

Brhannala

Scene One

Sayasachin and Brhannala

(Softly the rumblings of a gong. A light comes on slowly, lighting up the left side of a semi naked man sitting with his back to the audience in the centre of the stage. He looks armless. The rumbling gong grows a little louder. A single melodious note is struck softly on a xylophone. The man's left shoulder heaves and his arm seems to grow out of his shoulder, first as a stump and then the forearm is seen opening out in a sinuous, undulating, curved movement. From the beginning the heaving of the arm is accompanied by the sound of a clarinet which emphasizes aurally the breath pangs/birth pangs of the arm. The arm moves upward. The sound of the gong, clarinet and xylophone fade as the arm starts plucking the invisible strings of a Vachitra Veena. Soft sound of strings being plucked. Then the arm falls down. The stage darkens and the rumbling gong starts off again gathering volume incrementally as the light fades on and illuminates the right side of the figure. As his right arm appears the clarinet joins the gong and follows the angular, linear movement of the arm in its show of brute strength. Both arms then rise up together as though carrying an object offered up towards the sky. Then they mime the action of discarding the object/ the throwing off of Gandiva, the bow. A top light comes on to light the seated figure. The gong and clarinet are silent. But there is a crescendo of cymbals on a higher treble note than the gong and then as this fades the strings are heard again. The man's arms slowly come down on either side and pause, outstretched from side to side. They figure a single ripple which runs from his left to right, uniting the two arms in a single movement. The entire visual expresses Arjuna as Savyasachin, who is ambidextrous.

The man's arms drop and he turns his head slowly to look back towards the audience.)

Arjuna/ Savyasachin: Give me something to hold *

(He turns back. His movements are marked by beats on the mizhavu. There is more light. Through a series of undulating snake like movements, he rises to stand. And then he turns very slowly and gracefully, as would a dancer, towards the audience to face it in a three fourth's profile and looks at them coyly from the corner of his eye. Brhannala has entered the court of Virata. The light suggests a doorway.

Then Brhannala raises her hand as though to smell an invisible rose and sneezes violently. The sneeze alerts a sleeping guard-played by the same actor- who is shocked out of his wits. He leaps in fright and looks at her in horror. Brhannala's movements on stage are sketched by the gaze of those observing her on stage, as well as by the sound of anklets through out this scene.

A haughty courtier then spots her and expresses disgust at her appearance. Bhima who is there already sees her and waves out to her. As Brhannala sways forward she is spotted by Utrarkumar who is smitten. He dances her into the court singing the following song accompanied by the sound of Brhannala's anklets:)

* Dharama means literally that which **one lays hold** of and which holds things together, the law, the norm, rule of nature, action and life.

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Uttarakumar: [sings]

She came into my father's court
Like the leader of a herd of elephants.
Of enormous size and exquisite beauty
And hips as large as the banks of a river.

Blackout.

(Music continues into the blackout and opens the next scene. The sound of anklets increases and is joined by the playing of a ghatam. Brhannala sings a song in the darkness.)

Scene Two

Brhannala tells a story in the Court of Virata

Brhannala: *(singing in the dark.)*

I sing, I dance, I play music
 I tell stories
 I am Brhannala, Brhannala, Brhannala
 I am Brhannala
 Son nor Daughter
 Without father, without mother,
 I am Brhannala Brhannala Brhannala

{By the last line of the song the stage lightens and she is seen centre stage, with her back to the audience singing and dancing. When the song ends she turns slowly and walks forward in a modified Chhau Chali.}

Pandu, pandu,

Once upon a time, there was a tiger (*Brhannala takes on the Kalaripayattu pose for a tiger*) and one day he met someone on the road. (*She sways to the right and morphs into a dog, who whines and barks and then raises one leg to pee. A dog whistle reinforces his whines. Then with a leap the actor goes from the dog posture into the tiger posture, essentially a Kalaripayattu amarcha. The tiger stretches voluptuously to the sound of two sticks being rubbed together. He has a very happy and contented look on his face. He sings and giggles to himself as he settles into a squatting posture. Then he sees someone whose attention he tries to catch with hand gestures and waves. Then he calls out, speaking in a feminine voice. Both Dog and Tiger reorient their faces/ they have characteristic facial masks which identify them as well as different voices. The tiger has a high feminine voice and the Dog has a deep voice.)*

Tiger: Hello, hello...dog? ...hello dog, dogetta look me, look me, dogetta look me, look me, look me, look me, look me...*{ each repetition of 'look me' becomes more insistent}*

(The actor leaps into the Dog posture. All transitions are accompanied by musical flourishes or beats.)

Dog: Yare...tigera...hello tiger how are you? How, how, (*the 'how' becomes a howl*) how, are you?

(The actor leaps into the tiger posture)

Tiger: *{ Laughs}* Discontented.*(slides into the Dog posture immediately)*

Dog: Why ma, why discontented?
(*Transition.*)

Tig: { *sighing sadly* } Dogetta, life is making a bonsai out of me...cutting and chopping all my creative expression.

(*Tiger looks up at an imagined tree and then tries to clamber onto it, then leaps back into the squatting posture.*) All I want is a little bit of growth.

(*Transition. The Dog leaps happily and laughs loudly*)

Dog: Tigere neengaluma (*You too? He sings an old MGR song which means “ there is no team like you and me”*)...Neeyum nanuma, kanna neeyum nannuma! Tigera you and I, very good team. { *laughs and does a little jump on the spot.* }

{ *More seriously* } Tigera athu enna sonna?.where were you coming from ha?

{ *The Dog leaps and transforms into the tiger, who laughs hysterically and uncontrollably. The music pit goes berserk, blowing whistles and pipes and drums and other ridiculous instruments. The tiger stops laughing suddenly, looking very confused and dazed.* }

Tiger: Where am I...What am I { *looks down at his genitals* }...Who am I...I { *Light dawns in his mind as he connects the sound of I to Chennai.* }.... Chennai! { *said with rising confidence and then mad joy* } Dogetta Chennai!...Dogetta Chennai! { *At this last he leaps across the stage and on landing becomes Dog. Who looks puzzled.* }

Dog: Chennaia? Kekkaveilliye..leftile pona Kovai,.rightile pona Madurai,where is Chennai never heard about it.{ *He turns to the Dog*}Mm route pathukkalam?{ *Should we see the route?. And he turns back to his calculations.*}A square is equal to B square. Square ille Sachin; then Sachin should take 4.3 per over, then India can beat Australia, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Pakistan ..pakist { *With that he knows how to go forward in his investigation and he asks the tiger excitedly* }tigere.., which countries did you pass on the way?

{ *Musicians go berserk again as Tiger jumps into place hysterical with laughter.* }

Tig: That is so easy---that is **so** easy...bullatta..bullate..royal enfield machismo. { *He mimes riding on a bike, and makes it look like a dance.* }

First I walked down the mountain...on the other side of the mountain is the Kanafussi forest na? There I met some of my old friends they called me for lunch.,....but I tiger stayed on for tea { *then as though in response to a query from the audience* } What?---- { *disgustedly* } nothing much--- we all just went behind Mary's little lamb...and here I am on the road.

{ And with excitement he rises up on his trembling hind legs and collapses into the Dog's posture. The music goes berserk again. Dog hysterical with laughter as well. }

Dog: *{ Congratulatory and admiring }* Tigere that is quite a distance you traveled. Very nice, very nice, in fact very ni....*{ Dog suddenly hears a whistle and he sways onto his hind legs, back to audience and gets into Brhannala's swaying walk. He then dissolves into his normal posture, howls and whines. The Tiger is then shown watching him with alarm and interest. }*

Tiger: I say dog, what is it like being a dog?

Dog: *{ Dog gets into posture with a wail. }* Horrible! Horrible! Tigere, there is no variety, no prospects---today pup, tomorrow dog, day after tomorrow dead dog. Dead dog. It's a dog's life. *{ A Dog flute wails. Dog leans confidently towards Tiger }* Tigere do you know man? No? Wonderful creature. It stand's on its hind legs. Not only that, - man has prospects.

Tiger: *{ Tiger is very excited. But then realizes he doesn't know the meaning of prospects. }* What are prospects?

Dog: That is when your right eye looks straight ahead in to the future.

Tiger: *{ Tiger leaps with excitement. }* Let me look into my future...I have never seen my future*{ he goes cross eyed trying to see his future. }* nice nose---- Dogetta I can only see my nose *{ his nose twitches }*...lambs, lambs, Mary's lambs! *{ Excitedly }* My nose can smell my past!

Dog: *{ Leaps into posture. Very excited, laughing uncontrollably and singing nonsense. }* So can I, So can I, So am I, So am I, So do I, So do I!! My memories have a wonderful smell.

Tiger: Is that so? Dogette please sing me your memories; please, please.

Dog: *{ Trying to shrug off the Tiger. Very irritated. }* Ha tigere, don't force me.

Tiger: *{ Begins by pleading and then getting ferocious }*

Dog: *{ Extremely irritated with Tiger. }* Tigere PLEASE! Don't do that! Stay there.

{ Uncomfortable pause during which the Dog thaws and tries to placate. }

I cant smell very well these days Tigere. my memories are all mixed up with Man's memories.----- *{ Pause. Then giving in completely. }* If you want I can sing you Brhannala Sir's Memories. Brhannala sir's? ...Memory?can I? ha ha ha

{ He makes himself comfortable centre stage and asks the musicians to join him. They sit around him. There is play and conversation between them, he gives them instructions on

the taal and then starts howling/ singing. The musicians play on the ghatam, sticks and the stage floor.}

Dog:

There was a god called Prediction.
Time was his father,
Space was his mother
Memory was his sister...and she looked back in time.

“Creation is the proof of our parent’s hand
From Chaos they made some thing terribly grand.”
Prediction looked ahead into the future-
And saw the great need for a brand new creature.

He used rainwater, rich loam and fertile sand,
And called this confabulation Wo An Man.
He gave it two big heads, four arms and four legs,
And then sat down and had ten *Patiala* pegs.

But the king of gods was terribly afraid
Of this potent creature Prediction had made
“Split it down, split it down the middle!” he cried,
“Call one half man and the other woman!” he sighed.
“Let each half waste its time and its energy,
Seeking the other, endlessly, fruitlessly.”

So Wo An Man became a divided creature,
With one head, two legs and two arms in the future.
But Prediction loved his new creation.
He tried to help in its evolution.

He taught it 123-ABCDE;
Special gifts not shared by any other kind.
They came from an appreciation of Time.

{ Dog rises on his hind legs and starts dancing.}

Then there was a great leap in evolution,
A divided brain caused a revolution,
Wo An Man’s brain was now split in two,
Out sprang Wisdom, a goddess new.

She had strategy, skill and military head,
She could look behind she could look ahead.
She could use the past to deal with future threat.
Though from a divided creature she had come,

She herself was both Woman and Man in One.

{Pause. Dog gets irritated with his audience of musicians. He barks at them and chases them away. A very faint slow beat starts up and another joins it in an off beat. Dog starts speaking honoring the rhythm of the percussion.}

But because Wo An Man's brain was now in two
Each part developed a different hue-

{ He moves his body languorously, he speaks languorously .The light has changed and his body's movements try to break the expanse of space thus exposed. }

One was about-

The moon, muse, music, magic, madness, memory, myth and metaphor,

{Dog sits erect. The body's lines clean. He speaks his lines into a rhythm he establishes by slapping on his thighs. This rhythm is an off beat to the musicians' rhythm. }

The other about-

The sun, science, speech, sentence, sequence and seriousness;

And in this state of division and duality,
When half was left and half was right,
One side was rooted in space and saw every thing **all- at- once**

{ Softly into the already existing rhythm a snare drum starts playing a war march.}

The other side was rooted in time and saw everything **one- at- a-time**.

{ The war beat gets overwhelming and the Dog rises in horror and turns his back to the audience to hear it more clearly. He covers his ears and shouts.}

Brhannala, there is a war !

{ The war music builds up, continues through the black out, connecting this scene with the next. }

Black out

Scene Three Drona and his Students

{ War music from the last scene peters out and there emerges from under it the sound of a metronome ticking away the time. Light fades on to a figure in the right backstage corner. He is an old man in silhouette and his back is to the audience. A drum rolls and the musicians start off a double rhythmic vaitari, which gives the sense of thoughts rumbling in the old man's mind. He uses his hands and fingers rhythmically as though working out a problem in his mind. He jerks to face the left side of the stage with a drum roll. There is another roll and he faces front, continually waving his hands to the vaitari and the metronome. We see his face now and his eyes are moving rhythmically to the beat of his thoughts, giving the look of a man working out problems in his mind. Then the vaitari stops abruptly and the old man speaks with the rhythm of a teacher underlying his speech. He continues to use his hand rhythmically. At one point he summons a student and evicts him from the class in this manner.

This is Drona instructing the Kuru children in the science of war.

In the course of the scene he moves forward one step at a time, almost dance like in his movement. By the end of the scene he has crossed the stage space to the left downstage corner. The light changes with his movement, lighting only him up as he moves across the stage. The aim in this scene is to bring out the temporal processes of the left brain. }

Drona: In the course of evolution, the eye of the bird developed into a spectacular organ of vision. Living too high, off the ground, the bird could no longer find its food through smell. *{Drona moves a step forward}*

So---retina.

The retina of its eye developed cones in its center. { Drona, looks around at his students, focusing on each one by slightly squeezing his eyes in a squint. This is accompanied by a rhythm slapped out by the musicians on their thighs. Drona moves a step to left as though facing a student there. } Nakula, cones allow a creature to see color and to see details.

{ He moves forward one step with the next word. }

Birds.

Birds can abstract a single detail from a whole picture and scrutinize it separately from the rest.

{Pause. Metronome stops as does everything else. Drona looks up with his eyes, as though observing something on a tree in front of him. The he turns to his left side and looks down at some one sitting near him. He makes a sound in anticipation of catching a student off guard with his next question. }

Arjuna what can **you** see in that tree ha?

{An explosion of light and sound as Arjuna leaps into a typical martial arts posture. His eyes move with rhythmic focus like a bird's up the imaginary tree and he calls out joyously: }

Arjuna: The eye of the bird.

{ There is an explosion of drums as before. And Arjuna leaps in sync with these and shoots the bird's eye. He falls back into the earlier posture. Drona rises up from that position and his head is moving in time to a vatar, as though he is really enjoying his thoughts. His words break in to the vatar and halt it. He moves forward. }

Drona: If the nose played a part in the discovery of the past, the eye gave birth to the future. It saw the world in sequence. It moved from what **was**, to what **is**, then demanded, **what next?**

{ With each of the phrases he moves a step in the direction of the left side corner of the stage. The transitions are accompanied by the roll of a drum. At 'what next' his right leg remains suspended in mid air. Then he turns to his left again to address an imaginary seated Arjuna. }

This is how the future was born.

{ Again there is an explosion of drums and Arjuna leaps into position and shoots an arrow. He waits for it to hit its target. It takes a long time and he gets impatient and disappointed. He collapses into a sitting position on the floor. After his arrow hits the target, he turns with urgency and addresses an imaginary Bhima next to him. His words are accompanied by rhythms slapped by the musicians onto their thighs. }

Arjuna: Bhimettan, if my arrow had an eye like the bird it could find out its prey and chase it into the future. *{ He turns respectfully to Drona. }* Acharya what was Ekalvya's secret?

{ A gong sound fills the air and a didgeridoo is sounded. Drona rises in slow motion and describes a circle with his arms. His movement and voice anticipates that of Siva's in the next scene. So far he has spoken in the voice of an old man. Now it is young and strong. }

Drona: Your arrow must hit its target at the moment it leaves your hand. Time must stand still for your arrow, then it will have power over the future.

Arjuna: How can I make time stand still?

Drona: *{ Drona becomes himself. }* That is a question you must ask Siva.

{ The musicians play a damaru and other percussion instruments join in. }

Blackout

Scene Four
Arjuna goes to the Himalayas to get the Pasupata from Siva

{A deep gong interrupts the fading damaru. It strikes three times and resonates into the scene which follows. A blue light comes on off centre stage on the right hand side. Siva is seen balancing on one leg and taking on the Nataraja posture of dance in slow motion-his movement flowing. Light fades and there is a roll of drums at the end of which a yellow light comes on in the same place to show Arjuna with his back to the audience doing a rhythmic martial dance accompanied by percussion. The light, movement and sound of both scenes are in sharp contrast and the two scenes seek to establish extremes. The light fades on Arjuna and the gong resonates again, the blue light comes on again to Siva, rising up and playing cricket in very slow motion as he speaks the following lines. }

Siva: When you can see the three faces of time, with the eye of complete union
 Time will stand still and you will have power over the future.
 Your arrows will fly at the speed of light, but they must be as light as light.
 For that you must explore the formula, which can convert mass into energy.

{ Black out, roll of drums. Yellow light comes on to show Arjuna facing audience and doing his staccato, rhythmic dance to percussion. He pauses abruptly to ask: }

Arjuna: How do I see with the eye of complete union?

{ Black out. Gong again. Blue light fades on Siva standing in a languorous posture. He starts dancing in slow motion, with a flowing, non rhythmic motion. The gong fades into strings and as he dances he says: }

Siva: Savyasachin, you shoot arrows with your right hand and your left hand,
 Use your left hand knowledge, which makes you Brhannala, to understand time through space. Become me---Ardanariswra.

{ The strings take over completely from the gong and Siva continues to dance, his movement slowing and deepening whenever a string vibrates for a longer duration. At irregular intervals the chime of a manjira is heard and almost unnoticed a rhythm enters it as it does Siva's dance. Unobtrusively a yellow light enters. The audience must witness the middle ground of slow change as the dance moves from one extreme to the other. And then the rhythm becomes clearer heavier and the flowing feminine dance gradually becomes a martial dance. Arjuna turns his back to the audience as he continues Siva's movements in this martial extreme. At the crescendo he takes on the posture of one doing penance and a conch cuts through the rest of the sound. }

Black out

{ The Gong strikes five times through the black out. }

Scene Five
En route to Kurukshetra

{The light falls on the Tiger who looks like his head has been mounted on a wall. He has a hibiscus flower behind one ear. After the light settles he starts giggling, then speaking and then moving and we realize that but for the head the rest of him is hidden behind a puppet screen.}

Tiger : I am not dead! I am cheating!

{ Laughs and dances with his head. Music starts up and he sings.}

Many, many, years ago a tiger always had the choice
Of color he would like to be;
Some choose black others choose yellowy...!

{As the song ends the Tiger hears a distorted dog bark. He is startled.}

Tiger: Who is that?

That is who?

Who is that?

{ He disappears behind the screen and Dog comes up barking. He does not have a hibiscus flower behind his ear.}

Dog: Who's that who is saying 'who's that' to me? *{ Familiar music which Dog associates with the Tiger.}*

Tiger?

Tigere, where have you been?

{He transforms into Tiger, flower and all.}

Tiger: Mm, where are we now?

{ Ducks behind screen and transforms into Dog and this happens through out the scene, where dog changes to Tiger behind the puppet screen and the Tiger into Dog.}

Dog: Smells like Delhi, it really has a bad smell.

Tiger: Oh what a mess! What a mess! Dogette how did we get here?

Dog: Tigere, you said you like traveling so enjoy it now!

Tiger: I will and I want my prospects.

{ speaking like a politician at a rally.}.... Remember we tigers are becoming an extinct species, so we want our prospects!

*{ turning on Dog ferociously}*and once again remember I am discontented.

{ The two disappear behind the screen and there is much sound and fury and we can see bits of Dog being thrown up. Finally a toy dog is flung from behind the screen and it lands on a musician's instrument. Dog pops up from behind the screen his head covered with toy stuffing. }

Dog: Oho, tigere you want your prospects ha ?

Tiger: Yes I think there is a future in that.

Dog: OK then let's go and find Wo An Man

Tiger: The creature, which stands on its hind legs? I love it. Dogetta, hold my hand and talk to me while we walk.

{ Light fades. A ghatam starts playing a rhythm and we hear a song sung by Tiger. The words consist of abuses in Tamil : pati/ female dog; thendi/ beggar; naye/ dog. Finally Light comes on to show Tiger sitting front left. Close by is the toy dog on top of a percussion instrument. Tiger address the toy. }

Tiger: Dogetta I am in a singing mood, can I sing you my memories? Yes? !

{ addressing the musicians. } All of you come and sit around me –like in the last scene remember? and then I'll sing. Ok Start. *{Tiger starts clapping a beat. After some time he realizes no one has joined him. }* What is the matter?*{ looking around}* What is the problem? *{ Shocked and angry whisper at the silent uncooperative musicians}* What are you doing? The audience is waiting! *{ The musicians are silent and then one by one they respond with offensive music. }*

Tiger: PLEASE come.

PLEASE.

Alright don't come! I'll sing alone. *{ Threatening}* And then if I sing two times it is like five times. *{ Giggles }* So better I sing one time only. *{ Does a voice warm up. }*
That's enough.

{ A soft beat begins and he starts singing }

One young tiger we are told
Got tired of being yellow gold
He concentrated all day long
And sang the tiger witch's song
He practiced till he learnt the knack
Of changing yellow fur to black.

Very nice! Very nice! *{Applauding himself. The musicians mimic him. As this dies down the sound of the metronome is heard.}*

Pause.

The atmosphere changes. There is a sense of dread and anxiety in the air. }

Tiger:*{ troubled}* Dogetta how long is it since we started remembering again?

Dog: { *pause*}As long as the road from Delhi to this place.

Tiger: So what is this place? It really has a bad smell.

Dog: This is the place where Man plays with his prospects.

{ Tiger is overwhelmed. And he speaks with rising excitement.}

Tiger: Will I meet Man?

{ Tiger starts rising with each question till he is standing on his hind legs.}

Will it stand on its hind legs?

And the prospects?

Will I meet my prospects?

*{ Starts dancing and jumping}*I want to see my prospects-----

*{ Gasp as he catches sight of some one in front }*I can see--- I can see Man—I love you Man--- I want to become you---I am coming---*{ The sound of a shot. Tiger is hit and collapses slowly. He dies. Lights fade. Dog howls.}*

Black out

{ Soft crying and wailing flutes}

**Sixth Scene
At Kurukshetra**

{ Faint light comes on to a figure sitting where Tiger was in the last scene. He is sitting in the Dog's posture, crouched over in grief. He raises his head slowly and he is howling soundlessly. We realize it is Arjuna when he speaks. }

Arjuna: *{ Dazed }* Abhimanyu dead. *{ Remembering . }* Beautiful smiling eyes.

{ Arjuna jumps into the Tiger posture sticks his tongue out cheekily. He is Abhimanyu now. Then he gets back into the Dog posture as Arjuna and admonishes Abhimanyu for playing cricket near the railway track. A flashback. }

Abhi vedu po. Venda Abhi. Railway track—cricket—venda. ABHIMANYU

{ Arjuna gets up to chase Abhimanyu. He goes into slow motion in the chase. Lights change. A flute starts playing. Arjuna's hand drops onto Abhimanyu's shoulder, he morphs into an old man happily being led by a little boy. He moves thus towards the left stage. Suddenly a strong drum beat and Abhimanyu disappears leaving Arjuna with seeking and outstretched hand. Arjuna comes back to the present and turns front looking at his hand. He is front stage, left. }

There is no future.
{ agonized } The heroes of tomorrow they died,
So that five old men could live.

{ The mizhavus start up. Arjuna goes into a grief stricken martial dance. And then bends as though to pick up a very, very heavy object with his right hand. He lifts it up with difficulty beyond his head. Waits. And then easily throws it over his head. The percussion stops abruptly. Bereft, he squats and addresses someone in front of him. }

Give me something to hold.
Gandiva has slipped from my hand.
{ sudden shift into a laughing child. }
They call me Savyasachin
I shoot arrows with my right hand and my left hand. *{ Pause. Voice becomes that of a man. }* Which hand was it that killed Karna?
{ Pause. He starts shaking his finger at the figure in front of him and builds up to a violent emotion. }
My mind has no belief in Gandiva.
Give me something **else** to hold.
{ Distracted by the sound of fire, he looks towards it. }
On the banks of the river, someone puts fire to the torn clothes of a soul.

{ His gesture questions the why of this. He faces front and reinforces the question through the gesture and then puts it into words. }

Why this world of battle? Of each breath, which is a breath of death? Why at every step forward something is crushed, broken----*{ He howls the Dog howl. Light changes and the sound of anklets is heard. Arjuna turns to look over his shoulder and sees Brhannala, hips swaying with her back to the audience. She calls out as though to a child who is crying, she turns and bends forward, waist down to match the child's height, the one she is addressing. }*

Brhannala: Arade? Arjuna kutti? Va, va. Arra ru, ru

{ She takes the child in her lap and starts singing a lullaby. At the same time a musician chants the ten names of Arjuna, sung to children when they are frightened to give them his courage. Both the lullaby and the ten names come to an end simultaneously and Brhanalla speaks to the child in her lap, telling him a story. }

Arjuna. Three birds, mother, father and their baby flew over the ocean to a warm country for the winter.

In the middle of their flight, baby bird grew tired and fell into the waves.

The parent birds cried out to it, they tried to help it, but there was no sight or sound of it. So they flew back to the shore from which they had come, and stood there. Paralyzed with grief.

After sometime they started to dig a hole.

When the hole was big enough to their minds, they went back to the ocean and picked up a few drops of it in their beaks. Then they came back to the hole and emptied the water into it.

They went back--- and came—went back ---and came.

Trying to empty the ocean.

And their action was full of power.

Then one day they went up,

high,

very high,

higher than they had ever been.

From there,

they saw with the eye of complete union—the eye that sees everything-all-at –once.

Time stood still.

And they had no grief.

{ Strings played by musicians. }

So joyfully they went back to their task of unveiling the ocean.

And their action was full of creative power.

Arra ru-u –u

{ Strings played into the black out. }

Black out

Scene Seven
The Union of Polarities

{The same spot at which the play began. Light, silhouettes a man standing in chawk with his back to the audience. He turns and opens his arms out. There is a ripple through them. He moves forward one step at a time in a chau chali to the front of the stage as he speaks. He pauses now and then. The light changes at each step.}

Arjuna:

They call me Savyasachin,
And I have something to hold.

I was asked at Kurukshetra;
“Savyasachin, do you want the wealth of a thousand cows with gold rings around their horns,
Or do you want existence beyond Time and beyond Space?”
But what do I chose?
For the Two are One.

Krishna said to me
“Let it be known Savyasachin, you are one half of my body,
We two are one.”

I become in Time and Time is a Man,
I exist in Space and Space is a Woman,
The two are one.

{ He squats front stage and speaks intimately to the audience.}

The world is born at each moment,
And each moment is one still moment of now.
I hold this moment carefully in my hand, for it is Vasudeva,
And there is no grief in me.

END

Veenapani Chawla
1998