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Cariappa Annaiah – India –

I call myself an artist and poet without borders. I was born, raised, and educated in India, where I trained and worked as a physician and pathologist. I have worked as a scientist for 30 years: eight in Karigiri, South India, and 22 in Boston, Massachusetts. In the past two years, I've taken a job as the steward of mentoring programs at an academic research institution in Louisiana.

The decision to leave India was not taken lightly, since my parents and siblings live there, but my philosophy made it easier. It was a natural extension of my need to do basic research that would be effective. In India, I conducted clinical research on leprosy patients, and such research was not easy to conduct there because of a lack of funds and materials. I decided to immigrate to a country where this type of long-term research was possible, and the United States was the most logical destination. I contacted scientists in the USA and obtained a postdoctoral position at a Boston hospital. In 1992, I flew there with a valid visa to conduct research in the field of developmental biology.

The only difficulty I faced as an immigrant was the long and tedious bureaucratic process of becoming a naturalized citizen. There was no culture shock since I had already been exposed to a lot of Western culture in India. I have experienced no overt prejudice, which could be because of the nature of my work. Research is an egalitarian field.

I was very happy at the ceremony when I became a naturalized American citizen in 2006, along with my physician-scientist wife of 33 years. History, both past and current, suggests that it is in the nature of human beings to be suspicious of immigrants. Given that fact, it is essential that immigrants both maintain their identity and also assimilate and contribute wholeheartedly to their adopted country.

This I have done!

I have published many of my poems. Here is one of them:

UNION MEMBERS

we all are!

Love it or hate it

we belong to

The Human Union.

Pick it or Picket it

the dues come due

in one form or the other.

The choice is Hobson's

Not yours.