

The fingers write a letter on the dust-covered bus.
The bus is both the space and shelter, takes care of
reaching it to the unaddressed destination.

The vacant wedding hall compels to act out alone
the scenes from a film on the lucky daughter-in-law.
The absent fire keeps the clothes pressed without burning.

The steps of the huge mall that was never set foot on
become a nightstand with chappals as a head rest. The mannequins
in the show window prevent expensive dreams.

Like penance, the dried cloths, whatever the family is left with,
must be taken off the line, folded neatly. The soft touch of each
ignites once again an unlit clay hearth.

Like the kid riding an imaginary toy car, complete with all
gestures and sound, the existence must be lifted
with abundant imagination and agitation.

When we stand together, at least once, staring at the reflection in the
row of plastic framed mirrors in roadside shops selling household
articles,
the mirror clicks a group photo, the street providing the magical
flashlight.

Jayant Kaikini

*'Group photo' from Jayant Kaikini's 'Vichitra Senana Vaikhari', 2021
(Translated from Kannada by Pratibha Nandakumar)*

[Click here to listen to the poet's Kannada rendition](#)

Jayant Kaikini is a popular Kannada poet, short story writer, and
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