

#A NEW WAY OF THINKING

Petrarch and the Birth of Humanism

People travel to admire the heights of mountains and the vastness of oceans, yet neglect their own souls



In 1336, an unusual act took place on a mountain in southern France. Francesco Petrarch, often called Petrarch, set out to climb Mont Ventoux. What made this journey remarkable was not the climb itself, but the reason behind it. He did not go for hunting, trade, or any practical necessity. He climbed simply to see the view from the top.

At a time when most human activity was driven by survival or religious duty, this act stood apart. It reflected curiosity, a desire for experience, and an appreciation of nature for its own sake. When Petrarch finally reached the summit, however, the moment took a deeper turn. He opened a copy of Confessions by Saint Augustine and read a passage that struck him profoundly: people travel to admire the heights of mountains and the vastness of oceans, yet neglect their own souls.

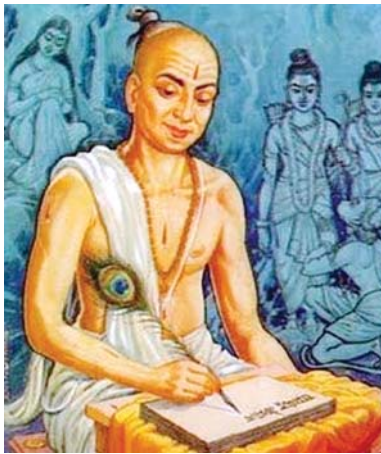
That line transformed the experience. What began as a physical journey became an inward one. Petrarch found himself reflecting not just on the world around him, but on the nature of human existence itself. This moment of self-awareness marked a subtle but powerful shift in thinking. Until then, intellectual life in Europe was largely centered on religious study. But Petrarch began to ask a different question: instead of focusing only on theology, why not also explore the writings of ancient civilizations to better understand human nature? This curiosity led him to the works of classical authors, particularly those of ancient Greece and Rome.

He developed a deep admiration for figures like Cicero, even going so far as to write letters addressed to him, despite the fact that Cicero had lived over a thousand years earlier. These "letters to the dead" were not acts of fantasy, but expressions of intellectual dialogue across time, as Petrarch sought wisdom from the past to enrich the present. In doing so, Petrarch helped revive interest in classical antiquity. He is often



Celebrating Love That Ripens with Time

अद्वैतं सुखदुःखयोः अनुगतं सर्वास्ववस्थासु यत्।
विश्रामो हृदयस्य यत्र जरसा यस्मिन्नहार्यो रसः॥
कालेनावरणात्ययात् परिणते यत् स्नेहसारे स्थितं।
भद्रं तस्य सुमानुषस्य कथमप्येकं हि तत् प्राप्यते॥



A free English rendering of the verse is:

"Blessed indeed is the person who attains that rare love in which two hearts become one through both joy and sorrow; where the heart finds its deepest repose in every stage of life; whose sweetness cannot be diminished even by old age; and which, when the coverings of time have fallen away, matures into the very essence of affection."



When we think of love, our minds instinctively turn to images of young couples, the excitement of first meetings, stolen glances, and the intoxicating euphoria of a new relationship. Literature, cinema, and popular culture have long celebrated this exhilarating phase of love, where emotions are intense, hope is boundless, and every moment seems touched by magic.

Yet, there is another kind of love, quieter, deeper, and perhaps, more extraordinary. It is the love that has weathered storms, endured misunderstandings, survived disappointments, celebrated triumphs, and grown richer through shared experiences. It is love that has ripened over time, acquiring a depth that youthful passion alone cannot offer. Such love deserves to be celebrated no less than the romance of youth.

Few poets have described this mature love as beautifully as the great Sanskrit dramatist

Bhavabhuti. In his Uttaramacarita, he portrays love not as a fleeting emotion but as a lifelong companionship. His celebrated verse reads:

अद्वैतं सुखदुःखयोः अनुगतं सर्वास्ववस्थासु यत्।
विश्रामो हृदयस्य यत्र जरसा यस्मिन्नहार्यो रसः?
कालेनावरणात्ययात् परिणते यत् स्नेहसारे स्थितं।
भद्रं तस्य सुमानुषस्य कथमप्येकं हि तत् प्राप्यते?

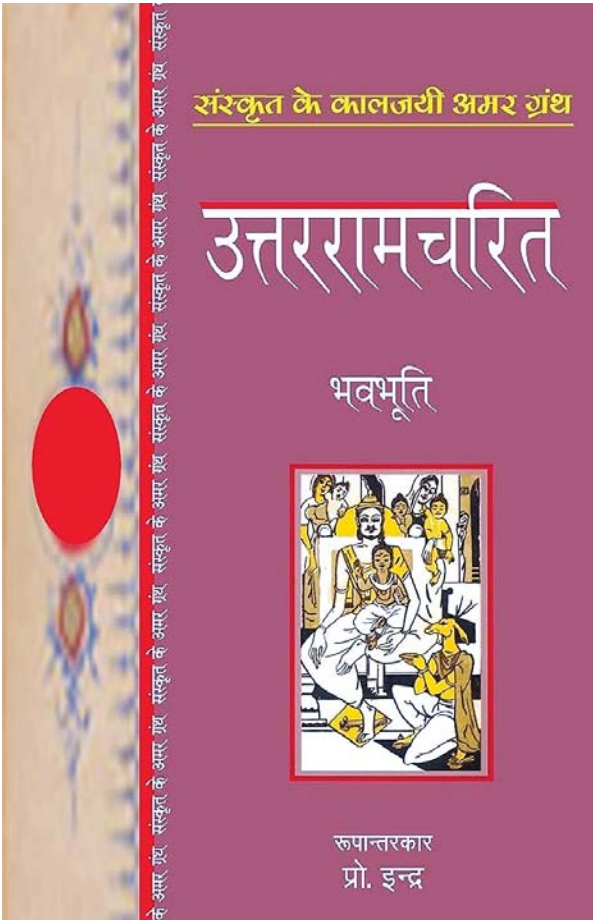
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Bhavabhuti presents love as a companionship that transcends the changing fortunes of life. True love shares happiness and grief alike, offers rest to the heart in every circumstance, and does not lose its flavour with advancing years. Instead, time strips away superficial attractions, revealing the enduring core of mutual affection. Such love



#BHAVABHUTI AND SHAKESPEARE

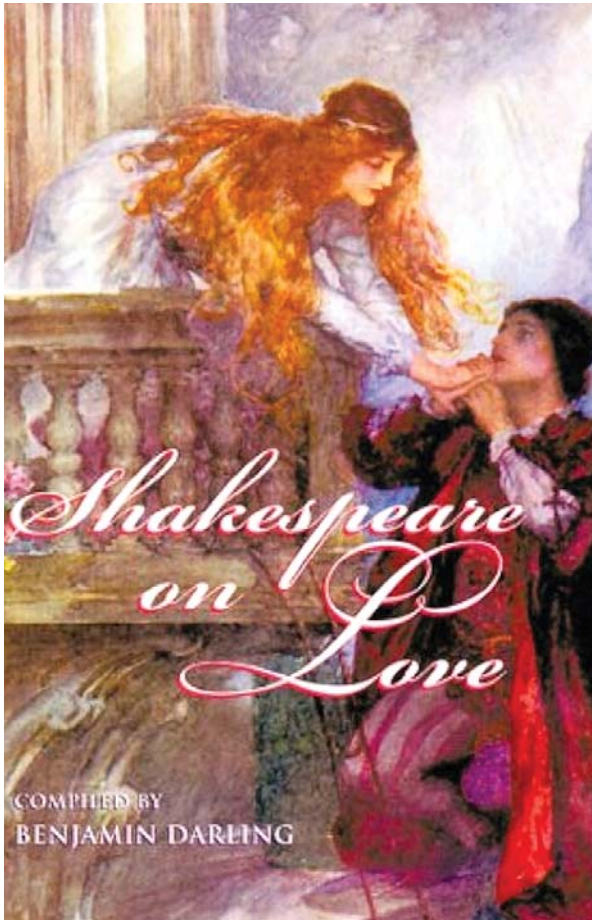


is exceedingly rare, and the poet considers its attainment as one of life's greatest blessings.

This vision bears a striking resemblance to Shakespeare's immortal Sonnet 116, which opens with the famous lines:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.

Like Bhavabhuti, Shakespeare insists that genuine love is not gov-



In a world fascinated by the excitement of new romance, these poets remind us to celebrate another, perhaps greater, miracle, the love that survives. The love that grows gentler with the years, steadier through adversity, and deeper with every passing season. Such love is not simply a feeling; it is an achievement, a quiet triumph of the human heart. It is this enduring, ripened love that deserves our admiration, our gratitude, and our celebration.

erned by changing circumstances. It neither weakens in adversity nor fades with the passage of time. He continues:

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

The image is unforgettable. Love is compared to a steadfast lighthouse and to the Pole Star guiding lost ships across turbulent seas. Tempests may rage, but true love remains unshaken. Here,

Shakespeare's poetry may almost be read as a poetic gloss on Bhavabhuti's insight. Both poets, separated by nearly a millennium and belonging to vastly different cultures, arrive at remarkably similar conclusions: authentic love is constant, resilient, and strengthened rather than diminished by the trials of life. There is another striking parallel. Bhavabhuti speaks of love that survives old age, its sweetness impossible to steal away. Shakespeare echoes the same sentiment:

Love's not Time's fool, though rose lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come.

Physical beauty fades, youth passes, and time leaves its marks upon the body. But true love belongs to another realm; it remains untouched by the ravages of time.

The two poets differ in their concluding note. Bhavabhuti ends with quiet wisdom, declaring such mature love to be one of humanity's rarest blessings. Shakespeare, however, concludes with characteristic confidence:

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

It is a bold challenge. Shakespeare stakes not only his poem but his entire identity as a poet, and even the very existence of



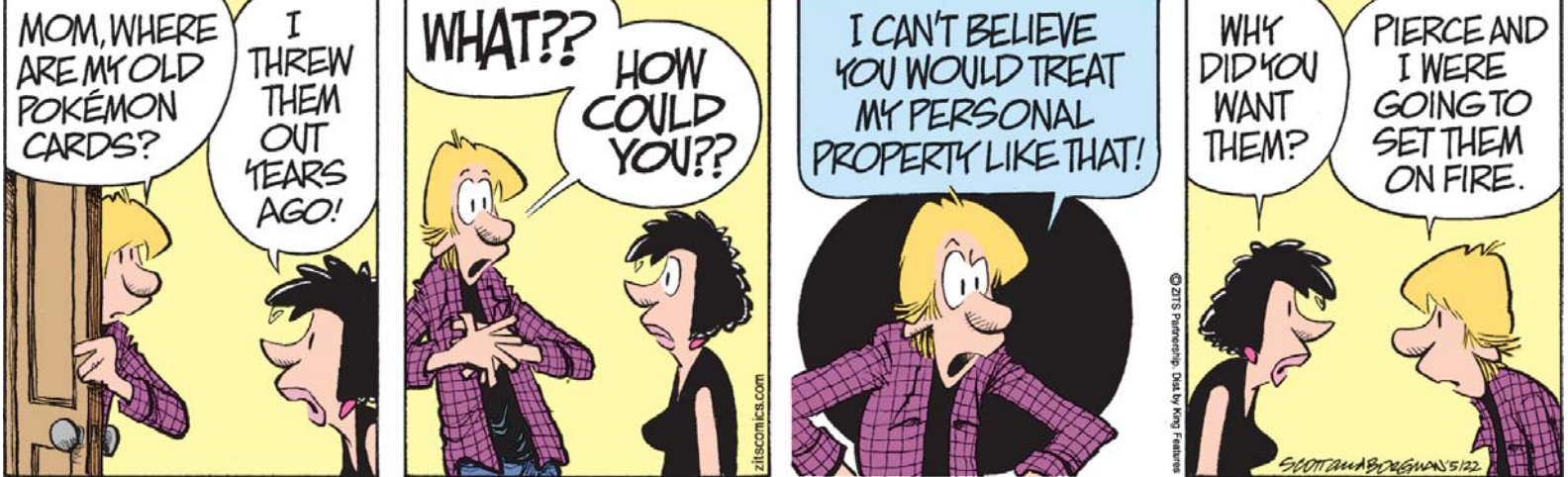
By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

BABY BLUES

IT'S DEEP CLEANING TIME!



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

Celebrate National Watermelon Day with Freshness and Fun

National Watermelon Day is celebrated every year on August 3 to honour one of the most refreshing and nutritious fruits enjoyed around the world. Watermelon is rich in vitamins A and C, antioxidants, and water, making it an excellent choice for staying hydrated during hot weather. Families and friends often celebrate by sharing fresh watermelon, preparing creative recipes, or enjoying outdoor picnics. The day also highlights the importance of healthy eating and seasonal fruits. Whether eaten in slices, blended into juice, or added to salads, watermelon brings joy, flavor, and freshness, making National Watermelon Day a fun and meaningful celebration.



##COMMODIFICATION

The Punganur Comeback

Conservation, Commerce, and the Price of Popularity, will these cows be able to shoulder the burden!

In the red-soil stretches of Rayalaseema, where survival has always demanded resilience, a remarkable story is unfolding. Punganur cattle, once on the brink of extinction, have staged an unlikely comeback. But their revival brings with it a new and complicated question: will their future be shaped by careful conservation, or by the forces of commodification?

The crisis did not happen overnight. After independence, India's agricultural policy increasingly prioritized milk volume. Subsidies and institutional support flowed towards high-yielding exotic breeds, leaving indigenous varieties like the Punganur behind. Unable to compete in terms of sheer litres of milk, this hardy dwarf breed was gradually abandoned. By 2007, the Food and Agriculture Organization classified the Punganur cattle as "critical," a stark warning that extinction was no longer a distant possibility.

The numbers tell a sobering story. By 2016, fewer than thirty Punganur cows remained on government farms across India. What followed, however, was a rare success in revival. In 2020, the government of Andhra Pradesh launched Mission Punganur with an investment of 69 crore, alongside scientific breeding interventions such as IVP programs. Gradually, the population rebounded. Today, estimates place their numbers between ten thousand and thirteen thousand, a dramatic recovery within a few years.

The Punganur cow is no ordinary animal. Standing just 70 to 90 centimetres tall, about the height of a large dog, and weighing under 200 kilograms, it is considered the world's smallest humped cattle breed. Its coats range from white and grey to deep red and mottled patterns, and its crescent-shaped horns add to its distinctive elegance. Despite its size, it is remarkably resilient, thriving



in the rocky, drought-prone terrain of Chittoor district, where fodder is scarce and summers are unforgiving.

For generations, this breed has been perfectly adapted to the harsh ecology of Rayalaseema, requiring minimal feed, tolerating extreme climates, and producing nutrient-rich milk. It is, in many ways, a living reflection of the land itself.

But just as conservation efforts began to succeed, a new and unexpected challenge emerged: popularity.

Urban India "discovered" the Punganur cow. Videos and reels showcasing its unusually small size began circulating

widely on platforms like Instagram. What was once a quiet symbol of rural resilience suddenly became a viral sensation. Demand surged, not from farmers, but from urban buyers eager to own something rare, distinctive, and shareable.

With this attention came commodification. The Punganur cow, once valued for its utility and adaptability, began to be priced as a novelty. Transactions increasingly reflected status rather than sustainability.

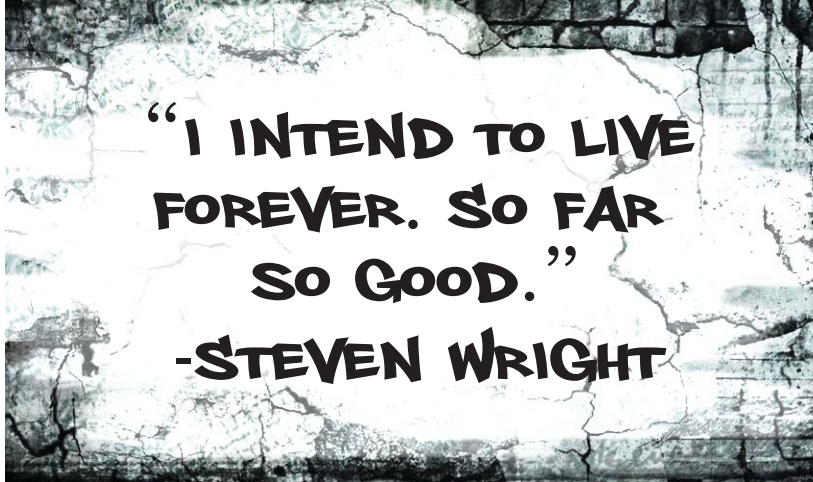
For breeders like Venkata Reddy, who has spent over a decade raising these animals near Madanapalle, this shift is deeply unsettling. Watching a three-week-old calf confidently step into the afternoon light, he sees not an object of curiosity, but a legacy of survival.

As he puts it, "This is not a pet. This is a working animal, a farmer's companion, a sacred breed. It survived this land for hundreds of years without pampering. That deserves respect, not novelty."

His words capture the tension at the heart of the Punganur story. Conservation has brought the breed back from the edge, but commodification risks reshaping its identity. The future of the Punganur cow now rests on a delicate balance. It is no longer just about saving a breed, it is about deciding what kind of relationship society wants with it.

In Rayalaseema, where resilience is born from scarcity, the Punganur cow has already proven its worth. The challenge now is ensuring that its second life is defined not by fleeting fascination, but by lasting respect.

THE WALL



"I INTEND TO LIVE FOREVER. SO FAR SO GOOD."
-STEVEN WRIGHT