

Pegasus

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Foreword

The publication of *Pegasus* was postponed as we planned this special edition triple the usual size of our journal. Here we concentrate on the sonnet, especially Shakespearean, keeping as usual, our students in mind, rather than our own scholarly aspirations.

In colleges affiliated to the Calcutta University, this academic year is rather unique for the students of English Honours. The Second Year and Third Year students are both studying more or less the same syllabus. There seems to be a time warp in place.

So, we bring out this issue, hoping to help both the batches of students simultaneously. We have here a detailed analysis of the three sonnets of Shakespeare that are included in the syllabi. We are also publishing one article on the Elizabethan sonnet in general and two on the sonnets of Keats and Wordsworth. Three articles taken from the Internet follow this. The first one gives a brief overview of Shakespeare's sonnets and the second takes a look at the structural aspects of the sonnet form and its early history. We have perforce skipped over a number of important issues concerning the form and history of the sonnet, left out discussions on other important sonnet-writers. We shall correct this lacuna in future.

Also included is a quick look at the Bengali sonnet. We hope this will prompt the serious student to read some of the sonnets written by stalwarts of Bengali poetry. The need for reading one's native literature is often forgotten by all of us.

Following our usual policy, we are not tampering with the opinions of the individual authors – not that there is much disagreement here. However, if a reader does not subscribe to any of the opinions expressed, he or she is invited to start a debate.

We are proud of *Pegasus*. We do believe it serves a useful purpose. Yet, as we remember the victims of the Tsunami, as a pall of gloom hangs over the world, all academic pursuits appear futile. How can poetry and its scholarly analysis matter to the victims of the Tsunami, dead and alive? As the bodies lie buried under mass graves or rot in the benign winter sun, as the homeless and the bereaved and the starving live exposed to the elements, as relief remains a prey to political expediency, as callous crooks subvert the fruits of generosity, can we sit in our safe harbours and dream sonnets with a clear conscience? We think not.

We appeal to everyone to remember – every mite helps. Please do what you can to awaken the conscience of the people, to enthuse them to contribute in any way they can to the relief initiatives, to raise their voices against the indifference that compounded the tragedy, to demand an end to the bureaucratic bungling that prevents early warnings.

Still, we wish our readers a Happy New Year. Life, fortunately, goes on. People reconstruct life as best as they can. Let all persons of good will share in the effort. Let us grow into what we are capable of, not what circumstances force us to become.