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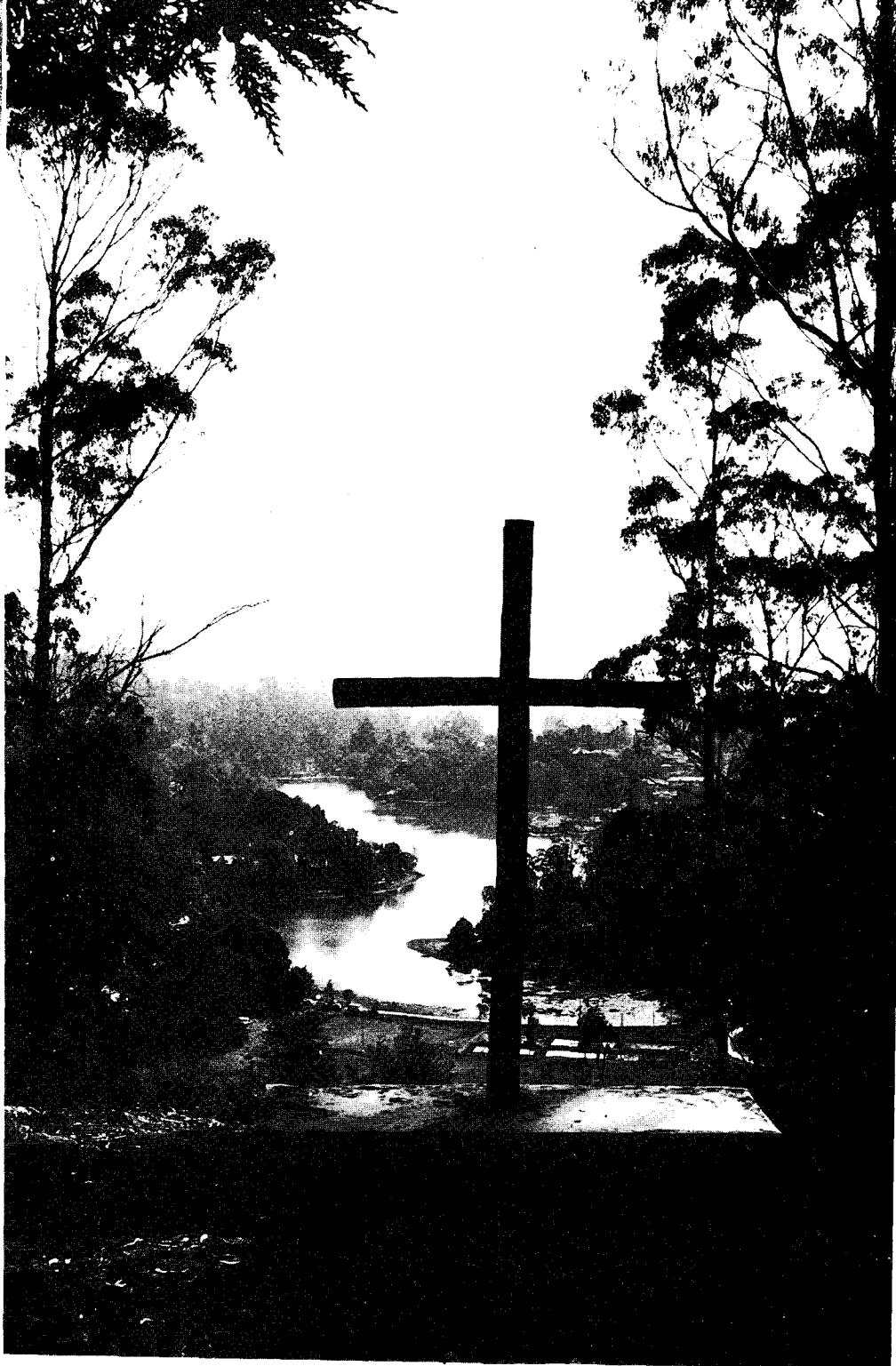
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"Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.  
And the selfsame well from which your laughter  
rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.  
And how else can it be ?  
The deeper that sorrow carves into your being,  
the more joy you can contain.  
Is not the cup that holds your wine the very  
cup that was burned in the potter's oven ?  
And is not the lute that soothes your spirit the  
very wood that was hollowed with knives ?  
When you are joyous, look deep into your heart  
and you shall find it is only that which has given  
you sorrow that is giving you joy.  
When you are sorrowful, look again in your  
heart, and you shall see that in truth you are  
weeping  
for that which has been your delight."

*- Khalil Gibran*

... **A note from the editor**

"Yin - female, soft, receptive, dark, empty;

Yang - male, illuminating, firm, creative, constructive.

Yin is the earth; yang is the heavens.

Yin is cold, darkness, disease, death;

Yang is warmth, light, strength, health and life."

\* \* \*

These expressions, sometimes associated with oriental philosophy, exist in each man's consciousness. Such western psychologists as Carl Jung say human beings come to depend on them, not for living, but solely as a sanction for thought. What does mankind live for? Perhaps it is the Heart. It could be said that the test of Man's "essence" lies in His creative search for what dwells at the center, where there is no permanency or sense of the absolute. His outer search is the understanding or the acknowledgment of the absolutes which lie at the extremes of his existence as a social being; and yet there is always the hope for a heart that has essence primarily before existence.

Truth thrives at any depth of the heart. It is the ambiguous manifestation of that which is. This is the reality of each individual, devoid of society's assurances of security, necessity, obligation, credibility; and perhaps, sanity.

Rock your boat. Set your bounded wings on flight. Free of the dependency on the solid fortitudes of assumed permanency and absolutes. Explore the insecure hidden dark corners never dared to be dreamed of; never dared to be given justice to.

Live your creativity.

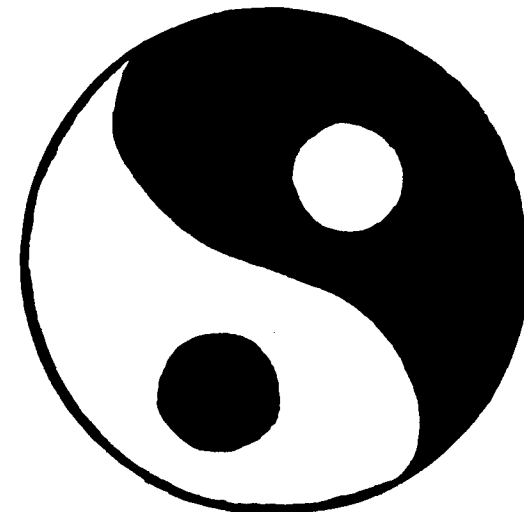
"Mistah Kurtz - he dead" is a phrase from Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness. It is the story of one man's venture into his fascination of the abomination that he found deep in his soul. It is a tale of the man's voyage into the depths of Africa, and consequently into the darkness of his inner being. The death of this 'mistah' ended all ambiguity of his power and powerlessness, his nobility and cowardice, his heroic pretense and reality. Above all, his death allowed for a 'phoenix re-birth' of new ventures; as life can only be complete with consistent intervention of flux.

\* \* \*

We hope you will read these literary works with an open mind, both to the ideas being portrayed by the authors, and to the hope that this first issue is merely a stepping stone for others to come.

*Bishal Mehta*

*Atrayee Chakrabarti*



## Armageddon

It is the end of the world today. They announced it over the news just a while ago. Yes, it is the end of the world, by common consensus.

They asked me about it, too: "When would you like to die?" they asked. "At the end of the world," I said. Funny, that so many others should have said the same thing ... so they fixed the date and here we are.... at the end of the world....Yes...funny.

I wonder what they're all thinking now, all those other people. Are they wondering what I am? Or are they just carrying on with their routine lives, oblivious of what today is? But no, that can't be so. We must have something in common if we made the same decision. Perhaps we are the same people.... What a horrifying thought! Yet, how else could we have come to the same agreement? Death? The end of the world? An uncommon answer. You wouldn't expect it; yet, we all chose it.

I look down, out the window, onto the street below. People swarming all around,...the frenzy of humanity. But wait! No, it can't BE! I take a closer look. The faces! The FACES! They are all the same ....

-Mahin K.

## Balance

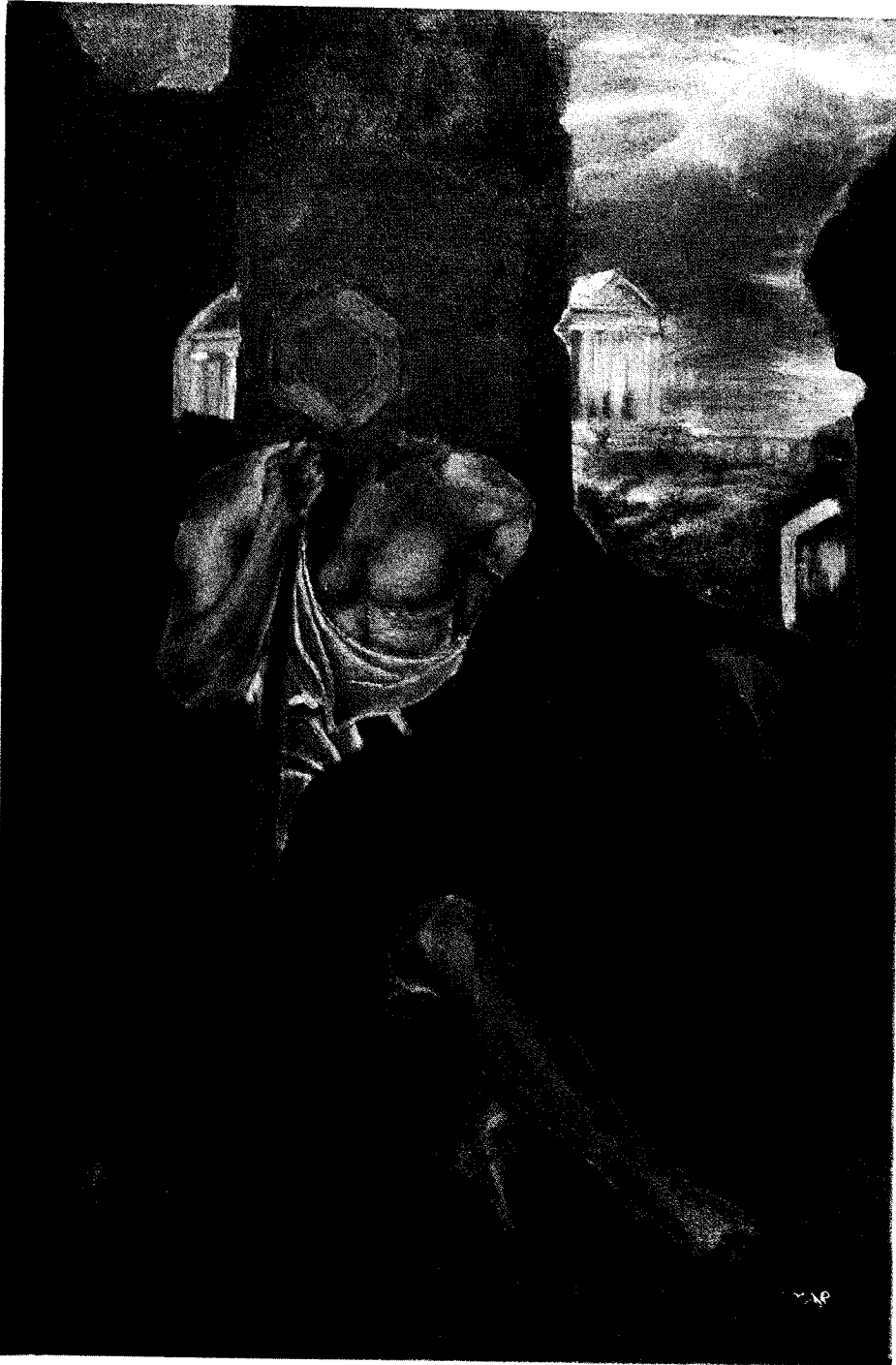
**He** died. As his soul rose up, he saw his prone corpse on the ground; he was rising up as if he still possessed a body. Then he found himself in a place where things boiled and bubbled, appeared and disappeared. Creatures crept upon the scene and then crept back again. Flames curled. Land turned to liquid. Strange beasts grew to huge proportions and shrank again, flesh seemed to flow and reform. Then he was in whirling nothingness. Colours flashed past him, something shrieked, and laughter filled his head. He tried to take a step and stood on a crystal plain; embedded in it, beneath his feet, were millions of beings, of the millions of different races that had ever existed since the beginning of the universe. There were males and females and all had their eyes open; all had their faces pressed against the crystal; all stretched out their hands as if seeking aid. All stared at him. He tried to stamp on the crystal; he hammered at it until his fists were bloody, but the crystal would not crack. He was crossing a bridge of ice. It was melting. Fanged, distorted things waited for him below. The ice creaked. He lost his footing. He fell. He fell into a whirlpool of seething matter that formed shapes and then destroyed them instantly. He saw whole cities brought into existence and then obliterated. He saw creatures, some beautiful, some disgustingly ugly. He saw things that made him love them and things that made him scream with hatred. He took another step and stood knee-deep in slithering flesh that was without shape, but which lived. It began to suck him down. He gasped and forced his body through the stuff. He stood beneath a dome of ice and with him stood a million images. There he was innocent and gay as a child; there he was moody and grim; there he was happy and full of pleasure; there he was writhing in pain; there he was dying. Another step. Blood flooded over him. He tried to

regain his feet. The heads of foul reptilian creatures rose from the stuff and snapped at his face with their jaws. Then he was standing on a ramp which stretched upward over a gulf of sparkling emptiness. Strange sounds filled the air, rising and dying, coming close and falling away. There were hints of menace, hints of beauty, hints of death, hints of everlasting life, hints of terror, hints of tranquillity. A wind seemed to spring up; cool breezes wafted him and hot winds scoured him. He saw faces all around him and many of them he thought he recognized. Some faces were huge and some were infinitely tiny. Eyes watched. Lips grinned. A sorrowful moaning came and went. A dark cloud engulfed him. A tinkling as of glass bells ringing filled his ears. A voice called his name and it echoed and echoed and echoed away forever. A rainbow surrounded him, entered him and made his whole body flush with colour. A strange droning sound came to his ears. It made his brain itch. He wrinkled his scalp. He rubbed his face. The droning increased. His ears

ached. His teeth were on edge. The volume grew. Suddenly, he found himself in a land over which a black sun burned. Light rose from the ground, but the black sun's rays almost extinguished it. Hopping things came towards him. They hopped on several legs and from their bodies sprouted a dozen or more tentacles. Their huge eyes rolled; their massive fangs clashed and they were singing. Then he was flying over a sea of oozing stuff which flung up tendrils at him and sought to drag him down into itself. Sometimes faces appeared in the stuff, sometimes hands raised as if in supplication. Strange forests passed below him and valleys were filled with perpetually burning fire. He saw rivers of molten metal and beautiful castles made all of jewels. He flew over a multicoloured gas that swirled below him and then over a range of mountains, each more than a thousand feet high but each one a perfect cube. Beyond the mountains was a dark jungle and beyond that a crystalline desert. The crystals of the desert moved

constantly, their motion creating an unpleasant tinkling music. Among these crystals moved ochre and crimson beasts of enormous proportion, feeding off the crystals. Then the crystalline desert gave way to a flat, black plain on which a huge youthful face writhed as if composed of a million white worms. Dead, red eyes peered from the face and all the horrors he had ever witnessed could not compare with the simple, tragic horror of that visage. He screamed and his scream blended with that of the tortured face, as the flesh of the face began to putrify and change into a score of foul colours which gave off an incredibly pungent stench. As he watched, the face changed its features. Sometimes it was the face of a middle-aged man, sometimes the face of a woman, sometimes that of a boy - and once fleetingly, it was his own face. Each was a mask of pure eternal pain and anguish. He saw a million years of despair recorded there. And still the face writhed; still the red eyes blazed in terror and agony; still the features changed and

changed and changed and changed....More than a million years. Aeons of misery. Then the face vanished and lighting seemed to flicker through the sudden darkness. Globes of purple light appeared in a rushing turbulent cloud of red and orange. Massive teardrops of green and blue light began to fall all around him. There was the sound of a raging wind, but no wind touched him. An almost human voice echoed on and on and on. Then he was flying through swiftly moving shadows---the shadows of things and people all rushing in the same direction. Below he saw a thousand volcanoes, each one spewing red cinders and smoke, but somehow the cinders and smoke did not touch him. There was a stink of burning, and it was suddenly replaced by the smell of flowers. The volcanoes had become so many huge blossoms, like anemones opening their red petals. Singing came from somewhere: a joyful tune like the song of a victorious army. It died away. There was a laugh, cut off short. The bulk of enormous beasts rose from



seas of excrement, and the beasts raised their square snouts to the skies and groaned before sinking again beneath the surface. A mottled, pink-white plain, apparently of stones appeared, but it was not stones. The plain was comprised entirely of corpses, each one neatly laid beside the other, each one face down. A huge wave advanced toward him. It took the form of a human hand. It clenched itself into a fist and then disappeared. A spring day dawned. He flew over the morning fields as the dew sparkled. Flowers grew in the grass and there were little bright pools of water, tiny rivers. In the shade of oak trees stood horses and cows. A little way ahead was a low, white farm-house with smoke curling from its chimney. Birds sang. Pigs rooted in the farmyard. The fields gradually began to swirl, like stagnant water stirred by a stick. The farm-house spread out to become scum on top of the water. The flowers were now festering growths on the surface. This was pure, unbounded, unchained Chaos. By a

cosmic chance he had entered the Realm of Chaos.

Then there was silence. He was drifting in total blackness and absolute silence, in neither one dimension nor another. Here was the ultimate in justice and the ultimate in injustice. Here Law and Chaos were absent. Here there was no need for equilibrium between the two for this was neutral territory. This was a place to which gods had been banished. It was as vast as space, as timeless as infinity: the middle ground between light and shadow, between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This was where the living-dead dwelt. This was Limbo.

- Roby M.