

Middle On Middle

-Mahesh Balasubramanian

What is in a name? “An apple by any other name ...” can’t be applied to humans. Try to call Mrs. Gupta as *Guptee*. I recall a doctor I went to. Once, a bag-full of pills a druggist gave me against his prescription contained one brand less. On checking, I realized to my horror that the first item (which, like others, sounded medicine to me) was in fact, my second name naughtily reduced to Bal-rub-seminum. It confirmed that he is a genuine doctor. But I am not, as I love playing with words, rather than alphabets, thanks to the ed-page section called the *middle space*, escorting my day’s first cup of coffee.

As I am made to believe, every dog has his day. As regards the esteemed column, statistic tells me, - that day comes at the most once a month. Now and then, I am deprived of even that sweet little share due to – my own destiny (Writers’ block); master’s choice (Editor blocks!); or due to other dogs around the street (sheer competition).

A writer gets blocked when his perennial itch to write something great doesn’t materialize even in his wildest of fancies. Reason – lack of proper environ which conducts creativity. It could be Chintu, the wonder kid next door and a direct descendant of Changez Khan, who would not budge an inch from his tradition of screaming aloud in a fit of nonsense until & unless you too screamed with twice the amount of energy he took to put a question mark on the very existence of the fragile glass windows attached to your home sweet home.

Sometimes the editor holds back the great middle you wrote painstakingly, maybe inspired by the revolutionary idea you had in your mind at the middle of your bath. That is because, in such cases, the honorable editor, in a larger public interest, feels that it would prove detrimental to the interest the readers have in the newspaper. In plain language, you are not worth the time it takes them to read the column. So, the editor, instead of putting it in the rickety machine, which was perhaps not oiled for quite a long time, honors it with a pride of place in the dustbin.

Sometimes, the article falls prey to sheer competition. This happens because the best one always stand better than the good ones’. As prevention is better than cure, articles are never accumulated to take on the configuration of leaning tower of Pisa on the editor’s desktop. Again, the editor gathers the temerity to trash your item to dustbin, so as to avoid having to face the

problem of choice in the future. It is like- now or never, placing you at par with a dog lost in a dogfight.

So, each morning it is again- a long wait for the *paperwallah* after the Sun god, to appear on the horizons. At about the same time, people putting up in the hutments of a nearby area, visibly as gripped as I' am, pass by urgently to attend to their morning business, which further strengthens my total support to those in favor of vetoing anti-personnel landmines! Hmmm! A topic to write upon; meanwhile, I wait hopefully for *The Hitavada* to make my day.