



OUTPOST

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The Rock Concert

An article by Barishkem K. Pohti

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THIS WEEK'S THE PLAYLIST

A peu près

Featuring:

- On brulera by Pomme
- Alright (feat. Russell Dickerson) by Clara Mae
- The Wether by Lawrence
- Coffee by Elise Huang

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SKIRMISHES

-Ojas Krish, X

2020, ever the stranger to unfortunate events, has encountered yet another conflict. Enter two former Soviet Union territories, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Last week saw heavy fighting between the two countries, threats from both ends and deaths on both sides. In a conflict stretching back to the fall of the Soviet Union, these two countries have been constantly warring. Azerbaijan and Armenia are fighting over the tiny region of 'Nagorno-Karabakh'; which is recognized as part of Azerbaijan but under the control of ethnic Armenians. It had voted to become part of Armenia, which sparked a war which lasted till 1994. Since then, it has remained part of Azerbaijan, if only on the map. However, it is inhabited by separatist Armenians who are backed by the Armenian government. Negotiations between the two countries have never resulted in true peace, and the war continues to claim lives to this day. What further adds fuel to the fire is the ethnic conflict between Islam majority Azerbaijan and Christian Armenia. Both of these groups have harbored tensions for a very long time, and both seek control of the Caucasus. Another interesting factor to this volatile tangle is the role of Russia which can be traced back to the Soviet Union to which both had belonged as satellite states. The Soviets were notorious for not knowing how to effectively solve ethnic conflicts without mass genocide, and they seemed to have passed it on to their neighbours. Russia, today has good relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and is willing to play the role of a negotiator. It is apparent that Russia wants to curtail the growing Turkish power in its backyard. Armenia, keen

on bilateral talks and a third party intervention is quick to point out what an involvement of Russia could turn into; another Syria. A worrying thing in recent years is Turkey's aggression and ambition to portray itself as the new Caliphate. Turkey was heavily involved in the Syrian civil war, in Kurdistan, and is now supporting Azerbaijan with military help along with sending in Islamist militia against a far weaker Armenia. Turkey's foreign policy should be a source of worry for Europe, as they look to further their influence aggressively. The weakening European Union stares helplessly on even as France promised to stand by Armenia with military help while Germany keeps its focus glued to selling Volkswagens to China. The question that begs attention is what these developments could mean for the rest of the world? Firstly, both countries are in the Caucasus, a strategic mountainous location in south-eastern Europe, where ethnic groups and countries have vied for total control. This region, while part of Azerbaijan, is controlled by Armenians, which has led to ethnic conflict between Christian Armenia and Muslim Azerbaijan. If peace is not negotiated, this war could spill into the rest of Europe. Both countries have powerful neighbors, such as Turkey and Russia, each having fought their wars and their causes on another's backyard. Ethnic conflicts are not new to Eastern Europe, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and if we don't see a swift end to the ongoing aggression, it will engulf all of Europe and the world.

The Rock Concert

-Bariskhem K. Pohti, VIII

It was a very hot summer day in suburb New York. It was 9:30 AM and Sam Brian, a boy with red hair and a short stature gulped down his breakfast and dashed out of the front door. The door slammed behind him as his parents nodded their heads in dismay.

Sam managed to reach his school bus, just as it was about to leave the bus-bay. He sat next to his friends, Emma and Dave on the last seat. Dave was a very bright student with round glasses and green eyes and Emma with her long hair and a serious expression, was really a pixie at heart. Both Emma and Dave were used to Sam's late coming. Sam noticed that the duo was talking about the Rock Concert at school the next day and happily joined in. Neither noticed when they reached school. The day thereon circled around their maneuverer to outwit and outrun Jason the class bully.

After school, as Sam got home with the intention of practising on his skateboard, he was surprised to find a man waiting for him in his room. His surprise would have quickly turned into a terrifying scream had the man not begun to speak softly to him. "Tomorrow you will all face a grave danger at the rock concert. You and your friends must act else much will be lost," the man told Sam. Sam just stared at the man with his jaws open unable to put to words his many questions. The man gave him three pen like gadgets and with a spark of bright light, was gone. Unsure of what to make of it, Sam kept the gadgets hidden in his bag. Next day, he woke up earlier than usual and got to his school bus well on time. This surprised everyone in the

bus including Emma and Dave.

Just before they reached school, Sam told them about the strange man's visit. Both Dave and Emma listened transfixed. He gave them each their pen like gadgets. The sky had turned dark blue and the school auditorium was bustling with students.

As everyone settled, and the rock band came on the stage to perform, several figures wearing balaclava's slipped into the auditorium and had it surrounded. Before the teachers and others could react, they had fired a warning

shot and everyone realised to their horror that they were under attack. Sam, Dave and Emma managed to hide behind a large column unseen.

Unsure what to do next, they decided to switch on their pen like gadgets.

Before they knew it, they were dressed in super suits that seemed to know what to do. The trio were soon in the air and to everyone's bewilderment, soon had the masked men heaped on the floor. Before long, the protective sirens of the police could be heard along with sighs of relief.

The friends despite the odds managed to keep their identities hidden.

The trio learned to work and train as a team and their friendship became stronger. While Sam never again met the strange man, the friends realised that they had been blessed with these special powers so that they could shoulder immense responsibility.

They knew, the secret of their success lay with each other and together, they were powerful. Thus, began their adventures.



Illustration: Prapty Borah

An Inked Narrative

Centuries before tattoos became fashion statements, the 'Tanws' - tracing their origin in the Apatani Plateau of Arunachal Pradesh- began tattooing their womenfolk. Having a rich oral tradition and scarcely any written records, this is a modern folklore about why the Apatani women have sizeable nose plugs and tattoos adorning their faces. Today, a tattoo is a quintessential accessory that many celebrities and artists are aquatinted with. However, my very own grandmothers were constrained to get their faces tattooed when they were hardly seven. Elderly Tanw women to this day can be seen with a thick blue line running from their forehead to the tip of their nose and smaller lines on their chins. Walking down their memory lanes, I witness the horrendous sight of thorns being dipped into a paste of soot and pig fat, slowly hitting their faces with a cane - much unlike the present-day ink and tattoo guns. The more their wounds got infected, the larger and clearer the tattoos appeared. Nose and ear

modifications were correspondingly painful processes. Why then did they mutilate their faces? The Apatani women were believed to be exceptionally beautiful, and although outer beauty is merely the parameter on which one's aesthetic senses are contented, the desire of it makes many exceed their limits and turn to wrong practices. They were extremely susceptible to getting kidnapped by neighbouring tribes that would raid the villages. In a desperate attempt to protect them, the village elders proposed that women of all ages should have their faces tattooed and their noses plugged to make them look unattractive to the abductors. In the Apatani view, it became a typical rite of passage. To the women, life was beyond pleasing physical appearances and their decision of letting go of it by going through the agonising aforesaid processes indeed evinced their courage.

Although not many women born in the last three decades have chosen to get their faces inked, the elderly Apatani women consider the tattoos and nose plugs, called Yapiñ Hullo, as an integral part of being a Tanw. Over the years, the nose plugs embedded into the local culture and custom as an inseparable part of it. What began as a precautionary measure to protect the women from abduction, grew to become a vital part of Apatani culture and tradition. These tribal customs are today slowly being consigned to history.

Culture goes beyond traditional cuisines and colourful attire. It is a way to navigate one's place within the world. The tribal youth do not consider banning facial art as a loss of heritage. With modern education and cultural amalgamation, they are swiftly turning away from practices they cannot identify themselves with. The anecdote of why the women underwent facial deformation is an essential one which the Apatani keep in their collective memory. It has become a reminiscence of the times gone by as the government imposed a ban on it in the 1970s. Notwithstanding, the remaining bearers of this practice are proud of this identity, for these are the last fragments of an era that is now chronicled in the bygone days.

-Takhe Tamo Reela, XI



RANDOM

-Nomera Ibnat Alam, XII

If you still haven't watched "Atypical" on Netflix, you're probably just wasting your subscription. This is however a random thought that stays connected to an incident that took place a week back. I was re-watching the show for the nth time when I received a text late at night. I usually don't check notifications when I am glued to watching what I was. Before finally shutting eye in the wee hours, I read the text. It was from a friend. It read- "By the time you read this, I'll be gone forever and it'll probably be too late." For a while I stayed gripped by shock unsure how to act. My mind raced through a series of emotions and I chose to latch on to the hope that this was just a hoax and a fast one was being pulled on me. Uncertain I began to call her and since no

one answered, I left a series of texts. This did nothing to assuage my conscience so I texted our mutual friends, asking them after my friend and if anyone else had received such a text from her. It was close to 4am and I realised hoax or not, I had no other option but to call her mother and warn her just in case this was more than I could rationally fathom. It was right then that my friend called back. From a feeling of utter relief, I raced through anger, disbelief and then simple gratitude that she was if nothing, on the other side of the line from me. I am at the best of times awkward in the face of human emotions and quiet incompetent especially when it comes to comforting someone else. I try nonetheless, in my usual weird way. That night my friend and I spoke at length. Rather she spoke and I just listened. I realised she had all these pent up emotions she needed to release. So I sat there with the phone pressed to my ears listening and wondering how none of us have never noticed all that she was going through. The only thing I stressed on was how she must never ever visit the idea of letting go, for life was precious as was she. As the wee hours ushered in the day and the day rolled on to the evening, I stayed in a state of haze fleeting in and out of reality. I couldn't help but weigh all the many probabilities that could have easily turned this into a tragedy. I couldn't help feeling guilty wondering what would have transpired if I had not read the text that night. I realised we all go through problems. Everyday seems like a new challenge and yet this is not a comparison between issues. We need to understand that we have very different levels of tolerance and what seems like a small issue to one might become a trigger for another. The School Song comes fleetingly to memory, 'if everyone would help just one and that one helps another one along, like a fire burning low, every log will make it glow and pass it on'. Perhaps therein, lies our hope and salvation.



Illustration: Ssara Jha

THE EDITOR'S PICK

THE OUTPOST

Illustration: Eloziini Senachena

The winds of change blow from Hong Kong to Bangkok to Nigeria as youth driven movements in these countries demand a change of governance. Moving away from non-alliance India welcomes Pompeo in a strategic two plus two dialogue to make the Quad against China stronger. Security forces pick up Turkey's growing involvement in Kashmir drawing attention to Erdogan's sinister ambitions in the region. As America heads for the election week, Borat 2 rampages through the Republican camp riding on Giuliani's shoulders. As the countdown to the Bihar elections begin, promises take flight from a lakh new jobs to free vaccines.

the middle page ^{#9}

By: Eloziini Senachena



The Quarantine Playlist

Need help finding a gem amidst a sea of monotony? Grab a cup of coffee or tea and dive into the world of these enthralling stories told through tunes, here is a list of some

ON BRULERA BY POMME: Her poetic lyrics lets oneself be enveloped by melancholy and delight at the same time.

ALRIGHT (FT. RUSSELL DICKERSON) BY CLARA MAE: The song is a lovely melody with a great chorus with a contemporary country touch.

THE WEATHER BY LAWRENCE: A song about love, loss and the nostalgia of good old days.

COFFEE BY ELISE HUANG: This little brew of music that young Elise says she wrote on "other people's behalf."

NO TIME TO DIE BY BILLIE EILISH: The new James Bond theme is an unsettling ballad is very much about betrayal.

BEST DAY OF MY LIFE BY AMERICAN AUTHORS: With a medley of instruments from banjo to percussion toys, the song has the lyrical tradition of rock music- stuttering.

Ripple #144

-Moom Lego, XI

*She cried in the corner
Wondering why no one
would answer
But she was just too
young
To understand the
difference
Between a soul and a
body*

Keep It Reel!

The Sundown Show

-Joya Abedin, XI

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Design & Layout: Tanisha Bhadra & Jeremy Jahau

Illustrator: Takhe Tamo Reela, Eloziini Senachena and Tanisha Bhadra

Photo Credit: Letminlun Haokip

Mistress-in-Charge: Ms. Sarmistha Paul Sarkar

Publisher: The Assam Valley School, P.O. Balipara, Dist. Sonitpur, Assam-784101, India

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