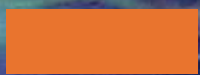




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Inspiration: Sri Aurobindo's

'Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol'

Reference the article in this issue by
Sachidananda Mohanty, pp. 59-70

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I find myself at a loss for words. What can I write after seeing the horrific images and reading accounts of the devastation and despair that defined the second wave of the pandemic over the past months. It will be a while before they fade somewhat, but will never be forgotten. Entire families were wiped out, children orphaned, and people were left gasping for breath. It was surreal; it felt like we were actors in a science fiction film on improbable diseases. The poet Christina Georgina Rossetti wrote this somewhere in 1855 and it rings true for us in the 21st century.

The Plague

*'Listen, the last stroke of death's noon has struck—
The plague is come,' a gnashing Madman said,
And laid him down straightway upon his bed.
His writhed hands did at the linen pluck;
Then all is over. With a careless chuck
Among his fellows he is cast. How sped
His spirit matters little: many dead
Make men hard hearted.— 'Place him on the truck.
Go forth into the burial-ground and find
Room at so much a pitful for so many.
One thing is to be done; one thing is clear:
Keep thou back from the hot unwholesome wind,
That it infect not thee.' Say, is there any
Who mourneth for the multitude dead here?*

Coming to the current issue, I hope readers will enjoy the diversity of this collection. The Dr. C.D. Deshmukh Memorial Lecture is a feature of the Summer volumes. This year's lecture, titled 'Indian Constitution: What it Ought to Mean Today', was delivered by

eminent jurist and former Chief Justice of India, Justice M. N. Venkatachaliah. This dovetails with an article on Indian democracy, followed by articles on literature and international relations. The photo essay by Sanjeet Chowdhury is on ‘Chandernagor: Little Europe’, which is a journey through this historic city.

The summer heat has finally broken and the much-awaited monsoon is here, bringing a little cheer. But the worst of the pandemic is far from over and collective memory is short. Let us learn from the past to limit the impending third wave.



OMITA GOYAL