

Kali's Personal

The "Personals" department of one of Seattle's two daily newspapers recently received an ad wildly but legibly handwritten in English and transliterated Sanskrit. The submitter gave no return address or phone number, and asked that all replies be forwarded to a post office box in Calcutta, India. The ad arrived in a ten-by-thirteen-inch envelope so powerfully scented that it was noticed almost immediately by every employee in the enormous office (an entire floor the size of a city block). Most employees came looking for the source of the smell at once, some demanding that whoever or whatever it was be thrown out of the building, some simply needing to know its source, a dazed few begging to "have some of it."

The odor reminded various individuals - in their own words - of "musk," "bad wine," "burned fat," "carrion," "sex fluids of both genders," "singed hair," "goat cheese," "a pagan altar" and "funky underwear. Big time funky." Both stationery and envelope were made of the kind of grainy, inexpensive paper produced by small factories all over India. Both were stained - in many dime-sized and several silver-dollar-sized blotches - with a variety of fluids, including what appeared to be blood. The envelope also contained fifteen thousand extremely used, equally pungent Indian rupees (several times the amount needed to run the ad) and an apology, written in the same helter-skelter hand, for the submitter's failure to convert the currency. "It is difficult," she wrote (if in fact she was a female), "for me to enter public buildings on any continent, but impossible for me to enter an American bank. I haven't the arms to carry all that they try to give me."

A scholar at an American university agreed to translate the ad's Sanskrit phrases on the condition that both he and the university remain anonymous - "especially to the writer of the ad!" He said that most, maybe all, of the Sanskrit was lifted from poetry of the Vaishnavic tradition, that the verses properly belonged to "the sublime erotic give-and-take between Radha and Krishna," and that "their appropriation by the present writer is flagrantly blasphemous and consciously, derisively obscene."

After consulting lawyers, Seattle police, the FBI and an expert on international terrorism, the editorial board of the paper converted the rupees into American dollars, mailed a cashier's check for the full amount to the Calcutta post office box, but chose not to run the ad. When they attempted to produce the ad for police lab tests, however, they discovered it had somehow been stolen from the editor-in-chief's safe. And when police tried to fetch the rupees back from the bank, the bank's manager had already paid for them, taken them home and incinerated them in his backyard barbecue "to be rid of that smell!" According to the manager and three neighbor eyewitnesses, the rupee barbecue attracted a flock of several hundred frenzied crows and caused neighborhood dogs to howl. The eyewitnesses also claim - over the manager's understandably vehement denials - that the manager stood stark naked in his backyard as he burned the rupees, that he was weeping as they burned and that he had an erection throughout this performance.

Two days after the original ad's disappearance from the safe, a single full-sized, fourteen-by-twenty-three-inch newspaper page began to appear among the rock concert posters stapled to telephone poles all over Seattle. Running down the center of this page in a single two-inch-wide column was a newsprint copy of the ad. Calcutta police now report that "lacs of letters, from all over America" are arriving at the PO box there, but that the box's owner has not been found. Seattle police have been unable to locate the people, or even the press, that printed the ad. Copies continue to appear on phone poles. No one in either city has been apprehended.

Though the handwriting, stationery and fragrance are inimitable, the ad as it reads on the phone poles - with the anonymous scholar's translations added in brackets - follows:

KALI'S PERSONAL

Single Asian female; ageless; nonprofessional; new to America; searching for virile, confident, ambitious young males of any caste, color or physical description to whom to bare my perfect breasts and shining body and give ecstasies that leave you gasping for more. I never lie. From the moment you see me you will burn for me, you will never cease burning, and you will never once satisfy me though you'll live only to try. You will give me your love and I'll answer with scorn. Pranavatpranayi-kali! (Kali is more precious than life!)

You will give me your life force and I'll turn it into a house you will hate, make you live in it, make you slave for it, stuff you daily into a car in which you'll hurl to a job that shames, flays and damns you, and seduce a thousand others while you slave. Naha-reha Kali-karana om karunam harantu vo sarasa! (Let Kali's nail marks remove your pain, they'll leave you rife with emotion!)

You will give me your seed and I will surround you with sullen incomprehensible offspring who'll worship me with the same reasonless intensity with which they'll despise you. Kaliya seciram jayanti gagane vandhyah karabhrantayah! (Let the meaningless motions of Kali's hands in the sky triumph forever!)

You will give me your mind, heart and lingam and I will suck, twist and torment them all, bloating you like a mosquito when you enter my body, laughing at your feeble love thrusts, striking you limp before you come, seducing our sons if you try to flee me, remaining radiant as you grow desperate and old and addled. Kali naccaviu panganaivimhai padiu lou muhur muhur mohahata babluivuh! (When Kali danced in the courtyard the world went berserk. Frenzy wracked everyone again and again!)

I never lie. And in the end I will mount you, and with the still-perfect breasts you'll beg to mouth, then find too heavy to turn aside, I will suffocate you, growing inflamed by you at last as you thrash your life away beneath me, driving my tongue down your throat to thwart even your death-rattle, moaning and coming as your soul falls out your rectum, drinking your blood in one draught. Dolaloladghanajaghanaya kaliya yatra bhagnah meher kridanganganavitapino nadhunapy ucchvasanti! (Broken by the power of Kali's hips gone wild as she writhed, the trees in Compassions' garden have not recovered!)

I'll let you lie unmourned and unburied. I'll dance in the swamp of your festering body. I'll sing at last of love as your naked soul writhes in flames that I'll journey to hell just to fan. I'll hang your charred and sightless skull on my rosary, force your shriveled wraith to inhabit it, and make you forgive and adore me for all of this. Emvahim Kali-paoharham jam bhavai tam hou! (Let the glow of Kali's breasts endure!)

I never lie.

Yet even now you begin to want me. And how swiftly I moisten to your desire, how fast my nipples rise. I feel your heat. My hips, my cavern answer. I writhe as I write this. I anoint breasts and thighs with my sweat and sex, they glisten, they shine now, only for you. Come, my chosen. Do not dare deny me. I am the nightmare you long to wake to at dawn. I am the problem to all of your answers. I am the time of your life and the life of your times. Gauri! Candi! Devi. Amba, Thakuram! Krpaya paraya-visto! Rudhirapradigdhan! Kali! (Fair one! Fierce one! Goddess, Mother, Mistress! Filled with infinite pity. Smearred with blood. Kali!)

From Kahlil Gibran's PROPHECY