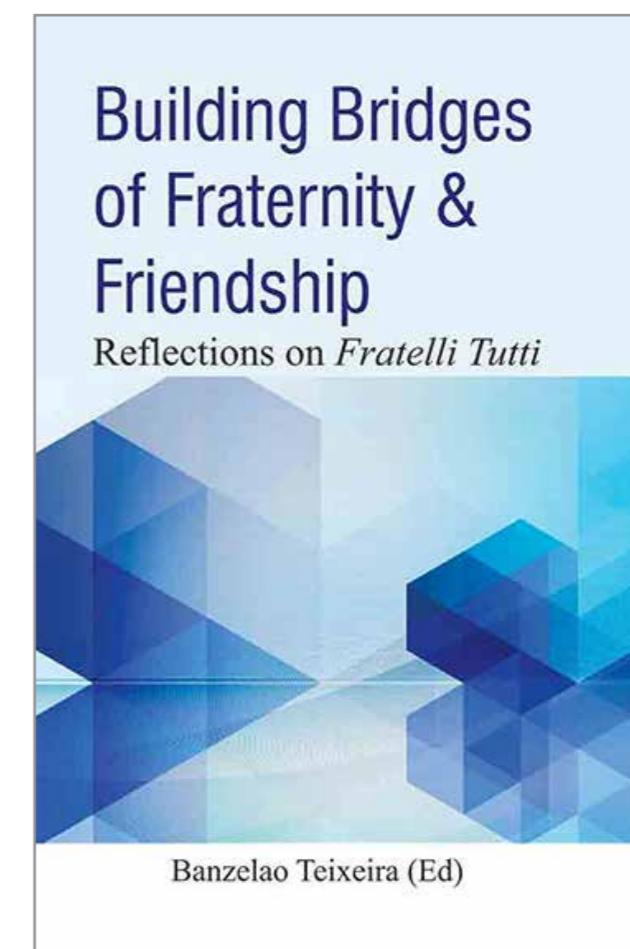
India is on the threshold of dangerous times...the fragmenting of political set-ups can destabilise the economy, national security and smooth functioning between the Centre and State Governments.

What the future holds is, perhaps, in the form of the new government at the Centre, and the role of the incumbent PM of a minority government supported by a small group of allies, each baying for their pound of flesh.

Will the tail wag the tiger?

The only losers are the impoverished that go to bed hungry every night. They know that the future holds nothing for them.

In 2021, I wrote an essay titled, "*Insaniyat – Fraternity in Diversity*", which was published in *Building Bridges of Fraternity and Friendship: Reflections on Fratelli Tutti*, Edited by Banzelao Teixeira, Published by Christian World Imprints, 2022. <https://www.abebooks.co.uk/book-search/title/building-bridges-fraternity-friendship-reflections/author/banzelao-teixeira/>



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Insaniyat¹ – Fraternity in Diversity

“For it is in giving that we receive.” – St. Francis of Assisi

Abstract

The world is facing unprecedented hardship due to the pandemic, hate and violence in all forms. Rising intolerance, and misinformation in the media, where the rich get richer and poor becoming poorer, is threatening to tear societies apart. This groundswell of disturbance has been witnessed in the last one year with devastating effect. In these turbulent times, fraternity surprisingly exists in diversity. People of Faith are reaching out to assist the less fortunate irrespective of their colour, caste or religion. Their work is reflected in their insaniyat. Perhaps it would be these very people who will save humanity from the brink of self-destruction.

Introduction

In the mid-1970s I was studying in St. Xavier’s College, Calcutta, in Pre-University, the mandatory one year before admission to graduate studies. And it was here that I had met many enlightened Jesuit priests, one in particular was Vice Principal Father Huart. One day Father Huart requested me to accompany a priest, who had arrived from the Vatican and was new to the city. I was to show him to his hotel a short distance from the college on Park Street. So off we went.

On the way we passed an emaciated beggar lying on the pavement. Without any hesitation the priest turned back, picked up the beggar in all his filth and instructed me to hail a taxi to take us to Mother Theresa’s Home for the Destitute. A few minutes into the drive the beggar died. The priest, who had cradled the beggar’s body in his arms, prayed softly. There was much sadness in his voice. When we arrived at the Home the nuns gathered the broken lifeless body, cleaned it and covered the man with fresh linen. The reverence with which they did this startled me. Then they all began to pray and sing. Standing next to the priest was Mother Theresa. Her face lit up with an aura of pure insaniyat.

There was never any talk of caste or religion of the dead beggar. His body was accepted. He was accorded dignity in death. Mother Theresa’s actions reflected her Faith. I, on the other hand lacked all these qualities.

The actions of the priest and the nuns at the Home are the embodiment of insaniyat... how we should treat one another regardless of our social position.

This humbling experience left an indelible impression and its effect can still be felt whenever one is confronted with an existential dilemma brought on by a passing bout of alienation of self and the distancing from shared values.

Much has changed since the mid-1970s. The world is now caught in a web, the internet, which connects all and entraps all. And this web is fed by billions of people, each person spewing all kinds of opinions, misinformed and uninformed, that appear to be growing in insidiousness – *us* and *them*, *us* vs. *them* or the now popular trend – *me-me*. This self enforced compartmentalisation of peoples is destroying the ancient natural bridges between cultures and religions. The self incarceration of freedom of thought is fast becoming a reality.

Where do we go from here?

Here are a few thoughts.

I believe that there are six basic pillars of society: *Love, Respect, Non-violence, Forgiveness, and Charity* with the cornerstone being Faith.

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Love and Respect

Love and respect are two sides of the same coin. How can we love another if we don't respect the person? How can we do this if we don't love and respect ourselves, our bodies?

It is easy to succumb to the baser instincts like hatred and violence. Reason is not an option because many are used to readymade fixes for all their ills. We hate because we fear. We resort to violence because we have dispensed with the cumbersome process of reason. We have taken refuge in our perceived notions of cultural values, twisted to suit individual needs.

The many variants of love and respect originate from our upbringing. At birth a new born is given a slap and from then on parents 'train' their children to obey their commands. There is always a rider – *if you don't do this or that then you will be punished*. Or, in growing instances new age parents indulge their children to a point that crosses the sacred line of parent teacher-child relationship resulting in the child becoming precocious and self-centred. This is more pronounced in single child families.

And when this child becomes an adult, society is faced with yet another aberration. Love and respect must begin in the family, the nucleus of a society/state. Parents are custodians of society and their contribution to love and respect is imperative for its very survival. They are the foundational teachers. And they are failing now for they are succumbing to the new form of liberalism that is decimating all free thought. *You can't say this, you can't say that*. All forms of 'political correctness' including the banning of a growing number of words and phrases is hamstringing free and fair debate.

We must begin with love for this will remove all shackles of age-old prejudices and hate.

We must begin with love for this will remove all shackles of age-old prejudices and hate. Nelson Mandela couldn't have said it better – “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”[2]

Unfortunately, amidst the COVID pandemic the voice of love, of respect, of selfless duty is overshadowed by the rising tide of jingoism and a disturbing trend of exceptionalism on one hand and rising social anarchy on the other. The pricing and cornering of the vaccine market, the enforcement of lock down laws without regard to the common people's welfare, their day-to-day survival, presents a disheartening image of the burgeoning power and greed of the exceptionals.

Can fraternity survive in this adversity?

Non-violence & Forgiveness

Non-violence in thought, word and deed is an ideal state. But when we add the human factor numerous distortions occur, violence in various forms, which can only be resolved by the simple mechanism of forgiveness. But how do we forgive if we are conditioned from childhood to be exceptional by colour, caste, religion or country? How do we reach across the aisle to embrace a perceived adversary?

All these factors contribute to the present trends – suspicion of the pandemic and the distrust of authority, fear of a conspiracy of an insidious emerging deep state new world order, and upsurge of right-wing nationalism.

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With utter disregard for others' lives, people without face masks have taken to the streets to protest their individual rights, thus endangering millions of lives.

Meanwhile medical workers around the world are fighting the deadly battle of saving lives. Thousands of them have already died in the process, exposed to the lethal virus.

But this has not stopped politicians and others from using this for their own selfish purposes to attempt one-upmanship on opponents, thereby creating further schisms in society.

We are witnessing these developments across the world.

Resorting to violence, physical and verbal, to achieve one's purpose has now become the rule rather than the exception.

Again, it is conditioning that has blinkered many from seeing a wide-angle picture of what ails society.

Why is it that we cannot remove these blinkers? Is it fear of the unknown or the reluctance to accept the truth of reality, an unsettling reality that we must discard to overcome that which feeds our baser instincts and accept unequivocally the wholesome goodness of non-violence and forgiveness?

Perhaps the heavy burden of historical wrongs contributes to this fear. The litany of *'we must not forget, we must always remember'* continues to fuel hate and promotes a dishonest rendition of Truth.

If we continue to teach our children about the historical wrongs how are we going to be able to create a just society, which is non-violent and forgiving?

What we are witnessing today in the media and social media is just this – raucous cries for righting historical wrongs, stretching it to a point where we experience reverse discrimination, thereby reigniting fires of hate and suspicion and starting new ones.

A society creates its own government, a government elected by the people to ensure the smooth and fair functioning of the state. The present state of affairs is alarming. Various societies are at the mercy of their governments that in turn are overshadowed by the power of the transnational corporations.

Increasingly, these elected governments have been digressing from their duty to serve the people. The disdain of exceptionalism exhibited by many in power is truly disheartening. It is as if they have shrugged off the moral responsibility of caring for the people in all aspects during the pandemic. Instead of engaging the people, they are treating them as juveniles who don't understand the pandemic and thus need laws to impose monetary fines for transgressing the pandemic restrictions. These actions have encouraged volatile elements in societies to create violent confrontations with the law.

Shouldn't people reach out to support one another, to make peace through non-violent action and seek forgiveness in the event of transgressions without the overbearing interference of big brother?

Is this a deluded suggestion?

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Charity

The essential ingredient of a healthy society is charity – The will of the people to share a part of their wealth with others who are less fortunate so that everyone has shelter, food, clothing, basic education, and more.

The pandemic has just added to the woes of the hungry and homeless and those who have lost their jobs. The news report titled “A Tenth of the World Could Go Hungry While Crops Rot in Fields” is a telling reminder of the impact of the pandemic.[3]

Further, the poor have become poorer and the rich, richer. In fact, the rich have increased their wealth to \$10.2 trillion dollars during the pandemic.[4] Are these rich people akin to profiteers during a war?

The sinkholes of disparities are suddenly appearing everywhere. This could result in social revolution. The rumbling of discontent, rightly so, can be seen and heard across cities in the west. What if the rich shared their profits from the pandemic with the poor?

What if the rich followed the example of MacKenzie Scott (ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos), author and philanthropist, who has given away more than \$4 billion in the last four months?[5] This may be a pittance in comparison to her total wealth but at least it is a start.

Perhaps charity begins at home. Could it be that we must first begin to share what we have with our family, relatives and friends? And once we have achieved a level of honesty, then reach out to others to support, possibly our neighbours and those who live on our street?

If we don't share a part of the excess wealth that we have, how can we hope to build a just society?



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Hampi, India. Photograph by Mark Ulyseas.

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Faith

In the late seventies on the Old Cadell Road, Mumbai, just short of St. Michael's Church (Mahim) was a mosque (it is still there). The road was lined with a few restaurants that prepared dal and chapattis for the homeless and those living in slums. The deal was quite simple – anyone could buy chapattis and dal (heavily discounted) to feed the lines of hungry people sitting patiently outside the small restaurants with aluminium plates in hand. Often I would see the rich drive up in their cars and hand over small bundles of currency notes to the restaurant staff who would immediately serve the equivalent in piping hot dal and chapattis to the hungry. This was a social arrangement between humans to care for other humans regardless of their caste or religion.

It was a beautiful celebration of insaniyat.

I do not know if this practice still exists. But this I know, many religious organisations offer food, shelter, education and more to those who are less fortunate.

And this, for me, is Faith in all its magnificence.

This goes back to my encounter with a Catholic priest and Mother Theresa in Kolkata decades ago. It was their Faith that gave them insaniyat. It was their Faith that did not blinker them from being selective in their approach to humanity. In fact it was their Faith that enlightened them to do what they did without seeking any reward or accolade.

Perhaps it will be Faith that will bring us all back together as one.

In the meantime, fraternity is all that we have in diversity to survive in a world fragmented by violence, hate and the pandemic.

It will be people of Faith, I hope, that will continue to reach out across the great divide to offer succour for the less fortunate. And through this, perhaps, bring about permanent peace between the peoples of the world.

[1]The title of this essay is an Urdu word which means humanity, to have humanity.

[2]<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2501119-long-walk-to-freedom-the-autobiography-of-nelson-mandela>
Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela.

[3]<https://www.bloombergquint.com/global-economics/hunger-is-threatening-to-kill-more-people-than-covid-this-year>.

[4]<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/07/covid-19-crisis-boosts-the-fortunes-of-worlds-billionaires>.

[5]<https://www.npr.org/2020/12/16/947189767/mackenzie-scott-has-donated-more-than-4-billion-in-last-4-months>.

Some links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/russia-accuses-us-of-meddling-in-indias-internal-affairs-complicating-lok-sabha-elections/article68156511.ece>

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Dr.Lorraine Gibson, writer, and poet, was born in Glasgow. She is Scottish-Australian. Her poetry appears/is upcoming in journals, magazines, and anthologies in Australia, NZ, US, Canada, and Ireland. These include: *Meniscus Literary Journal*, *Antipodes*, *Prole*, *Quadrant*, *The Galway Review*, *London Grip*, *The Lake*, *Hecate*, *Backstory*, *Eureka Street*, *Live Encounters*, *Brushstrokes IV*, and *Poetry for the Planet*. Her poetry was shortlisted for the 2023 Calanthe Open Poetry Prize. Lorraine began writing poetry following a career as a Social Anthropologist. She is the author of 'We Don't Do Dots: Art and Culture in Wilcannia, New South Wales', Sean Kingston Publishing:UK.



DR. LORRAINE GIBSON

COFFEE BETS: AN AUCHMITHIE FISHERWOMAN

A short story of historical fiction in relation to Elizabeth Cargill (Coffee Bets, 1830-1906) who lived and died in the village of Auchmithie, Scotland. Historical fiction is based on real-life characters in history, with the addition of imagined actions and events.

The coconut scent of wild gorse came in waves; their pea-shaped flowers crowned the earth in a halo of bright gold, lighting the hills as far as the smuggler's caves at Red Head. You could smell the turn in the weather. The old *Cailleach*, her teeth like rusty pegs and hair of frosty white would soon be chased away by *Brighde*. The snowdrops and primrose were awakening, and white-throated *linty* fledgelings were calling for life from their hedgerow nests.

Elizabeth Cargill kilted her long woollen skirts about her thighs, bent her knees, braced her muckle back against the dark wood hull of the McKorn and heaved. She and her fellow fisher-wives and lasses dug their heels into the shingle and the boat rasped its way across the pebbly beach to meet the white frill of water's edge. Her husband Thomas Cargill, dressed for sea in his greasy, blue wool *gansie* stood waiting. "Up you come Tam". Elizabeth hoisted her husband onto her back, wrapped his sturdy legs around the girth of her hips, and waded bare-foot into the bitter-cold of the North Sea. "Yur gettin' heavier by the year. Nae mare tatties for you" she laughed, as she ferried her male cargo, dry and warm for now, to the waiting boat. Next, she lowered her lad James in with the other husbands, sons, and brothers. It was time to catch the sweet whitefish.

Dr. Lorraine Gibson

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Elizabeth Cargill (Coffee Bets) 1830-1906, (photographer unknown).
Photographs courtesy of Darlene Spink and Gordon Findlay. Photographs are in the public domain.

Elizabeth Cargill (Coffee Bets) 1830-1906, (photographer unknown).
Photographs courtesy of Darlene Spink and Gordon Findlay. Photographs are in the public domain.

Elizabeth adjusted the cotton ties on her white bonnet and stretched her back. Standing knee-deep in the wash of the oars, her shadow lengthened and formed a rippling watery twin, backlit by the last lemony light of dusk. She peered as far as she could into the darkening navy sea until the night closed around the shapes and voices of the departing men.

For forty-four winters Elizabeth had followed the well *kent* patterns of Auchmithie fisherfolk. She had listened to the echoes of centuries, from atop the rugged cliffs on Scotland's east coast. For as long as memory could fathom, her kinfolk had heeded the call of the sea: this capricious mistress called to their bellies—called to the dwindling coin in the women's purses. All too often, it called to the men and kept them for its own. Six Spink's and two Cargill's swallowed by the sea within the space of ten years. And then there was poor David Spink's wife, left a widow with six *bairns* to feed, the youngest not yet one month old. The villagers knew the men had done the right thing for the boat: some might call it superstition, but she knew no-one had taken any treacherous pig meat to eat onboard, and no unearthly pigeon had come to the men while at sea. "Och, God help us all" she thought. Sometimes it was beyond acceptance that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

As a young lass Elizabeth had been given her *bye*, the name she would be known by. Nicknames like 'Tammie tak-your time', 'Dainty Davie', and 'Laughing Pete', were a necessity in a village where names, both first and last, wore the repetition of generations. Elizabeth's *bye* was Coffee Bets. Her deep-set eyes were palest aquamarine, fitting for a woman of the water; they shone as lights from a strong-boned face the colour of dark coffee. Her hair, parted in the centre, was caught in a loose bun at the nape: once black as black—it no longer held the sheen of winter's raven. But for all that she was still a striking looking woman. Outsiders remarked on her dignity and poise, a trait that set her out from many of the fisherwomen.

As Bets turned from shore to home, she prayed for a good slack tide for the men to shoot and haul the lines. All day and every day she bent her body to survival: mussel shelling before dawn, baiting and spreading the lines over flattened dune grass, then skilfully laying the dressed lines in sculls—safeguard for a tangle free flow. Picking up a jasper pebble she rolled her thumb over its smooth green, sea-washed surface. Beauty could be found in this hard way of life—peace of a kind in the rhythms of her known world. She lit her clay pipe, clamped her teeth on the stem, and setting her eyes up the steep brae started out towards cottage and sky. Pleiades promised a clear night.

As she leaned into the slope towards her waiting daughters she chanced a memory. As a young lass she'd wed Thomas Spink. Wedding party honours had fallen, as tradition dictated, to the oldest woman in the village. The oldest wifie had danced out in front, her striped skirts swirling as she led them the three miles to St Vigean's kirk. Bets smiled as she remembered the old wifie stopping from time to time to sip from her whisky glass as the crowd clapped and sang. Och, but those days had long since passed. No point daydreaming about what ifs or what might have been. But the mind has its own way of working, and against her wishes, she found herself wondering if any of the other wives had imagined marrying a different man: did they ever think of bringing the thighs of a man other than their husband around their hips as they waded to the boats. There were some braw looking men in Auchmithie and she had not been short of suitors. "Stop your nonsense", she said out loud, chiding herself for such fancies, glad the blushes could not be seen on her dark skin. What she needed was some *scran* and bed. Memories and worries would have to bide their time.

Bets birthed Mary her first-born in 1855. By 1872 Jessie, Elizabeth, James, Isabella, and Barbara had followed. Six living *bairns* in all—five lassies and a lad. Aye, she was a lucky woman. She trusted they would keep the way of the fish, expected they would they wear the clothes and speak the dialect that marked them out as Auchmithie fisherfolk.

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She dearly hoped they would not wear the scorn of outsiders; those who mocked the women lifting their skirts to carry their men to the boats; those who looked down on their cloistered way of life. People feared difference, that much she knew.

She rose while the moon had not yet welcomed dawn. A thick white *haar* lay over the water like a ghostly blanket. She sang out to her second eldest to come and look. "Is that not a strange sight Jessie"? True winter was just one month gone and it seemed too early for a true sea fog. "Och Ma, you're aye that superstitious. It's not an omen, it's just a bit warmer this year than last". Bets tried to close her ears, to shut out the voice of her mother Jane and the tales of strange happenings on the water: she allowed herself to be convinced that all was right with the world and set about her chores. Scooping handfuls of hardwood sawdust into the *kail pot* she set that at the bottom of the old whisky barrel. Tam had sunk the old barrel, with its top and base removed, a full foot into the earth. Neither fish nor barrel would feel the might of fierce coast winds. She set the kail pot smoking, *blathered* about this and that with the other women, her ears attuned to the sound of returning oars.

The chill morning air filled with the rich scent of history. The women breathed the *weel-kent* smell of smoking oakwood. Bets readied the fish, gutting, salting, and drying them, then tying each fish tail-to-tail with lengths of jute twine. She hung the paired fish over the smoking barrel on hardwood sticks, layering dampened sackcloth over the top to tamp any unwanted flame. She would tend the fish until the skin crisped and thickened to a deep coppery bronze.

By daybreak the returning boats touched the shoreline. The fisher-lasses and wives took their turns up and down the brae, some carting close to 50lbs of catch. They ferried the *drookit* men from boat to shore, then packed the creels with fish, and walked the twenty miles to Dundee to sell the fresh haddock and *smokies* for shillings.



Smoking the haddock. Woman unknown. Photograph courtesy of Darlene Spink.
(Photographer unknown)

Bets knew her way of life was changing. When she was not quite thirty winters, one hundred-and-twenty-three Cargills' had risen and slept in Auchmithie. The other two-hundred-and-fifty-two living souls in the village had mostly been Spinks', Swans', Swankies', and a few Smiths' and Beatties'. But the young ones were leaving, lured the three short miles south to the stone harbour of Arbroath; a town with trade a'plenty and no steep *brae* to climb.

Her descendants had tried to leave before. The whole village and beyond knew the story of her Cargill forebears being enticed in 1705 to the easier fishing in Arbroath. This was when the Auchmithie families were under bondage to the Ethie Estate and the Earl of Northesk. Bets had sat round the peat hearth as a wee lassie listening to her father John tell the story of how the Earl, angry at the Cargill's leaving, had protested to the Lord Advocate Sir James Stewart, of how the Earl had challenged the freedom of his vassals and won his case to have the families returned. Power always sided with power and money always went to money. Since 1799 the fisher-folk had been free of their bondage. Now, all that stopped folks from leaving was their own will and the want of change. Indeed, the year before she had been born some of her own kin had begun to lay down roots at the *fit o' the toon* in Arbroath, taking with them the ways of the smokie. Only God himself knew if the exodus would continue.

Bets heart failed as the wheel of the twentieth century had barely turned. She had seen beyond the bible's three score years and ten. She had seen the birth of the 'Arbroath smokie'. She would not live to see her plentiful descendants cast their nets into the twenty-first century. She would not hear, how her three times great-grand-niece Darlene would speak so proudly of her, and how she wished she had listened more closely to the stories told to her by grandparents and great-grandparents. She could not have known that the smokie would gain protection like a fine French champagne. Nor could she have imagined Arbroath smokies flying over oceans to kitchens of *Red Lichtie* expats and Michelin starred chefs. Let us raise our glass to Coffee Bets, to the strong, unsung fish-wives and lasses of Auchmithie, each of whom could rightly say, '*Wha's like us? Gey few an' they're a' deid*'.

Glossary.

Cailleach – a figure in Scottish mythology associated with the bringing of winter, in particular, the raising of wild weather such as storms and strong winds. The old Cailleach is depicted as an old woman or old hag.

Brighde's – a Celtic goddess known in Scotland as being associated with the bringing of spring and summer. She is considered by some to be a mirror deity to the old Cailleach.

Muckle – strong.

Linty – linnet (bird).

Gansie – water resistant thick wool jersey.

Bye – nickname. The name a person is known by.

Scull – a large, oval shaped wicker basket with a shallow scooped appearance.

Brae – a steep slope.

Bairn – a young infant or child.

Scran – food.

Bide – have patience, pass time.

Haar – thick white sea fret/fog that rolls in from the water.

Kail Pot – metal pot.

Blethered – gossiped, chatted.

Well Kent – well known, well understood.

Drookit – very wet.

Creel – a deep, often crescent shaped, high-sided wicker basket carried on the back and held by a woven strap that stretched around the front and above the breast.

Fit' o' the Toon – foot of the town.

Arbroath Smokie – haddock (fish) smoked whole (in the round).

Red Lichtie – a person from Arbroath.

Wha's like us? – Who is like us?

Guy few an' they're a' deid – Very few and they are all dead.

Many thanks to the people, websites, historians, and friends on social media, who have been so very helpful in providing and sharing information (and photographs) in relation to Elizabeth Cargill (Coffee Bets) and fishing life in Auchmithie. Special thanks go to the relatives and descendants of Elizabeth Cargill who were so willing to share the history of their ancestor. In particular: Kev Cargill of Arbroath; Darlene Spink, born in Auchmithie, three times great-grand-niece of Elizabeth Cargill. Darlene now lives in Arbroath; Kev Spink, previously of Montrose, Scotland with strong familial links to Arbroath. Kev now lives in Queensland, Australia; Gordon Findlay, social historian and genealogist whose mother's family were fishers in Auchmithie and Arbroath. Gordon now lives in New Zealand.

Social Media

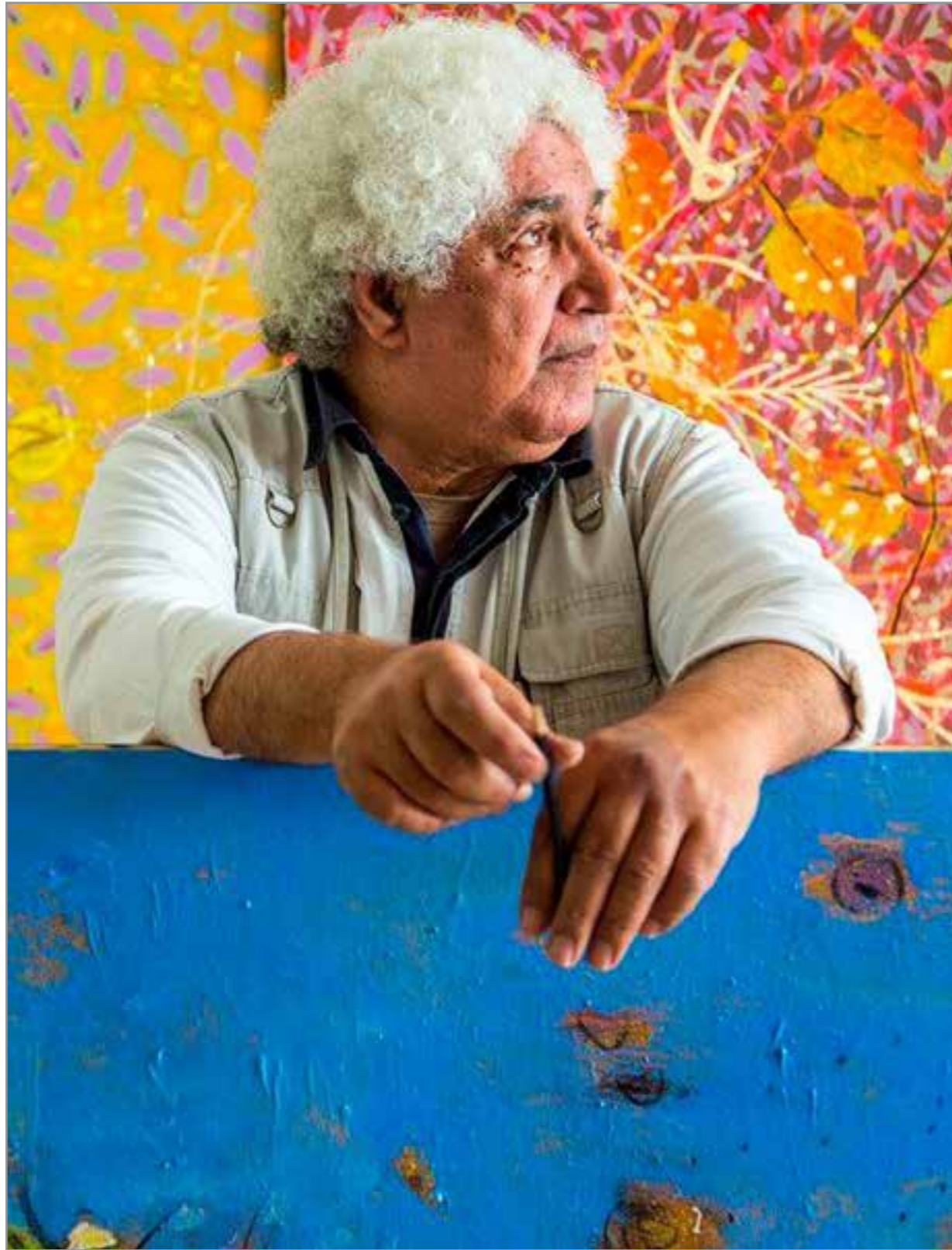
Facebook members of Red Lichties Wordwide, Arbroath, Angus.
Contributors to: <https://www.Silander.Scot/auchmithiefamilies>
Contributors to: <https://www.Tapatalk.com/groups/auchmithieroots>

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Fish smokehouse in Arbroath. Photograph by Lorraine Gibson, 2024.



Abdel Wahab Al Abdel Mohsen (1951) is an Egyptian visual artist. He graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Alexandria, Graphic Department, 1976. He received his master's and doctorate from the Cairo College of Fine Arts. Abdul Mohsen participated in many local and international artistic events and won many local and international awards for his works in engraving and printing, and his works were acquired in many institutions, museums, Arab countries and others. He runs the Abdel Wahab Abdel Mohsen Foundation for Culture, Arts and Development, where the Foundation holds an annual event (Al-Burulus Forum for Painting on Walls and Boats). The creative project of Abdel Mohsen is linked to the nature of his living place. He draws inspiration from his visual situations and formulations from his environmental, geographical, and cultural elements. The artist dealt with these data and formulated them into visual emotions in which he invoked multiple techniques that included engraving, printing, photography, and drawing, in addition to multiple other media such as sound, moving images, and composite works.

Dr. Salwa Gouda is an Egyptian literary translator, critic, and academic at the English Language and Literature Department at Ain-Shams University. She holds a PhD in English literature and criticism. She received her education at Ain-Shams University and California State University in San Bernardino. She has published several academic books, including "Lectures in English Poetry, and "Introduction to Modern Literary Criticism" and others. She has also contributed to the translation of "The Arab Encyclopedia for Pioneers," which includes poets and their poetry, philosophers, historians, and men of letters, under the supervision of UNESCO. Additionally, her poetry translations have been published in various international magazines.

DR. SALWA GOUD,

reviews

ABDEL WAHAB AL ABDEL MOHSEN

Fifty Years of Art

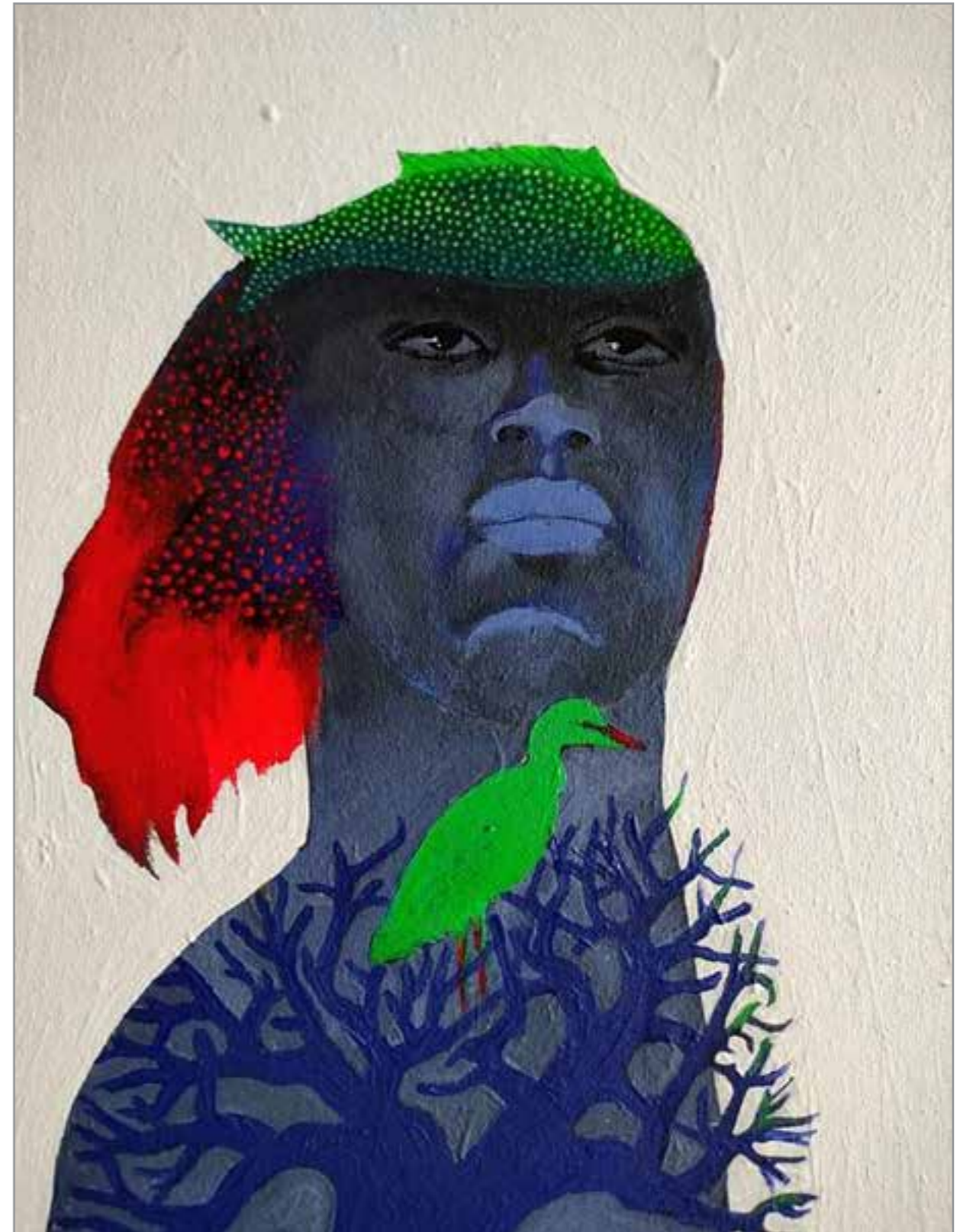
Egypt has long been a hub of artistic talent, with a rich history of creativity and innovation that spans centuries. Abd ElWahab Abd ElMohsen (1951), the Egyptian visual artist, is a renowned artist who has made significant contributions to the field of visual art over the course of fifty years. His artistic journey has been marked by creativity, innovation, and a deep exploration of various artistic techniques and styles. Throughout his career, Abd El-Wahab has experimented with different mediums, including painting, sculpture, and mixed media. His versatility and willingness to push the boundaries of traditional art forms have allowed him to create a diverse body of work that is both visually captivating and thought-provoking.

One of the defining characteristics of his art is his ability to blend elements of traditional Arab culture with contemporary artistic expressions. His works often incorporate his own personal life in his village, which is located near the Mediterranean and represents his first source of inspiration and beauty. This fusion not only shows his deep appreciation for his cultural heritage but also serves as a means of bridging the gap between different artistic traditions. Over the years, he has exhibited his artwork in numerous galleries and museums around the world, gaining recognition and acclaim for his distinctive style. His pieces have been praised for their intricate details, vibrant colors, and the emotional depth they evoke in viewers.

Abdel Wahab Al Abdel Mohsen

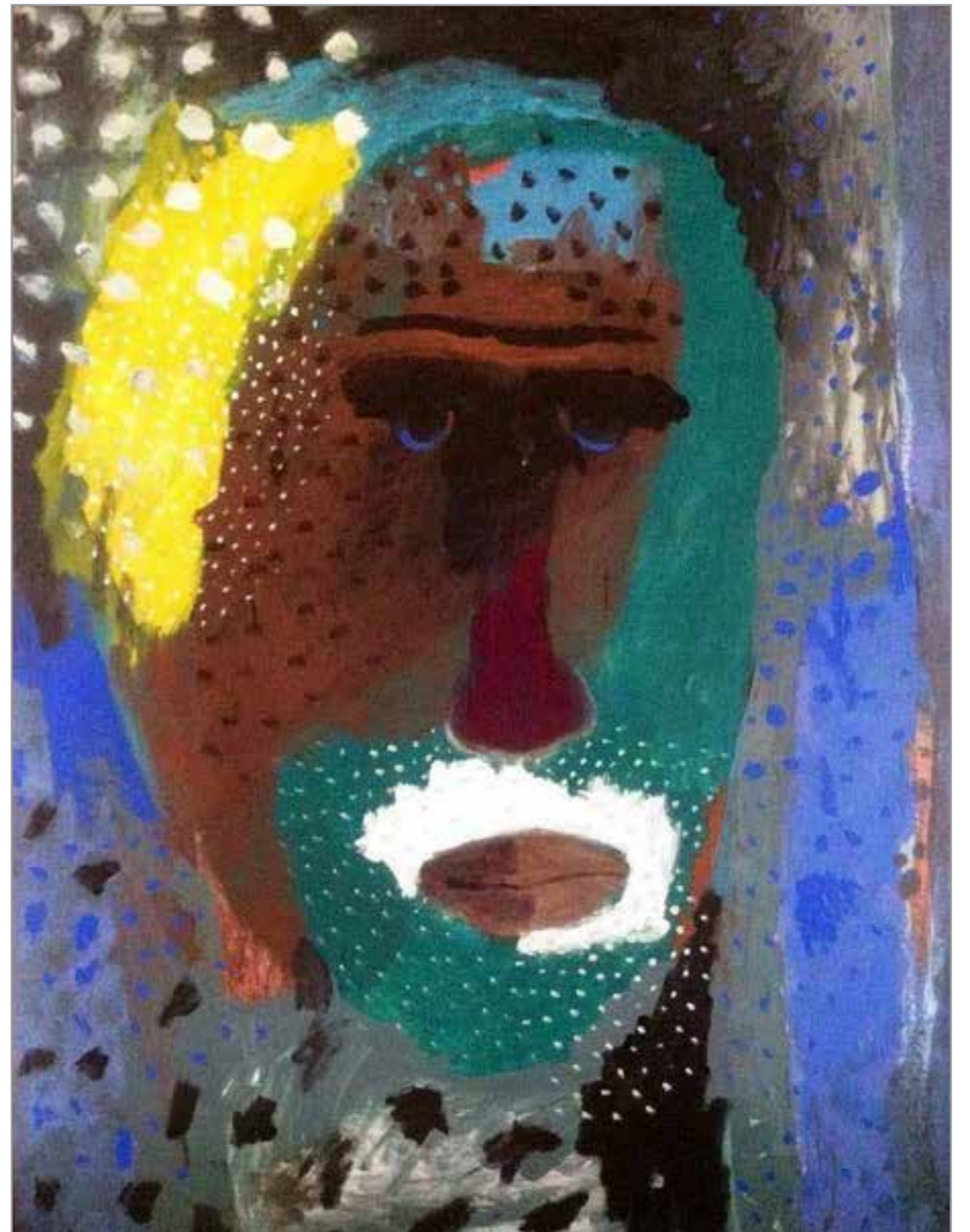
Abdelwahab Abdelmohsen's artistry goes beyond mere representation, as he seeks to evoke emotion and nostalgia in his viewers. His paintings are more than just visual interpretations of the sea and village life; they are windows into a world of beauty, tranquility, and introspection. In a world that is often chaotic and fast-paced, Abdelwahab Abdelmohsen's art offers a welcome respite, a chance to pause and reflect on the beauty of the natural world. His work serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and cherishing our environment, as well as the rich cultural heritage that is embedded in our surroundings. Through his vibrant and evocative paintings, he transports viewers to a world of calm and tranquility, inviting them to appreciate the simple wonders of nature.

Furthermore, Abd ElWahab Abd ElMohsen is known for his deep exploration of themes related to identity and the intricacies of human existence. Through his artwork, he delves into the depths of life, searching for the essence of identity in a world filled with complexities and contradictions. One of the defining features of his work is his commitment to pushing boundaries and challenging conventional norms. His art reflects his deep contemplation and introspection as he seeks to unravel the mysteries of life and the self. His graphic concept is based on authentic experiences, techniques, and understanding, such as his work on the lakes or the Egyptian countryside and his keen interest in the engraved line and the intersections of visual perception at a point of intense sensitivity. In Abdul Wahab's work, we inhale the scent of the Nile mud with the eye, where this scent scratches the lens of the eye, penetrating the boundaries to a more profound emotional reality than what the naked eye sees directly. Finally, through his art, Abd ElWahab Abd ElMohsen invites us to embark on a journey of self-discovery and introspection. He challenges us to confront our own beliefs and assumptions, urging us to look beyond the surface and explore the complexities of our innermost selves.



01.









Gopika Nath is a textile artist-craftsman who stitches and writes, threading her syllables into poetry, creative non-fiction and art reviews, where her art practice provides a mirror to the self. Her writings have been published in Bengalaru Review, Brown Critique, Lakeview International Journal of Literature, 100 subtexts and others. For the last seven years she has been inspired by life, as observed, along the Western coastline of the Arabian Sea. Using nature as a catalyst to go within and re-look at her life and living patterns with a renewed perspective. Photography is an important adjunct to her art works that are crocheted, knitted and embroidered. A Fulbright Scholar, alumnus of Central St. Martins School of Art and Design [UK], Gopika lives and works in Goa, India. <https://gopikanath.co.in/>

GOPIKA NATH

PATTERNS IN NATURE

A Photo essay

Living in Goa, along the coastline of the Arabian sea, has been a source of great inspiration for me as an artist and human being. These images of patterns found along the seashore at Ashwem and Morjim in North Goa where the confluence of energies – of sand, water and wind, around the estuary of River Chapora, creating countless, ever-changing patterns on the beaches, of the rills and mud adhesion ripples with water rippling over them, are of particular interest.

I am fascinated by these patterns not just for the beauty they provide in the visual realm, but for the compelling reflection upon patterns in the psyche. Patterns are created by repetition of motifs/lines/tendencies. In the psychological sense, these are often seen as negative. Something that we need to change – tendencies that are destructive. Life is exceedingly complex and to analyse oneself is challenging. But, looking at the way the colliding ripples of water, washing over sand ripples, with wind adding to the rippling effect and the diffused rays of sunshine at dusk, complicating and complimenting the visual panorama, help me see these patterns of colliding energies as mesmerizing and incredibly beautiful. They enable me to look at my own life, with a fresher perspective: to consider that patterns within and without occur with the confluence of energy fields, ever-changing as we grow through life. They are an essential corollary to being, neither good nor bad, but pertinent to existence itself.

These images have been selected from hundreds taken over the last four to five years.



Gopika Nath



Patterns in Nature 1



Patterns in Nature 2



Patterns in Nature 3



Patterns in Nature 4



Patterns in Nature 5



Patterns in Nature 6

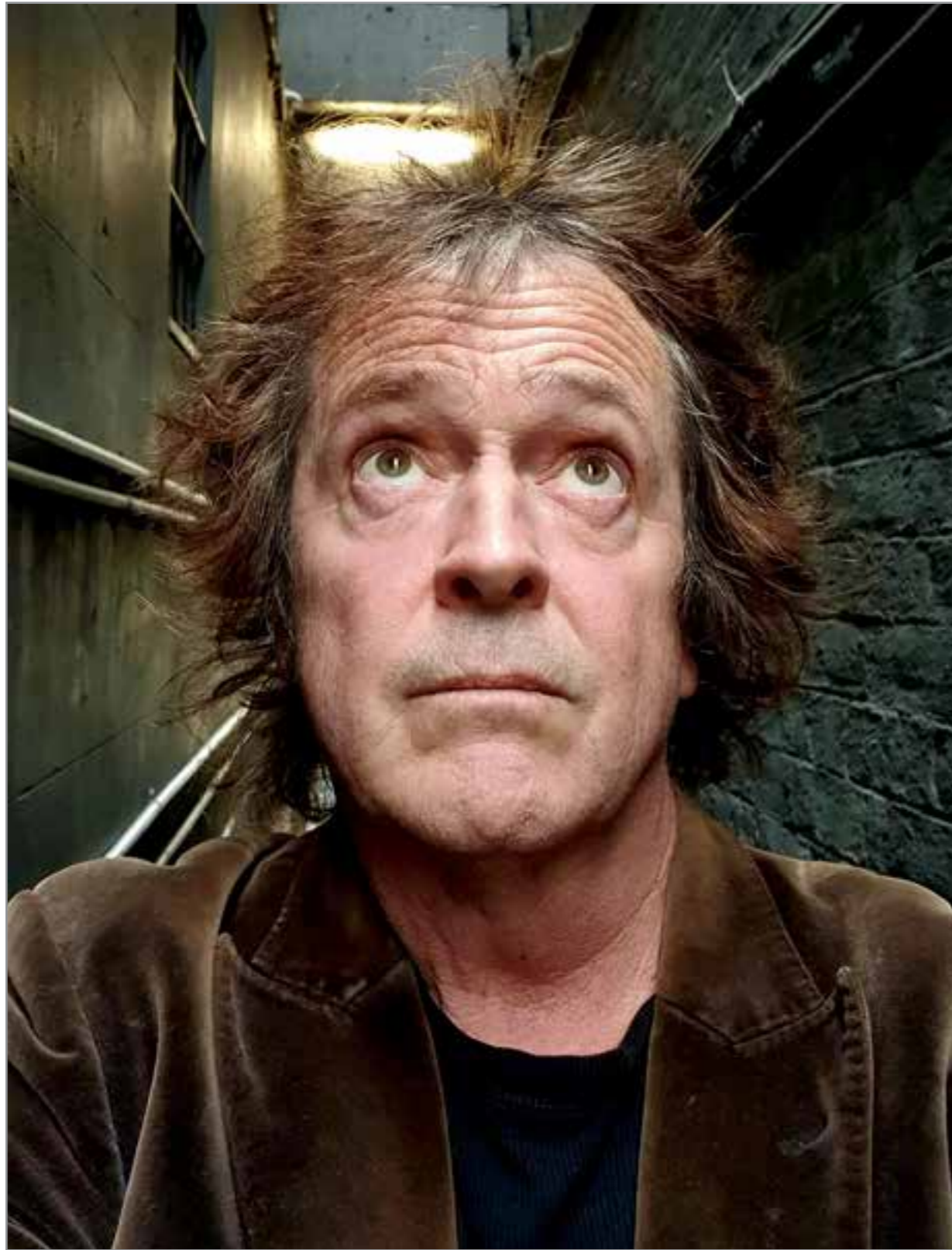


Patterns in Nature 7



Patterns in Nature 8

Tug Dumbly is the pen and stage name of Geoff Forrester, a Nowra-born poet and performer who has lived in Sydney for decades. He has worked lots in radio, venues and schools, and founded a couple of seminal poetry nights in Sydney. He has performed his work as resident-poet on ABC radio (Triple J, ABC 702), and released two spoken-word CDs through the ABC – Junk Culture Lullabies and Idiom Savant. His awards include the Banjo Paterson Prize for Comic Verse (twice), and Nimbin Performance Poetry World Cup (thrice). His poems have appeared in many publications and he has been shortlisted many times for big awards. In 2020 he won the Borranga Poetry Prize, in 2022 he won the Woorilla Poetry Prize, and in 2023 he won the Bruce Dawe Poetry Prize. His first poetry collection, *Son Songs*, came out in 2018 through Flying Island Books. He is also a singer, songwriter and musician who likes photography and nature, especially cicadas.



TUG DUMBLY

SHOALHAVEN - PART I

Photo sketches of home

I grew up in Nowra and couldn't wait to leave, the second school was done. I was going to Sydney to become a pop star. And I did. (Go to Sydney, at least). Nowra was 'a hole', last stop on the train line. (Or Bomaderry was, just across the river, playing a sad Brooklyn to Nowra's sadder Manhattan). I probably never hated the town as much as I felt obliged to make out. The place treated me well as a kid. I grew up with a creek at the bottom of my yard and miles of bush just across the road. I had liberty to roam, to explore and injure myself at will, building rafts and cubbies, slingshots and spears, in the kingdom of the bull ant, brown snake and cliff. And it was a mecca for cicadas, a creature I've been besotted with from the moment Danny Turner showed me how to drown one up from its hole, and then watch the miracle of its hatching, when I was about six. Of course the older I get the more I've come to like my home town, or more generally the big Shoalhaven district in which it sits. I've lived in Sydney for decades but love getting 'home' to the Shoalhaven, with all its beautiful bounty of bush, beach, river, mountain and rainforest – Cambewarra, Kangaroo Valley, Currarong, Jervis Bay ... and all the rest. I still have family living there, including a kind sister who puts me up in her Cambewarra home whenever I like. I have a thousand photos of the place, and the only really unifying theme with this little scattering here is that they're all from the Shoalhaven. I'm lucky to have grown up there, and luckier still that I still have it

Tug Dumbly



Flying Spiders



Kangaroo River



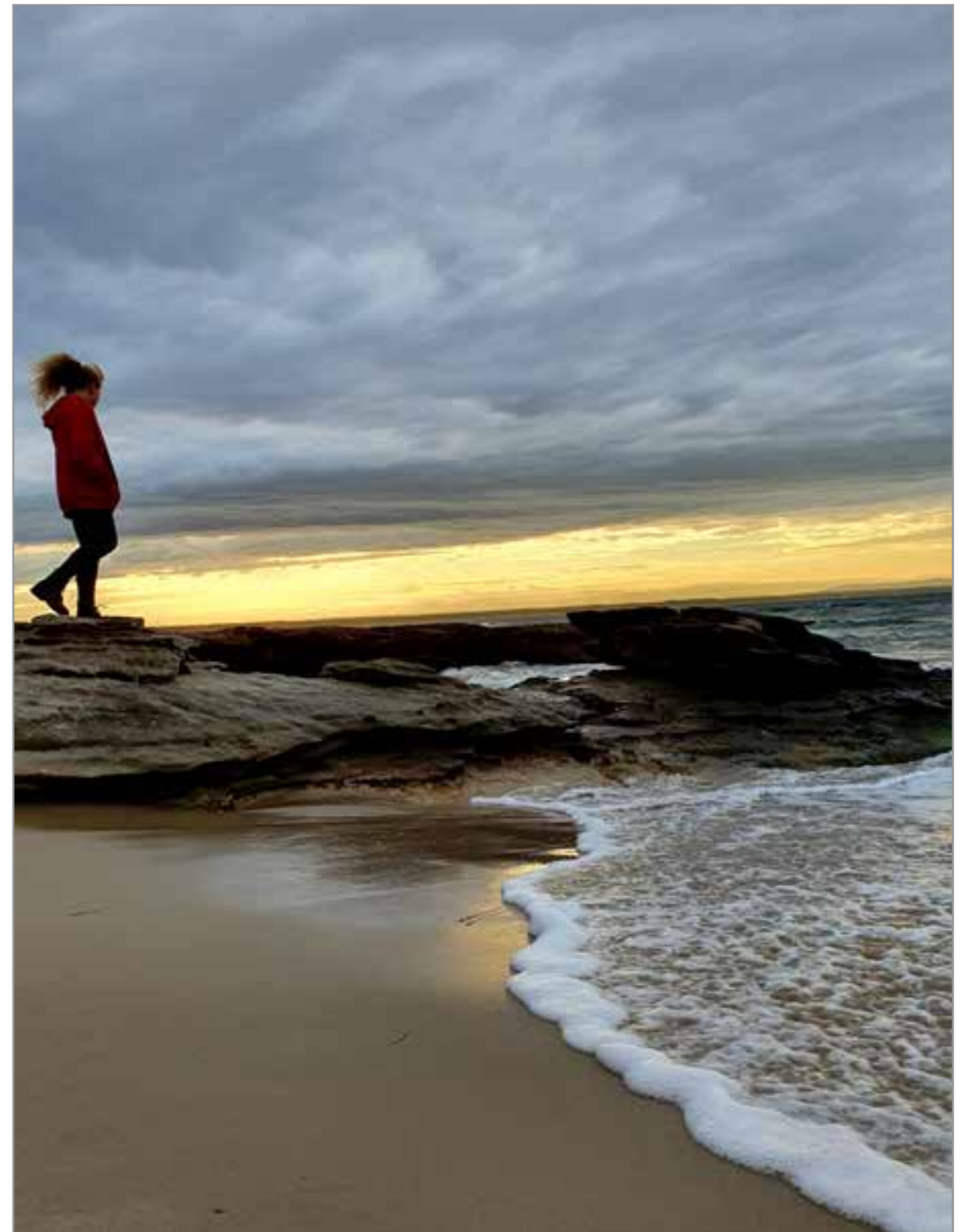
Sea Cave



Sea Mirror



Morning Mirror



Daughter



Fire Eye



Shazzam!

Roydon Cerejo is a digital media professional with over 10 years of experience covering consumer tech for some of the leading media houses in India. He is also an aspiring photographer and enjoys capturing candid moments, mostly of his family, with either his phone or digital camera. Wildlife photography is one of his budding interests, and his goal is to explore more of the rich and varied wildlife habitats of India.



Roydon Cerejo

ROYDON CEREJO

THE TIGERS OF ANDHARI TIGER RESERVE

Tadoba, Maharashtra, India.

Photo Feature

While Ranthambore and Jim Corbett National Park are names synonymous with wildlife in India and get featured prominently in international publications, the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve has quietly earned its stripes (pun intended) when it comes to tiger sightings. Home to about 115 tigers, 155 leopards, wild boar, langoor, gaur, sambar, the elusive sloth bear and 195 species of birds, the chances of seeing amazing wildlife living their best life is 100%.

The tigers are the main draw of the reserve and enjoy a starring role from hotel keys to amateur graffiti. But the guides insist that there is much more to see than just the tigers. The sheer diversity of wildlife is mind-boggling. Birdwatchers will not be disappointed.

Only a small percentage of the reserve is open to tourist activity and about 15-20 tigers regularly make an appearance. The rest live deep in the jungles of the reserve, undisturbed. With endearing names like *Bajrang, Yuvraj, Sonam, Collarwali, Roma, Choti Madhu, Lara, Mama* and *Bhanja*, the tigers are a matter of pride for the guides and drivers who know the area like the back of their hand. When they're not pointing out and rattling off names of trees, plants, animals and birds, they will regale you with stories of the majestic beasts as the 4x4 bounces along dirt paths traversing through each tiger's territory.

The Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve deserves to be experienced at least once in a lifetime. For me, this visit was the first, it's definitely not the last.



Tigress *Choti Madhu* with one of her four newborn cubs. This rare view of a tigress moving her young was a sight to behold and was the season's highlight in Tadoba.



She walked across the road silently and unphased by jeeps full of people watching her.



Yuvraj means young prince in Hindi and he lived up to that name. Silently emerging from the dense forest he gave onlookers a chill colder than the morning air.



Proudly bearing battle scars on his snout, *Yuvraj* struck a very regal pose sending everyone watching into a clicking frenzy



Yuvraj gets going after posing for the cameras. He stalks off into the thicket and blends into the foliage.



Tigress *Collarwali* (named because she had a collar at one point) wandered out of her territory and into Tigress Sonam's territory just to cool off in the Telia lake.

Tang A Pau is a professional photographer living in Saigon. He has 15 years of experience. He is a volunteer photographer with ICF Asia (International Crane Foundation) and of some National Parks in Vietnam. Tang's stories are usually about the natural beauty of places, and species at risk, and encourage environmental awareness. He hopes through his experience and photographs he can highlight all the great benefits that Nature has to offer in Vietnam. Publications: 2021 - Co-author, *Birds of Vietnam*. Co-author, *Atlas of Cattien National Park*.

Special thanks to Nguyen Thuy Hoa.



TANG A PAU

BIRDING IN VIETNAM

Photo Feature

Tang takes you on a fascinating journey through wild Vietnam on a birding trip.

His photographs capture breath-taking images of birds that are both endemic and endangered.

Come, experience wild Vietnam with Tang.

Tang A Pau



Red-winged Laughingthrush



Scaly Laughingthrush



White Browed Fulvetta



Slender Billed Schimitar Babbler



Green Tailed Sunbird



Snowy browed Flycatcher

2010 - 2024



Live encounters

FREE ONLINE MAGAZINE FROM VILLAGE EARTH
JUNE 2024



COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF YUVRAJ BY ROYDON CEREJO