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Preface

Language, labour, and community are intimately related. Words are formed through need. The more complex the society, the more elaborate the forms of labour and social cooperation to satisfy needs: which in turn creates fertile ground for linguistic richness through negotiation, argumentation, appreciation, and irony. In a deeply complex and diverse society like India, native languages have long been the repositories of the long and intricate development of material culture. From craft to agriculture to masonry to engineering, Indian vocational excellence has gone hand in hand with the abilities of people to work together and form knacks for understanding each other through their doings with words. Traditional and ancient knowledge is passed on through these languages; lives are made easier through the facility of Indian languages for wit, sarcasm, and irony. With the pervasion of English as the imposed common tongue in which all human association in India will be carried out, there is a danger, not only that we lose our linguistic and cultural history, but that we lose our ability to create novel works that are Indian in nature – that we lose our creative potential. Though the irony of writing this in English is not lost on this author, he plods on in the hope that the insights in this magazine in the florid prose of various native tongues will be apologic enough for the Indian languages this issue seeks to celebrate.