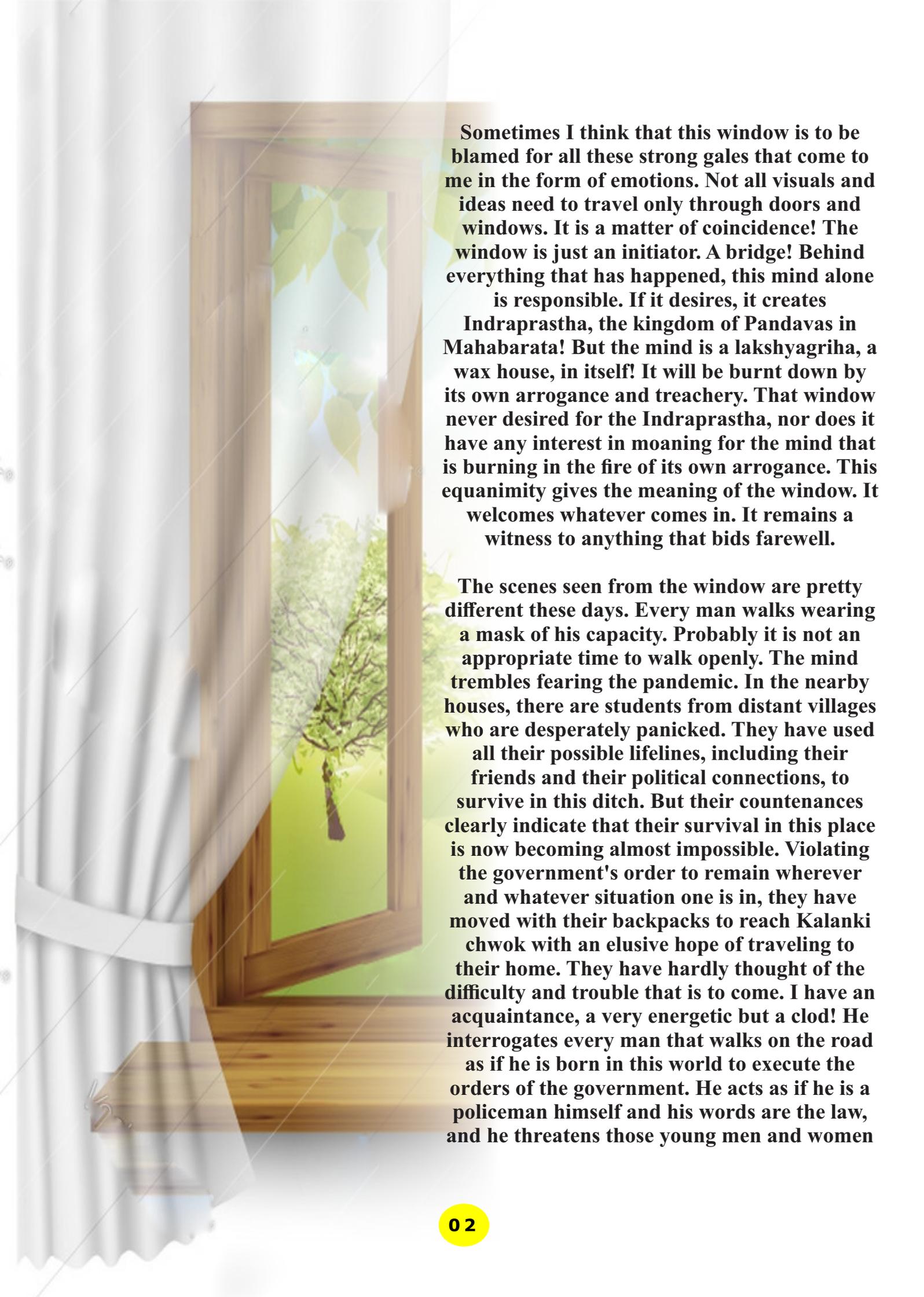
A photograph of a window with white curtains, looking out onto a green landscape with trees. The window frame is wooden and the view is bright and clear.

By KESHAB SIGDEL

Outside the Window

I see a stretch of road from the window at the eastern elevation of my room. From that window, I watch the passion and the heat of the time that travel through that road. I also see the fading dreams of men, their sighs and sufferings. Many such moods and scenes move through that road. They appear and disappear. Often, some of those events or moods provoke my mind, and they move through the visual sphere of my mind as an uncertainly regular phenomenon. The odor and its influence outside the window are felt inside the room too. As I meditate about the road, I metamorphose into the street. I then feel the pressure of the men's footsteps on my own body. That compression invokes the thought-wave of my mind, and I become a coal fire of ideas! The objects around me no more remain the same. They merely turn into the ingredients of my mental world, my ideational sphere!

A window with white curtains looking out onto a green landscape with trees. The window frame is wooden and the curtains are pulled back to reveal the view. The scene outside is bright and green, suggesting a park or a rural area. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

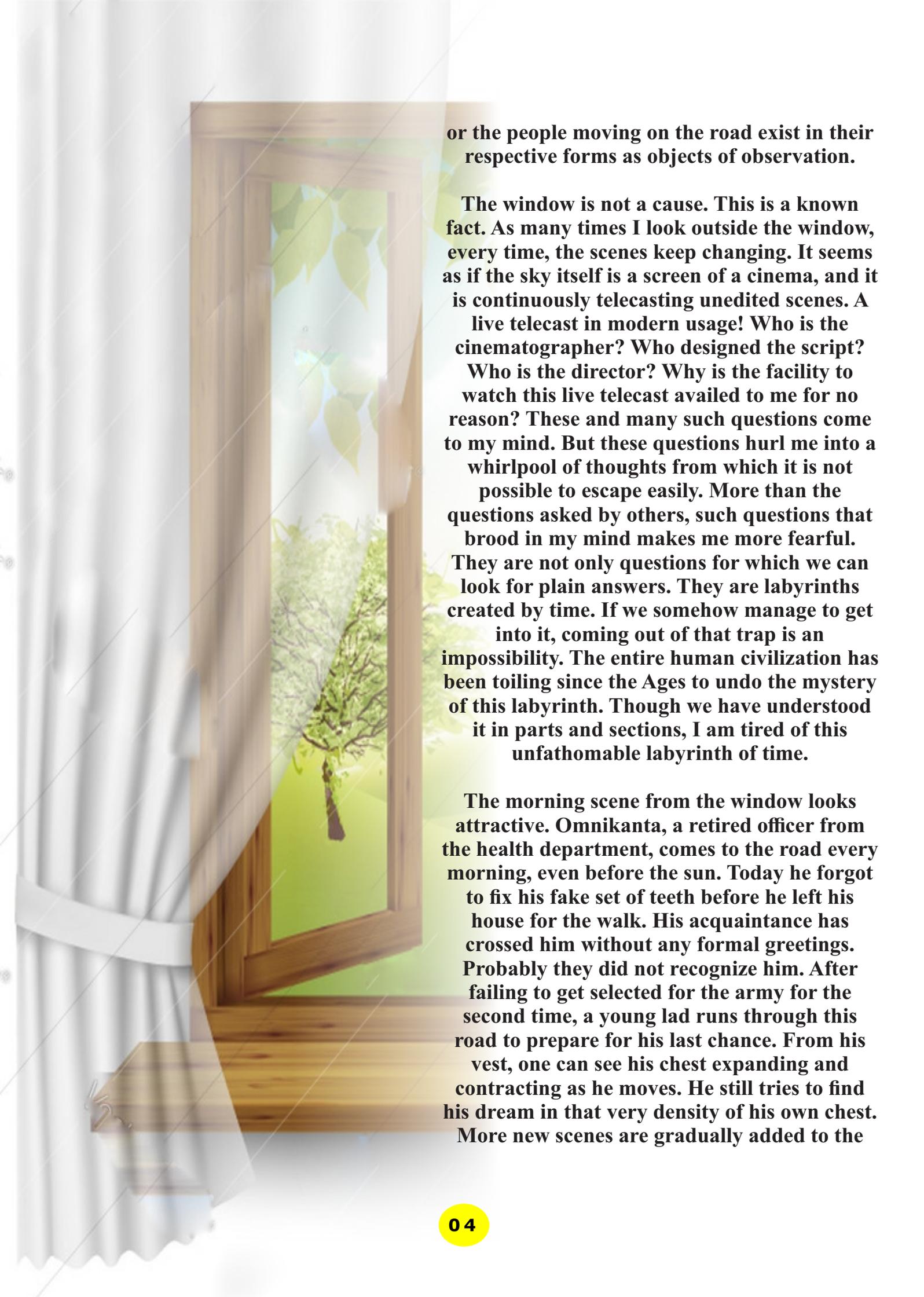
Sometimes I think that this window is to be blamed for all these strong gales that come to me in the form of emotions. Not all visuals and ideas need to travel only through doors and windows. It is a matter of coincidence! The window is just an initiator. A bridge! Behind everything that has happened, this mind alone is responsible. If it desires, it creates Indraprastha, the kingdom of Pandavas in Mahabarata! But the mind is a lakshyagriha, a wax house, in itself! It will be burnt down by its own arrogance and treachery. That window never desired for the Indraprastha, nor does it have any interest in moaning for the mind that is burning in the fire of its own arrogance. This equanimity gives the meaning of the window. It welcomes whatever comes in. It remains a witness to anything that bids farewell.

The scenes seen from the window are pretty different these days. Every man walks wearing a mask of his capacity. Probably it is not an appropriate time to walk openly. The mind trembles fearing the pandemic. In the nearby houses, there are students from distant villages who are desperately panicked. They have used all their possible lifelines, including their friends and their political connections, to survive in this ditch. But their countenances clearly indicate that their survival in this place is now becoming almost impossible. Violating the government's order to remain wherever and whatever situation one is in, they have moved with their backpacks to reach Kalanki chwok with an elusive hope of traveling to their home. They have hardly thought of the difficulty and trouble that is to come. I have an acquaintance, a very energetic but a clod! He interrogates every man that walks on the road as if he is born in this world to execute the orders of the government. He acts as if he is a policeman himself and his words are the law, and he threatens those young men and women

A window with white curtains looking out onto a green landscape with trees. The window frame is made of light-colored wood. The curtains are pulled back, revealing a view of a lush green field with a large tree in the distance. The scene is bright and sunny, with some green leaves visible in the foreground, possibly from a plant near the window.

walking desperately on the road. But when he secures a special travel permit with his influence, like a free street bull, he drives along the road forbidden for ordinary men. He startles us with the video posts of his drive on Facebook and Twitter!

An old lady is weeding the newly grown maize plants on a piece of unoccupied land adjacent to my window. She is simultaneously sowing seeds of beans. This land is fenced by chopping dried bamboo. Two dogs jump high to cross the fence and land in this same space. The old lady's middle-aged son has a complaint of high blood pressure. He is trying to walk along the grass belt on the edges of this land. Hirakaji, a local land broker, is showing this piece of land from one end of the road by pointing his finger. Probably, the landowner is a different person. Two people are measuring the land's four sides on the land owner's instruction. This unoccupied land has enabled my window to perform its duty. It has allowed me to watch the road from my room. If a house is built in this space, the road that travels on the east to this land will become a story for me. The authority of the window will turn into history. Well, I may walk through my door and reach that road. But someone else will be looking at me from his window. I shall merely turn into a traumatized character walking on the road. From an observer, I shall be transformed into an object of observation. Act-wise, this is a form of degeneration. But when we talk of a form, it suggests the idea of impermanence. There is always a possibility of becoming an observer or an actor. I am provoked by this knowledge of how the existence of a thing or a person depends on the other rather than by the idea of degeneration or growth. The meaning of the window depends on that unoccupied space and the open sky. My own identity rests on my action as an observer. Or, say, the road

A window with white curtains looking out onto a green landscape with a tree. The window frame is wooden and the curtains are pulled back to reveal the view. The scene outside is bright and green, suggesting a sunny day. A tree with green leaves is visible in the distance.

or the people moving on the road exist in their respective forms as objects of observation.

The window is not a cause. This is a known fact. As many times I look outside the window, every time, the scenes keep changing. It seems as if the sky itself is a screen of a cinema, and it is continuously telecasting unedited scenes. A live telecast in modern usage! Who is the cinematographer? Who designed the script? Who is the director? Why is the facility to watch this live telecast availed to me for no reason? These and many such questions come to my mind. But these questions hurl me into a whirlpool of thoughts from which it is not possible to escape easily. More than the questions asked by others, such questions that brood in my mind makes me more fearful. They are not only questions for which we can look for plain answers. They are labyrinths created by time. If we somehow manage to get into it, coming out of that trap is an impossibility. The entire human civilization has been toiling since the Ages to undo the mystery of this labyrinth. Though we have understood it in parts and sections, I am tired of this unfathomable labyrinth of time.

The morning scene from the window looks attractive. Omnikanta, a retired officer from the health department, comes to the road every morning, even before the sun. Today he forgot to fix his fake set of teeth before he left his house for the walk. His acquaintance has crossed him without any formal greetings. Probably they did not recognize him. After failing to get selected for the army for the second time, a young lad runs through this road to prepare for his last chance. From his vest, one can see his chest expanding and contracting as he moves. He still tries to find his dream in that very density of his own chest. More new scenes are gradually added to the

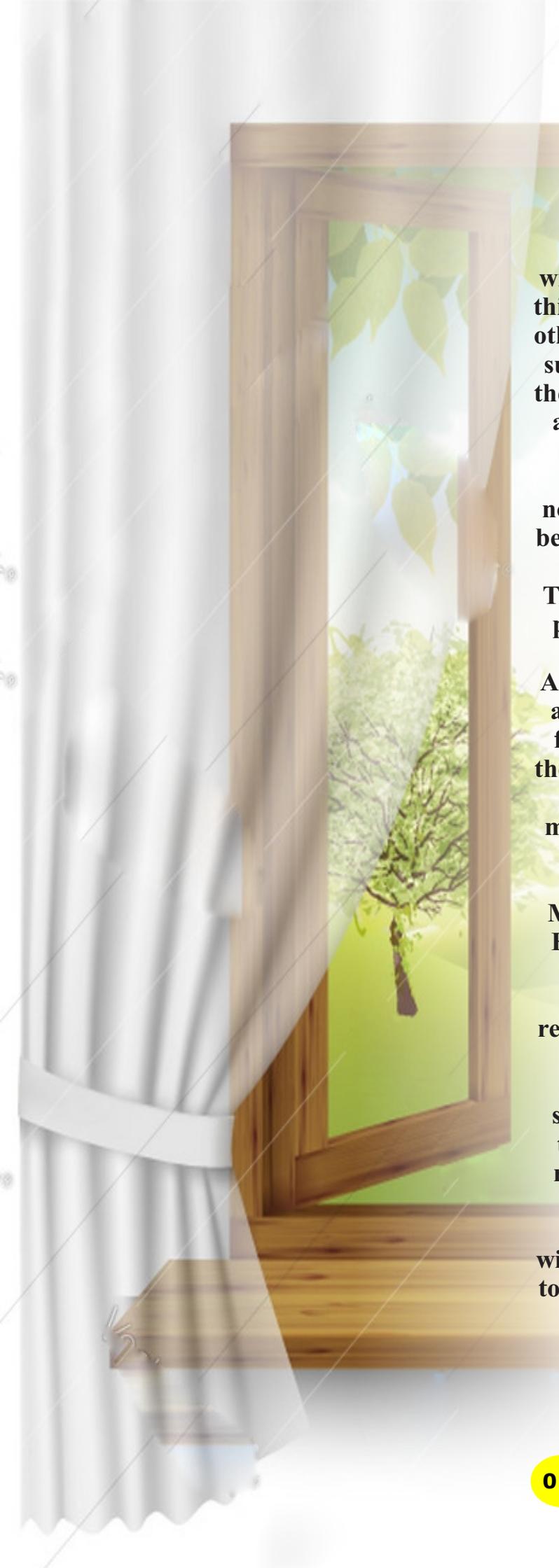
A window with white curtains looking out onto a green landscape with trees. The window frame is wooden and the curtains are pulled back to reveal a bright, sunny outdoor scene with lush green foliage and a clear sky.

road. A cycle hanging canes of milk; a wheeled cart with cauliflowers and tomatoes for sale; a housewife hurriedly bargaining the price of vegetables whose husband and children are waiting for her for their morning breakfasts; a jyapu balancing his kharpan while crossing the road; a heaving bakery-van driver trying to sell his products; a hawker holding the bicycle's handle with one of his hands and a newspaper with the other; and the two neighbors debating during their morning walk of whom one is supporting the stand of the party leader on the border issue while the other asks the life of his fake nationalism. As the sun grows young, these scenes gradually vanish.

The window is in the same place. Only the morning scenes have disappeared. But this does not mean that the window is living a void. There are changed new scenes. In a way, these scenes keep changing. There must be someone who is so easily changing the characters. Changing the scenes. And making the place a theatre. From the outside, it appears that the window shows us an external performance, but I feel its flow and influence are intrinsic. There are many literary and artistic creations on the theme of the window. Which wave of thought did make them observe outside the window? What did they see when they looked outside?

Or were they looking for the same visuals outside that were realized in their mind? These questions obviously are not easy to answer, but

I feel that these are able to dismantle everydayness and provoke waves of thought. It is a romantic thought to contemplate what Govinda Bahadur Malla Gothale wanted or did not want to see outside the window through his character Mishri. The plot leaves the readers in a complicated state of mind from which they can neither sympathize with the character nor completely abandon her. Why

A window with white curtains looking out onto a green landscape with trees. The window frame is wooden and the curtains are pulled back to reveal the view. The scene outside is bright and green, suggesting a sunny day in a park or garden.

does the window leave someone in such a situation? The answer is not that easy.

Many often, I have imagined a situation without windows. The window brings so many things that I do not want to see or hear but that others are committed to telling and showing. In such a state, it is difficult to balance the mind, the conscience that is torn or split. Now there is a different scene outside the window. On the top of the house opposite, a young girl is reading Leo Tolstoy's *Anne Karenina*. The novel describes a romantic extramarital affair between Anne and Alexei. The girl looks a little more thoughtful as she continues reading. Then, all of a sudden, she picks up her mobile phone and dials a number. She appears as if she is Anne herself and the thoughts about Alexei Vronsky make her excited. On her side, another bearded young man is capturing his fresh selfie poses to share with his friends in the beard club. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, which he is holding in his hand, is not meaningful to him at this moment. The ethics of his club is different. His ethics of being happy is even more different than that. Morality does not have a universal standard. Humans assign different values according to time and place, necessity and taste, and convenience and adversity. Morality is a relative thing, and it can be proved only by the power of intellect and logic or through the power of authority. The crux of the double standard lies in this complexity. The men on the road wearing masks are only a physical representation of this double standard. This window is a witness to many such truths, which should not be underrated only as window scenes. Many truths that I am not able to observe are preserved by this window in the ditch of silence.

Author's Bio