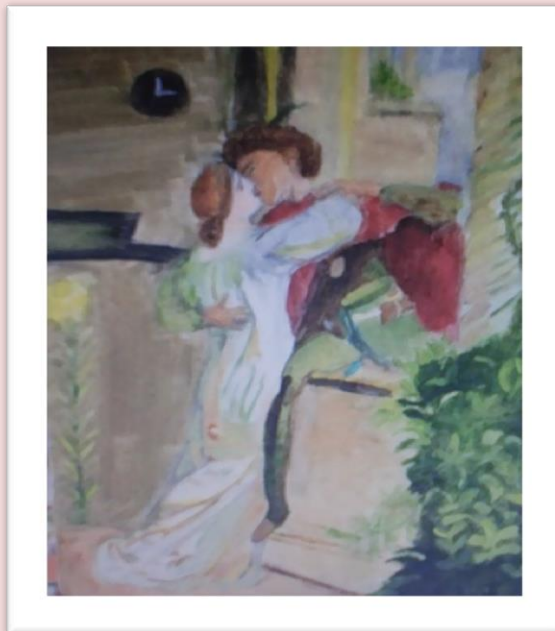


GloMag
GLOW98

*Monthly Online Poetry and Flash Fiction
Magazine*

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Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

Rimona Franklin



Title of the Cover Pic: Romeo and Juliet

Rimona Franklin: Rimona has been drawing, painting, writing, and dancing from a very young age. Her first article was published in The Hindu when she was in 12th Standard. She further refined her painting skills in college and fell in love with oil paints. She has freelanced for the website Glam Curry as writer and photographer. She can feel her creative energy flowing when she is dancing or choreographing. She has learnt Bharatanatyam for nine years, done two years of freestyle, performed at the inauguration of IPL 4, performed professionally with a team at various shows and choreographed at various functions. She strongly believes that there are no beliefs – just a bunch of people doing what they think will make them happy. She finds this intriguing and someday hopes to help people be happy by dealing with mental issues through counselling. She is currently waiting to join The Nudge Organization by the end of this month and is excited to do her bit for the betterment of our society. In fact, she urges everybody to join The Nudge and do what they can for the cause.

Website: <http://www.thenudge.org/>

Some Tips on Painting:

1. Take some time out to paint
2. Do not postpone painting
3. Do not be afraid of the colors
4. Experiment till the painting conveys what you want it to
5. Be proud of your creation

ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag is the coming together of poets in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions - and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the poet gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the poet's intentions, and at the same time, enhance the reading experience. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. The thoughts capture you, time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful verses, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

Glory Sasikala

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BACKGROUND MUSIC: “Romeo and Juliet” movie
background score by Andre Rieu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLL9GoeEqS4>

PREFACE

Rimona Franklin

(Fiercely positive; unconventional; questions everything; creative and intellectual; afraid of fear; lives on 'life's too short to lead a boring one')



When I asked mom what the Preface should be about, she told me to write about something I feel strongly about. Well, I feel strongly about so many things and I could ramble on into a never-ending Preface of contradicting opinions. But since this is the love issue, thanks to Valentine's Day, I am going to attempt to elaborate on the same. Ok, I tried to, but I have absolutely no clue what love and marriages are all about. I would probably go to the top of the lighthouse, eat cheesecake, catch a movie, or take a trip by myself – to celebrate Valentine's Day. Yes, yes, welcome to a 24yr-old self-exploring girly girl.

It's the journey that matters. The journey was the only thing that mattered for Romeo and Juliet because the end of their

love story wasn't that great. Even in many situations in our lives, the journey never seems to matter till we reach the other side. Imagine this, a hundred years from now, is it really going to matter if you coloured your hair blue or green or got a tattoo? It is of complete insignificance, but nonetheless creates a huge hoo-haa when someone does it. Focus people! Having children, now that's quite important. One, for populating, because we are under the threat of extinction, and another, for leaving something of yours behind because one of you once on this Earth is not enough. I don't even know my great-great-grandmother for crying out loud! There's no point, which I am sure, is what everyone must be thinking about my Preface now. Keep going brave hearts; I'll try to tie it together in the end.

Journey, point, ummm...right so – our journey through life is full of very important things that have no point at the end of it all. Think about all the decisions and changes you have made for someone else's happiness, just because the other person wasn't kind enough or mature enough to say – take your own decisions, live your own life, if you're happy I'm happy, even if it means you becoming a different person from what I wanted you to be or because of the society that was too busy not minding its own business. Now think about all the things that we get stressed out about. We get stressed out when we want to succeed at something but are not able to, and stress, in turn, pushes you down even further. Ironically, people who take it in their stride and care just a

little less always succeed. No, I am not talking about the “whatever” attitude here. I am trying to shift the focus from totally unnecessary things to matters that actually need contemplation and action.

Saying no to Individuality seems the mantra here. But the groupies have brought out a generation of judgmental, non-thinking, corporate robots who prefer existing over living; perhaps some don’t even know the difference. I am sure they have done good as well, but does it justify the negative effect? How can a person think that a good life is when one takes care of one’s family and provides for them when one is completely aware of the fact that there are thousands of other families out there who haven’t had enough food and don’t have a proper shelter? All of us know that there is enough money, food, fuel, etc., to sufficiently supply everybody on the face of Earth. The more persistent question is why everybody finds the inequality normal and the self-right to luxury natural.

So what I am saying is that it’s the journey that matters, so choose your journey carefully. Don’t break a sweat over things that seem important, but actually are not. Spread love and empathy – not just the words, the actual feeling in the actual world as opposed to the virtual world, which is the need of the hour. Happy Valentine’s Day people!

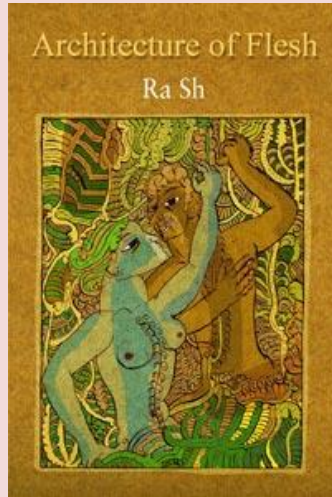
P.S. – If you could make sense of the above, hats off!

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Architecture of Flesh

By

Ra Sh



K. Satchidanandan: Excellent work!

Meena Kandasamy (Excerpt from her Introduction):

It is very hard to pin down Ra Sh - Ravi Shanker's poetry to any one superseding emotion: he can be outrageous, he can be unabashed and shameless, or, he can surprise the reader by his political acuity. It is safest to read him without expectations.

The many love poems in this collection are often suffused with an atmospheric element, as if to highlight the precarious manner in which love holds itself, as though it were at the mercy of the forces of nature. Rain is one such recurrent theme, and coming from that land of monsoons, it is

understandable why his love-poems are drenched with pouring rain.

In Conversation with Meena Kandasamy – Times of India

http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tracking-indian-communities/love-too-is-a-sickness/?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=TOI

Duane Vorhees, Editor, duanespoeTree blog mag (Excerpt)

Finally! I had an opportunity to read your book. I was only going to sample it, but I couldn't stop until I reached the end. Some of the poems are simply amazing, especially the love poems. If i had to choose a favorite it would be "You Are a fucking Rain," but actually the choice would be difficult. As a foreigner I enjoy the exoticism of many of the poems (though of course they are not exotic to you) -- the strange words, the unusual sounds.....I truly thank you for sending it my way!

Linda Ashok, Editor, Poetry Mail and Founder/Editor, RædLeaf Poetry -India

"Distance is a beautiful disruption when it loses its way to familial familiarity. Ra Sh as a clever hermit seems to acknowledge it through the poems that appear in this solo collection. Distance is no fancy object here but treated as a tool to bridge the uncanny, the subliminal and the mundane to an experience that reads raw and tender, loud and bursting with crazy meteorites of imagery that burn the

pages of the book. That's how life on earth was built and is sustained. That's how Ra Sh emancipates poetry from the labour of elitism."

Rajasree Ramesh, Poet (Excerpt): Ra Sh's writing is miraculous: a stanza can suggest a novella, and the reading transforms to a lucid aphrodisiac dreaming. The pleasure and pain of flesh run through the poems and what's crucial is the torque of language that takes his poetry to fresh levels of perceptual power. This is work to revel and be grateful for.

Bini B.S, Poet (Excerpt): "Usually poems that explore intimate corporeal experiences revolve around the personal, often reluctant to set out into the terrain of the social. We rarely find works that do not treat the personal and socio-political as separate concerns. Reading the collection, *Architecture of Flesh* by Ravi Shankar (Ra Sh), takes one right into the body of the world. "

Elancharan Gunasekaran: "To put a few lines to this work of poetry would result in mental haemorrhage. Simply mind fucked by Ra Sh's poetical whirlpool. All the wrong words in all the right places. Inciting, intoxicating and inviting, *Architecture of Flesh* is magic made into pages and text. Go read!"

Vineetha Mekkoth, Poet/translator: Just finished Ravishankar sir's book *Architecture of Flesh*. Dark. Dismal. Powerful. Stabbing you in the gut. A single thought-thread running through the poems. A mocking laugh in the face of

the conventional, the authoritarian. Not for the traditionalists. A brilliant collection of poems that make you think.

Ashitha. M, Poet (Excerpt): Love, no apology

I am flesh I am body I am soul. Bold and shameless, his poems are no songs of despair or guilt. It's love, that's grown unconditionally to proclaim with an unparalleled confidence that - I will sleep with you/ You will sleep with me/ He will sleep with us/ All my loves, All yours/ Will sleep with us/ Even the dead ones/ Even those in the seeds.

LINKS

<http://kindlemag.in/architecture-of-flesh/>

<https://paperwall.in/books/74/Architecture%20of%20Flesh>

<http://english.manoramaonline.com/lifestyle/books/architecture-of-flesh-ravi-shanker-ra-sh-meena-kandasamy-poetry.html>

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AFTER EL NIÑO: FEBRUARY 24, 1998

(for Lynne Cohn, who left town one day too soon)

A foamy surf of clouds breaks over
the San Gabriel mountains.

El niño has left for the moment,

finally, today, it is

sunny Southern California:

brightly purpled wildflowers,

highlight the green valleys

unobscured as they were

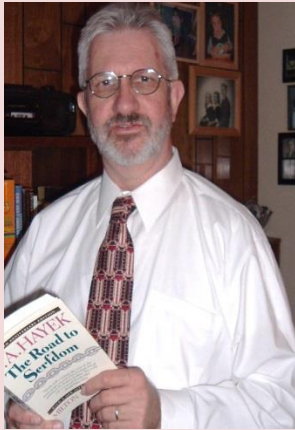
by yesterday's sheets of rain

and the clouds--heavily
folded brushstrokes of slate grey.
Meanwhile, white-veined

and dusted with snow,
the peaks of the ridges run
in a curve along the freeway.

As evening sets, the sun splashes
blankets of pinks and greenish blues
over the burnt-and-brown tones.

A ribbon of light runs red
along their arched backs.
This is what you had hoped to find.



William P. Cushing: Born in Virginia, Bill Cushing grew up in New York, attended school in Pennsylvania, began college in Missouri but quickly found himself back in Virginia and New York as well as Florida, Maryland, Texas, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico before moving to California. Bill has had reviews, articles, and poems published in Another Chicago Magazine, Birders World, Brownstone Review, the Florida Times Union, genius & madness, Metaphor, Sabal Palm Review, the San Juan Star, and Synergy. Some of his work can be found at poemhunter.com as well as poetrynook.com. He now teaches English at East Los Angeles and Mt. San Antonio colleges and resides in Glendale with his wife and their son. He can be contacted at: piscespoet@yahoo.com



I behold the morning sun,
That shines so bright and strong
Perhaps stronger in a select dwelling,
A dwelling where you live with me.

The fluttering waves in Brighton
With peace and tranquility all around
Remind me of the childhood dream
A dream that you share with me.

The long and weary journeys
Resplendent with the colours of joy and sorrow
Narrate a tale of triumph over troubles,
A triumph that you celebrate with me.

The ever earthy aspirations and goals,
Are indeed shaped through struggle and care.
But the best laid plans are those with a helping hand,
A hand that you provide to me.

In a dreary episode from my quiet journey,
I see into the horizon, only to witness..
The far pavilions of a life together,
A life for you and me.



Vivek Shivram: My life is a poem, a beautiful one at that. I live in one of the most happening cities in the world. When I live out my life as a Consultant for a blue chip firm, the energy of Canary Wharf is mine to claim. And when I seek refuge in poetry, the Surrey Countryside opens up to me.



CONFINED CONFESSIONS

Connoisseur of love
moments of erotic charm.

Serene, sublime my lust
always in your arm.

Smiling your lips
your effervescent kiss.
Defiant your passion
seamless bounded emotions.

Spirit of your love
my heart's sensation.
Never ever in life
so surreal emancipation.

Fervent desire
your moves; I admire.
Senses you arouse
breath in deep pause.
Smell, only odor of love
fragrance fresh as ever
mesmerised uncovered soul.
Wrinkled sheets of linen
covering ecstasy
testimony to the story untold.



Vishal Ajmera: He is a Business strategy consultant working with a reputed MNC in Mumbai. Professionally, strategy and finance are his area of expertise but over the last few decades Vishal has developed a penchant for poem dating back to his early school days. In a poet's avatar, he is an avid writer with composition of poems across all genres especially

romance, philosophy, psychology, nature, human life etc. With compositions of over 1,000+ poems across different languages (Hindi, English & Gujarati) and genres; Vishal's work has been greatly appreciated by both national and international authors/ poets of repute. With an intention to scale his 'poetic fervor' to the next level, Vishal is currently working towards contributing to international anthology publications.

If not busy with his professional commitments, easy to find Vishal at his 'poetic chair', penning dreams into words :). You can reach him at: vishalajmera1@gmail.com

Happy to connect!!



PUNISHMENT

Prachee Godse jumped over the pool of water in a pothole on the footpath. She gingerly trotted across the deserted road and reached the bus stop and stood there embracing herself in a futile effort to fight the cold. Prachee's salwar, now wet from the downpour was sending cold jitters through her body. She eyed the road till the end, yet there was no sign of an auto or a bus. She started walking towards the main road, carefully keeping an eye out for lurking night monsters, which featured in the newspapers every day. "Mother must be trying to call me. I wish I get home soon; even Hari has been absconding for two days. What a headache!" She waited on the deserted road, cursing the weather, cursing the time, and cursing all the autos, taxis and buses which had brought their revving engines to a stop to call it a day. "Couldn't they work for an hour more?" she thought. Far away a beggar on the road kicked a dog which tried to take shelter under the shop door along with him. The whine broke the eerie silence of the sacred night. The downpour had stopped. The buildings with tyre roofs and the buildings with aluminium roofs were wet and dripping, and the water gushing out of pipes from the terraces onto the sidewalk formed a mini waterfall in the concrete jungle. Prachee decided to walk it up slowly till a God sent mode of transport came by her to take her home.

Rambo and his friends huddled together around a freshly lit fire on the roadside, by a rapidly flowing drain. Amjad and Suri were rolling a piece of paper and then stuck the side with a lick. The open end was slowly turned till it looked like an Olympic torch ready to be lit. Rambo unbuttoned his denim jacket and looked at the glittering graffiti proudly. 'Rambo' it read. "It is very strong Rambo bhai, so don't suck on it too long the way you always do." Rambo patted his folded arm loudly and said "Rambo can handle himself." With that statement, the three of them began taking turns, and after a couple of drags, they sat quietly looking into the fire, like three blocks of wood, moving only to take the rolled up piece of burning paper from the other. Three blocks of inanimate wood.

Prachee finally reached the bridge over the city drain, which would lead her to her house on the other side. Her self-embracing act continued, and she walked faster across the bridge. The roads were deserted except for three men around a fire smoking a cigarette. With an eye on the trio she passed by them in a hurried trot. After a few yards heaving a sigh of relief, Prachee glanced over her shoulder to see what the three men were up to. Precisely at that moment, a huge shadow threw itself on her and pushed her. Within an instance, she was hurled by an uncanny force through the bushes on the roadside, down a rugged clayey slope. It was dark and the ground was wet, the sound of a fast flowing river was overpowering. The strong stench of marijuana suffocated her, and a broken ankle and a wrist wouldn't let her get up. Prachee tried letting out a scream, which was sent back in with a muddy hand stuffing a piece of cloth into her mouth. Her arms were pinned down by a strong man,

and she struggled to try and get free. "I told you it will be a tough fight, didn't I?" the two men laughed loudly.

Fifteen minutes of struggle left Prachee drained and unable to move. Unable to scream through the gagged mouth, she let out deep-throated growls of pain. The duo, finally content with the outcome of their action, summoned Rambo bhai. Rambo got into the act, slowly not caring about the world around him, not listening to his friends asking him to hurry up. Finally he stood up on his unstable feet trying to handle himself, trying to stop the earth from slipping from under him. He held the tree next to him. "She stinks, let her take a dip in the river," he said and giggled. The trio heaved her now unconscious broken and tattered body into the river. With a sigh of relief, the three men climbed up the slope onto the road, and bid adieu.

Hari got up with a start, clutching his painful temple, to the noise of a TV reporter on a news channel. "In yet another shocking incident, a twenty-year-old was raped and thrown into the city drain. The body was recovered by the slum dwellers early this morning and brought to the general hospital, where she was declared brought dead." The press photographers shot snaps of the victim, and Hari looked at the TV in shock and in petrified disbelief. "Police have nabbed two men, with the help of witnesses. Further investigations are being carried on." The duo have been identified as Amjad, a college dropout from Shivrajpuri, and Suri, a drug peddler from the Shahjahan slum. The police are now on the lookout of a third suspect named Rambo, who is in hiding." Hari got up from the bed and got dressed quietly, probably to go home and sit by his wailing mother.

Later in the evening, the local news channel flashed the breaking news: “suicide on railway tracks”. The reporter was standing with a crowd of people behind her at the railway track. She narrated slowly “In a rather unfortunate incident, a young man has ended his life by jumping in front of the Leelabai superfast express at 10 in the morning today. Trains on this route have been delayed by an hour because of the incident. The cause of the suicide has not been found; however, the victim has been identified as Hari Godse.” The crowd moved aside to let the reporter take a snap of the incident. Hari lay face down on the railway track. The afternoon sun shone brightly, making the graffiti on his jacket glitter. ‘Rambo’ it read.



Vishak Chadrasekharan: Baker by day and Poet by night, Vishak lets his personal experiences decide the course of his pen on paper to come up with the most Vivid and brutal expression of Life situations everyone goes through. He uses his ability to connect to people emotionally to put those experiences on paper and enables others to look at the world through their eyes. He currently runs and partners a Cafe in

Coimbatore called V's and pens down poems and dark Stories during the little free time he gets.



BUILDING BRIDGES TO SPRING

Carrying their twigs, the sparrows sing

Building bridges, to the lovely spring

Winter's woes have passed

Balmy days are here, at last

Soft meadows and a sky so fair

That feeling called love... in the air

Two days short or four weeks long

Who can say as you while along

February....sweet and small

It's the greatest month of all.... :)



Vinay Virwani: A marketing guy by profession, I can't help but try and convince you that a particular brand of detergent powder can really change your life!

And while you may choose not to believe me, at least I ended up telling you a story!

Alas, while the breed of storytelling marketers is fast getting replaced by number-chasing, profit-making, excel sheet enthusiasts, I write....to continue telling stories....

A misfit perhaps, in a rapidly format-driven, number crunching world.....but a misfit who has successfully blended in.....:)



THE GIRL BY THE SEA

She had her own conversations
with the layers of doubts
that coiled her,
like time that anonymously plunged
into the corridors of silence.

She knew,
that her questions wouldn't find
answers immediately,
And sometimes, never.

Yet she believed in her questions,
because they were meant to be,
because they were the only connecting bridge

between reality and illusions,
between her inner self and the outer world,
between the blank canvases and the footprints that raced on
it, without notice,
like monotony that plagued life and further turned it
invisible.

But her questions will still remain,
like the waves of the sea that magnanimously meet the shore
everyday,
not expecting to touch the same legs that it did the the last
time,
or wash the same shell that once belonged to it.

Because both the sea and her,
believed in their questions,
and not the answers,

And that is why
both of them were in love with each other,
forever.



Vasanthi Swetha: She is a 2nd year Economics student who is extremely passionate about the art of poetry, dance, reading and dreaming, and she believes that every poem that she writes is a result of a conversation with her soul.



In a dark room
Blinds drawn and made darker
You pulled me towards you
Savage and brute
Like we were in 'our' days
Ah the futility of my meek 'no'
In that forbidden space
We breathed into each other
Hands accustomed to the topograph
And yet the hide and seek
Just as you lowered your head
Better sense said I should resist
It was only the night before
I had convinced myself

'We were through'

My sweaty palms held you tight

Lips inches away

With a lust so sublime

When have relationship manuals

Ever had their way?



Vandana Kumar: She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She has done her masters in History from Lady Shri Ram College and her Diplôme from the Alliance Française de Delhi.

She is a French teacher in a couple of schools and private institutes and also translates for various publishing houses and corporates. An active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi-she has a soft corner for Kolkata where she spent her childhood. Her various passions include singing, playing the piano, composing music and participating in local

antakshari competitions. She describes herself as a dreamer...a wanderer and a certified incurable romantic...the romantic moorings worsened with all her fancy French studies. Poetry for her is her stress buster -her flight of fancy- and strangely – what keeps her rooted too.



GLORY IS A CHOICE

"Its a long way to glory", said the mother to her son.

He nodded sagely; he was ready for the run.

Truth to tell, he did not know much of life.

His day began and ended with his parents' strife.

Food was simple, puffed rice in whey,

Sugar was added on a festive day.

Fruits culled from an unknowing garden

Could cost a life, at the hands of the warden.

Water there was aplenty it ran all around,

Except it was muddy, choked of all sound.

Many fish in the water, the poor were wont to say.

They spoke of themselves in this self-effacing way.

Life's learning was not so easily got.

The chase heated by guns uneasily bought.

One's skills were honed on the follies of the other

One's armor mostly was the blessing of his mother.

No life was valuable, none empowered,

Manliness died. Elevating the coward

To a heightened political poise,

At great cost to human life.

Glory was His only choice.

Glory was his only choice.



Usha Chandrasekharan: She is a believer in the power of the universe, in the power of positive energy, in the power of words, in the power of good intentions. She has two children

both of good literary prowess, both creative in their own way.



CRAZY VALENTINE..

You have seen me fall,
You have seen me make mistakes
I'm sure you've often said,
"I am tired of all this shit!"
But as ungraceful as I am
I truly love you,
Even tons n tons of roses
can't tell you how I feel about you.
But baby, come closer.
Showing is better than telling,
and I know just how to show you
how much I love you...



Thileepan Manikumar: He is a HR professional, currently resides in Trichy with his wife Cathy and an arrogant cat, Sling. He is sincere, friendly, curious, ambitious, and an occasional liar. He is a man with a dream. A very simple dream, mostly including bikes and beers. But a dream nonetheless.



THE URBAN ROMANTIC

On a morning of humid August,
In a cramped flat in a mid-rise, restive Mumbai,
A bedraggled guy,
Wakes up by the street dogs and then
Bends down, plants a hot kiss,
---His breath stale and
Carrying hints of tobacco and liquor---
On the soft and cold belly button of
The fair-complexioned woman
Stretched out in bed, half-bare/half-covered, still asleep,
Mouth slightly open,
Teeth protruding above a swollen lower lip;
The moist kiss sends a shiver down,
On the exposed mid-riff, brown-white;

The sleepy figure dreaming of an orange sea against a dark sky, a couple, on a bench, mesmerized by the sight.

She stirs up, eyes open, in half-dream,

Then breaks into a smile, sighing: Oh! So erotic!

Then---

Mundane begins!



Sunil Sharma: He is a writer based in Mumbai, India. A college principal, he has published four books of poems, two books of shorts and a novel in English, apart from co-editing six literary anthologies.

He edits Episteme:

<http://www.episteme.net.in/>



(pic by Sumita Dutta)

SHONDHI PUJA

The Lamp Inflorescence -

Exactly hundred and eight flowered

Awaits life - a flame.

People cluster, traditionally bedecked -

Piety clad for that moment auspicious

An appointment with God.

Heart-full faith -

Minds humming prayers

For ambitions, fears and loved ones...

From hand to hand passes the flame -

Human hands, so delicate, so strong

Lighting the patient ghee soaked wicks.

The inflorescence grows -

A Tree, it's branches aflame
Bathing each precant in luminescence.
Reds and oranges and brilliant gold
Kissing sweetly loving faces;
Leaving in flickering shadows
Hidden worries and pain
The relentless scourge of humanity.



Sumita Dutta: She is a photographer and the proprietor of Adlsh Photo Art. She has a degree in Fine Arts (Painting) from Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore. She loves writing both poetry and prose. She resides in the southern end of Chennai with her two sons, her father, a cat and a dog. Find her blog at: <https://zippythoughts.wordpress.com/>



Love unattainable

I loved her, love her now and forever

She is unrealistically adorable

As beautiful as a blush of summer sunset

As bright as sunny summer morning

Her black night sky hair pulls me to get engulf into it

Eyes deeper than the nadir of ocean invites me to get drawn

Her carefree laughter infuse everything around with life

Her calmness seeps into my being and make me peaceful

Her untamed oomph fills me with buoyancy

Her memory works as elixir of my life and it immortalizes our
love

I loved her, love her now and forever!!!



Three question of existence

Where we have come from?

What are our pursuits of life?

Where we will go on the judgment day?

These keep on whirling in our mind

We pretend to know all and being enlightened

Boasting about our wealth, power, astuteness

We lie to not only world but also to ourselves

Thou our introspective state keep on showing us mirror

We see our retched falsehood in that unbiased moment of truth

The next moment we deny our realization and

Throw ourselves into the river of illusion, prejudice and blinding deception

Again consumed totally in living unreal life!!!



Subhash Chandra Rai: Nonconformist by birth, wearing emotions on sleeve. Enjoying path less traveled and being myself.



WISH OF A LOVER

I wanna

Walk

For a mile

But... with you only!

I wanna

Talk

For a while

But... with you only!

I wanna

Live

With a smile

But... with you only!

I wanna

Become “We”

In this life

But...with you only!

If I am

Complete

In this life

It is... with you only!

If I wanna

Cherish

My love

It is...with you only!

You are

My heart beats

My world

Is..you only!



Dr. Sonia Gupta (BDS, MDS): She hails from Dera Bassi, near Chandigarh, India. Though, a doctor by profession, yet poetry is her passion. She started writing in 2006 and her journey of poetry continued afterwards. Her many poems got a place in various Hindi magazines and English anthology books. Recently she became an established poetess after getting her two Hindi poetry books published. Her three English poetry books are releasing soon. Besides poetry, she is fond of paintings, singing, cooking, knitting, designing, stitching and embroidery too!!!

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L A S T KNOCK

The postman's knock brought the housewife whose husband was away. He asked for water as she grabbed the letter from his hand. As he drank, the glass trembled within the sad wrinkles of his hand. White hair crowded his brow, hiding a permanent frown. She consumed the letter again and again, but his glass was empty in no time.

The husband wrote only when he could, and she waited through the night for some dream to resolve her pain. His letters salved a deep wrenching ache she couldn't pluck out herself. When she wrote, "I miss you so much," he replied: "I don't even get time to think of home."

The postman knew these stories of departure and deprivation, and he wished he could offer something more. He scuttled back and forth like a fish in a drowning world, watching the death of hope, wanting to ask, "How can I help?"

He had known this woman for more than ten years, partaken of her laughter and tears. He now felt he was an inalienable part of her world. A comforting uncle whose word was enough to soothe her. He wondered how she would take his news.

The woman looked at him and said, "Thank you," and waited for him to back away from the door. He stood for a moment longer, wiped the sweat off his brow and said, "Madam, I won't be coming any more."

She paled. "Why not?"

"I'm retiring today."

"Then who'll bring his letters?" she asked.



Shreekumar Varma: He is an Indian author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet. He received the R. K. Narayan Award for Excellence in Writing in English in 2015. He is known for the novels Lament of Mohini, Maria's Room, Devil's Garden: Tales Of Pappudom, The Magic Store of Nu-Cham-Vu and the historical book for children, Pazhassi Raja: The Royal Rebel Born as HH Prince Punartham Thirunal of the Travancore Royal Family, he is the great great grandson of

the artist Raja Ravi Varma and grandson of Regent Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, the last ruling Maharani of Travancore. He is married to Geeta Varma (poet, teacher and columnist) and has two children, Vinayak and Karthik.



MEMORIES LOST AND FOUND

Memories of forefathers faintly dimming
In the light of sound where blooming
Of younger and wiser
People were bound
My one house-memories razed to the ground
My other house-a resurrection abound
Is this where happiness finds ground
Holy fathers, holier grandfathers
'Where art thou'
My question is put forth
A place where prayers and meetings
Have materialized
Has it all been vandalized?
No, No, No my answer is put forth

My one house-the meandering
River of life come to standstill
Has it all been my mind's wondering?
No, no, no my answer trills
My other house-the river where life flows
Seemingly immense
Nevertheless, equally intense
Memories, old and new
Touching a chord
Never bedimming, so much like dew
Will prophecies of fathers and grandfathers
Bring in a regeneration of flowers
Yes, a thousand times yes
My answers scream forth



Shobha Warriar: Born near Trichur in Kerala, she did her schooling in Mumbai and Chennai. Shobha was highly

influenced by her maternal grandfather who was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar. Shobha had a keen interest in languages, be it prose or poetry, from her school days. She completed B.A. and M.A. in English Literature as also B.Ed. She has also worked as a teacher in schools for some time. Shobha's father, K. Ramakrishna Warriar, is a distinguished writer in Malayalam, and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi award for his contribution in Sanskrit. Shobha is married to an engineer and has one daughter.



***TRANSLATION OF SANDHYA NAVODITA'S 'UNKE NAAM KA'
(THY NAME)***

THY NAME

Thy name has simply possessed my mind so much,
that I am not able to see and hear anything.

Don't know, where are my steps and my destination
Standing at a place, where no one is visible.

After every blink of my eye his face memorizes
at every breath I hear his step.

When I think this fire has ended
Then a simmering spark is steadily visible.



Shamenaz: I am Shamenaz, a PhD in English from University of Allahabad with specialization on Sub-continent Women Writers and a teaching experience of 12 years. I live in Allahabad. I have published many poems in E-journals & magazines in India. I love nature and write poetry based on it but I also like to write on various issue relating our everyday lives. I have presented papers in Seminars/Conferences and have published papers in many refereed journals in India and abroad. I am in the Editorial board of journals: Literary Miscellany, Cyber Literature, Research Access, Expression (CLOJ), The Context & IJRHS (Jordan). I am the Guest Editor of 'The Context' Volume 2, issue 3. I have served as a Chairperson of Women Cell of my College, AIET & Cultural Incharge, AIET since 5 years. I am a freelancer, who writes reviews, articles & blogs.



LOVE

Love is too precious to let it slip away
Or hold the future back one second!
I love you and I am so dizzy from spinning
With madness, thinking how it could end
When we had such a great beginning!

Oh please, don't inquire of a childish reason
To explain a matter so remote
When in the paradoxes of life's generosity,
Love is to itself an antidote,
A vision of perfect luminosity!

My heart has made a commitment,
It did not consider my senses

And so inside, I am struggling to set it free
From damp chambers where dwell defenses
Well protected first but now suffocate me!

My sentiments have made no reservation
And are not bound to stay or leave,
However, my choice remains in the anticipation
Of meeting the right one that I hope is you!

Passions are not easily discouraged
Though they breathe with different hope
Like swinging on a pendulum
Or crying out in frustration
When beauty is seeing through a microscope
And it seems to be transitory,
Fleeting in migration!

It is existence itself
That strives this way
To reach beyond all limitations,

Discovering that The value of being
Is not the conclusion of effort
But in challenging a false foundation
So that our hearts and minds
can peacefully co-exist
In a reservoir of love between us
Once and for all!



Romeo Della Valle: Born in a beautiful island named Quisqueya or Hispaniola and from Italian and Spanish parents and coming to America very young with a goal, mainly, to succeed in life and be happy. As a citizen of the world, there is not race, color, or religious beliefs that would stop me from searching for happiness...I have become through times passed that I am a man with a Vision and a clear mission: 'To spread my message of Love an Peace throughout the World and if my poetry can touch a single soul in the World, then I would gladly die leaving my clear footprints behind!

www.romeodellavalle.com



ABOUT KISSES, SEX AND SECOND-HAND BOOKS

1

After making love

I said

"your body is a time-

machine

that transcends me

to a primordial land

where

a primitive homo-sapien

playing with two rocks

makes fire"

2

before the relapse of

romance-

we visited
a second-hand book store,
where you kissed me
all over-
for a terrible excuse
and said
"this place smells
like your mouth"

3

You said
that my breath is foul
in the middle of kiss
that it smells of
second-hand books.
"But," you resumed
gasping-
"I like your face
and your beard"

"It's like a ruined city
after disaster-"

I sighed,
thinking of submerged cities
in the womb of ocean-
thinking of an untimely deluge
in a deserted village.



Ro Hith: He is a poet and a medico from Andhra Pradesh, writing poetry since 7 years. His poetry has been published in various online magazines, including Muse India, The Four Quarterly, Istanbul Review, Kritiya, New Mirage Journal and print magazines like Kavya English, which was applauded and complimented by various senior poets. Currently, he is working on his first book of poems, which will be published shortly and an online magazine that deals with progressive poetry and translations from various Indian languages.



SPRING FEVER

One morning in spring
I was feeling very low,
A walk in the park, I thought
Would make my spirits soar.

The birds were chirping
The flowers were in full bloom,
Seeing the beauty all around
Melted away my gloom.

In songs and flights
In nips and bites
Love was in the air,
In the flowers, in the pollen

In the petals that had fallen
Love was everywhere.

All were roaming in pairs
Whether humans, animals or birds,
They were speaking the language of love
In silence, caresses or words.

Spring the season of love
As ordained by mother nature,
Was holding in its thrall
Almost every creature.

In this sea of happiness
I was feeling very lonesome,
Desperately I looked for a partner
Who was loving as well as winsome.

I saw a pretty woman
Sitting under a tree,

With a book in her hand
She appeared quite busy.

I sat down beside her
Looking at her visage,
Was this angel face for real
Or was she a mirage?

I had just lit 25 candles
I felt I was ready to make someone mine
Would this lovely creature
Agree to be my Valentine?

Suddenly closing the book
She looked at me,
"The last pages are missing
What happens? Can someone tell me?"

I had read the book many a time
I told her the ending,

The story was a tragedy
The denouement heart rending.

Tears in her lovely eyes, she asked
"Why are all love stories so tragic?"
Is it because after sometime
Love loses its magic?"

"Love that is true
Love that is pristine,
Is everlasting," I said
Taking her hand in mine.

And thus began
The love story of our life,
The saga continues,
Even though we are man and wife.

Now when I ask her,
"You chose me because my persona was riveting?"

"No, silly, " she says smiling

"It was the season of spring."



Ramendra Kumar: Ramen is a writer by passion and a narcissist by obsession. He has 27 books to his name, almost as many awards and translations into several Indian and foreign languages. A popular story teller and mentor he is working as Chief of Communications, Rourkela Steel Plant. He has a page devoted to him on Wikipedia and his website is www.ramendra.in



I HOLD MY LOVE

In My Cupped palm
Of crisscross lines,
I hold you, my Love!
You are my breeze,
My bonanza, my bouquet!
Opening like a flower
Blossoming into eternal,
Lasting fragrance dwelling
In Unshakable Edifice.
I hold you my Love.
Hidden behind gossamer
veil of fritter and frill,
aroma of Breeze peeps
In and out of the window.

Curtain partakes of the
Jubilant Of Love's mirth.
I hold you my Love,
My song, melody rejuvenates
From the tombs of
Antony and Cleopatra
Their dead angst into
Not A Permanent Threnody
But everlasting Bliss.
I hold you my Love.
Not a cake, but a cakewalk
Into a life of serendipity
And high thinking.



S. Radhamani: She was born in Madras, did B.A.English ,obtained M.A. English from Venkateswara University, Tirupati, did her doctoral thesis on W.H.Auden's Plays,

subsequently obtained PGDTE from CIEFL (Hyderabad). A Professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience in a post-graduate and research institution, published four books of poems and one book of short story, widely published and anthologized, guided M.phil research scholars and PhD candidates, and a reviewer and critic. Also published poems and short stories in many websites, presented papers in National and International conferences.



(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCERGs_g04U)

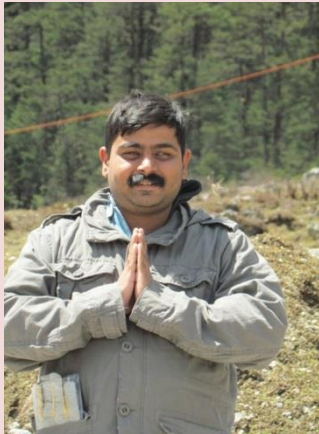
COMMANDER OF SHEEP

It began really with a video on the internet. A shepherd leading his charges in a mock march; the coincidence of Republic Day being just that. Who were those sheep? Why, you and me and he and she, who else? Okay, maybe they and ze and ey, to be gender-neutral. Following the advertisements that tell us to stand out of the crowd by wearing the same aftershave, the same jeans, the same condoms even; driving the same cars, buying the same TVs. Following the politicians who tell us to be afraid of 'them' who are not 'us', to be very, very afraid. Following the priests to worship the same but slightly different god in the same, but slightly different way. And we all march past those altars, kowtowing, namasteing, saluting. And we watch the same video, and share it and laugh in the same way, at the poor ragged shepherd drilling his sheep.

dawn chill...

I begin the commute

all anew



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He moonlights as an award-winning copywriter by day and daylights as an award-wanting poet by night, and sandwiches an archaeology course, running two literary clubs, astronomy, the occasional trek, some peer counselling for suicide prevention, and learning languages in between. He thinks he is funny, but his friends vehemently disagree.



THE STRANGE DEATH OF AN OUTCAST

who was rohith vemula?

i knew many, not just the

head without torso that

hung from a spiderweb.

a rohith vemula was my childhood pal

who saved me from the bite of a cobra.

he stepped on its head calling it a rat snake,

later died in the hospital sweating blood.

a rohith vemula saved me from drowning

when i was trying to pluck a lotus flower

in the local pond. he got sucked into the slush.

a rohith vemula pushed me to safety when

crossing a road. he got hit by the army truck.

a rohith vemula wrote my love letters for my
beloved. her family goons broke his limbs.

a rohith vemula sat with me in arrack shops, travelled
with me on long train journeys singing songs, squatted
with me on the fields sharing the same bottle to wash up,
a rohith vemula taught me how to make a leaf spoon, how
to play thalappanthu, how to angle with a hook and a worm,
a rohith vemula guided me through my adolescent fantasies,
sold lottery tickets to me seated on a makeshift wooden
trolley,

paid 51 rupees for my wedding, drove the three-wheeler
which

saved my child's life, poured the first drops of black tea into
my

just born grand daughter's thirsty mouth.

rohith vemulas crowd my life, criss crossing my life's
pathways

as playmates, classmates, lovemates, workmates,
shaapmates.

so, who is this new rohith vemula

who hangs from a fine web of

lies , conceit, loathing and repulsion,

masterminded by an academic pool

where only vultures come to wash their beaks.

who is he to die so unceremoniously?

`like a dog', `like a dog', my kafka wails

as someone slits his throat ear to ear.



Ravi Shanker (Ra Sh): He translates from Malayalam and Tamil to English and vice versa. Published English translations of stories by Bama (Tamil), Mother Forest (from Malayalam) and Waking is Another Dream (Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry) and for Anthologies of Dalit literature published by OUP and Penguin India. Published poems in magazines, journals and anthologies. He is one of the five contributing poets to the

anthology, “A Strange Place Other Than Earlobes” (five voices
seventy poems). E-mail: shankeran@gmail.com

Blog: bonoboland.wordpress.com



ANOTHER GAME ... PLEASE?

The room is as we left it
it has been long since
these walls felt the warmth
of the sun.

And everything that was sleeping
with it for so long
seems to have awakened
with the opening doors

I see you again
sitting by the window having tea
watching me
as I struggle with the horse

who did not know where to go
after you killed the queen
set a trap for the king
Your magic trick was six moves.
I practiced it on the board for long, alone
Too long – too late
Now, my eyes look away from the board
there's an empty chair before me.
now I know the six moves trick
but I so much want to lose another game.



Priyeshha Lobinha Cdo: I am a creature of the dark, like a firefly. People of light, who have never been brave enough to face it don't understand it and hence despise it. Does light not blind you as much as darkness does? The fireflies know better, they owe it to the night, it's what makes them so beautiful.



GANYMEDE

The moon is bigger now,
Oh, it is flooding my eyes.
The clouds are dropping now,
They are dropping ice.

Oh, it is heavy lifting.
But they are flowing upward.
Oh, she is always shifting
In her layers of intoxicating life.

Are you caught love, off course?
Oh, she is quite a catch,
With her atmospheric force

And its majesty of light.

Oh, we can see the earth now,

It is a long-forgotten habit.

Oh but you are always falling,

Once you are in orbit.



Prasanna H: I have lived in Villivakkam, Chennai all my life. I live across the street from where I was born. I have had the company of some exceptional people all my life like my grandparents, parents, brother, relatives, school friends, college mates, office mates, home boys and girls and the Glotimers. When I am not hanging out, I read, watch movies, start things I won't complete, listen to music, be angry, frustrated, blissful, hyper and dancing.



Lead kindly light

you are a sheet of white sky
Of a sleepless night
and i my self a galaxy of
stars

I am the seed of light
I sprout my self through out
the night
the celestial darkness being
our love
thou lead kindly light!

I have called you
even knocked at your heart's
door
at every phase of the night
you have opened up
the door of light

beloved!
you know the art of
converting the setting sun
In to a rising one

To me you are the sun rise
even sun set for me!

-----Dr.prahallad
satapathy
Balangir..odisha.

you are the sunset even for
me.!



Prahallad Satpathy: He hails from Balangir district of Odisha (India) is a bilingual poet. He writes both in Odia and English. So far he has published three anthologies of poetry in Odia to

his credit. His poems have been published in national anthologies like Scaling Heights and international anthologies like GLOBAL ANTHOLOGY ON PEACE AND HARMONY, HAPPY ISLE, FEELINGS INTERNATIONAL, etc. By profession, Dr. Satpathy is a Reader in Economics, at present in Rajendra autonomous college, Balangir (Odisha). He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as honorary member for two consecutive terms.



A CIRCLE OF WIND

The wind blew through the trees
The trees were bending at the knees
The knees were knocking at my door
the dormouse scampered across the floor

The floor came up to meet my chin
The chin was there through too much gin
The gingerbread man came round to tea
The tea was where it ought to be

The Bee got honey from the flower
The flower opened at that hour
The hour bought on what was destined

The destined bought on howling wind

The wind blew through the trees

The trees were bending at the knees

The knees were knocking at my door

the dormouse scampered across the floor



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental Engineers. He has two sons and a daughter and 3 grandsons. He has written a number of technical papers, which were published internationally, before turning attention to writing poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child," which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.elfinchild.com

In December 2013, he was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease. He spent the last years of his life concentrating on raising awareness regarding the disease. Philip G. Bell passed away on October 8, 2015.



We all prostitute

One way or other

Saluting a Boss

Dusting a Politician's shoes

Writing without enjoying

Doing a job only for Money

Thinking what the Mass thinks

Masquerading Happiness.

We all Prostitute

Voyeurism some one else's pleasure

Pretend we are aroused

Excited about an event

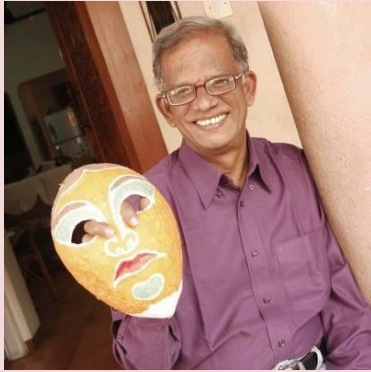
Gifting precious things to people

Expecting a favour.

Any one who has not done this or that

Let him/her

Throw the first stone at the Hooker.



Parasuram Ramamoorthi: Poet with three published volumes of Poetry. Norwich Musings (2003); Fire courts Water 2009; Neem Gita 2011; Playwright with twelve plays published and Performed. Autism Advocate and Pioneer in the file of Drama for Autism. Chairman VELVI www.velvi.org



Something binds us closely yet loosely
To allow us meander our own souls
Before we walk side by side
In acceptance and understanding
Like the morning mist on a solitary walk
The tranquillity I have known
The everydayness of walking by your side
And the way you have soothed
The darkest depths in me
Leaves an unvoiced oath
An incorporeal thread binding us
And I call it love.



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession and I see every day it is hard to be honest in a brutal world that demands the best façade even at the cost of one's inner well-being. Sometimes it helps to know that we are all fighting secret battles and we are not the only ones in pain. I love to observe human relationships and nothing inspires my writing more. Thus the dominating theme of all my writings are conflicts and triumphs of the same. I thank each and every one who has encouraged me to better my expression. Gratitude for reading!



The day you LIED to me...

When did 'I love you'

become so weak?

When did it camouflage 'in affection'

and become a mere statement of deceit?

When did it become so selfish

No longer sacrificial

Only self gratifying?

When did the tales of a happy ever after

Become a faulty wave of memory

Not worthy of remembrance in history

Yet i remember-

When did love become so painful,

At what point did I become a blind fool?

When did that happiness

become the very source of sadness

When did so much comfort

Become the reality of inconvenience?

Tell me when

Cuz on that day,

Was the day you lied to me.

We never stop loving...

We just transfer it to someone else

I now know this because

Before you ever said 'I love you'

You were just a copy and never the original.

'I love you' can only be counterfeit,
If the real deal exist.

When did you lie to me?



Oluwatosin Olabode: Oluwatosin Olabode aka Double_ST hails from Nigeria. He is a graduate of Biochemistry from Bingham University who enjoys writing and has his works published in several platforms, including his blog- bib4le.wordpress.com He is a Spokenword Poet and coauthor of the book titled 'The Big One'.



SPRINGTIME

Here comes Persephone, returned to the land of mortals
from deep beneath her dwellings in the Hades,
to bestow on earth once more her gifts,
end the winter of discontent
and bring balance to the world again.

Slender green stalks of corn and maize
and tender buds of flowers so beautiful
emerge from the bosom of Gaia.

A joyous reunion with her mother Demeter,
symbolized by new life and new beginnings.

Till seasons have passed and with great sorrow
the Mistress of the dead returns to her underworld abode.

Eternal springtime now merely a myth.



Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Integrated Immunology from the University of Oxford who likes reading books and travelling. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and has given many performances. She loves any form of creative writing (especially poems) and writes them whenever she can.



ANTIBIOTICS AND ARTICHOKE HEARTS

Antibiotics are a crazy thing,
because you may be having an infection in your mouth from
kissing too long,
or your unborn baby might be haemorrhaging surrounded by
its own breathing,
but the doctor smiles at you and he gives you antibiotics all
the same.

And they take away your pain but do nothing for your
suffering.

And they are bad for your sleep but you already knew that,
didn't you?

All those nights you've spent running around the block in
your small city,
looking through window panes and wondering
whether eavesdropping on other's suffering is also
considered voyeuristic.

Tell me what you think of the girl who buys one sleeping pill
every day from a different shop across town.

And I'll tell you all our bad decisions are piling up in the library of our hearts till we choose to burn them on the bonfire of a rebellion.

Tell me about the husband who parades naked in his wife's gown when she's not home.

And I'll tell you he deserves more affection than the mirror can provide.

Tell me about the lady who packed her life in a knapsack and drowned herself in the darkness of the mountains.

And I'll tell you she's a broken star transmitting love songs back to the skies.

Tell me about the women who own a filthy mouth and a lipstick shade called crazy

Tell me about the people who smile for every photo because they can't find a good excuse to cry

Tell me about the souls who don't care whether it's Paris or Vegas,

whether it's midnight or 5 in the morning when they kiss or throw up or talk to a stranger about love.

And I'll tell you,

It's all you.

It has always been you.



Nilesh Mondal: He is 22, is an undergraduate in engineering, and turns to poetry when the day gets the better of him.

He works for Terribly Tiny Tales, an online storytelling platform, and wastes rather large amounts of time scouring social networking sites for strangers to talk to.



THE QUESTION

Where did the wind come from?

Where does it go?

Why does it howl and rush?

Why does it blow?

Where did the Sun come from?

Where does it go?

Why sometimes burn so strong and fierce?

Why now a soft glow?

Where did the rain come from?

Where does it go?

Why does it come down gently?

Why then lash out so?

Where did the sea come from?

Where does it go?

Why wash the shores from end to end?

Why ebb and flow?
Where did the star come from?
Where does it go?
Why does it twinkle only at night?
Why such a brief show?
Where did the Moon come from?
Where does it go?
Why does it wax and wane?
Why shrink and grow?
Where did the flower come from?
Where does it go?
Why enchanting for a time?
Why then fade away slow?
Where do all these come from?
Where do they go?
Why do they ever come?
Who will ever know?



Minnie Tensingh: I think I have been writing from the age of 10, contributing to the school and college magazines. Several prizes for creative writing and poetry competitions have encouraged me to keep at it. Reading is my passion and often distracts me from writing.

Currently I am on the verge of bringing out a story book targeting children in their pre and early teens to encourage reading among children.



Ek hi nazarse voh kar gaye qatl-e-aam
bharese reh gaye sareke saare jaam
chulbulakar chehchehakar hue voh ghayab
hasbe maamul sharab hui badnaam.

TRANCREATION

With just one look she effected a massacre
all the goblets remained full, untouched
after trilling and chirping she vanished
as usual wine got the blame.



A thin line
separates genius from insanity
droll reality from celestial visions

bothersome do's and don'ts from driven passion
often poets must live like Gulliver lying helpless
on hot sands of reality, whilst Lilliputians pompously
annunciate their astonishingly hollow rules.
Giants must die thirsting, hungry and frustrated...



Late Mushtaque Ali Khan Babi AKA Max Babi: Max was a multilingual writer, poet who liked a wide variety of formats – whose life was full of oxymoronic shades, a polymath who went from being a specialist to a generalist to a versatelist. Mentoring by being a catalyst enthralled him, he wrote on serendipity and intuition, conducted workshops on a range of subjects and topics. He was a very friendly Santa Claus.



LOVE IN THE TIME OF TERROR

Holidays

Are corporate creations

Spilling a yarn

Of yak

Of yen

Of yesterday's love

Wrapped in today's box

With a bow

With a branch

With words

Written by a stranger.



Mark Antony Rossi: His poetry, criticism, fiction and photography have appeared in The Antigoni Review, Another Chicago Review, Bareback Magazine, Black Heart Review, Collages & Bricolages, Death Throes, Ethical Spectacle, GloMag, Gravel, Flash Fiction, Japanophile, On The Rusk, Purple Patch, Scrivener Creative Review, Sentiment Literary Journal, Toad Suck Review, The Sacrificial ,Wild Quarterly and Yellow Chair Review.

<http://markantonyrossi.jigsy.com>



(pic by Bhumika Bhatia)

SOMETHING

she took me in
fingers forever dancing
across my kaleidoscope dreams
and we drew spiderwebs in smoke
laughing precious seconds into early hours

she took me away
as I closed my eyes
and did not see darkness
in our abandon
one more time.

in the end
she told me she heard

the strains of a song
reticent, far away
we were breathing into our pillows
slowly wafting into shallow sleep
only to see the clock tick with our half bright eyes
twinkling together as the crows dawned
and we fell hands clenched tight between us

i told her only she would hear it
and only I could ever know
" i don't wanna leave her now..."
" ... i don't know... i don't know"

THIS IS A STORY OF HOW WE BEGAN

and how many dreams
we shared
lying
basking in the afternoon warmth
of yet another flaring day
then
how mere

a little sliver of wind hovered
like a secret in whispers
while our fingers wove music
on damp skin as we reached
together yet again
over our souls and stories
laid bare.



Madhumitha Varadaraj: She is 26 year old Poet and Design+Communications Consultant from the 'City of Small Pleasures' as she calls Coimbatore. She believes that certain moments in our lives, however mundane, are raised to an emotionally alluring level of significance in our memories and through her writing, she seeks to remind one of those transcendental moments that most of us forget to hold onto, but almost everyone has gone through. She writes as 'The Volatile Woman' and is currently working on her first collection of poetry.



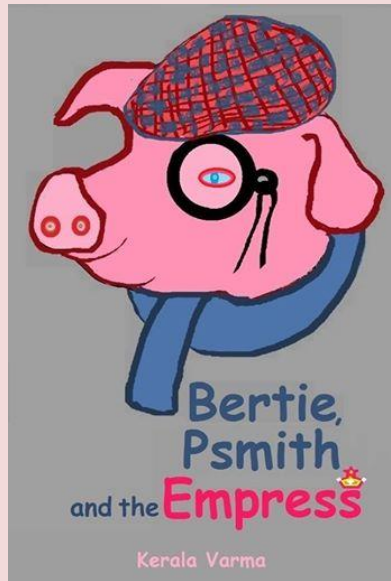
THE PENDING NOTES ON AHIMSA

The shredding waves did seep in the sand
Of porous vision
Breathing the gales of ahimsa
Thou, the shell slaughtered
By the sharp waves of cutting thought
Thou, the tornado of touring truth
Dawning in yawning buds
Thou the virtuous valour of vivid vintage
Blinking in moments of immense memories
Thou, the enlightened spirit of splendid cause
Draining the vocabulary of abstract thoughts
Thou the crescent moon
Of catering sensuous smile
Making the freedom to blush

Under thine solidarity of the sold
Violence exchanged with
The hampering heaps of ahimsa



Krishnaveer Abhishek Challa (b. 1991): He is currently working as Soft Skills Trainer cum Faculty at Department of Foreign Languages, Andhra University. He is also the Secretary of Linguistics Research Society and Honorary CEO of Tao Educare. He authored 23 books and published 71 Research Articles, Poetry and Book reviews in reputed Journals, Edited Volumes and Newspapers and Seminar Proceedings. He was selected as a student at Blekinge Tekniska Hogskola (BTH), Sweden and completed many courses. He won first prize in National Level Debate Competition on 'Green Manufacturing'. He acted and directed many Short Films and Documentaries and won an award.



(3)

It is one of the paradoxes of life that when the party of the first part is ready to help the party of the second part in an act fraught with grave risks without actually taking part in the act (like something starting with cat and ending with list, which would get into the act to bring about the desired result without itself undergoing any change), the party of the second part would queer the pitch by introducing a completely unacceptable dénouement. After an interval of silence in which the mind brooded and the forehead frowned, I spoke to Psmith with the characteristic firmness Woosters are rightfully famous for, "I refuse to be a party to the stealing of the most well-known pig in England. She's so well known a celebrity in those parts that she would be mobbed and her autograph sought if you are seen taking her around."

“That’s a big letdown, buddy. Could we possibly find a way to make you reconsider?”

“It’s complicated, my dear Smith. Firstly Jeeves would refuse to help for purely ethical reasons. Secondly, why would Galahad smuggle you into Blandings Castle if he knew your intention is to steal the Empress of Blandings, a prized pig so dear to his brother her disappearance would break the heart of the earl so much he might absent-mindedly eat cucumber sandwiches with his four o’clock tea? Gally too loves the pig and is proud of the fact that she is the most accomplished and decorated member of the family. He was the one who found an artist to paint her portrait much to the chagrin of all his sisters led by the formidable Constance Keeble. He once famously said the portrait of the pig would embellish the family portrait gallery much more than all those bearded bounders now infesting it. Whenever she was stolen in the past by envious owners of inferior pigs, Gally was in the forefront marshaling the troops to retrieve her and to inflict the harshest punishment on the thief.”

My last sentence startled Psmith no little. Hiding his discomfiture, he mumbled, “You mean Jeeves and Galahad Threepwood will not help us in our scheme?”

“Your scheme, Smith; not our scheme. I too will not help. When you said you wanted my help in sneaking into Blandings Castle, I thought it was for some romantic reason. I fancied you were in love with one of the earl’s nieces or the

daughter of the local vicar. Lovers in distress would always find a helping hand and a shoulder to weep on in Bertie.”

A certain dark cloud which was threatening to intensify over Psmith’s face sailed away as if blown by a benign wind. He said half excitedly and half pleadingly, “The reason I want to steal the pig is romantic. It’s to win over the girl I’m in love with.”

“Are you sure you want to link your future happiness to a girl who thinks nothing of asking her suitor to pinch a pig, the heaviest pig to boot in the whole of Shropshire?” It was with a deep feeling that I uttered these words. All the girls I used to be engaged to had given me firsthand experience of how the periodic fiancées of an upright young man of simple tastes and straight thinking lead him into adventures that defy logic and, in the instant case, gravity. As Newton, a brainy chap held in high esteem by Jeeves, would tell you, any attempt to lift the empress would be against the law of universal gravitation. I do not know how well built Newton is; but he is likely to turn violent if Psmith were to mess with his gravity theory.

“I have no doubt that I want to walk down the aisle with Sarah Mary Parsloe. She is the adopted daughter of Sir Gregory Parsloe-Parsloe of Matchingham Hall, which is situated next to Blandings Castle. Unfortunately, Sir Gregory does not think highly of me and is against the match. So I can’t possibly stay at Matchingham Hall. If you get me invited

to Blandings Castle, it would give me an opportunity to meet Sara every day. You'll actually be helping lovers in distress."

"But where does the kidnapping of the pig feature in your scheme?"

"I have no interest, my dear Bertie, to pinch the good animal. It's Sarah's idea. Her father's pig, the Pride of Matchingham loses every year to the Empress in the Fat Pigs Contest in the Shropshire Agricultural Show. She thinks that if I can steal the Empress and hide it on the day of the contest, her father's pig will win the prize. That would make her father agree to our match."

"I get the drift now; but whatever the motive, being a party to the pinching of the pig is against the code of the Woosters. Jeeves and Gally obviously won't help either. You have to think of better methods to ingratiate yourself with the pop Parsloe."

It was thus with no weight in the familiar Wooster bosom that I bid bye to Psmith, happy that I exhibited a steely resolve to emerge unscathed from what threatened to be a minefield. Jeeves will be proud of the old master when he learns how I stymied the plans of Psmith to entangle me in a devious plot. Sunshine was all over London and the blue sky made a bright canopy, as I walked home tra-la-laing an improvised song:

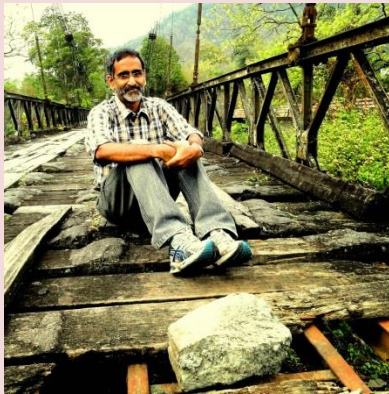
Nobody robbed a liquor store

Nobody burned a building down

Nobody fired a shot in anger

No girl made her man pinch a pig

We sure have a little good news today



Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur), Kerala, is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.



HOMS, SYRIA, 2016

I am called a Syrian Christian,
In my home state, though,
Neither was I born in Syria,
Nor do I have close relations there.
Some cousins have blue-green eyes,
And, the pale skin of Syrians.
I may have a bit of Syrian blood,
(Though I am dark brown),
Ironically, they also say I am of an Indian breed,
The descendant of Brahmins from Palayur.

Homs perchance was my ancestors' birthplace,
And tears roll down when I see,
Homs, my ancestral land, today,
Torn and twisted by bombs and mortar,

Crumbled buildings, empty doorways,
Vacant spaces where people lived,
And fled, in utter panic,
From death, rape, and terror.

Those people, those refugees,
They are my people, too,
They are people like us everywhere,
Like us they need a home,
Not a hollow place with a gaping hole,
Offering no safety from bullets,
A place to call their own,
To lie down curled in sleep,
Stretch their tired legs,
Perhaps, not to be awakened by a bomb.

In Homs, Syria, my ancestral land,
Nothing moves, nothing except maniacal metal,
From barrels made of steel.
The vestiges of our culture are torn down,

Churches and mosques are but rubble,
There are no homes, roads, or, parks,
Schools have been shut long ago,
And desks have been burnt,
Blackboards have been further darkened,
By the soot of fires.

Neither do I want to visit Homs,
Nor, do I want to walk its streets,
It's a ghost town when darkness falls,
Nary a mongrel's barks there,
Or, morning chirps of birds,
It's not home to anybody,
No water to drink, and no food for hunger,
The fields around are dynamite fields,
It's said there are more land mines,
Than blades of grass.

It's a wasteland, this once thriving city,
Which its inhabitants abandoned,

They say it's the new Biblical Exodus,
Of people through deserts and mountains,
To a promised land across the seas,
Where they wait in line,
To rebuild their lives,
Wash, clean, and cook,
Send children to schools,
And, wait to be given visas and work permits.



John P. Matthew: Writer, poet, singer-songwriter, and blogger John P Matthew was born in the state of Kerala, India. His first success as a writer was Penguin's world-wide short story contest "India Smiles" in which his short story "Flirting in Short Messages" was selected for publication in an anthology.

His poem "Call of the Cuckoo" has been published by Poetry Rivals. He is working on his first novel and writing a book-length travelogue about his native state of Kerala.



THE NEW ARRIVALS

My new born baby is crying for milk,
And I have not a single drop to give;
Soon she will know, she will learn by and by,
Lessons in hunger, all through her life;
But right now, her stomach is screaming for milk;
And I do not have a drop to give.

The night sky lights up in resplendent colours;
Crowds shrieking in mounting excitement;
Counting by seconds, they wait for the new bunch of dates,
With cakes and candles, drinks and dizzy dances;
With blinding sparklers, and deafening fireworks;
Their din did drown my baby's shrieks for milk,
But I do not have a drop to give.

Will the crowds look around, and listen to the wailing sounds,
Will the people ever learn, will the men stop to think,
That they are throwing in the bin, and blowing with the wind
Not theirs but my little baby's share of means?
Till then my newborn will whine for her milk;
And lo! I will not have a drop to give.



Gulnar Raheem Khan: She is a post graduate in English, former officer of the Indian Bank, mother of two, and now, grandmother of three. She was the student editor of her college magazine. She has contributed to the Letters column of the Hindu, and the Arab News, and has written poems and articles for her Bank house journal. She cherishes her letter to the Arab News which won her the first prize in Topic of the Week contest. gul.fazl@gmail.com



LOVE, YOU OUGHT TO KNOW

Love, you ought to know
that in my mind,
we're together.
the hours are long and still.
they allow for laughter and silence
when all we do
is look into each other's eyes
and speak volumes.
the cold wintry mornings
are spent
wound around each other
hibernating.
I watch the steam from our cups
and you read the newspaper.

the dog must be fed.
sometimes we go for long leisurely walks
to see if the first bloom has arrived.
there is a letter from a loved one
we share and laugh over.
yes, love, the hours are all ours
in my mind, in my dreams
even as i pick my bag
and munch through a hurried breakfast
to try catch a train
that will be gone before I arrive at the station.
yes, love, the first blooms are there somewhere
and the picture of you misted over.



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet and writer residing currently in Chennai. She works as Quality Analyst for language. Not an Earthling by any stretch of the imagination, where breathing, writing, living and loving lose their personal identity and

present as one, she comes from that world...sometimes
letting her pen lead her, sometimes leading her pen...It's a
Pied Piper's tune all the way!

<http://glorysasikala.wix.com/ebooks>



TRAVELS WITH CHARLIE

I will live
Until I die
And so will you
I shall walk
Through the Valley of the Shadow
Of Death
He shall prepare
A table at which
I will dine
With mine enemies
Stabbing them
Tue Viking-style
When the mead flows
And they snort
In their heroine
Like horses
To the knackers' yard
I shall travel the world
By boat and plane and train
And bus
Careering through the Continent of Europe
Hamburg, Amsterdam, Brussels sprouts on and on
To Welsh leeks

Swansea and Cardiff
Glittering on the gull's back
Nodding steady cranes
In old industrial somnolence
An industrial revolution
Stopped in its tracks
Flying back to a snowy, white
Christmas Denmark
Virginal in her whiteness
Like unto a whited sepulcher
With inside the bones of rotten corpses
And yet bejeweled
In winter
With ice droplets
The prettiness of little men
Sweeping streets
Free of snow with hand machines
Flurrying it up
So high into the sky
So beautiful
Before the stench of drugs
Rising up from
Rockerborgs



Geoffrey Jackson: He has been an intrepid TESOL instructor at 5 universities and 4 colleges, blown off course from England to Holland, Finland, Hungary, Oman, Saudi Arabia

and, in the Roaring Forties, to Denmark. A self-described European cosmotrollop and Americanophile with New World dreams, Geoff is the Poetry Editor for Fullosia Press.



BUKIT BINTANG (HILL STAR)

(This is for my Valentine, my husband Dilip)

This valley surrounded by emerald hills,
Decades ago I recall how destiny sculpted,
As I watch this star sending me thrills,
Glitters in my eyes, in your love I melted!

Eyes transfixed anchored on imagination,
A ghost of a person as you did appear,
Dreams of a million years in oscillation,
Unfurl in my mind's eye, letting go a tear.

For I recognised you my love amid chaos,
A single invisible Ray connecting our souls,
As time launched us in a journey, in a toss,
Existence scans a field beyond black holes.

My eyes trapped your being, for I knew you,
At a remote distance, no more time to waste,
My stunning Greek, Roman, Indian God true,
Here I wait your bride to surrender my "chaste"!

As you take my hand that trembles in delight,
I've waited aeons for the mere touch sublime,

Locked forever through births sure and tight,
Let me walk around the Divine Fire also this time!

Love, I will ever beautify and embellish my being,
Be with you through life's every truthful moment,
I know your eyes seek only me, my beauty seeing,
And I fall like a fluttering leaf at your feet clement!

I see my journey with you through earthly realms,
Body, mind and soul, yours to claim with authority,
Let's shine as twin flames, your love my soul helms,
Ethereally entwined, a fiery graceful dance in eternity!

With you beloved, "yours and mine" lines never sight,
Our eyes watch the horizon, through day and night,
You have made me a star on the hill shining bright,
It is enough if I reach only you in a sky of sunlight!



Geethanjali Dilip: A Chennaiite at heart, she is a graduate from Ethiraj College and a postgraduate in French from Bangalore University. She is passionate about poetry, travel, teaching travel, gardening, interior decoration, and enjoying a deep spiritual connection with everything. She's been teaching French, freelance, in Salem for the past 34 years in schools and colleges, and at her centre, Zone Francophone, in Salem. Her family includes her husband, Dilip Narsimhan,

daughter, Manasa, son-in-law, Ajay, granddaughter, Aarushi,
and her parents.



let me be me
now, my friend,
my soul has to fly today.
you brought those magical days back,
let me breathe.

thunder showers,
our voices drown in the rain
and we laugh,
wet, with books and all,
(we dried our books under the fan!)....

now, after all these years,
you open this door,
and tell me,
I have changed.
but you haven't,
one bit!



Geeta Varma: She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant

and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling. She is married to Shreekumar Varma (Writer and Novelist) and has two sons, Vinayak and Karthik and a daughter-in-law daughter Yamini. She lives in Neelankarai, Chennai.



IMAGINED REALITY

I opened a window for you to look inside
But all you did was to place an invisible mirror
In the middle of the room
To look at your own reflections.
The myriad themes and the frames
The shadows and the sunshine
Which existed deep inside you
Were played on the mirror
Creating an imagery
Of a world of your own.
It was not me who you saw on the mirror
It was your own frame of me.
You created me alright
With all the layers and the colours
The nuances and the likes
But all of it was nothing more than
Your imagined reality.



Dipankar Sarkar: He is on a continuous journey to discover himself and the mystery called life. He remains an eternal optimist with a never-ending zeal, in spite of the many battles that he has lost and few that he has won.



CAMPUS

I see someone sitting
On my favourite rock.
Students walking hurriedly past
The sprawling white-washed building
With bathrooms in fluorescent green.
I smell the familiar sickly-sweetness
Of thousands of winged moths,
Of thousands of deaths in the rain.
I have woken up to this crisp air,
Rainwashed roads,
Fresh instalments of birdpoop.
I have blushed on these roads,
Danced in this mess hall
Till the wee hours of the morning,
Stopping finally to get chai and gugni-mudi
At mausi's ramshackle hut.
I have crossed this foyer five thousand times,
Walked into this classroom with hundreds of cups of tea
Bleary-eyed.
I have fought the War,
Real and imaginary.
Here,
On this faded table
In room 116,
With a pink mosquito net doubling up as curtain,

I have left behind a part of me.

Now the couple at the jetty,
Dangling their feet in unison,
Look at me
With the insolence
Of belonging,
Somewhere.



Deepa Duraishwamy: Deepa is chronically afflicted by what she terms the ‘something else syndrome’ – the condition of always wanting to be doing something else. So it’s fortunate her interests span from languages to lampshades, from history to hyper-accelerating galaxies. She is an engineer and MBA, attempting to work towards a PhD in Saiva Agamas when not running behind her toddler.



LOVE IS A DRUG

Love burns with a steady flame
at times my faith is like a ship
riding a stormy sea
I know the path I must follow
with my wings spread wide
soaring through the skies
I have found a new flight path
to my inner being
taking me on a journey
where light never cast a shadow

behold a miracle I see
ecstatic and sublime
in wonderment I gaze at you
I stand with arms reaching out
like a tree with its boughs outstretched

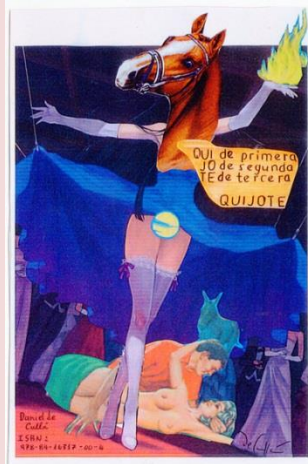
you dance into my arms
a dainty ballerina
I hold you for eternity
a rich sensation surges through me
my deepest soul afire
your beauty mesmerises me
intoxicates my senses

the softness of your body
pressed against mine
like opium sending me on a high

how my lips ache for your touch
do not put out the light of love
to cinders burn all my fugitive desires
leave a little flame
in the hearth inside your heart
to kindle the love and passion
in my deepest soul for you
until it becomes a raging fire
that consumes
the earth, the sky and outer space
and leaves only you and I
dancing in psychedelic euphoria



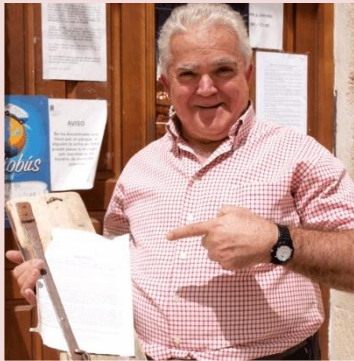
Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny: He is an Indian born, and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by, and writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers' Association, and Glorioustimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.



BITCHES IN BEACHES

Making castles in Spain, as houses of sand cards
Children take many lives
Deer wishes of hunting
And Popeye's old love letters to Betty Bob
Letters from the past
Letters from a sailor....
Salty air dilates our nostrils
Sea quacking the heart
Naked bodies are as tortillas on the hot sand
As such, image
As the turtle's island.
Are we the Folks last species of the Planet?
Look here; look before you leap:
Bitches in Beaches
Are now coming
Who have received the logic of love
As a nutrient into the universe of ourselves.
They are coming
Coming to having a whole issue of her work
Coming to act.
We, the men, dig her name:
We are senses with the multiple voices-animal

Sea printing the voice-life of Earth.
Bitches in Beaches
Have been joined to the Wo/Man of Homo sapiens
In birthing now
While children coming to act
Destroying the sand castles as Quixote's.



Daniel de Culla (1955): He is a writer, poet, and photographer. He is also a member of the Spanish Writers Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Director of the Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review. He's moving between North Hollywood, Madrid and Burgos, Spain.



WORDS UNSPOKEN

Words unspoken, deafening in my ear,
Should I have asked you? What point was there?
Your kind wary eyes made the message clear,
My love was a burden you should not bear.

Guarded sentences promising friendship
And nothing more. Brisk cheerful sounds peeled
From your lips that day, “Your mask must not slip”
You thought to me: keep anguish concealed.

I could not receive what you could not give,
I understand. My fruit held no delight
To your taste, I am most appreciative,
Though the moment burned in me like spite.

We are still friends; well that is something good,
We write and see each other, sometimes now,
And I try to forget that long-lost wood,
Where I wished that you could love me – somehow.



Christopher Villiers: I am freelance writer in the United Kingdom, with a Master's degree in Theology, who writes about God, Love and the Universe, big things in little poems! You can see more of my poetry on my Facebook page.



I
I cannot hold you
When you wrap me with the smell
Of my tropic home

II
You will mess my hair
The sun will set in the east
It's a fine morning

III
You are still today
Is it the winter of grief
That has held you down

IV
Let me sing to your
Impetuous wild gambol
Love child of my soul



Borna Ghosh: I am nobody, as Emily Dickinson would say. Every morning I wake up and start my work of erasing myself. Every night I go to bed having failed in that effort. Narcissism, Maya? Who knows what is it that keeps me chained within myself.



MEMORIES OF 1989

Neither any fancy dinner
Nor any roses for my valentine
Just me and your tombstone
And two glasses of red wine

Neither any chocolates
Nor any gifts for my valentine
Just conversing all night
Under that toxic moonshine

Neither any kiss
Nor any hug for my valentine
Just few tear drops
And memories of 1989



Barun Bajracharya: He is the author of a short story book *Sins of Love* and contributing author of short story anthologies: *You, Me and Zindagi 2*, *The Zest of Inklings*, *Once upon a Time*, *Blank Space* and *Rudraksha*. Barun is a Communications Officer at an INGO and an Editor at PEN

Point (literary journal). Furthermore, he is the youngest member of PEN International Nepal Chapter and Traditional Poetry Writers Association of the World. In October, 2013 he travelled to S. Korea to represent Nepal in the general conference of Traditional Poetry Writers Association of the World, attended by 9 countries, where he earned appreciation for his poems. He can be contacted at barunbajracharya@gmail.com.



TO BE INDIAN

There is the tricolor rippling in the hot summer loo,
Slapping at that wind, bending and cajoling
the masses; and me and my monotonic patriotism.
The anthem rang through the air and bounced off my pride,
And my heartbeat rose to a crescendo,
And at once I was there, where the dust had stubbornly
settled,
My neck around the 1857 noose,
And “shaheed”, the medal that noosed my neck.
Practiced memory lipped the words,
And mind slipped into zealous stupor.

Kakori is as sharp in the mind, as is the razor
that slit my throat gushing Vande Mataram in blood.

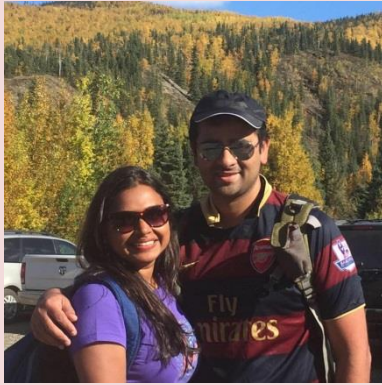
I bled then, in my search for independence,
Tears I bleed now, with every bite of that forbidden fruit.
But then, “Jana Gana Mana...” and I am coaxed once more,
plummeting through time, a rush of blood reigns supreme,
And smoothens out the wrinkles in the fabric of irony,
and at once I am Azad of yore, ancestor of my freedom.
and Bhagat of course, with every flutter of the flag,
adding brush strokes of history to lighten my choler.

“Jaye he, Jaye he, Jaye he” and the flutter stops,
Kakori is blunt and my throat is parched from mindless
recitation,
My blood is as streams through a meadow, mellow and
listless.

Irony is rampant; freedom is an obscure memory
riding on the curls of Azad’s moustache-baroque.
The tricolor is limp; perched on the flagpole of freedom,
sparrows sing no anthem; I am I once more.

Mangal's noose left no marks; hollow memories left no void,
for I am Indian, but only on Independence Day.

But what is it....to be Indian?



Avishek Ramaswamy Aiyar: I was born and brought up in pristine Calcutta and lived the first 18 years of my life there before moving to Chennai for my undergraduate education. I eventually moved to the US, where I completed my doctoral studies in Chemical Engineering. I currently work as a scientist at IBM in New York.



LIFE'S LOVEOGRAPHY

Torn Page I (Dated 14th February ,2003,Time-12noon)

I don't love you for love is not enough expression for my craze for you,
I just saw the trailing serpent receding, I must buy one for me and you .
Even if the Dooms Day frowns I will be on reclining on you tomorrow.
I know you will wait for me, surely dewes will be on your rivulet eyes,
Clouds dense in me too, tomorrow I will shower on you, wipe the burns.

Torn Page II (Dated 15th February ,2003,Time-12midnight)

Avi, I know not whether you reached home at midnight last local,
Just desiring to be drenched again with you, though it is raining here.
Believe me the more rain is in my mind, than is in the dense clouds,
I hate you smoking, but it seems soothing more to be on fire with you.
Oh why can't you fly? Please just for me come now at midnight, oh! be kind,

Be thief, a robber, a plunderer –loot me, rob me, be cloud on me, I will not mind.

Torn Page II (Dated 14th February ,2004,Time-12 noon)

Oh! within you I voyaged through peaks and cave, thrilling ups and downs.
Both Kanchunghanga and Panama hidden behind the Victoria congestion!
The Victoria Memorial sculpture within you, the the angel at the top looks poor,
Beside your gorgeous swallow neck, your curved bosom ivory, I am sure, sure.

Torn Page III (Dated 14th February ,2005,Time-12 midnight)

Avi,I thought you a petty thief ,but I know you now a majestic dacoit,
You know the art of robbing. I never thought so pleasure in being looted.
You plunderer, burgle me, with your lips, poetized and predatory,
For what then is the flower for , if not deflowered in that majestic way?

Torn Pages IV ((Dated 14th February ,2016,Time-??)

For so many days I have preserved like treasure those yellow torn pages,
Bore the burden of memory in solitude, shed tears with dark night sole witness.
Today I released the rust, I know not how are you, really never wanted too,
For I know now you are not that you of years' ago, you found a sober servant.
I know he will never ransack you, a polite honest embrace will never stimulate,
You said who would like to dig the past heart to arouse agony? I know you ache.
The sober stature with assured eyes may gift coziness, I still make you shake.
In your endeavor to crush me, have you yourself got not crushed? Ask the night.



Avik Kumar Maiti: (email - itzakm@gmail.com) He is a poet and writer from Midnapore. He is a permanent ESL teacher at Belda Gangadhar Academy, West Bengal. He likes to travel, explore the locale with cultures, to drink life to the lees', passion in humanity and drenched in literature. He believes that God is there and one day everything will be fine again. He believes in the flame eternal that is within us, which may cause a miracle with just a sympathetic touch.



SEASON OF SNOW

(formerly published in Quail Bell Magazine)

I.
the grey sun falters
like an old woman;
ravens scatter
from the skeletal trees;
a barren woman
hunched over her spinning wheel
prophesizes
to the crackling flames.
Outside, the black dead leaves
kiss the ancient snow.

in a parallel life,
a woman dances to death
on a frozen lake,
feathery snowflakes
clinging
to her silver hair
(like diamonds or stars)
her moon-kissed skin
shimmering-
and the wolves spying from the shadows
are transfixed.

in her memories,
mitten-less fingers
are tracing a name
on the misty window-sill.
her secret friend,
the snow-man
lies buried
as the wind howls
his death-cry
and shakes the crumbling rafters
of her gingerbread house.
the snow queen's jewelled sledge
sparkles
in the faraway dark snow.

II.
later,
in the owl light,
the stricken child
will bring back
a pointed twig(His hand)
and press it against her heart
and the wingless ballerina's lips
will kiss it(His skin)
as her rubies
from her bleeding, transforming body
glimmer
in the starlit snow
and the wasted, toothless hag
will throw it(His curse)

into the dying embers
and blame herself, the wind, the wolves, the snow
for everything.

iii.

but the snow,
the ancient tainted snow
shall wipe away all footprints
even the wolf's.



Archita Mittra: She is a freelance writer, artist and designer based in Calcutta, India. A first year student of English at Jadavpur University, she is also pursuing a diploma in Multimedia and Animation from St.Xavier's College. Her poetry has appeared in numerous publications and anthologies including Quail Bell Magazine, eFiction India, Life In 10 Minutes, among others.



A PASSING SHOWER

A shower just passed by,
And in passing
rustled up the smell of wet earth
shook the leaves free of stale dirt
drenched my soul with your rhapsodies
....and gave me a new reason to breathe



ORANGE MORNING SKY

The Orange Sky seemed okay to me
Until all the others began to ask why
And that forced another relook
At the grey cloud studded orange sky
And then I remembered my younger days
When Granpa would make me sit at his knee
And show me the colors of the sky

And teach me how high which cloud would fly
If you see an orange colored evening sky
He'd say, the weather is gonna be just fine
If you see an orange colored sky at dawn
Better watch out for the coming storm !



Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost 2 decades serving that industry. Whatever little time that has been spared from work or sleep or reflective meditation has – with quite a few well-meaning prods and nudges from friends – been devoted to occasionally tapping to the Muse’s dictats from time to time.



"STRENGTH"

A little more strength,
And I will walk away from you.

A little more strength,
And I will learn to forget.

A little more strength,
And I will never come back.

A little more strength,
And I will be gone.

Just a little more strength,
And I will be someone else.



Anirbit Mukherjee: I did my undergraduate in physics from the Chennai Mathematical Institute (CMI) and then a

master's in physics from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai. Currently I am in the PhD. program in physics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Poetry has always been an intrinsic part of my life as much as mathematics and theoretical physics. I write primarily in Hindi and English and sometimes in Bangla. For a decade in between, I used to ardently do water-colour and oil-painting and pastel and charcoal art too.



I AM FREE

Mask of Sanity
I adorn you
To show the world
My indomitable spirit
That I will rise
Against all odds.

Once there were doubts
Fear no more
Possesses my psyche.
I have been set free,
Free from the clutches
of individuals
Miniscule in their minds,
Of an unforgiving society
Who takes twisted joy
In measuring me
Entrapping me
By the confines
Of their limited minds.

I am free to soar
Where eagles dare to fly
Above the storm clouds

Dive into the depths
Of the oceans
Where divers dare to reach.

For I know
Freedom is sweet
Freedom is clarity
Freedom is the power of choice
Freedom is knowing
I am me
A precious being

I have tasted
the cup of freedom
My soul reaches deep
Deep longing for life
Beyond time and space
Transcending the
planets and stars.
Cos' my life
Has an undated freedom

Like the pawn swept aside
I am now queen
And reign supreme
As my territories expand
Beyond the scope
Of your imagination.

I am free
The architect of my life

Loved and blessed
With wisdom
To know that
My freedom is the
Pinnacle of my essence.



Angela Chetty: She is a HR Manager, an avid poet and lyricist who lives in Durban, South Africa. Angela imbibes her work with a deep passion and belief that words can touch hearts and change lives.

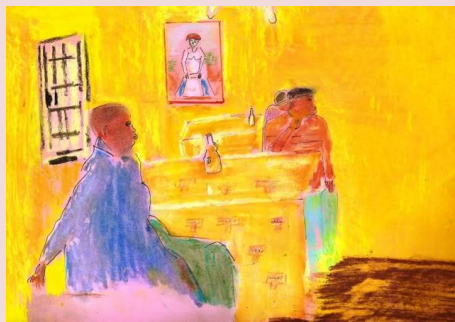
The depths of her soulful prose, cuts across different genres, talking to matters of the heart. Poetry is music for my soul; like oxygen, the breath of my life. In 2013, an Anthology of Poetry entitled, Heartfelt moments - A Treasure Trove was published. www.heartfeltmomentspoetry.com

In 2015, her poem “Miss Me” was selected as Editor’s choice for the Contemporary Poetry Digest and has been chosen as the best poems of the year for a Valentine’s Special Publication.



YELLOW SKY

tiny houses peep
through a veil of a yellow sky
mdantsane joins with everybody
a sea not far away rushes
and goes back
a sun clamours out of tardiness
shines again.



DAYTIME MDANTSANE

daytime drags its feet
reeling under a broken sun
mdantsane moves
on its streets and paths
in shacks and houses
sharing secret truce with
an emaciated river sky
last night tumbled
onto a today
not quite understanding its reason
of another existence.



Amitabh Mitra: He is a Poet/Artist and a Medical Doctor at East London, East Cape, South Africa. He lives in many worlds and narrates his life in hallucinatory stopovers. Words and images tend to amalgamate in many such strange journeys.



(This was written for my sister, Bela, who moved to the USA in the late 1980s. Those days we did not have smart mobile phones, and calling was expensive. Letters were few and far between. The only time we spoke was on birthdays and anniversaries. That too we kept it short. Travel to the US was not easy either. So, one day, after hearing from her, I wrote her a poem. It is a figment of my imagination: a little whimsy, a little sad, it reflects what I felt, way back then.)

IF ONLY

Belu, blue, since you wrote,
Thought I'd write too.
Racking my brain,
Till it turned into an aeroplane,
I let it wander,
Imagining I would travel at the speed of thunder.
I'd be with you,
Singing in your loo
Till you found me
And gave me some tea.
Then we'd chat,
Till the night grew cold.
I'd disappear again,
Before night became day,
And reality emerged -- raw and bold.



Ameeta Agnihotri: First of all, I love to write. Then I love to travel, and write about my travels, including about the food I eat on my blog. Being a Food Critic, I have four food books to my name: The Times Food and Nightlife Guide. My restaurant reviews come out every Friday in the Chennai Times. Yes, life's good. My book is done. It was done five years ago. Am still trying to muster the courage to edit it.

Work: <http://timescity.com/chennai>

Blogs: <http://silentsensation.blogspot.com/>

<http://fascinatingtastes.blogspot.in/>



MY UNREQUITED LOVE

Come alone, in thick darkness of night,
To put a flower on the stone of my grave;
In memory of the man, who loved you,
And his life of love, that you could not save;

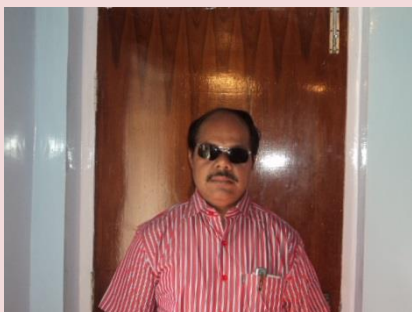
Your heart was as dark as a moonless night,
Where not even a spark of love was seen;
Though I vowed to shower my love forever,
To accept the truth, you were not so keen;

For a long time, I made you to realize,
That the world had a face, false and cruel;
The care and love it bestowed upon you,
Don't ever take them to be pure and real;

But you did not care to listen me
And fell so easily into a false lovers trap;
That made you weep through day and night
Your life began to take an ugly shape;

Time has already gone for you to be back,
Only the pain would make you remind,
Of the man, who died without your love;
Who had been to you so sweet and kind;

Weep, sitting on the stone of my grave,
Let a drop or two fall on my defeated soul,
My body would feel the warmth of your love
And I would find peace in the earthy hole.



Anil Kumar Panda: My name is Anil Kumar Panda. Tiku is my pen name. I was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in the state of Odisha, in India. I am currently residing here. I work

as a mine surveyor in coal mines. I write short stories and poems whenever I get time.



"SHE IN ME"

She is all colors,
His thumb-prints on nude canvas;
Metamorphosing me into portrait,
My most beautiful Poetry.

She is a fretless harmony,
Which the songbird strums in me;
An autobiographical testimony;
The symphony of divine melody.

She is ink in the alphabets,
And erases herself for spaces betwixt;
Allowing my senseless sensibilities,
To scribble our fairyland's love story.

She is the tapping sound,
Of my barren feet;
Dancing wild in living temples,
A Tantric's Tandaava.

She is this breath,
Scanning life for my spirits to be;
I being an expression,

The loveliest gibberish between.



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: He is a Rourkela-based, Odia nomad, restlessly scribbling since 2003. An undergraduate, indeed a college drop-out; but now he is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities. He has been a proud contributor to a few anthologies by International and Indian Poets. Apart from pouring his thoughts and himself on virgin papers, during his leisure time, Aakash is an observer, a dreamer, a philosopher. He likes to strum his Guitar and sing. He also likes to play and brush colors on canvases.



ciao! 😊

