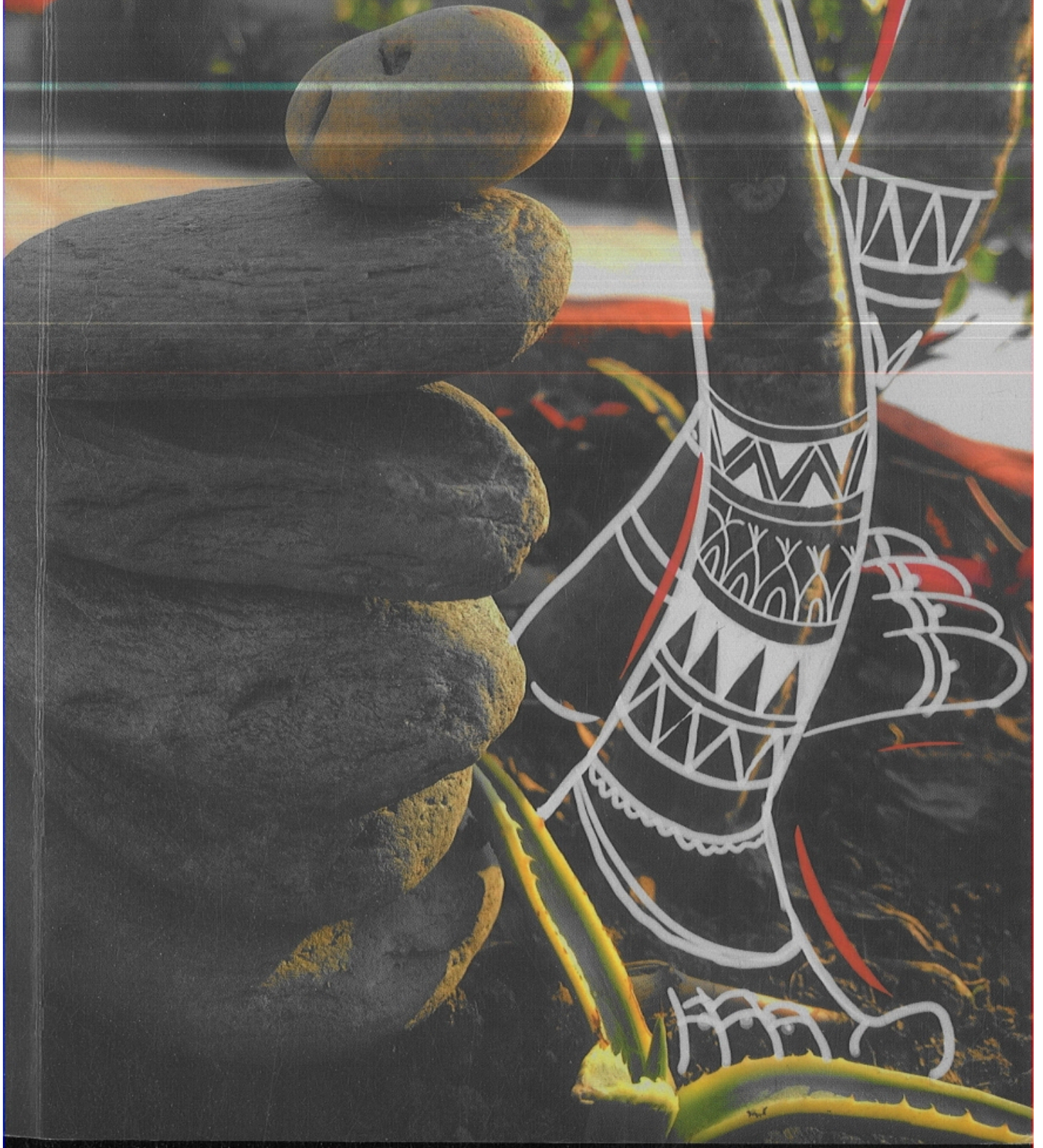




# Indian Literature

Sahitya Akademi's Bimonthly Journal

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## Neelesh Raghuwanshi

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### *Paandan*: A Box for the Betel

With my first salary  
I will buy a *paandan* for my father

A little one  
Which will hold dreams of my eleven years  
And  
The happiness of a lifetime.

*Pandan* is a small box  
I will place lovely stars in it  
And sky  
Don't mind —  
In the sky and the stars, I have always seen you father.

Mother will fill the *paandan* with betel leaves and nuts, each day.  
*Paandan* will hide in father's palm  
Like a rabbit  
Or  
Like my childhood in his memories.

### The Girl Who Writes Poetry

Whenever a girl writes a poem  
She is told, "learn to work on a sewing machine"  
Stitch clothes, knit sweaters  
Don't weave the words to be a poet  
All this is a waste of time.

Live like girls  
Don't roam the streets  
Don't be a part of debates  
First, learn all the household chores  
And if there is any time left after this  
Then you may try poetry.

Oh Marina Tsvetaeva  
Would they also tell you, time and again  
Live like girls  
Did you also stitch clothes and knit sweaters  
Or did you roam the streets  
Looking at the sky  
You must have also heard such taunts  
You must have also been upset  
Still you kept looking out of the window.

Oh Marina  
Just as you  
I will also be a poet  
While sewing clothes on the machine, I will stitch poems  
While knitting sweaters I will weave words  
Will discuss your poems  
Sitting under the open sky.

### Cauldron

An old and beautiful cauldron  
Is filled with grain  
Sometimes with water  
Earlier, it used to be full of dreams.

That cauldron  
Was brought by a young bride in her dowry  
All along she must have seen in it  
The way to her house  
It was full of childhood  
It was full of days set in stars.

That woman is not the same anymore  
Nor are the days full of stars  
The joyful dreams could not be saved

Cauldron is still there  
Alive in it is the life of  
Her parental and marital homes  
Still left in it  
Is the fragrance of life  
Still left is a woman's call  
Which tells  
How that woman kept her home together.

None shall break  
None may whither  
May her innocent dreams be saved  
Caught in this disarray  
The cauldron rolls all over the house.

### **I Desire Love**

I desire love  
Which is like torrential rain  
Like a dense shade in scorching sun  
Like a bonfire in freezing winter  
Such is the love I want

Like the plants that spring up and rivers brimming  
The dewdrops on the vast grassland  
The moon in the dark clouds  
Like the first ray of the rising sun  
I want such love

Like a blooming red rose  
Like a grin on the face  
I want love which flickers like a light in the dark  
I wish a love unknown, unheard of  
Just as the first sight.

I need love which takes you to the finish line, crossing the rugged roads.

I want love  
Which can hold the whole world  
That is the love, I desire.

*Translated from the Hindi by Rekha Sethi*

