

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

THIS WEEK THE STAR WEEKEND SHEDS LIGHT ON THE WORK AND PHILOSOPHY OF A CELEBRATED AMERICAN WRITER WILLIAM TANNER VOLLMANN.

ANANTA YUSUF

country." However, he also criticised America for the current situation of the country and says, "I think it's a mistake, like all other Afghans. The Afghans will win, as they always have before. In the meantime, the Americans will create more and more hatred and thus will be punished themselves, unfortunately."

In the nearly two decades of his career, he has produced a number of masterpieces. Many of his writings deal with the margin of war, poverty and hope. And North America takes the central position in most of his writings.

From the beginning of mankind, storytelling is the only existing form that has been able to grab people's attention from every walk of life. Irrespective of age or culture, most people usually find stories more interesting when the narrative connects with their lives. In many cases, a short story can be more enlightening than a thousand words. And a powerful word can bring a story alive, enabling us to imagine the little details and intricacies. "I try to make all my books different and I try to make my sentences as beautiful as possible," he concludes.



PHOTO: AMMAN William Tanner Vollmann

STAR PEOPLE

Whatever we do in our mundane life, we usually do it for money. A few people dare to dream, can follow where the dreams lead. Some dare to face the ups and downs of life. At the end they emerge triumphant. Celebrated American writer William Tanner Vollmann is one such writer who writes to nourish his mind.

"I worked as a computer programmer to earn money. I am a writer because I want to be," he explains. "I'm influenced by many writers. The more dead they are, the better I like them," he adds, tongue-in-cheek.

The Soviet aggression inspired him to visit Afghanistan in 1982 and write about the country. With insights into the craft of storytelling, he started writing about his experience with a group of Mujahideens heading for the front lines. His initial research for fiction and non-fiction projects began in the battlefield and that's how he penned his first non-fiction "An Afghanistan Picture Show, or, How I Saved the World."

He says, "I felt sorry for the Afghans when the Soviets were enslaving that

LIVING THE DREAM

Born in Lalmonirhat, Jesy did her schooling till class 7. "I was very adamant about playing cricket. When I was aspiring to be a cricketer, we didn't have a national women's team. But I knew one day there will be one, and I was determined to be a part of it," says Jesy. "My inspiration was Sachin Tendulkar. When I was getting to know of him, he already had 18 centuries in his bag. He was the reason I fell in love with the game."

Jesy's parents were very pleased with her academic result, but did not appreciate her craze for cricket. They tried to convince her to stay in school, but she was determined to go to Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Pratishthan (BKSP). After seeing her passion and talent, her parents came around, but there was still a lot of criticism that Jesy had to face from outsiders for being a girl who plays cricket. "But I was so in love with the game that I knew that I couldn't let anyone's words get to me," she says.

In 2007, after an internal all-women's league, the best players were selected and our women's national cricket team was finally formed-inevitably, Jesy was selected! Jesy has been the Vice Captain of the National Women's Team for a few years, she has also been the captain of the Abahani team, and is now captaining the Rupali Bank team, who are in the middle of a tournament right now. "Some of the

SHATHIRA JAKIR JESY IS A WELL KNOWN FEMALE CRICKETER IN BANGLADESH. SHE IS A RIGHT-HAND BATSMAN AND A RIGHT-ARM OFFBREAK BOWLER FOR THE BANGLADESH WOMEN'S TEAM.

NAZIBA BASHER

greatest achievements as a cricketer, though, have been with the whole team," says Jesy. "I think the most memorable was when we got our ODI (One Day International) status in 2011. Apart from that, there was also the time

when Salma Khatun, Tithi Rani Sarkar and I got the first salaries as female cricketers, and in 2007, when we became the champions in the ACC Women's Tournament."

Jesy is closest to teammates Tithi Rani Sarkar and Lata Mandal, and from the men's team, Shakib Al Hasan. "Shakib and I have been friends since our BKSP days. We even go to the same university now. He is definitely one of my favourites from the men's team. He and I get together every now and then and discuss games, tips

and techniques," she says.

Apart from this, Jesy is also a prominent television personality as she hosts many talk shows on cricket during major tournaments like the T20 World Cup or the ICC World Cup.

Jesy is currently doing her Master's in Development Studies from American International University, Bangladesh (AIUB), while focusing on her cricketing career at the same time. "I took and also topped a Level 2 coaching course in Malaysia. I am currently coaching orphan girls to play cricket through an NGO in Gazipur- Kishori Unnayan Kendra. I hope to take up coaching after my career as a cricketer is over."



PHOTOS: COURTESY

Shathira Jakir Jesy

QUIRKY SCIENCE

THE MISSING LINK

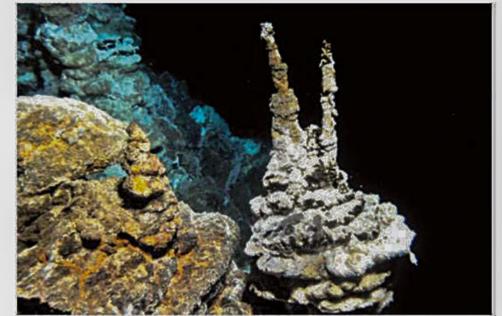
In a new study, published in Nature this week, a research team led from Uppsala University in Sweden presents the discovery of a new microbe that represents a missing link in the evolution of complex life. The study provides a new understanding of how the complex cell types that comprise plants, fungi, but also animals and humans, evolved from simple microbes.

In this week's edition of Nature, researchers from Uppsala University in Sweden, along with collaborators from the universities in Bergen (Norway) and Vienna (Austria) report the discovery of a new group of Archaea, the Lokiarchaeota (or 'Loki' for short), and

identify it to be a missing link in the origin of eukaryotes.

"We hoped that Loki would reveal a few more pieces of the puzzle, but when we obtained the first results, we couldn't believe our eyes. The data simply looked spectacular," says Thijs Ettema at the Department of Cell and Molecular Biology, Uppsala University, who lead the scientific team that carried out the study. "By studying its genome, we found that Loki represents an intermediate form in-between the simple cells of microbes, and the complex cell types of eukaryotes," says Thijs Ettema.

Source: sciencedaily.com



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POP HISTORY



Evolutionary biologists and computer scientists have come together to study the evolution of pop music. Their analysis of 17,000 songs from the US Billboard Hot 100 charts, 1960 to 2010, is the most substantial scientific study of the history of popular music to date.

The study found that 1986 was the least diverse year for the charts, a fact the researchers attribute to the sudden popularization of drum machines and samplers at the time. Diversity recovered after that, and while it was declining again by 2010 the scientists reject pessimistic views of chart diversity: there is no evidence for a general trend towards homogenization in the charts.

The researchers from Queen Mary University of London and Imperial College London, with help from music website Last.fm, used cutting edge methods from signal processing and text-mining to analyze the musical properties of songs. Their system automatically grouped the thousands of songs by patterns of chord changes and tone allowing researchers to statistically identify trends with an unprecedented degree of consistency.

Matthias Mauch, from the School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science at QMUL, lead author of the paper, said: "For the first time we can measure musical properties in recordings on a large scale. We can actually go beyond what music experts tell us, or what we know ourselves about them, by looking directly into the songs, measuring their makeup, and understanding how they have changed."

Source: sciencedaily.com