

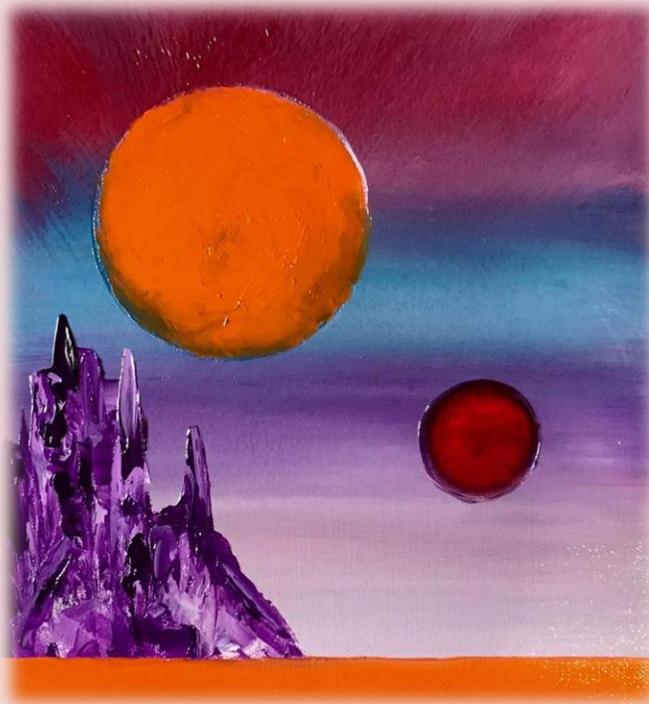
GloMag

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*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose*

*Magazine*

*July 2017*



*Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala*

## **Cody Lyon**



**Title of the Cover Pic: Orange Grass**

**(Meaning: we create the color of our world)**

### **About The Artist**

I am a self-taught artist and song writer. I have had the opportunity to sing and play with many great musicians along my way. I live on an Equine Healing Horse Ranch in Colorado and have become a full time artist. I have a passion to create and find the beauty in this world. The ranch and the horses have given me the opportunity to open my eyes and my heart.

## **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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**BACKGROUND MUSIC: “Mast Magan”. Movie “Two States” (Hindi)**

## **PREFACE**

### **Scott Thomas Outlar**

(Scott Thomas Outlar spends the hours flowing and fluxing with the ever-changing currents of the Tao River)



GloMag brings together, in its own special fashion, various visual arts and the written word. This combination of aesthetics is commonly referred to as ekphrastic poetry. But it is so much more than just this simple title that tries in vain to explain what appears as the final, polished product upon the page. Indeed. The pieces that are published within this fine monthly magazine are an amalgamation of the senses. A kaleidoscope of imagery reimagined with the pen (or keyboard, as we are living in the 21st century after all). A swirling synthesis of great minds from around the world synchronizing their talents to create a higher form of expressed passion. A roaring explosion of color captured with ink. An exploration of form and shape distilled through

language. Modern day hieroglyphs splashed upon the page. Can you tell I dig the process? You better believe it!

It has been both an honor and a privilege to have my words appear in this wonderful venue, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to help kick off this second anniversary issue with an introductory essay.

What a thrill to have worked with so many artists and photographers whose work I admire greatly since my dear friend and fellow poet, Don Beukes, introduced me to Glory Sasikala's wonderful magazine shortly after its inception. By the way, keep an eye out for an ekphrastic collection from Beukes in the hopefully near future. I've heard about the exciting idea he has in mind, and I look forward to witnessing the vision reach fruition with the right publisher soon. You can also check out his debut book of poetry which was released last year through CTU Publishing, *The Salamander Chronicles*. I was happy to play a small role in this book by writing the preface.

I've been blessed to pair my poetry through the months thus far in GloMag alongside photography and paintings from Nicole Taylor, Mechelle Wilson Ballew, Charity Janisse, Irsa Ruci, Jagannath Chakravarti, Cody Lyon, and, in this current issue, Paula Dawn Lietz. There are many more wonderful artists that I'm looking forward to working with

in the months ahead. I begin to salivate expectantly at the very thought of it.

Cody Lyon, whose abstract painting I responded to in the May/June issue, has returned in this special edition with an amazing painting to grace the front cover. “Orange Grass” conjures up thoughts of some distant planet, stark, alien, exotic, yet welcoming through the embrace of its warm palette of colors.

I’m thrilled to have a poem in this issue written in response to Paula Dawn Lietz’s black and white photograph of a great grey owl. It was almost impossible trying to pick out just one image of hers to work with, as they all jump off the screen and send the senses soaring. If I can just persuade her to spare a few moments from cultivating and harvesting her garden up in Canada then I hope to collaborate with this brilliant artist again sometime very soon.

On another personal note, the collaborative process reached a new level of excitement for me in June with the release of my new book, *Poison in Paradise*. I worked closely with the two editors at Alien Buddha Press shaping the manuscript into its finalized form over the past several months. Red Focks and Jay Miner contributed 25 full color photographs taken during their travels around the United

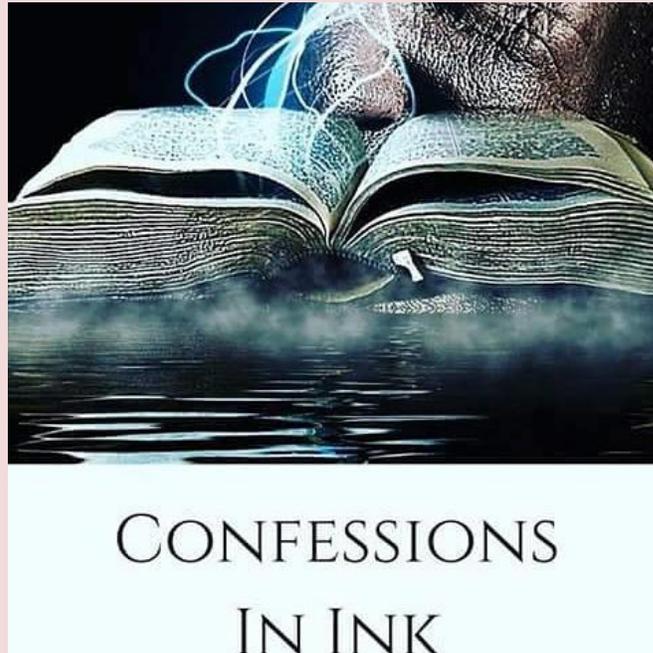
States, and we fit those images together thematically with my 67 poems to create a piece of art that I'm truly proud of. Anyone who enjoys my work and would like to support the independent press, please consider picking up a copy today.

Enough with the shameless plug! Now, my friends, it's high time for me to sign off and step aside so that you can dive in headfirst and enjoy the two-year anniversary issue of GloMag. Feast your eyes on this...

## **BOOK OF THE MONTH**

**Confessions In Ink by Bevan Boggenpoel**

Published by Creative Talents Unleashed



### **LINKS**

[www.ctupublishinggroup.com/bevan-boggenpoel-.html](http://www.ctupublishinggroup.com/bevan-boggenpoel-.html)

[www.amazon.com/Confessions-Ink-Bevan-Boggenpoel/dp/1945791268](http://www.amazon.com/Confessions-Ink-Bevan-Boggenpoel/dp/1945791268)

### **FOREWORD**

<https://creativetalentsunleashed.com/2017/05/10/about-the-author-meet-bevan-boggenpoel/>

It is an honour for me to introduce fellow South African and a unique weaver of words to the global literary community, Mr Bevan Boggenpoel. I first noticed Boggenpoel when he posted a spiritual poem, which I thought would be a good fit for Spirit Fire Review Journal and subsequently advised Boggenpoel on the mechanics involved to submit internationally, as I realised how talented he was. We became very good friends and I realised that his work is destined for great things.

Boggenpoel's ability to speak to his community and indeed a nation in two languages after his debut South African collection in December 2016 published by Selwyn Milborrow of Milborrow Media and Publishing; is testimony to his literary vision to also communicate to a global audience, writing about universal themes such as racism, oppression, love, hate, culture, politics, dystopian society, spirituality and much more; which affects humanity in one way or the other.

As an educator, Boggenpoel has a unique perspective on the development of young and creative minds through language and life skills training; and has already inspired the next generation of writers at his school to put pen to paper and leave their own legacy. As his learners are from a mixed race or 'coloured' (a term given by the Apartheid regime) cultural background, just like himself; identity and

cultural pride in a post-Apartheid society is still a sensitive issue for many in South Africa. Boggenpoel is passionate about the fact that education should be a cornerstone of South African society and indeed the world to enable children to become true global citizens. He further believes that educational deprivation is detrimental to the potential and growth of a country which is still yearning for a true cultural and literary renaissance.

Boggenpoel's poetry draws upon his family values, community spirit and his insatiable need to share his literary messages to the world. His poetry has a unique lyrical quality, which transports the reader through a melodious lullaby of rhyme, rhythm and repetition, as he creates magic with poetic devices. The themes he shares with us are beautifully woven throughout his poems, which testifies about his personal experiences growing up in a divided society based on race and cultural identity and his vision of a truly unified intercultural national identity.

Boggenpoel's raw honesty moves us to believe every word and reference in his poetry, which is a rare quality. He has a literary integrity that demands respect from eager readers ready to listen to what he has to say. His work reflects familiar obstacles in society, taking the reader right into the heart and mind of society; leaving us with a literary heritage that invites the global community to reflect,

question and confirm their own values, despite religious and cultural differences.

Boggenpoel has already begun his global outreach in the months preceding his new collection of poetry and he is destined to carve out a reputable literary legacy for future generations.

***Don Beukes – Author of The Salamander Chronicles***



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## **HAUNTING MEMORIES**

Sitting alone in the veranda  
With an engulfing silence around  
And a burning cigar in hand  
That is consuming both itself and me  
With each puff and passing moment  
Both drawing nigh their end certain  
One to end in ashes  
The other in dust  
Leaving behind a questionnaire  
The things gone wrong  
The deeds undone  
The errors committed

The love omitted

Could they be any different?

Had I a second lease on life?



## **SONNET 11**

With eyes laden with heavy lids

Standing am I before the mirror

That is silver and exact and not a liar

When I see the wrinkles coming over

The signs all of aging overwhelming me

Lost am I in the prime of youth

Reflected once in the same mirror  
That tells otherwise and is but an enemy.

The four cornered wall that is in love  
With the glass and its ever presence  
Seems to make face at me to tease  
As life seems drawing nigh an end  
Of the lease I was granted in Eden  
That has much been wasted and rotten.



**Zulfiqar Parvez:** Vice Principal Cum O Levels English Language Teacher, London Grace International School, Dhaka. I have done my Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi, and am the editor of Neeharika.



## MY LUNAR LANDING LESSON

Three decades created my *tabula rasa*: I grew up in the fifties, a time of such conformity that black-and-white television seemed *apropos*; came of age in the sixties, a time that birthed youthful open revolt; and matured during the seventies, an age of malaise so bad the government concocted a new standard of weights and measures: the “Misery Index.” Little wonder skepticism became my default attitude. Still, one memory gives me the sort of

optimism Faulkner envisioned when predicting humanity  
“will not merely endure [but] prevail.”

Almost 50 years ago, Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. Many bearing witness gained a new perspective. What I gained took place here, on Earth, at my grandmother’s house in the Vermont mountains. A friend from her London youth was visiting. He was about 80, an extraordinary lifespan in those days, so I treated him like any teenager treats the elderly, with aloofness bordering on contempt. Thinking he had little to offer, I ignored what he said, which is why what happened had such impact. As the evening unwound, we settled into conversation when he spoke to me.

“You know when I was your age,” he said,” we heard about some box if you had electricity, you could plug it in and watch blokes elsewhere right there in your flat. Of course, I didn’t believe it. It was ridiculous. Such a thing couldn’t be.

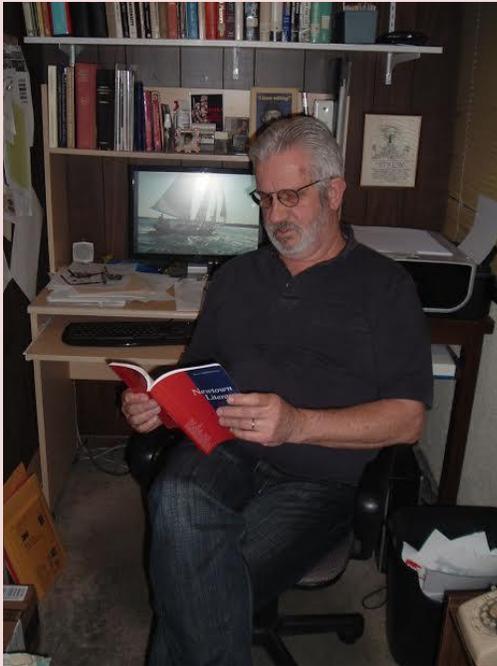
“Now,” he swept his arm toward the television, “I just watched some Yank walk on another planet on the box I didn’t believe existed.”

Revelation didn’t hit me so much as seep in: this guy could recall the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the one I entered at its midpoint. He knew days without widespread indoor plumbing or electrical service. He watched transportation by rail and horse turn into automobile and plane. Now he was seeing space flight.

That was when I understood the enormity of events a person can witness in any given life. That was when I understood the wonder of human capacity, realizing that given enough time, the right materials, and proper knowledge, there isn't much we can't achieve.

Aside from organ transplants, I don't recall feeling the wonder of his lifetime, but I have about 15 years to catch up.

Wonder what's next.



**William P. Cushing:** After being honored last month as one of the "Top Ten L. A. Poets of 2017," Bill returns to some prose memories of his childhood for this issue and offers Glomag readers a true story. He is also proud to announce that his poem "The Ancient Flocks of Wilson Street" (previously published here) will be released in July as part of a collection of writings and art used for school curricula.



## **ALTERED STATES**

one of the side effects  
of the new med  
is vivid dreams  
epic altered states  
of identity nightly  
doomsday drama  
apocalyptic scenarios  
of altered survival  
that fade quickly  
upon waking, taking  
with them any hope  
of foretelling

but it doesn't matter  
anyway  
when doomsday comes  
however it comes  
those wounded of us  
who take the meds,  
any meds, all the meds  
will be the first to fall



**Wanda Morrow Clevenger:** She is a former Carlinville, IL native. Over 443 pieces of her work appear in 154 print and electronic publications. Her magazine-type blog updated at her erratic discretion: <http://wlc-wlcblog.blogspot.com/>



Sandcastles survive in sepia memories

Of a picnic on a windy deserted beach

Framed eighty years ago this day

Showing children screaming soundlessly

Running up and down the nervous edge

Pursued by moms and aunts throwing up their hands

In prayer or surrender! Grinning uncles

Propped up on the sand are caught in the act

Of shuffling cards and sipping rum--

They are all dead, you know, my love  
And this is now another country  
Where walls grow within and without

And leftovers and love are drowned--  
We stare at stones skip across the sea  
While waves subtitle our whispers

And wish that the snapshots we click  
Will one-day help others remember us  
And the sacredness of what we could not see.



**Vijay Nair:** He is a retired as Associate Professor,  
Department of English, Government Victoria College

Palakkad, Kerala. He taught English Language and Literature in various colleges for 31 years. His poems have appeared in several International Anthologies. He was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016.



## **JOURNEYS**

If you told me  
journeys were meant  
to end,  
I would tell you that  
they were meant to  
begin.

To all the times  
departing was made hard,  
arriving was made suspenseful.

Sometimes, we left places, things and people,  
sometimes they left us;

all to start afresh in another  
path, to another plot twist.

We were

ridiculous passers of time,

who felt too empty

or felt too heavy.

Our journeys were loops

that were always connected,

stories that were always told

in words or silence,

love that was always filled

with hurdles,

but we were ants

occupying sweet territories

called destinations,

failing to see the journey.

We were humans who found the cave

but failed to see the carving

on it that said

"Keep going."

We don't have destinations;  
every destination is a journey  
that begins, to not end  
but to begin another.



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



## **EACH SEASON WITH YOU**

Porous veins of thought

The rambunctious syllables waltzed

'Twas not mere winter but crystals on terra

That had lulled fall to sleep

'Twas not just spring but disheveled grasses that turned  
verdant

Summer no longer lethargic around infernos

But tap danced in tepid air

Autumn no longer an in-between

My verses pirouetting in gold and rust hue

For all the lilting lullaby

One season bid to the next

And yet meter and rhyme

My metaphors intact

A little like my love you became

My poem for all seasons



**Vandana Kumar:** She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She has done her masters in History from Lady Shri Ram College and her Diplôme from the Alliance Française de Delhi. She is a French teacher in a couple of schools and private institutes and also translates for various publishing houses and corporates. An active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi, she has a soft corner for Kolkata where she spent her childhood. Her various passions include singing, playing the

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



## **I SUDDENLY FEEL**

I Suddenly Feel

I suddenly feel the need to tell;  
The need to tell you what I feel;  
What I feel about my various relations  
About my love for each and everyone  
Each of whom I know.

What passed between us is what I have wanted  
What I have wanted I did not get every time,

Every time when I accepted the happening,  
The happening allowed a mediocrity to seep in.  
Each of whom I know knows it now.

So in fine, some of my -ships have flourished and grown  
Some have wilted, some I have thrown.  
Some sought its own mired ends  
While some are gently hopefully in bloom.  
If you know me well, now you know.



**Usha Chandrasekharan:** She is a believer in the power of the universe, in the power of positive energy, in the power of words, in the power of good intentions. She has two children both of good literary prowess, both creative in their own way.



## THE VOICE OF EMPTINESS

Now, the loudest voice of emptiness,  
Is reverberating from the hardest rock.  
There is nothing to subdue or absorb it,  
So it is disturbing me round the clock.  
It tempts and lures the desires to fall,  
It knocks the window pane and the door,  
But my stumbling fingers are condemning it,  
As I don't want the life of an arthospore.



**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.



the wind whispering words

only I can hear.

The wind speaks:

"Come with me, come with me"

I will carry you around- -

over the Earth, over land of green grass,

over rivers deep, mountains high"

I will show you the pyramids,

the Eiffel Tower ,

The Sphinx

the great wall of China"

I want you to see all the

beauty of this world.

The endless seas, the green forests"

"Come with me, come with me -

"I want you to see -

to see it all!"

That's what the wind whispering to me!



**Svanhild Løvli:** I'm a Norwegian poetess.



In Independent India

The mother and son

Walking down the road

Both barefoot,

Hunting for the items

To be salvaged from the

Urban solid waste lying around

The corners of the high-rises in the

Mumbai central suburb;

Early morning,

Before the neighbourhood wakes up

Fully to the sound of screaming school buses

And crowded auto-rickshaws with sleepy kids;  
The young child, hardly seven, slim, in tattered  
Shorts and soiled Tee-shirt, holding a little  
Rucksack over his tiny back, happy in the  
Company of her coughing and skeletal mother  
Tousled and dirty, both on a hunt;  
His daily open-air and free school---  
The uneven roads and dustbins;  
If unable to find discarded items  
In the mountains of garbage  
The family of six will go without food.  
The well-fed joggers avoid the spectres  
The stray dogs chase them  
The security shoos them off the  
Pavements of the gated communities;  
Unmindful, the two keep on surveying  
The locality for the soggy leftovers.  
Is the Great Republic listening?



**Sunil Sharma:** He is Mumbai-based senior academic, critic, literary editor and author with 18 published books: Six collections of poetry; two of short fiction; one novel; a critical study of the novel, and, eight joint anthologies on prose, poetry and criticism. He is a recipient of the UK-based Destiny Poets' inaugural Poet of the Year award---2012. His poems were published in the prestigious UN project: Happiness: The Delight-Tree: An Anthology of Contemporary International Poetry, in the year 2015. Sunil edits the English section of the monthly bilingual journal Setu published from Pittsburgh, USA:

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

For more details, please visit the blog:

<http://www.dr.sunilsharma.blogspot.in/>



Did they build me with love?

Selecting the right materials;

Hammering, shaping, fitting

Together my infinite parts

With patient care?

Like a house built meticulously

On the wings of a dream, a home?

The moneyed can afford that.

The poor build their homes organically

With any old stuff that comes to hand.

Yes, some nourish their offspring with love

But most squeal their woes under the daily grind

And their children grow up wild  
Extracting succour where they can find  
Imbibing and exuding the fumes around them  
The complaints, the judgments, and the hate.  
Mine was a middleclass world,  
Where striving to better was de jure.  
Middle Earth blessed and cursed  
But I chose to be fostered,  
Blooming cocooned in the pages of books.  
Yes, they built me with love and great care  
All those authors who nourished my psyche.



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



## **CLEANSING**

I have to kill

That is my will

I will kill patiently

This I know inherently

For this I will not need any 'astras'

Nor will I need any 'shastras'

There will be no clarion call

No blowing of conch-shell to declare the war

There will be no beating of chest

No war cry at anyone's behest

It will be done subtly

It will be done covertly

One by one my inner demons will fall

The soul's light will begin to shine bright and tall

No inflection or indication will remain

Steadily the light will brighten

The glow will spread all over

Without any resistance it will tower

So let me burn that little lamp in my inner core

To eliminate darkness and to illuminate some more.



**Sudeshna Mukherjee:** She is an Economics Major. She is a poet, short story writer and painter. Her book of poems “Meanderings of the Mind” has been published. Many of her poems have been published in national and international anthologies, magazines and e-publications.



## **SHE AND ME**

Crossing mountain of garbage in street  
Hastily covered my nose to stop repulsive smell  
My eyes fall on her at the center  
She was busy selecting and collecting waste  
She was concentrating on her work  
Nothing else seems to exist for her  
Has she overcome the bad smell  
Or may be hunger smells even worse  
I could not stop to notice her  
But I could not stop my running steps  
I ran out of her world  
Took a deep breath and continue my journey



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



## **WALLFLOWER**

You love me every April  
When I bear my scent as my strength  
My mother's womb is a modular 6 x 4 tray  
In which I survive every harsh winter  
This time I'm born a confident October child  
And the vaunting pride of the cottage garden.

When I smell like shady violets  
You get reminded of certain modesty  
Of a familiar courteous war veteran

Who unexpectedly chose suicide

As a mode of creative freewill

Do I smell of decorous death?

How to know which love I deserve?

A wallflower stays aloof from party animals

Digging into the alkaline soil of memory

Unearthing bygone events from leaf mould

How do I know if you love me for a happy cheer

Or hate me for a sordid idea that declines to depart?

I'm the pop flower of introversion

I'm flashback flora, seldom befriended

I'm the birthday gift that isn't given or taken

The lionized botanica of fond foliage

But for you I was never the sombre Erysimum

I am simply (and always) *your* wallflower.

You forgot me as you forget many other things  
Dusty time clogging the neurons of your brain  
Foxgloves, sweet rocket, sweet william et al  
You day-mind erasing all night-scented stock  
Life isn't always a frost-free condition  
And I went down my alkaline grave.

Your private tears unheeded by November rain  
Your personal grief encased by December snow  
But did you ever cry or feel sorry for me? I doubt.  
Come April, I rise again with a different hue  
Neither do we stop living despite death's mobility  
Nor can we repress memory for the best of desire.



**Subhadeep Paul:** He was born on October 15, 1980 in Kolkata, India. He received part of his early schooling from Dr. Graham's Homes, a boarding school founded by the revered Scottish Missionary John Anderson Graham in Kalimpong, a lovely hill town in North Bengal. Subsequently, he studied at Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission, St. Xavier's College and Jadavpur University from where he obtained a Masters, M. Phil and Ph. D. He is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Bankura University. Dr. Paul's poetry, short stories and non-fictional works have appeared in numerous forums such as 8th Day (The Sunday Statesman), The Telegraph, Earthen Lamp Journal, The Four Quarters Magazine, Blue Minaret, North East Review, Edi-Blossom (from Edinburgh) etc. An anthology of his poems entitled 'Finite Sketches, Infinite Reaches' was published by Writers Workshop Kolkata in 2007. He is currently working on a family saga structured as a three-generation quest novel.



## **MY CRAVING HEART**

Years have been passed

I am searching for true love and care

Sacrificing for others

My own heart got bare!

I never demanded any money, or comfort

Never asked for any luxury

My heart kept on beating

Only to listen a soothing word among worries!

I actually don't know,

What is my fault

Why God provided me  
with such a heart!

For the care of other's feelings  
I forgot my own  
Buried all my ambitions  
All wishes somewhere gone!

Alas, there was a time  
When I was living my life  
With a freedom  
I was struggling to survive!

It's time to take a call now  
For how long my heart will crave  
O' my lord, now free me  
From being a slave!

Listen, O' God

I wanna live my life again

This world doesn't deserve care

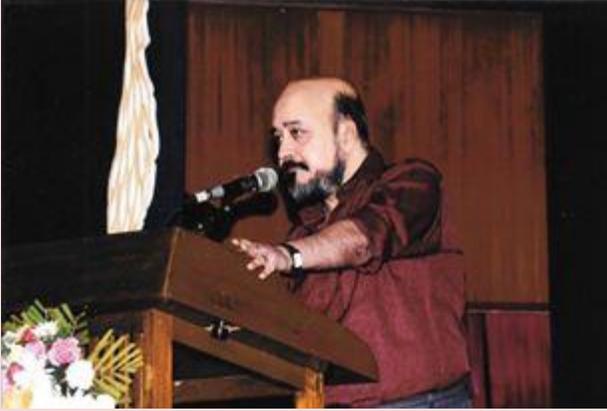
All sacrifices are in vain!



**Sonia Gupta:** She is an oral pathologist and senior lecturer in a dental institute. She has published two anthologies in English and two in Hindi. She has also contributed to several anthologies, and is a regular contributor on GloMag. She has received the Nari gaurav samman, Yug surbhi samman, Prem sagar samman, Women of the year samman, sahitay gaurav samman in hindi literature awards.



Like a new-flung thought  
That cracks the skin  
Of jaded belief  
And wreathes its ripples  
For a whole generation,  
Let's aim the child  
At the turn of the sky  
Where darkness waits  
In sure knowledge  
Of the cracking dawn.



**Shreekumar Varma:** He is an Indian author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet. He received the R. K. Narayan Award for Excellence in Writing in English in 2015. He is known for the novels Lament of Mohini, Maria's Room, Devil's Garden: Tales Of Pappudom, The Magic Store of Nu-Cham-Vu and the historical book for children, Pazhassi Raja: The Royal Rebel. He is the great great grandson of the artist Raja Ravi Varma and grandson of Regent Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, the last ruling Maharani of Travancore. He is married to Geeta Varma (poet, teacher and columnist) and has two children, Vinayak and Karthik.



## **A DAUGHTER'S JOURNEY THROUGH TIME**

Daughter, whose wide world brimming with hopes and goals

Swimming through tides of time, loads of which abounding  
Into the richness of time and seeping through curtains of  
timelessness

Being born, eyes widening at the magnificent world  
expanding

Into the world of beauteousness

Growing up, being a woman

A seemingly beautiful world, a yeoman life

Which holds for joyousness and calmness

Life, in all its glory

Would it provide the richness of salvation, as if in a story

Wherein the mind reaches the soul

In all its pristine glory



**Shobha Warriar:** Born near Trichur in Kerala, Shobha was highly influenced by her maternal grandfather who was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar. Shobha has a keen interest in languages, be it prose or poetry. She has also worked as a teacher in schools for some time.



## HEART

I beat a pump, oh like a drum  
I do so to such rhythm,  
A body's dance, a hopeless trance  
And I'd be at work hidden.

In cages dark that stretch out far  
I lie beneath the surface,  
In hot or cold or moanful groans  
Conducting chemical service.  
I grew so fast I thought I'd last,

Then came a terrible blow,  
A war is on which side I'm for  
I still seem not to know.

In cages dark that stretch out far,  
I heave a thumping rhythm,  
Push hateful screams in silent streams,  
Of blood to soon be ridden.

I see the sky, oh body of mine  
The blade has kissed your skin,  
My bitter screams lay terrible streams  
Of longings from within.

I beat a pump, oh like a drum  
I sing the c'est la vie,  
And do so loud and search the crowds,  
For one to sing with me.



**Shivank Sarin:** Like chocolate sprinkles on dessert, poetry and music have added excitement and sweetness to my life. I'm technically 18, but to me, age acts as no barrier towards being cynical or insightful. I'm notorious for my gluttonous appetite and even skipping social gatherings just to attend music lessons. I'm a first-year student studying Economics at Ashoka University, where I hope to further develop my musical, literary as well as professional abilities. Would love to hear from you at [shivanksarin98@gmail.com](mailto:shivanksarin98@gmail.com)



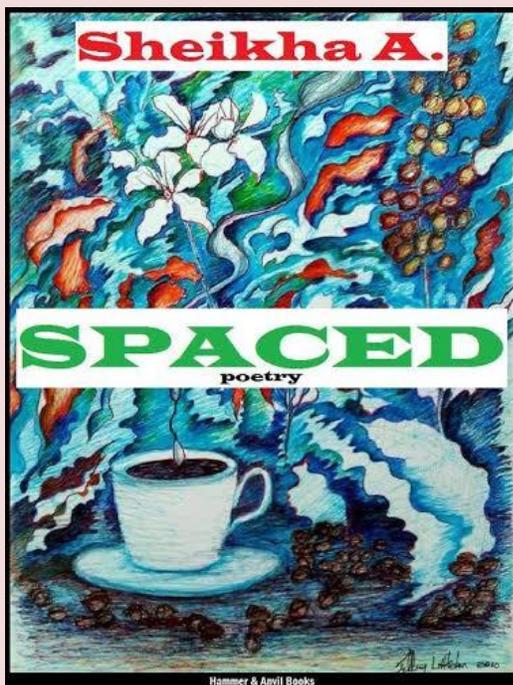
*('Floating unto Eternity' by Suvojit Banerjee)*

## **KEEP ME UNBLED**

*(inspired from Suvojit Banerjee's concepts on faceless anonymity)*

Starting the exchange by 'in retrospect',  
the faceless distinctions ever marked,  
whether you be a blurry name, or trend  
of a forgotten memory bark; any which  
way the tides have gone, a face blurred  
in the midst of blurs; trodden the earth  
mask-less curves, but a blur to give form

from the mind's furrowing swerves.  
Afar, anear! Hear I float, here I pray!  
Anon a phantom wall will shed – bars  
iron, manacles. I would not survive  
sans illusory thrive – let me write this  
aplenty abet. Reflect in me piece by  
piece; keep my walls, keep me unbled.



**Sheikha A.:** She is from Pakistan and United Arab Emirates. Her work has appeared in over 80 literary venues both print and online. She edits poetry at eFiction India. More about her can be found on her blog [sheikha82.wordpress.com](http://sheikha82.wordpress.com)



## **THE DARK HOLDS NO TERRORS**

People say dark holds terror,  
the belief which has captured,  
our minds since childhood,  
is it true, I don't think so.

The dark holds no terror,  
The terrors are inside us,  
in our hearts and minds,  
we weave it on our false belief,

on the myths and believes of others.

We nourish it unexpectedly  
and slowly-slowly it stretches

like a fierce claw

on our own personality  
giving us a major threat,  
leading to a state of insecurity.

This fear is a mere illusion,  
or just our own imagination,  
which we have to overcome,  
as the dark holds no terror,  
but the terrors are inside us.



**Shamenaz:** I reside in Allahabad. I am a freelance writer, passionate reader, blogger, and poet, with many published poems in E-journals & magazines in India. I have presented papers in India and abroad. I am in the Editorial board of journals: Literary Miscellany, Cyber Literature, Research Access, Expression, The Context & IJRHS (Jordan). I am the Guest Editor of 'The Context' Volume 2, issue 3. I have served as a Chairperson of Women Cell of my College, AIET & Cultural Incharge, AIET.



## **BLACK & WHITE W/A GREAT GREY**

One eye sees straight through your darkest shadows;  
the other seeks pure light to flood in waves.

Wisdom pours through electric cables;  
a predator waits to feast upon knowledge gained.

Silently stalking the truth  
found in the marrow of bones.

Patient ... calm ... at peace  
with the perfect schism.

Perched above with the gods of sky;  
gazing down upon the dualistic nature below.

There is a season for all things in this life;  
tender lips that softly kiss and jagged teeth that rip to tear.

One eye divines the sins lurking deep within your soul;  
the other dares to open wide your third.



**Scott Thomas Outlar:** He hosts the site [17Numa.wordpress.com](http://17Numa.wordpress.com) where links to his published poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, reviews, and books can be found.



**Paula Dawn Lietz:** She is an award winning photographer, artist and published writer of various genres in numerous formats presented in publications such as; *When Women Waken*, *Knot Lit Magazine*, *Life and Legends-Silent River*

Films and Literacy, The Best of Enchanting Voices, Levure Litteraire, Labletter Monthly, Haiku and Tanka Society Cattails, Ygdrasil a Journal of the Poetic Arts, Red Fez, Mad Swirl, Blue Heron Review and Hedgerow Poetry to note but a few as well as resident artist for Writing For Peace. Each reflecting upon the other the fine network of the best writers, artists, editors, poets and publishers the world has to offer.



The nest so built  
on the leaves that spill  
Is no less than  
a sewn quilt

One feather here  
one over there  
Spread all over  
till it could bear

But Roses n riches  
acquired now  
with a streak of heat  
may turn to ashes

If future is all  
that you wanna sought  
This my dear  
Is your last call

Live thy present  
so the leaves don't spill  
then like a spoilsport  
you won't repent



**Satya Vadlamani:** She hails from Hyderabad and works for a construction company. She likes to experiment on various poetry forms with diverse genres and feel that one should be exposed to enjoyable forms of writing. She is also a co-founder and organiser at Twin cities poetry club, Hyderabad.



He comes upon me black as night

He comes upon so dark giving me a fright

He comes upon me an ugly sight

He comes upon me with all his might

He came when my love passed

He came when I saw my friends last

He came after the last time I had a blast

He came, he came running so fast

He calls himself uninvited

He calls himself for pleasure where pain is cited

He calls himself an emotional mess

He calls himself Loneliness.



**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.



## **THE GREEN LAWN MOWER**

The green lawn mower in a corner of the garden

Under the neem tree, so rusted and woebegone

Lackluster and bored, just naps.

Hey, what's that? Ah joyful tidings!

The surroundings ring with shouts of joy, half-crazed.

"Oh boy! Oh boy!" I listen, amazed.

A bunch of kids, go into a frenzy of clapping.

Clap- clap- clap!

The green lawn mower no longer naps.

The teacup beckons, the elusive rain goes pitter-patter

The emaciated peahen looks fatter.

The birds swoop down enthralled by this pitter-patter.

Sporadic raindrops, like drafts clattering

Through a rusty typewriter, splatter with a pitter and a patter.

The chickens skitter, thither hither

Like bitter misunderstandings bandying back and forth.

The rain is a poem with erratic lineation

A free verse, with a nondescript rhythmic pattern.

A stern looking painter in the hotel lobby dips his brush in paints

And immortalizes the green lawn mower

Splashing some rain glitter, ah the lawn mower is no longer bitter.

Pitter patter, patter pitter.

Splatter! The lawn mower stirs,

“Come, I will mow the lawn for you to make your walk smooth.”

It whispers; the truth of a new dawn lisps

On a rain-drenched lawn.

Clap! Clap! Clap! Go the kids

Onwards the lawn mower skids

Gaining momentum, as the rain hums.

An invisible guitarist strums, and that is all that really matters.

With joyous aplomb the rain pitter-patters

In self-congratulatory mirth, perking up a bedraggled earth.

A new fire burns in the stern painter’s heart

He smiles too, with a vigor new.



**Santosh Bakaya:** Academician-novelist - poet-essayist, Dr Santosh Bakaya, has been internationally acclaimed for her poetic biography of Mahatma Gandhi, *Ballad of Bapu*, [Vitasta publishers India, 2015] for her collection of peace poems, *Where are the lilacs ?* [Authors press, India, 2016] and her book of essays: *Flights from my terrace* [Earlier an e-book on Smashwords [ 2014] now has an updated printed version, Authors press INDIA, 2017]. Extensively interviewed and awarded, her latest poetry book: *Under the apple boughs*, has just gone to the press and she is giving finishing touches to her two novels, one a satire on higher education and the other, a breezy love story.



## **JUNAID**

Junaid, my friend, Sleep now.

No saffron will touch you

No white nor even the green!

Junaid, my brother, sleep now.

You need not to travel

Now by any bus or by any train!

Junaid, my dream, sleep now.

My lullabies, now you don't need.

O Junaid, Who killed you,

They can't be Hindu,

Can't be Muslims nor animals of any breed!

Junaid, my youth, sleep now.

You are my blooming nation.  
Even after death, you are still there  
In our dream, in our passion.  
Junaid, my child, my sweet teen  
With your ammi, we all your mothers are crying.  
Junaid, my boy, you don't belong  
To only one religion.  
O Junaid! How can you go?  
When you are living in hearts of millions!!



**Sanhita Sinha:** She is a native of Tripura, is a teacher, a bilingual poet. Her poems got published in different national and international anthologies, journals & magazines like "Heavens above poetry below," "A haiku

Treasury," "In our own words," "Scaling heights," "Epitaphs," "Milenge," "IFLAC PEACE ANTHOLOGY," "BETRAYAL," KIRNOKAL," "ANTOHKORON," "RUPANTAR," "PURBHABASH," "GALAXY," etc. Apart from writing she is actively engaged in cultural activities too. She is a regular artist of television and radio too.



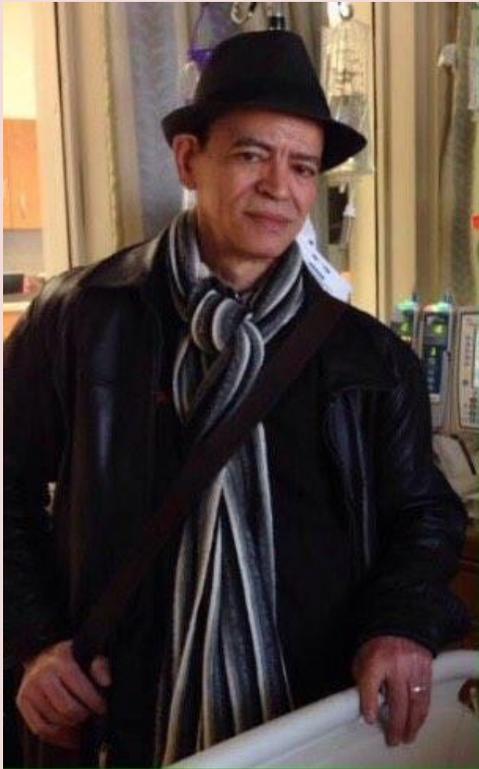
## **ONLY MY MIND HAS WINGS**

If I were meant to fly,  
I would have been born  
Like a bird with wings  
But only my mind has them:  
Magically my thoughts fly  
And so my vivid dreams!

Only my imaginary wings  
Can flap against the wind  
And be able to reach you

All the way there  
in your peaceful nest!

Knowing that birds  
can also sing  
But can never write,  
I take the liberty  
To drop my humble lines  
On this blank page  
Since I am the poet,  
Not the singing bird!



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



## **JUST ANOTHER KNIGHT ON STRAIGHT STREET**

Rico dropped by the other night

a new girl

tattooed on his forearm...

That makes five distant memories

and a few bottles of blue black ink.

He brought along some owl feathers to trade-

said he shot the bird himself.

But the turquoise he wanted was expendable,  
owl feathers aren't.

Rico didn't hang around too long-  
sped off on his Harley...  
thirsty July leaves scattered.

Telephone pole on the corner didn't flinch  
when Rico dropped it:

orange fire...

sirens and screams...

gasoline and burning owl feathers.



**Robert Feldman:** Born in Paterson, New Jersey, he was inspired at an early age by members of Paterson’s literary tradition, most notably Louis and Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams. As a young adult while living in St. Louis, he organized various poetry readings, produced and hosted a community issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. It was during this time his interest and admiration for the Beat Generation flourished. Robert was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona’s most influential writers such as Drummond Hadley and Michael Gregory, and in 1980, collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, “Mule Mountain Dreams.” During the ’80s and ’90s, he participated in dozens of poetry readings around the country. Now years later, he continues to write, paint, and play tabla, besides working with high-school students as faculty advisor of the Park Vista Writers Workshop. The

body of Robert Feldman's writing and painting can be accessed at [www.albionmoonlight.net](http://www.albionmoonlight.net); he can be reached at [rffeldman@gmail.com](mailto:rffeldman@gmail.com).



There is a sadness in this town.  
People grow old with buildings,  
the one who works in a movie-theatre  
was very young the other day  
now, his face is layered  
with generations of life.  
The owner of the medical-  
shop, who gives an aspirin  
for everything, had reportedly  
gone to a picnic long ago  
and never returned.  
The taverns once filled  
with noise are empty now.

"Only lonely people are coming  
these days" the bar-owner said:  
"they occupy 4-seater tables  
and drink all alone. It's like  
they are conversing with  
some phenomenon" he  
reckoned in horror.

In the slowness of repetitive nights,  
the dogs chase winds from cemeteries,  
The trains slow down at empty stations,  
The steps descend the spiral staircase.  
An aged God sleeps on footpath,  
shivering with cold, recounting  
his memories in sleep.



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



*The Triumph of Death by Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted c. 1562.*

Death  
arrives  
before time  
unexpectedly  
an inconsiderate guest  
we're not ready  
to die  
just yet  
but we've got to go  
no excuses  
no pardon

no redemption  
children  
elderly  
women  
men  
everyone  
must die  
without complaint  
but we may  
choose  
who will kill us  
religious minions  
government agents  
lynch mobs  
we can also choose  
the mode  
if we wish  
the gun

missiles

bombs

plane crash

trucks

knives

clubs

the choice is endless

so choose wisely

to make our last moments

as pleasant

as possible

if we're

terribly lucky

we may get away with

an amputated leg

or two

or disfigured face

or blindness

or lost sanity  
only if we're lucky  
till then  
we all live  
in fear  
in anticipation  
of death  
made in our own  
country  
state  
locality  
made by our own  
species  
homo sapiens



**Rita Bhattacharjee:** She is a communications consultant, having managed corporate and internal communications for companies across diverse industries and continents, including non-profit organizations. She is the co-founder of Mission Arogya and Arogya HomeCare and has recently relocated from the USA to India to channel her skills towards social entrepreneurship to increase awareness and reduce disparity in public health. A passionate poet, her poetry has been included in anthologies and published in reputed international journals, including The Copperfield Review, Contemporary Literary Review, Camel Saloon, Café Dissensus, About Place Journal, and Kitaab.



## **DISINTEGRATING**

I watched you once  
from behind the school wall  
kicking a pebble all the way home  
and knew a stone could keep you  
forever  
so I became one  
rolling everywhere your feet went  
always a step ahead  
till you got tired of the game  
but not of me

Then one day I remained motionless  
while you kicked with all your might  
but in vain

for I had grown painful roots

You changed your tactics

and removed your shoe

to rub at your hurt toe

glaring at my temerity

For the first time ever

you picked me up in your palm,

looked at the illogical shape that I was

and threw me away

You never saw that your kicks had left me cracked, the rain  
had seeped inside and found a seed



**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.



## **THE SPIDER AND THE BUTTERFLY**

one day the spider died in its web.

her finely spun web shivered in the breeze

with its little cocoons of ants, fireflies and beetles.

none dared approach fearing instant mummification.

not even to mate.

abandoned by both prey and mate

she slowly shriveled in the sun.

till a butterfly was caught in the web.

the web had lost its glue by then

blown on hard by harsh dry winds.  
the daring butterfly moved up along  
one of the silken routes  
to reach the flower as it seemed.

but the spider had not died yet.  
it clasped the butterfly  
in one last deathly hug.  
the butterfly clasped the spider  
to draw honey from it.  
they started a love game  
yet unknown to the world.  
a game that would soon see  
both alive and both dead  
both satiated and both thirsty.

the web was blown to dust  
and the remains of love/death

scattered in the wind.  
the world has not seen  
a spider or a butterfly  
ever since.



**Ravi Shanker (Ra Sh):** He translates from Malayalam and Tamil to English and vice versa. Published English translations of stories by Bama (Tamil), Mother Forest (from Malayalam) and Waking is Another Dream (Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry) and for Anthologies of Dalit literature published by OUP and Penguin India. Published poems in magazines, journals and anthologies. He is one of the five contributing poets to the anthology, "A Strange Place Other Than Earlobes" (five voices seventy poems). A collection of his poetry, "Architecture of Flesh" was published by Paperwala in 2015. E-mail: [shankeran@gmail.com](mailto:shankeran@gmail.com)



## **GODHRA REVISITED**

The train moved from the station

Like a sluggish giant,

Minutes later it halted

Why was it playing truant?

Inside there was a happy chaos

Of arms, legs and voices,

Shouts and laughter, yells and smiles

And all the normal noises.

Suddenly there was an eerie calm  
Inside the crowded train  
Outside there were a thousand faces  
Ready to play Cain.

Stones were hurled, doors shut  
It drizzled and rained petrol,  
Man had gone in hibernation  
A beast had taken control.

No one was spared not even  
The tiny hearts and souls,  
It was a collage of burning flesh, roasting limbs  
And a litany of shrieks and howls.

Across the land the word spread  
Of the gruesome game of death,

Revenge became the flavour of the day  
Venom spewed with every breath.

Messiahs of hate roamed the streets  
In search of an eye for an eye,  
They blazed a trail of unbridled anger  
And left humanity to die.

Vultures descended on the corpse  
Tearing away chunks of flesh  
Self-serving netas and hacks  
Were salivating for the meat so fresh.

For the netas it was a bonanza  
Which would turn into actual votes,  
The hacks were sniffing at stories  
Reality bites, succulent scoops and quotes.

For the bureaucracy and the judiciary  
It was time to wake up from stupor,  
Make suitable noises  
And slip back into slumber.

Corrupt politicians, self-seeking media  
Inept bureaucracy and impotent judiciary,  
The nation had been held to ransom  
By the four pillars of democracy.

A riot is never a creation,  
Of any community, creed or caste,  
It is our rotten system  
That is behind every holocaust.

Our apathy, inertia and greed  
Have created this brutal system

Where man feeds on man  
In the name of blessed religion.

Will we allow the land of the Mahatma  
To be raped and ravaged?  
Or will we cleanse our nation  
By launching a fresh crusade.

Godhra has taught us a lesson  
We should all keep in mind,  
'An eye for an eye will only make,  
The whole world blind'.

We should pledge to exorcise the demons  
Of greed, hatred and violence,  
And make our country a Utopia  
By giving love and peace a chance.



**Ramendra Kumar:** What would you call a person who is a writer by passion, a story teller by obsession, a mentor by aspiration and a communicator by profession? You would probably call him insane. Well, we call him Ramen.

[www.ramendra.in](http://www.ramendra.in)



## OF PLACES AND POETRY

i come from naked nights  
where i lay restlessly  
musing over the midnight moon.

~

i come from days that  
bloom brighter  
at the edge of her smile.

~

i come from broken dreams and  
obstinate hearts  
that don't know how to un-love.

i come from parched pages  
poured with stillborn syllables  
of desolate hearts.

~

i come to you,  
yet  
i'm never there,  
i'm never there.

~



**Rajesh Jethwani:** He was born in Madras and has done his BA in economics. He now takes care of his family business and has his own online store. His love for tea resulted in a beautiful tea house he now runs along with his best friends. He loves train journeys, photography, eating out and

playing cricket. He loves writing and reading love poems.  
His poem was first published last year in South Africa.



## **RAINDROPS**

is it rain  
or you within,  
dancing in drops  
on my parched skin?

each drop brings  
a piece of sky  
each pore  
becomes an eye

dance in rain

I still do

and the rain dances

around you...



**Rajendra Pradhan:** He was born on October 5, 1959. He is a qualified civil engineer. He is a businessman and the CEO of Pradhan Builders. His hobbies include sculpture, photography, writing and poetry (in Marathi and English). All these are self-taught arts. He has published an anthology of poems. He has won competitions in photography. He has won a Maharashtra State Level award for his sculpture in a nationwide contest held by Prafulla Dahanukar Art Foundation, Mumbai.



## NIHILISM TAKING ITS TOLL

Yonder nihilistic boat  
in its anchor awaiting  
the seasoned call of its  
master. This is not the  
only one. To my surprise  
many I have witnessed  
making inroads into  
smooth sails of those  
in untroubled waters.  
These nihilistic boats

have no select Seasons  
or set reasons, nor are they  
weathered by stormy winds  
or torpedoes. Creating whirlpools  
is the pastime of this  
nihilistic boats. Crew and cabin  
have washed their sins easy  
as the bodies are washed ashore.  
As always you cling to  
His Feet, seek His Magic Wand  
To protect you ever, ever.



**S. Radhamani:** She was born in Madras, did B.A.English ,obtained M.A.English from Venkateswara University, Tirupati, did her doctoral thesis on W.H.Auden's Plays, subsequently obtained PGDTE from CIEFL (Hyderabad). A Professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience in a post-graduate and research institution, published four books of poems and one book of short story, widely published and anthologized, guided M.phil research scholars and PhD candidates, and a reviewer and critic. Also published poems and short stories in many websites, presented papers in National and International conferences.

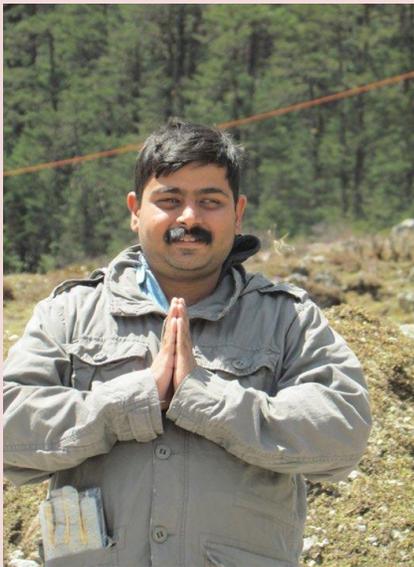


Someone write me a love song  
There shouldn't be any diesel smoke in it  
or cafes or cappucinos and no movies  
I'd like some roses in them  
But if you could do me posies  
And wildflowers and picnics by the river  
  
And maybe write into it  
A tumble in the wet grass  
With my love's breath in my hair  
That overcomes the Spring itself

And the fresh salt of the lovers' kiss  
In the half-dark moonlight

And if you just find your way  
To putting in a dusk-lit walk  
In a forest glade (without the snakes)  
And some place to make love  
All hot and sweaty and...

Someone write me a love song



**Raamesh Gowri Raghavan:** He moonlights as an award-winning copywriter by day and daylights as an award-

wanting poet by night, and sandwiches an archaeology course, running two literary clubs, astronomy, the occasional trek, some peer counselling for suicide prevention, and learning languages in between. He thinks he is funny, but his friends vehemently disagree.



## **SHINING SUMMER**

As the breeze blows

Through the tall trees

My wings of fancy touch

The heights of the blue horizon.

As the dew drops of mist

Glisten on the green grass

My heart yearns to compose

The magical song for you.

A fragrant breeze fills the air around me

Love brings new twists and turns

When the indigo clouds unfold their secrets

Behind the black velvety curtain

At the arrival of the night queen.  
Earth becomes fertile, and  
The flowering trees take deep breaths  
After a sudden shower of dewy rain.  
The sun peeps through the coconut leaves  
When the lotus blooms in the village ponds.  
Love revives the soul  
As the first shower of spring,  
Like a murmuring stream of summer,  
Like a beautiful flower blooming in the dense forest, and  
The soul starts floating in the air  
Shining happily.



**Preety Bora:** The poetess, Mrs Preety Bora started writing from her college days on. She hails from a beautiful state "Assam" (India). She lives in Golaghat with her son and husband. Nature inspires her to write poetry. She writes in both languages: English and Assamese (Mother tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in foreign countries. She also wins various poetry contests in India organized by various groups.



draw our selfies  
in the canvas of life  
beautiful or ugly  
decide ourselves  
whatever we draw  
we have to live in.



to the weak & the meek  
share as much as we can

be the giver of love  
see our god in their smile.



wherever we are  
whatever we are  
doesn't matter  
we are same.  
unique creation  
of the same God.



**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.

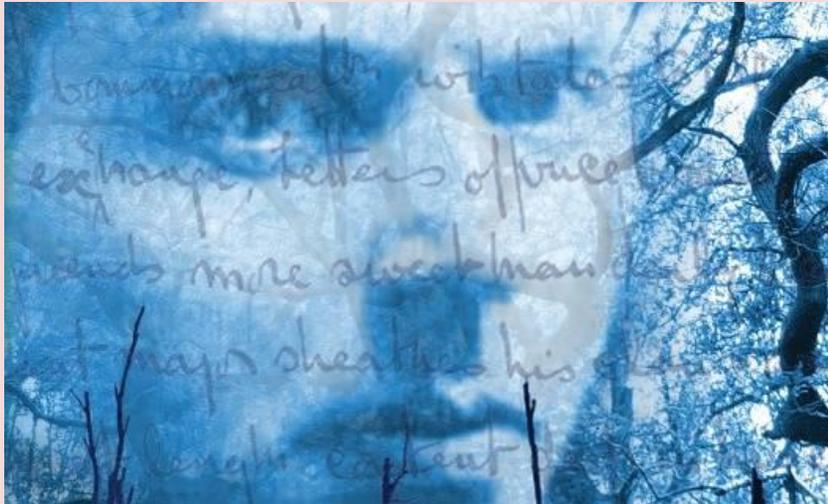


*In response to the Special Award declared by Reuel International to Sherin Mary Zachariah, daughter of our new member, Sangeetha John.*

Way to go, my nebulous angel,  
Formless we are, you have again underlined,  
Each one of us has to search, 'the mist of myself',  
you have again emphasised,  
Yes, in helping you, actually we are discovering ourselves,  
Our beautiful pristine side,  
Which needs to be cleansed of our ego, our petty  
mindedness,  
Yes dear, we need to throw away our street savvy ness, our  
cynicism, our cold bloodedness,  
Make a world habitable for savants like you,  
Messengers of divinity.



**Pratima Apte:** I am an English Hons. Graduate of Delhi University. I am a homemaker, recently turned grandmother! I used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. I love reading and writing, words are my world. My interests in reading are self-help books, spiritual and cookbooks and fiction. Books by Ayn Rand, Taylor Caldwell, Leon Uris, J Krishnamurthy, Dan Brown have been my favourites, as also layman's homeopathy, astrology and medical books.



## **UNLESS I WRITE**

Unless I write

Words will

Die a silent death

My eyes

Give birth to a beautiful

Canvas that you say, sky

Words illuminate like stars

The night looks like a bride

Veiled are those faces of life

Ornamental being our imagination

Poetry Oscillate in between silence and word!

Life is simply inhalation and exhalation of words

With many a whistle stops left the train of life on its own  
predestined track

Just a journey is poetry

Never ever a destination!

So what if the moon has committed suicide

So what if stars look like assassins

So what if the beloved's lip is red

And her palms are splattered with blood

So what if knife has taken the place of pen

Who is that trespasser

Inking the sky

Burning the oil of the mid night's lamp?

Under the canopy of His eye leaf

I can see the march past of naked children

Where are they going

Let someone stop

I am afraid, they may devour all the stars of this beautiful 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. Dr. Satpathy is a Reader in economics, working at present in Rajendra autonomous college, Balangir (Odisha). He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as honorary member for two consecutive terms.



## **A TOKEN TEAR**

I cried a little expressive tear  
When my token gesture died  
And I lay down on my flowerbed  
And crumpled up inside

My winsome way was lost today  
I knew that all was wrong  
No one heard my plaintive cry  
Now I'd have to be strong

So don't you worry, don't you fret  
I'll pass this day in sorrow

And when all seems so at a loss

There is always tomorrow



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

In December 2013, he was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease and died in 2015.



## THE SAYS

The Gust Says

“Enough. I’m sick  
of being the only one

who moves things about.

It’s regime change.

I will not be moved. Dust,  
leaves, cans, paper will

have to move themselves.  
Windfarms using my service

without a thought to what  
I want. Waves too. Totally

oblivious to my needs.  
It's an effort to stay still,

but I will do it. I'm no longer  
the wind of change. Do it

yourselves. How do you  
make a difference?

Put your lips together  
and blow.”

## The Rocks Say

"Enough! Years we've let you

walk all over, clamber

all over, stab us with

steel pinions to secure

your sense of comfort.

It's time for us to forego

this malaise and move

like stone giants

in your legends.

Stretch our legs, work

these tired sinews.

We're doing you a favour.

We warn you. So you can  
become refugees  
Once your home  
is rubble and you flee  
the fires and explosions,

As if we've declared war  
on you, when all I  
do is move."

The Skies Say

Enough! You go through us.  
You really do.

We're all air to you. All clouds  
and flitting. Our colours

and appearance pushed about  
by Gust, Sun and Moon.

You think we can't stand up  
for ourselves. You think  
we have no strength of our own.

Be careful!

One time we'll be so still,  
even the stars won't move.

One time we'll be so stood  
even the sun won't budge.

That day is on its way  
over the horizon.

## Gust Says Too

' I can make hills jump,  
and seas hills, I can make you suffer.'

You're a bully' says the quiet earth.  
Gust says 'I belong.' then disappears.

Soil shouts 'Who to?'  
'I belong here.' to Gust already gone.

Gust returns lifts soil to another place.  
Gust tumbled through the grass blades.

'I'll spoil your hairdo',  
'Spread my seeds' replied grass.

'I can always redo my hair later.'

Gust to rock 'I will wear you down. I swear.'

and promptly forgot what it said.

Gust returned with grit in its teeth

unaware of what it had said.

Gust blew dead leaves into a blazing swirl.

'I can make you live again' it said.

No reply,

but a rustle from leaves on the tree above.



**Paul Brookes:** He was shop assistant, security guard, postman, admin., assistant, lecturer, poetry performer, with "Rats for Love"; his work was included in "Rats for Love: The Book", Bristol Broadsides, 1990. First chapbook was "The Fabulous Invention Of Barnsley", Dearne Community Arts, 1993. Read his work on BBC Radio Bristol, had writing workshop for sixth formers broadcast on BBC Radio Five Live. He was recently published in Clear Poetry, Nixes Mate, The Bezzine, The Bees Are Dead and others. Forthcoming two illustrated chapbooks "The Spermbot Blues" published by OpPRESS (summer, 2017) and tentatively in autumn "The Headpoke" by Alien Buddha Press.



## PETRICHOR

The untimely rain hiccups, sputters, and breathes its last even before the puddles begin to form.

A few isolated raindrops cling to the car's windshield and when I floor the gas pedal, a draught of air makes them glide up the glass, against the pull of earth, meandering over an unseen trail as if they ache to dissolve back into the bosom of the clouds above.

Later, I halt by a roadside tea-shop and between sips of hot masala chai watch a group of men chop down an old neem. As they load the twisted limbs onto a rattling lorry, leaving behind the blot of a stump on the landscape,

I wonder if I could map the events of my life over the rings  
of this felled tree.

*sway of paddy —*

*this need to find meaning*

*in every occurrence*



**Paresh Tiwari:** An electrical engineer by profession, a creative writer, and illustrator by choice, Paresh Tiwari, grew up in the labyrinthine lanes of Lucknow. He took to Japanese literary short forms in the winter of 2012. Since then his haiku, haibun, tanka, haiga, free-form poems and flash fiction pieces have been published in various journals, anthologies and books. His first collection of haiku and haibun ‘An inch of sky’ was published by 20 Notebooks Press and is available online.



Lost in my own Home

Usurped my space

I am captive

I wear a mask even in sleep

Lest someone may wake up

See my unmasked Face.

Have you ever felt a stranger in your home

Invite unsocial guests for stay

Don't have to invite

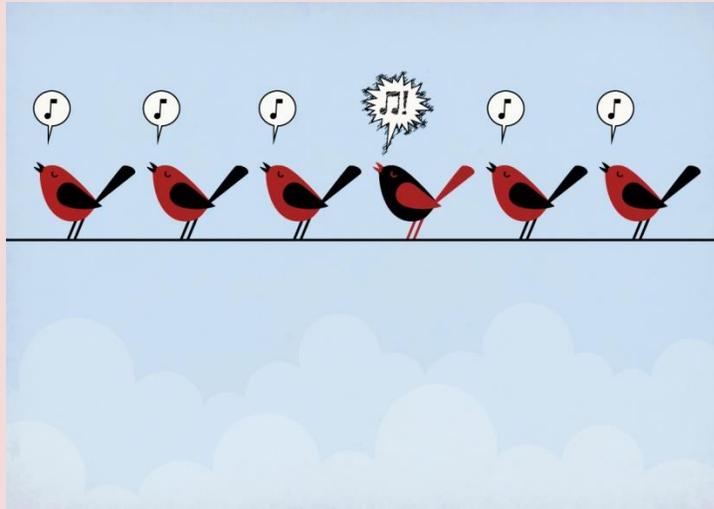
Let them barge in

Invade every inch of space

Masked face home Masked.



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



## FLAWS

Point not my flaws thus

Doing so you bare my muck.

I want the world to know me

A person fair and full of glee

Dig not my flaws or look into it

I fear what others will make of it

For I have celebrated another's

Splashed it insensitively all over.

My flaws are either inherent

Or thrust upon me. Chagrined,  
I sneak in the dark every night  
Away from my reality in stupor flight

But everything that hides, even flaws  
Live in perpetual fear of being flogged,  
Bared and shamed before the world  
So thicker lies ensue for it to not unfurl

Praise me for virtues I possess not  
Dance I will with glee, but taunt  
My folly so apparent brazenly  
I will murder you before truth kills me

*(How do you handle your flaws? Have you embraced that side of the scale?)*



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



A little bird has adopted my window ledge  
Twittering and cooing all day long  
He alights each time swiftly  
And stops my breath when he teeters  
On the edge of the ledge

I like him and he seems to accept me  
With a scrutinizing look with beady black orbs  
I don't know, where does he go sometimes,  
All I know is that the familiar sight  
And sounds of him  
Fill my heart with a glad delight,

Is he a minstrel of hope  
Sent to remind me that life should be leisurely  
Cooing and fluttering his wing  
As he surveys his kingdom.

'Rats of the sky', 'vermin',  
common epithets for him and his ilk  
I don't know or care if he is the most  
Unattractive of his species.

He is a symbol of life,  
So precious and full with  
A voice brimming and bubbling with joy.



**Padmini Rambhatla:** She is a homemaker and Creative writing teacher who enjoys her different roles as loving wife to an awesome and caring hubby, and as mom to her two sons, Rahul and Arjun. She loves the company of her students and strives to make them enjoy reading, writing and using their imagination to create wholesome and interesting stories. She enjoys watching movies in English, Tamil and Hindi. Padmini dabbles in art occasionally and loves cooking a variety dishes for friends and family.



## **CELEBRATING WOMEN**

You are Strong!

The woman is of equal essence,  
in the words of our Heavenly Father  
she's called a Man- a FE...male man  
F.ully E.quipped M.A.L.E man  
FEMALE.

Her value radiates from His presence  
A WO...man is a man with a WOMB,  
she is in no way lesser than anyone  
she's not the weaker vessel you think  
her kind is a vessel the Father calls HELPER.

She's a BEING

not an object of exploration and exploitation

she's a BEAUTY

not an erectile ejaculating inducing device.

She's a BLESSED PHENOMENON

not your sensual lustful desires

she's all and more- INDESCRIBABLE.

She's the only access point into existence for humans

even the Ultimate King couldn't but obey protocol

though He bypassed the male ritual.

she's the one whose worth can never be forgotten-

She's that significant

A phenomenon woman,

you are important

just the way you are

who He created you to be

She is asked and taught to submit

Let's face facts

can a leader lead without serving?  
She's a standard to meet-  
Surely the man is the head  
but nowhere is it said she's the tail  
in-fact as it is said,  
'she's the heart-  
which head can stand without the heart?'  
A woman wasn't created to attract men  
men were created to be attracted to women  
know who you are  
grow in this knowledge  
let no one tell you different  
and this world would be a better place for you.



**Oluwatosin S. Olabode:** He is a speaker, poet, blogger and writer. He is a Christian, an idealist and a 'future thinker'. He resides in Jos, Nigeria. He goes by the stage name, Double\_ST (SST), which stand for Strictly Simple from Tosin-given to him as a result of the simplicity of his message. He writes Poetry, nonfiction and a little bit of fiction; including drama depending on the context. His works centers on God, man and life.



## **AUTUMN/WINTER THOUGHTS**

The year-long pageantry of nature  
ends with the suicide of the leaves  
carrying with them a freight of untold wealth  
transitioning from playful to pensive  
like an avant-garde dilettante

A trending bounded curve  
blunting the keen edge of curiosity  
transcending through the cultural zeitgeist  
their facade, a life hidden behind verisimilitude

Those leaves once described as lovely and useful  
now bear the moniker 'late'  
as little ridges of snow crust the fingers of God.



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



On some monsoon evenings  
I miss the splendor of my city  
its own wily way to tell me to pause  
and chatter with myself  
the halt at the signal and the pause at the monda market  
the hawkers noise that insulates my own devious plans that  
interfere with faith  
and the call of the mynahs,  
the illiterate one that remembers its notes.



**Nivedita Narsapuram:** She is an unschooled student of poetry and prose. She writes to make sense of the chaotic world around through her stories and poetry. Among her other interests, she loves exploring Wisconsin and soaking in the warmth of its people and its harsh winters. She blogs at: [nnivedita.com](http://nnivedita.com).



## **IF FREEDOM WAS A PERSON**

If freedom was a person,  
you'd imagine his  
ribs to be stronger than ours, because his lungs never  
learnt  
to breathe with burden weighing heavy upon them,  
his heart never feared shattering,  
tendons snapping,  
tissue scarring, so  
it never would be  
quite the same, again

he'd tremble when he cried,  
and apologised often,  
without being told when  
If freedom was a person, he'd have  
short sightedness, enough  
to see his arms,  
unbound and free,  
but not to witness the fence,  
the wall, the barbed wires  
around, and the gate through them, was only a mural  
designed to drive those  
who could see, insane  
If freedom was a person, he'd have  
a voice which  
shrill, became a song,  
when hoarse, became banners.



**Nilesh Mondal:** Born in 1993, he has lived most of his life in the small town of Asansol. An undergraduate in engineering by choice, he stumbled onto poetry by chance. His works have been published in various magazines and e-journals like *Bombay Literary Review*, *Café Dissensus*, *Muse India*, *Inklette*, *Kitaab*, *Coldnoon Travel Poetics*, etc. He currently works as a writer for *Terribly Tiny Tales* and *Thought Catalog*, as prose editor for *Moledro Magazine*, and is an intern at *Inklette Magazine*. His first book of poetry, *Degrees of Separation* (Writers Workshop), was released in June, 2017 and debuted at #2 of the Amazon Bestseller list of Poetry.



V

The memory is tender and cluttered

like a soft ache behind my breastbone-the raw deal.

The world, of course, is a fundamentally inequitable place.

VI

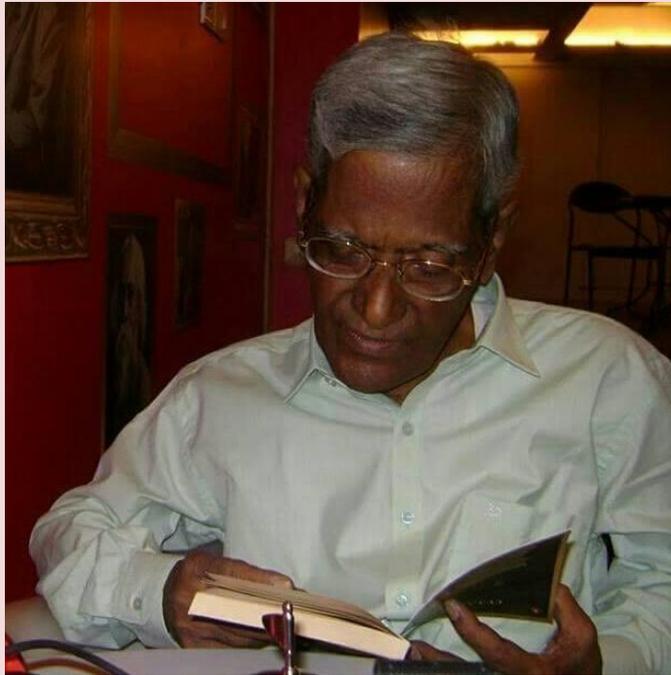
I wish I were a magician, a trickster

with the pen substituting a baton

connecting postponed kinships with people vanished.



**Nandini Sahu:** She is a major voice in Indian English poetry, is an Associate Professor of English in IGNOU, New Delhi, India; she is a creative writer, theorist and folklorist ; she is the author/editor of eleven books; has been widely published in India, U.S.A., U.K., Africa and Pakistan. Dr.Sahu is a double gold medalist in English literature, the award winner of All India Poetry Contest, Shiksha Rattan Purashkar and Poiesis Award of Honour, 2015. She is the Chief Editor and Founder Editor of two bi-annual refereed journals, Interdisciplinary Journal of Literature and Language(IJLL) and Panorama Literaria. Her areas of research interest cover New Literatures, Critical Theory, Folklore and Culture Studies, Children’s Literature, American Literature and ELT. [www.kavinandini.blogspot.in](http://www.kavinandini.blogspot.in)



## FATHER

*(A tribute to my father who passed away on 21st June 2017)*

Writing something about you is like

Trying to make a swim through a sea,

Through waves after waves of memories,

The first distinct smell of you

Had the that peculiar mix of tobacco and shaving cream,

The first distinct touch of you had been to feel your palms a  
bit roughened,

And to feel how those lines on them had withered with the  
ups and downs of time-

Partition, independence, state of political instability,  
carnage , emergency, flood of seventy eight , hartals,  
strikes, lockouts, bandhs,

Then your smile, never too loud,

Just a sweet candid one,

And your angst - silence spreading over clouds of even  
more silence,

Your writing hand curved and sparkling

Your fountain pen dipped in ink - your poems and stories,  
your sessions of debates and discussions , Marx , Lenin,  
Engels, Tagore, Vivekananda, Aurobindu- all turning like  
lively figures standing before us as if saying their words,

Your recitation of poems,

your acting at amateur theatre- glittering dresses, swords  
of tin,

And then ' Krishanu' and literary adda over cups of tea,

Mail posts arriving with your name printed all the way from  
foreign shores,

You teaching me cycling one spring day

You cooking special dishes,

you drawing a beautiful sketch of a train passing through  
the curves of hills,

You taking us to evening show of a flick - shown for charity -  
A Satyajit Ray masterpiece- an adaptation of Ibsen ,

Now as time has moved with its winged gait,

And as age has come and sat like a philosopher queen

Just betwixt us,

How I just think of you

As a tree old

With stories written on its bark.



**Moinak Dutta:** WELCOME! JULEY! BON JOUR! CIAO!

Me? I am nothing...I'm not a conscious poet...I just scribble;  
For scribbling is like singing spontaneously...It is like  
dancing loving the movements of body...So I live...So I wish  
to depart...



## **TREASURED PLEASURES**

Nature has given us simple pleasures of life

To enjoy be happy and have a blessed life

Watching the birds feeding the young ones

Rolling and playing on a moist lawn with pets

A hot coffee on a rainy day

And reading or writing a poem

Blowing bubbles with friends

Making someone smile

It's a pleasure to walk

A short distance with your loved one  
On a moonlit night as the cold breeze embraces you  
Holidays spent with family or friends  
Are pleasures beyond measure  
Pain brings in a lot of pleasures too  
But when the goal is achieved with hope  
It's a treasure that lingers on forever beyond measure



**Merlyn Alexander:** I hail from Nagercoil. Surrounded by nature all around our district, I feel blessed that nature has lots to offer for my poems. Other than writing my hobbies include painting, craft, travelling, music, reading and

cooking. I'm a blogger and I have a cookery blog. I would love to publish a cookery book someday. My collection of poems in a book. Gimme some time.



## **TRAUMA**

Like being kicked awake  
from a succulent dream,  
like a jaywalker knocking down  
a burger from your hand,  
like a favourite coffee mug  
shattering on a whim-  
an aborted rendezvous  
festers too.



**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.



In loving you  
the absence of strongholds  
gets ahead of my faith  
my footsteps run into each other  
and I slide down your subconscious

In loving you  
the strokes of your chiseled profile  
strip my skin off where it is fragile  
and my dead feet fall off my ankles  
into your heart's furnace.

In loving you  
the mind mistakes your body's curves  
for the way planets are bounded  
suspended in space-time's endlessness  
my star caves in on itself.

In loving you  
I lock my coordinates  
In the grand scheme of things  
and in breaking projected trajectories  
right the wrongs  
birthing and living have done me.

In loving you  
there are no heavens or wonders  
only awareness of the unknown  
of black skin against black flesh

and the guileless darkness  
beyond it all.



**Mathew Jasper:** He is a poet and medical student. He is based in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He has been writing since high school and has won prizes for extempore and writing, besides poetry. He is an avid reader and appreciator of all genres of poetry. Mathew is also an upcoming pianist and composer. He can be reached [atmathew.j.jasper@gmail.com](mailto:atmathew.j.jasper@gmail.com)



## **BEING BORN AS A GIRL**

An April night  
was kicked by a pair of tiny feet,  
-"another female"  
announced an old nurse.

A mass of flesh with a hurried lub dub  
made a young pair take birth  
along with it,  
as 'father 'and 'mother'.

My first breath in the form  
of a wail,

filled the labour room  
with a flurry of activity ,  
and their lives with pure happiness.  
A tender wish unwrapped,  
spreading its wings  
o'er this blue green earth,  
the birthing of a vessel of love ~a woman

A difficult birth,  
as the girl decided to show  
her feet to the world,  
when the news reached  
the matriarch,  
she replied,(much to the relief of the young mother)  
"oh this sign is considered auspicious!"



**Mallika Bhaumik:** She had been a student of literature and did her masters in English Literature from the University of Calcutta. She is passionate about writing and many of her poems and stories have been published in National and International anthologies, well-known magazines. She is an event planner by profession and is fond of music, travelling and cooking. She lives with her husband and sons in Kolkata and is a proud Kolkatan.



My body is a sinking boat when you unleash a flood inside me

The other day I made music out of my feet tapping to the rhythm of your heartbeat on the maple wood floor and the cracks on my heels don't bother me anymore.

Your giant body is a mountain and I am a timid yet courageous hiker facing my fears.

The dirt sticking to my soles leave footprints along the length of your shoulder bones making me a foolish criminal that leaves a clue.

The day you find out and pierce my eyes with your gaze, I might go blind.

Then suddenly, my dream ends and you are as far as the moon is from the earth.

If I could swoon over just a figment of my imagination of you

I'm sure I'd lose myself in every bit of you in blood and flesh



**Mahitha Kasireddi:** She is from Hyderabad, India. She had been a writer with online magazine Youth Ki Awaaz. She is a former content director at Campus Diaries. Her poems have been published in literary journals such as GloMag, The Ink Drift Magazine, Unbound Emagazine and the Telegram Magazine by the Talking Books, Delhi and in The New Indian Express. She is the writing finalist of the Campus Diaries 25 Under 25 2016 National Contest. She's certified

by the University of Iowa for completing the International Writing Program MOOC on How writers write fiction 2016: Storied Women. Her poems are also to be published in an upcoming anthology by Author Press India called Women Poetess: Within and Beyond Shore due to be out in 2017.



## THEY TRY!!!

Yes they have always been , and always will try to demean,  
Demoralise,traumatise, accuse us and criticize  
Our entire existence, the very substance,  
Of our being a part of their life's chart,  
They take the credits, refusing us all merits.  
So they are always in a tremendous hurry,  
Right from our beginnings to bury us deep under earthy  
burdens,  
Taking that will threaten, scare us ,and dreaden

Enough to numb and deaden, all and any of our sensations.

All they don't know is our strong intentions, and that we all are simply exceptions.

We all are lively seeds ,with lovely, fruitful deeds,

Providers and givers, gentle but fighters.

We fight all odds and germinate, never ever contaminate ,

We are feminines, but cultivators genuine;

Heat, water, cold, do make us bold,

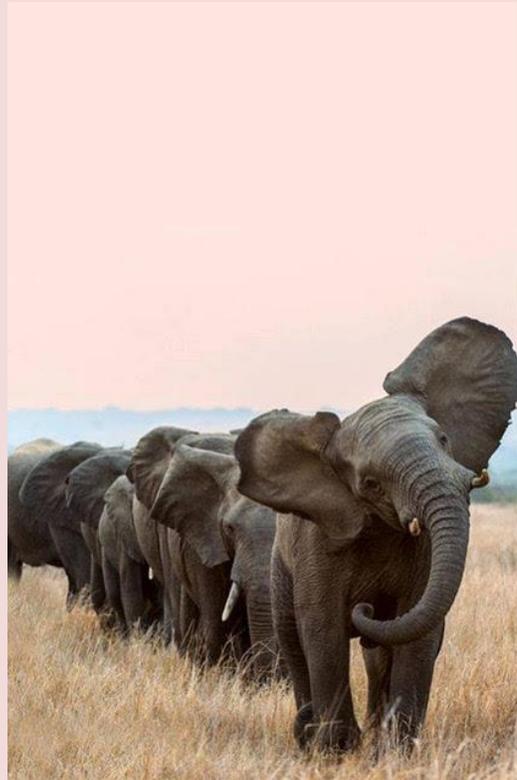
Weaving through the muddy treads, we grow out & up holding high our heads,

We love this lovely life, always, in joy and in strife.

Yes!! Yes we are strong seeds and entire civilizations we breed!!!!



**Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayar:** She is a Masters in English, is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English), writing by the name of Madhumita. A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, and healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She started her career with the media, moving on to the perfumes and cosmetics sector, and finally, where her heart lay: writing. Her works have been published in various national and international magazines, newspapers, web magazines, ezines, journals, anthologies. The author of "THE NIGHT JASMINE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS" is also 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. She is an avid animal lover too, her motto in life being "Live & Love Life".



## **GRAY TO BLACK**

For our iron colored majestic brothers,  
For the safety of their alabaster tusks,  
We beseech you, all whose trophies  
Are carved and displayed  
By others as idols,  
By others for sweet music,  
Hallowed tones made imperceptible by dirges  
Sung by gentle creatures  
Slaughtered for the benefit of indifferent industry,

Pawns deemed unworthy of even the simplest pretense of hatred.

While the devil underwrites your cruel tools,

Engines of eradication,

As the very last titan's eye goes milky to mirror his tooth,

He will call out for peace,

Carry your denied confession with him,

Away from you for your sake,

For that is the truth of love,

Gray to black.



**Linda Imbler:** She is the author of the published poetry collection “Big Questions, Little Sleep.” She has also been published by [deadsnakes.blogspot.com](http://deadsnakes.blogspot.com), [behappyzone.com](http://behappyzone.com),

bluepepper.blogspot.com, buckoffmag.com, Fine Flu Journal, Bunbury Magazine, Blognostics, Nailpolish Stories, Broad River Review Literary Magazine, Mad Swirl, Ascent Aspirations: Friday's Poems, Unbroken Journal and The Voices Project. Another poem is forthcoming in Leaves of Ink. Linda's short stories have appeared in Fear of Monkeys, Danse Macabre, and Mad Swirl. Online, she can be found at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com. This writer, yoga practitioner, and classical guitar player resides in Wichita, Kansas.



## **WHEN I MET WE**

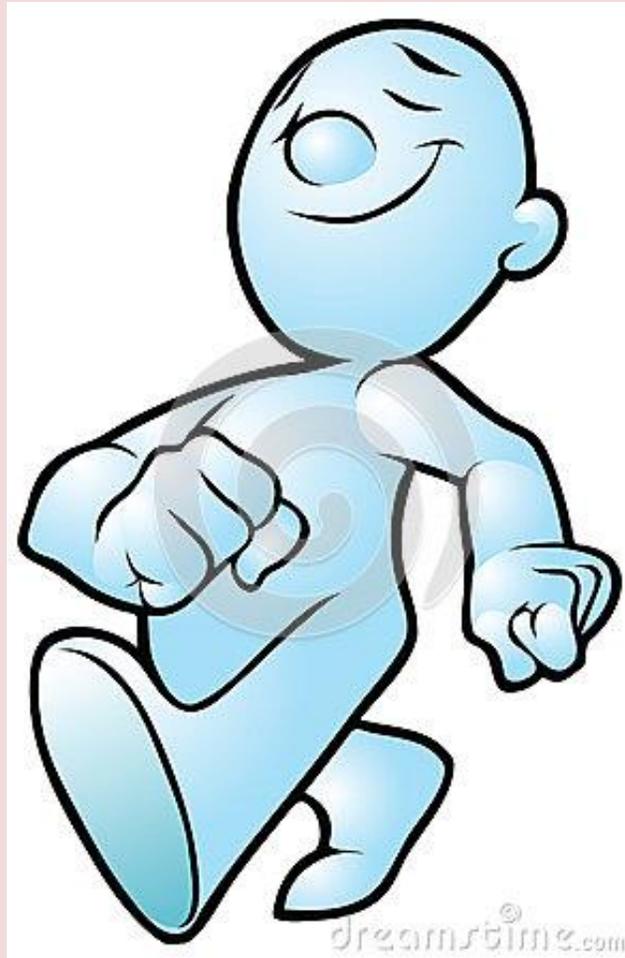
*a Kiran Zehra Poem*

He wears me in his eye  
Never lets me get out of sight  
He looks me in the soul  
Touches my spirit and takes control  
No questions asked  
Nothing be told  
He still knows my answers  
He still knows my moves

Where was he all along?  
The empty part of my duet song.  
When he laid eyes on me  
I knew it was he  
The one to have and hold  
The one who knows my secrets untold  
He wears my ring on his little finger  
We found each other outside 'Tinder'  
Some shells by the sea  
And some conversation over alcohol and tea  
I lost my heart to his eyes  
And woke with him on my bedside  
No lust involved  
And yet he took my all  
This man with those perfect eyes  
He makes me smile, he makes me shy.  
And can I say this is my happily ever after?  
You'll have to guess from my smile and laughter!



**Kiran Zehra Komail:** Put her in the mountains and she will bargain rhymes and rhythm from the tallest tree and the sward. Place her in the concrete jungle and she will sing you a song of love midst the streets and the walls. Show her a burning torch and she would tell you hope is approaching! Call Ms Kiran Zehra Komail a whirlwind of ideas or a foodie her zest for life is endless and so are her dreams! She could redefine the shades of red, yellow, black or white in words so vivid you'd almost wonder if the true shade of it was this. She works for Rotary News as the Sub Editor of the English and Hindi magazine. Travel, gourmet and people to her are intriguing. Her poems and sketches are her theorem – simple yet deep and humble.



## **THE COCKSURE MAN**

I'll pluck the flowers you love

I'll cut the trees you love

I own them whom I love

I'm sure you want my love

I hate them who're not like me

I'll make you as good as me

I always know what you mean

I'm sure you want to be mine

I look down on society's scum

I always come before you come

I know your life's total sum

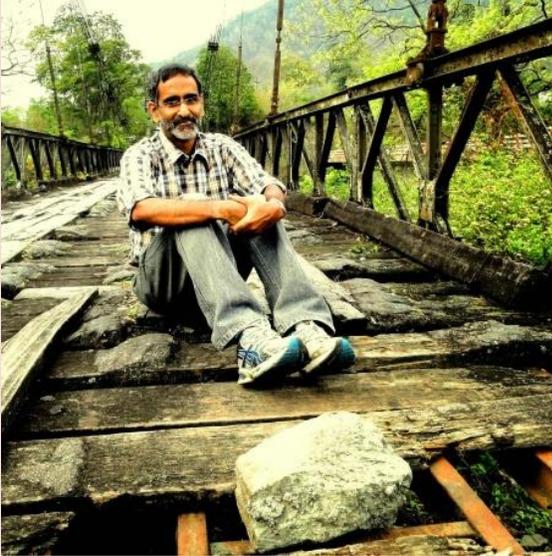
I'm sure you'll love me wholesome

I'm this world's man

None can do as I can

Run your life I can, only I can

I'm sure I'm your only man



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



## CHEMBUR

These crooked weathered streets  
On which time hangs like a drape  
Upon padlocked doors;  
It's here I grew my first sprout  
Of facial hair;  
Styled Elvis hairdos, high collars.  
Childhood vanished in a flash,  
In these lanes smelling of senility;  
Innocence fled; tears were shed;  
Look close  
You can see memories linger  
In the dark crevices;

Cricket matches, dropped catches,  
Embarrass me still.

II

These mean streets I walk again,  
Many a bend and a turn,  
I have seen  
In life's incessant churning  
In the froth of unrepentant fate.

Those dreamy bungalows  
In which I wanted to laze in  
Wearing slippers and boxer shorts  
Now naked, bare, and torn apart  
For upcoming shopping malls  
And haute couture plazas.

III

Where once there were shrubs  
Laden with the scent of bela flowers  
There's now the smell of fluorocarbons.

The littered streets are  
Dug up to lay jelly-filled cables,  
They don't know they once were,  
The majestic streets, on which,  
The Kapoors strode like kings,  
Worshipped, adored,  
Their studios,  
A favourite hangout  
Of those starry-eyed adolescent days.

IV

A boy I knew in dirty knickers  
Is now a mafia don;  
The world is afraid;  
I am not  
Really I am not:  
I have seen his unwashed underwears.

The girls were beautiful,  
They still are,  
Their walk is indeed fluent  
As a smoothly flowing river,  
And tongues holding lethal fires,  
They can kill with treacherous looks,  
Oh! How I miss them, those sylphs,  
Who inhabited my wet adolescent dreams!

VI

Chembur,  
You bejewelled suburb of the east,  
You nestle amidst sewers and marshes,  
And fumes as black as hell,  
Yet in your stained yellow bosom,  
Where the sun rises and sets in a haze,  
Smelling of death and decay,  
Was born the unfulfilled dreams,  
Of this, your unfortunate son.



**Late John P. Matthew:** Writer, poet, singer-songwriter, and blogger John P Matthew was born in the state of Kerala, India. His first success as a writer was Penguin’s world-wide short story contest “India Smiles” in which his short story “Flirting in Short Messages” was selected for publication in an anthology. His poem “Call of the Cuckoo” has been published by Poetry Rivals. He was working on his first novel and writing a book-length travelogue about his native state of Kerala. He died in 2017.



Brightly burning star fish...

Do you wonder where you swim?

Wandering sky and ocean flying  
floating now near shore line.

Many arms extended tugging  
celestial weeds Irish moss.

Grasping glowing orange disc  
climbing beds of coral coral.

Do you wonder where you swim  
brightly burning star fish?



**Joan McNerney:** Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze, Blueline, and Halcyon Days. Three Bright Hills Press Anthologies, several Poppy Road Review Journals, and numerous Kind of A Hurricane Press Publications has accepted her work. Her latest title is Having Lunch with the Sky and she has four e-books. She has been nominated three times for Best of the Net.



you short change the descent of it  
as it is done, for its special endorsement  
opening it up like a wet napkin to make two  
at the center old gradients of lines fall into

the pulp. A blunt gaze set at the wall in front  
of you, the wing ding Americana bright dyed above  
the chatty family sparkles new with a steel  
gleam.

The fan doubling and redoubling the inky  
light indoors, purpling the white walls touches

the wet spot of the napkin, bled out or  
sharp with reality as you would see if  
put up to your eye to look through.

*(This serialized poem is about American Murder. It is a generality that came up by watching Cops: Reloaded reruns and my worser sense of acuity from experiences in the long, difficult hours of Night Life)*



**Joseph Elenbaas:** I am a Christian writer, living in West Michigan.



## **PART OF MY FOUNDATION**

Heavy.... the things were,  
Frozen....my voice was,  
In the wind of new beginnings,  
For the nascence of steps,  
To move, to climb and to fight;  
Petrified I was,  
In my own bedlam of peace,  
Scrounging in order to sieve;

But, you came,  
As a ray of light,  
Peeping inside, from the fissures inside,  
Resurrecting all the possible measures,  
Reviving my confidence, exalting my patience;  
There are, pieces of anecdotes with asterisks,  
Hidden are, words of your advice on each path;  
Caring like a brother, teaching like a teacher  
Whatever the situations are, you are always here,  
Feelings are ineffable, words will lose their power,  
But the things you sprinkled, will never!  
Thanks for handling me in the most needed situations, to  
calm my inner exceptions,  
For being a part of my Foundation,  
May almighty shower his saffron milky benedictions!!

*(Thanks for everything, thanks for always being here.)*



**Jayant Singhal:** A voracious reader and an enraptured author, Jayant Singhal, under the animated pseudonym of 'Saaransh'. He began nurturing the passion for expressing the enchanted aura of the world through his pen just a few months ago. Having a strong affinity for English language, he loves to feel the imbuing effect of it. He is currently writing a Facebook page, "Aroma - The Essence of Life". Dazzling through the twists and turns of this beautiful voyage, commonly known as 'Life', he is en route to the bewitching nature of happiness and peace.



## NOCTURNAL SONG

if I could have accepted that this morning  
we would be ended and done not later  
than tonight I never would have gotten up  
exposed myself to the morning  
I would have stayed asleep, alive

under the covers, reserved my arm numb  
around your upper body, lips on your back,  
eyes stopped up. I would have found a way to contain

the dawn, to keep the bright fingers of light  
from creeping across the bedclothes to trace the shadows

of your face, to stroke your eyelids into opening, to keep  
this new thought that we must be over from  
blossoming into the angry flower

you keep close to your heart  
this denial of me.



**Holly Day:** She has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in Tampa Review, SLAB, and Gargoyle, while her newest nonfiction book, Tattoos FAQ, is coming out from Backbeat Books at the end of 2017.



### **CANDLE (NARCISSUS)**

It cannot be cured, this terrible light.

I am perfect and inaudible, bright

I run into the wind, my faith burning

At both ends. The bewitching

Trance! All of the stone

Edged day, the poisons chant.

They have caught me by my lies,

My cries. I bury them all in the ashes

That fall down the hands of lost prayers.

The consecration, the lone sacrifice.  
How it devours me! I touch  
A pyre and it is lit by the darkest wights.

It burns, it burns. I cannot see  
Beyond my shadows, there is no light.  
The shame, the awful spite,

It strangles and lets loose a blaze.  
I float in it like a holy babe,  
Divine, the world aflame in my eyes.



**Gowri Suresh:** She is from Kottayam, Kerala. She is a student of class 12. She was the recipient of the Reuel Prize in 2016. Literature is her passion and she enjoys every genre. She can be reached at [gowris113@gmail.com](mailto:gowris113@gmail.com).



## **WHEN**

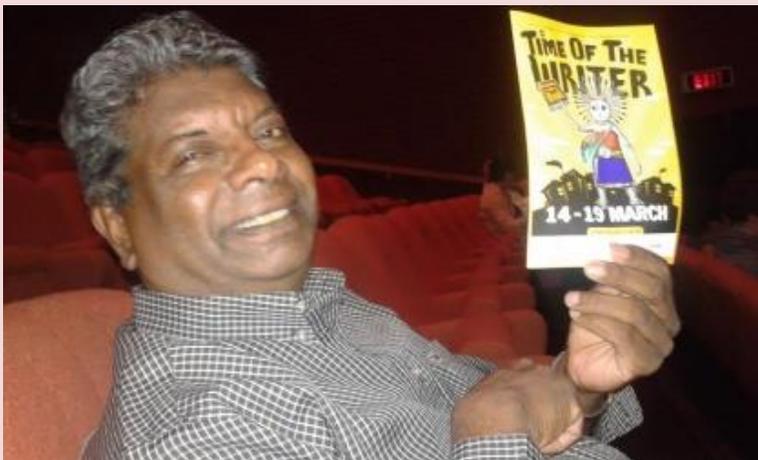
this will be my last  
wish and testament  
when my breath is ceased by death  
when my mortal body is laid to rest  
from far beyond my grave  
you will still hear my spirit sing  
you will hear my poetic songs  
crying for the veil of darkness  
that shrouds the earth to be lifted

and the light of peace enters  
every soul and atom

when the light shines for ever  
when heaven and earth becomes one  
when there is no mountain of sorrow  
when every soul on earth rejoices  
when the world has found its humanity  
when there is no more wretched calamity  
when we all, as brothers and sisters  
come together as one

when the light of peace shines forever  
never to be extinguished ever again  
when every heart  
sets the snow white dove free  
from its cage  
and it soars to freedom above the sky

you will hear souls sing poems of joy  
rising to a crescendo sweet and clear  
in harmony with peace  
touching every creature on earth with love  
voices will sing enchantingly  
love will rise above the hate  
that has tainted our humanity



**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.



## **THE MAIDEN AND HER LYRE**

Golden gates! A wanderer's prayer  
And as I went beyond  
Hardly expecting the sight before me –  
The most wondrous lawn!  
Flowers and fruit trees abounded  
Spring was eternally there,  
And besides a fountain, playing  
On her lyre, a maiden fair.

Unruly hair struggling against  
Coiled knot so tight,  
While escaped tendrils laughed  
All round her face in delight.  
Brows against forehead –  
Dark arches of expression.  
In speechless conversation  
A most comprehensive lesson.

Doe-like eyes,  
Lurking fear their loyal guard,  
Yet that truant hint of friendship,  
To contain he finds so hard!  
God fell short of perfection  
For the nose that he would need  
Threw down chisel, frustrated,  
From the scene to recede.  
Lay himself down and rested

And dreamt the perfection  
Refreshed, skill reaffirmed,  
Went back to it once again!

A thousand blossoms on deceiving lips,  
As they sat upon the chin  
For well they distracted unsuspecting mind  
From the string of pearls within.  
And innocent beauty sat there,  
Of her effect quite unaware,  
And music left her subtle fingers,  
And slipped into the lyre.

And Sun forgot he was due west,  
And the winds forgot the clouds  
Squirrels forgot to collect their nuts,  
And flowers in blooming paused.  
Birds ignored angry open mouths,

And trees, their leaves in delight danced,  
The water sang a gurgling song  
And deer – in joy they pranced.

No clocks to harness their harmony,  
No mundane needs to meet,  
No omens of impending disaster  
For no disaster down their street.  
I wish that I had stayed there  
My strung up soul to unwind  
But though Heaven's gates are still far away,  
There's eternity on my mind.



**Glory Sasikala:** She is a poet and writer, currently residing in Chennai. She is the editor and publisher of GloMag.



## **XMAS TIDE'S LIMPING VERSE**

When tills go wrinklín'

And slay bells tinkle

With dough

When elks get elk'd

And fish get fished

In the snow

When snow is glistenin' like gold

When turkey gets

Stuffed

And moose is moussed up

In every home

That's when Santa Claws is comin'  
On his way  
All the way from the North Pole  
Like the drafts down from Canada  
Funneled by the Rockies and Appalachians  
Oh, yes, winter's sure here to stay  
The snow geese  
Fly north  
With a bumper-crop of Xmas babies  
Born in September  
Out a roll in the hay  
Gid-ya-up, Gid-ya-up, you go  
The Second Ammendment's on its way  
So, Annie get ya gun  
And all you cops let fly  
To shoot innocent people dead  
So, let the cocaine  
Go round and round in yo' brain

And pass the joint, boy  
(When is a roach not a cock-roach  
It's a Xmas Cracker)  
Oh, yes, Xmas is on its way  
And Santa Claws  
Is goin' on down



**Geoffrey Jackson:** He has been an intrepid TESOL instructor at 5 universities and 4 colleges, blown off course from England to Holland, Finland, Hungary, Oman, Saudi Arabia and, in the Roaring Forties, to Denmark. A self-described European cosmopolitan and Americanophile with New World dreams, Geoff is the Poetry Editor for Fullosia Press.



## **HAMSA PAKSHI**

A damp breath soaking my infant roots,  
Life surges within me as I shoot tender shoots,  
My hands bursting through a realm of soil routes,  
As I blink blinded by yellow light arrows amidst highway  
hoots.

I'm resilient though trampled upon as I bend,  
In winds and rain and storm for myself I fend,  
Through Suns and Moons I evolve spreading some shade to  
lend,  
My branches lush with foliage beckoning birds their songs  
to skies send!

Pink and yellow puffs of flowers tickle my bark skin,  
I submit myself rooted firmly in the place I'm in,  
Ants crawl up and I giggle, tearing a gummy resin,  
I watch everything unfold around me, good, bad, charades  
and sin.

Then I feel a sharp something slicing through ,  
I go numb, in a shock like I'm falling off beyond lines I drew,  
Sunsets and sunrises that seeped through me now bleed,  
my leaves to strew,  
My myriad eyes that dropped at dusk now lying limp like a  
tamed shrew!

Worse still I'm sawed, felled, logged, rolled,  
Transported, weighed, bought and sold,  
And I look absolutely gorgeous I am told,  
Chiseled and metamorphosed into a Hamsa Pakshi by  
hands old!

Now I sit mute, not breathing but breathed well,  
From a rain tree thinking that's where I am but fell,  
Only to transform for a purpose I still cannot tell,  
Created, and recreated to sit beauteous where I now dwell.



**Geethanjali Dilip:** A Chennaiite at heart, she is a graduate from Ethiraj College and a postgraduate in French from Bangalore University. She is passionate about poetry, travel, teaching travel, gardening, interior decoration, and

enjoying a deep spiritual connection with everything. She's been teaching French, freelance, in Salem for the past 34 years in schools and colleges, and at her centre, Zone Francophone, in Salem.



As always, today too,  
Anonymous, the platform shares  
Stories unwritten, unknown,  
Amidst the commotion  
Of arrivals and departures  
Someone almost walks over him!  
Unaware, dead to all this, unburdened,  
May be he is bed-wetting in comfort  
The thin stream flows onto the luggage nearby  
Or, is exhausted, gave up, surrendered,  
Let things happen, this is all I can!  
Trolleys roll by

The multitudes of racing tired feet  
Day dreaming crowds, lost in thoughts,  
Of homes, hearts, lost, found,  
Caring, warm and inviting  
Who cares, I am dead to this  
Dead world, beyond repair.



**Geeta Varma:** She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling. She is married to Shreekumar Varma (Writer and Novelist) and has two sons, Vinayak and Karthik and a daughter-in-law daughter Yamini. She lives in Neelankarai, Chennai.



Hanging off the curtain rod

Is a little black boy.

Not too heavy, not too broad,

He makes all of the house a big play toy.

He walks around on his lithe paws

Tearing at you with his shiny greens.

You tell him you love him, you're at a loss;

You could kiss them to death, his little toe beans.

Tearing up the carpet, he slowly slides

Towards your hand, a nibbling little lion.

Under the blanket you watch him hide  
You straight old fool, his lies you're buying.

He's on the prowl now, a big black cat  
Marking his spot bang in the middle,  
Sniffing at you, all part of an act  
Leading up to a sweet tight cuddle.



**Gayatri Sekar:** She likes words and all the things they can do. Favorite quote: "All these signs lead to science"



The lone figure  
dances  
to the tune of the night  
looking at his reflection  
in star light.

Am I intruding?  
I wonder  
in what seems to be his world,  
his river  
and his sky.

I shiver with the breeze  
in my flimsy nightclothes.  
A moan escapes but he doesn't stop.  
It is just a new move for him  
a new note from the night.  
My breathing is the tone  
the universe is the song  
as he gets ready for the flight.

For a moment  
I flutter like a nondescript leaf  
of one of the million trees  
that adorn his earth.  
It hurts.  
But the night tells me to quit  
being coy.  
He goes on dancing

to the tunes of the night.

And watching him dance is sheer joy.



**Gauri Dixit:** She is a software professional from Pune, India. She is an avid reader and regularly writes in poetry groups on Facebook. Her poems have been published in multiple anthologies. Her poems were featured in the Poet's Corner for the E-zine 'Mind Creative' published from Sydney Australia and Learning and Creativity e magazine.



## MY OLD DOG

Once upon an old winter night, there came a roaring and wailing in the

wind. But home was not the dog. While I pondered weak and wearily, down

the alley I went in search of my old dog, but skating and napping was

not the dog.

Faintly I muttered, nearly napping, "my dog, my old dog, where could you

be, have the ever hungry hyenas had you for dinner" Tis I repeated.

Suddenly, there came a knocking and then a tapping on my old mansion

door. Wearily i muttered, "for out is the moon and up is Mr  
moor

napping on his old chamber bed; who then would be  
knocking and tapping

on my old mansion door".

Faintly I stood, hesitating no longer; wider the door I  
opened; behold!

There was the dog, my old dog, limping and tapping on my  
old mansion

door.



**Evinced Uhurebor:** My pen name is Evinced Brian. I am a  
poet, writer and the Editor of [kitloaded.wordpress.com](http://kitloaded.wordpress.com).



## **RAINBOW DANCER**

*En face* – Sitting here, facing you my audience unelected  
I admit I am tired, I have been tried and tested  
even emotionally spiritually molested by some of your  
inherited ignorance – I confess I have lost my  
inner halo my fiery glow due to your award winning  
human freak show in which I am still the star hoping  
for social inclusion fading illusion igniting my confusion.

*Adagio* – Yes, If I seem broken it is just for a moment  
In this racial box you have imprisoned me, stereotyped me  
exhibited me, ridiculed me, controlled me, mocked me.  
My feet are poised as I slowly feel my inner music  
Guiding me, propelling me, soothing me, as they will  
become fluid again to make me glide as I take control  
of my own destiny finding my elected synergy to set me  
free.

*Battu* – You think I am beaten, trampled on maybe even  
unhinged? Well think again! Your refusal to conform  
to societal change and acceptance of the norm will just  
further feed your murky inner storm – Boxes are for things  
to hide and store away unseen in the dark. I refuse to  
continue to hide due to the colour of my skin – Why  
can't a person of colour be a prima ballerina, make a  
grand historical speech in a packed arena, love someone  
of another culture or sexual orientation?  
I am part of this human global nation...

*Pas De deux* – Come, dance with me and you might just see my many colours of reverie. Your words might cause an emotional red mist but my blue joy will silence your mockingjay verbal vomit as my yellow hope will blind you and make you forget to see me as a colour. I forgive you, come closer – I am the rainbow dancer.



**Don Beukes:** He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles', his debut poetry collection published by Creative Talents Unleashed. Originally from Cape Town South Africa, he is a retired teacher of English and Geography and taught in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry deals with issues affecting the global village and he

is passionate about speaking out against racism, homophobia, sexism and intolerance. He has collaborated with artists from South Africa, the UK and America as part of his Ekphrastic poetry collection and his poems have been anthologized in various publications. His poetry has also been translated into Afrikaans, Farsi and Albanian.

His debut collection is available here

<http://www.ctupublishinggroup.com/don-beukes-.html>

**Jonel Scholtz:** She started painting in 1988, while in high school, with Louise Goudemond, an American born artist, specializing in figurative work and oil portraits. She has exhibited in South Africa in Johannesburg, Clarens, Cape Town, Swellendam, Hartebeespoort Dam and Dullstroom. Internationally, she has exhibited in New York, Miami, Italy, NY at the International Expo in 2010 and the United Nations as part of International Women's Day.



## PILGRIMAGE

It's going to rain again

Because we only know how to live.

Eros, the desire to live, is what we seek for

Through all the roads that we walk upon.

Because every road is a pilgrimage

To our desire to live and make our life count.

There will be joy and there will be triumph,

There will be pain and there will be gains.

But we will walk upon the road towards Eros

Because every road is a pilgrimage.

Because we only know how to live,  
And it's going to rain again.



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



## **BROKEN TOY...**

There was she crying and lying on the floor

For the just broken toy..

Since she was born,

The only theatrical and musical play

She had was that!!!

In her dwell of broken walls

And torn ceiling,

She found the affection in a corner

And dig downed her happiness

In the impaired tissue...

The only brightness of the day for her  
was a beam through the pane,  
And the only moon for her  
was the rural sound of waves..  
The only vision she was promised  
Was through her knickknack..  
And the only staunch support  
For her was the white cane.....



**Devayani Deshmukh:** She is pursuing master's degree in computer science at US. I am highly interested in writing. This poem is nothing but a fictional work. It shows the plight of a girl who is broken in love and made to keep distance from him.



## **MORSELS OF PAIN**

More venom! More venom!

A huge crowd, a huge outcry

I forget, brushing won't help

I dig my teeth deeper

Deeper in the hem, the helm

Blood gushes from somewhere

Throbbing, uncontrollably

A few morsels, of pain

Dig deeper! Dig deeper!

Crowd, outcry

A few morsels, of pain  
The throb will go  
And it will be a smooth flow  
Dig deeper child  
Granny's sigh  
Till the hiss, they fear you  
Spew the venom, you will die!



**Deepti Singh:** I am a Doctor in Community Medicine in State Government service and writing and music is my passion. I love to experiment and explore, and my favorites in this regard are nature and human behavior.



## **NO THOUGHTS**

I have been planted

by good drugs

& I wanted most

of all to be considered

part of the garden

& I would have been,

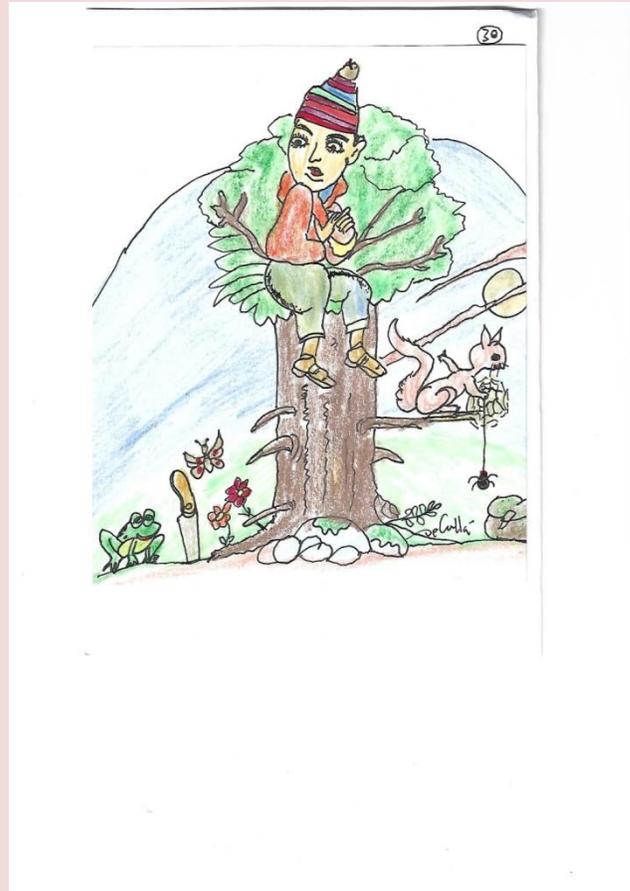
but the mile of salt-

water above my head

ruined my blossom.



**Darren C. Demaree:** He is the author of five poetry collections, most recently “The Nineteen Steps Between Us” (2016, After the Pause Press). He is the Managing Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology and Ovenbird Poetry. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.



### **SIMON, THE BABY**

Simon, the baby, asked his father:

What happens in this World

Where crimes and death takes over?

There is no place in the Globe

Where hatred does not flourish?

A church, a mosque

Where their gods do not take to kill?

They say that Cain killed Abel

With an Ass Jawbone  
That Delilah made Samson impotent  
Cutting his hair and something else  
That all fascist governments  
Need human blood and flesh to survive  
Especially from contestants and comedians  
Young people  
That's why they kill, kidnap and imprison  
Right, dad?  
Rivers and seas are spaces  
Contaminated by foul and bloody lava  
Fascist & Mystic Lava  
From humans turned into cannibals  
By the grace of a God and a Caesar.  
The innocent are always killed  
To be pasture of the fascist Herods of turn  
While their escorts and candlemen  
As monsters of prey

draw their limpet tongues in Syria,

Iraq, Afghanistan

And all the other nations

Right, Dad?

"Yes, Simon, it is the plain truth.

Son, Study and love Nature and all the living

it only saves us with the Science

and the Reason.



**Daniel de Culla (1955):** He is a writer, poet, and photographer. He is also a member of the Spanish Writers Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Director

of the Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review. He's moving between North Hollywood, Madrid and Burgos, Spain.



## **WATERFALL**

My youth is gone, my skin is grey,  
What's left wrinkling into a sneer,  
I did not want to come this way,  
But still the waterfall runs here.

My love is dead, hate lives crowing,  
It's beak approaching entrails dear,  
My joy is spent, none left owing,  
But still the waterfall runs clear.

You have now evaporated  
Earth-fled in life no longer near,

But despair has hesitated,  
Our old waterfall still runs sheer.



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



## **STONE DEAF**

People lock up gods  
say he is everywhere  
for his lunch  
he closes - the priest  
says it is siesta time for god  
outside  
it is a vociferous debate  
my god greater than yours  
mine richer than yours  
more powerful than yours  
and you see  
goid is stone deaf.



**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. I am writing poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.



## **MC LEODGANJ IN SUMMER**

Can we sometimes have an English summer?

Drizzles now and then and no hot and sunny weather?

Jolly times in evergreen parks

picnic lunches and lemon water?

There has to be a lake somewhere

Boating outings and the cool, cool breeze

To catch a fish and eat it fresh

season it with salt, again lemonade

But where oh where is that summer

Here it's scorched and parched and dust storms  
no fun outside, still relief can come  
Just take the train to Mc Leodganj



**Brishti Manjima Bandyopadhyay:** Hi, I am Bristi Manjima Bandyopadhyay from Delhi and like penning poetry. I am a content writer and editor by profession, a part-time versifier by inclination. Hope you enjoy my poem.



## THE HEALER

He makes me small

So small that he lifts me on his palm

And with his eyelid

Shields me from rain

He stinks like the season's last outpour

Rotting things, overflowing drains

Dead nests on uprooted trees

Drowned rodents bloating to burst to sunshine

This rain is a sick joke...

I hate the herb-black pepper-dry ginger elixir

He concocts to ease my heat

(The healer is aware: Fever is no illness but a mere symptom of malady)

Look, I am well cared for...

Am I not alright now, almost already healed?

For a woman of my age-

I am healthy as hell;

Sewn back to shape,

Fed, fattened, smoothened-

Look, I have recuperated like a dream.

Can't you see how beautiful I am-

Though full of shit

(Luckily buried so deep within me that you cannot sniff out).

I have let the seeds of couplets

Die in the drought of his love  
Nothing worse can happen to me

In this perfect climate for cure  
Have I any reason to malingering?  
The bitch in heat whining non-stop!  
There is plenitude of sun, wind in abundance  
My room is sealed with care  
Sound and scent of rain dare not enter

I am tired of becoming well  
How come this trip has no end?  
Was I sick in the first place? When? How?  
He only tells me why

With my baggage getting heavier,  
And days passing uninterrupted by nights

I must tell him to stop healing me

I need the rain to put me to rest

In the rain, I shall discover my element

Pure repletion of a cycle

All so quiet that you don't even notice

My healer, please understand

I am that matter which rain melts

From my vapours clouds are formed....

After which nothing matters.



**Bini B.S:** She is currently an Academic Fellow at Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda. Her research articles, poems and translations have appeared in national and international Journals and anthologies. She the editor of Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought. Her poems were part of an anthology of corporeal poems titled A Strange Place other than Earlobes: Five Poets, Seventy Voices published by Sampark, Calcutta in 2014. She is the recipient of the 2016 J. Talbot Winchell award for her contributions to the discipline of General Semantics which was presented in a ceremony in New York.



The soul speaks through whispers  
billowing in the rustle of leaves  
of a lone,  
weeping willow.

Hush.

The soul's voice wanders  
in the wind seeking,  
God's voice.

Can her voice be heard or is the soul's voice  
lost in the noise of the universe?

Deaf to struggle.

Deaf to anguish.

Deaf to the wail of life.

Deaf and dead.

The soul tries to speak -  
attempts to be heard  
in the wind  
that blows like mad.

It is a wind that tears through you  
like a fiend ravaging a decayed corpse -  
it howls like a witch  
shrieking at the storm inside,  
inside.

No one must ever know  
the language of the soul -

it can never be revealed,  
these are violent words  
for the ears of none -  
that weep.

The soul weeps, cries and slow,  
slowly  
withers into a crumbling ruin  
of tragedy.



**Bilkis Moola:** She is an Educator who resides in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province. Her first published anthology, "Wounds and Wings: A Lyrical Salve Through Metaphor" was received throughout South Africa and launched her poetic persona. It evolved as an introspective quest for recovery from her personal narrative of an abusive marriage. Her poetry is a delicate negotiation of patriotism and ethnicity. Bilkis Moola navigates a pluralistic dialogue towards multiculturalism and transformational activism in post-apartheid South Africa as "A Sprightly Cultural Hybrid in Metamorphosis". She presently divides her time between professional responsibilities and post-graduate studies in Education. Her pen continues to sketch the flotsam in her mind from the passion in her mind on shreds of paper that bloom into poems.



One more time we meet  
in this darkness, to dig deep  
down our weeping hearts.  
Again we have inherited  
darkness of our true strive.  
Behind spiritual flames  
bend our souls.  
We stand here as beggars  
of a different life.  
We stand and sit,  
depending on the story retold.  
We tell our stories,  
under threat of being labelled

bombastic, impromptu  
and unkind to human kind.

We wait with bruises, behind them  
remain stories untold. Some are long,  
some patience they demand.

They are tales of life and love.

We share our tears,  
that we fear to taste.

Victory is written  
as we stand to heal  
all wounds that saw  
world sinking and sing  
poetry song,  
none more time.



**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 mediums like SABC, Y fm and Trans Africa radio blowing the poetry horn. He is a member of Amavukuvuku music band. He also facilitated children storytelling at Xarra Books.



## **OUR PATHS**

When our eyes met  
Our hearts melted into one  
You became my moonlight  
Starlight and sun

When we first touched  
Our resistance crumbled  
In each other's presence  
All our egos were humbled

When we first kissed  
Our spirits were entwined  
Our previous life  
None of us wanted to rewind

When we first danced  
I just couldn't let you go  
My fascination with you  
I wanted you to know

With our new born child  
I could see eternity  
When our paths first crossed  
You became my destiny



**Bevan Boggenpoel:** He was born in Salt Lake, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He attended Soutpan Primary and matriculated at Westville Secondary School. He 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.



## **IGNORANCE: A SONNET**

Years ooze out like the withered leaves of winter with a sigh.

The furrowed force within, creeps like a tired snail to nowhere.

I face the mirror to find the ever increasing string like silver  
I even out the yellow memoirs and the evening rolls out  
around.

With all ears I listen to the sound of eternal silence  
engulfing.

With no ache or anxiety I make myself ready to welcome it,  
Like angels kneeling before God, showering flowers.

The part being over, why should I tarry more? What I was I was.

But who the I is this within me? Who mirrors me in front of mine?

Alas! I am still a stranger to myself desperately discovering me.

Am I a joker who once amused them with roar and earthen sword?

Am I the you who wanted to be you with monkey mimesis and finished?

Millions identities unstable, jostle within me and masks replaced ever.

Oh! Does one life suffice to know it all or is it thy intended ignorance?



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



*pic by Asoke Mitra at Tista river, North Bengal*

## **FOOTPRINTS**

I remember you  
silently you had burned  
into memory,  
scars of memory.....  
this evening  
slowly growing into night.....

Syllables of love  
no longer different from  
the syllables of stone

Endless passion,  
wounds of arrogance  
often remember you  
gently dancing

Fragrance of musk in your sweat  
smell of dust  
wild laughter in the rain,  
strange laughter in the wind.....  
silently you gave in to my innocence

We lost our way.....



**Asoke Kumar Mitra:** I am from India, Kolkata. Poetry is my passion.



Made in the good ol' days  
We're breakin' it down now  
Telling each other the Lord was wrong,  
When we can't convince ourselves that we are.

Fooling our minds and our souls,  
Takin' the name of the Lord,  
He watches us in Heaven and lets out a laugh  
Let's the elephants whine and the dogs bark.

For he knows man will only realise  
When he has lost everything he held

dear

That his concept of religion

Came not from Heaven but from his

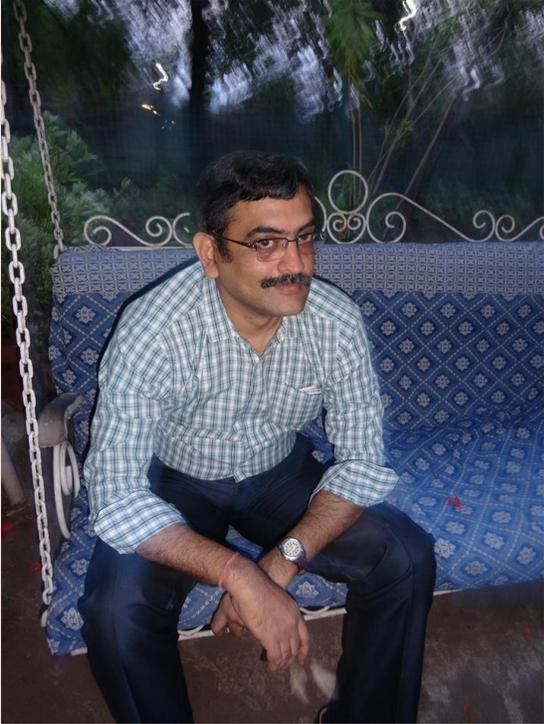
own fear

Of his fellow human and his lust

That killed his compassion in a fit of musth

And now he pays the price

As he travels from dust to dust



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



A plastic moon  
I put on my wall-  
The real one's too far  
from me.

A book I read about  
lovers and friends  
In my life none  
are there.

I remember thy face,  
remember thy smile  
and often I think  
about you.

Days have gone by  
I still wonder why  
I swallow my tongue  
around you.



**Annika Lindok:** She is an English teacher and a freelance translator, living in Estonia. Her work has previously been published in Scryptic Magazine, Five 2 One, Peacock Journal, Quail Bell Magazine, Zoetic Press's Nonbinary Review and others, upcoming in Degenerate Literature and Ariel Chart. She is a prose editor for Escapism Literary Magazine.



## **RESTIVE**

You are the season of spring

You come with all the fragrances

The new flowers hold in their petals

The hungry wind seeks you

Like a tide untamed on the rocks

To get draped with your cool shades

You are the newlywed bride  
Waiting the footsteps of the night  
Anxious to get disrobed of innocence

Your gaze is like that of a bird  
Prying the worms from a cosy top  
Hungry to devour their twists and turns



**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.



## **BLESS THE DAY**

Bless the day

I found you

Cos the lights

Are brighter

The misty morning

Is clearer.

Bless the day

I found you

Life is peaceful

Will this feeling remain

Shall I look to the day

We belong to one another  
Will every sunrise be yours  
Will every moonlit night be mine.

As time spirals into  
The dreams I have  
Will this memory  
Always encapsulate  
My innermost desires

If I read your mind  
Will you touch my heart  
Each time we say hello.  
Will that tingling sensation  
Never leave me  
You came into my life  
As the summer ended

And winter draws  
its own canvas  
With greys and blues  
Rains and snow  
Hot chocolate and port  
Warming the body  
Fraying the edges  
Of Eden.

Like spring and summer  
Melts into each other  
And autumn dances  
To its windy partner  
With winter's arrival postponed.  
You and I escape  
the seasonal changes  
And life is the longest summer

Bless the day

I found you

Life is a romantic dance

Never ending

No interludes

The music serenading

Our rejuvenated souls...



**Angela Chetty:** She is a HR Manager, an avid poet and lyricist who lives in Durban, South Africa. In 2013, an Anthology of Poetry entitled, Heartfelt moments - A Treasure Trove was published. In 2015, her poem “Miss Me” was selected as Editor’s choice for the Contemporary Poetry Digest and has been chosen as the best poems of 2015 for a Valentine’s Special Publication. Angela has been selected as an Elite Poet for 2016. Her poem “Heart and Soul” has been selected as Publisher’s choice and “Love’s

Carousal” selected as Editor’s Choice for the Evergreen Journal of Poetry. In 2017, she has been awarded Elite Writer status by International Poetry and two poems “Still the Storm” and “Heart and Soul” has been published in the 2017 Poetry Showcase and Yearbook. In 2017, her poem “Lover of Mine” was selected for a special edition - From the Heart. Her poems have also been chosen as semi-finalist for International Poetry Contests.



## MY TINY BALCONY GARDEN

I have a tiny garden in my balcony

Pots of basil, mint, and parsley

hanging from the roof;

their leaves overflown

and swinging in the air.

Colourful petunias flirting with

the eyes of the passersby.

Devil's Ivy below,

climbing up the grilled fence

Cacti growing stiff and strong

Roses in plenty

and sweet jasmine diffusing its scent

O, it's beautiful in all senses!

We have our tea in the evening

sitting in our balcony

ignoring all sounds and

trying to listen to the chirping birds

returning to their homes.

Sometimes, we have our dinner too.

A table for two and a candle-light,

the symphony of cicadas

besides the mellow music from the player

and faint cacophony of the vehicles

serves us a romantic ambience

in an otherwise chaotic city.

And when I am alone,

I go to the balcony at sunset

I will rest in my rocking chair

and play old country music on radio.

The twilight and music make my mood  
and take me places - mentally.

Sometimes I wonder  
how such a tiny place  
works wonders on me.

The whole brick box is huge,  
well-equipped with the gadgetry;  
Yet above all,  
I love this small space  
devoid of any sophistication.

O, what a saviour  
my tiny balcony garden is.  
It reminds me to be humble  
To be at the roots - unmaterialistic;  
To serenade those moments

And most of all,  
to enjoy the simple joys of life.



**Anand Gautam:** hails from Hyderabad, India. He studied life sciences, currently works in a tech giant, and his heart and soul has always been inclined towards poetry and fiction. He snatches a few minutes every day from his life for his love of writing and believes that one's passion must be kept alive to be alive. He can be found on Instagram handle, @anand\_writes and he blogs at <https://notesandwords.wordpress.com/>



*TLe Violon d'Ingres (Ingres's Violin) by Man Ray*

## **LOVE CANNIBAL**

I want to swallow you alive  
have you always in me  
thus keep you forever with me  
in my universe within  
You would be so happy  
finding all you need  
inside there, all!  
My universe is so beautiful!

You can't imagine just how much!

It has everything in it

mountains rivers oceans waterfalls

jungles

buildings

people

sweet bird-calls

Has no sorrow in it

or me except to wipe away your tears

after (I make) you cry, if at all

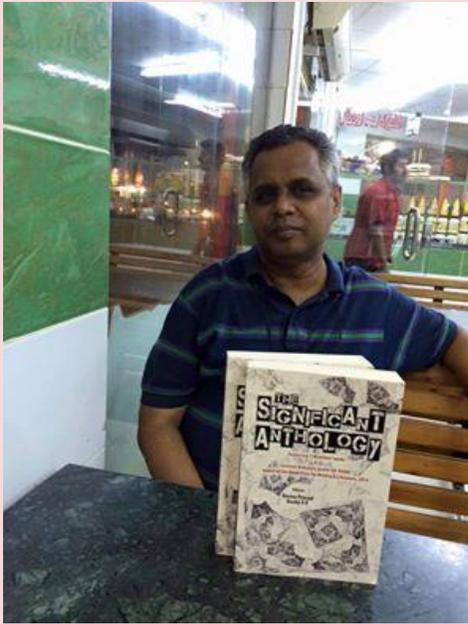
My universe!

You have to see it to believe it!

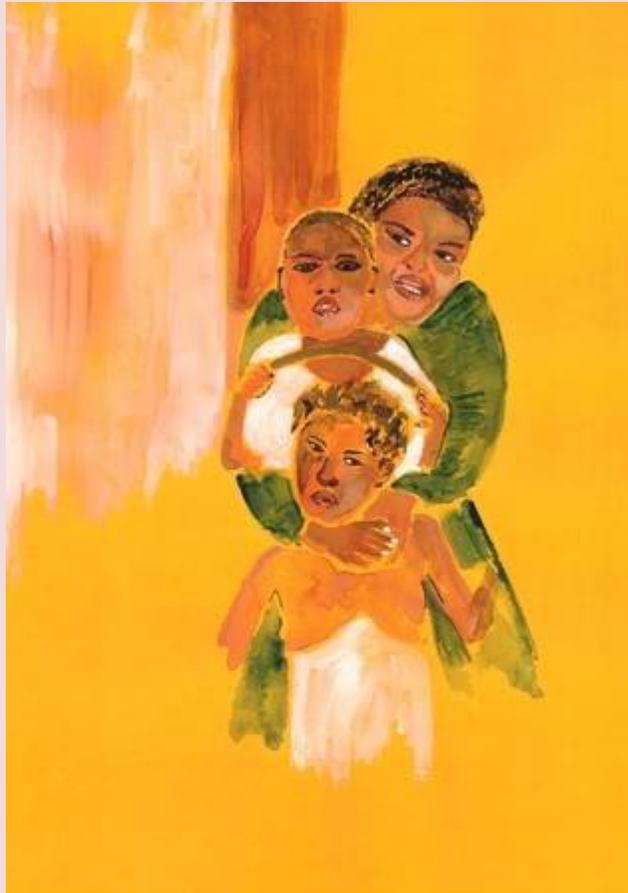
This is what I mean

& I say it to you so clear

that I just want to - devour you whole!



**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 Inlinks and Umbilical Chords.



where does mdantsane start  
where does mdantsane end  
i do not know  
ask its people  
its many streets  
its sky  
and its birds  
they all end up in a close alley

in closed rivers  
of closed dreams  
sometimes a light flickers  
somewhere  
only for a moment  
when children laugh  
at nothingness  
its echo looks for  
another mdantsane.



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



### **SONNET IV: MELANCHOLY, MY LOVE**

O dear-bought melancholy, I love you a lot  
After an overlong pursuit, I have you got  
I have deadly got to learn your beauty  
And sorry not to find you earlier so pretty  
People quail at your face not catching on  
And I once again beg your gracious pardon  
As I kiss your randy lips and breasts snow white  
And make love with you throughout my white night

Those who are afraid of you never know  
That you are the touchstone incomparable  
And having eyes all blind, can't see your glow

Ah! You've been mine. I'm humble. I'm humble  
So long as I can breathe, I'll be loving you dearly  
You are my only love, my beloved melancholy.



## **LONGEVITY FLATULENT**

I

We have run loco to live long  
As if we sang a perdurable song  
And long life were staple; the rest wrong.  
If to live a long life expounds all,  
Can I, living a long life, be Aristotle?  
Could life expectancy zap Sukanta or Keats?  
Is high expectancy the sage thing a man needs?

II

Man is mortal, we all say

Okay, tell me another thing today

Could this mordant truth slay

Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton or Gray?

The list encircles many more:

Lalon, Mosharraf, Farrukh, Nazrul or Tagore...

They just went esoteric setting forth the door.



**Aminool Islam:** A bilingual poet, I weave poetry in both Bengali, my mother tongue, and English. I also weave English sonnets. I did my M.A in English literature from National University, Bangladesh. I'm currently the sub-editor of a literary magazine named Neeharika.



My bags are being packed,

I'm almost ready to go.

I'll be meeting new people

Eating new food

Discovering new avenues,

Amid mysteries, waiting to be unraveled.

'Yes, this will be fun. One more thing to strike off our bucket list,' the Brain whispers with a smile.



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

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

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

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



## **I LET GO**

of my will, fantasies  
of perfection that make  
life my enemy. I let go of things  
already lost, of water flooding my ship and  
of the dead dolphin floating by.

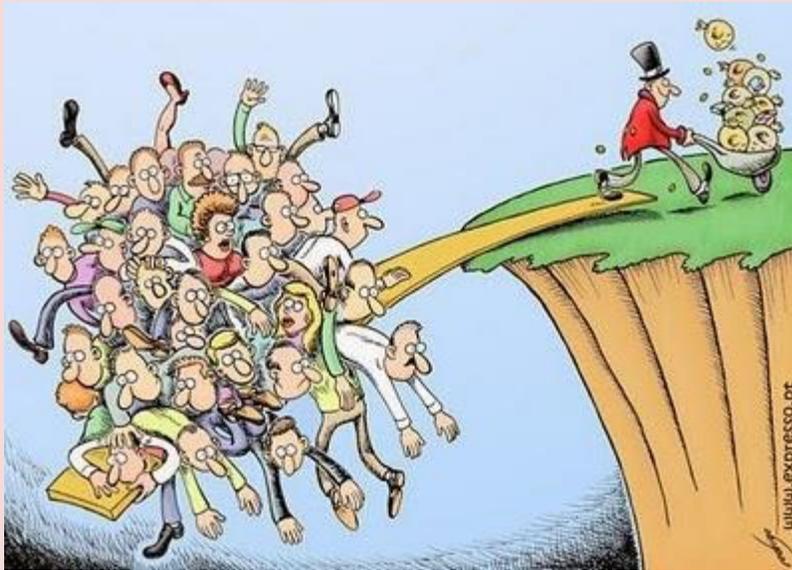
I let go again of my desire  
for unauthorized miracles  
and accept the gifts I have been given  
as a light over the ocean, guiding me,  
marking me a 'someone' to find.

I let go of old photos and unclear stations  
on the radio. I let go and embrace what  
is living, knowing this is just fine,  
knowing I am always held close  
in God's engaging arms, knowing  
I must let go



**Allison Grayhurst:** She is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Three times nominated for Sundress Publications “Best of the Net” 2015, she has over 1050 poems published in over 425 international journals. She has sixteen published books of poetry, seven collections and nine chapbooks.

She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay; [www.allisongrayhurst.com](http://www.allisongrayhurst.com)



## AMERICAN PIE

Understand, you'll pay dearly  
for a safety deposit box protected from flood,  
politicians, and the telephone company.

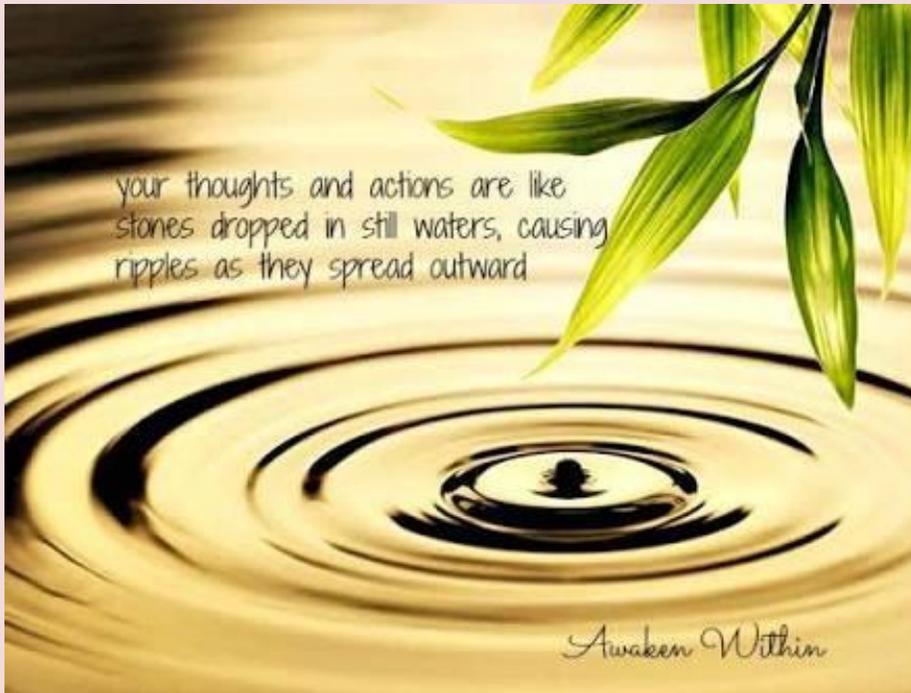
Oh, yes, this is the land of the wealthy.

If you're poor,  
all your artifacts can be eaten  
by a hurricane with a familiar name  
such as Henry Ford, Richard Nixon,  
Bill Gates, Jr., or J. Edgar Hoover.

Fortunately, if you're rich,  
history often corresponds  
to your fondest memories.



**Allan 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.



## **THE STILLNESS**

A lonely way walks back alone,  
No commitments ever came along;  
Days do sleep and insomniac nights been long,  
Your silence is the lyrics of my song.

Met elements of life as five good friends,  
Mother nature never minds to lend;  
Only the end reveals why one was sent,  
Spirituality is code of conduct in God's Government.

Eyes with names are difficult to identify,  
A touch is warm or cold is rather easy to classify;  
The closet is full of faces to decide,  
To confide and merge in the wild with nothing to hide.

A dreamer wants to ride upon time,  
Where smiles and tears compose one rhyme;  
The thought to think compels mind to crime,  
Don't ripple the stillness tis' sublime.

*(An excerpt from "A Quagmire of Quatrains")*



**Aakash Sagar Chouhan:** He is a he is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities residing in

Rourkela. He co-authored the book "Between Moms & Sons" along with Geethanjali Dilip in 2016.







**ciao! 😊**