

SAMIKA BAJAJ



Title of the Cover Pic: Life

About The Artist

I am currently a student of class 9. I first began writing when I was in class 5. However, I took to writing seriously during class 7. I have had my work published in GloMag regularly for almost 2 years now as well as in the school magazine a number of times.

Website

I post my work on Mirakee (now Miraquill) quite frequently. I have also recently published a short story on Wattpad.

Art Perspective

My doodle depicts the life of most teenagers in today's times. It displays the people and things one values the most, one's choice of music, pastimes, hobbies, etc. Basically, it shows how life is a motley collection of the stuff one treasures the most. Since I love doodling, I tried to depict my idea that way...

ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions, and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the writer gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the writer'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 writings, 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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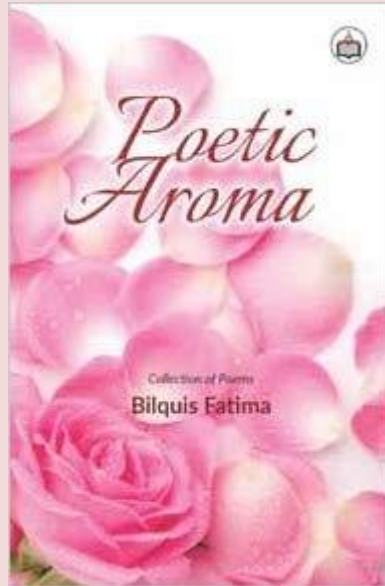
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BOOK OF THE MONTH

Poetic Aroma

Collection Of Poems

Writer: Bilquis Fatima



LINK

<https://www.amazon.in/Poetic-Aroma-Bilquis-Fatima/dp/B07DH6VN24>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bilquis Fatima, an innate lover of nature and speaker for social issues, has allowed her feelings to be expressed as short writes and speeches from her college time. Though being a postgraduate in Chemistry has also mastered the skills of poetry appreciation and writing. Her poems

reflecting the situations that are prevalent in the society, have been appreciated in some groups of poets and writers lately.

REVIEW BY GLORY SASIKALA

I have with me Bilquis Fatima's book, 'Poetic Aroma'. It is the colour of my dreams. I see the world with rose-tinted glasses, and the cover of this collection of poems is all pink rose petals and flower. However, all the poems in this lovely collection are not rose-tinted; they are more kaleidoscopic: observations of an astute mind and a sensitive soul. Each poem captures an emotion and crystallizes it in words that any reader can easily resonate with.

Love is a truth. That love is all that matters, that love, and even a little care is all that is necessary is reiterated again and again:

Oh! What say of love,

No feelings can surpass this one.

Not just romantic love; the poet's magnanimity extends to all creatures great and small, a call for kindness and peace, seeing even a drop of this emotion as soul-soothing:

And if there is nothing to give

Give your ears at least

For the lonely to speak

Or munificently bestow a smile

In those dark lives, bring sunshine

That she loves nature is quite evident. She not only loves nature but revels in it and celebrates it in all its glory. One feels thankful then that she is a poet and is able to capture her ecstasy for us in words, so we may celebrate too.

Slumbering rays kissing the frostbitten milieu

Beckon me to stay and watch beyond the gray...

...to realize how promising can be

Cold winter mornings

.....

A distant sparkle in the blue water

Sparked her dormant feelings

While cajoling whispers of the sea

Slowly built up her dreams

One poem stood out from the rest for me: **Revealing Gleams**. The confusion of a wife of many years who watches another side—the charming side—of her husband unfold at a party. Who is this stranger across the room to whom she’s been married to for years, they, their marriage dissolved and vanished under folds of daily drudgery?

Flashing his charismatic smile

Which had eluded her a long time.

.....

The sparkle she had failed to kindle

Assuming life's drudgery had made it dwindle.

.....

The ring on her finger, was it a mockery?

The man, her significant other

Seemed now strange and distant to her

And all that is asked for is a little bit of love, little bit of care, little thoughtfulness:

Undoubtedly from selfless love we'll both gain

Truly spreading happiness and lessening pain.

And if that were there—the little bit of love, care, and thoughtfulness—life would not be such a lonely journey.

When together we walk

Leaving malice and melancholy behind

Even more beautiful seems the earth

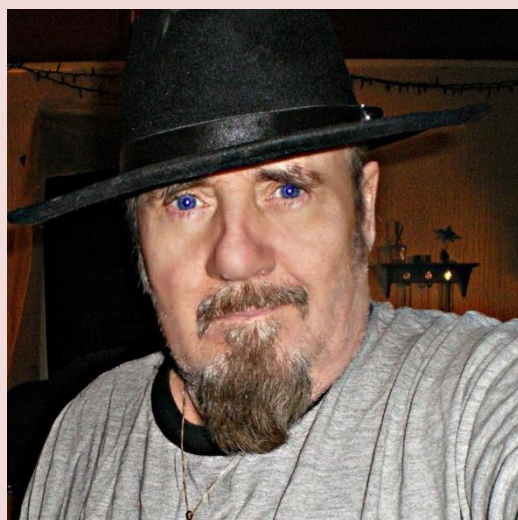
Then I ponder why can't the world

Just be like you and me.

The book reiterated for me the fact that if you're a poet, then you must pick up your pen and write—because only a poet can vocalize such deep emotions and the call of the soul.

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Ken Allan Dronsfield: I am a prize winning poet and was born in New Hampshire, but now reside in Oklahoma, USA. I am disabled and write poetry and short stories full time. I have contributed to and have been the co-editor for many anthologies. I have three poetry collections and am working on a fourth.



Occupation: I am a disabled veteran. I write poetry, short stories, etc., full time.

Fav book: The Shoes of the Fisherman, by Morris L. West, 1964

Fav movie: High Plains Drifter, with Clint Eastwood, 1973

Fav song: Comfortably Numb, Pink Floyd, 1979

Fav hobby: Guitar playing

Fav color: Blue

Fav sport: Football

Fav food: Pizza

Fav pet: My sweet Nicky, Cockatiel, Passed away in 1998.
Still Missed.

Fav actor: Clint Eastwood

Fav actress: Liv Tyler

Life philosophy: *“Sometimes you must fly alone; just to prove that you still can.”* (Ken Allan Dronsfield, 2012)

One liner describing you: *“Freedom is being yourself without needing anyone's permission.”* (Ken Allan Dronsfield, 2012)

Favorite holiday destination: New Hampshire

Favorite quote: *“Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality.”* (Edgar Allan Poe)

Birthday (optional): October 28

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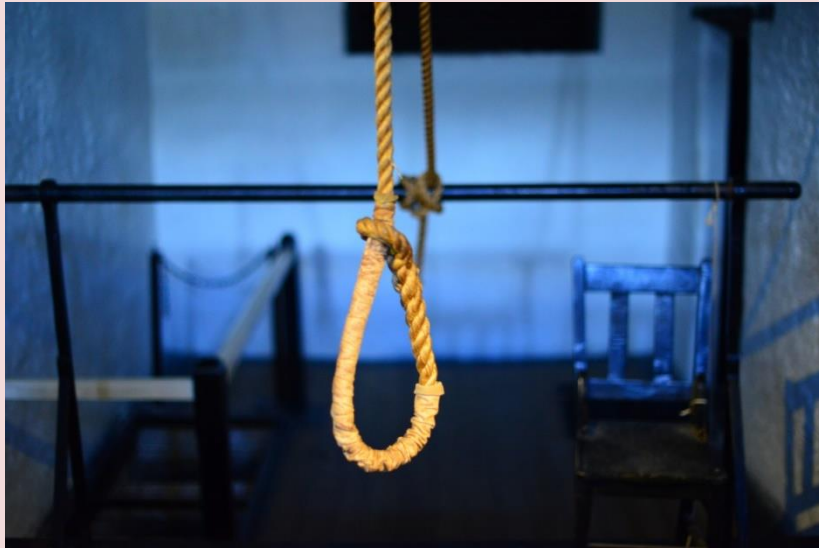
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HANGMAN

Have been stuck here in the gutter
For years these bars of iron
A witness to my sighs and tears
Sunrise and sunset know I not
Days I pass in an eternal pit of darkness
Many a man have I hanged
With a mere pull of the lever
I stand as the border
Between the beauty of life
And the atrocity of death
No more am I a man with a heart

You dub me but a stone
Still I shudder albeit deep within
Upon beholding the look on the visage
Of the condemned ere the black mask is on
Icy death at strife to triumph
The sigh heaved, the tears shed, the scorn felt
I can read them all however secret
You say my hands do not tremble
But deep down I feel a remorse
That leaves me craving to break the shackle.



Zulfiqar Parvez: He is the Head of Academic Affairs cum English Language Teacher at Tanzimul Ummah International Tahfiz School, Dhaka. He has done his Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi.



TOGETHERNESS

I remember when she was only six months old I used to make a house of a bedsheet for both of us. All of a sudden the world would disappear and we would be filled with togetherness. She loved being with me under the roof of that bedsheet. She felt safe. She felt secured. She smiled. I could still visualize her smile. She would screech with joy. But then I couldn't keep her under it forever. It was the time again when the world will come into her sight. For how long we could live under a fake shelter? We had to face the world sooner or later and when the time came I think we enjoyed it 'cause we were together.



Vivek Nath Mishra: My short stories have been published by many magazines and newspapers, including The Hindu, Indian Literature, Muse India, The Punch Magazine, Adelaide literary magazine, The Criterion. My photographs have appeared on many platforms, including The Guardian and The Sahapedia. My debut book is 'Birdsongs Of Love And Despair'.



AT THE CROSSROADS

Like travellers at the crossroads lost in thought,
We felt the threat of losing touch with ourselves
While unkept promises hurried to catch up - -

Memories crawled out of the woodwork:
Their snapshots blood-stained and twisted out of shape
Begging for forgiveness for the day truth blinked - -

We listened to the feet of those who ran away
And squinting at the faded writing on the wall
Wondered at the kindness of half-torn fluttering flags - -

Hope has deserted this countryside

And the branches of these trees bear no birds:

A string of questions could hang you at the end - -

You return to the city of skyscrapers

And I, to a cow-dung-splattered dawn,

The taste of your skin fresh upon my tongue.



Vijay Nair: I retired as an Associate Professor of English and I have contributed to various national and international anthologies. I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016. I was the 'Critic of the Year' in 2016, 2017 & 2018 at Destiny Poets, UK and was also adjudged the 'Poet of the Year' in 2018 by the same poetry group.



LINES WRITTEN POST THE SOLAR ECLIPSE ON DEC 26, 2019

As I stepped out on to the street this afternoon

Uneasiness my garb

The solar rays seemed sharper for a December day

(Did I not feel the prick at the back of my neck?)

And all around the environ was a whiteness

Of a sunlight as if washed out clean, like fresh laundry—

Is this what an eclipse does? I wondered

Or was it just my hallucination?

I looked up (through my shades, of course)

For, I wanted to see if it was a different star up there

But it was the same unfazed sun carrying on

Its daily journey across the sky

It had its time allotted, an end-of-day deadline
And couldn't allow something as trivial (for it)
As an eclipse to tarry its path.

Wasn't it just a couple of hours ago, I asked
That I witnessed the phenomenal blackening?

Phenomenon it was for you, a much ado

But, for us, up here in our cosmos

'Tis of no consequence, an impermanence

A casual meeting, though not an occasional one

From which we move on, as I do now

For, if I don't set and rise again on the morrow

Neither will you.



Vidya Shankar: A poet, writer, blogger, motivational speaker, mindfulness practitioner, and yoga enthusiast, residing in Chennai, India, I have been in ELT for more than two decades. I have been contributing articles to an international newspaper column as well as poetry and stories to anthologies and literary platforms. Myself a 'book' with the Human Library, I am winner of literary awards, been on the editorial of three publications, and have published two books of poems, one, a coffee table book in collaboration with my husband and the other, to create awareness about mental health.



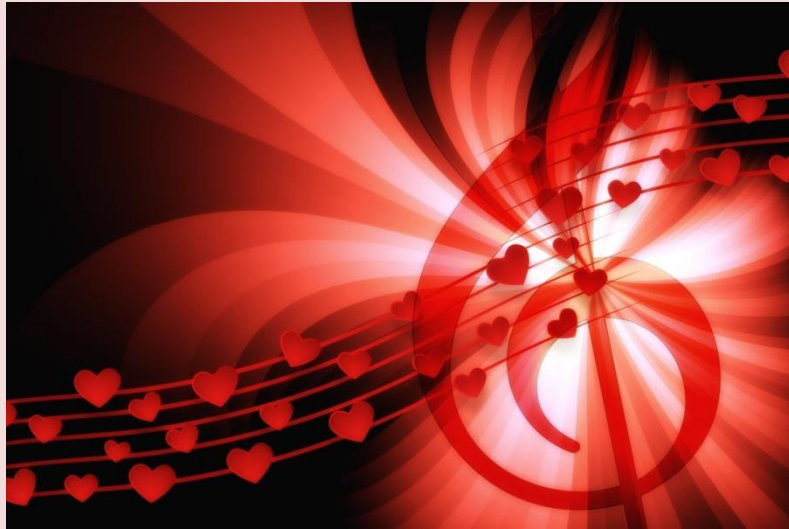
Hibernation of my thoughts and feelings
Were poisonous enough
To paralyzed my personality
And my soul started bleeding
Due to low metabolic rate of my creativity
I screamed a lot
After realizing my physical weakness
Yearning a lot to break all my compulsions
But this dormant situation will surely bring a hot ray of
happiness
When I could tackle all my unfavourable period of life

With a finger on my lips

Shhhhhhh!!!



Varsha Saran: I am a homemaker living in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India. I did my post-graduation from Ch Charan Sing University, Meerut. I am a bilingual poetess, story writer by passion. My many poems and stories have been published in different international anthologies, e-zines, magazines and newspapers.



LYRICS AND SONG

There grows a song

At the tip of my tongue

With a longing

For something

That shouldn't be

Of letters that by now

Should have swept away

With the leaves of fall

They lay frozen

An entire winter

Hoping your glance
Would thaw each line

Of strange roads
Wind swept hair
The waiting at the bent
Of how banter always lasted
One summer to the next spring

There hang a few things
Lyrics –
Replete with colors
You once robbed
A fine-tuned guitar
And three prizes to give away



Vandana Kumar: I am a poet residing in New Delhi, India. I work as French teacher and translator. I have contributed to various anthologies. Few of my poems were recently published in 'Spillwords' and 'North of Oxford'.



THE CITY

Can you see this,
Here it is the graveyard of desires,
Feelings, from this place,
Are deported and retired,
Crammed up in the cargo
Way away from this crowd
To be dumped in a vale
It cannot seep away or transpire

And we end up
As sheer components

Of a heartless machinery
Destined to be unperturbed
By our own deeds
And our misery.
If, in the mad rush,
you chance upon to see a bud
You fail to discern
The mingled tint
Of someone's blood.



Tribhu Nath Dubey: He is a sociologist by profession and poet by passion. He is employed with the Commissionarate of College Education Rajasthan as an Associate Professor in Sociology. He has been Co-Editor of the Rajasthan Journal of Sociology—a peer reviewed academic Journal. He is

presently serving as the Secretary of Rajasthan Sociological Association. He loves to resort to poetry as an essential means of catharsis.



THIS MUSIC

Your music doesn't attract me; I'm eager for a silent lullaby
Or for the rustling of leaves scattered behind my home.
Or for the treasures beyond the limit of my myopic eye
Or for something new, demanding to be music's antinome.

You can't utter sweetness, only the tirelessness of throats
Are echoing with some musical sounds from unhappy
reeds.

And the connoisseurs are applauding together with the
goats

Only to satiate their contagious thirsts and ordinary needs.

For sake of your transfixed auditory nerve, don't dispraise
My healthy eardrums which are fond of trivial tranquility.
For sake of my flawless auditory nerves, please don't raise
Your loudness level up to the height intolerable to me.

Let my eager ear enjoy the solitary confinement of its own,
By allowing to flee from your eyesight or by leaving me
alone.



Swapan Kumar Rakshit: He is an Indian poet who lives in Bankura, West Bengal. He teaches physics for his professional needs. However, he prefers to write poems, especially sonnets. He wants to be acquainted with the universal mind through poetry.



acrylic painting on canvas by suzette portes san jose

HOW CAN YOU HURT ME THIS WAY?

i hold you close within my arms embrace
holding you tight so you won't slip away
believing you to be my only solace
as i dream life drifting along in a long way

the trodden path that i walk with my fears
are the steps in barefoot of flooded tears
the thorns that hurt me are in my heart
when it will end and have nowhere to start

i am hurt the way that i have never been
blindly converge my thoughts of what is seen
my heart keeps pondering and beating fast
never will i know how this ends for life to last

how soon promises are made to be broken
leaving me in the world with a heart forsaken
shall go and play on the stage of hope and faith
till time ticks around into the phase of its death

tell me please, how can you hurt me this way?
when all you ever knew is wanting you to stay
as my world would stumble upon your feet
i raise my sword only to conquer my own defeat



Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City. She is a University half scholar from high school to college. She now has joined 15 book anthologies from 2015 to 2018. Each of her poems is written with her painting as visuals and are now appearing internationally. She is also a recipient of multiple awards for her ART works and literary works. She was awarded Poet of the Year in 2017 by one of the prestigious poetry site Destiny Poets International Community of Poets UK. She has also published her book



Freya's tears by Gustav Klimt

She faced the lashings

Standing in the rain

Sleet over her naked body

The storm breaking away parts of her

She held on to the remnants

The waves pushed her and beat her down

Almost choking her

But

She laughed

Uproariously

Hysterically

Deliriously

She laughed

And laughed

Her eyes bled streams of sunny specks

Her body became a river of yellow sparkling golden light

Flowing along...



Sunita Singh: She is a bi-lingual poet and writer, writing in English and Hindi. Her poems feature in Indian and International Anthologies and e-magazines. Many of her poems have won awards on on-line forums like Kaafiya, Poetry Planet, The Significant League etc. A few of her Hindi poems have also been turned into lyrics for private albums. She is an active member of Katha Kathan, a forum for reviving Indian languages. She lives in Delhi and is fond of travelling, music, reading. She finds inspiration from nature.



ODE TO ORDINARINESS

Serenade the common

the everyday

the ordinary!

If no ordinary guys are there,

how will they measure the extra-ordinary?

Being ordinary is more tough than being a celebrity.

You are what you are---deprived of the bigger opportunities!

Authentic!

Yourself only, all

the times.

And not wearing masks or pretend what you are not---like
them,

the perceived royalty

or rock star,

whose fortunes

rise, dip

very fast;

yours---always, constant

in a flux market,

lucky but an aberration.

well, well,

being ordinary

commonplace

---average Joe---

has got its own joys

...and perils

in the celeb-and success-oriented
cultures.



Sunil Sharma: I am a writer living in suburban Mumbai, India. Work as a college principal. Published a total of 19 books, solo and joint. I edit Setu:

<http://www.setumag.com/p/setu-home.html>



SAKHA

Sakha all is skin and bones, perishing
the tides swallow the sun plunging into an abyss
of time; the most glorious days dark and dreary
as dusk takes centre stage. Time creaks moaning winds
grieve for a lost paradise. The serpent rejoiced
while we feasted on the forbidden fruit
to be punished birth after birth.

The waiting and wanting in this cycle is mine
while you carry the cross of other pains

many of which you hug closely, loathe to heal
those gaping wounds, Jesus being your second name.
Karma the cruel taskmaster, flogs every remnant of sanity
till we pay, forfeiting each other to destiny, to rebirth.
My half of our soul now tired worn weary thread bare
yearns for fulfilment as the journey's end draws nigh
and the graves of my ancestors with open mouths call me.

Sakha, I shudder as sepulchral arms lunge towards my heart
Take me, meld me within you, heal my aching bones
your half of our soul lending it a new lease of life, new
reasons to live
as I make your quote 'love springs eternal' my mantra for
life
cocooned in the warmth of the mantle you so lovingly
drape
the warp and weft of love faith devotion interweaving a
tapestry
telling our love story of undying passion, our single soul.



Sunil Kaushal: I am a poet residing in Pune, India, a retired gynecologist, now working as a writer. I have contributed to various short story and poetry anthologies. Presently I am finishing my memoirs and a poetry book to be published soon.



BLOOD WEeping

“A curse!”, They say.

“A disease!” The ignorant claim.

“Defiled they are!”, Some frown.

They don't understand

That the womb weeps blood periodically

For she realizes she lost another chance

To be the God, to create, to harness the life seed.

They believe blood weeping

Is a curse on womanhood,

A curse for Eve's sin, “Temptation!!!”

That devastated men's godliness and the Eden.

They bar blood weeping women's entry

Into temples, kitchen, bedrooms,

Segregated, quarantined like the AIDS victims

They sleep isolated on discarded mats

Like infected pets, like abjured refugees.

Women are impure during their blood- weeping period
They should not pollute the temple or men
For Ayyappa is a bachelor God, so pure!!!
But the juice of the bleeding hole is the tastiest
Men can't resist the temptation, what say you men?

But feel not ashamed women
Your blood weeping is not Eve's sin
It's the holy path to eternity
The ceremony of survival for this Paradise
The Earth, our home and heaven
A gift not given to men, so jealous they are!!!



Sumitra Mishra: I am a writer residing in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. I am working as a full-time writer after retirement as a Professor of English. I have contributed to various anthologies, magazines and e-zines both in English and Odia. I have published 04 anthologies of English poems, 03 Odia poem collections, 03 Odia short story collections and 02 full length plays in Odia. I am the editor of a monthly Women's magazine published from Bhubaneswar.



THE WIFE

She scratched her sparse grey scalp.

God's hurried hand had sketched her hair—

Straight lines merged at the apology of a bun.

A small white rose pinned with two thin pins

Atop the knot, proclaimed pride in womanhood.

Her too large blouse, many holed, held together

With safety pins. Her synthetic sari tucked up

In folds, dripped, for it was raining—not harshly,
But a continuous drizzle that had skimmed all fat
And defined her tall, strong boned, work-horse of a body.

‘I am sixty-five... My children are in hostel...’ she says.

‘I studied till 11th standard,’ she says. Broken English
testifies...

‘I will clean my daughter’s house,’ she says

And she does—slowly, lovingly... Perforce remembering my
mother,

I distance her, but she has walked into my house, and... my
head.

Only the Universe knows how she got my number—

I’d been searching when she called, ‘I need you, please wait
for me...’

She is openly grateful. Such devotion I’ve never seen.

Her past leaps to my imagination, a good wife;

In my absence, she’ll surely watch over my sons like a
mother...



Sumita Dutta: She is a publisher, poet and novelist residing in Chennai, India. She is the founder of Adisakrit, a small publishing house, seven books old in October. She has contributed to various online sites and anthologies. Her debut book was *The Heart of Donna Rai*



Out of their own wedlock
A relation divine,
Century passed by
No devisor could properly define.

She is not his wife
But to him, she is the meaning of his life.

Radha devoted her
Body, mind and soul,
'Krishna' completed her
Entire entity as a whole.

Brow beat of society

Could not limit their inexhaustible love,

Righteous, Dharma, society

Shame, blame,

Nothing could defame their

Eternal love fame.



Sumana Bhattacharjee: She is a bilingual poetry writer from India. She born and brought up in city Kolkata in a family of teachers. She has keen interest in music, poetry and drama and she loves every form of fine arts. She has done master degree in English Literature and Hons in Bengali literature. She is a published poet and her poems have been published more than twenty national and international anthologies, magazines and blogs. She is the founder of an online poetry group and a member of World Union Of poets. She is very passionate about poetry and she thinks poetry is the best way to express your thought.



HANDFUL RICE

Prodigality of rice in the restaurants,
Even we find it in the aristocratic houses.

The young maid serves a few homes
To provide a handful of rice to her kids.

Her drunk husband just commands her
To distribute him the good dinner.

No idea from where she could manage everything,
If she gets failure to serve him enough meal,
He beat her mercilessly as much as possible.

It was raining heavily in the rainy season
She could not go to her master's house then.

But the kids were suffering from hunger,
Watching no other alternate way she had gone to the
abode of her owner.

The owner in the absence of his better helpmate,
Tortured her physically to quench his beastly lust.

Only for the handful rice, she bore everything,
Taking the delicious dishes from there,
Returning home when she described that to her
dear(hubby)

He just said, "At least today after a long time will have the
special dinner".



Sujata Paul: She is a bilingual poetess belonging to Agartala presently. She is a teacher by profession but writing is her passion. She has published her solo poetry book 'Whisper of My Souls' and many of her poems and articles have been published in different national and international anthologies. Her second book 'Sarang', collection of poems has been published at International Conference of Multi-Disciplinary Research in Kolkata on 2nd March, 2019. Besides writing, she likes to travel and listen to music too. She wants to help the street orphans too.



DEFT CONNECTION

These wounds might never heal

Cracks and fissures may remain sans seal

Crying per se is of no use

No one is there to listen to woes

Caught between two extremes

Edge of hope chooses variants of longing

Seeks respite

In quiet facades of gone by while

Ensembles of faith and belief

Desperately cling to faded contours of vintage

Buried under plethora of modern assemblage

The dilemma... "what to dump" "where to dump"

How to segregate right and wrong

Tells upon nuances of relationship

A malady... that has travelled far and deep

Hunt for panacea is on

Taking cue from subtle articulation

Hope it arrives at DEFT CONNECTION

Taking into confidence

Both vintage and modern.



Sujata Dash: I am a poet residing in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. I work as a banker. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have one published anthology of poetry.



WHERE DO I BELONG

I have tried to belong

in many ways

By chopping off

By rounding the edges

By squeezing in

Yet,

I stick out

like a sore thumb

Spilling out from

The Square Box

I ooze out of the
Capped Bottles
The Sealed Containers
are unable to hold me in

I don't belong
Anywhere
The claustrophobic air
The dark room
The blind alley
All have rejected me
Thankfully

The birds have been kind
Yet
Every time
I try to fly

My feathers don't match

They don't flap

I sit alone under

The Great Banyan

That once was

The giver

The breather

The provider

Now no more

I crave dearly

for the filters

to peep through

the thick blanket

Of maggot infested

Minds

I know I don't belong

I know I don't belong

I don't fit.



Sudeshna Mukherjee: Sudeshna Mukherjee's poems deal with varied human nature. A keen observer, she chronicles the happenings around her and writes with a tinge of humour. 'Meanderings of the Mind' and 'Mélange' are her published collections of poems. She loves 'words' and loves to play with them.



MIRROR OF LIFE

Aha! mirror of this life is very unique,
Stand in front of it and see,
O' you will find a wonderful canvas it paints,
With variable colors, hues and shades!

Sometime it showers bundles of joy and cheers,
Sometime it becomes a river of sadness and tears,
Sometimes so soothing like blooming red of roses,
Sometimes thorny pathways it encloses!

Aha! Sometime it sings a melodious melody,
Sometimes it mourns like a dead body,
Sometime it is suffocating as if a caged bird stay,
Sometime it looks like a stage to play!

O' what an enigma; what a mystery?
Mirror of life is having specific chemistry,
Lost in this enigma we keep on moving,
But mirror of life reflects so many hidden things!



Sonia Gupta: Dr.Sonia, a dentist by profession, is a well-known name in English and Hindi literature. She is an established author of four English and Two Hindi poetry books. Her many poems and stories have been placed in various anthologies, magazines and newspapers. She has been awarded with various awards in Hindi literature and won many poetry competitions organised by various literary groups on facebook. Besides being a poetess and doctor, she is fond of painting, singing, cooking, designing, knitting and teaching. Her many projects are coming soon.



LOVE WINS

How beautiful is life when we share things

and live for each other.

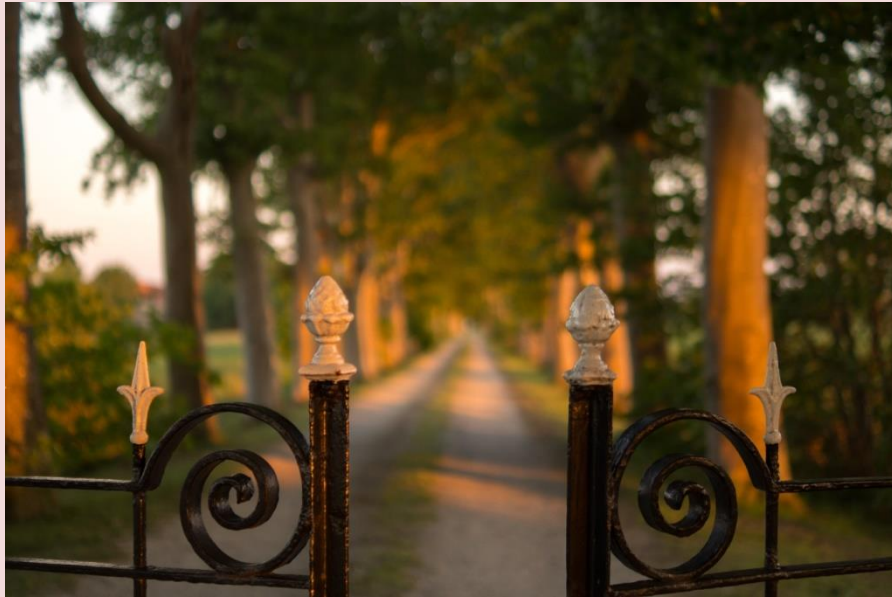
When love reigns, it makes life a paradise on earth, lack of it ruins life and makes it a living hell. I love me, my wife and sons, my family where I live in. I am loved in return. I love my family because it makes me happy and stands by me in moments of happiness and sorrow, always with me when I need it the most. On love and reciprocation stands family. Can I not expand my family a bit more to include my old parents, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, in-laws, my neighbours and colleagues with whom I interact daily? Can I not be with them when they need me and have their love, concern and support in return? How beautiful is life when we share things and live for each other. Are we so

selfish that we only live for ourselves? What about those on whose love and sacrifice we stand. What about this beautiful world, air, water and light which keep us alive. Do we pay anything in return or have taken things for granted. Is it not our duty to pay back as little as we can? Are ego, jealousy, selfishness, greed worth having which keep life at a distance and us in perpetual bondage till we leave this earth?



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, O.F.S, son of Raj Kishore and Shantilata Mohanty is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer. His write-ups are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies which are widely acclaimed across the world.

Website: smrutiweb.wordpress.com



WAITING

Push open those gates with all you have, breathe in your joy and come

Down a broad driveway where flowers flank, and birds thank you for coming.

The house isn't hard to find, it fills your greatest vision, but not so easy to reach.

If you are who you say you are, the doors will open without much effort or help.

Spread out your arms and enter, your heart will have started filling,

Past empty rooms and lives that left, birth and rebirth of silences.

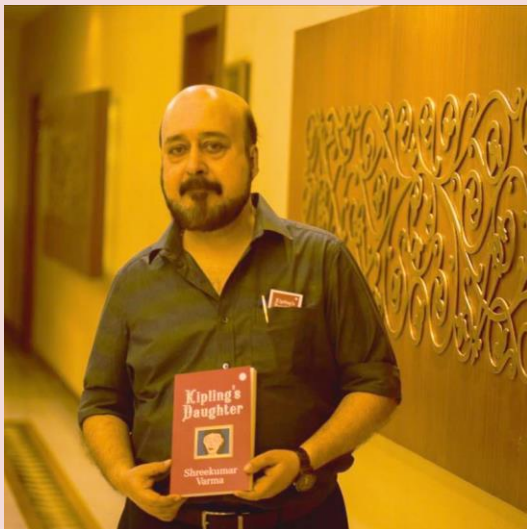
You'll see portraits of known and unknown pioneers that may make you linger quite a bit.

There are memories from other lives that may make you hunger quite a bit.

But if your heart still beats, and your eyes are glowing, there I am, you found me.

My smile and brimming eyes, my welcome plain to see.

Come to me, I've waited long within the jewelled frame of this ancient portrait.



Shreekumar Varma: He is a poet, novelist, and playwright residing in Chennai, India. He is a writer. He has contributed to various anthologies. He has received the R. K. Narayan Award for Creative Writing. www.shreevarma.com

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shreekumar_Varma



BOATS FULL OF SURPRISES

Men busy at their work

Along life's teeming multitude

A paean of surprises

Multihued, joy in their wake

Poles, vaulting in their philosophy of life

Along life's meandering banks

A deep chasm, dividing joy and sorrow

A beautiful medley

Flora abounding

Fragrance of breeze, beholding
Wishful thinking, a new sphere



Shobha Warriar: I am a poet residing in Chennai. I am a housewife. I have contributed to a few anthologies. I have also published poems and also one collection of a few poems written by me.



photography by Carl Scharwarth

VESTIGES

Forevermore that last touch

That stopped halfway

That kissed breath we shared upon a hold

The one that never was felt

On my grave

Draws me like a pulley. Dead weight.

Tugging flesh with bones

Til I am spinning with an ache

Emptying the air

For me to come back a last time.



Shanti Harjani Williams: I am a lawyer and poet residing in Ontario, Canada and currently a stay-at-home Mom. I have contributed to online poetry and poetry review publications and hope to publish my own book of poetry soon. Recently I contributed to the publication Cultural Reverence for World Peace Day, my poem entitled "Hitting Back."



DISTANCE BETWEEN DIMENSIONS

The sun rises and it sets again in my world
Another day Dawn's swallows its own tail
An unseasonal November rain driven silly
In sheets and sleets and yet my eyes are empty
The world is alive hiding its desperation
I had seen previously emoted only in movies scenes
I thought this was all a bad dream
Only I see them for you endlessly
From the other side - your eyes twinkle
Bridging distance between dimensions and dreams
How exactly did you squeeze through the filter of physics
Invisible - yet here - I know

From the way my hands jumped
And spilled that goey stuff and some wicked thoughts
You were reprimanding - invisible
But I did rather we stayed in the same dimension in the
same compartment
Not separate in two compartments only connected by the
gangway
I did rather not disembark and leave you behind in time
Yet in my helplessness
I have reduced you
To a pinch of ashes stored in a letter box
Because you can't be allowed over the threshold
The same letter box you used to open
At the end of each day and bring in
Sunshine sugared with smiles



Seema K Jayaraman: She is poetess based out of Mumbai, India, and is a professional in the IT Banking domain. Her poems paint a vivid picture, colourfully presenting the myriad vibrancies of nature, at times stark depictions of human strife and tragedy. She writes both free style and rhyme-based verses, and she also enjoys writing haikus and tankas. Her debut book, *Wings Of Rhapsody – A Dalliance Of Poems*, was released in June 2016.



HALO EQUATED

I promised all my sevens

to the pattern

now I'm caught in its prism

blink twice for fusion

spin in the grasp of spent coding

untangling live wires

in the storm

You told me every dog
still has its teeth
from the hunt

now I'm warm in the forest
fur wrapped with worn blankets

coil through the night of rebellion

enticing compressed visions
from crystal



Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His favorite season is autumn. His spirit tree is the pine. Most of his poems are written in the woods. He hosts a podcast, Songs of Selah, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio. Links to his published work and other thoughts about life can be found at 17Numa.com.



MIDDING

There's something clamouring for my attention
everywhere,

Hovering over my mind-scape some digital nightmare,

I plead helplessly for that solitude that self-care

While my fingers scroll and swipe involuntarily somewhere

Crowded windows, the parks, those teeming campfires

Jostling for space bodies at birth beds and funeral pyres

Nothing private, digital invasions strangle us, no mercy nor
blue wires

I crave for spaces, silences, away from data quagmires

In a world busy partying and clubbing
Drowned in banter, mindlessly fubbing
I choose the quiet of verses, in my own midding
Appeasing an unseen reader free and un-forbidding.

**midding: v. intr. feeling the tranquil pleasure of being near a gathering but not quite in it*



Saranya Francis: She is a multilingual poet with published poems in English, Hindi, and Tamil. She is a social activist, freelance life skills and language trainer. She has to her credit two anthologies of poetry, titled 'Ambedo' and 'Being Purple'. Her poetry is featured in reputed anthologies such as Amaravati Poetic Prism, Metverse Muse and Efflorescence. She is the recipient of the Bharat Award for Literature (2018), Rabindranath Tagore Award (2017), and National Chanting Bards Award (2017). Saranya

is the Secretary of ZAV Foundation, an NGO working for the cause of education and women empowerment. She has recently been conferred the Star Ambassador of World Poetry award at The World Poetry Conference 2019.



COME FALL INTO MY ARMS...

Remembering her rosy days
there's a hurt in her heart, a terrible hurt
when he did not keep his promises
to make her happy
He vanished into the thin air
without a word
Now she is in agony
hitting her head
against a brick wall
bleeding profusely

Then she hears a voice
that divine voice
from above
Don't spoil your mind
I am with you
loving and caring
Unto my arms
fall safely my dearest child !
I am your Lord God
In your happiness n sorrow
I am with you
Fall into my loving arms
my sweetest child
I have carved you in my palm
and called you by your name
I knew your destiny
before you were born
much suffering you had

No more tears

come fall into my arms!



Sarala Balachandran: I reside in Kolkata, West Bengal, with my family. My poems have been published in national and international anthologies. I am a contributing poet for Different Truths. I write free verses.



The destruction of nature around
Is a warning and a sound
To humans to take a break
They should know about the stake
It is a great loss
It's not going to be simple as a coins toss
Matters are growing complicated
Nature is beginning to get irritated
In her irritation she throws us symbols
To explain to us our short falls
She is the mother the protector
And we humans have to be more than traitors

It's our duty to uphold her integrity
That will ensure our sovereignty
Otherwise we end up as slaves to fate
And will have no one but us to berate.



Sara Bubber: I am studying Human Development from MSU, Baroda. In my free time (sometimes even during classes) I love looking out of the window especially when it rains. I love reading, listening to music and spending time with my dogs. My dogs are my favourite people in the world.



pic by Dr. Santosh Bakaya

SOFT AND MELLOW

The morning hues, soft and mellow,
lovingly embrace the new dawn of a new year.
Are the hues any different from the year just gone,
I wonder, looking at the languorous smoke curling up
from a modest little shack in the distance.

My shapeless thoughts, inchoate and confused,
fuse with the morning hues, wiping out hidden bruises .

The weeds fringing a rainwater pond watch on
with amused, green eyes, as a tiny Chinese coot
cruises merrily, with the majesty of a black swan.

I yank myself away from all bleak thoughts,
in this new dawn, as I inhale the fragrance
of the new morn and the white, wild flowers
swaying merrily ; I am once again a new- born,
glowing with a radiance , new- found.



Santosh Bakaya: I am a poet, novelist, and essayist and Ted speaker, residing in Jaipur, India, working as a teacher. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published novels and edited poetry/story anthologies. My latest novel is 'A Skyful of Balloons'.



WHISPER

Bougainvillea memory vines
swing in the waxing night.
And I embark the paper boat
Travel the pages of months and days.

I reread the lines,
My fingertips kiss the words of our story.
I listen your approaching steps.

The last second of this night
Going to immerse in your eyes and

The night queen of hope
Gently unfolds her petals in my heart.

I collect the granules of love.
With the warmth of our embrace
Marigold morning waiting near.

I gently move and
softly whisper in your ear,
"Happy new year my Love"
"Happy new year!"



Sanhita Sinha: She is a native of Tripura, is a teacher, and a bilingual poet. Her poems have been published in different prestigious national and international anthologies, journals & magazines. Apart from writing, as an elocutionist and as an actor, she is actively engaged in cultural activities. Along with stage, she is a regular artiste of television and radio too.



JUST LIKE YESTERDAY (HOW TIME FLIES)

Oh! It's seems just like yesterday,
My hair tied up, like a cat's ears
And I stepped in for the first time,
My second home for the years to come.

It seems just like yesterday,
When I first went on stage,
And co-hosted the Annual Day,
At the tender age of 6.

It seems just like yesterday,
When I first talked to my would-be bestie
And soon forged a friendship,
That completes a decade this May.

It seems just like yesterday,
When I first crushed on somebody,
I had no guy friends back then,
Now I talk to boys quite easily.

I'm going to complete class 9 next month,
And give my boards next year,
Oh! How fast time flies,
When you're with the ones you hold dear...



Samixa Bajaj: I am a fourteen year old student of class IX. I love to pen poems on topics that strike a chord with my moods at any given point of time. I love to read and dance.



DIFFERENT UNIVERSE

For the lovelorn,
Night bears a sigh of despair
Silence does trouble
Flow of grief
Bursts their bubbles;

For the saints,
Night conveys in-depth essence
Silence does meditation
To know the cosmic hush;

For the torchbearers,
Night tends to bring myriad light
To set the silence free
From the inconsistent longings;

For the soul-mirrors,
Night haunts
To look into inner state
Silence does penetrate
To see its reflection
As clearly as it might be!



Salman Khan: I am a poet of both Bengali and English language, residing in Bangladesh in Bogura district. By profession, I am a teacher of English language. I have contributed to various anthologies both nationally and internationally.



AFTER DEATH....

continued from last issue...

LOCATION: heaven

CHARACTERS:

One: -River Nila (Bharathappuzha). The river that flows from the Western Ghats (Sahya mountains) to Arabian Sea, through various terrains of Kerala State.

The river 'Nila' (Bharathappuzha) was severely affected by draught and assumed that she has been the subject for premature death without leaving a single dilution of water.

Two: River Euphrates: The river that flows in Iraq.

River Euphrates also had a premature death because of the Anglo-American invasion and brutal and cruel act of radicalism towards the society living in its valleys.

continued from last issue...

She continued...

“Do you know, how many songs and poems our great poets have written and we have sung to appreciate you? Even then, you! You are a cheat! You are merciless!”

Blocking her speech, Euphrates said, “You are right Nila. Whatever you have said is absolutely correct. But do you know how sad I am about your premature death? But, even for a second, have you thought about my situation? Unlike you, though I am flooded with water, have you ever asked about my fate? Have you ever even read the post-mortem report of my premature death? You may not have done so.”

She continued with an hesitation, “You, the most literate of people, the people of God’s own country, would have never done that; because you know how to forget all and how to cover up all as you wish.”

“But you have to hear it, you should know it. After the Anglo-American invasion, the bloodshed war, and use of chemical and biological weapons in my sacred body, dumping its poisonous wastes, and with other contaminations, every drop of water flowing through my veins has become deadly poisonous. If you drink a drop

from it, you would never back to your life; you could never have a reincarnation.”

After a moment of silence, Euphrates continued, looking to Nilas’s face, “No, dear, my unfortunate plight should never happen to anybody! I can’t tolerate that as well.”

“My destiny is anyway like this, but you, your story, that’s not like mine. When rain clouds embraces the Western hill lines, where you started to put your little footprints, with its intense excitement, then it would open yet another episode of nature. I can see you wearing a sari made of rain threads. Your ragged breasts would blow up. I can imagine how your skinny cheeks would become like a ripe Kashmiri apple. I can see crowds of dotted deer kissing your flaming lips. Grass valleys and bolded hilltops would be covered with a green blanket. Then you too can retain your youth. Many new poets would write about their romance with you, and you will be trilled of love and romances...”

With a weak sound, Euphrates continued, “Dear friend, don’t be disappointed, please wait. You will retain your life, your current stage, it’s only seasonal. You will be reincarnated again...”

By hearing these words, Nila was crying without tears...

SCENE 2

Location: the world

Even after some days of delay, rain clouds started to spread like an umbrella upon the land east to 'Shaya parvatham' (Western Ghats). Cool winds murmured about the approach of yet another season of downpour. It became dark everywhere; peacocks started to open their colourful feathers and dance. Bright veins of lightning sparkled in the far skies. Earth shivered with sounds of thunder...And then, the downpour began...

Streams and waterfalls sang loudly their inherent songs. Ragged breasts of Nila popped and blew with milk; her navel buds got ready for another course of satisfaction. Her veins got refreshed, she laughed with thrills of orgasm. She flooded and flowed like a girl of seventeen.

But when she, 'Nila' got her life back, she never remembered her friend Euphrates. She was in a rush to catch her own comforts and satisfactions.



Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola): A freelance writer and painter from Kerala, India, working in Doha as Franchise General Manager. Writes short stories, poems and travelogues in various magazines (Malayalam), periodicals with a pen name of ‘Saleem Kattuchola’, and used to write English poems and articles in International magazines and news papers as well.



THE FIRST LIGHT

Dedicated to my brother's daughter

She opens her eyes

As been so far in another world,

Opens to see the earth

The beginning of touch with earthly things around.

With the human beings, the creatures

With the etiquette, the culture
With them who are closer to her
Also who are little or quite far.

But, prior to the all, probably with her
Who introduces the first light,
Then with other's affection and care that are earthly
As will be blessed from the heaven and been so far.



Saikat Gupta Majumdar: I am an amateur poet. I reside in Kolkata. I work in a private organisation in 'Accounts Division' My hobby is writing poems, rhymes, and captions both in English and Bengali. My English poems have got published in various online magazines so far. I have obtained certificate from one of them also. I wish to get established as a Poet.



BROKEN TELEPHONE

You know the game,
everyone sits in a circle
and whispers what was whispered
into their ear so that you can see
how much the message has changed
by the time it gets back to the originator.

And I never wanted to play.

I wanted to sit under the stairs in the dark
thinking about ghosts.

But they made me play,
so I sat in their circle
waiting for a whisper to
come around.

And when it did,
I told a tale that had nothing to do
with anything.

The kid beside me would say “what?”
and I would repeat it like the message had come around
and he was too stupid to get it or something.

In that church basement along Grove Street.
Waiting for the message to come back around.
So the headmaster would say it out loud
in a room full of kids.

But they always just talked it over.
Said nothing and started again.

Without me this time,
so that everything went off without
a hitch.



Ryan Quinn Flanagan: He is a Canadian-born author residing in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada with his wife and many bears that rifle through his garbage. His work can be found both in print and online in such places as: Evergreen Review, The New York Quarterly, GloMag, The Poet Community, Red Fez, and The Oklahoma Review.



QUESTIONS RAISED

She passes by and I wonder

If she notices me at all

As I turn to nod my head

With offerings of salutation:

Does she even know

That I exist?

How can one describe

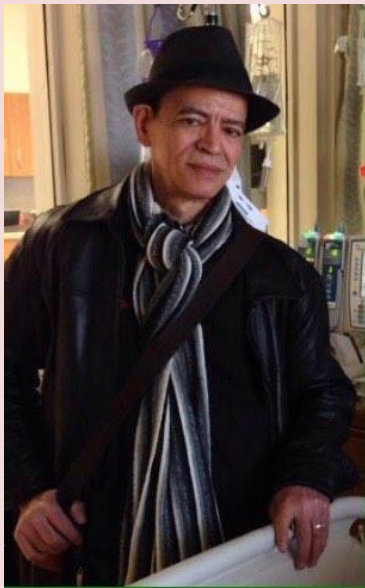
This amazing girl who

Each day walks and our
Eyes have yet to meet,
Is she thinking of a lover
Or just moving along
With uncertainty of habit?

Who seems not to notice
My attraction, will she offer
Any validation to what she is
Thinking or to what she sees?

Then one day next with a glance
That offered me salvation,
She gave me a smile which
Opened up my heart with
Great assurance!

We hadn't met by chance
Or by lark as my life received
Hope, calling me into aliveness,
A long time conviction and as
Irrational as it may have seemed,
I found the love of all my dreams!



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. 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!



BEFORE THIS, THERE WAS NOTHING MORE THAN THIS

the tide shifts

no matter the wind

devoid of purpose

abandoning the surface

nothing more than earth

nothing less than sea

here the earth crawls on

content, no matter the era

content, no matter the residents

nothing more than sand
nothing more than constant breath

nothing greater than this
nothing more precious than life's pulse

no matter the daylight

no matter the moonlight

the tide shifts

the earth crawls on

its breath speaks hope

the earth summons the residents:

“before this, there was nothing more than this”



Robert Feldman: Inspired by members of my hometown Paterson's (New Jersey) literary tradition, most notably Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams, I continue to write/publish/present my work (most recently 'Hineni', 2018; 'Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields and other ArtPoems', 2019), make fire paintings, and play tabla. The body of my writing and paintings can be accessed at <https://sites.google.com/site/robertfeldman23/>.



BIRDWATCHING

The hoopoe pecks at an early worm

his angry beak jabbing at the slick, cylindrical softness

Dewdrops are destroyed in the making of this film

I am the canna patch when the food is gone

sometimes the worm

but mostly I am the beak

or the afternoon, orange-splashed

but in the shade

The end, unique every time

His mate gobbles her find, her rump towards him

secure even without sharing

An outsider in avian domesticity,

the voyeur in me snaps several images of unfurled crowns,

distended wobbly throats and frazzled tail feathers

with the 3D clarity of dual eye lenses

that pause between shots

to let some dreams wander through irises

hoping to make a bird of it sometime later

on a screen like the one here



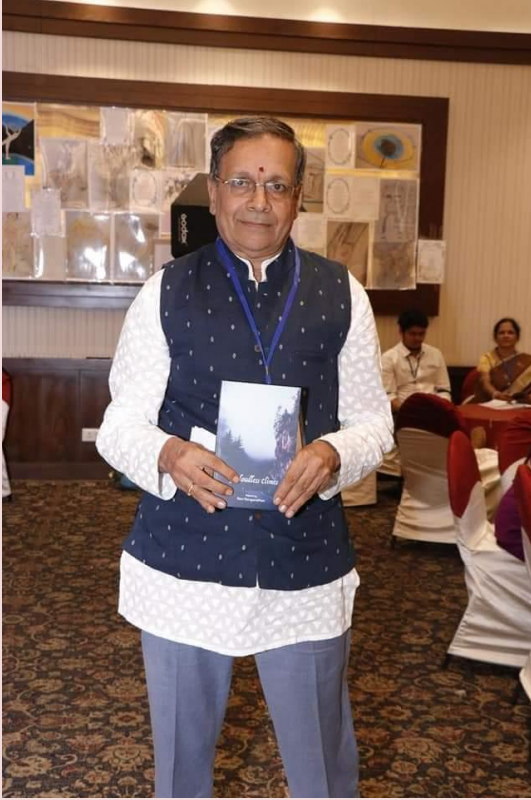
Reena Prasad: She is a poet/writer from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals, e.g., The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, Lakeview International Journal etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. More recently, she was adjudged second in the World Union Of Poet's competition, 2016. She writes at Butterflies Of Time.



A MIND OF MY OWN

Earth smells mud pores
can sense the distinctive petrichor
Leaks winking over the ceiling
rain drops fall on the floor...
Now it is raining and raining
delirious in its downpour...
Threatening black clouds
waiting to flood more
Green leaves wet with life
thirsting for nectar...

A tired me totally drenched
impatient mind seek shelter of home...
Mind follows the frog
croaking in the well...
Hears the twilight thunder
tweaking the sky...
Feels the patter, patter
on the cemented roof...
I need not do anything
to drive away the rain
It will leave on its own...
What do I do
To drive away my mind
It will not leave me
even if I disown...



Ravi Ranganathan: He is a retired banker turned poet settled in Chennai. He has to his credit three books of poems entitled 'Lyrics of Life' and 'Blade of green grass,' and 'Of Cloudless Climes'. He revels in writing his thought-provoking short poems called 'Myku'. He loves to write on nature, life, and human mind. His poems are featured regularly in many anthologies and they are well received. He has won many awards for his poetry, including the prestigious Rabindranath Tagore award in the poetry competition conducted by Poiesisonline, Sahitya Gaurav award by Literati Cosmos Society, Mathura and Master of creative Impulse award by Philosophique Poetica.



THE CABLE-KNIT SWEATER

On a dark winter night
as the cold soaks into me,
I take the purple cable-knit sweater
out of the closet
that my mother had knitted for me
long long ago.
I put it on and feel
warm and cozy!
The bone-deep memory sleeping away,
pops into my mind unbidden,

like a language that
crosses all borders!

I remember her
sitting on the sofa knitting:
Rolling the wool into balls
before she started knitting;
the bag for wool
full of purple balls!
I was delighted to see
her fair beautiful fingers
running swiftly on the knitting yarn!

In eager anticipation
of completing my sweater
she took the knitting
everywhere she went;
at night, she would work the stitches

until her fingers would hurt--

I meant so much to her!

Oh, the boundless Ganga

of unconditional love--

She carried and sustained me!

I still feel the bond of the cord

no matter how old I have grown!

After so many years

the snugly sweater is still shining:

The divine, magical pattern

becomes a legacy of love!

Softly, I caress the purple stuff

and reminisce --

My mother's benign presence

amid an aching void of absence!

The past floods into the present:

I feel my heart riddled with Toska--
Grief...nostalgia...yearning...



Ranjana Sharan Sinha: I am a poet, author, and retired professor residing in Nagpur, India. I have published 7 books in different genres. My poems have been published in reputed anthologies, archives and journals, including Indian Literature, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. I have published 50 research papers. I have been honoured with many prestigious awards for contribution to literature.



<https://www.amazon.in/Stories-Resilience-Ramendra-Kumar-Ramen/dp/B083TY4QTM>

STORIES OF RESILIENCE

Khushi

A month after my younger sister got married by mother went away somewhere. I tried asking Papa. But he would always shut me up and call her filthy names.

I did not miss my mother all that much. I was always more fond of Papa. He would bring toffees for me every night when he came back from work.

A few days after ma left I was sleeping on the ground like I always did. Suddenly I felt a heavy hand on me and woke up with a start.

“It is okay beta, it is only me, your Papa. Come give me a hug,” he said.

I hugged him and he hugged me back. After sometime he started touching me. I didn't like it and pushed his hand away.

“Come on beta. I am only showing you how much I love you. All fathers show their affection in some way.”

I tried to stop him, I even shouted. But he didn't stop.

“Beta, it is your duty to keep me happy. See how much I do for you. Can't you do this for me? I won't hurt you and I'll look after you really well....

In the beginning it was very painful. Then slowly I started getting used to it. I didn't even know what he was doing was right or wrong. He was my father and he cooked for me, brought me chocolates, gave me clothes....so maybe he was right. He had warned me not to talk about this to anyone.

“They won't understand this pure love between a father and daughter.”

But somewhere I started hating my own body and sometimes even my own self.....

<https://www.flipkart.com/stories-of-resilience/p/itm0847843748037?pid=9789389888362>



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



My rickshaw is my make-shift home,
Where I take rest in intervals;
I can indulge in afternoon siesta, and
Enwrapped in a cozy blanket warm,
I dare to ward off winter blues as well;

My vehicle is a symbol of life
In motion which runs at a snail's pace;
Yet in the end as often happens,
Slow but steady wins the race;

My dreams are moving along with me,
Whenever I drive my rickshaw in motion slow;
I tread on the thorny paths of life,
Taking in my stride both highs and lows;

Ensuring the travellers' passage smooth,
I'm a helmsman of a kind rare;
Guiding the people on their cherished course,
Is what I do daily without fanfare.



Rakesh Chandra: He is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D in Law from Lucknow University. He has got one collection of poems Titled "Moon is Black" and also one collection of Hindi poems. His English poems have found place in different poetry journals and Newspapers' literary supplements. He also has authored two books on Law.



THE DROP

Had a fall

Almost an instinct

Dark mounds released

Travel through winds

Reached your face,

My salty peers

Moistening your eyes

I splash you

Feeling of chill,

Have known you

Miss you whence

You love me

Continuous flow floods,

I wait again in pursuance

As and when your arrogance

Gives way to your eternal penance

Tiny split happiness, life to crop

Call me again, my love,

My rain drop...



Rajorshi Patranabis: I am a food consultant by profession. I write poems in English. My genres are love, metaphysicality, and at times, supernatural. I have a collection of poems named 'Crossover - Love beyond eternity'. In this book, I had also written two short stories in verses.



NY TIMES REPORT

A Bronx man
conducted surveillance
of military and intelligence
outposts in New York city
and airport, in support
of anticipated terrorist attacks,
the federal authorities
said in a criminal complaint.

The man,
32, a naturalized citizen,

told the F.B.I.

in a series of interviews:

he was recruited

for Islamic Jihad

as part of an effort

to develop “sleepers”

who lived ostensibly normal

lives.

Could be “activated

and tasked” with conducting

operations.



Rajnish Mishra: He is a poet, writer, translator and blogger born and brought up in Varanasi, India. He is the editor of PPP E-zine, a poetry e-zine. He has a blog on poetry, poetics and aesthetic pleasure:
<https://poetrypoeticspleasure.wordpress.com>.



TICKING OFF THE CALENDAR

With the advent of New Year
a new born elm, a smile always
welcoming all in the household,

looking at the corners of every page
a calendar in each room, a visage
of Messiah, holding numbers in wand;

some dates crossed for bringing tears
some dates marked highlighting events
happening and hearkening, soft touch

is the heal. A new face, new laminated bulk
new beckoning, yet effacing old memories
Impossible; a straight horse jumping into field

crossing all barriers, thistled hoofs, high jumps
over bush, speeding fast to an unknown
destination; fog clogging nose and pathway;

wind across window pane, calendars
fritter and face ordeal of hands and push.
They have a special place on the wall.



Radhamani Sarma: She is a student of Ethiraj college, Chennai. She specialized in the plays of W.H. Auden for her doctoral thesis from the University of Madras. She obtained PGDTE from CIEFL from Hyderabad. She served in Pachaiyappa's college and is a retired professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience. She has published four books of poems and one book of short stories. She is widely published in various anthologies and is a reviewer and critic.

Her blogs:

pearlrade.blogspot.in

pearlrade.wordpress.com



HINDUTVA

To share fellow feeling in a city with a persecuted minority is a bitterly sobering experience. To have a hated language, a religion and culture that looks across the sea for sustenance, a food practice that calls one out, to be the whipping horses for polemic political campaigns that terrify the majority into voting demagogues with landslides...

piyumi flowers

at the Buddha's feet I ask

where I go... and why

Here I am in the Balasooriya Vegetarian restaurant, not far from the great Buddhist temple of Kelaniya, eating Sri Lankan Tamil food and speaking in Tamil to the owners about the Rajapaksas. I offer a little kumbudu to the small, framed Murugan hanging above the counter. They say I speak the Tamil of the movies, not the Tamil of their villages. I notice the quiet ways in which the patrons arrive, easily identifiable by their clothing. I order a kothu rotti, and never manage to finish the huge portion size, washed down with nannari sarbath.

Kataragama

they know you by the way you

prostrate to the gods



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: I am a writer residing in Thane, India. I work as freelance copywriter. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published poems in many magazines and poetry anthologies. I was felicitated at Amaravati Poetic Prism 2016 for writing poems in 11 different languages.



AN UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT

The winter evening was filled
with laughter and fragrances
Of the tenderness of your body's perfume
My eyes were fixed on the stars
Hands on your shoulders,
And the thickness of the midnight wind
Kept whistling in my ears.
I had experienced something new
inside me , vivid and unique
Like a lotus , it started to bloom .

Colouring my mind and body
The wind's soft whispering
Rested on the walls of joy
A bonfire of hues smiled on the ground ,
At a distant horizon
As my dreams kept chasing me
Through the darkness vast
As I was thirsty for years
For the gentle touch of your tender lips .
Breezing sweet lullaby to my soul's nest
With the warmth of the old chimes
The night measured my everlasting joy and peace .



Preety Bora: The poetess, Mrs Preety Bora started writing from her college days and hails from the beautiful State, Assam, India. She lives in Golaghat with her family. Nature inspires her to write poetry. She writes in both languages: in English and in Assamese (her mother tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in foreign countries.



WE ARE ONE

This world is ours

Not of any cowards

We came here for a purpose

Wake up and do well for others

Think of the life we share

Do feel others that we care

Stand up tall every moment

Be bold with a spine so straight

Raise our voices together

Against all evils that happen here

Speak up what matters

Never afraid of the outcome

Stand together, hold hands each other

Let us transform this world into heaven.



Praveen Ranjit: He is a creative writer who gets inspiration from nature to social issues and enjoys writing poems on love, life, compassion, happiness, human relations nature's beauty etc. At a very young age he developed his writing skills, published poems in various anthologies and periodicals and received many awards of excellence. He was a professor in the Department of Commerce, St. Albert's college, Kochi, Kerala from 1981 to 2014.



GURU DAKSHINA

"Son, the real challenge is in Bhaarat. Put all your degrees, expertise and experience to work here. Laurels won on foreign soil are ok," so read Pops' letter to Kushagra.

Pops' will was watertight. Only half of Pops' self-made millions came Kushagra's way. If he wanted the remaining half, he had to take up Pops' challenge. The challenge was to make Pops' ancestral village, self-sufficient. No sign of development had reached there.

Kushagra was used to a lavish lifestyle. He wanted the 'other half' willed to Pops' lifelong admirer, Gyanchand, CEO of Explorers Inc. a blue chip research oriented company in Australia.

Gyanchand had taken a one year sabbatical from his job, to chase his mentor, Pops' dream.

Whenever, Gyanchand had asked Pops about what guru dakshina he would like, Pops had waved away the poser saying he would know at the right time. So, this was it!

Gyanchand's eyes skimmed over the newspaper cuttings in Pops' file about Anna Hazare, Sachin Tendulkar, Johad Rajeev, Baba Amte, the IAS officers who made over Surat and Nagpur, the firm Aarti and even CDs of Swadesh and Idiots!

He was trying to make a blueprint for his ancestral village, when throat cancer, struck him. Seeing the file, Kushagra just rolled his eyes; Pops was crazy, he thought.

Rainwater harvesting, forest planting, cleaning up the temple pond, toilets in every house, zero garbage, a road to connect the village to the highway, a bridge across the river..so much to be done!

No mobile range here. The town doctor visited once a month.

Kushagra had to leave his well-equipped mobile home about two kms., away from the village.

Gyanchand and Kushagra trekked it to the village and put up at the sarpanch's place.

Working with his bare hands, alongside the hardy village men, in the open air, sun flaming down daylong, he got a dark tan, but his gym muscles got sinewy. Real hunger, made him relish the simple fare of bajra roti, onion and chillies. The sarpanch's wife made him have milk, dahi, buttermilk too. The simple vegetables too had such freshness about them! Straight from the fields, into the cooking pot!

His joy knew no bounds, when the kaccha road linking the village to the highway, got completed with the villagers' shramdaan!

His vanity van could now ferry the villagers to the weekly haat in the town.

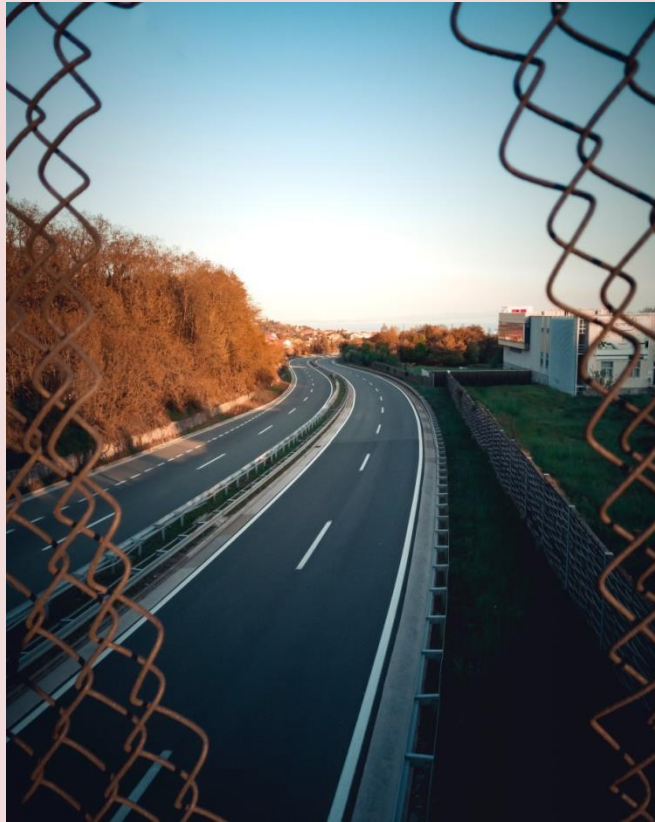
Now, he had a goal in mind. Kushaagra was now going to meet Indians settled in foreign climes, and urge them to do their bit for their native villages. They would be guided by his hands on experience!

At the end of the year, Gyanchand handed over the 'other half' to an elated Kushaagra.

Gyanchand was content that he had finally made his guru dakshina - he had got Kushaagra to fulfill Pops' dream.



Pratima Apte: She is a poet residing in Pune, India. She is a homemaker, recently turned grandmother! She used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. She loves reading and writing, and words are her world.



WHICH PATH TO FOLLOW

I have not taken the road to serfdom ever

Rather the road to freedom happens to be my first choice

Where “the mind is without fear and the head is held high”

But I am yet to find one.

Everywhere there is fear lurking

After bodies are criminals.

Where is mind?

We are all bodies sheer roaming in the street

And the street is a night.

Darkness everywhere

The night is drunken

Intoxication everywhere

Cowards are assembled and are after a lone body

They are eating flesh together and leaving bones for the
forensic team--the citizens!

Which path I should follow

One the path that ends up in banana republic or the path
where I will meet a country, a flag, a Constitution.

I am hanged in between two horns of a dilemma.

Candlelights everywhere

Feet are marching ahead.

May light devour darknesses

May sanity prevail

May Goddess KALI reappear again in every streets, nooks and corners to empower women

May women dare to move alone at night.



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



Dear Fighter,

I'm sorry I never knew you existed.

I never knew you existed within me.

Is it because I pushed you to the corner-?

Whenever you popped up your head?

As a school-kid, I remember being side-lined

In debates,

For lack of fighting spirit.

Today, I don't know from where you emerge,

Relentlessly, With a glorious resilience,

And put up this magnificent fight

Against the little monsters of myself.

Dust yourself and be ready.

I need you with me now and on.

Let's bring back those lost pieces of self;

Back home.



Prabha Prakash: I am a poet residing in Kochi, Kerala. I am a Chartered Accountant and work as Senior Auditor at EY. My first poetry anthology "Lost Monsoon" has been published by Writers Workshop Kolkata. I have been selected for the Reuel International Poetry Prize 2019.



MOVING WITH THE TIME

As days and months run by
the sun never fails to rise
there can never be a pause to the time,
nor will lines willingly rhyme

Sometimes it's the distant moon
that shines with constellations,
stars like a boon,
but is the new year a mere celebration

words once said can never be erased
lines once written are inked in parchment
marvel how frivolous one lived as a child
Oh! how the days rolled by the crescent

It's the mighty pen that is a blessing
It's art that never perishes
it's music that is all pervasive
oh! lady, 'tis the God who is really singing



Pooja Suresh: Hello! I am Pooja Suresh, an upcoming Carnatic music vocalist and I perform concerts along with my sister. We sing as vocal duets and I also play the instrument Veena. I started writing as a hobby, and now, take part in various writing prompts and programs. I also recently completed a NANOWRIMO camp setting myself a goal of 10000 words and received an honorable mention for one of my poems on togetherness written for On Fire Cultural Movement. I aspire to write more and read more.



TEAR STAINED EYES

As I looked into your beer stained eyes

Aware that they were really fear stained eyes

Little hope that they will be cheer stained eyes

Just and only just, the usual tear stained eyes

But I still love those dear stained eyes

Even when you look back with leer stained eyes

At each and every one of your peer stained eyes

Causing them all to become tear stained eyes

And as the sun begins to clear stained eyes
I draw you close so that they are near stained eyes
And realise that they have been all year stained eyes
But now I wipe away your tear stained eyes



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 written poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child." He was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease and died in 2015.



A GUFFAW

of gulls accused of abuses,
free runners of the air
graceful, delicate flight action
catches your chucked morsel

in a speed vault

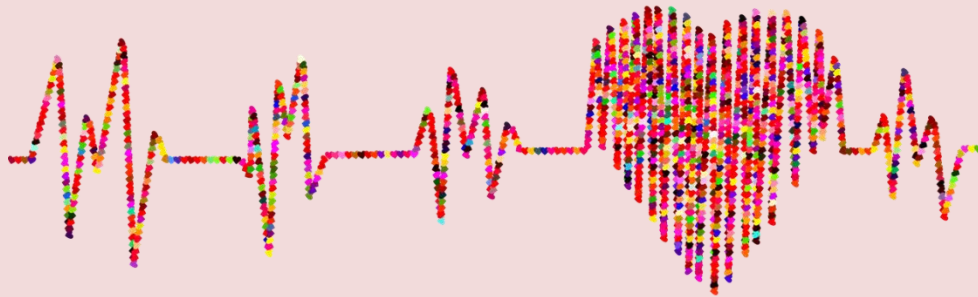
mid air

above the squabbled ducks.

These are not seagulls
perched on fishing smack masts,
but laughing gulls on lit lampposts
in retail parks.



Paul Brookes: I am a writer residing in Wombwell, England. I work as shop assistant. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published five poetry books. Forthcoming is another poetry collection called Ghost Holiday (Alien Buddha Press, 2018). My book 'Please Take Change' was published by Cyberwit recently.



I speak a Language
Of fingers, hands, head
Even my belly.
You often don't understand
Blink, raise your eyebrows
Yet you don't ask
"will you please repeat?"
You guess and go wrong.
my navel speaks
You need to know me
You need to hear the soundscape

I speak unto you

Your body

Listen, listen, my sounds.



Parasuram Ramamoorthi: He is a 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



NEW WORLD

So many things to see and find.

So many to know and to them be kind.

This search of mine makes me feel young.

At every bend I find a new song.

New worlds where I never before have tread.

Simple ways of life which I have never realised.

Layers of new worlds I find every day.

I feel happy and rejuvenated in every way.

The fresh flowers displayed on the pavement.

On the break of every dawn.

The myriad colours and fragrance freshens my mind.

A new joy, a new happiness I find.

So many new places to visit.

So many new things to know.

This search makes me so many things to learn.

So many mysteries, so many puzzles to discern.

The colourful wares in the shops.

The lighted shop windows everywhere.

Simple things with so much shine.

All arranged so lovingly and looking so fine.

The things of everyday use.

Scattered and sorted all in a row.

Colourful pillows and cushions to curl.

Stoles, shawls to unfurl.

The vegetable and clothes market in the noon.

The crowded lanes of buyers and passersby.

Stepping into a world of crowd, dirt and grime.

Why do I so much contentment find?



Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: I am a poet and live in Mumbai, India. I am an educationist. My poems have been published in more than 150 national and international anthologies. I have five published books to my credit. I have started and am the President of IPPL (Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library) Mumbai Chapter. Recently, I received the Golden Rose award from Argentina for contribution in art and culture.



SORROW OF THE SOIL

Sun rays, steep and sharp
go deep into the soil
chase droplets hiding in depths
like drunkards would
their wives' small savings in spice jars,
rivers draw abnormal maps
of nameless nations,
women walk miles with pots
unmindful of baking earth below,

migrating birds return desperate
their annual sojourn not being feasible.

Greens go, rains elude, earth sears.

Looming water wars taint relations

Failing crops, falling hopes.

The three-pronged demons

drought, debt and despair

drive farmers to death,

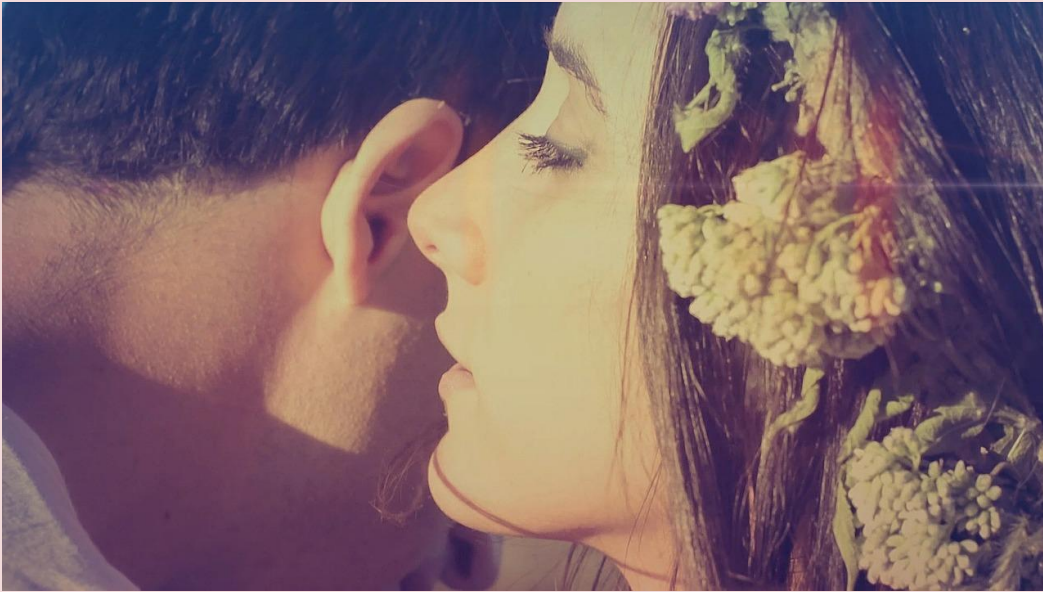
rivers to rumours.

Would it have been different

had they not been named after women?



Pankajam: She is a bilingual poet and novelist residing in Chennai India, retired from BHEL as Dy Manager/Finance. She has contributed poems, articles and book reviews to various anthologies and journals. She has published so far 3 novels and 11 poetry anthologies in English and has won many awards for poems and short stories including the Rock Pebbles National Literary Award 2019 and Cochin Litfest Poetry Prize 2019.



Pray, resonate with me
Even if you do not.
Shrug our disagreement away,
Argue with a smile or laugh... Not because you lack
Sensibility your own
But for how you cherish
The path I have trailed,
And embrace my being,
My cravings and my sorrow
Despite yours being far from mine.



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession. 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.



SUNRISE ON THE BEACH

Hope simmers as the sun emerges on the horizon
The darkness is dispelled by golden warmth,
The silhouette of a lone fishing boat as it sails into
the deeper waters for the silvery bounty of the day's catch

I take a deep breath, inhale the scent of the surf
That gently caresses my toes,
The scuttling crabs do their frenzied hide and seek
The turquoise waters glitter like jewels and reflect the
golden rays

The sunrise is a splendor in the sky,
A spectacle of sheer divine beauty
The day has just started, moments of magic
Thread their way into my heart

I forget the darkness, the tears and
the disappointments, for here the elixir of life,
gold and pure and warm
Pours its essence into me, giving me joy and hope



Padmini Rambhatla: I am a poet, teacher and homemaker residing in Chennai, India. I work as a high school English teacher. I have contributed to Glomag and my children's school magazine. I have not published anything so far but in the near future, I will. One of my recent and best accomplishments has been to develop a calmer and stronger attitude towards challenges.



NEW YEAR

As the new year begins

Forget the losses and focus on the wins

Let go off old heartaches

And learn from past mistakes.

Greet the new dawn with a smile on your face

Approach the coming year with poise and grace

Bury the past where it belongs

And learn to ignore others' wrongs.

As the year draws to a close
Forget all the trouble and woes
Fulfill the dreams that have been suppressed
And learn how not to get stressed.

Start a new journey yet again
With the hope that nothing is in vain
Filled with positive ideas and thoughts
While unraveling life's many knots.

Here's hoping that every new year that unfolds
Is filled with joy and wonders untold.



Nivedita Karthik: She is a poet residing in Gurugram, India, and working as a freelance editor/quality controller. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and enjoys writing poems and stories. Her work has been published in Glomag and the Society of Classical Poets.



A STANDING OVATION FOR THE WORLD'S STRONGEST PRESIDENT

Dr. Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan

From cradle, you were poor
That, never shut your door,
You strived through school
And came out finely cool,
You became a pure teacher
And not a dirty butcher,

Now a principled politician
And not a stinking mortician.

You are the BRAVEST

You are not a saint

Of course, no one is;

Not Judas with a kiss,

No matter the dark paint,

Your nature is calmness

Not timidity nor weakness

You are never a coward

Your dream for us; forward,

You are the NOBLEST

In presidency; the champion

Never chose to be a scorpion,

You are amazingly patient

A quality in others; latent,

They call it blindness
But the actual kindness,
Allowing room for repentance
Chasing the real substance,
You are the GREATEST

Plagued more than 'Egypt'
Tied yet called corrupt,
Hate in work: camouflaged
Efforts keenly sabotaged,
Table turned and intoxicated
Understanding hardly complicated,
If change does not get us 'drunk'
Then you can never be sunk
You are the BIGGEST

Your water was made blood
And your night; stormy flood,

Attacked by a swarm of locust
Your cloud foggy and dust,
Praised and yet betrayed
Supported but never portrayed,
Lauded; yet never received
Helped and finally deceived,
You are the STRONGEST

Write it on the cloud
Print it on purple gold
This wonder is too bold
Sound the timbrel loud,
You are a superhero
No pride, no ego,
An honourable gladiator
And incandescent radiator,
You are the BRIGHTEST

History calls you the transformer

Thank God; not a terrorist

Bravo!! never a sadist,

Dutifully a distinct performer,

The foundations you laid

Soon, you must be paid,

Though a world of prejudice

Posterity will give you justice;

You are the HUMBLEST

If you hated peace

War; you would grease,

If you detested Nigeria

Division; with criteria,

But still in your manner

You are no such planner,

Calling more for unity

Another brand of purity,

You are the HOMELIEST

Nigeria, you are great

Your voice keeps ringing

This move remains lingering

It will dry all your sweat;

Under the scorching sun

Rain, intimidation and gun,

Bent on bringing change

May it never be 'strange'

GOODLUCK NIGERIA

#STAND UP FOR THE CHAMPION

#GOD BLESS NIGERIA



Ngozi Olivia Osuoha: I am a poet/writer/thinker residing in Nigeria. I currently enjoy my work as a writer; I have contributed to over forty international anthologies. I have also published three poetry books and co-authored one, and published over two hundred and fifty poems/articles in over twenty countries. Some of my pieces have been translated and published in different languages too.



EGO

Ego ego ego

What can we say about

The Ttthhrrreeeee letter word Ego

Mister Ego when walks in the garden

Faces a difficult time saying pardon.

When he does a mistake.

Saying sorry is equal to death stake.

When there is a boasting competition

Mr ego comes first in every edition

But when it comes to doing something

Mr.ego is not able to come up with anything

When someone calls you Mr. Ego

He is Furious and tells someone to go

What can we say about

The ttthhrrreee letter word Ego



Nakshata Agarwal: She is a budding writer studying in class 10. Her hobbies are singing and cooking.



THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT

There's nothing like it,

Cuddling under quilt, you and I,

Your soft breasts touching carelessly my bosom, warm and gentle,

As if they wish to hear my beats of heart,

How it throbs and chants your name!



Moinak Dutta: I am a poet/novelist residing in Kolkata, India. I work as teacher. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published two novels.



MISSING FEEDING OF THE BIRDS

Keeping my daily journal diary short
these sweet bird sounds lost-
reviews January through March.

Joy a dig deep snow on top of my sorrows.
Skinny naked bones sparrows these doves
beneath my balcony window,
lie lifeless without tweet
no melody lost their sounds.

These few survivors huddle in scruffy bushes.

Gone that plastic outdoor kitchen bowl that held the seeds.

I drink dated milk, distraught rehearse nightmares of
childhood.

Sip Mogen David Concord Wine with diet 7Up.

Down sweet molasses and pancake butter.

I miss the feeding of the birds, these condominiums
regulations,

callous neighbors below me, Polish complaints.

Their parties, foul language, Polish songs late at night,
these Vodka mornings-no one likes my feeding of birds.

I feel weak and Jesus poor, starving, I can't feed the birds.

I dry thoughts merge day with night, ZzzQuil, seldom sleep.

Guilt I cover my thoughts of empty shell spotted snow
these fragments, bone parts and my prayers-

Jesus dwelling in my brain cells, dead birds outside.

I miss feeding of the birds.



Michael Lee Johnson: He is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. He is published in more than 1072 new publications, his poems have appeared in 38 countries, he edits, publishes 10 poetry sites. He has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. 198 poetry videos are now on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>.

Editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1530456762>; editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Dandelion in a Vase of Roses.



UNFORGETTABLE SURPRISE GIFT

What a pleasant surprise is this!

My heart's fluttering with joy

The ribbon tied delicious gift

I'm holding the box close to my heart

This season packed with unknown blues

Without even giving me the slightest clue

A wonderful gift that's brightened my world

Felt very lucky in my life

For a special friend like you

Like frosting on a cake

Making it all the sweeter

Beautiful you are inside and out
The one in a million kind of friend
Counting the rains of blessings
I'm happy for the friend I found in you



Merlyn Alexander: I'm a poetess residing in Nagercoil, India. I'm a housewife. My passion includes writing, cooking, and painting. I have contributed to many anthologies. I have published six books in Haiku Poetry. I'm currently waiting for my first anthology of English poems to be published soon.



THE FAKE REALITY

!!What is real, is not really real

What is fake, is not really fake!!

Our emotions, our feelings
our closeness, our dealings
needs to be hidden
inside a cocoon, for
if they are taken out
are considered buffoon.

!!What is real, is not really real

What is fake, is not really fake!!

But why is reality considered weak

and fakeness is no more bleak?

Why do we pretend to be real

when fakeness has already taken the lead?

Still, we burn in reality

and glow in duality.

!!What is real, is not really real

What is fake, is not really fake!!

The dreams I get

the shivers that beset

deep down the spine

not at all benign

hovering my past, still
in my present.

!!What is real, is not really real
What is fake, is not really fake!!

Do stars tell the truth, for
I keep staring at them
with far more warmth
and less of brutality
Keeping away from fakeness
holding tight the reality.

!!What is real, is not really real
What is fake, is not really fake!!



Mehak Gupta Grover: She is the author of three books - THE HUMANE QUEST (ume-1, 2 & 3), published by Authorspress, New Delhi. It is a QUEST for HUMANITY. She has been bestowed with '100 Inspiring Authors of India' award in kolkata. She has also been honored with the 'Women Of Influence 2019' award presented on women's day in New Delhi. Along with her books, her work has been published in various anthologies and she is recipient of various other prizes in poetry competitions as well.

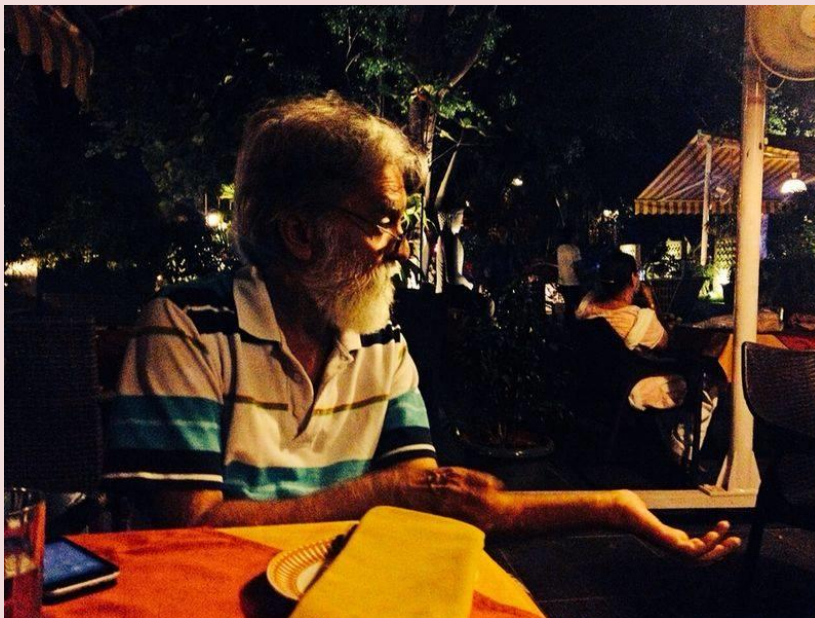
(mehakgrover@amartex.com)



GULMOHAR

Amidst a deaf and mute audience

the gulmohar sparkles like a rockstar



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~LONGING

He rests in me as chlorophyll in leaves.

Swarming locusts of his memory

grow over my breasts.

Gnawing the shrub of my desires as a yawning sun prunes
the testicles of a dark night.

Morning with its splintered teeth

trots over to that grass.

And life like the ball of
a toddler, spins.

Replacing its infant cries with sleepy snores.



Manisha Manhas: Manisha is a Poet residing in Pathankot. She has been published in many national and international journals. Writing poetry is a cathartic experience for her.



TONGUE

Eyes, ears, nose, torso limbs

The human body stands on a frame

Only the mouth holds a supple tongue

A palm long elongated flesh

Tempting and tempestuous

Doorkeeper of our health

Executor of our moods

Its size betrays its power

Can make or a human

Healthy mind in healthy body

It requires healthy food

Taste buds of tempting tongue
Calls for all in man's power
To withhold its juicy sway
However aware, ill or fit
Man indulges all knowingly
In the salivary terrain
Gourmets, chefs or simple foody
People live and swear by it
Devoting a life n career
To honour this fussy monarch
Its lithe movements emit sounds
Words shoot out never to return
Making its mark to cut or carve
Its multiple features astound
Tongue-tied, honey-tongued
Sharp tongue and bitter tongue
It bends like bow or is on fire
Can fill the world with sound and fury

Can bring peace or beget love
Though small its power is great
But not greater than human mind
When enlightened can control all
It serves its master well
But fights its way to servitude
Always on the sly to strike
And trap with its devious tools
So, beware of your little tongue
Control it lest it controls you!



Madhu Sriwastav: She is an Assistant Professor in English based in Kolkata. She is a poet, translator, critic who has written in various national and international ezines and anthologies such as Setu, GloMag, OPA, The Vase, Shradhanjali, The Amravati Prism, Culture and Quest, etc.



MY HEART WILL FOLLOW YOU ANYWHERE

So what if we have to go away from each other!

We will still smell the whiff of each other's fragrances in the air,

We will feel each other in the Sun's warmth,

You will see me when the star shines in the north,

And I will smile at you when you will see the spring flowers,

I will embrace you and cling to you as the rain showers,

When the warm woollies hug you, know that I am there,

My warm touch will always enliven you my dear,

In your eyes will I stay as the drop of the tear,
I will be that wind rustling your hair,
Will be standing by your side
Following you as your shadow behind,
Will tickle you with my memories and make you smile,
As the butterfly I will beguile,
My love shall walk with you everywhere,
Know that my heart will follow you anywhere!



Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English). A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She is the author of "THE NIGHT JASMINE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS". She is the

winner of ICON OF THE YEAR-LIFESKILLS COUNSELLOR 2015-2016, CREATIVE WRITER OF THE YEAR 2016, and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing.



RHYTHM OF LIFE

Often

We all wish

to dwell

In resourceful seclusion

Diving deep

In the serenity

Of a reflective peaceful life

Mind wondering

In quest of certain completion

Heart desiring

The feel that gives you solace

Lighter and dark moments

Scrambling with passing time

Turns the table

The filtration that goes on

Moves you closer or far apart

Amity and tranquility

Enmity and futility

Tuning in

With the rhythm of life!



Madhu Jaiswal: She is a poet, writer, editor and a social worker based in Kolkata, India. She has got published in various national and international anthologies and is regularly featured in popular literary magazines and e-zines. As an executive editor of The Impish Lass Publishing House Mumbai, she has 5 anthologies to her credit. Madhu is a friendly, optimistic and compassionate person who believes in humanity and volunteers for the upliftment of the underprivileged and destitute. According to her, hope, belief, and perseverance are the powerful mantras that have the ability to pave our path towards success no matter what. Her writings often revolve around these keywords. She can be contacted at madhuj2203@gmail.com.



WHEN YOU CAME INTO MY LIFE

When you came into my life, out of the blue

It was like a dream, all of a sudden, coming true

Incidents that happens only in fairly tales

Incredibly wonderful beyond belief amidst gales

Your being there, loving me like no one else

At the time when I was sad, lived under pretense

Fascinating meeting of our thoughts galore

Never had delightful conversations, same as I adore

Your peck on my lips, a feather touch, that day
A soft velvety touch, stirring my soul all the way
Then your passionate kisses utterly romantic
Enchanted feelings truly blessed ecstatic

Your teaching me ' the art of giving' in love
Love is giving darling, caress & embrace love
Selflessly bestow love unadulterated, pure & true
Ah! Sweetheart! All my loving I give only to you



Lubna Ahmed: She is a Certified Master NLP (Neurological Linguistic Programming) Practitioner; NLP Workshop Facilitator and Soft Skills trainer; and Certified Advanced Life Coach. She conducts SuperKoolKids Art Therapy workshops. She resides in Delhi with her family. She has managed to carve a niche for herself in the literary world by her ever so simple 'Love poems'. 'Princess Lubna' is her pen name, her writers' identity. Her love poems are spiritual and have a Mystical Aura. She has written many poems for National and International Anthologies. She is an avid traveller.



THE LINK

A Link

Certainly, a link is existing

Between you and me

Surely, the imperceptible bond is persisting

Among the vibes

In the midst of sonnets

Mostly as the scintillating torrents

A sensation with adoration

A feeling that heightens palpitation

A melody which buzzes with continuation

A parody of hearts

A prolong conversation of brains

A smart frontage,

A cool offstage

A sweet intoxication

A mesmeric draw

An alertness

An aloofness in mind

A rhythm in silence

A quizzer in noise

With these the connection breaths

With the permutation and combination.



Lopamudra Mishra: She is a native of Puri, now residing in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. She completed her graduation (English Hons) from Sailabala Women's College, Cuttack, and post-graduation (English) from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Her fascination for writing came from her grandfather and father from an early age. Writing for her is the powerful medium of expression. Her poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies. Her books 'Rhyme Of Rain' 'First Rain' 'Tingling Parables' and 'Rivulet Of Emotions' have also been published.



JACKO

A little boy upon the stage,
His voice was strong and pure.
Everyone who heard him sing,
Thought "he's a star for sure."

Had no childhood, yet grew taller,
With each new passing year.
Many more people saw him,
Chased him to the point of fear.

More Peter Pan,
Rather than a man.

Just wanted to be a real boy,
He changed his skin and nose.
Might have also changed his mouth,
That's how the story goes.

He befriended counterfeit pals,
The ones who wished for fame.
Thought they would be also known,
If attached to his name.

And, still today, his songs are played.
His children, three, now grown.
He no longer hears applause,
The King of Pop's gone home.



Linda Imbler: Kansas-based Linda Imbler believes poetry has the potential to add to the beauty of the world. She has three poetry collections published by Amazon and three poetry collections published by Soma Publishing. She is sitting on her next collection, which recalls her Nashville trip last Spring. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindapoetryblog.blogspot.com.



ME

I'm without

A doubt

A human being

For certain

Not a man-made thing

I'm Bernadette's

One and only child

She gave birth to me

I were not picked up in the wild

Fortunately she didn't
Brought me up on her own
My grandparents helped tremendously
Because ' dad ' disappeared and left my mom all alone

I'm set from drugs,
Alcohol and nicotine
I'm thankful towards God
For helping me get cleaned

I am a sinner
Saved by love and grace
For that I give God
All the glory, honor and praise
And I'll serve Him
All of my days

I am a writer

And Published Author

I have two sons

And one daughter

I have a wife

Her name is Eileen

She stood by me

Since the age of fourteen

I thank God that I'm not

Where I used to be

And believe that He'll perfect

Jeremiah 29:11 for my family

And me



Leroy Abrahams: Leroy is a poet who lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. He is currently working for the church, Victory Ministries International, and also volunteers and enjoys hospital visits because there he prays for the sick and encourages them. Most of his poems are autobiographical and serve as a warning to the young and Christians who are facing tough times. Verse en Inspirasie is his first anthology.



SONG STORY

Zindagi ka safar

Film: Safar

Indeevar - Kalyanji Anandji - Kishore Kumar

I met Gulab Kaur Bhagat, area sales manager of Ford/Escorts tractors, twice in 1982, first in Sangareddy (Medak district, Andhra) when I was heading the Agricultural Banking Division of State Bank of India there, and then at SBI Nyalkal (a remote place in Medak district) where I was the branch manager for a few months. We had a portfolio of a few tractor loans at Sangareddy; but I was surprised that she should bother to make a call on me at Nyalkal branch, one of the eight rural branches SBI opened

in a hurry after Indira Gandhi won the Medak parliamentary seat.

I remember the spirited and fiercely independent person that Gulab was. When she had introduced herself to me at Sangareddy as the area sales manager of Escort tractors, I had said, "Wow! I can't imagine a young lady in that male bastion" more in admiration than in disapproval.

"You mean a woman can't do it?"

"No, I don't mean it that way at all. I'm happy to find you in that position and have no doubt you will do better than your male counterparts."

She had been with the company for more than seven years. She was an Agricultural Engineering graduate from the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. She was also an athlete and used to run 800 m and 1500 m for her College of Agricultural Engineering, winning prizes at the inter-university meet for two years. Her father was a farmer and ran an agency in Phagwara for Ford and Escorts tractors. Her dad had once invited the top marketing guy of Escorts Tractors home for dinner. When he was told that she had just given her final year exams and that she had been an athlete and a college topper, he offered her a placement on the spot.

"Do you know why I came to Nyalkal? I know this place is not even on a bus route. One has to walk 5 km from the bus stop on the Zaheerabad-Narayankhed road to reach this place. I was lucky I got a lift in a tractor."

"I have been asking myself that question. But I didn't want to ask you because, you know, I'm happy to see you again."

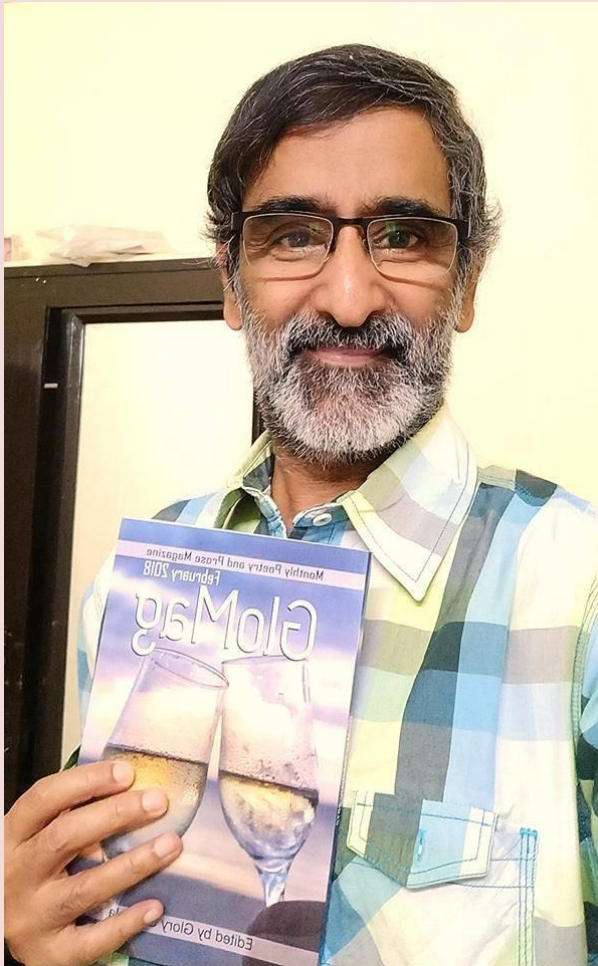
"You're very sweet. Let me confess. I came here just to meet you. I was in Sangareddy yesterday and they told me you're doing your bana-byaas in Nyalkal these days. I'm on my way to Bidar. So I made a detour from Zaheerabad to catch some time with you. I'm curious to know what you do in a place like this!"

"Thank you, Gulab. It's a coincidence that I have been planning a walk to Bidar tomorrow. It's about 60 km by road via Zaheerabad. But if you walk, like the crow flies, on village paths, fields, meadows and hillocks, it's only about 15 km. Today's Saturday. We can walk to Bidar in the afternoon so I can walk back tomorrow."

"You're crazy but I will walk with you. Let's go in the afternoon today. The earlier the better."

"Great. We'll leave at 1."

To be continued...

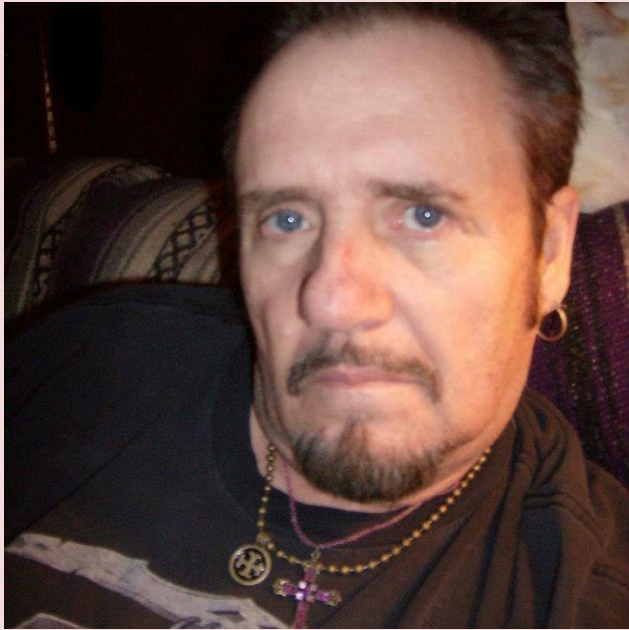


Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur). He is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea,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



CARDIGAN STYLE

Whispered dreams
of soft gentle breath,
seagulls tease in flight,
within a Sunday calm.
Coffee, bacon and egg,
sweet baguette and brie
warm southern breeze.
Terns on the blue bay
kids flying kites high
my beach walk awaits
my cardigan style.



Ken Allan Dronsfield: I am a prize winning poet and was born in New Hampshire, but now reside in Oklahoma, USA. I am disabled and write poetry and short stories full time. I have contributed to and have been the co-editor for many anthologies. I have three poetry collections and am working on a fourth.



BREAD

The body of wheat

Ground at the wheel (of samsara)

Becoming flour-dust, Reborn as dough,

Rising as Bread.

Falling as Manna, bread of the sky,

Becoming sacred and a sacrament.

Blessed by the Holy Prophet*

As the best of foods, accompanied

By grapes and vinegar: Bread!

Earth, the bread-basket
Giveth forth in abundance,
Greed hath many hands,
That snatches morsels
From other mouths!

As the leavens rise,
My prayers, too..
Lord, give every hungry mouth,
Its morsel due.

Notes : Prophet: refers to the Holy Prophet of Islam, Prophet Muhammad.



Kamar Sultana Sheik: She is a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism, and nature with a focus in Sufi Poetry. Her professional career spanning 18 years has been in various organizations and Institutions including the IT sector. She is a self-styled life coach and has currently taken a break to focus on her writing full-time. Sultana has contributed to various anthologies and won several prizes in poetry contests. A green enthusiast, blogger and content-writer, Sultana calls herself a wordsmith.



TILL DEATH DIES

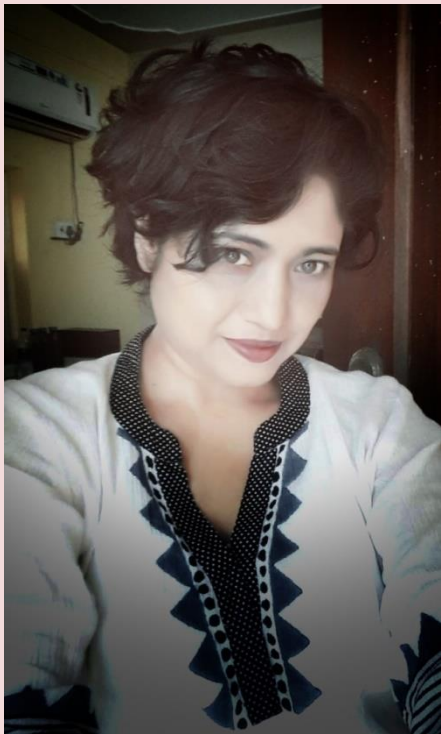
Loneliness, - in saline drops
drips its way
through intravenous channel
blotting into the stream of
flowing lifelessness.

Sparks of absent life
continues to ignite restfulness
like fireflies framing darkness,
till death dies
into laminated memory.

Thoughts gather in heaps
like unwashed laundry awaiting wash;
Death breathes on
watching life being carried away
on shoulders, chanting truthfulness.

Death respire and fumbles
through events of life with dear ones
for finding a suitable photo
to be framed, garlanded
and worshipped to celebrate sadness.

Loneliness gathers in cobwebs,
bewildered like a crying child,
lost among a crowd;
his small clammy palm
missing the fingers he had held, so long.



Kakoli Ghosh: She is a poet/short story writer from Durgapur, West Bengal, India. She wears many hats—a freelance writer, painter, beauty advisor and jewellery designer and has a keen interest in music and art in general. Apart from contributing to various anthologies, she has also published a poetry book.

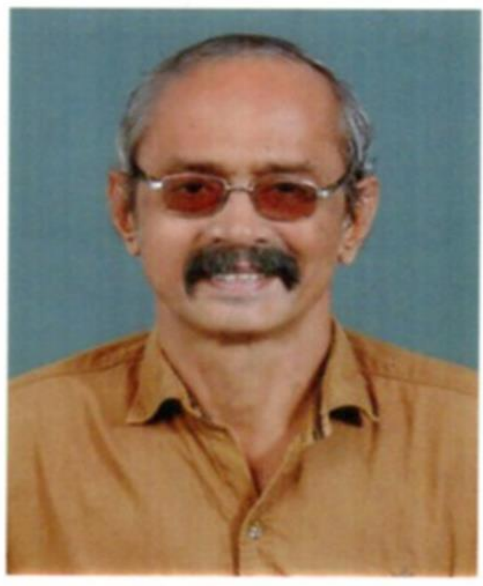


IN PURSUIT...

Solar anger at its peak pins you down
In the vortex of patience wearing thin;
Limbs, manacled in wear and tear,
cry out for a bout of blissful sojourn.
Summer, ever harvesting fresh hope,
eggs one on a wave of pursuit;
Mulling within the walls of a tiny flat
I seek to anchor deep my tiring boat.
Never toss on waves but swim.
Vacillation is a slow eating virus;

Live for a tantalizing glow of the star,
skin skimmed by salacious breeze.

Nature's whisper is always prescient,
Beauty is in doing what one didn't.



K.S. Subramanian: I am a poet and short story writer living in Chennai. I have published two volumes of verse through Writers Workshop, Kolkata. I have nine published short stories and also poems in several anthologies. "Dreams" got the Asian Age prize.



FOR GLORY

There she is
peeking behind
barrels of marigolds.

Playing hide and go
seek with us.

Her smile more
glorious than sunshine.



Joan McNerney: Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines and anthologies. She has four Best of the Net nominations.



THE POWER OF FAITH

It's the power of faith

Which sustains the life

Which makes you achieve

Which fuels the creativity

Which pacifies the inner conscience

Which liberates the soul

Which transitions our thinking

Which helps reach the destiny

Which makes the journey memorable

Which enchants the energy flowing

Which aids feel the magic in the air

Which energises to deal with tribulations

Which magnifies the power of aura

Which assists to solve the puzzles

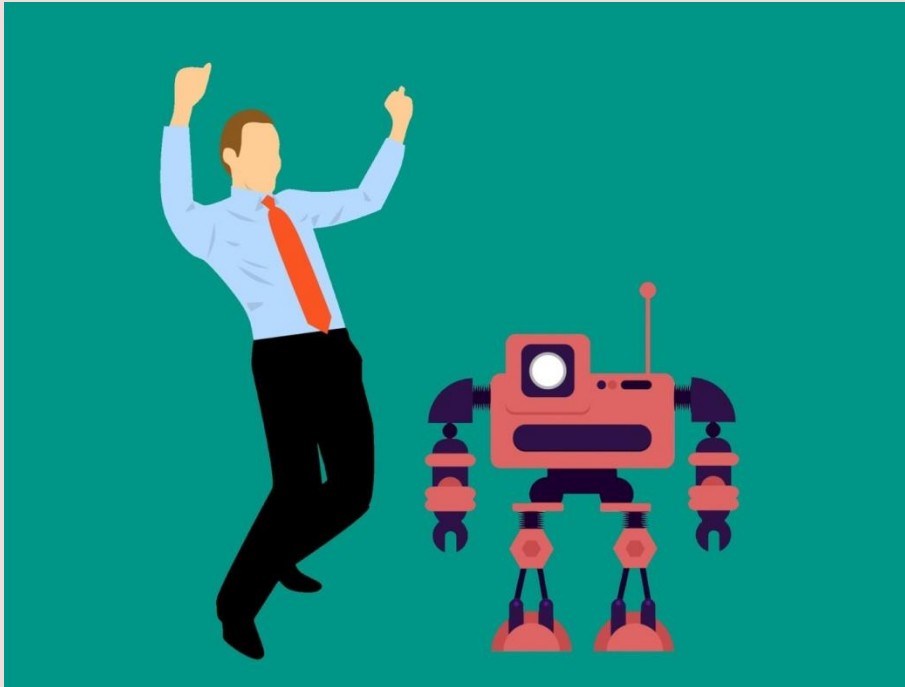
Which triggers the latent heat inside

Yes, it's the power of faith

Which awakens the humanity inside!



Jayant Singhal: I am a writer residing in Delhi, India. I am an Economics student. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am currently holding the position of Joint Secretary of my department.



AUTOMATION

Every invention or discovery

Has a great impact

On humans and their lifestyle—

Positive or negative.

Automation is no exception—

Machines replacing humans.

It made work—at home or

Workplace—easier and simpler.

Less sweat and toil.

But adverse effects were also there—

Physical inactivity in humans—

On health and employment.

From manual to automation—

Ploughing to tractors,

Bullock carts to motor vehicles, Analogous to digital—

Long way mankind has come

And will still advance.

It's for us humans

To discriminate—

Balancing manual and automation.



Jagadish Prasad: I am writer residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. I am an HR and Media consultant/Resource Person and also a partner in an HR/Talent Resources consultancy company. I have contributed poems to the annual magazine of Chennai poets circle, Chennai. I have also contributed prose and poetry to the in-house magazine of IOB (lobian).



MEMORY

Original : Assamese : Guna Moran

Translation : Bibekananda Choudhury

Shall return

To this day

Turned into past

Someday

In the past

The mind

In the future

The body would stay

Squatting on the carpet of grass

Playing flute on a full moon night

There in the sky above

the youthfulness of the moon is dancing

behind the thin curtain of cloud

Listening to tinkling sound of tinkles

wafting to the ears

World is silent in the magical tune

I am imbibing moonlight getting oblivious of myself

Rain of moonlight is the favourite taste of lover Earth

Shall sit as past

In the holy place of my favourite memory

Shall repeat the same work

Feeling euphoric thinking about it



Guna Moran: He is an Assamese poet and critic. His poems are being translated into Italian and France language and have been published in various national and international magazines, journals, websites, newspapers such as The Tuck magazine, Spillword, The Merak magazine, The Setu magazine, Story Mirror, The Poem Hunter, The Sentinal, The Hills Times, Best Poetry and so on.



SOFT LIGHT

Memories hang himself in the shadow
Silence is tender like crushed petals,
As if a child climbing in mother's lap,
Strong winds translate the twilight

There are no words for the evening
Bolted and closed the glass windows,
Beyond those myriad possibilities
I know too that innocents are butchered.

Somewhere the leaves count raindrops
The minutes and hours wash the darkness,
Perhaps the soft light points the way,
Your fingers count the soundless stars

A wakeful sleep descending inside,
All thoughts, all figures empty the mind.



Gopal Lahiri: I am a bilingual poet, writer, critic and translator residing in Kolkata. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published nine volumes of poetry in English and seven volumes in Bengali. In addition, I have

also jointly edited two anthologies of poems in English and also have one translation work of short stories of Israel, translated by me from English to Bengali.



SEASONS

when the first summer rains
came falling from a cloudless sky
you and i walked in the rain
I held your hand, kissed your lips
did not care about the drenching rain
like the promised seasons
we believed our love would never die
like the seasons time passed us by

autumn came and undressed the trees
green leaves on trees turned red and yellow

frayed leaves, barren trees, and cold breezes

again, it was that time of the year

when everything bursts with its last beauty

Part of me died that year

when the leaves fell from the trees

and left everything naked and bare

winter came with the cool breeze

turned the fields white with snow

covered them with kisses so gently

and I wondered if the snow loved the trees and fields, the
way I loved her

the nights were cloudy and grey

we lay in each other arms

and shared the warmth of our bodies

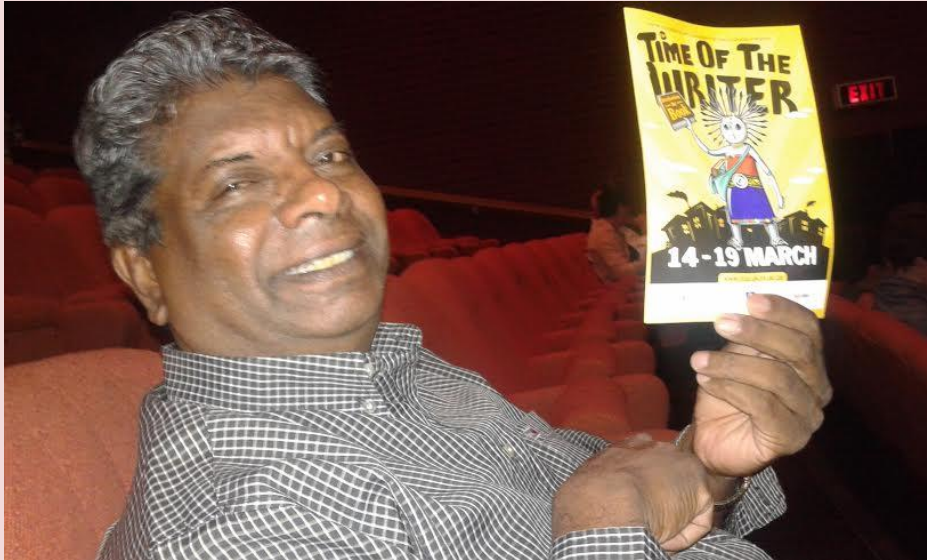
beside the fireplace

and the wine was as sweet as her lips on mine

spring came like a newborn child
the ever-promising spring
lit a smile on the jubilant face of nature
and we did what spring does with the cherry trees.
we shared the energy of rebirth
and let it blossom into ecstasy
long walks hand in hand
we traipsed the countryside
taking in the beauty of spring
and the earth gladly embraced the sun

summer came all hot and humid
angry like a swarm of bees
and the moody black skies burst it clouds
sent lightning and thunder
and the storm raged on, flooding the banks
of the once tranquil river
further than the eye could see

and you became a tempest like the storm
don't ask me why the day it stormed
you were gone without a word of farewell



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.



SEE YOU NEXT BIRTH?

you were my childhood

that escaped into mosquito nets

with fireflies in matchboxes

you were little teapots and pans

little make believe world of dolls and doll weddings -

my sons getting married to your daughters

your palanquins making way to my house

mothers were fascinations, were they not?

they wore saris, those very long pieces of clothes

that we draped just like them

over our frocks
beetroot lipsticks and rouge
mamma's high heels and her handbag to match
her high pitched voice borrowed as we mimicked
'shall we go to the market?'
yes! the onions are so costly!
dance steps practiced diligently
frocks flying, hair flying...
our lives flew too
we were teenagers then
we discussed boys
your mother taught you to cook
mine, to part ways
from you
to lead my life
while you led yours
women now
we lived knowing

childhood was a different birth

the now, the woman, is the one who lives

the one who births

the one who puts herself last on the list

the one who lives unquestioning...

i wonder now

did i even question that i may never see you again?

did i want to see you again?

did you want to see me again?

or did we bid goodbye

thinking

see you next birth?



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet, novelist, and publisher currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is also the editor and publisher of the online poetry and prose magazine, 'GloMag,' published every month on Facebook, featuring writers from all over the world. She brings out two hard copy versions of the magazine every year. She is the administrator of the GloMag Group and Love Group on Facebook.



ACROSS THE FENCE (ROSEATE SONNET)

Drab clumps of earth have metamorphosed,
Into little brown stones chiseled and composed,
By rain, rivers and streams that themselves forced,
Turning them to colourful pebbles that light imposed.

So have foliage, fauna, flora, turf and dense thickets,
Coexisting in their rich greens where gossip crickets,
Hues unfold in petaled souls that wilt and wither beyond
pickets,

All the same wherever eyes will to see earth offers her
trinkets.

But look at us humans who would rather mock, intimidate
and snigger,

Giving snide names in distorted sounds darting spite
through a trigger,

Rudeness is the way of the heart that doesn't respect,

Outrageous is the propensity of this mind and intellect,

Sullyng God's variegation, mocking His plan with
disrespect,

Excluding, discriminating, isolating, hating, reducing love to
a sect.



Geethanjali Dilip: Geethanjali takes her name seriously and evolves as a handful of songs. A French teacher by profession she contributes to several ezines and blogs. She is a recipient of The Reuel International award for Poetry 2017 and also the meritorious award for commendable mention in Great Indian Poetry Contest 2018. Residing at Salem, India, Geeth believes that poetry connects and moves the world.



Let me skim today

Not go down deep

Only float aimless

Or surf in joy.

Let me dance in the air

Light and swift

In leaps and swirls

Over the clouds.

Let me not remember

Any ancient songs

For melodies haunt

And pull you down.
Let me just be
Between now or never
Ever knowing or thinking
Anything at all.



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.



STORM

Clouds of illusions

Clusters of chaos

Raise a storm

Where my senses swirl

Push me inside closed doors

Where darkness reigns

No sun peeps there

No moon casts her silvery glance

Eyes strive to see

A beam of light

But the storm blows away
All lights on earth
Just like strong tides
Sweep away empty sea-shells
Scattered on the sandy beach
Losing the pearl inside..



Gayatree G. Lahon: Gayatree is a teacher and a poet from the beautiful state of Assam. Nature is a great inspiration for her. The beauty and complexities of life also find expression in her poems. Her poems have been published in anthologies, magazines, and newspapers in India and abroad too.



I am no bird
To fly
Don't tell me
To soar high

Right next to you
Keep some space for me
Don't preach
Just let me be

I am no bird

To fly

Don't tell me

To soar high

Let your deeds

Bring parity

Cut those empty speeches

Of equality

I am no bird

To fly

Don't tell me

To soar high

I have lived

Long enough

I don't need instructions
About everyday stuff

I am no bird
To fly
Don't tell me
To soar high

I may stand
I may run
I may choose to smile
At particularly none

I am no bird
To fly
Don't tell me
To soar high

I could be a fish
I could be a bear
I could be a tree
Or a ghost in the air

Let me find
My own sky
Don't tell me
To soar high



Gauri Dixit: A software professional from Pune (India), Gauri writes English poetry. Her poems have been featured in multiple Indian and international anthologies. She is a regular contributor to many poetry pages and e-zines of

repute such as Destiny Poets UK, Duane's Poetree, Glomag, Kubili Cafe, Learning & Creativity, Mind Creative, Spillwords and Stanzaic Stylings. She recently won the 'Reuel International Prize for the Most Promising Poet - 2018'. Her first poetry book 'In my skin, I find freedom' was recently released. She loves reading, photography and traveling.



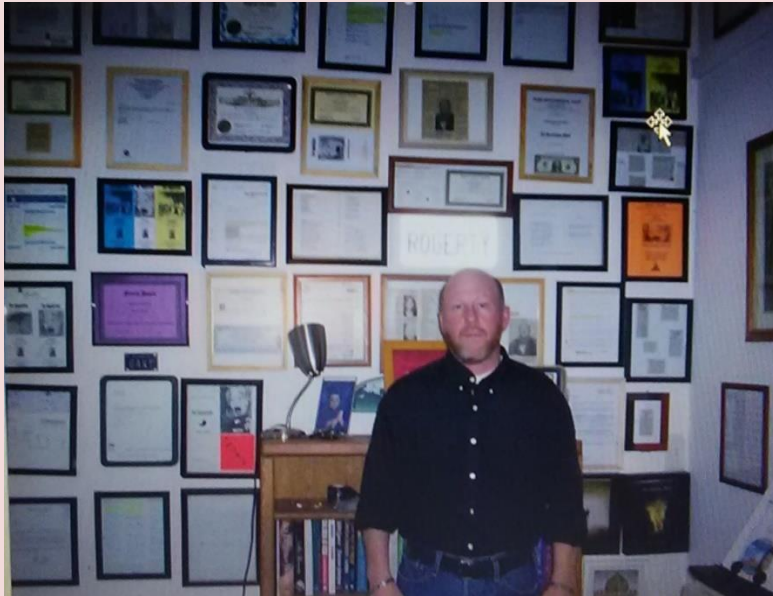
THE GREATEST

A privilege it must have been,
To have known this remote man.
The twinkle as he strolled,
Was a design to behold.

A tall fellow, prophetic
For his saving generation.

The unknown aching,
For the lives he was taking.

He was a marksman,
With a noiseless finish.
To be carried out in a bag
Not draped, with the flag.



Ferris E Jones: He writes poetry and screenplays from his residence in Puyallup, Washington. His work has been published in Se La Vie Writers Journal, Write on Magazine, Outlaw Poetry, Degenerate Literature 17 and other literary periodicals. He is the recipient of two Grants from the Nevada Arts Council and published several collections of poetry, including To Burning Man, Oh the Path that Followed and As the Toad Sleeps. You can learn more about Ferris E. Jones by visiting www.inquisitionpoetry.com where each month he features the work of other poets.



APEIRON

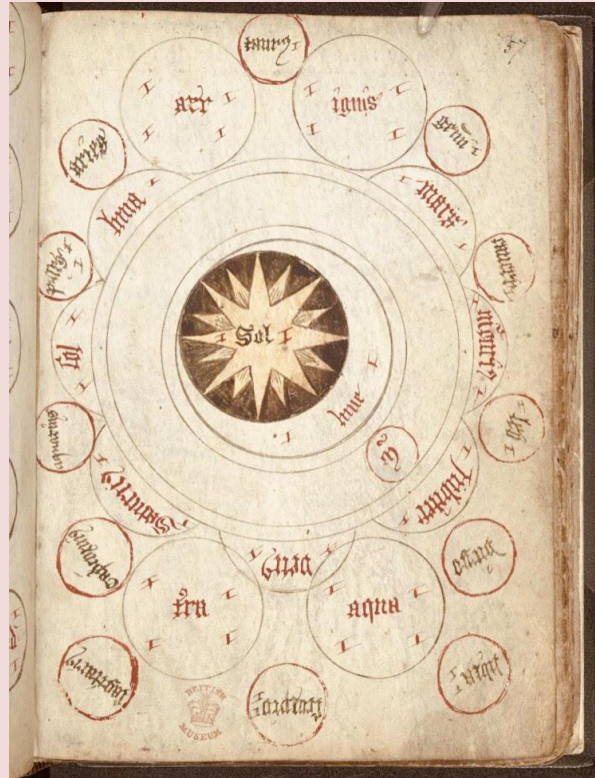
Translated by Artur Komoter

Oxygenated by the world
she looks for a space of peace,
apeiron of happiness,
silence
in which the sound of the sea
and seagulls are a testimony to life.
She looks for the sun.

The world around the Eden has already hidden.



Eliza Segiet: She graduated with a Master's Degree in Philosophy, completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy, Arts and Literature at Jagiellonian University. Author's poems Questions and Sea of Mists won the title of the International Publication of the Year 2017 and 2018 in Spillwords Press. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019 (USA, November 2019), Nominee for Naji Naaman Literary Laureate Prize 2020, November 2019).



NOTES ON INTERPLANETARY SPIRITUALITY

it was

the bullet-rush

of two skies,

turned towards

each other,

a shower

of ammunition,

Life and Death

on no good terms,

a tension, mounting,
as planets, agitated,
searched
in the midst
of their own despair,
and i could almost
hear the air, crying,
the heavens
inside ourselves
scrying the elements,
meant to war for more potency—
such is the art of starry alchemy.



Eliana Vanessa: I am a poetess, currently residing in New Orleans, USA. My poetry appears in three anthologies and over ten magazines. Recently, I participated in 100,000 Poets For Change as part of a worldwide endeavor to raise awareness of social and environmental issues through the art of poetry.



JUST ONE = EITHER ONE

Impossibility:

like “a dove

can’t be,” disproved

by just one sky

Permanent is not eternal

Now is not forever

To circumstance adjust

frost, flood, dust

Condition isn't definition

Energy matters/matter energizes.

Conception itself conceives.

Is always was.

Life lives with no conception.

Posit any sky

to prove

the dove's

possibility

--or the crow's.



Duane Vorhees: He grew up in rural Ohio, fell in love, went to school, fell in love, stuck his toe on bits of four continents, fell in love, taught and learned various subjects, fell in love, grew chronologically and physically. Fell in love, fell in love fell in love. 'Love's Autobiography' is the first part of a longer meditation, 'The Many Loves of Duane Vorhees'. It is based on a lifetime of observation, imagination, introspection, experience, and fantasy.



I AM AFRICA DIVA

I, Diva – I am the legend of millennia. My story still epically riddled with fear. At the dawn of time my worth rather sublime – My gift to man painfully a warped perceived divine crime. Instinct and intuition my lifetime ambition. Abused and violently misused, even glorified in European human freak shows, Laws of man and land could not break me! Even through their scarlet imprints they refused to see my

Earthly connection – Created by atomic friction or
whichever god you believe in – My universal appeal
still causing global contradiction. I am still a pulsating life-
giving fierce force – Witness to senseless and
devouring devastating cultural existential depleting divisive
unnecessary destructive deleting wars...

My legacy will be historically murmured forever – For I am
and always will be, Africa Diva!

I, Phoenix – I rise from the bitter charred doomed ashes of
Apartheid, spreading my determined
liberated fiery wings, melting my inherited divisive derisive
chains from generations of captured minds –
I rise, proudly soaring ever higher to realise my true
possible potential, my growing confidence
consequential, my proud lineage historical, my forefathers
and mothers existentially influential as I burn
off the gangrenous remains of a racial ideology in flames
writhing headlessly aimlessly – I rise!

Cradle of Mankind – My homeland South Africa and indeed Africa, where ancient stones and bones echo

my generation's global heritage, reverberating our desperate ancient moans of extinction of human

extinction of human succession found in paleoanthropological revelatory missions – Introducing us to

'Mrs Ples', our 2.3 million year old ancestor – She, who reminds us to cleanse ourselves from searing

detrimental hate and bitter jealousy as well as hungering for earthly thrones and cancerous animosity –

I say this to you – Let universal love permeate through you, igniting your peaceful inner halo to finally

soar higher than you ever imagined and to own your destiny and say "I'm possible"!

Rainbow Nation – I willingly drown in the colours of us, the beauty of us, as I languish in my nation's

Metamorphosis whilst disintegrating Apartheid's toxic dust!
Never and never again will we allow the

Disintegration of our beautiful nation! *Yellow* – My new inner flow radiated by the African sun. *Red* –

Proud of my multi-racial blood defining me, empowering me, liberating me, reviving me...

Blue – My inner peace reflected in these African skies above and two oceans kissing and hugging our

South African shores, leaving its showers of blessing imprinted in our DNA to breathe for yet

another cleansing day. *Green* – Giving me breath of life, our fauna and flora unique in the world we

hope to protect, nurture and live in harmoniously in blissful co-existence but only if we insist to truly try

and resist our carbon footprints to ensure a future green necessary persistence for new generations...

Black – Despite our unfortunate dark tainted history, we all share its languishing chemistry!



Don Beukes: He is a bilingual South African British writer and the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles' (Creative Talents Unleashed) and 'Icarus Rising - Volume 1' (Alien Buddha Press). His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into Afrikaans, French, Farsi and Albanian. He was nominated for the Pushcart Poetry Prize in 2016 and the Best of the Net in 2017 by Roxana Nastase, editor of Scarlet Leaf Review for his trilogy 'Esorfo Ygolirt/Trilogy of Rose'. His debut South African publication is due in August 2018 in a unique anthology with three prominent South African poets.

Bernice Borrill: She describes herself as an ordinary woman from Cape Town, South Africa. She has always loved

painting, especially capturing the colours and people surrounding her. There are no colours in the world that compares with her homeland's rich, vibrant and pulsating South African culture. She loves writing too and had a collection of short stories published. She likes to tell stories of people like her; the ordinary, who make up the colourful tapestry that is South Africa. She achieves this either with the written word or through paintings.



DISTORTED

The grumpy old man on the lonely beach
Told us to go home
He said the sea was not happy
I looked at the sea
The water was heavy and black
And it was almost still, all the waves almost died
As if in expectation of something to happen.
I held out a mirror for her
She looked at her face
She said her face felt heavy and black

And that she couldn't laugh.
We started running fast
As fast as we could
To get away from the sea
But even after hours
We just couldn't get away.
We might have fallen into a time warp
The space didn't move
Although the time had passed.
The heaviness in our heart
Our dead souls and the inability to laugh
Distorted the realities around us.



Dipankar Sarkar: Poetry is the only soulmate I have. I find solace in poetry when my heart bleeds. Poetry comes to me completely unannounced, without a notice. I wake up sometimes, out of an altered reality or out of a daydream, and voila, words just start flowing out of nowhere and completely inundate me, force me to live an experience of writing. I am not a regular poet, but poetry is the only soulmate I have, who understands the real me.



IMMORTALITY

This is the conundrum, this is the irony.
This is the conflict within the spirit, within the soul.

When we love,
When we caress, kiss, embrace, hug and hold,
When we play, clasp and love,

We seize, invade, pierce and assault.
Like atavistic savages, we express our supreme love
By attacking, seizing and violating
Everything secret, everything private,
Everything warm, sweet and inviting
All dressed up, all perfumed, clean and entrancing,
Seductive and irresistible
Begging for 'conquest',
Desiring our violation.

Driven inexorably like mindless, lustful gorillas
The headless, primitive reflex instinct for procreation
Is in control.

We strip ourselves before she whom we desire.
Naked and vulnerable,
We expose ourselves before the Goddess of Beauty,
Our shrine of immortality,
And some of us are shattered forever.

But most of us blossom like a rising, tumescent, solar dawn.

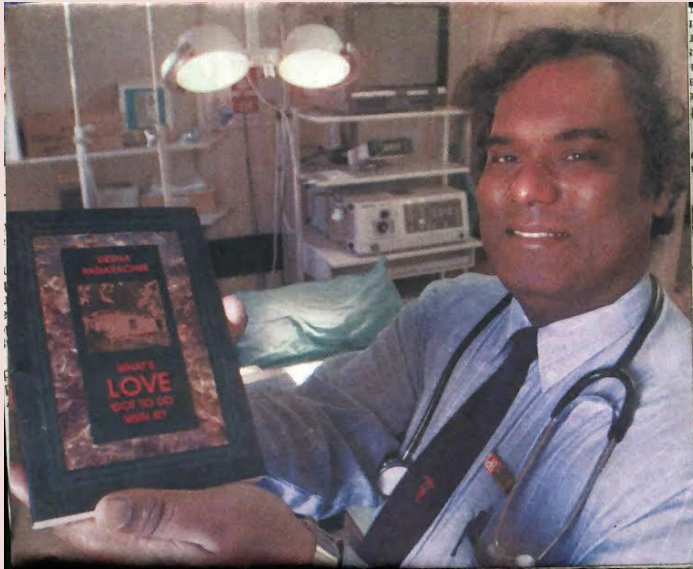
Within the all-encompassing love.

In the act of planting the seed, in the creation of tomorrow,

Within the greatest love that Homo Sapiens can know,

We invade, we ravish, we 'conquer'

And we are conquered.



Deena Padayachee: He is a South African Author and Poet, residing in Durban. He works as a primary care physician. His writing has been included in various international and South African anthologies including the Readers' Digest's BEST SOUTH AFRICAN SHORT STORIES. Three of his books have been published. The English academy of Southern Africa awarded the author the Olive Schreiner prize for prose; The Congress of South African Writers has awarded the doctor the Nadine Gordimer prize for prose.



Pic: Isabel G. de Diego's Selfie

TWO LIVES

There are two Lives
Two bellies, to which more.
The one, by Isabelle
Waiting for a new life:
Kylia's, boy, who, now
In the beautiful Isabelle's belly
Is sucking his finger, no doubt
And that his first cry birthing
Will be: "To drink, to drink!"

Like the Rabelais' Gargantua

At birth.

The other, by Daniel

Whose good is based on eating well

And at an inconvenient time

In the Rabelais' Pantagruel style

Who calls his belly "Thelema"

And it is very similar to him

In the Gustave Doré's illustration

As do You see.

Those two bellies

Of Duchess and Duke

Are two "O" that we can pronounce

Happy seeing them.

Two wonders of Creation

That produce good effect.

Compelling reasons

That the life exists.

It is true that a child will come
With pleasure and with care
Hearing him, with joy, cry
Learning what birth is
Since then,
As true as that Daniel's belly
So slender
Is making a thousand progress
Without lying to Pantagruel
Eternal companion of eaters
And convincing dinners
Converted, today and now
In an oracle
Of the divine bottle
From Ribera's wine.



Daniel de Culla: 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.



Heaven on Earth

To build heaven on earth is tempting
When prayer and patience leave stomachs hollow
A little longer, some qualms exempting
Snatch short-cuts to a better tomorrow.
Does paradise come according to plan?
Can everything meet strict projections?
Can good and evil fit within our span?
Will we stop human nature's rejections?
Shoot the priest, hung all landowners, seize banks
Destroy the old then try to make all new
If people are ungrateful send in tanks

You wish they'd understand how much you do
To make them happy. Why seem they in hell?

The blood of revolution cannot make
Us white as snow, nor mend broken hearts
Christ is the antidote, none else shall take
To cure the poison that made Adam fall
And kill the Herod who reigns in us all.



Christopher Villiers: I am a poet residing in Branton, England. I work as a writer. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published three volumes of poetry.



In a far off very far off country
at the railway station
the announcement
suddenly came
you were free to buy tickets for destination of your choice
at the counter and on line
but
due to emergency and new rules
only patriots can get in
there is a lie detector machine in front of every
compartment
you have to clear to enter

some went

they were handcuffed taken to jail

others fearing stood back refusing to go

the train left empty

only the driver his assistant

the TTs and Guard

who were patriots left.

When last heard

trains services in that country were suspended

saying there was a fault in the lie detector machine



Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee, now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai, part of the poetry circle which meets first Wednesday of every month. He writes poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.



FLORAL PHI

Old Fibonacci says lotus and camelia

Are sister starlets, along with gardenia.

Pink carnation and wild rose

Are family, hence the science grows.

Speculated are sacred patterns

On tiger lilies, whence speckle matters.

Hydrangea bush is kin to phlox

As Euclid knew when lifting blocks.

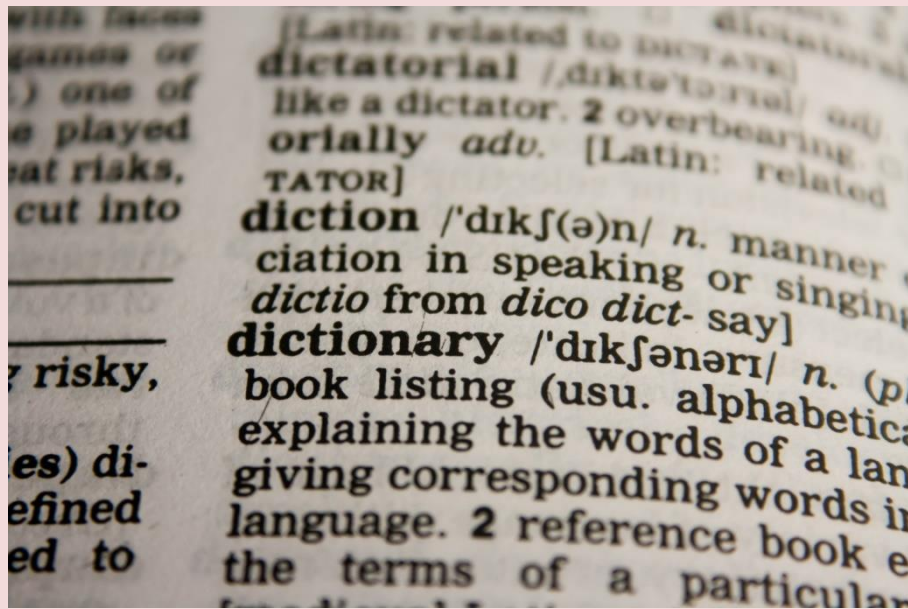
The zen of zinnia relates to begonia,

Just as goldenrod sisters celosia.

Fraternal is order of daisy and feverfew,
Filial a border of crocus and tulips, too.
Also sororal be fuchsia and sorrel,
As likened be bougainvillea to laurel.
Geometry witness a dandelion discus,
And azalea so close to the love of hibiscus.



Chris Daugherty: I have been writing poetry for ten years, having both institutional and self-taught education on writing metered verse. I currently have only two books in circulation on the Internet: 'Phoenix' and '88 Poems'. I reside in rural Florida of the United States. The poem 'Floral Phi' is from my forthcoming book 'Opal'.



DEAR DICTIONARY!

(1)

O, thou art ever been the wonderlands
Walking thru I come on treasure chest,
And I feel profusely blessed at thy hands,
Nothing is hidden; I always get the best.

(2)

When lonesome heart throbs with love
Words come bubbling to spark romance,
Joy drenches me as if in a blessing grove,
Beautiful phrases throw me into a trance.

(3)

Moon-light comes through green leaves
Everything far and wide shimmers lightly,
Words full of melody hum softly with ease,
Love-birds' faces all around blush blithely.

(4)

Like lava when anger boils within me
At the injustice to any human being,
Words come out fiercely from thee,
They abhor all the sight as sickening.

(5)

When I see roaming the rapist monster
And a long candle march with fiery eyes,
I'm urged to wring his neck like a rooster,
Well-worded slogans fire women to rise.

(6)

When violence breaks out like wild-fire
And people suffer from burns and pains,

Words act as water cannon to douse fire,
Sermon and love songs gush out like rains.

(7)

Dictionary is endowed with magical powers
Its magical touch is so soothing and relaxing,
It offers to all whatever they wish, like showers,
So clear sight it has; here nothing is perplexing.



B.S. Tyagi: He comes from India. He writes in both Hindi and English. He has several books, fiction and non-fiction, to his credit. His poems have been included in several anthologies. He writes short stories which regularly appear in national and international literary magazines. His write-ups and poems have appeared in national and international magazines. Besides, he has translated four books of poems. He shies away from public celebrations and prizes. Inner bliss he is showered upon though creativity is the greatest prize.



VICE VERSA

I wish to go back to those days
When innocence was a bless
Ironically; it was ignorance, too.
The world was a bundle of bliss.

When I grew up as a child
In my own pace;
The evenings- a welcome time
To play with friends on open space

Not confined to internet;

By the way, what was it??

Fun - filled horizon

And solitude broken as a bit.

Adulthood was a mirage..

Though sometimes i wished to become one.

To get rid of homeworks

That obstructed all the fun.

Yeah...I did wish to become an adult

That lured me magically.

Only to realise that it is full of commitments

Speaking logically.

Haha: That's the trick of life;

A game that can be twisted freely

When we wish for what is not
And laugh at ourselves eerily.



Brindha Vinodh: I am basically a poet and a freelancer residing currently in the United States of America. A few of my poems have been published in national magazines in India.



COLORS

When day dawns,
Colors spread on the earth
Red, blue, green and many
of living and nonliving beings

Sun shines in dazzling white
Green are the paddy fields,
The blue sky stretches infinitely
Grey are the wavy hills

A brown meadow stretches on,
And flowers bloom in myriad hues
A red sun goes down in the west
Painting sky with colorful views

Birds of myriad colors
Sing songs of life
Colors enthuse love and peace
Colors enlighten our minds

Violet, indigo, blue and green
Yellow, orange, red all mixed
Colors are for us God's gifts,
Blessed with all rainbow feels



Bishnu Charan Parida: He is a bilingual poet writing in English and Odia .He is from Jajpur Road, Odisha. An engineer by profession he carries a passion for poetry. His poems have been published in many anthologies and magazines of national and international repute. He has been honored in the state level Kalinga Nagar book festival 2015 in Odisha and at 11th Guntur International Poetry Festival 2018. He has been the world featured poet of Pentasi-B, China in 2019. Recently he has received the prestigious R. N. Tagore award from Xpress Publications, Kerala, India.



PEACE – BOUNDLESS LOVE

Why is anxiety piercing the heart of mankind

Why is this cry, wail and mourning?

Why has the laughter been muffled by mausers

Why is the sun bleeding and humanity in shame

Why is the moon shrouded in a pall of smoke

And for which there is no consoling .

Why are heads bowing over knees of sorrow

As if the sun will not rise tomorrow

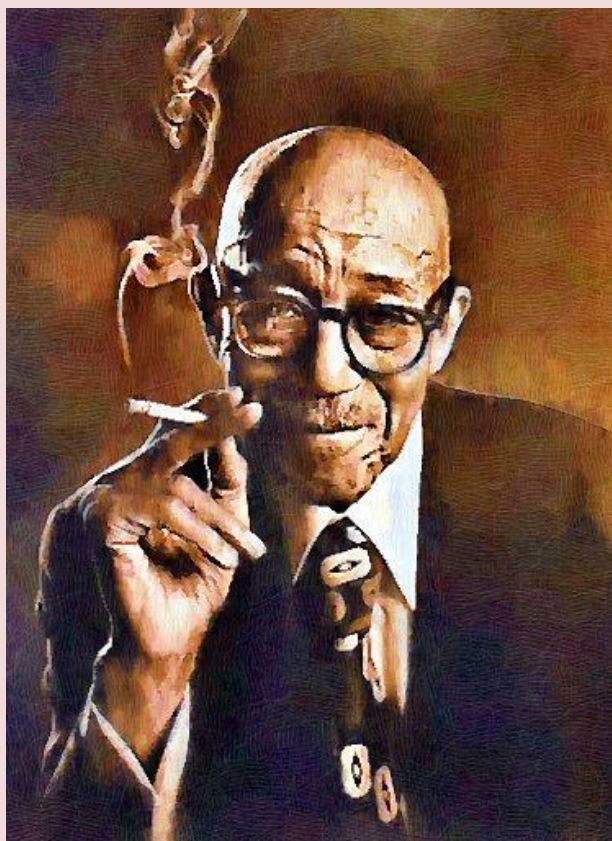
Has the end come near or snow melted in Kilimanjaro

The end brought by man's own ruthless opportunism
Segregating man into its own made demarcation
To satisfy his demonic greed made morsel of mankind
Surrounding himself in depravity and despair.

Why can't he open his third eye
And see, how easily the world would comply
If he changes his strategy sly
Replacing despondency with love and hope.
For love embracing, creating and including
Spreads peace, the positivity that travels deep.



Bilquis Fatima: She is an innate lover of nature and speaker for social issues, has allowed her feelings to be expressed as short writes and speeches from her college time. Although being a post-graduate in Chemistry, she has also mastered the skills of poetry appreciation and writing. Her poems reflecting the situations that are prevalent in the society, have been appreciated in some groups of poets and writers lately.



BLAKESONG

Eubie did it better than anyone—
not just music but life as well. Sneaking
off at thirteen, already pro,
playing at a Baltimore brothel,

he filled time for men lounging on couches,
pulling slugs of whiskey from flasks, waiting

for the girl of—if not their dreams—at least
their choice that evening. Then, people hummed

his show tunes, but his true calling being
the Rachmaninoff of Ragtime.

Long fingers, doing what few can hope to,
created perfect stops, gaps leading to

rolling trills, rollicking dances on black
keys running along accidentals

of sharps and flats. Later, I watched him play
on that Manhattan stage, as Alberta Hunter

sang—both seeming unaware of the crowd
gathered about them— he having a year
for each key of his instrument; she 80,
near two centuries of experience. I wasn't

at a music hall that night. Instead,
I stood on the edge of Mt. Olympus, looking up,
getting a chance to eavesdrop on gods
of music as they played.



Bill Cushing: Bill Cushing returns to music this month in honor of the man he considers one of America's great musical treasures, Eubie Blake (February 7, 1887 to February 12, 1983). Blake played jazz and ragtime as well as writing scores for Broadway musicals. Bill's poem is one of the pieces offered in his latest book, *Music Speaks*, which

won the 2019 San Gabriel Valley Poetry Festival and has been restructured into a more stylish package with new material added. It is available on Amazon but can be acquired at half price from the publisher's site, <http://www.lulu.com/shop/bill-cushing/music-speaks/paperback/product-24267491.html>.



LET'S SHAKE

Days where joy is not junior
are carried in a flash of light
In earth that we recreate
every dimple is mighty in that undeniable
smile shaping lives memorising sketches
once announced in spaces of time
It can be found in between ears
of a street mentor celebrating a loaf
gotten by digging deeper into the bin
No woman sorry for selling a first fruit

No man holy for signing a suspected contract

Dear child you are born every moment

you touch that brewing desire

Trouble may tap you harder in preparation

of red carpet of your delight

Reading through the verse of unshaken mind

travelling from here to there to grasp on peace

Sympathising to all greater meanings of happiness

No matter how tiny to an ignorant insights

they gang up to concrete the foundation

Shaking up the source of prosperities

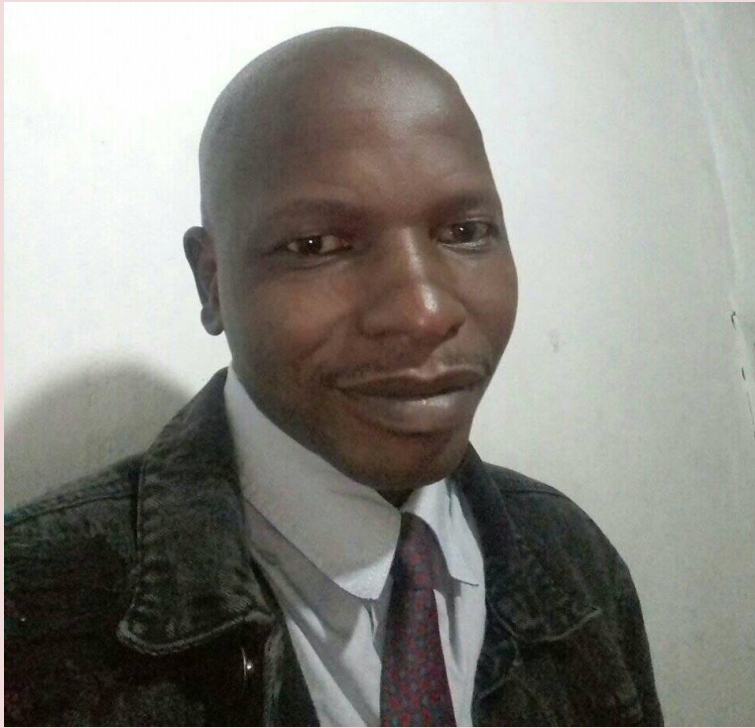
Imaging communities

Every little drop of joy

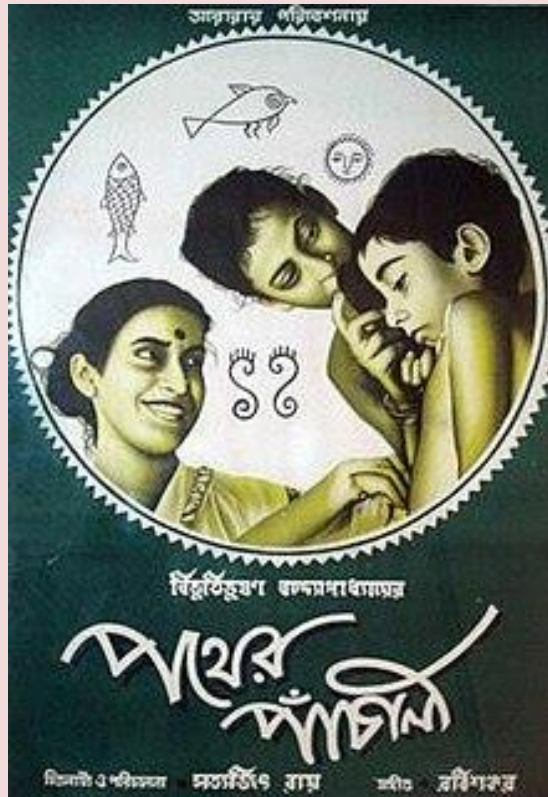
Let that be golden marked on calendar swipe

Or scribbled down on tender earth

And flown higher than winter kite



Bheki BO. Nxumalo: He honed his writing and performing skills at FUBA School Of dramatic And Visual Arts, where he did speech and drama. His earlier poetry was published in a book titled FEDILITIES V. edited by Kobus Moolman. He has performed in festivals such as Bosman Weekend Festival, Newcastle Winter Festival, Macufe festival, to name a few. He has graced broadcasting medium like SABC, Y fm and Trans Africa radio blowing poetry horn. He is a member of Amavukuvuku music band. He also facilitated children story telling at Xarra Books.



A LETTER TO APPU WITH LOVE FROM DURGA DIDI

The poem cannot be called a poem, but some abstract thoughts. It can be understood in the backdrop of Satyajit Ray's Bengali film, 'Pather Panchali'. Apu is a small boy and Durga is his loving and caring elder sister, and they share a strong bond with each other.

Apu

Can you hear me?

Long years have elapsed

Your call aroused me from my sleep

Can you see me
I have crossed over
To the other side of the border.

Oh, our days were so jolly
The Kash flowers, so lovely
So tasty, tamarind jelly.

How adventurous we were?
Have we not seen the train?
Have we traveled
in that train?

Yes, yes

We have traveled to Mars
Where water is found
Under layers of ice
We can melt the ice
And bring water to surface

Yes, life is possible
As ice will again become liquid
And we
Can bring life
To our land
Yes Apu,
We have really traveled
On the train.

With love
From Durga Didi



Bharati Nayak: I am a bilingual poet, critic and translator residing in Bhubaneswar, India. I work in the Government of Odisha. I have contributed to various national and international anthologies and e-books. I have also published three poetry books, two in English language and one in my mother tongue ODIA and worked as co-writer in two poetry Anthologies. I regularly write on on-line poetry site www.poemhunter.com where I am placed among the top 500 poets and offered the title 'Poetic Basil' for my contributions.



A CAN OF WORMS

this earth was made
for all man to live in
until someone
came around messin
up the program
that was meant to be
for all races and faces
living in unity
now separated
living apart

segregation
piercing the heart
of the oppressed
the oppressor
on a quest
to divide
different colour
so they can smother
our dignity
our pride
that rift caused
clear and wide
they had us
feeling inferior
with there
misdemeanor
a country filled
with possibility

could have flourished
now a messed up
carriage
carrying hate
despair everywhere
it leads
a wagon
filled with discouragement
and disappointment
we need
a brand new upliftment
we need to pick up
people's dreams
and hope
and fill it
with a positive scope
so that tomorrow
can bring opportunities

and possibilities

a can of worms



Bevan Boggenpoel: He was born in Salt Lake, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He attended Soutpan Primary and matriculated at Westville Secondary School. Boggenpoel completed a Baccalaureate in Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He launched his debut Anthology 1 December 2016. The book was well received by the public and he sold 200 copies locally. He is also an author at a South African website known as Litnet (Literature Network in South Africa). His poetry is written in a South African context that covers different issues in daily life. In his writings he strives to tell a story or teach a lesson that will inspire and motivate. He is currently a teacher at Bethelsdorp Road Primary in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth.



WE FACE FIRE

How good it would be if, in good times, we came more together.

Must our best capabilities most flourish in tough times?

Are we winter-flowering -

Dogwood. Crocus. Quince?

Are we artists, scientists, scholars, teachers, students, workers of all kinds?

Are we -

Homemakers?

Homebreakers?

Homeless?

Are we more alive in mind, heart and conscience in these more desperate times, so that, at last, we can come together and feel more alive in our winters than we did in our springs?

Are we just like the bold firies, volunteers and communities in Australia now?

Just like the bold refusers of cruel regimes

and those who would speak up or shut up for them?

Just like the heroes, prophets, saints, healers of all times, races, creeds and no creeds and those who honour their example?

Just like the gun-death-anguished children in the USA who flash-organised to face the weapons purveyors and their lawful and unlawful enablers?

Just like the climate-anguished children around the world who struck and marched to face the Earth despoilers and their enablers, those sold-out elders who need to have grown up first?

We face and again face!

We face the fires and the lighters of fires.

We face the liars and deniers of the sacredness, whether
secular or religious, of—

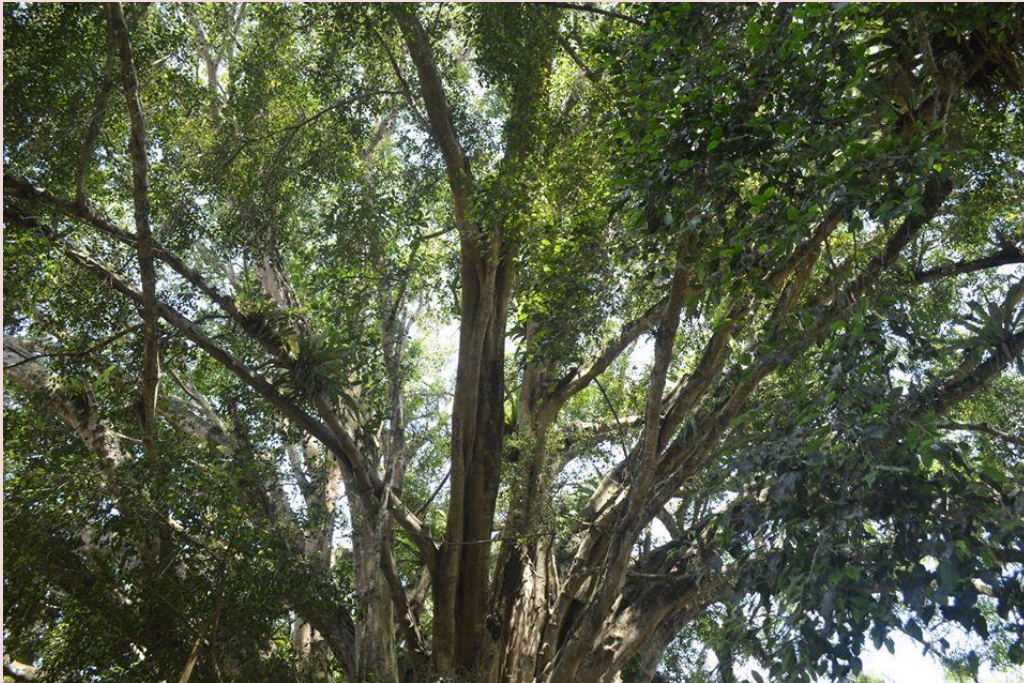
Fire. Wind. Space, Earth. Water

We also face—

Ourselves...



Barry Pittard: I am a poet, lyricist and short story writer, living in the Hinterland of South East Queensland, Australia. I am a retired (refreshed!) teacher, and have also worked as an NGO among the socially marginalised. I have broadcast on social just and world music themes on community radio. In the theatre, I worked as an actor, director and writer. Presently, I am doing a personal dance sadhana, extensively using the superb music of Uma Mohan.



WINTER ECHOES...

Two owls sit on the windowpane

The night is young and forbidden

It is the beginning of another day

The barking of dog's echoed in the darkness

A fist of unfinished desire swallowed the moon

The sound of falling leaves of winter

Flapping wings of owls churning out the memories

A strange blurred picture of your eyes

A passionate wintry night's hungry moon

Lonely, vacant abyss of silence

Memories in neon lights

Searching my lost poems



Asoke Kumar Mitra: He studied at Hindu school and St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and is a retired journalist and was editor of 'Calcutta Canvas' and 'Indus Chronicle'. He is a bilingual poet. He has contributed to various anthologies published in India and abroad. His poems are translated into various languages. 'Savage Wind' is his first poetry book, a bilingual edition, translated into Spanish by Mexican poet Josep Juarez. 'Song Of Pebbles' is his second bilingual poetry book, which is translated into French. Poetry, photography, paintings are his passions.



THE REAL SAINT

They sport like a child
though realised in freedom,
may conduct ownself like a dullard,
talks like an intoxicated one,
they only accept 'things' of life
if only it is for the good of the world

and not out of desire,
weather and atmosphere hot or cold
so easily do they respire.



Ashish K Pathak: He is a middle school teacher posted at Dharhara block in Munger district of Bihar province (India). He regularly contributes his poems at Glomag. He is a modest person, poet, and human.



AIYANA

She did not make it through the night,
although she fought so valiantly.

The bitter cold was too much
for her little body to survive.

She was not supposed to be here.

She should have flown south,
but she stopped for just a moment,
and stayed three months.

She brought joy into our lives,
our little winter guest.

She could not know our love,
she became our angel.

We watched her every minute
of every daylight hour.

Taking scores of photographs
and keeping a journal.

January brought an Arctic freeze
that took our dear Aiyana.

I watched as strong gusts buffeted
our weakened tiny jewel.

All day I heated feeders,
but that was not enough.

There was no more I could do.

I cry my heart out to this day.

We watched for days after,

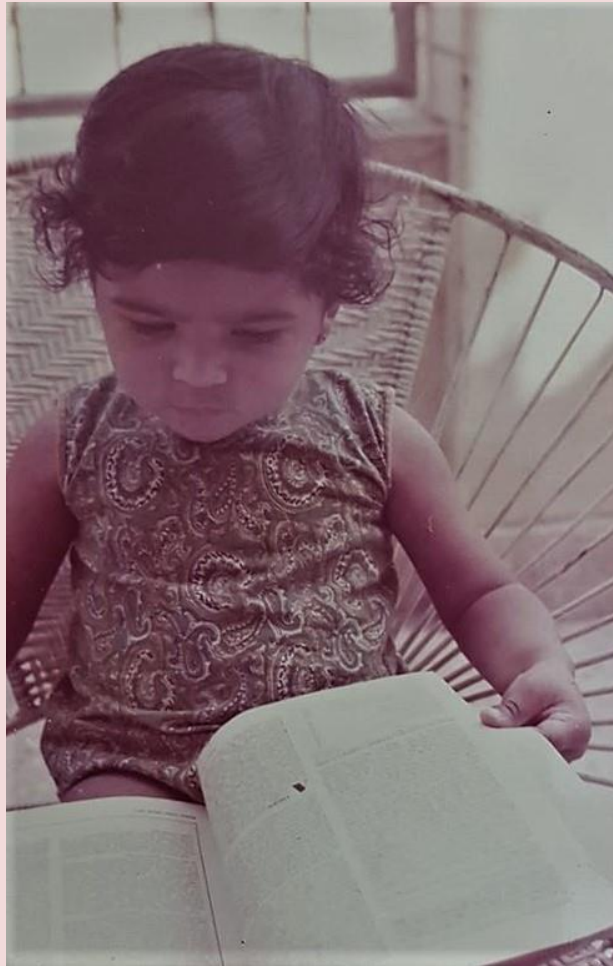
not wanting to accept.

We prayed for the miracle

that could never be.



Ann Christine Tabaka: She was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry, has been internationally published, and won poetry awards from numerous publications. She is the author of 9 poetry books. She has recently been published in several micro-fiction anthologies and short story publications. Christine lives in Delaware, USA. She loves gardening and cooking. Chris lives with her husband and three cats. *(a complete list of publications is available upon request)



FIRST LOVE

That first time, my heart must have swelled
And drummed inside my chest.

My hands must have trembled in anticipation.

Was there a flash of wetness too in my eyes?

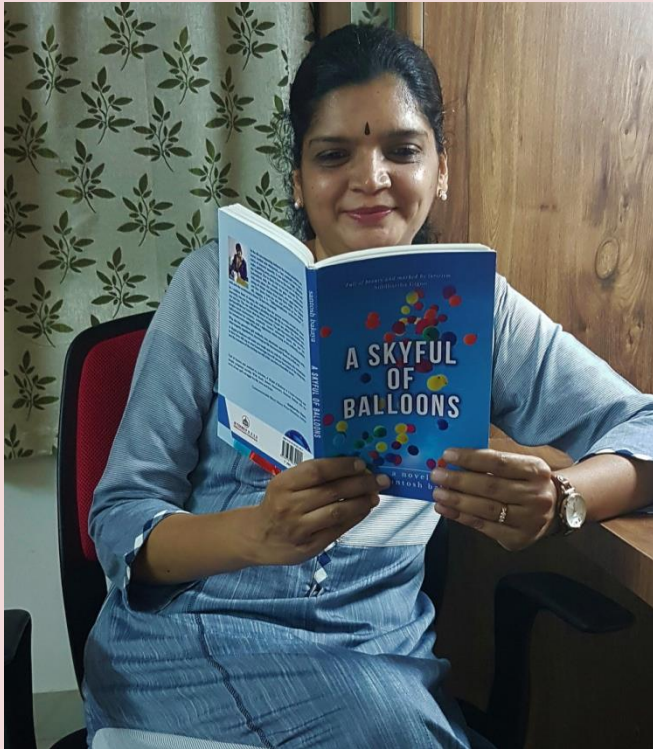
I do not know now, for I was a small child

That first time I held a book in my hands.

They say I wouldn't peel my eyes off
The glossy pictures, alive in my child-mind.
My fingers would run back and forth
Along the unintelligible, yet already beloved lines
Beginning a love story that was my first
And a relationship that was set to last.

That was the time, many other loves ago
When I had begun to explore and experience
The delicate curves and bold lines of the written word;
That rolling around the tongue of its sounds
And the flow of expression that pushed open the door
To an exciting, fanciful world of endless possibilities.

My first love, still flaps its wings preparing to fly
Taking my heart home as it did that first time.



Anju Kishore: She is a poet, editor and a former Cost Accountant. She has contributed to various anthologies. One of the winners of The Great Indian Poetry Award 2018, her first book of poems ‘...and I Stop to Listen’ was published in 2018. She is part of the Editorial Team of India Poetry Circle that launched two anthologies in 2019. She is also one of the editors of Pinkishe, the print magazine of the Delhi based NGO, Pinkishe Foundation.



MY LOVE IN WINTER

This winter has been better
If I had found you in my arms
Sleeping peacefully as the night
Strikes twelve and the first hoot
Of the owl is heard from the barn

This winter has been a blessing
For me if under the yellow light

I had found you reading the poems
On love resting your head on my chest
And the moon had smile at us secretly
Through the rectangular skylight

This winter will come again
And I will show you my love
When the snow will start falling
I will hold you tight under the blanket
And take you to the moon and the stars
With dancing of my fingers across your
Body and warm kisses on your soft lips



Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tiku): He is from Brajrajnagar, Odisha, India, and resides there currently. He works as a mine surveyor in coal mines. He writes short stories and poems whenever he gets time.



THE HIRED GUN

Why is it so easy for people to hire hitmen

To kill others in the most heinous way?

No rationalization can be used to motivate
the despicable craft of destroying life.

There is no romantic notion of the hired gun
its simply a killing machine.

Why does the sword rule the days we live in?

The hired gun in society has only society to blame

Where there is a demand there is opportunity

It's a simple transaction kill and be paid?

Hired guns have become a norm in society.

Like an automated robot with no emotions or feelings

Using the darkness to cover his tracks

He kills and walks away

There is no thought about the individual

or the distraught family.

The orchestrator is as complicit in the crime

as the hitman pulling the trigger.

When drug lords rule society and

Take control of everything

The law has no meaning in a free and fair society

The greed for money, control and territory

Is a toxic combination that can only result in death.

The cycle of violence never ends

The futility of violence

“You live by the sword; you will die by the sword”

When hitmen are hired to kill their spouse

They are callous cowards

Walk away, be courageous.

Killing him in cold blood

Surprised and unable to defend himself

in his own home.

Your day will come too

When that hour is upon you remember

The lives you took without a second thought

The hand that pulls the trigger

is a reminder of what you did

as a career hitman.

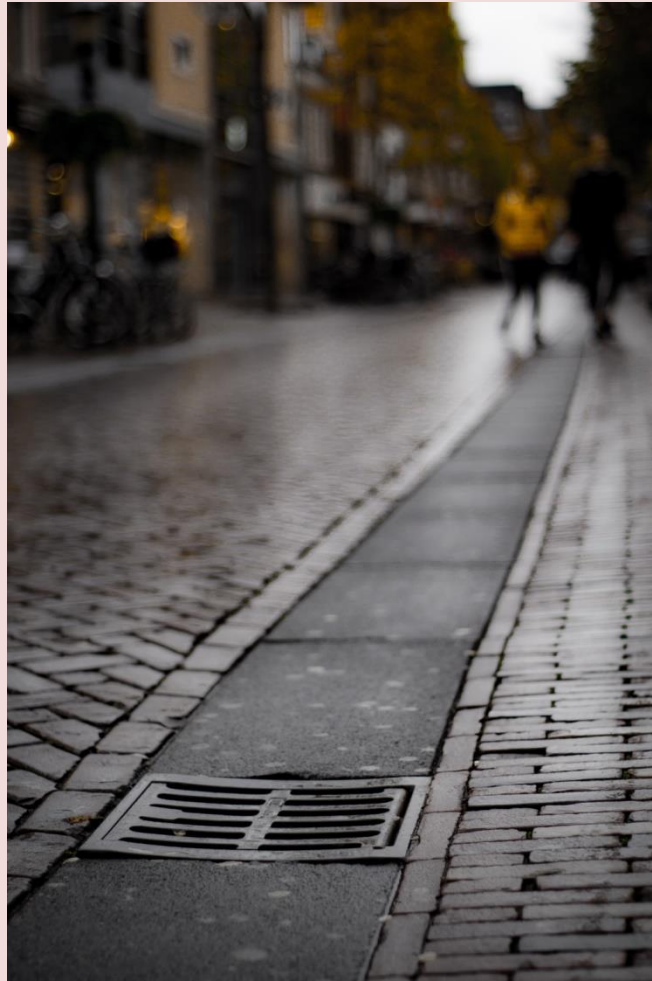
Violence begets violence.

“You live by the sword,

You will die by the sword”



Angela Chetty: I am a poet residing in Durban, South Africa. I work as a consultant. I have contributed to various anthologies and numerous journals. I have also published a poetry anthology. I have been honoured as a contemporary poet with the most heartfelt poems in 2019 and had two poems featured in the Top 100 poems for 2019.



FLASHES FROM THE PAVEMENT

When rain comes, don't know

why, you also come

Not like rains, but like dark clouds

covering every bit of my sky.

& occasional flashes bring back

to me flashes from the pavement,

small alleys, riverside, busy streets
and an indifferent boulevard.
& when rains pour incessantly,
I get drenched in
sweet & bitter coffee
& laughter, cries & disagreements.

When the sun reappears, you hide
in me, to be bloomed again in
a rainy day.



Aneek Chatterjee: I am a poet and academic residing in Kolkata, India. I work as a professor of political science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a novel named 'The Funeral Procession' and a poetry anthology titled 'Seaside Myopia'. I was a Fulbright Visiting fellow at the University of Virginia (USA) and a recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach at reputed foreign universities.



It was said

See no evil

By them of old time

But I say to you

Watch closely now when you see evil done

Carefully

So evil can be known by its assailants

And do not let its perpetrators go scot free

Tear off their masks

Raise the banner of your protest

Disapproval

Opinion

Influence

High

Against them

Fight

With all your might

So they may vanish

Into nothing

In fear

Same with hear no evil

Speak no evil

Hear to resist

Speak to rebel

Be in the Force

Be Jedi

Do not fear or do evil

But good

Take the battle to them

Beat them to fine dust and chaff

Blow them away

Finish them off

Unleash your word-light Sabres

And let your metaphors cause spiritual mayhem

On all the ranks of the enemy

Rise victorious

Inquilab Zindabad



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Significant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited Inklings and Umbilical Chords.



BEAUTEOUS TO BEHOLD

He said it with unembarrassed confidence

To the face of her husband and children

Before his own wife, her sister

He said it with the impudent authority of a painter and
surgeon

“Your teeth are so expressive “

The noise of forks knives and spoons

On the dining table was stilled

Through the narrow strip of glass

Looking out on the unkempt grass

Of the backyard stretching far

Then curving

And disconcertingly precipitating into a gorge

With a stream far far away at its bottom

And rabbits hopping over stiles

And loose fences

The Sun suddenly peeped

A curious eavesdropper

They would not even touch

Was it a compliment?

The child remembered it

When she was an old woman

Just as it came back to her

Time and again

Looking or imagining

The mother, alive or dead

All through the years

At unexpected moments

The Lotus and the Lotus bud

On the waters of the Dal Lake

Seen from a Houseboat

Of carved walnut wood

Snapped by his Nikon camera

But sketched also

With chinks on cardboard

To impress his gynaecologist bride

Or revel in the romance of the honeymoon

Freeing many spirits

She smiling radiantly
In a gold woven Benares sari
In a tasteful shade of pink
Teeth like pearls
Was it a family likeness
That stirred his imagination?

There was more than one sketch
But one
He gifted

Preserved for years
In a mango wood cupboard
By the heiress apparent
It was finally framed
In thin gold
And put up between the door and the window
Under a tulip light

By the son

They noticed

The water was shaded grey

The leaves grey green

The petals pastel pink

Touched with white

Visitors

Down the corridors of time

Remarked on its delicacy

People did not say such things

In such contexts

In those days

“Your teeth are so expressive”

The decorous mutual admiration

Lasted both their lifetimes

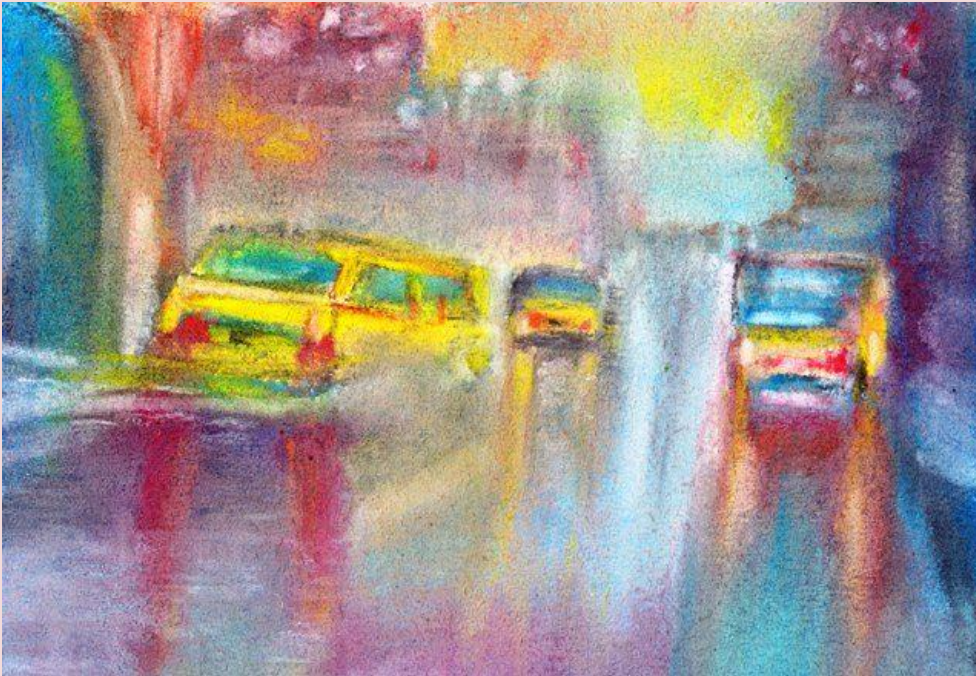
Beauteous to behold

He was a sorcerer

She was a goddess



Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia: I am a retired bureaucrat but at heart a poet and a teacher. I write, mostly poetry, in English, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. I've never published anything except on Facebook or occasionally some newspaper or magazine here and there. I was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award (First Prize) 2019 for Excellence in Writing and my contribution to Indian English Poetry.



Space, mind, time

And eternity

And You

Mind in five dimensions

You in all of them



Amitabh Mitra: He is an Indian-born South African physician, poet and artist. He is one of the most widely published poets globally.



Pic by Ramesh Chandra Santra

FORGET ME NOT

The winter sunshine loosely draped on her back
she stretched her frail limbs
pushing back time to the brink,
meandering thoughts
dig through dust decades old
winter's dry leaves gathered in a pile
blown in crevices of forgetfulness
a shadow undeciphered, a contour vague,
sneak from their hideouts

play a quirky game of hide and seek.

Suddenly a flash flood

of remembrances resurge

deluging a frayed canvas,

knotted emotions disentangle

into pearl drops

faces hushed in oblivion surface

beam familiar smiles, rewind tales.

Memories rejuvenate

blush in blooming forget-me-not

its fragrance in the hue of winter sky.



Amita Ray: She is a retired associate professor of English and Vice Principal of a College in Howrah, West Bengal. She resides in Kolkata and is a published translator as well as a short story writer. An academic of varied interests she has been in the teaching profession for thirty eight years. She takes an active interest in working with the child development unit of an NGO based in Kolkata and is associated with other social organisations at present.



POORNOTA

Poornota,

I dare say

I love you

albeit I equal 20

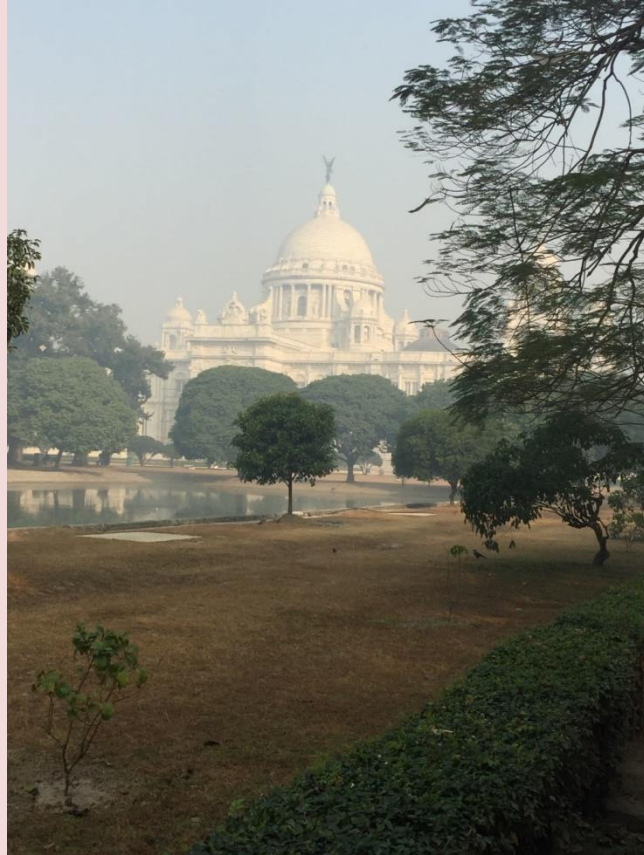
and you 80

will you allow me to be 100

adding myself to you?



Aminool Islam: I am a poet residing in Bogra, Bangladesh. I work as an English language instructor. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am currently the sub-editor of a literary magazine named Neeharika.



THE CITY-CALCUTTA

The roads that you have
trod upon could discern
from your doubtful steps
to those carefree ones
when you oscillated on
your belongingness here.

They have no arms
to pin you down, yet,
your legs felt heavy
and Calcutta - murky
and unkempt, blatantly
true, grew upon you

and you now wear her
under your skin, breathe
her scent secretly, and to
your asking lips I yield to
say, "I am Calcutta,
to you I slowly seep in."



Amanita Sen: Amanita has 2 collections of poems: ‘Candle In My Dream’ and ‘What I Don’t Tell You’. Her works have been published in numerous journals in India and abroad. She is a mental-health professional and lives in Kolkata.



CHRISTMAS

Observe Merry Christmas with much pomp and ceremony
Once in a year we dedicate ourselves to promote harmony
Jesus epitomises love and affection incomparable
His birthday is today so make it quite memorable
Tolerance is the crown we all need to adorn
Propagate empathy for which Jesus was born
Sing the song of humanity in chorus that Xmas cherishes
As the noble deed sacrifice erases all bruises

Brought for us myriad gifts adorable Santa Claus
Forgiveness being the best policy let intoxicate us
An inner current of unity unites us being humans in
camouflage
For the preservation of universal brotherhood in the name
of Jesus let take pledge



Alok Kumar Ray: I am a bi-lingual poet residing in Kendrapara district headquarters of Odisha province in India. I work as a Senior Lecturer in Political Science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I contribute regularly to various online poetry groups also.



PRESCRIPTION FOR A POEM

It is not easy to write a poem

You have to gather your thoughts

Swirling quickly like snowflakes during a blizzard

Catch them before they melt and disappear into oblivion

Later add fever of feelings and strength of emotion

Decorate your sentences with your dreams collected

from the silver dust of falling stars.

You can also

pick out a melancholy longing from the bottom of the lake

and hang it on eyelashes to shine with tears

Then collect the wet haze of sadness

shimmering like drops of dew on calamus,

add grayness of the November' s landscape

Season it with a bit of bitterness and regret

Or you can

Capture the laughter suspended by an echo

Between high mountain peaks

Catch the merry words in the net of butterflies

carried by the warm breath of the wind

Turn the rainbow over to add a smile to the sky

Sprinkle it with a touch of humor and joy

Finally, crazy metaphors must be released

Let them draw colors from the imagination

That the poem would acquire a transparent lightness
and like a soap bubble rise above everyday life
Allow it to fly off in an unknown direction



Alicja Maria Kuberska: She is an awarded Polish poetess, novelist, journalist, editor. Her poems have been published in numerous anthologies and magazines. She has published 13 poetry anthologies. She is a member of the Polish Writers Associations in Warsaw, Poland and IWA Bogdani, Albania. She is also a member of the Directors' Board of Soflay Literature Foundation.

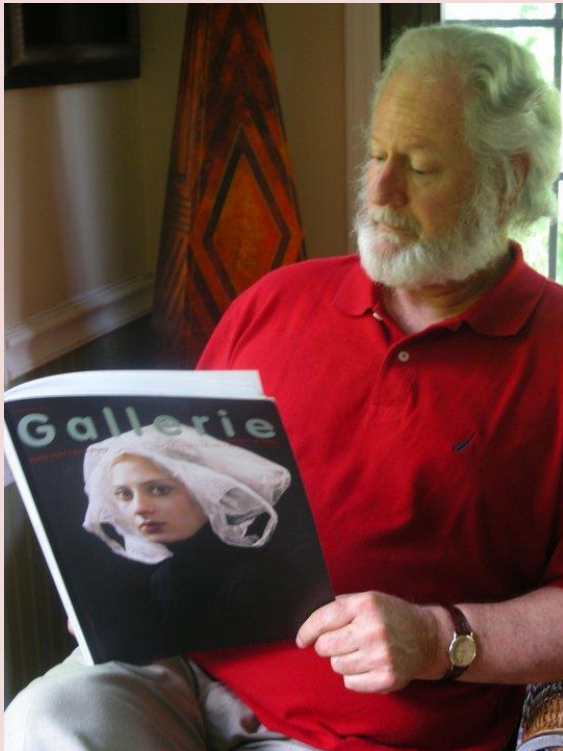


MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Oh, my darling take me
by the hand, & though the seasons
freeze, though we sometimes seek
comfort in thunderstorms beside
the Little Patuxent & elsewhere
when we least expect it like
the night we crashed the Disney
prom with machetes shattering
illusions that resembled bruised
moons yet unable to untangle
our emotions from those
of our neighbors.

Oh, my darling take me
by the hand, & though the seasons
freeze, though we sometimes seek

comfort in thunderstorms beside
the Little Patuxent & elsewhere
when we least expect it like
the night we crashed the Disney
prom with machetes shattering
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our emotions from those
of our neighbors.



Alan Britt: In August 2015, Alan Britt was invited by the Ecuadorian House of Culture Benjamín Carrión in Quito, Ecuador as part of the first cultural exchange of poets between Ecuador and the United States. In 2013, he served as judge for the The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award. His interview at The Library of Congress for

The Poet and the Poem aired on Pacifica Radio, January 2013. He has published 15 books of poetry, his latest being *Violin Smoke* (Translated into Hungarian by Paul Sohar and published in Romania: 2015). He teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.



BY MYSELF

I will survive by myself, and
everything beyond my limits
away from desires, and choices

I will enjoy seesaw by myself
with sorrows on my side, and
happiness by itself on the side

I will play

Cricket

Badminton

Basketball

by myself

I will talk very loud on the phone

gossiping to nobody but myself

texting myself hateful messages

I will always miss you by myself

your love was the joys I lived for

now, I'm a mirror with falling tears



Ahmad Al-Khatat: I am a poet residing in Montreal, Quebec. I work as student. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published 10 poetry anthologies. I have recently graduated from Dawson College as a Social Science student.



LEAVES IN A CITY

What do leaves do in a city that
oscillates between doors and distances?

Grow innumerable like the crowd,
flood the tree as if a street.

Evolve veins that hesitate to bleed.

Be the open hand eager for warmth.

Leaves in a city build a city upon themselves.

Extend the curious ant walk
into the highway of barks and beyond:
the age of ants and commoners is to arrive.

Curl the apex
to mimic the hand that turns the door knob.
Use the interstices to open the night
as if a solitary dark room in wait.

Conceal the noose in a stalk
and shield the young fruit
from the ghost of fallen fruits.

Urban leaves know—
a peaceful street
is the shadow of a suppressed revolt.
The blood beneath the skin,
hope about to thrust upon the floodgates.



Aditya Shankar: He is a bilingual poet who has been writing poetry in English and Malayalam since 2002. His poems have appeared in journals from 25 or more nations, and translated into Malayalam and Arabic. His work has been nominated for many literary awards including Pushcart and Best of the Net. His poetry collections include *After Seeing* (2006), *Party Poopers* (2014), and *XXL* (Dhaulti Books, 2018). He edited *Tiny Judges Shall Arrive* (AHRC, Hong Kong), a selection of KG Sankara Pillai's poems translated into English. His short films have participated in International Film Festivals. He lives in Bangalore, India.



AT SEASIDE

The sea roars,
And multitude waves break on the shore,
And bath thousand feet with foamy froths.

A lone boat is tossing
On the raging waves,
And it glistens in the early rays.

Newly-wed couples are all smiles;
Some even deftly etch names on sands
And strive to enshrine them forever.

Children plunge to mother's long arms
And shake and shriek as the waves rush to their toes.

The sky is nondescript;
Grey, dull, plain,
And crows caw and crump on
Leftovers and a dead rat's innards.

Tourists and regulars shout
And flash and stand waist deep
To plunge next on the rushing waves.

Cameras frequently flash,
And the beautiful sea, its myriad hues

And its loved admirers
Are caught in splendid airs.



Abu Siddik: I am a writer, residing in Berhampore, Murshidabad, India. I work as Assistant Professor in English at Plassey College. I have contributed to various e-journals and anthologies. I have also published three books. Website: www.abusiddik.com



ciao! 😊