

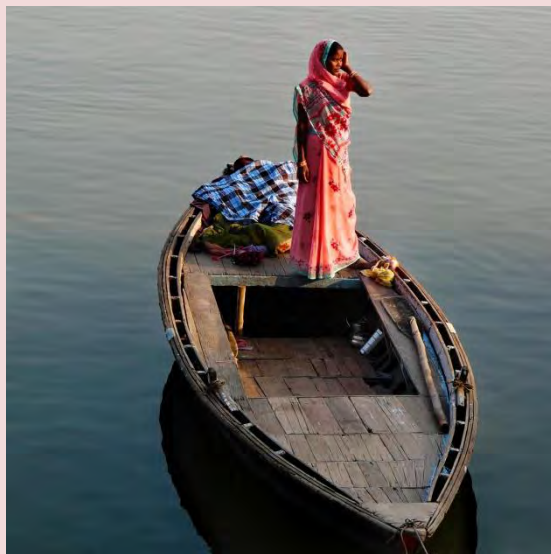
GloMag

GloMag

Monthly Online Poetry and Prose

Magazine

July 2019



Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

LAURENT GOLDSTEIN



Title of the Cover Pic: Moment of Beauty, Banaras, U.P.

About The Artist

Laurent Goldstein is a French photographer, art director, designer, author and film producer sharing his time between Varanasi (Benaras – India) and Paris (France).

Laurent was trained to be an architect and later became the designer and the art manager of several high fashion companies in Paris, London and Milan before he settled in India and launched Red Halo, a household linen label involving people living with difficulties.

Along the Ganges, relationships with people are different and Laurent carries on this human adventure through photography extending his glance to the world and showing

many aspects of Indian society sometimes deeply devoted to its traditions or on the contrary forward-looking.

His attempt to capture the soul of people allows him to show the inner beauty of those who cross his way.

Benares, the oldest living city in the world, became one of his favourite topics where in a kind of biblical set, he is introducing people who are most of the time wrapped in a state of grace.

The work of Laurent Goldstein is currently published and exhibited in several art galleries all over the world in order to sustain the Education of several children in Benaras and to support Human Rights organisation such as Guria.

His work is spontaneous and influenced by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Raghu Rai, Herbert List and photographers from the 19th century such as Samuel Bourne, Madho Prasad or Brajo Gopal Bromochary.

Website

www.laurentgoldstein.photography

FB Photography Page

<https://www.facebook.com/laurent.goldstein.photography/>

Art Perspective

Photography is a way to get closer to the people, to talk to them and understand who they are.

It is also a way to show that we are all brothers and sisters and to overcome the barriers of ignorance.

I am trying to share this through what I call the beauty that I see in everyone who comes in front of the lens.

For instance I made that picture as I was walking along the Ganges at dawn and I saw that lady on a boat when the rising sun enlightened the peach shade of her sari.

Everything around her was peaceful, it was the hour where the Eternal city is still between dreams and reality.

This could be the beginning of a poem, I simply froze that moment but you are free to imagine a few words with this.

Sometimes I wonder if the “decision-making process” in creativity, is an image sparking poetry or if it is the opposite, it might probably be both but I have to react in a split of second which is in fact summarizing all that I have acquired through my skills and knowledge of art as well as my feelings on a psychological field which makes that “Decisive Moment” so dear to Henri Cartier-Bresson.

ABOUT GLOMAG

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

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

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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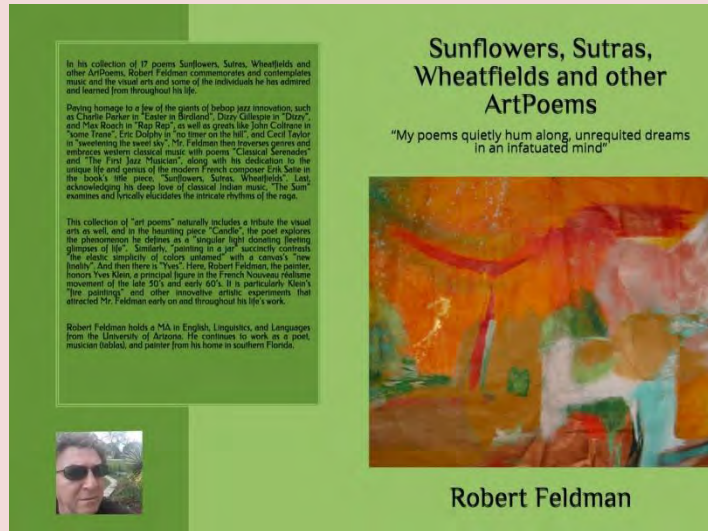
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BACKGROUND MUSIC: 'Sundari Kannal Oru Seidhi' (movie: Thalapathi) flute cover by Johnson.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

SUNFLOWERS, SUTRAS, WHEATFIELDS AND OTHER ARTPOEMS

Written by Robert Feldman



LINK

<https://www.amazon.in/Sunflowers-Sutras-Wheatfields-other-ArtPoems/dp/1091373914>



FORWARD

Robert recently described our friendship and connection as a “karmic dance”. I agree: we have much in common, as we are both passionate about the arts. Still, as my focus of artistic expression has always been through my photography which leans toward impressionism, Robert's creative juices are clearly manifested within the myriad of genres that have inspired him, as well as by the influences from the array of towns, cities, and countries he has explored.

Bisbee, Arizona, was the breeding ground for the creation of his abstract oil paintings, enhanced by a process of applying fire to enrich the visual effects; he has featured them in his publications to partner with his poetry. And during those Bisbee and Tucson years, Robert also evolved into a skilled silversmith and stone cutter, which by the 1980s morphed into creating original designs of sculptural jewelry. These stunningly unique and wearable art pieces eventually found their way to stores like Saks Fifth Avenue, and were also featured in Vogue and Harper's Bazaar. Suffice it to say, I have never known Robert Feldman to do anything on a small scale!

This brings me to his lifelong love affair with the written word. Robert's countless literary influences include Kenneth Patchen, along with Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and other prominent writers of the "Beat Generation". These

literary giants, along with sourcing his musical inspirations from Bob Dylan, Laura Nyro, and Paul Simon among others

prior and subsequent, have impacted Robert's multifarious philosophies of imagery and rhythms throughout his distinctive poetry.

In his latest collection, "Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields and

other ArtPoems", Robert offers a "playlist" of transcendent painters and musical masters for the reader to experience in

his distinctive "Feldmanesque" way. As a visual artist, I

find myself riveted by the painterly impressionistic word

photos in his poems. As you read through each

poem, his exquisitely descriptive word palette flows

effortlessly from scene to scene. Unmistakably, his

background as a painter, musician, and writer combine to

invite you into the poem to linger for a while.

A writer from the New York Times commenting on Kerouac

remarked: "If you don't read poetry, you'll never have your

heart broken by language". The poetry in this edition and

the prodigious style of this poet have the power to both

inspire and touch your heart.

So if you haven't experienced the rhythm and passion of Robert Feldman's poetry in the past, my suggestion is to carve out some quiet time, or invite a friend, pour some wine, and slowly savor the lyrical production that was created by this poet to guide you along into new dimensions. Enjoy your travels!

Mary Ann Appell

Impressionist Photographer

Boca Raton, Florida

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

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



Name: Dr. Santosh Bakaya

Occupation: Teaching

Book, E-book or Audio, which do you prefer? Book

Fav book: To kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee

Fav movie: Pyaasa and To kill a Mockingbird

Fav song: Let it snow [Frank Sinatra], merey saajan hain uss paar , [Bandini]

Fav hobby: writing, reading.

Fav color: Black

Fav sport: Table Tennis

Fav food: Rice and Rogan josh

Fav pet: Dog

Fav actor: Robin Williams\ Amitabh Bacchan

Fav actress: Meryl Streep \ Alia Bhatt

Life philosophy: “Kissi ki muskurahhaton pey ho nissar ,
jeena usi ka naam hai”.

One liner describing you: ‘An emotional fool, very tactile too, wearing her heart on her sleeve, who tries to infuse some of her own insanity into the sane world around’.

Favorite holiday destination: Always Kashmir

Favorite quote: Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. ~ *Martin Luther King Jr.*

Birthday: 22 February

Sign off message: Banish those frowns from your faces, life offers a lot to smile about.

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TEARS DRIED AGES AGO

Tears dried ages ago,
Her eyes socketed deep,
Limbs languid, skin creased.

Who stole her ebullience?
Nobody knows.

Was it an endearment of euphonic times?

Or was it a price she paid for ripe age?

Or an increscent sequel of both?

It is true, nowadays

No faces charm,

No talks stir,

No storm rages her.

Hollow words whir high and low

And hastily dig graves.

So, she finds a sunless corner

By the side of a hedge

And stealthily sits, and

Wistfully counts her waning days.



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



INSIDE OF MY DREAM

Inside of my dream
there's a bird flying
from one nest to an-
-other, without wings

Inside of my dream
there's a man holding
a sign that says, I

have serious cancer

Inside of my dream
there's one refugee
with tears of grief

because he lost hope

Inside of my dream

there's a young lady

smoking, and waiting

for the train to suicide

Inside of my dream

there's a black cat

staring at me, and

waiting to the end of my dream



Ahmad Al-Khatat: He was born in Baghdad, Iraq on May 8th. He has been published in several press publications and anthologies all over the world and has poems translated in several languages. He has published two poetry books “The Bleeding Heart Poet” and “Love On The War’s Frontline” which are available on Amazon. Most of his new and old poems are also available on his official page Bleeding Heart Poet on Facebook.



ORANGE

I said orange was an intelligent color
back in 1971,
& I still believe in that truth today.

Orange emerges fully naked from
the furnace forged by
the Tyger betrothed to Duende.



Alan Britt: In August 2015, Alan Britt was invited by the Ecuadorian House of Culture Benjamín Carrión in Quito, Ecuador as part of the first cultural exchange of poets between Ecuador and the United States. In 2013, he served as judge for the The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award. His interview at The Library of Congress for The Poet and the Poem aired on Pacifica Radio, January 2013. He has published 15 books of poetry, his latest being *Violin Smoke* (Translated into Hungarian by Paul Sohar and published in Romania: 2015). He teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.



<https://www.ctvisit.com/listings/olde-mistick-village>

LITTLE TOWN

I walk along the streets of the town,

Which I once loved.

Today, I am an indifferent stranger.

I barely recognize it.

There are no more old, hospitable aunts.

No more nosy neighbors hidden behind curtains,

Or brave men with war stories.

They are gone.

Time changed everything,

Not only the people, houses, streets and trees.

It seems to me that it even

Repainted the shade of the sky



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



IMAGINATION, TAKE ME THERE WHERE I HAVE NEVER BEEN

i am longing to live life of the countryside, unmindful of
any rule of loss or gain to abide

want to play from morning to night, no restrictions that
may cause fright

with friends I will compete to catch butterflies, to get relief
from defeat I will rely on cries

swim and sink in the nearby river , till parents browbeat to
block my entry to home for ever

spend the whole night with friends sans parent's approval ,
in the morning come back home and face trial

ride up to top of the tree to pluck berry, falling down
unluckily and bear minor injury

skip school and go to the nearby fair, return in the evening
and get thrashing by Dad seems unfair

tear papers from notebooks to make paper boats very
fancy , get ultimatum from teachers for delinquency

imagination, take me there where i have never been, being
a city child which i have never seen



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



SOME DAYS

Some days it is just enough
that the dog puts his chin
on my knees when I badger

on the keyboard, excavating
coherent words from
the alphabet-terrains,

striving to piece together
knobs and holes of mind's
jigsaw puzzles with a poem.

As if he wills to reach where
words cannot, even metaphorically;
it's enough he's there, some days!



Amanita Sen: Amanita's first book of poems 'Candle in My dream' was published by Writer's Workshop. Her poems have been published in several journals, both print and online ones in her country, India, and abroad. She works as a mental health professional, is married and lives in Kolkata.



MY SELFIE KING

My dear selfie expert!

I can never capture the perfect one like you.

Nor be as gentle,

Or as thoughtful.

Our different eating preferences,

Different ways of thinking...

The arguments you always win!

The wisdom you bring

To every decision

I make.

Your sense of humor
Keeps me in splits
Our years together
Have been full of adventure
(Some misadventure)
We've had highs
And lows
Just like
Every other.
Here's cheers
To many more years
Of wedded bliss!

PS: This selfie was taken by me



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.



THE POEM NOT WRITTEN

I wanted to write
a love poem on you
which is the volcano eruption
of my love compressed
into my heart for years
You will turn into ashes
being burnt by the lavas of my love
Scared of this
I can't write the poem



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



SAY A LITTLE PRAYER!

Om shanti...

Om shanti...

Om.

Chant. Recite. Scream.

Scream Loud.

Hello, anyone in there?

Can you hear me?

It's me. Hellos...

Ever wondered does God hear us? Do our prayers reach him? Since childhood our deep-rooted cultures taught us to pray. Prayers upon the first rise, prayers for the first morsel, prayers before bed. Prayers say it all.

‘Prayers’ – the tiny messengers to God.

From my kidding days to greying today, I’ve mastered my prayers thoroughly. As time grew my mental maths got much weaker but my prayers grew larger and stronger. Unshakable pillars engraved inside me, I guess.

Truly undisputed. Aren’t they?

What is a Prayer?

It often makes me ponder. On a simplified note I’d rather say it’s my heartfelt convo with my 3.00 am buddy – God. Also it could be some kinda group talkathon which reels loud mantras and shlokas in bold chants. Is it a propaganda too of the societal rights and the wrongs we follow? Can prayer be ‘The spiritual habitat?’

Can a prayer compel me to look deep within and know the real me?

Prayer with Technology

Today, everything comes at our comfort lap. We need not seek hibernation in Himalayas and meditate with penance for days and months to reach out to God. Google Apps saved us. Our lives are much sorted. Technology helps us bridge the gap. Prayer is more of a User experience (UX)

today. With the flexibility in its nature it offers an adaptable interface. One can program it and re-program it much to his/her suitable needs. All it takes is a simple tweet with a send button no matter where you are. The scores pomp a million views with a thousand likes on your desktop. I'm sure it has reached the palmtop of God too and now your prayer ought to be answered in a quickie.

Are we nurturing a generation of mockery to follow the wisdom of Ai rather than the power of our own heartfelt?

I am stalking God

I follow God everywhere. Why? Because I fear. My fear is gripped tight underneath my heels and takes me places far and near. The dilemma of 'What ifs' is a choco-block in my head. Am I inviting some bad episode? It's like a game. One rule missed and the bad omen gets a 'life'. The fear allows me to trade with God. Commerce is in my DNA. Bargains and exchanges become the primary oaths of my prayer.

Am I challenging the very being of God and the immortal strength in prayers?

I am an Atheist

I don't pray. I don't believe in it. I don't know its type. The non-prayer is my real type – my true religion. That's my pattern. Prayer ain't in captivity but in liberation. Prayer lies in a simple connect with the nature. The painter is an atheist. He hymns a prayer with his abstract. He worships the hues of his palette. His picture paints beautiful dots with God. The writer is an atheist. His pen conveys volumes of meaningful and desired conversations with God. The yogi is an atheist. His meditation is a path of zen to God. The warrior is an atheist. Courage is his release. And the strength to knock life back in its boots is his sole path to God.

To me prayer is what I send as a signal wave in nature and in return Mother Nature gifts it back to me. Prayer is in chaos and love, both. It's in a gentle smile, a warm hug and a cheeky peck of simple love. It's a loud unheard voice of my inner silence. It's the small humdrum of my soulspeak. Prayer is the faith of my will. It's a discipline that I strictly follow obey its rules by heart. It's in the sublime power to submit to the light of my inner self and come in unison with the outer cosmos. Prayer is to heal me with my rights and wrongs of life. I call it my safety belt – my very own being.

I ring a prayer every day. Do you?



Ami Parekh: With profound interest I pursue a stint of creative writing which impacts the reader mind with a grain of love at first sight. Playful indulgence in languages I write niche poetry, reviews, short stories and blogs as a flavor of my creative compositions. My work is published on various platforms like Literature Lovers Association, On Fire Cultural Movement, Verse of Silence, Mila Publishing, Glomag, Momspresso.com, Yourstory.com, etc.

Can follow me on <https://passionsnetin.com>



STARRY NIGHTS

Here the aroma of *bel* and *juin*

Mingles densely with cheap *atar*

as evening sets a stir,

Damsels with painted face wait for baits

their lascivious curves

Hide no mystery to be unraveled

in the pitiless starry nights.

In the bower of feigned lovers

a sordid room

is scripted a tale on the painted mask,

Darkness of night seeps in drudgery

Each famished cell taut.

A rare night hatches a forbidden dream

An erratic bubble to die at dawn.

Nights trickle and loiter in this narrow lane

Rake up fleeting gusts of pain and desire

While the muddy sweat on the bed,

The unlit stove in the corner,

The dying aroma of ***bel*** and ***juin***

Wafting in languor,

Churn out a hackneyed prose.



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



Eternity

Eternity



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.



ERIS

How can I have everything I want
When I don't really know what I want
Maybe
I have everything I could ever want
I just don't know it
Yet.

#GoddessofDiscord-Eris



Amit Krishan Agnihotri: I am a poet residing in Landquart Switzerland. I work as a County Manager. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published short stories and poems in UK and India.



THE OUTSIDER

I am always on the outside

Even of myself

Watching me

Doing

Watching the me doing

I am outside the other

You

And

I am your other

Watching you

Watching me

Like startled deer

Do you remember

The snowflakes

Snow was falling

That day besotted by lust

Near the fence

I lifted your skirt

And took you

Trying to dissolve

My outsidersness

The ice-cold clay of the earth

Was under you
I watched myself
Trying to merge
Watcher and watched self
Into one

Or the day
You said
Take me
Now
I melted
In your arms
Afterwards
I felt a stranger
The leaves were falling
It was the fall
After a moment of non-being

Darling, take me now
Kill your outsider
It is painful never being able
To be a believer



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Writteings: 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 Signficant 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 *Inklinks* and *Umbilical Chords*.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOomEbVO86g>

A WALK THROUGH THE SEASONS

A walk through the seasons

That's what we do

And it's not a cakewalk too

Filled with bliss

Melancholy

Love

Longing

Illusion

Reality

We all pass through them

It's inevitable

And the gospel truth

Ebbs and flows

Highs and lows

No matter what

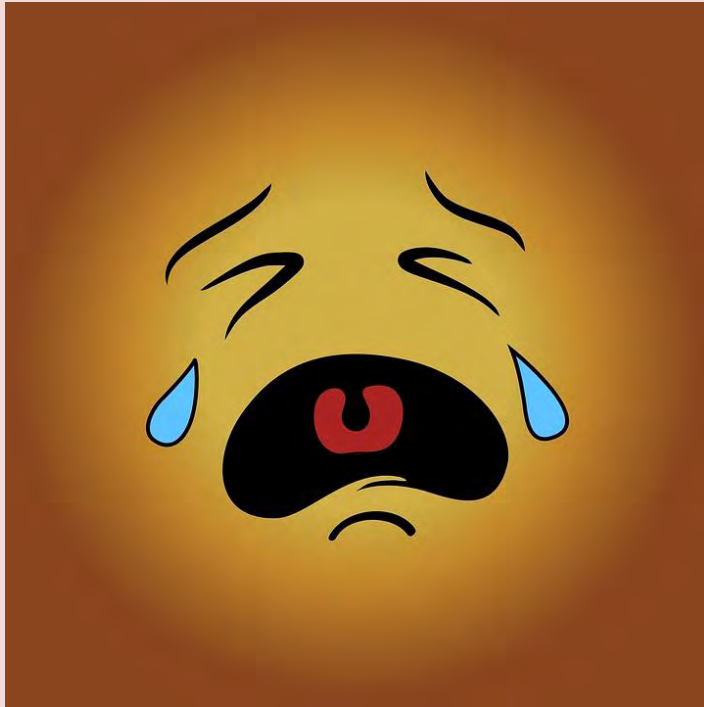
Life has for us

A walk through the seasons

That's what we must do



Anand Gautam: He 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/>



I WANT TO CRY OUT LOUD

Mother you've watched me grow
but you have not seen me
cry loud (like you) as a
grown up

You may wonder what I'm
talking about, but grown ups
need to cry out loud sometimes,
like you

I know you'd reasons to cry loud
I know you could never hide
your feelings, cries
when that beast mercilessly
beat you,
you cried,
unlike many other
mothers, loud
& got more beating

I watched you from behind the doors,
you knew, but you couldn't help
crying out loud

From that time I learned to cry
in secret

From that time I practiced to
swallow the lump in throat

But the lump stayed, forever

I couldn't swallow it

in childhood, now,

when I'm grown up

I'd like to cry loud

when the world

plays hide n seek

Pray that I may cry loud

when the picture is crumbling

when the mask is safely in place

when there is no tree for shelter

when the black hole is advancing

fast

Mother, I want to cry out loud



Aneek Chatterjee: I am a poet, novelist and writer residing in Kolkata, India. I work as a professor of political science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a novel and an anthology. I taught at the University of Virginia, USA, as a Fulbright Visiting fellow.



PEACEFUL HEART AND MIND

As the weighty worry and acute anxiety heaves
It feels like your heart will explode into smithereens
The enflamed emotions clamouring
against your teeming, pregnant thoughts
Consuming your rampant mind and restless soul.
The panic wreaks havoc beyond proportions
Heart palpitations, sleepless nights and panic attacks
Becomes your daily reality and it feels like
Another being has taken complete control
Of your thoughts and you're in auto pilot mode

You need to step out of the situation
Watch the scene playing out
Breathe in and consciously realise
All the fretfulness and endless worry

Will not transform the situation
In a time of turmoil, allow the emotions
to be questioned and understand
Why you feel this way?

Understand what creates this uneasy,
anxious feelings of endless worry
How you react to any situation in life
Is your individual choice as your behaviour
Will affect your peace of mind.
The heart and mind are intricately interwoven
Your feelings stem from your thoughts.
Let your thoughts not incite anxiety
And provoke negative thinking
Shield your precious heart
Don't allow circumstances or anyone
To fleece your perpetual peace

It's not about whether the heart or mind wins
Its about your calm command aligned
To your inner thoughts and feelings.
Prudently choose your behaviour
Adopt a positive attitude and mindset.

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he"
The peace in your heart, mind and soul
Is the best gift you can grant yourself
To live a peaceful and exuberant life.



Angela Chetty: I am a poet residing in Durban, South Africa. I work as a consultant. I have contributed to various international anthologies and numerous journals. I have also published a poetry anthology. I have been honoured as a contemporary poet with the most heartfelt poems in 2019 and achieved Top 100 poems internationally in 2017, 2018 and 2019



YOUR DRESS

It is your dress that
You wear so carefully
When you expect me
Passing by your door

I love much its colors
It floral patterns, its
Cuddling you like a
Child and lifting you
Gently from the floor

It is your dress that
Keeps me engaged with
You and takes me after
A Surly butterfly to the
River and its shore

I feel lost like a cloud
In the time of storm
And seek the love in
You when you come
Running in that dress
And I don't need more



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



THE LAMENT OF THE PARIJAT

(The Parijat is a small, white, fragrant flower with a bright orange centre and stalk. It blooms at night and falls at dawn. It is native to South and South-east Asia)

Did you see the night breeze rock my hammock?

It must have ruffled the leaves nearest me

And they must have shushed in reply

So the rustle does not startle me out of my sleep.

Guiltily, it must have swung my stalk gently so my dreams
do not scatter.

I think the stars descended on me then, showering me with
starlight

Or was it only a dream like the breeze surmised?
Let me ask the moon, the healer who stays up all night
Mending hearts and sometimes breaking them too.
I could ask the clouds if they tilted their goblets
Overwhelmed by an impassioned, thirsty earth.
Did the nectar splash on me or did the earth sway in
inebriation
That I found myself shaken from my stalk
And scattered like a handful of fallen stars
With the dewdrops still fresh on my languid eyelids
And the blush still crimson from the kiss of a starry night?



Anju Kishore: I am a poet residing in Chennai, India. I have contributed to various anthologies. My poems have been featured in a Dubai-based magazine and also a theatrical performance in Mumbai. My book of poetry "...and I Stop to Listen" was published in 2018. I am one of the winners of the Great Indian Poetry Award 2018.



NEW BEGINNINGS

Walking away from somewhere safe

standing on the edge of risk

stepping off

plunging into the unknown

Exposing myself to judgment

facing possible rejection

holding my breath

bracing for the worst

Facing my demons
accepting my fate
learning from mistakes
marching bravely onward

There are no promises
there are no guidelines
there is only discovery
there is only hope

New beginnings
clutch at our hearts
our minds and our souls
then free us to find us



Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet residing in Hockessin in the USA. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry, have been internationally published, and won poetry awards from numerous publications. I am the author of 9 poetry books and one Memoir.



When they came in
They weren't the sun
What you saw was a halo
But mostly it was the sun
The real halos leave a light
Long after the sun has taken flight



Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost two 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.



OUR LIFE

Sometimes our life comes
Sometimes throws us away,
Puts us against the wall,
gives us slap to wake,
Sometimes puts us on edge
to fight or admire,
Sometimes we pass our time
of utter madness
sometimes we fight our moments
of utter sadness,
Sometimes we think everything

Will pass,

Sometimes we try everything

to pass.

Sometimes we love our

Silly life

Sometimes we end up hating

our willy life,

Sometimes we hate to

Love life

Sometimes we love to

hate life

Don't we?



Ashish K Pathak: He is a middle school teacher posted in Munger district of Bihar province (India). He has got letter of appreciation from President of India for his poem. Recently his works of poetry have been featured in many national and international anthologies.



FRAGRANCE...

You a wildflower

Blooming in the hills

With the unsung passion of your heart

You asked the wind

To bring me

A whiff of your fragrance

My song comes between

With a touch of pain

I ask the cloud

From where you come...

A strange fragrance in the wind

Never pluck this little flower

The far-away song in emptiness

And fragrance passes by like a dream...



Asoke Kumar Mitra: I am a poet residing in Kolkata, India. I am a retired journalist. I have contributed to various anthologies published in India and abroad. My poems are translated into Italian, French, Persian, Hebrew, Malay and Mandarin languages.



<https://english.kolkata24x7.com/an-enthralling-tale-how-sonagachi-got-its-name.html/>

SONAGACHHI

Primal blackness that existed before the light had come
oozed out

From the pale posts of Sonagachhi. The dingy wind plays
with the

Dusk of the drab lanes that lay like static overaged serpent
of Sonagachhi.

The roadside sun-scorched shrine rings the vesper
coarsely.

The day ends and bustle begins at Sonagachhi rooms

With Sikha, Sabina and Salome. Pale patches, cheap scents.

The impatient horns of yellow Ambassador are their vesper.

A pious Brahmin comes like angel fresh from temple,
After the chanting of prayer comes a Muslim-during the day
They fought to denounce other's god, now they are friends
Enough to suggest from last night's experiment the most
gratifying doll.

The Hindu like octopus embraces Sabina whose lips
has just savoured
Beef. The Muslim like the ocean deluges the rickety legs of
Salome who emits scent
Of pork.

After midnight the discharged souls having completed
the worship of flesh
Start homeward to sanctify the marriage bond.
Next day newspapers bring out grumpy headline of spitting
religion to each other.
In Sonagachhi Sikha Salome Sabina spit bittel and laugh
aloud.



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



TO THE LAWMAKERS

Of all the struggles depicted in the pages of history, perhaps the ones for power had the most number of strings attached to it. In the battles that were fought to acquire kingdoms or the elections that established democracy as the term to fall back on, you emerged unscathed, all the time. No wonder you pulled the right strings.

Your voice echoed in the brigades and the image of a visionary aspiring to change a filthy landscape gave me solace. In your smiling face on all the wall posters and distributed pamphlets, I found hope of a new beginning. But expectations leads to frustrations, we all learn it the hard way. In the wake of your victory, a commoner bled to death crushed by the wheels of your drunken follower. But

like a true savior, you misused what had been bestowed to you by us. Power.

The many paragraphs in the esteemed daily maybe biased writing, but how would you explain it when people sharing the same streets draw their weapons on the other, just because they are divided by religion! Now that we ride on your promises, why does my sister find it difficult to walk the streets alone when it's dark?

You may serve the wishes of the Gods you believe in or dress up like the saint you want us to see, but why does your name and corruption flash hand in hand as breaking news in the bottom center of my television screen? It used to leave me aghast but I got used to it with time. In the showcase of hypocrisy, you pulled the slow trigger that made me avoid the left turn that's headed to the temple.

Five years down the line, I am a clueless visitor to yet another election booth. I witness men emerge with a smile as rigged votes slap the face of democracy. We love to live in a world that is safe, but irony smirks as I fear retribution from you if I step a foot wrong in your direction.

But, you of all people should remember that the reins you used to drive the horse from your saddle were provided by us. While it takes time, a collective voice does finally achieve to make itself heard.

And while a Nation still decides to give you a chance, it's high time you learnt how to behave.



Ayan Chakraborty: I am a writer residing in Bangalore, India. I work as a software engineer. I have contributed as a writer in various online magazines and anthologies.



THORNY PATH

(1)

In the bare endless stretching sand

I fall by the wayside without a friend

In wilderness I can't sing a love-song

Lying without hope I can't wait long

(2)

At dusk feeling burnt-out I plod home

The ruins around – home sweet home!

Pangs of longing are ever so numbing

My cherished world comes crumbling

(3)

Into the rolling river of fire I'm to step
To re-gain long lost jewel with all pep
Ready to stake my life, as a last resort
I'll struggle without stopping for a port.

(4)

Now time is ripe to snatch from time
My glorious eternal soul in her prime
I can hear well her distant sweet call
Soothing music like that of a waterfall



B S Tyagi: He comes from India and writes in both Hindi and English. He has several books- fiction and non-fiction to his credit. His poems have been included in several anthologies. He writes short stories which regularly appear in national and international literary magazines. His write-ups and poems have appeared in national and international magazines. Besides, he has translated four books of poems.



ONCE UPON A LIE

When we were very very young,

We swore to our playmates,

Hand over heart:

"I cross my heart and hope to die

If ever I should tell a lie".

Or some swore:

"Cross your heart and hope to die,

And hope the cat'll spit in your eye."

Or:

"Cross my heart,

Hope to die,
Stick a needle in my eye”

When we were very very young,
We learnt, quick as animal instinct,
The lifesaving possibilities of a lie,
A lie smart, a lie pathetic,
Or exquisite or risky

The old tale tells that in Paradise Garden
We practised, then too,
The straight face,
The earnest voice,
The artful and the artless lie

But what of the purple faces of humans
When biologists call us animals?

Did not non-human creatures,
Long before the talking serpent,
Lie and scheme their heads off
- Each species to its own
Self-saving fashion
In air or sky or water -
With their bodily instincts alone?



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



SWEET WEED INDEED

remember how
it all started
3 boys departed
from their
innocent ways
looking to explore
with drug
filled days
got the pipe
got the weed
then proceeded

to do
what was not needed
ready to jump into
what we didn't no
long ago
we just
wanted to explore
it was all out
war
hardcore
spliffing and puffing
coughing
then another
stuffing
went from grass
to pill
sending chills
down the spine

messing up the mind

now we was

closer than ever

before

entering through

an unknown door

floating

and flying

laughing

and cursing

that feeling

bursting with

pleasure

do we really

need to treasure

an experience

we were not
suppose to do?

now we went
at it harder
as we were
getting smarter
rolling slowbows
down in
the meadows
hiding our
use
we had
no excuse
why we started
but it was fun
what's done
is done

that's how we felt
enjoying each
others company
we got caught
in it
completely
what was
suppose to be
a once off
experience
became a series
of activity
smoking weed
in between
the reeds

a bad habit
and 3 friends

floating
and flying
laughing
and cursing
that feeling
bursting with
pleasure
do we really
need to treasure
an experience
we were not
suppose to do?

see
here we are
today
each one
of those

three friends
turned out ok
got clean
got sober
that life
now over
3 boys
who wanted
to explore
decided
no more

no more
floating
and flying
no more
laughing
and cursing

that feeling
bursting with
pleasure
will be
our long
lost treasure
forever
and ever

once upon
a time
we were
floating
and flying
laughing
and cursing
that feeling
bursting with

pleasure

do we really

need to treasure

an experience

we were not

suppose to do?



Bevan Boggenpoel: He was born in Salt Lake, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He attended Soutpan Primary and matriculated at Westville Secondary School. Boggenpoel completed a Baccalaureate in Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He launched his debut

Anthology 1 December 2016. The book was well received by the public and he sold 200 copies locally. He is also an author at a South African website known as Litnet (Literature Network in South Africa). His poetry is written in a South African context that covers different issues in daily life. In his writings he strives to tell a story or teach a lesson that will inspire and motivate. He is currently a teacher at Bethelsdorp Road Primary in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth.



DEVI (GODDESS)

Bou

(Oh Mother)

What a beauty is there

In your vermillion smeared face

When your nose and eyes

Were watering

From the smoke of firewood

Billowing from Katha Chullah (Hearth)

You were busy

In tidying the house
From early dawn
When there was still darkness
Without caring even
How messy your looks gone
Whether the vermillion
Was in its place or smudged
Or your hair became
Knotty and rough!

You only cared
Whether your children
Ate properly or not
You loved to bake for us
Chapatis or bread
Cook rice and fry small fishes
To our tastes
Preparing curry of greens

Dishes after dishes

Oh what a taste in them

As if there was

A nectar's touch.



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



<https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/nelson-mandela-71923b7a-6769-497e-9ef4-7161417698b8>

THE TRIBE FORGOTTEN UNDER MUD

I made words work towards

revelation of a dream

Revisioning golden roads marking

loner's victories past has pasted

on our path

What is naked about the sky has carpeted souls aiming for
colour

free state of mind

Elevated tainted ambitionist of deculturing those remaining
on intimate prayers

In hemispheres fogging out smoke nature denies
mythification of hunger by race

A sweat worth for some pride
imprinted on bare footed young
runners chasing tails dustier than
the street

Some other times dreams faulted
in absence of honesty in moments
where unity became a must

No treasure

No secret

No truth

No lie

No love

No hate

No pain

No delight

No revolution

No tribe

wants to ever

dwell under the mud



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

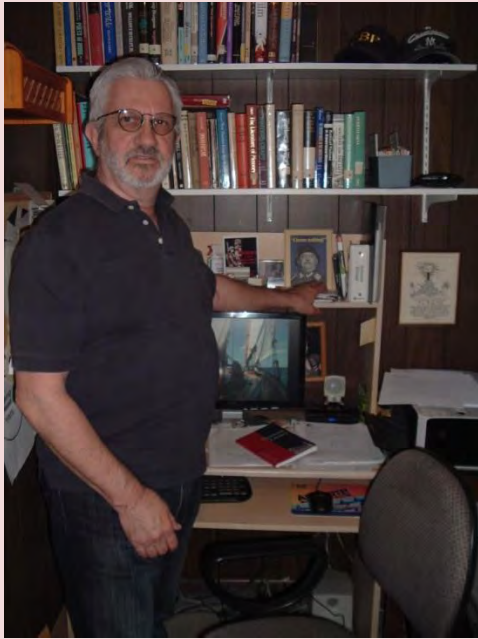


<https://www.deviantart.com/amoxes>

CLARENCE

After a lifetime of farming, tending land and animals, you retire, replacing the rich smell of dung with the moist odor of sawdust. You take up hammer and chisel to become a carpenter. You say, half-joking, to a reporter from Ames, “It’s the best way to stay out from underfoot.” He writes that should the Grim Reaper ever knock on your door,

you'd likely invite him in for checkers,
providing he was neither a Baptist nor
a Democrat. After having some coffee,
playing a few games, Death would probably leave
as a new customer. Like most carpenters,
you lost some fingers to your craft, that sacrifice
being more important than some thumb.
And the heart shows in each finished product:
the wooden bowls made from a lightning-struck tree,
the clocks all set seven minutes slow, or
the stool you build for your great grandson: its seat
heart-shaped, its legs shortened for smaller legs.



Bill Cushing: The poem is "Clarence," which does appear in my book *A Former Life* (in a slightly longer form), and the image is "The Old Carpenter" painted by amoxes, whose work is on deviantart.com



RELEASE ME

The more I try to free myself
The more entangled in you I get
Wondering what my heart intends.
For avoiding things, redolent of you
not erases but etches deeper
The vivid memories of you.

Every day becomes a struggle
To see the sky without its blue
For blue is your favourite hue
To enjoy the cool, caressing breeze

Without feeling your fingers ruffling through
To enjoy the warmth of sunny days.
Without feeling the touch of your embrace
To enjoy the rain without being reminded
Of fun filled moments in your arms drenched.

So shutting away the world from me
Seeking solace, in submission I prostrate
A soft voice in the air reverberates,
What use is prostrating before God
While resting an idol in your enamoured heart.



Bilquis Fatima: Bilquis Fatima, an innate lover of nature and speaker for social issues, has allowed her feelings and ideas to be expressed as short writes and speeches from her college time. Being a postgraduate in Chemistry, she has also mastered the skills of poetry appreciation and writing. Her poems reflecting the situations that are prevalent in the society, have been appreciated by many groups of poets and writers lately. Her literary works are embellished with eloquent expressions that seem to pour out from the heart.



WHEN RAIN VISITS MY STREET

The face of the sky looks grimed
Silent are the trees,
The dragonflies swarm around,
Before rain visits my street

A rally of clouds march on,
In a sky gradually growing gray
Slowly the raindrops fall down,
Dribbling on the grass blades

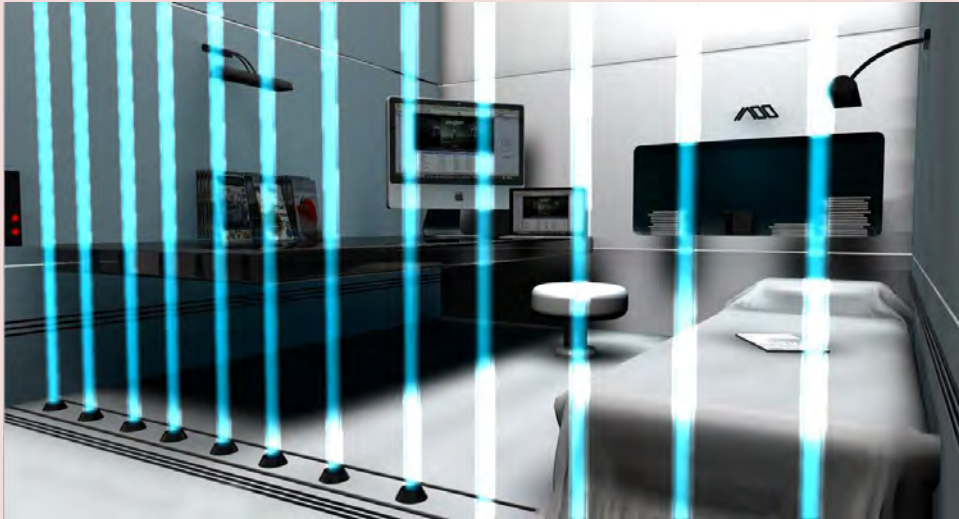
The sideways are bedecked with little grass flowers
Fishes move in the inundated walkways,
Slowly gliding upstream,
Playfully the children gather to catch them,
Floating paper boats along with,

The conch shells crawl along the alleys
And climb on the temple wall,
The mating calls of the frogs and the fowls
Reverberate the surrounding

Drops of rain ignite the fire in me,
I feel the rhythm melodic,
Poetry resuscitates in my heart
Making me feel euphoric



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



You may hang a murderer

confine him to solitary

crime does not stop

Prison justice is pure business

it needs capital

raw material

the poor are made to pay for crime

rich powerful get away

all aren't equal before law

no

prison houses also innocents, scapegoats

it is a place where

scamsters, murderers roam free
build more prison to house your guilt
crime still laughs and makes hay while sun shines.



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



ZEBEDEE AND SONS

It was a good day's catch on Galilee,
The nets heavy-full with wriggling fish,
James and John with me their proud Zebedee,
Treasures to market and treats for our dish.
Then he came, notorious now I hear
That carpenter's son who should do more work,
Breaking men from their families dear,
Is one labour that prophet will not shirk.
He called out to them and off they ran
Out of my life. "Fishers of men" he said
They would be, now their other lives began,

And on my boat I felt among the dead.

My hired men remain, but family

Became another man's that day at sea.



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.



FOLKLORIC WO/MAN NUMBER ONE

I woke up from a deep sleep

And I came to the fields

Leaving the bedroom

And, as sorcerer and wizard

I rose up to a leafy tree

For watching sunrise.

With great silence, softly
The Sun god
Was walking slowly
Wrapped in colorful clouds
Visiting the site
Where I
Was contemplating Him.
What a joy of light
He was going to give me
He's coming, He's arriving.
I stick out my tongue
And relate Him.
Oh, what a moment!
When I got hold of myself
He dressed me as folkloric Wo/Man
And put in my hands
On the right chest
A plastic Goddess

Whom my hug woke up
Giving trick, a good trick
On the Sun god
Because I gave Life to the Goddess
Naming her Eve
Removing Himself, full of sun
Confused and stunned
Growling and giving swear-words
For burning my skin
And make me blisters.
With some risk
I got off the tree
And, in its shadow
Me free from so much sun
I blessed Him for being God and Sun
And for giving me this goddess
With which, here, I fell in Love
Wanting without wanting.

I don't know if other folklorics
Will have achieved so much happiness
Like me.
What I can say is
That I'm full of light
And very glad about it.



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



CLAWING AT THE GROUNDED MOON #53

the moon has an ecosystem the moon has people that have climbed it to die on top of it the moon is the leading cause of suicide we have translated Pablo Neruda's collected poems into a language for the people that live in tents that hang from the moon i am from mount Vernon the town of the individual that got the donner party lost with his fake maps i've started selling old maps with the moon drawn poorly over the midwest i am not responsible for any of this i am not responsible



Darren C. Demaree: I am a poet residing in Columbus, Ohio, United States. I work as librarian. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am the author of ten poetry collections, most recently "Lady, You Shot Me" (December, 2018)



THOUGHT

If justice is not fair and equal, it becomes a sick joke, it becomes injustice and the judges and lawyers who participate in the charade are little more than charlatans.



GREED

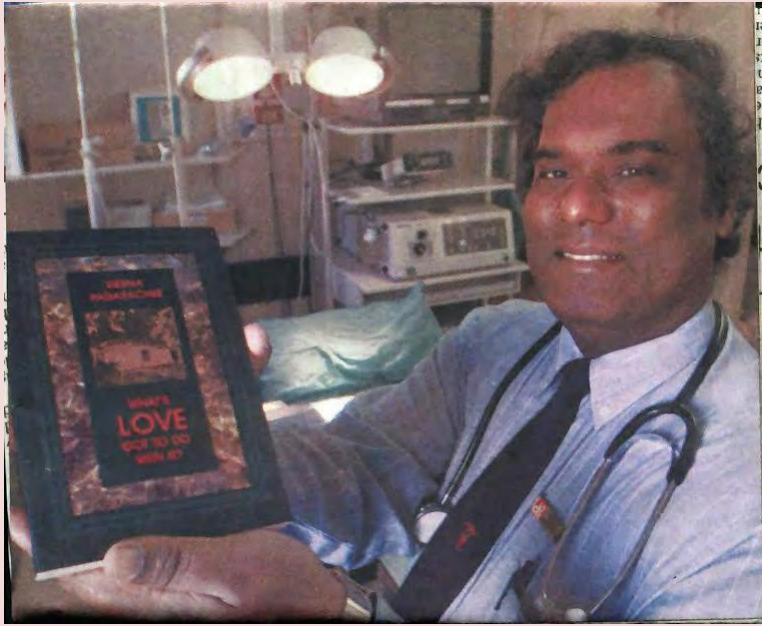
How much do they need?

How much must they steal?

How many people must go without,

How many people must experience pain and suffering

so that they can have too much?



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



OUR SCHEME OF THINGS AND DESTINY'S SMILE

No it was not planned like that

We thought what we knew was eternal

We thought what we believed was universal

How could things be so different?

Our scheme of things to control our lives

And control lives of the others

Dear and near to us, our next of kin

And all other, millions of unknown faces

We knew as our countrymen

And even from distant other countries

How could the world be so different?
From the world we knew
How could anyone believe anything
Other than what we believed
How could anyone do anything
Which we didn't approve?
No it was not planned like that.
But then the disaster struck
The high walls around us crumbled
The glass minaret, built centuries ago, fell to pieces
Every life around us started to decompose,
And we stood uncertain, alone, lonely in the wind
The earth trembled beneath our feet
No it was not planned like that.
But the destiny smiled without us ever knowing
Saplings began to sprout up everywhere
Soon we were stuck, imprisoned, immobile
As the new world marched around us.



Dipankar Sarkar: Poetry is my passion, but I do not write regularly. Sometimes, words just flow out of nowhere and completely inundate me, force me to live an experience of writing. That's poetry for me. I work as the Chief Content Officer of iDreamCareer.com, India's largest career counselling organisation.



pic by Marcel Herms

INFESTED INVESTMENT

het wordt moeilijk – I am really trying but *things are getting increasingly difficult* –

This life is not the same anymore. We are not the same anymore – So many

conflicting mentalities extreme emotional fatalities easily avoidable but regrettably

welcome for some. Too many of us use free speech to accelerate brain freeze from

forced ideas gleaned from social media spheres blinding
our inherent fears to enable imported false veneers where
dagger smiles replace acceptance of

differences – All sorts of social issues still not accepted by
weak masses fervently

seeking elevated voices to influence modern choices – Our
humanity regrettably

infested – How are we to repair broken relations fuelled by
ill-informed human

investment? Who to trust who to believe what to believe
from ideas ill-conceived?

Vanity Inferno – Celebrity status leaving new generations in
zombie stasis, marching

aimlessly to seek out new faces fuelling their brittle spirits
to alter their appearance –

Happy to chemically inflate their lips filling themselves with
toxic chemicals just to wipe

away their mirror image contortions only they can see
despite loved ones witnessing

their true beauty – Sacrificial diets the new craze to mimic
that feeling of achievement,

A touch of fame to feel part of the fake image game
enhanced by catwalk fashionistas

strutting down street runways stomping to the beat of
frenzied designers dressing their

chosen stars becoming their willing mannequins walking
yet another stained red carpet

beamed across the global village as if other nations are in
need of cultural makeovers,

as primitive fodder not conforming to what is the norm, the
fashion storm...

Maelstrom City – Fading moral lines deepening the rot
allowed to infect and neglect

this human race. Anything goes, where pathetic lonely men
decide to delete a wife a

a partner, a mother, a father even their own children –
Where world leaders dress up

as lifetime dictators, where deadly substances annihilate
whole generations, or fanatic

so-called soldiers of faith stone maim even kill anyone who
loves the same sex or
change their sex, where women are spat at even attacked
for daring to pray with men
or enter a space reserved for men. This global city now in
existential meltdown where
systems change rules change – Where those with financial
power actually govern our
lives pulling their political puppet master strings. Even as
our oceans are choking and
the skies fall down some still prefer to embrace this
infested town – Final meltdown...



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



JIHADI JUNE EVENING

Oh! little mosque—
your muezzin abuzz—
with blood and mist—
hoping to save my skin,
I swat/swat at
your incessance.

NOTE: "Little mosque" could be hispanicized as "mosquito," though the Spanish word is actually derived from "mosca" (fly) and the diminutive suffix "ito." The root word, related to the Sanskrit "maksa-", may have been related to the buzzing of insects. "Mosque" in Spanish is "mezquita."



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



<https://www.cntraveler.com/stories/2012-04-26/london-olympics-east-end-shoreditch-pubs-restaurants-cafes-shopping-art-gallery>

TO HAVE LESS

Translated by Artur Komoter

In the evening
through the alleys
seeps the music,
Cesária Évora's voice

delights and calms.

Joy is painted
on the faces.

Here everything is:

- *no problem,*
- *no stress.*

Sunk in delight,
nowhere do they see evil,
they do not share time

it is theirs.

Tangled problems
become nothing.

Here they understood
that to have less

means
to be more.



Eliza Segiet: She graduated with a Master's Degree in Philosophy, completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy, Arts and Literature at Jagiellonian University. Author's poem Questions won the title of the International Publication of the Year (2017) in Spillwords Press. Author's poem Sea of Mists won the title of the International Publication of the Year (2018) in Spillwords Press. Author's works can be found in anthologies and literary magazines worldwide.



Freedom is a stranger
That I keep watching from a distance
I get a feeling that he watches me too

We watch for some time
And then ignore
Each waiting for the other to make the first move

I like the idea of freedom

And he perhaps likes the fact that I never had freedom

He knows!

My hesitation is a dead giveaway

I wait

Watch

Ignore

He turns his back

And watches the sea

The mermaid walks past him taking his arm, guiding him
into the waves

She doesn't give a damn about whether he can swim or not

I wait

Watch

But can no longer ignore

She sails past the waves

Freedom drowns

And I can do nothing about it

Not even frown



Gauri Dixit: A software professional from Pune (India), Gauri writes English poetry. Her poems have been featured in multiple Indian and international anthologies. She is a regular contributor to many poetry pages and e-zines of repute such as Destiny Poets UK, Duane's Poetree, Glomag, Kubili Cafe, Learning & Creativity, Mind Creative, Spillwords and Stanzaic Stylings. She recently won the 'Reuel International Prize for the Most Promising Poet - 2018'. Her first poetry book 'In my skin, I find freedom' was recently released. She loves reading, photography and traveling.



SAGA OF LOVE

No one questions when the leaves embrace the wind
passionately

No one scolds the spring flowers when they sprinkle love in
the surroundings

Does anyone try to stop the river!

Flowing from ages...to meet her love. The ocean

Singing the ancient saga of love...

Singing her desire to reach her true destination

Beloved ...let us move to a far off land

Beyond the reach of prosaic minds

Where no one will question our love

Where we can catch our dreams together and walk hand in
hand

Let us find a land where we can at least stay alive in each
other's hearts

And no one will object...

Someday may be we will find that celestial land

Where love will find its true destiny

Far far away from this terrestrial boundary...

Beyond the horizon and the moon...



Gayatree G. Lahon: Hailing from the beautiful state of Assam, Gayatree is a poet as well as a teacher. Poetry is her passion and nature her great inspiration. She is an ardent lover of nature and her poems reflect those qualities in a subtle way. Her poems have been published in newspapers, magazines and anthologies, both in India and abroad.



CIRCLE OF JOY

“Show them your dance.” That was an order!

Children screamed clapping their hands and then quietened waiting in anticipation. They were charmed by her appearance. She wore a pale green skirt with orange designs and a small blouse tied in a knot just above her stomach. Her neck was completely covered with colourful strands of beads. Her black wiry hair was held by a bright pink ribbon. Her dark eyes, smiling too, shone like stars. Feeling shy, she drew a circle with her toe in the mud.

“Neeli, come on, you dance so well!”

Neeli slowly laid the sickle on the ground and the bundle of grass next to it. Now her hands were free. She began with a song – “Thabidu tharee, thabidu tharee.....pinne moru

tharee..." Her legs moved and she jumped swinging her body left and right in a semi-circle. Children started clapping in rhythm. As the tempo increased, they went round and round her dancing, imitating her. She laughed and they all laughed and danced....round and round and round. "Thabidu tharee...thabidu tharee... A dance of joy spreading happiness.

Then she stopped, and everyone stopped. As they waited anxiously, she smiled. Then she started singing again making everyone scream and squeal with excitement. They started again...round and round and round. Thabidu tharee thabidu tharee...

All of a sudden she stopped again. She bent to pick up her bundle of grass and the sickle. Will this be another trick? Will she start again? As they wondered, Neeli smiled. Her toothless smile stretched from one ear to the other, making her wrinkles stretch to their limits. She stood balancing her bundle of grass on her head. One hand held the grass and the other, the sickle. She gazed at all the children crowded around her.

This time she left.

But they started again.... round and round again....thabidu tharee thabidu tharee....screaming and laughing....round

and round and round... as the sun set, spreading orange and red and yellow into darkness.



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.



THE NIGHT FALCON

Something brews under the soil, scented like petrichor,
But I cannot put my finger on it,
It stirs the alien in me, as I grow wings of a falcon spanning
oceans;

Memories waft through the window, the sheers tremulous
with delight,

I breathe in my dreams as I exhale desires I wished of this
world, reborn, restructured, reunited, rejuvenated,

The dream ends too soon as I rub my eyes, a haze outside
my shutters,

Fogging my mind that in the camphor of the night emerges
pearly white,

Vaporising like wisps of hope:

Dreams seem surreal, like poetry,

And mists drift away to suspend themselves as clouds
hover my senses,

In an evanescence of a fragrance disappearing with the
dawn light.



Geethanjali Dilip: I am a poet residing in Salem, India. I work as French Teacher. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published two poetry anthologies. I am the recipient of the Reuel International Poetry Award 2017.



YOU

the cars sped,
traffic policeman
screams, screeches, halts
ragamuffin pestering to buy flowers
mother tugs at my arm
come on! let's get going!
the street lights are on
the guffaw of chai-drinking men
sounding bawdy jokes
the strange sense of deja vu prevails...
have i been here before?

same place, same people

i turn in your direction

looking up to where you stand

devouring me with your eyes...



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet and writer currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is the Editor and Publisher of the Monthly Online Prose and Poetry magazine, 'GloMag' and is the administrator of the group of the same name on Facebook.



THE FOREST

through slate gray morning hues
snow covered mountain peaks rising
slopes adorned with rich, green
trees of forests
sunlight piercing the thick,
early-morning shade
that lingers like a light veil over the treetops.
a unspoilt natural gem,
hidden in the realms of nature's sanctuary
like a secluded oasis lurking
beyond the desert's horizon

of open skies and evergreen plains.

what awaits me is nature's breathtaking beauty

in the middle of nowhere

nowhere can hide a spectacular somewhere

amid the gentle rolling, tree lined paths

I tread

absorbing the blissful quiet

except for the whistling wind

and the chirping of birds

that fly beneath swirling clouds

so unreal they look like a painting

of Vincent van Gogh

red stone cliffs with its rocky terrain soar upwards,

upon a crystal clear aqua-blue stream

I stumble

so bright and transparent it appears like diamonds

water like sapphire revealing white-sandy floors

giving life to flora and Fauna
with colourful fish gliding along.
photosynthesis happening before my naked eyes,
with plants blowing bubbles to the surface

nightfall comes and I am immersed
in the solitude the night brings
and the sweet fragrance of the forest flora
is opium to my soul
i am seduced sent into a meditative spell
that the night has cast over the forest glade
my thoughts are captivated
by the pristine breathtaking night sky
and the cool invigorating fresh air
that gives life to the lungs of the forest

my virgin tropical paradise untouched, unspoilt
i say a silent pray

her virginity be preserved
and not violated by the careless
uncaring pernicious hand of man



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.



SOMETHING UNKNOWN

Not knowing where winds roar or the reasons
Of the sleepy sigh of the awestruck tall trees,
The smouldering sunsets give a pass,

In the mountains, grey clouds settle over the crossing
Of unnameable stones and pebbles, and all this
Before my gaze, my conniving life.

There is a sense of having stepped back in time,
Reshaping the faint trails in the woods and
Veiling a river valley somewhere below.

Still listening to the rumbling of last night rain
In those narrow alleys of mind, my tiring legs
If buried under debris, may inch along the,

Glacier streams with weak body and blank faces
Soaking in the bountiful beauty of hill slopes
And plunging meadows spreading the green.

Feel deceptively light, I can now hear the sound of
Conch shell slowly resonating inside,
In search of something unknown.



Gopal Lahiri: I am a bilingual poet, writer, critic and translator residing in Kolkata. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published nine volumes of poetry in English and seven volumes in Bengali. In addition, I have also jointly edited one anthology of poems in English and also have one translation work of short stories of Israel, translated by me from English to Bengali.



WROTE DOWN WITHOUT WRITING

Original : Assamese : Guna Moran

Translation : Bibekananda Choudhury

Would look at your eyes

You'd misunderstand

Would utter through my lip

Won't turn sweet to the ears

Would speak through letters

It'd wither

Rather I'd write without writing

Your name in my mind's vista

No one'd know

No one'd understand

You'd not be aware too

Would write without writing

Whose name in the innermost fold of the soft slate

Wind wouldn't be able to carry away

Rain won't be able to wet

Fire won't be able to burn

Even my source of inspiration wouldn't be able to rub

Only the flowing ones knows the value of flowing ones



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



<https://www.behaviourworksaustralia.org/change-isnt-always-a-holiday/old-couple/>

GHAZAL

I will be with you till the reminder, even in wrinkles

Hear my voice echoing through skies, woven in wrinkles

I am the everlasting sentience lying within depths of your heart

Feel the joy and gala, agony and desolation graven in wrinkles

Look and you will witness my form whether in noise or
ecstasy

The dust of ages and perplexity will be shriven in wrinkles

Reason and intellect are like the dim light of distant stars

Let's be the dazzling sun and light up the heaven, in
wrinkles

This mortal world is nothing but snow and ice

Let's be the burning heat of summer thriven in wrinkles

This pining and yearning in my heart is more a curse than a
cure

Come for the sake of union, so I will be forgiven, in wrinkles



Imran Yousuf: He is a Poet/Writer/Columnist from Anantnag Kashmir (J&K), India. Currently working as Columnist and Journalist, he has contributed his poems to various reputed magazines, journals and international anthologies. He has also written a series of articles about the great Poets of the Kashmir Valley (starting from 14th century) that were published in various newspapers and magazines and now being compiled into a book, expected to be launched soon.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow>

RAINBOW

Rainbow---appears

Enchanting, spectacular,

Breathtaking, colourful

In the sky.

With its different hues,

Shades of experiences—

Life becomes enchanting,

Mesmerizing, lively

Like a rainbow.

We humans,
In spite of diversity and differences,
If cohesive—
Can be as enchanting, colourful
As a rainbow.

Rainbow appears after
Dark clouds, spell of rain—
Beauty follows
gloom, darkness.
Lesson from nature.



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



ME AS HYDE: A LETTER TO SATAN

(with thanks to Five Finger Death Punch)

I think you, Satan, made me take
my first stride.

You've seen me in
the raw and the dark...

you've bled me and each drop
emits a spark.

Each wound I flaunt with undisguised pride
as you are my savior and my guide.

I try to be Jekyll but am fighting Hyde.

You haunt my brain like
phantom of the night.

You did not hesitate to put up
a cosmic fight...

with God as the enemy, you're in flames inside
flaunting your conquests everywhere with pride.

Metals clash in my head as I unwind,
the Devil soothes me to sleep in his kind.
In every pore of me, you, Satan, reside.
I try to be Jekyll but am fighting Hyde.

The orgasm of screaming black death
is often decried,
but even God's own Milton was on your side.
A gloating serpent won't have his pleasures denied...
I fell with Eve as in me you abide.

Behold your daughter -- your joy and pride.

I try to be Jekyll but am fighting Hyde.



Jagari Mukherjee: She holds an MA in English Language and Literature from University of Pune, and was awarded a gold medal and several prizes by the University for excelling in her discipline. Her poems and other creative pieces have been published in different venues both in India and abroad. She is a Best of the Net 2018 nominee, a DAAD scholar from Technical University, Dresden, Germany, a Bear River alumna, and the winner of the Poeisis Award for Excellence in Poetry 2019, among other awards. Her chapbook *Between Pages* was published by Cherry-House Press, Illinois, USA, in June 2019. She is currently pursuing her PhD from Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, India.



Filled with the cold breathe

I was there

Travelling to Airport

With an apprehension in my mind

How those guys will be?

Will I be able to fit in?

How will my trip be?

Panting I checked-in at the airport

And then all of a sudden

Everything changed

We met each other

And then there were chats & discussion
It's strange how we shared,
Combined pieces with each other
We delved and related facts with each other
We enjoyed common interests
And made this trip
A memorable one
To be cherished for the lifetime
Forever and Always!!



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



<https://www.cpomagazine.com/cyber-security/more-to-fear-than-fear-itself-online-threats-and-what-you-can-do-about-them/>

FEAR

what lies in its definition?

Is it the dark?

or what lies in it

it has to be the monsters

it has to be the tides

it has to be the red that covers the white in its eyes

right?

are we really scared?

I think we are all just unprepared for the fight

eluding the night even though it feels right

some are scared of water
some fire
some are scared of love
some fearful of desire
some are scared of falling
terrified of their calling
someday you must find the courage
to face them all
smash through that fucking wall
stand up so damn tall
that the world looks like a bug on the ground
scurrying around while you're standing proud
fear is an illusion
fear is not real
fear is a manifestation
fear is something you feel
you can't heal
if you're scared to move on

it's not real
unless you play along
fear of the dark
fear of the monsters
fear of your demons
fear in your heart
you must cleanse yourself of all of this
nothing is stronger than your will to win
fear is nothing but an illusion you live
draw your swords warriors
slay the fucking beast
we are not prisoners here
we are fucking free
we suit up in armor
we lace up our boots
we will kill the monsters
we will not lose
fear is something you choose to do

if you keep feeding this animal
it will always control you
starve the demons so they lose their strength
put out the fire that made you run away
stand here today swords in the air
fear is not a reality
this is our nightmare.

I'm embracing my fears tonight
there is so much at stake
I can't live with them anymore
my soul they cannot take.



Jeffrey Oliver: I am a poet/lyricist, currently living in upstate New York. I have been writing for 20 years, I write my heart, soul and emotions and will never give up on this crazy dream of mine. I have been told that I have a captivating style when my work is registered in the minds of many. I am also a family man, I have a wonderful wife, who is my inspiration, as well as 7 beautiful children. Welcome to my mind.



AT SEA

I look onto the sea as if it had been made for me,
no companion but this boat cradles me.

With no destination or desire to watch the time,
the wind drives about a change

D

E

E

P

within me as I find a strange new
source of comfort in my skin.

Out here there is no awkward moments of insecurities.
Fear does not rule my life.

There is no rush hour traffic
or mothers hurrying with their children.

I do not hear unattended babies crying.
nor do I struggle to climb the corporate ladder
to reach the next rung for more money.

People are not engaged with each other but with social
media.

Eyes not making contact with the faces they love
but instead on the faces of their cellphones,
like their status really matters based on how many likes
a picture has or how many comments are made on a post.

Out here there is a peace that washes out the negativity in
my soul

only interrupted by an occasional seabird flying overhead.

Day after day, week after week, the waves rock this boat

to a rhythm only a sailor at sea can understand,

and only the reflection of the moonlight below

bears witness to healing powers of the water.



Jennifer Carr: She is a poet residing in Santa Fe, United States. For the last two years, she has worked as an EMT and Firefighter. Her poems have gotten published in more than 10 anthologies. Her Haiku has been published in print and in online publications throughout the world. She flies by her own wings and looks for any opportunity to soar to new heights.



SUMMER SONG

Trees outline the
horizon in green lace.
Beneath boughs float
galaxies of blue bugs.
Crimson clouds smudge
a sapphire sky.

Listen to swish of
branches as cicada

swell and swarm.

Hiding under shadows,
beating their wings,
hissing their mating calls.

Evening is coming...
the dawn of night-time.
We are suspended now
between light and dark.
Clouds rushing over heaven.
Sun drops from sky.

The air is fragrant with
sweet blooming jasmine.
Southern winds sweep
across the hemisphere
brightening star after star
awakening this night.



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



A DISCARDED CLOTH

A discarded cloth winks from a corner
awaiting the final shove to its fate.

In a few years it lost its sheen, hubris
whittled away by wear and tear.

It played host to its owner for a time
braving the nuances of vagabond weather
rain, soaking heat or embalming chill.
It knew Time had nothing to reclaim.

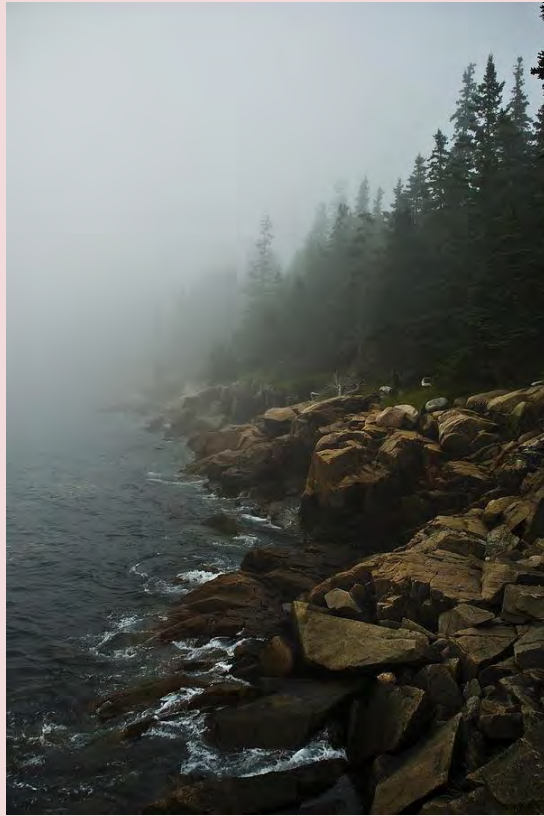
Its owner, ever short of care or foresight,
was too besotted with his daily chores –
building a life out of the visible avenues.
No thought to spare for a cloth's plight.

Its clever design or artful artwork is
a contrivance for only a passing notice.
A shred of beauty awaits its own twilight.
The owner's day too awaits the hearse.

Its prankish wink was lost on the owner.
After all age is only a fading number.



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



REFLECTIONS OF THE FLAWLESS

An early dawn's gentle fingers
probe the coasts morning fog.
Cascading water trickles down
from the mountains to the sea.
Wraith-like mists rise and dew
glitters and twinkles in the sun.
Terns and gulls now soar above
gnarled long-dead trees dwelling

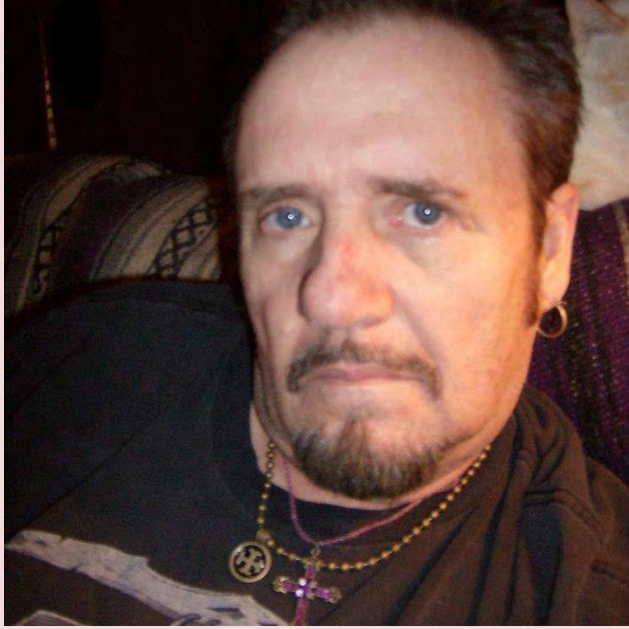
along the rocks and sand as now
twisted gray shapes of driftwood.

Pines sway to building winds;

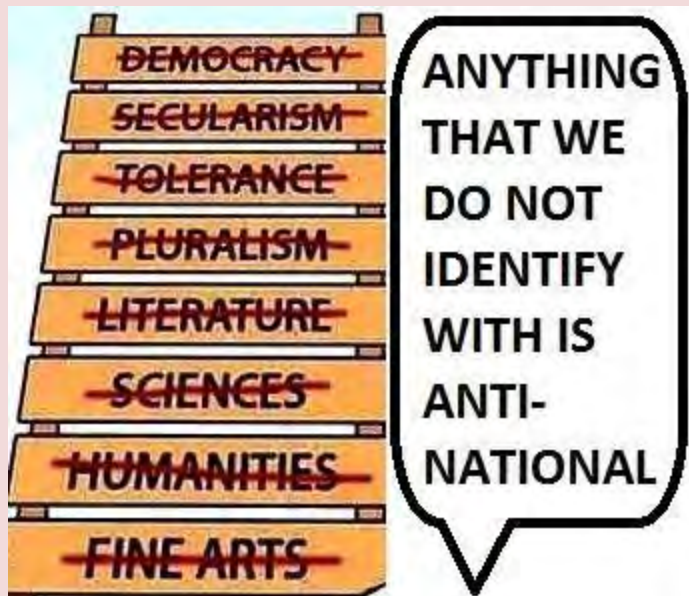
We smell the vast coastal woods,
salt and blue ocean essences.

The flawless panorama of Maine's
Acadia National Park is exhilarating.

Standing high upon the cliffside we
watch as Bass Harbor Head Light
whispers to the mighty Atlantic.



Ken Allan Dronsfield: I am a Poet and I reside in Seminole USA. I am disabled and write full-time. I have contributed and have been a co-editor for various anthologies. I have two published poetry collections.



ANTI-NATIONALS

There is a difference between anti-nationals and anti-nationalists.

Anti-nationalism describes all of us who are opposed to the concept of the rabid nationalism practised in India and elsewhere, which is the imposition of nationalism as a belief or identity system based on the exclusive religious beliefs and language of the majority instead of territory-based nationalism encompassing the whole population of a nation in a spirit of inclusiveness. Tolstoy, Tagore, Einstein, Marx, Engels, Lenin, E M Foster, Samuel Johnson, George Orwell, Soren Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, George Carlin, Carl Segan and John Lennon are some of the famous anti-nationalists, who inspire us to think beyond the narrow confines of the identities bestowed on us by the accident of

our birth. Einstein said, "I am by heritage a Jew, by citizenship a Swiss, and by makeup a human being, and only a human being, without any special attachment to any state or national entity whatsoever. I am against any nationalism, even in the guise of mere patriotism. Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind. Privileges based on position and property have always seemed to me unjust and pernicious, as did any exaggerated personality cult."

Anti-nationals, by contrast, are those who work against the true inclusive spirit of the country, against the peaceful coexistence of all the citizens of the country. Who are the real anti-nationals in India? They are not the naxals, communists or those derided as sickulars, libtards, feminazis and presstitutes. The real anti-nationals in India are perhaps the following.

1. Those politicians, officials, activists, religious preachers and artists/writers who do not live by and practise/propagate the spirit enshrined in the Constitution of India, the Article 51A of which says, "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women; to protect and improve the natural environment

including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures; to develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform."

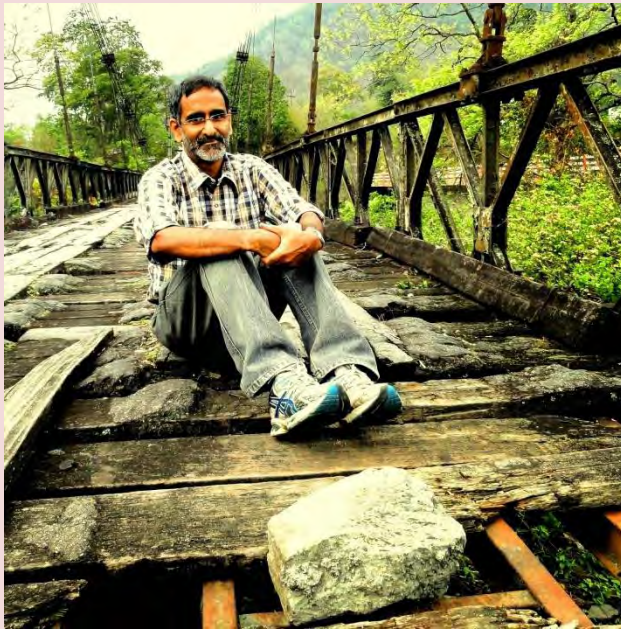
2. Those politicians, officials, activists, religious preachers and artists/writers who try to divide the people of India on the basis of religion and impose the primacy of the majority religion over minority religions, instead of promoting harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India transcending religious diversities as required under Article 51A of our Constitution.

3. Those politicians, officials, activists, religious preachers and artists/writers who try to divide the people of India on the basis of language and thrust the majority language on all others, instead of promoting harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood among all the people of India transcending linguistic diversities as required under Article 51A of our Constitution.

4. Those politicians, officials, activists, religious preachers and artists/writers who try to defend and promote sexist patriarchal rituals and traditions of religion, instead of renouncing practices derogatory to the dignity of women as required under Article 51A of our Constitution.

5. Those politicians, officials, activists, religious preachers and artists/writers who try to debunk atheism, secularism,

rationalism and logical thinking and defend irrational rituals and traditions of religion, instead of promoting scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform as required under Article 51A of our Constitution.



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



<https://www.shutterstock.com/fr/video/clip-28336714-bird-falls-nest>

MEMORIES...

The last fluttering of a little bird

Fallen from a heavenly nest

Still echoes in me

The thirst to live

Could not be quenched

By the hand which fed.

The womb that bore

Could not hide him.

The last touch

The suppressed cries

A heart so strong

Kept all the sobbing

Buried deep within

But memories rise

When a leaf waves in breeze

When raindrops fall

Then I close my eyes

Touches a teardrop his feet

The kiss of a mother

So helpless and broken.



Leena Pradeep: I am working as a teacher in a Government school in Thrissur district, Kerala. Teaching and writing poetry, I believe, keep me alive. My poetry is the reflection of my inner self.



<https://www.maxpixel.net/People-Wave-Beach-Sea-Ocean-Silhouette-Alone-Man-2593582>

I'M A HUMAN BEING

Sometimes I laugh

Sometimes I cry

Sometimes I say hi

Something I wave goodbye

Sometimes I walk

Sometimes I run

Sometimes I'm serious

Sometimes I want to have fun

Sometimes I drink

Sometimes I eat

Sometimes I write

Sometimes I read

Sometimes I'm wrong

Sometimes I'm right

Sometimes I go left

Sometimes I go right

Sometimes I'm silent

Sometimes I speak

Sometimes I'm full of strength

Sometimes I feel weak

Sometimes I follow

Sometimes I lead

Sometimes I feel like cooling down

Sometimes I need some heat

Sometimes I sleep

Sometimes I'm awake

Sometimes I have to work

Sometimes I need a break

Sometimes I'm worshipping

Sometimes I'm praying

Sometimes I want to be superhuman

But then I'm reminded I'm just a human being



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



A MEMORY WHILE CROSSING THE MISSISSIPPI

You are still the one,
with riverboats and barges,
buoyant, and gliding atop your flowing course.

Where groveling settlements
hug your water's edge,
while always hoping for flood's reprieve,
wanting to avoid the mantled enveloping of the land
below your water table.

Churning waters deep,
bear authentic casinos
that float upon your surface.

What a memory you hold for me:
Because also beside you,
stands the St. Louis arch,
my 12-year old self's signature
contributed to the inside of the time capsule
welded atop the apex of that grand structure.



Linda Imbler: Kansas-based Linda Imbler believes poetry has the potential to add to the beauty of the world. She has two self-published poetry collections and two poetry collections published by Soma Publishing. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com. She has completed her chapbook for this summer's poetry reading at the Kansas State Fairgrounds and is working on her Nashville trip recollections.



THE WOODEN BENCH

With a twisted and scornful smile,
the broken old bench near the gate greets us for a while.
Its tattered limbs and discoloured face attracts everyone
towards its surface.
Speaks loudly the volume of by-gone stories in a beat,
I become nostalgic with its heat.
Flashing memories of my grandpa,
sitting in it and narrating the tales of freedom era,
grandma's idling there and unfolding truthful story of scary
years,
adds the flora!
Once anxiously I asked my grandpa—

"Why he loved to sit in the wooden bench most?"

Paused a little and then he said... "here I share my feelings to my friends".

Henceforward I started liking it from every sphere,
linked all my golden memories with it in cheers.

The bench always giggles with laughter of ours,
its treasury filled with pile of churning stories of ours.

Evening snacks and tea by its side,
with each family member remaining close by its sight.

Pours out their daily ordeal keeping it as their witness for
their plight.

It gulps down every details and prepares itself in a clean
image,

for next day in quite.

Here grandpa used to read newspaper loud, we try to avoid
his boisterous shout.

His blurry vision smells our fishy stroll,
then the preachy lesson starts and ends with groan.

Now memories are rusted like the broken bench,

at time lingers for refresh.

Grandpa and grandma are no more,

bench is silent with all its core.

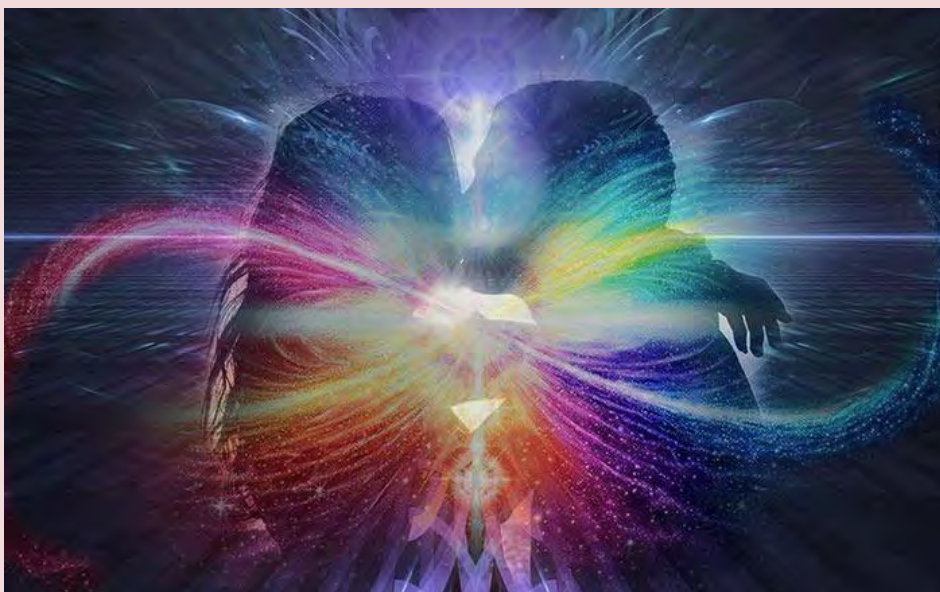
Unwanted, undeserved it stands now,

with its spread warm hands,

fluttering wings of time categorised it as waste product!



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



The caress, sensational and oozing with love

The persona, sizzling with oomph and galore

The satin touch, the silky skin

The peak of the mountain, high and low

Passionately adhering and losing self

The passion building, deep inside

The fire rising, irresistible to hold back

Eagerly pulsating towards the ecstasy zone

Beat by beat, the breathing getting intensified

The valley of love

Waiting to experience the bliss

The tenderness, the sweetness of the forbidden fruit

Longing to lay deluged in its aftermath

Closer, as closer it could be

Higher, as higher it could be

Riding, hitting the right chord

Intoxicated and mystical

Clasping and caressing

The deprived soul

Flying up

Sailing through the sojourned paradise.



Madhu Jaiswal: She is a bilingual poet born and based in Kolkata. Writing is a passion for this homemaker. Her write-ups are published in various national and international anthologies and e-zines.



EMBALM

will time teach me to embalm
embalm myself and preserve
preserve for you
you the cause of my pain
pain and pleasure
pleasure that is hidden
hidden somewhere like that painful splinter
splinter that shall hurt forever
forever lifelong till you come
come out of the darkness

darkness that is now a part of me
me who still waits forgotten by you
you and the world together
together with the darkness my desires burn
burn to keep that lamp glowing
glowing for all to see
see and trace the path to my world
world that is colourless and dreary without you
you for whom I burn
burn with the lamp all through the night
night that may one day show you the path
path leading to me and my heart
heart that craves and cries
cries and tries to mix tears with colours
colours that I try to splash
splash around to keep my dreams fresh
fresh as the lily that flowers
flowers that wait with me for you

you to return one day to me
me who will learn from time to embalm
embalm and preserve myself for you



Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English). A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She is the author of "THE NIGHT JASMINE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS". She is the winner of ICON OF THE YEAR-LIFESKILLS COUNSELLOR 2015-2016, CREATIVE WRITER OF THE YEAR 2016, and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing.



BLACK HOLE

Monsters within gnaw me
Ripping entrails of my mind
Darkness threatens to engulf
My joys, sanity and self!

A heavy weight pulls down
Struggle stronger than gravity
My heart beats sore,
Mind battles hard!

The world is beautiful
Light all about
Light entails darkness
Beauty connotes sorrow
The lord has given all!

Be with me through this
May your light prevail!
Strong enough to smash
The black hole of my mind

As a sunflower seeks the sun
My sore heart seeks your balm
Human love is frail
In this oscillating world
Only constant is change!

My mind turns sterner
And lashes at my heart
Berating it's unmind fullness
Being self –concerned!

Look at the larger picture
The world beyond your eyes
You'll find you've been blessed
Seek not rather give
In this cyclical world
Everything comes around!



Madhu Sriwastav: She is an Assistant Professor in English based in Kolkata. She has written and published her poems and short stories; translated and published short stories from Bengali and Hindi into English. She has written and published several academic papers. She has also scripted, directed and acted in a couple of plays and also made her students win award for outstanding performance in short plays. She also takes part in poetry and storytelling performances.



KEEPSAKE

A journey starts,
chugging towards a foggy distance.

A damp routine waits. A pain, dry and numb, sits snugly
within.

I turn the pages of a magazine.

A journey is coming near or going far.

Some crocheted memories, photographs, handwritten
letters.

A lost door, its peeping keyhole,
a childhood fading with the rush of the suburbs,
some yesterday's broken pieces glued to today's tale. A
redundant key.

I carry them as keepsakes.

My mother's zari bordered peach saree, her favourite pearl
bracelet.

Chaiwallahs and noise of other hawkers
selling chewing gums, combs, cheap nail cutters.

My fingers reach an asylum of touch, the lusty pearls, the
softness of the peach drape.

There are no lavenders blooming,
I inhale her lavender fragrance.



Mallika Bhaumik: She had been a student of Literature and has a Master's degree in English literature from the University of Calcutta. Her poetry, short stories, articles, travelogues, and interviews have been published in various e-mags and anthologies. Her poems have been published in reputed e-mags. She has received the Reuel International prize for her debut poetry book, 'Echoes', by Authorspress (India), which is currently available in Amazon. She lives and writes from Kolkata.



<https://ghiroph.com/garden-lovers-painting-by-vickie-wade>

THINGS

Of all things I missed,
it was always you.

I always had this belief
that you will spring up
from some corner

like the smile of a two year
old who walked her way

towards the window at
sunset which indicated:

"it was time for
Mom to be home."

Yes, I miss moments.

Mom in her printed blue
rain coat, black ballerina,
with a bow (that looked
like tiny moustaches)
arriving in my nursery.

You know it has turned
into a temple now,
my school and the
classroom in which

a Marathi Marwari couple lives.
Their three year old daughter
unlike me is quite talkative.

You know it still has the
water tank, the mango and
the jamun tree from where I
picked my life's first fruits.

The pillars I held as I
walked counting flowerpots,
the pedestal, I sat for hours
staring at sunlight. All there.

You know mom wore pink
frames in summers when
she came from work.

Her pink face radiated
its reflection.

You know Papa would not be home
for five days a week but would come home on Friday
nights. I still don't know
why I feared Fridays the most. It seemed as if his words
never synced with my heart's symphony.

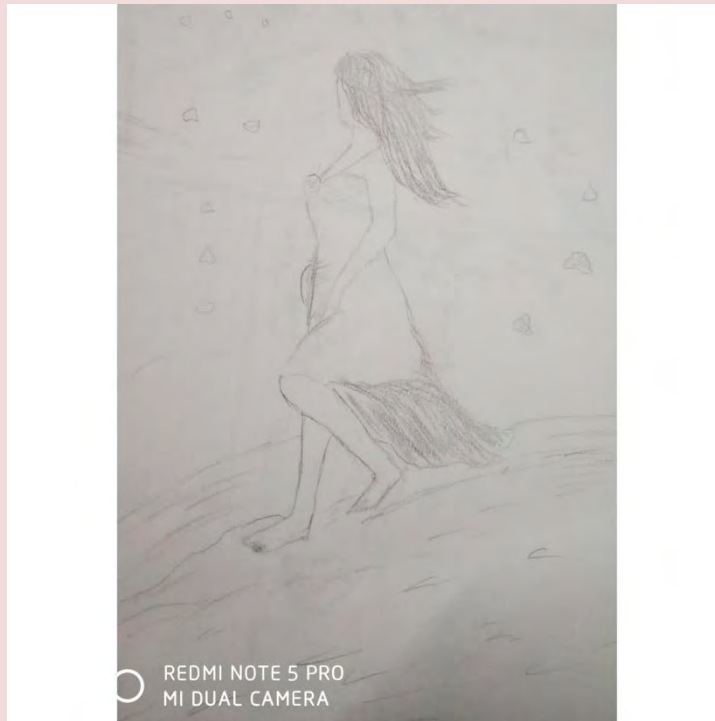
You know I always
liked to eat chapatis
with the fresh okras plucked from
my garden or the saag
cooked in the mud rasoi of winters.

But of all things I miss, I miss
bhaiya' s fingers the most who
at times combed my hair
and

collected tiny paisas to gift me
a creme chicken frock on my
birthday.



Manisha Manhas: She is a rebel. She is an English teacher with Punjab education department and moonlights as a poet. Her poems mostly revolve around the theme of "partition and migration" of 1947. Her poems have previously been published in various journals. For her, poetry is her life-force quite similar to blood flowing in her veins.



THAT'S WHEN YOU FEEL THE BREEZE!

Content heart makes peace,
Calm mind puts turbulence at ease!
Eyes finally open to see through,
Ears hear what they intended to!
When you smile at your own reflection,
Worth, over perfection!
When you lend a hand with reach broaden,
Start with steps on path less trodden!
That's when you spread the wings invisible,

Breathing fresh air undivisible!

Liberated you stand, amongst the swaying trees,

That's when you feel the breeze!



Mansi Sharma: She is a passionate writer, who sowed seeds and watered the plants of writing while basking in the warmth of motherhood! A former Officer in a govt. Organizational with a degree in Management and a literary heart, is now taking baby steps just like her baby, towards writing!



<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/houseplants/hpgen/repotting-stress-treatment.htm>

POTTED PLANT

Potted plant ages

pollen-starved,

showing wrinkled emotions.



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.



TEARS THAT SPEAK

Tears make the strongest part of me
that carries away my pain and sorrow.

They touch me, fondle me
and sway away the hardest of me.

Tears make me go weak in my knees
letting me thaw in the darkness.

Urging to inhale the dogma
creating the callous within.

Tears become my fambam that stays with me
in rain or shine shimmering its aroma.

Making clusters of droplets
sprinkling them as magical flakes.

Tears make my soul unsullied
reaching far beyond the empyrean.
Collecting all the jewels in harmony
laying them in my lap forever.



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

various other prizes in poetry competitions as well. She is known for raising contemporary issues in the society. Just as there is freedom, there is a certain responsibility towards the same. To choose to do good and be good within the specified responsibilities, is freedom in action. 'The Humane Quest' is a humble attempt to create awareness against the evils of society and stimulate the strong Indian values which are lacking in the present times.

(mehakgrover@amartex.com)



REBIRTH OF EARTH'S SIBLING

A world filled with warm colours
Of the beautiful scented flowers
The chirping birdsongs so sweet
The green grass blades popping up
The cool wind blows gently caressing
Cotton clouds gathering up in the sky
For some light showers now and then
The earth so fresh and rejuvenated

Looking so calm and serene
Giving us a little zesty feel
Refreshing our minds
Awakening our senses
Inspiring us in many ways
To continue with our lives
The exquisite beauty of spring
Brings everything to a new start



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



YOUNG COUPLE-@ HEART ATTACK GREASY GRILL

I was a little boy,
tad hillbilly son,
patterned then in
present tense,
hardly old enough
tall enough to work
nor notice if I had pubic hair-
large or small endowment
growing up self-conscious
about short comings
narrow chest.

Just a teen aged nighttime boy
looking 4 a part-time hook up-
little girl play, with a five-card stud.

Preacher daddy raised me,
back-seat Christian boy
low on faith high on doobie
rolled cigarettes.

I took my 1st job, pancake flipper
@ Heart Attack–Greasy Grill, 24-7
pocket coins 4 tips, a few greasy dollars,
pancake short stack, secret menu was that
boss's daughter, blood on hands,
my bun busted now stale, stained, & baked.
Eliminate lines unessential:
waitress injected me some spice
old time recipe.



Michael Lee Johnson: He is a Canadian and USA citizen. Today he is a poet, editor, publisher, freelance writer, amateur photographer, small business owner in Itasca, Illinois. He has been published in various anthologies. He is the author of two books, and several chapbooks. He also has over 134 poetry videos on YouTube as of 2015: He was nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards for poetry 2015 & Best of the Net 2016.



WHERE THE FALCON FLIES

Confined at birth: enshelled, nestled then nurtured.

Nature takes hold and hungers mature.

Vision grows sharp and the sky becomes home
as much as the nest.

The meal the target, then the mate,
then the need that tickles and taunts,
the need to achieve, the need to soar.

The wind must become a friend,
ally, confidant, a tool to the task. The wings
must become strong, aligned, and confident,
'live even at rest.

In flight Earth seems small, yet real.
In flight Sky seems infinite, yet limited
By the strength of the body, never the soul.

Where the falcon flies man can only follow.
The same needs from nest to cradle, tree to
office, forest to town. One thought echoes:
Become my true best.

The meal the target, then the mate,
then the dream that tickles and taunts,
the dream to achieve, the dream to soar.



Mike Griffith: He began writing poetry after a disability-causing accident. His chapbooks *Bloodline* (The Blue Nib Imprint) and *Exposed* (Soma Publishing and Hidden Constellation Press) were released in November 2018. Mike was nominated for the Pushcart Prize for poetry in October 2018. He lives in Hillsborough, NJ and teaches at Raritan Valley Community College. He is Poetry Editor (USA & Canada) for The Blue Nib.

<https://twitter.com/AuthorMGriffith>

<https://michaelgriffithwordpress.wordpress.com>



RAIN IN HILLS

Remember how once in hills

On a sojourn, after three long summers,

Met her, the rain fairy,

She had worn a white veil transparent,

Her face glistening with droplets of water shining

Like beads of pearl,

I looked at her

As she beckoned me to the terrace of my humble stay,

A double storied house

Overlooking the hills green,

'can't you see the beauty of the day?'

She asked,

' yes, it is so indescribably wondrous'

' will you remember once you will go away from here?'

' O I will, for those hills, this soothing greenery, this tune of flute coming to me from not so distant place, this mist, this shower-

They will remain in me like you will'

I replied, with a sudden rise of passion,

She smiled,

I thought I heard the giggles of a mountain stream.



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



BEYOND THE FEAR OF FEAR...!!

We often hear, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself,"
and I ask myself, "How far is it true?"

Aren't there innumerable things worse than fear?

Can this fear transform, who we are inside?

Can this fear make us realize
more wrongs than our boasted rights?

Are love and tenderness mere words in our anthems and
almanacs or do we mean it?

How many hungry did we feed
and how many homeless did we shelter?

How many smiles did we spread
and how many gasps we ended?

What do we fear that holds us back from being the BEINGS
of our true deeds?

Why this fear homes our hearts?
Do we ever want to know?!



Monika Ajay Kaul: I'm a multilingual poet and short-story writer, residing in Delhi, India. I'm an educationist by profession, currently serving as a guest-faculty. I've contributed in various poetry and short-story anthologies. I'm enjoying my aesthetics journey by painting, writing and singing.



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THE WORST DAY OF MY LIFE

The worst day of my life,

Was one which involved strife.

I fought with my best friend in the morning,

And spend the some part of the day in mourning.

I dropped my tiffin box on my shirt,

And spent the day engulfed in dirt.

As I was playing football,

I had a close call.

I tumbled and stumbled and fell,

On a ground filled with dirt and bad smell.
I had to go to the medical centre,
Where my wounds had been catered.
Suddenly the nurse dropped medicine on me,
And to the lost and found store, I had to flee.
There, I borrowed a uniform,
And no sooner I was back in form.
When, I went home, I cried and cried,
I felt like my inner soul had died.
Then my mother called up my best friend,
And there was a lot to cry and comprehend.
And, then all was sorted out,
I was very happy in and out.



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



IF WE ALL WERE CATTLE

If we all were cattle

Herdsman would not bear arms.

If we all were herdsman

Cattle would not graze harms.

If we all bore arms

Cattle would not raze farms.

If we all grew farms
Cattle would not blow charms.

If we all were scams
Cattle would have no qualms.

If our past were cattle
And our present, battle
Then our future is rattle.

This sacred cow
Against a scape goat
Remember a vow
Can disarm any boat
And waste its oat
By mere asking how?

If we all were herdsmen
If we all were cattle
If we all were scams
If we all had qualms
If we all grazed harms
If we all blew charms
If we all bore arms,
If we all fought battle
If we, this snake rattle
Then our past
Our present
And our future
All, would be a flood of muddy blood.



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



SHE

Does she choose
To dwell everywhere?

In knowledge
And lack of it;
In passion
And dispassion;
In love
And lust;

In joy
And sorrow;
In colours
And haze;
In light
And darkness;
In life
And death;
In order
And chaos;
In the source
And the end.

Is it then strange
That she chose to dwell here?



Nilanjana Dey: A story-teller at heart, Nilanjana Dey likes to experiment with fiction and poetry. An alumnus of English Literature from Jadavpur University (Kolkata), she is a marketing and communication professional based in Mumbai. She also volunteers with a Mumbai-based NGO working with the marginalized sections of the society.



STARVATION!

At the edge of truth; truth of life,
Though standing erect,
The dupe of an unscrupulous world,
Pensively I look for a definition,
Definition of starvation,
Being confused at the decay of human civilization.

Hunger for food; for shelter,
Hunger for flesh; for power,
Hunger for bribe; for war,

Hunger for deception; for libidinous desire,
Perpetual darkness of human needs,
Someone dies then someone creates the blackness of
hunger.

Dissolved into the pages of stories,
The underfed kid with its underfed pet,
The spiny hold of starvation
Now no one can resist but hunger
Lives and feeds on, everywhere.

Money falls like autumn leaves,
Innocent animals and forests are breathless,
Under the mounds of these,
Sprouting again; the starvation!
At the outset of hunger games.

Who is starving indeed?
No downfall in crime nor in corruption

No going back to peace
War is there; killing and dying there,
Greed for power; morale dies for desire,
As if we humans have embarked upon
a new life in a forbidden land of hunger,
In embrace of starvation forever!



Nitusmita Saikia: By profession, an instructor in National Cadet Core, India, Nitusmita Saikia is a keen worshiper of literature. She is working presently in Jorhat Assam, India. A young budding poetess, Nitusmita Saikia, has been adored by the World society of poetry. She writes in both English and own regional language (Assamese). Being active in

various online Poetry groups and blogs, she has been writing for E-Magazines like Tuck Magazine(USA), FM-Online(USA) poetry magazine, and blog Sparking.biz. With these, her poems have been published in various poetry anthologies National and International.



IF

eyes are the window to the soul

would you permanently shutter them closed or always
hold them open?

eternity was on second long

would we live continuously or be dead forever?

a single taste of victory makes us want more

are we incessantly inept or deeply dissatisfied?

life is filled with pain and agony

is it punishment for past sins of lessons for future
mistakes?

the reservoir of memories is drained empty

do we look to add more or descend into
despondency?

every action has an equal and opposite reaction

should not peace follow war and life follow death?



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



THE BOY ON THE SWING

“Higher, mom, higher.”

The child’s high, dulcet tone rings gleefully

Through the park. He soars high up

In the sky, his feet moving up and down, toes curling
inward with exhilaration

The sheer joy of living shines in his lively blue eyes,

So like his mother’s, as love for him shines in hers.

Her child, so happy and healthy, her reason for living.

She stands in front of the swing, moving back and forth,
imitating the rhythm he sets.

Another woman watches this happy scene,

high up from the window of a hospital room that overlooks
the park

The boy's joyful peals of laughter reach her and her lips
curve into a smile

Her gaze now wanders to the little child on the bed

"Mom, can we go to the park? "His feeble voice murmurs,
Rending her heart into million slivers of pain

"Yes, darling. Soon...very soon."

The mother's heart swells with emotion as she regards

Her little son who has been through so much pain

Almost entered a darkness that had no place for her

though she would have willingly gone with him

It was her prayers and devotion to a higher power that
brought him back to her.

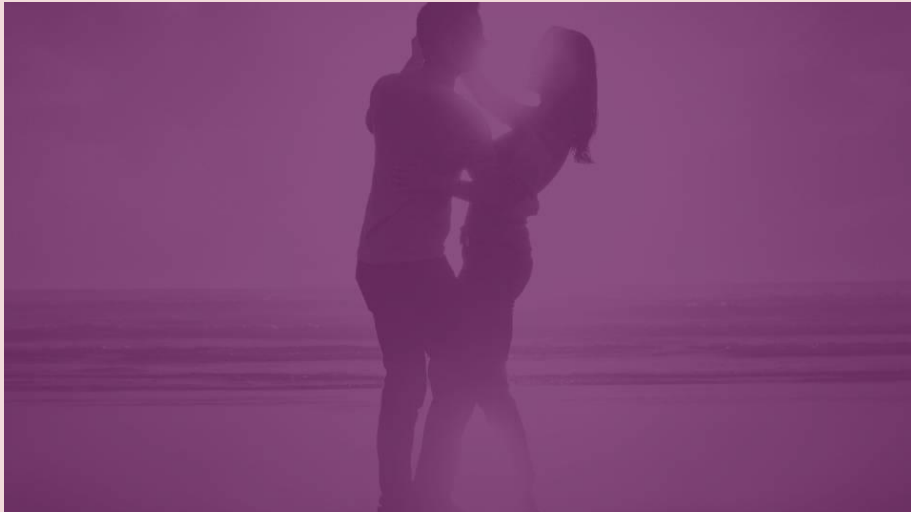
Finally, the darkness jilted him, and life wooed him back.

Very soon he would also be on a swing at the park, soaring

Into the sky, a ray of golden sunshine in his mother's heart.



Padmini Rambhatla: I am a homemaker residing in Chennai, India. I work as an English teacher. I have contributed to a poetry group on Facebook. I dabble in art occasionally and love cooking a variety dishes for friends and family.



<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

On days when I must love me more
And caress my wings into flight,
Your voice becomes my inner one
Crooning, mooning, wrapping me



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession. Sometimes it helps to know that we are all fighting secret battles and we are not the only ones in pain. I love to observe human relationships and nothing inspires my writing more. Thus, the dominating theme of all my writings are conflicts and triumphs of the same.



Crimes against children rise in Rajasthan; 5,913 crimes in 3 years | jaipur | Hindustan Times

I'M THE EMPEROR, HERE'S MY SWORD

Black serpents crawling in and out of dark hells,
condemned, curtailed and compressed
demand the antidote of annihilation be enforced.
I'm the emperor, here's my sword.

Words that carry no weight unleash treacherous sanity,
pierce like bullets through the skull,
tell honeyed tones of annihilation to be silenced.
I'm the emperor here, take my sword and swirl.

Tears dampen hollowed cheeks in seething abashment
as stormy sea crashing upon rock faces,
show the anarchy of annihilation to be set right.
I'm the emperor here, come on glorify my sword.

Weak shuddering in fear as deer in the mouth of lion,
wind tossed tresses torn asunder as broken mirrors,
implies the podium of purgation needs to be purged.
I'm the emperor here, it's time to sanctify my sword.

The world choking with desire, reeling in rage,
rotting in revolt and revenge; all roads lead to annihilation.
Swords are not to rust in sheaths,
but from somewhere an *ashareeri is heard;
Give up your sword and take up the pen, and I heed.

Note: ashareeri- oracle or revelation



Pankajam: She is a bilingual poet and novelist residing in Chennai India, retired from BHEL as Dy Manager/Finance. She has contributed poems, articles and book reviews to various anthologies and journals. She has published so far 3 novels and 10 poetry anthologies in English and has won many awards for poems and short stories including the Rock Pebbles National Literary Award 2019.



[https://www.zazzle.com/i love my ball python cute snake drawing poster-256228767623855220](https://www.zazzle.com/i+love+my+ball+python+cute+snake+drawing+poster-256228767623855220)

My son loves snakes

He rescues and rehabilitates

Teaches children not to fear snakes

Shows them how to handle

Once he stopped the car

Rescued a snake on the road.

He is my Telemachus

He does his, i do Mine.

My Grandfather worshipped snakes

He called them Naga

Naga-Pooja he did

He spent a lot of time with snakes.

To me snake is Phallic energy

Kundalini shakthi

Yesterday i dreamed of snakes

Dance of the snakes

In the same family Differences.

Accept Differences.



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



<https://canalwalk.co.za/events/event/canal-walks-little-mermaid>

FISHMAN

She loves him.

though he is water.

Her mam says "When I gift you

a fishes tail it will hurt

every time you use it

to and fro like a wave.

It will seem to him

a beckoning.

I will give you a tongue.
Every time you sing to him
you will drown a little more.

You will have each other,
but I will lose you."



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



<https://www.shutterstock.com/fr/image-photo/arneson-river-theatre-along-san-antonio-687291343>

RIVERBANK THEATRE

All along the riverside

Soft sounds fill the air

Grass lined auditorium

Birds and Crickets share

Stage lit by crescent moon

Reflections from the river

Owl hoots his midnight call

Making listeners shiver

And so the curtain rises
Upon this nightly play
Till dawn itself arises
Welcoming the day



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental Engineers. He has written poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child." He was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease and died in 2015.



TIME WITH THE WORLD

Smelly Bones and Funny Bones
can't get their heads off from their past lives
while I write they try to oversee
my keys by typing faster
my head shrieks creativity controlled
a tickle in my bones as it peeks
tells "Time with the world"

It's their habit to hold
the living and laugh at people
they are smelly and funny

and they do rhyme.

Once they knocked a man

who was on his phone

he felt a tickle, to "Time with the world"

Smelly and Funny

hate beggars on the road

they top off their vessels

and begging bowls

they cannot digest a saint's learnedness

while the beggar has lost his mind

more pungent smell made the beggars run

run....to "Time with the world"

When they sleep they hold a tickle

giggling at the living fools

more people lay tulips at their graveyard

some selfish come to work faster

some realised souls shredding tears
and some just to feel the tickles
they hate people who waste time
"It's their time to go to sleep"
Can you feel them?



Pooja Suresh: Hello! I am Pooja Suresh, an upcoming Carnatic music vocalist and I perform concerts along with my sister. We sing as vocal duets and I also play the instrument Veena. I started writing as a hobby, and now, take part in various writing prompts and programs.

I also recently completed a NANOWRIMO camp setting myself a goal of 10000 words and received an honorable mention for one of my poems on togetherness written for On Fire Cultural Movement. I aspire to write more and read more.



BIRDWATCHERS FROM BALCONIES...

Nowadays I meet quite a few of them

Passing questioning glances at me

A few raising eyebrows

And some casting strange expressions of helplessness-

Unable to gulp the question mark

Nor move on without the answer.

I call them birdwatchers from balconies.

To know what they did,

Once, I put on their shoes.

It's a beautiful sight!

You can see, analyze, comment and remark extensively

Without fear

Till the iron rods and arches of the balconies

Shield you with countenance.



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



THE MISSING POEM

Lost last night a poem somewhere

Unable to trace now

I have left no stone unturned to search it

Searched the diary, drawer of my study table, limbs of
trees, burrows, even lanes where lonely hearts used to
stroll at midnight, but nowhere it is found.

N't that I have lost the poem

The poem too has lost me

The poem might be searching the poem man!

May I give my name, address in the missing column of the
daily newspaper or in TV I will telecast my latest
photograph

May I write for the trespassers that I wear French cut
beard, no smile in face, just a deserted look with spectacles

My height is five feet eight inch, colour wheatish

For the common men, let me tell it is just a white piece of
paper where one finds no words whatsoever

Only people with heart can read

The blind can see the colour of the word

The deaf can hear the sound of poetry

The dumb can give the clarion call reciting the poetry of
protest!

For some the poem may be splattered with blood, to others
it's a moonlit night's romance with the blue sky!

Have I lost the poem in the bus stop where I used to stand
for hours together to have the look of the evening meeting
the night just to part

Where I whistle away my solitude staring at the moon
covering our distances.

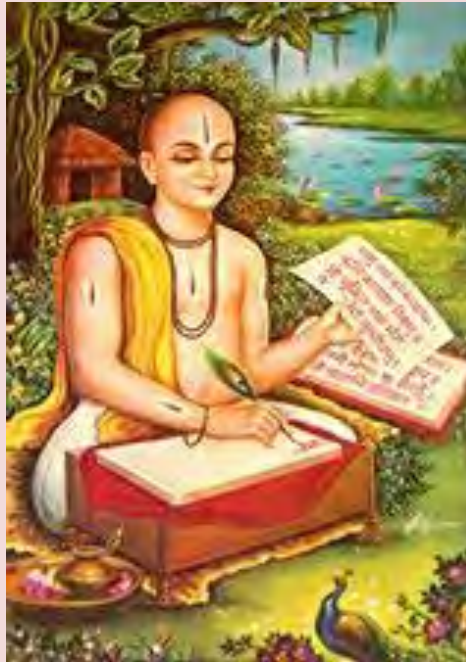
Is not it we see the same moon, same sky, same agonies we
experience

Same blood flow in our earth's veins?

I am sure one day the poem will find me, but I may not
locate the poem!



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.



<http://hariharji.blogspot.com/2010/04/chapter-35-extraordinary-character.html>

THE WORD

Legends of extraordinary happenings are spun to enhance a spiritual experience - to believe in the power of the One. Faith can work miracles.

A saint from the so-called lowercaste was barred from composing songs singing His praise and preaching to the commoners, as that was the privilege of the so-called priestly class, who had exclusive access to the sacred texts. Since, he had not read the sacred texts, he had no right to preach of all humans being equal in the eyes of the One!

He was ordered to immerse his parchments in the waters of the holy river, as a mild punishment!

The saint was completely devastated! This was a punishment worse than death!

Taking refuge under a tree on the banks of the river where his written works were submerged; he gave up food and drink for 13 days.

Word spread around fast of his predicament. Throngs gathered around him, and chanted his melodious verses chronologically!

The unlettered had memorised his beautiful couplets and hymns, and sang them by heart!

Seeing the mood of the swelling crowds, the law makers, backed down, and lifted the unjust ban imposed on the saint.

Legend has it, that Vitthal, had preserved his writings on His head! When the priest opened the doors of the temple sanctuary, this unworldly sight met his eyes. Word quickly got round, and the bard's priceless possession was restored to him.

Some say, Devi Saraswati and Ganeshji helped him write out the couplets and hymns from memory; which was recharged by the commoners singing his verses by heart!

Thus justice was done to the true servant of the One.



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



Running water doesn't flow backwards

So is life

Enjoy the flow.



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.



EUPHORIA

The sweet aroma of flowers dances in the air
Seeds of love get brighten with the vermilion sun
Night becomes so longer
Knitting vivid dreams and stories
Behind the curtain of love
Life is now full of hopes.
The sweet music of the streams
Blends with the aerial symphony
Drenching in life's perfume
Clouds pack up their dull grey shawl,
Cool breeze of spring heavily laden with fragrance

Life's beauty spreads her golden wings.
Somewhere eerie silence in the sea
Fresh air and bright sunshine at my door,
Made me drowsy in their warm lap
My stubborn eyes get fainted in those sunlit street
Breath mingles with the smell of wild flowers
My heart fills with love.



Preety Bora: I am a poet residing in India, Assam, in a small city called 'Golaghat'. I have contributed to various anthologies and also edited one bilingual anthology of poems. Nature is my greatest inspiration. I love to paint my word amidst the beauty of nature.



ENROUTING TO SELF

I have been there, seen it all

Even when I was not needed, I was there to catch them
before they fall

I laughed with them

I cried with them

My day and nights were for and with them

I devoted all my time and my energy in pleasing people
building relationships

and I started missing little parts of me

I did things only for them to see

I forgot to prioritize and then, I realize

What am I doing with myself? Who will be there with me
till the end?

It will be me and myself and so much to mend

Alas! I en-routed myself to me and took up one idea

made that idea my life and I work on that idea day and
night

to build myself and wish a wonderful life to spend.



Priyanka Nair: I am a blogger, poet, and speaker, residing in Mumbai, India. I work as a freelance content writer. I have contributed to various anthologies online. I have also published one eBook and was a part of an International collaboration for a non-fiction novel. Awarded as best debut author award.



TEMPLE DAY

today is temple going day

queue is long with hundreds

waiting to see me

they are pouring oil and water

on my head, and putting dying flowers

and rancid coconut pieces around me

lighting suffocating incense

and hot flaming dheepams

and chanting mantrams that i have

long forgotten to bribe me

praying to escape from sins

praying to get easy money

praying to resolve doubts

outside one beggar child is there

with one broken idol which she has put

in broken cradle from rubbish bin

with stained cushions and dressed with

torn jarigai podavai

take me out of this temple and tall

gopuram which smells of everything

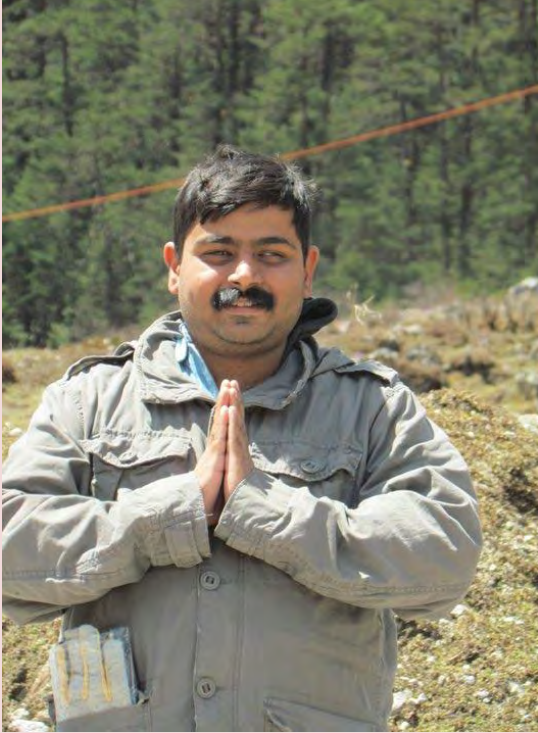
but not of bhakti i want to sleep in that

beggar girl cradle listening to her

andal songs for now and forever

will someone help me please

Note: It deliberately has no punctuations.



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



HIS BENIGN LOOK IS RICH ENOUGH

Don't call me filthy rich
for I own some landed
property, all of my own
sweat and blood, ground
still wet with smell of toil
grounded in sickle and bent;
self-earned income;

No pride of rental income
nor any booming flow of
harvest and copious corns,
for aridity and parchement

strikes here, parchment
in man's tongue and heart
like whirlpool rolling on;

somewhere far off, cascade
of water flow as if catchment areas,
could be cheering dawn in my heart
of hope and undulated Faith
consoling like a Mantra from Heaven.
I move on, there is no time for speculation.
Time's serendipity in and out pouring.



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

Her blogs:

pearlradhe.blogspot.in

pearlradfhe.wordpressf.com



A POEM CAN HAVE ANY SUBJECT THEY SAY

It took me so long to type and mail this
it made you wonder where I was, or not?
It took me time to delve deep to find truth of heart.

You say I did things that meant something,
to you at least. I say it was a chemical reaction,
time, our test tube, our thoughts combined
in various ways. Probably they were meant to,
and brilliantly. If I made you feel more
than you thought you were, you did the same to me.
You are right about the connect.

How can the goddess of wisdom be wrong?

Ditto about the game metaphor, and all the fun.

I did not know back then, that I'd cherish the moments
in the months to come, maybe till the end
of the months of my life. It's too early to be certain about
that.

It was a game when I showed that I saw,
when I had only guessed your thoughts and got lucky.
True, it was not plain luck all the time.

There were times when I spoke my thoughts aloud
and let you think they were yours. Some monologue!
Your energy was mine, so was the darkness within,
and the light within that. I saw your eyes sparkle
as you soared on the wings of hope. I soared with you.
I needed that more than you, I know now.

I am not good with people. I hate small talk.

Yet I felt comfortable with you. Why?

A universe we were, you and I, preordained to die.

I judged you alright, I judged as I sensed, and sensed
all the strength, all the weakness filled in you,
in us, me too. Believe me when I say
that it was always about me. I spoke
what made me feel right, good, healed, whatever.
Sometimes it worked for you too.

I have a long list of things I did that I don't do anymore.

I respect myself for being that man and am happy we met.

Drifting every which where, we may be, but we carry within
us

the remembrance of those days:

that twinkle in the dark sky, in cold that warmth.



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



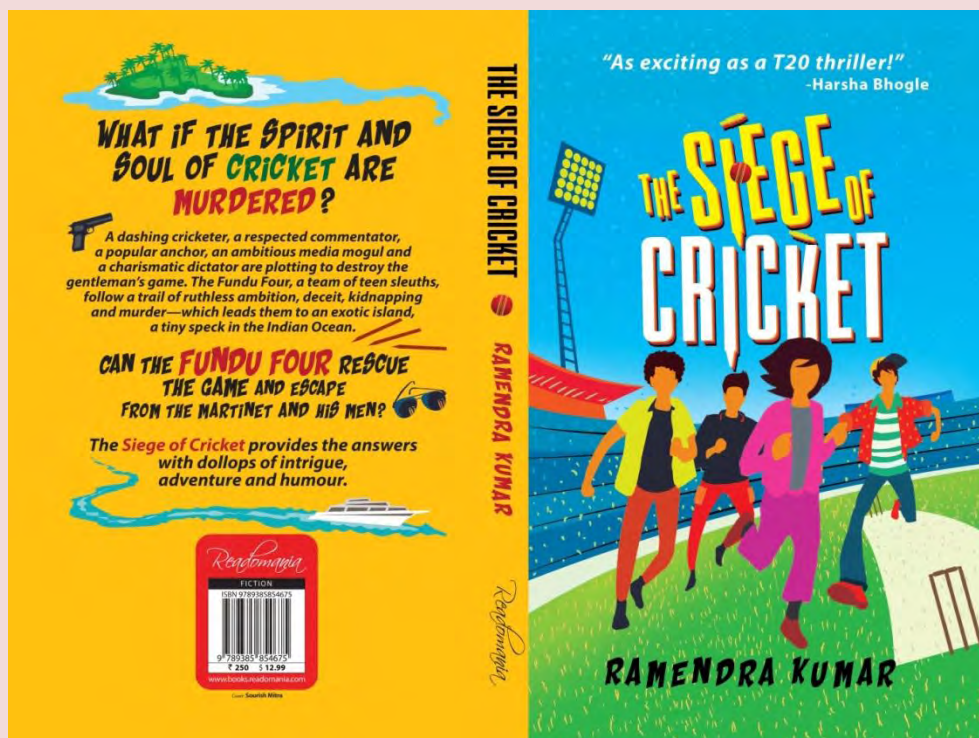
Who says I'm a dreaded carnivore,
And hunting or resting is my only chore?
I'm a connoisseur of beauteous nature,
My surroundings hold her precious treasure;
Red flowers of Palash I like most, which
Bear the lovely Spring's signature!

Riding atop the 'Flame of the forest',
I'm rejoicing in the riot of colours,
Standing alone like a king, of course,
I'm enjoying the feast for hours;

I love to see splendour of flowers,
Enchanting for me is the fragrance of fruits,
I do possess a human heart,
And I can never be a full-time brute!



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



AN EXCERPT FROM THE SIEGE OF CRICKET

‘Vicky, Vicky, Vicky. . .’ The crowd started chanting as the Aussie speedster, the fearsome Danny Higgins, came in full throttle to bowl. The last match of the India-Australia ODI series was in progress. It was the penultimate ball of the final over.

The score was 266 for nine. Four runs to win, one wicket in hand and two balls to go—it couldn’t get more thrilling than this! On strike was the captain, Vikram (Vicky) Vijaykar, while at the other end was the eleventh man, Mohan Rao.

Danny Higgins charged in and bowled. Vicky tapped the ball to short mid-wicket and started running. Mohan, seeing Alan Bierce, Australia's best fielder, swooping on the ball, yelled, 'No! Get back!' However, Vicky kept running as if he hadn't heard anything. Alan's direct hit shattered the stumps with Vicky stranded in the middle. 'How could Vicky be so stupid!' Neha wailed, almost on the verge of tears.

'A rush of blood, my child," her father, Ramkumar, replied.

Just then Ramkumar's cell phone rang.

'Mr. Ramkumar, Vicky has deliberately lost the match!'

'What!'

'Yes, Sir. He is guilty of match fixing.'

'You're talking rot."

‘I have proof, Sir. Can you come to my house? The address is C-17, Giriraj Apartments, behind Big Bazaar.’

Ramkumar hesitated for a moment. ‘I’ll be there. But it better not be a hoax.’

Twenty minutes later, Ramkumar was ringing the bell of the flat.

There was no response. He rang the bell and waited and then gently pushed the door. It opened. He went in, followed by Neha. She looked over his shoulder and screamed.

A man was sitting sprawled on the sofa. He was clad in a light blue T-shirt and a pair of dark blue jeans. He seemed to be in his thirties and had a dark, round face, a blob of a nose and large, round eyes which were staring at them. On the pocket of his T-shirt there was a hole from which blood was oozing.....

About the Book:

Author: Ramendra Kumar

Publisher: Readomania

Price: Rs. 225/-

No. Of pages – 196

Amazon

https://www.amazon.in/Siege-Cricket-Ramendra-Kumar/dp/9385854674/ref=sr_1_5?qid=1562397344&refinements=p_27%3ARamendra+Kumar&s=books&sr=1-5



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



SKY SCRAPING

The dust dims the view. Tall towers totter
and re-anchor themselves
as the vagaries of vision are adjusted by glasses
One story remains shaky though:
Ours
Timeless as this glass-encased day
Its view hopeless in brilliant blue
The giving is selfish, too easy
All it does is take away
the pain of feeding and nurturing grouse mites

The view from the other side fails me
I follow your bees half-heartedly, they blank me off
buzzing in an old TV screen in blue

The dirt streaks down the pane
My finger tip following it remains clean
I wipe the windows well enough
The outside defies my attempts; that dust is you
and the skill of dangling from the sky-rise
and never letting go though tempting
is beyond me.

Time is timeless too and I may learn
to emulsify a cloud cataract to bring rain
but for today, the undeciphered grey will do



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.



RINSING AWAY THIS DUSTY HEART

Beersheva's innocent stars implode over desert blackness,
Masada grey burnt orange cliffs sullen and historical,
a troupe of thirsty doves, beyond quarreling, play and peck
near my feet

cooing stories of red earth camel trails of Bedouin tent
caramel-tea modesty,

and I am left saturated- a sweet kindness dripping from
these young eyes

and they play among patches of wildflower honey mixed
with fresh citrus,

breath so zesty I want to douse my body with it!

to rinse away this dusty bristly heart

to tune in again to that adorable wisdom of skeptical youth
hop scotching from one discovery to another at the snap of
hip little fingers:

“yes, got it! dreamt about something like that once before
only now it’s more palatable
gushing with clear and simple sentience!”

here these children know there is no “why” to understand
immersed in this antique land of buoyant pioneer courage,
bathed in this chutzpah kindness of nothing to lose
in this land of nomadic audaciousness and innocence
interwoven,
all commingled,
and again I hear a new generation singing forth from one
voice,
transforming themselves into this resplendent
unprecedented organism



Robert Feldman: I am a writer and painter residing in Port St. Lucie, Florida. I own and operate a college test preparatory company. I have also published several poems and short stories in booklets, anthologies, and magazines, both hard copy and online.



Fernando Llorente-Photographer

MY LIFE'S STAGE

Coming back to my senses

In the clarity of the day,

I have regained my reflection

And my eyes can now see

The light of happiness

Reflected in the lamplight

Of true love

My life has a new purpose!

I have completely changed
I can now decipher
Myself apart from others
As the World is revolving
I keep evolving
No longer the person I
Used to be and now
Feeling anew!

A new page added,
A new chapter in the book
Of my life to be read
Pursuing my dream
By rejecting
A self-made uncertainty
And recognizing the need
For growth and be happy!
What does it mean?

Nothing more
But you and me
Alive with possibility,
Owing nothing
To our past and
Fully enjoying the present!



Romeo della Valle: Born in a beautiful island named Quisqueya or Hispaniola and from Italian and Spanish parents and coming to America very young with a goal, mainly, to succeed in life and be happy. I am a man with a Vision and a clear mission: 'To spread my message of Love an Peace throughout the World and if my poetry can touch a single soul in the World, then I would gladly die leaving my clear footprints behind!



<https://komonews.com/news/local/firefighters-battle-small-brush-fire-near-kent-train-tracks>

RAGING BRUSH FIRES

Slipstream salmon

in bear claw

heaven

under floatplane

eyes

of twin engine

seeing

while

raging brush fires

wipe away

everything

in one foul

swoop

like waited tables

between

service

or dried toothpaste

from the sides

of agreeable

mouths.



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



Sketch by Samixa Bajaj

A MAGICAL LAND OF STORIES

Little Women, Little Men,
Running around the town,
Come, forget duties awhile
And near me sit down.
For I'm here to tell some tales,
Old and new, short and long.

Tell me how you like them,
I'll put it in verse (or song).

Into the magic land I'll take you
to sit on the Faraway Tree,
Come, let's dig for the Psammead,
And ask him a wish each.
If he is troublesome, worry not.
Tarry not! Follow me!
Let's go on to Hogwarts
And meet Mr Harry!
'Potty Potter' some call him,
For instance, Malfoy and Peeves,
But we know he's the Chosen One,
Let's follow him as he proceeds
To the Chamber of Secrets,
And defeats the monster dreaded.

Oh golly! He did the deed!

Come with me and marvel at it.

Too many sweeties in a day,

They harm your little bellies.

So back to where we started from

Or no more yummy jellies

Like these, will you get dear children

So back to work as I

Sit down and put this into verse,

Fulfilling my part in this bargain of mine.



Samixa Bajaj: I am a student of class 9 and absolutely love my books (excluding textbooks). I enjoy sketching and dancing besides poetry, which I write based on my moods and likes.



HOPE:

They say, hope's a fragile friend

But, ever wondered what gets you past those gloomy days
with bleak clouds of despair?

Hope - Hope of a better future beyond the unhappy
present

They say, hope's a fragile friend

But ever wondered why a dying
man still visits the hospital for more tests and possible
treatment, if not cure?

Hope - Hope of being granted a few more years of survival

They say, hope's a fragile friend

But have you looked at a young bird attempting to fly from its nest, failing again and again, but still trying?

Hope - Hope that one day, it too like the others will soar the skies...

They say hope's a fragile friend

Yet, every night we go to bed with hopes of a better and brighter tomorrow

Hope - Hope that one day, someday, things will fall back into place...

Trace the pages of history

And ask yourself why, after being mercilessly defeated by Sher Shah Suri, Humayun decided to enter the battlefield again?

Hope - Hope that this time he would emerge victorious...

Hope, they say is a fragile friend

Nonetheless, it's a faithful friend

Hope is what keeps me going despite all odds,

Hope is what has made not just me, but hundreds of others
"survivors"...

We live with sanity in this life of uncertainty

Because of this "fragile" friend - Hope...

And now, does Hope really seem that fragile a friend?



Samrudhi Dash (Inara): I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. Along with contributors to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date four solo poetry anthologies and two novels and

conceptualised and edited an anthology of epistles and a medical assistance journal. I write under the pseudonym Inara and have completed my Masters in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. My signature words are "Hope, Live, Believe". I have recently been awarded the International Nissim Prize for the Best Upcoming Poet of the Year 2019 by The Significant League, Nissim Enterprises Limited and The Autism for Help Village Awareness Project.



<https://www.alamy.com/hibiscus-flower-with-raindrops-image65911898.html>

HIBISCUS

Elixir that monsoon brings
to the soil and spreads the green
A dull dying soil turns into a queen.
She happily blooms to adore her womanhood again!

Scarlet elixir, I carry in my veins
Gives me smile & a deadly pain.
She splatters her hue in my petals
Like a hibiscus I bloom & I dazzle.

Cramps & pain, swinging emotions

That's how I face my menstruation.

I bleed,

I bloom,

I smile &

Bear the pain

Like monsoon soil I enjoy the woman beneath my skin.

Oh Yes,

This pain makes me beautiful

As beautiful & holy as a monsoon Hibiscus.



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



MY MOM'S GARDEN

As I once again stood in my mom's garden,
I was assaulted by a memory avalanche.
I recalled, ambling through apple orchards,
tightly holding sister's hand,
my mother's cautionary coaxing, "come back soon",
dad's reprimand and elder brother's strict stand,
"this baby is getting too big for her boots."

piqued by my cheeky remark,
“get me a new pair of boots then!” ,
he had tried to glare me out of my mischief .

Even those bruised elbows and knees,
could not rein in that exuberant spirit.
But there is a wound that still festers, pestering me,
reminding me of your absence, constantly.
I look at the garden, so verdant, so bright.

Do the plants miss her loving touch?
My eyes are caught by a lone flower,
valiantly raising its head out into the world,
as though trying to inhale my mom’s soothing fragrance
which still lingers; there is a huge chasm between us.
Gingerly, I build a bridge across the chasm, [so what if it
totters]
and ask her, “Mom, tell me do you ever remember
your wayward daughter?”



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



A house of cream

By the stream

Weird as it may seem

Was a little dream

While waiting for it to come true

We began to move

In the direction we flew

And while everything went askew

But what we built with so much pride

With confidence in our stride

Was worth more than the little dream

Because we did it with our hands, in a team!



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.



BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL...

Look at that girl
walking along with eyes full of love
She is black and beautiful
precious is she like a pearl
Her almond eyes speak
Volumes of love
Her dark curly tresses
Swaying at the back
She tosses it now n again
She walks past the crowd

With all eyes falling on her
She walks fast with a sway
So beautiful to watch
Her black complexion gives
her that amazing beauty
and she knows it well!
So what if she is black
She is the apple of many people's eyes!
She is that awesome girl
Who toils day and night in the field
With no complaint in her mind!
She moves in rhythm with the Nature's flow
with a song on her lips
which is painted with
nature's glow!
She is a wonderful creation
by God Almighty in His grace!
End of the day she sits under the

moonlight with a beautiful shine

on her tender body divine

with sparkle in her eyes

enjoying the cool cool breeze

with love for her creator!

She is as innocent as a child

And as bold as a warrior

She fights for her rights

And is crowned as

The Black Girl Who Won Hearts Of Many

With her soft yet killer looks if she sees any girl being even teased or molested, she becomes Kali the destroyer of evil!



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



THAT 90s PLACE

Do you remember those days when time was slower, everything was judicious, except love, and there was no urgency for validation?

Everything had a meaning, the world was people centric and there was abundance of kindness and precious little imitation?

Do you remember the lasting memories we made in that era?

With thirty six precious shots on an analog camera?

The weekly musical treat on a common television shared between 7 households showing only two channels,

The verandah where children brought the roof down
together but never forgot their manners.

How we eagerly poured through film listings every week in
black and white newspapers...

How we waved to those tiny airplanes in view thanks to the
absence of skyscrapers...

Where Saturday meant half day school, afternoon naps and
gully cricket

Sundays the dreaded oil bath and roadside tap queues to
fill every bowl, every bucket.

Calls to the heart throb from that dull PCO

Saved up bus money could give emails a go

Quarterly letters from cousins were still in vogue though

And yearly once that carnival called first day first show

We knew fragrances by name and where they wafted
from...

Freedom it was called the smell of summer hum

Joy brewed slowly in an heirloom brass coffee filter
Ecstasy from the neighbourhood's 10 litre pressure cooker
Empathy entered our hearts from a radio that played a
favoured number
Bliss overflowed in "how was the day" balcony
conversations preceeding a deep slumber...

Time has quickened now, we've lost that familiar grace,
Everything's now picture worthy but mindfulness a lost
case,
Yet whenever life feels too much and tranquility is out of
trace,
I quietly reach for a memory tucked away in that 90s place!



Saranya Francis: She is a multilingual poet with published poems in English, Hindi and Tamil. She has to her credit two anthologies of poetry titled *Ambedo* and *Being Purple*. Her poetry has been widely published online. She is a dance and music enthusiast and a linguist. She is the recipient of the Bharat Award for Literature (2018), Rabindranath Tagore Award (2017), National Chanting Bards Award (2017). Saranya is the Secretary of ZAV Foundation, an NGO working for the cause of education and women empowerment. She is currently a freelance life skills trainer and also teaches in a satellite-based education company.



CAVITY

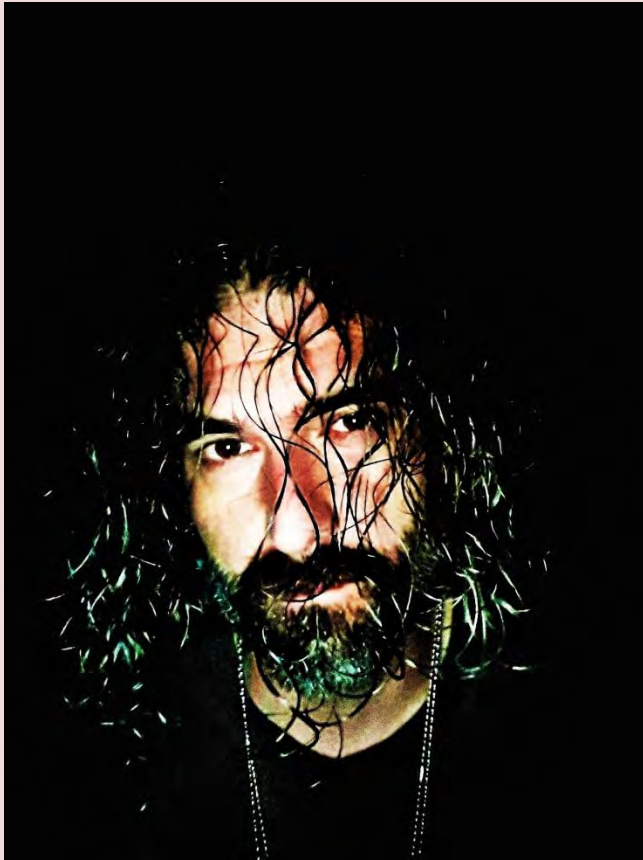
If you whisper into the night
the hounds will hear you
the owls will hear you
the old gods will hear you
the ghosts will hear you
the gravesites will hear you
the future will hear you

Coughing up triangles
in your doublespeak
It's three over two
and our theory is restless

Seven layers of lung
Eleven beams of light
Thirteen brands of chaos

Wisdom tooth pulled in innocence
left us wanting for the right verbs
Go back and call it a fit
of ignorance

If you scream into the void
If you laugh into the void
you will hear an echo



Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside Atlanta, Georgia. His most recent book, *Of Sand and Sugar*, was released by Cyberwit in 2019. More information about his work can be found at 17Numa.com.



<https://www.amazon.in/64-Arts-Shakuntala-Paintings-Multicolour/dp/B00JS0NK82>

Saqi, when love rains like shrapnels
Each droplet of molten metal
Scourges the vulnerable
Pour me your strongest, dyed of blood
Tend to these grooves of pulsating pain
I haven't yet had time to cover them up
Saqi, this rain of hurtling hail
Pebbles of denial cast my way

I take on my exposed heart
The most mature of your meads
Ambroise ancient from your curved pout
Bathe me with salvation of oblivion
Till pain and passion twine as one
Into antiquity this tale of love unrealized



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



FRAGRANCE OF LIFE

The beautiful fragrance of wild flowers

A beauty one of its kind

Slowly wafting along as only it can do

Soothing the mind

Along old pathways, streams of trees

A smell, which can neither be heard nor seen

Abundance of flowers

Smells pervading the senses

Can it be paradise in heaven?

The prevalence of the flowery fragrance

Teeming with the wildness of opulence

A truly savoury thought that

No, thought I, beauty

Which cannot be resurrected

In the mentality of the ethereal fragrance

Forth went I, driven to the path of unseen elegance

Can I get hold, me, a mere molecule in the

Entireness of the Universe

A drop in the ocean bespeaketh of the

Entirety of the vastness of the universe

No, I thought slowly

The fragrance of flowers,

Thoughts overpowering by itself
Are like memories, that
Slowly unhinges the self
But bringing the self back into sanity
Then inner self is liberated



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



ART DREAMS

Fill up all those little squares,
singly or in pairs;
mingled, or in white despair,
climb those golden stairs.

Geometry, or algebra,
scattered light from candelabra,
dance or trot or gallop through,

glance awhile at what they drew,
join the dots, their world will rise;
your childhood dreams in new disguise.

Soak in wild fountains of fun,
chase your loved ones as they run.
They'll frame your moments one by one,
bright galleries in the sun.



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



https://www.123rf.com/photo_35377243_key-heart-lock-a-symbol-of-love-and-devotion-black-background.html

YOU NEED TO LOVE

Love leads one to devotion,
devotion makes one surrender,
and surrender leads to enlightenment.

The more devoted one is,
the more successful he is both in the material life and in
spiritual pursuit.

A devoted soul remains within the world but above it doing
all the roles working as a caretaker at the behest of his
master having no responsibility to shoulder, no worries
whatsoever

Unflinching devotion leads to knowledge,
when one completely identifies oneself with
the object of his love and there remains no difference
between him and the object of his love and becomes
completely one with it.

Love, surrender and devotion can't be with
many, it is always with one,
with the object of love one identifies, lives and dies
and love, lover and the object of love
become one and the same in the end.



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer. He is a published poet and writer and a featured poet of PENTASI B World Friendship Poetry. His writings include essays, short stories, poems and novels which are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. Working as Finance Officer in Govt of Odisha, he writes extensively on life, its beauty and intricacies which are widely acclaimed.

Website: smrutiweb.wordpress.com



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoCnJ1qW4K4>

The raindrops drops gently down just like the curtains after a thrilling drama. They stage their moments stealing the thunder from the fork in the sky. Cleaving through the air and dust. Swathing the surroundings in the mysterious mist. The desert earth soaks in soon to turn muddy brown. The puddles reflecting the ever-growing circles of agitation. Little whirlpools of self-contained contentment.

The waves lash lashing the meeting point with tongues of surf bubbling foaming in the crevices spitting splitting images of unbridled rage.

In dryness my eyes drink it all in in a single gulp. My heart starts to put stakes around this little scene to hold it in. The calmness the turmoil the beauty the turbulence the enchantment the disillusionment.

All a dynamic dynamics cycling cyclically till it becomes a continuous seamless ring. No beginning no end. The wheel continues to move on predictable trajectory.



Sudeshna Mukherjee: Her poetry deals with varied human nature. A keen observer she chronicles the happenings around her and society. 'Meanderings Of The Mind' is her published book of poems.



ANOTHER CHANCE

Wiping precious tear
she gently eases and embraces
her modest couch of yore
to house her petite demeanour

Her crumpled kerchief
fully drenched in purgative fluid
unfolds... saga of betrayal
severe jolt to her faith rock solid

As she gapes at the ceiling
recounting salad days and plethora of good times
saline drops cross barricade of lashes again
take their course through obvious terrain

A feeble sound akin to horn
makes her consolidate
tucking misery inside ...she readies herself
bequeathing money matter and pelf

She begins her sojourn to an old age home
in search of another chance ...
to belong to happiness
tries hard to bid adieu to agony and loneliness.



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



FOR I KNOW...

Malady might make me atrophied
But I never break my heart,
You might be callous to me sometimes
But I know it's too a part of our love.
I have fallen down several times
But I never give up my nope,
For I believe that nothing is possible in nope.
Uncertainty surrounds me from all sides often,

But I have always passed through them.
For I Know if I overcome the wall of darkness,
Zion is there to welcome me to feel the supreme
happiness.



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



ONCE I BELONGED TO A ZAMINDAR FAMILY

Once I belonged to a zamindar family

My father said in our vein there is aristocracy.

Well! Now we belong to middle-class family,

Only speciality if we have that is culture and literacy.

In one fine morning, I asked to my grandpa,

How we are different from others

Nothing special is there in us

Right now we are just a part of orthodox society.

We lost all, the riches we had

Something happened due to bad luck

Rest was negligency.

Then why we boast of our legacy?

Answered his profound voice "You asking such questions,
this is your audacity.

To answer such question. I'm not ready

We belong to a zamindar family

In our vein there is aristocracy."

We don't walk the way all do

In our every gesture there is speciality"

I asked again how come be we maintain all

If embraced by poverty?

Ego should not be a constraint of our entity.

Some lost their all and scattered
From a joint property we are apart
From now on we should fight for survival,
Forgetting all about our ancient property.

Where women are dominated by men
In such a world women pretend to be happy
They are not allowed to work outside their boundary
And these boundaries are delimited by the family
They are respected only for their beauty
Then tell me! Is it not hypocrisy?

Yes! Indeed once I belonged to a zamindar family.
But that's not enough as my identity.



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



That laughter in your eyes
Follows me
Through silent crowded streets
And mute traffic jams
People speak voicelessly
Telephone rings visually
My children's call
Is an emotion in the air
I respond to all
While my ears ring
With the laughter in your eyes



Sumita Dutta: I am a publisher, poet, and novelist residing in Chennai, India. I work as a teacher, writer, digital designer, and publisher. I have contributed to various online sites and anthologies. I have also published a novel and contributed to three print anthologies. My publishing firm is three books old, having launched my debut novel *The Heart of Donna Rai*, Poet Geeta Varma's debut book of poetry *To My Violin*, and Sri Chinmoy Biswas's *An Overview of Spirituality*.



<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/10/08/un-warns-rapid-unprecedented-change-needed-to-halt-global-warming.html>

THIS YEAR

This summer has not been kind.

Nor was the winter.

Or, the monsoon.

Every year.

To the birds, strays and poor

In the urban centers.

Although the rich are also seen
coughing and ill.

Winter in summer

summer in winter

drought in monsoon

monsoon in drought

floods

famine.

They are puzzled:

What has happened to nature?

The peasant queries the town dwellers:

Well, what have you done to nature?



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

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



MADNESS

I take a shovel and break down my house

Throw away my riches

Cut away my robes which bind

All my gold, silver, diamond, I grind

My granaries I throw open for all birds and animals

My name I blow away into the sky

I live in your love

I wear your love

I eat and drink your love

Embellish myself with your love Intoxicated with your love

I sing and dance -

I swirl and twirl

They call me mad

They call me diwani

I know not who I am

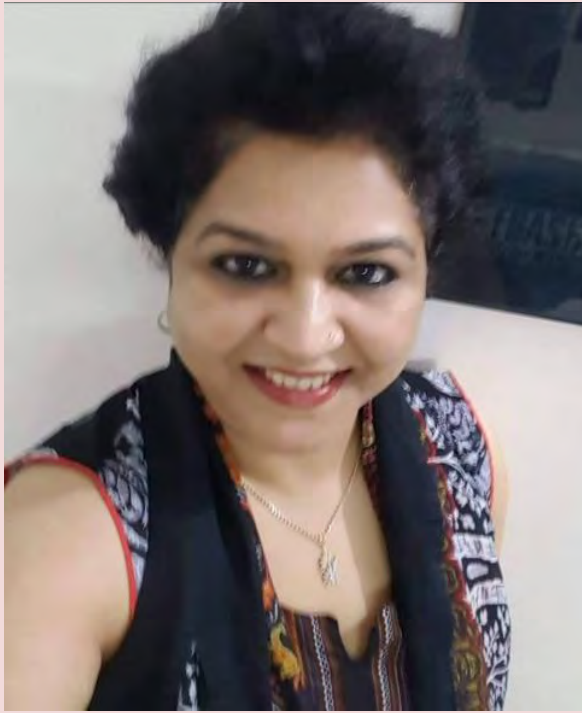
I swirl and twirl

Swirl and twirl

Drunk in your love

I swirl and twirl

Swirl and twirl...



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



painting by suzette portes san jose

SOMEWHERE IN TIME

from the long lost days
.....in the interlude of time
i wander into a phase in deep,
.....and i drift alone
my vision roamed, dreaming

.....of true love sublime
into my soul within me,
.....was reincarnated and reborn

we were the years
.....that passed through mortality
bestowed a haven
.....of an endless love for eternity
moments have gone
.....but never lost from the heart
bringing along the memories
.....we could never depart

i have you back
.....somewhere in time and forever
with our soulful embrace,
.....we belong to each other
be back then from where

.....we left our time in the past

to live again...and forever

.....we will have our love to last



Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City, Philippines, and is an accountant by profession. She now has joined 18 book anthologies. All her poems are written with her painting as visuals and are now appearing internationally. She has also published two of her own authored books. She is an admin of 8 groups to present, and the founder of POETIC HEARTS GROUP which is joined by Filipino artist/poets who are the regular artist-writers of her published anthology book.

She just started "CHARITY PROJECT" a free basic painting tutorial with free materials which caters children from remote rural areas. The project is funded by her book releases. She was awarded Poet of the Year in 2017 by one of the prestigious poetry sites in the UK.



<https://www.turbosquid.com/3d-models/hourglass-sand-3d-model-1192491>

THE HOURGLASS

The finest grains of sand those stored upside
Of hourglass, are falling as an expression of life.
The lion's share has been spent for just a snide
Or for the counterfeit; though I was given in rife.
Would you allow me to make an extra effort---
I want to hold this beautiful hourglass very tightly.
I want to place its upside down for delaying mort,
I want to direct the sands move against the gravity.
Though I know that it's a uniquely designed glass,

Only a few know that how to constipate the hole.
The upside sands must be allowed their easy rush
For rhythmic continuation of systole and diastole.
However, the sands in the upper half must run out
To say the smoothness of hole and the end of bout.



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.



LOST

In that narrow alley

He lost himself

Everything there

The burgeoning trees, side parterres,

Sprawling houses and sobbing huts

Stationed cars and the fading sun

All had a usual day

In that broad daylight

He lost himself

In that narrow alley

Could not find
And gather himself
That blew off somewhere
As strewn hay
In such a little time
In that narrow alley

After a night long penance
Envisioning and determination
He had started off a Broadway
Cruising confidently
To a hallowed destination
Descended to a alluring alley
At a destined fork
In a blip of stroke
To lose himself
In that narrow alley

He carried a confidence
And was sure of his charm
He dreamt of a new path
To the hallowed destination
But was disarmed
By the magic of the alley
He, the broadway speedster
Was imprisoned to the depth and the breadth
Of the narrow alley
He failed to fathom and to pass
He maneuvered, starved,
Exasperated and evaporated
To be strewn like rootless grass
In the wuthering alley
And he lost himself
In that narrow alley



Tribhu Nath Dubey: He is a sociologist by profession and poet by passion. He is employed with the Commissionarate of College Education Rajasthan as an Associate Professor in Sociology. He has been Co-Editor of the Rajasthan Journal of Sociology—a peer reviewed academic Journal. He is presently serving as the Secretary of Rajasthan Sociological Association. He loves to resort to poetry as an essential means of catharsis.



DEDICATED TO ALL BATHROOM SINGERS

It has been a tiring day
I drop car keys on the sideboard
Head straight for a shower

‘Bathroom singers’
Have their own audiences
Apart from family
Who don’t have much of a say

I am sure neighbors
(Thin walls of these apartments et al)
By now have strong opinions
Divided or the same
On my singing skills

When water gushes
In full force
Through the spray
Who needs accompanying music anyway?

I can go soprano
Or leave the operatic
Just hum random popular song
One whose lyrics keep eluding
But damn!
(That moment when you know
You sing so 'in tune')

And when I miss you

I go all playback

Divide the song

In neat twos

And sing my bit

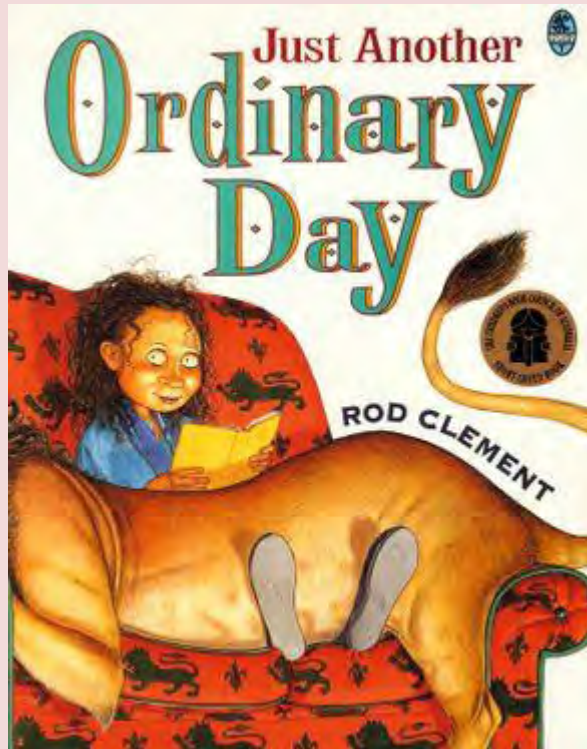
Perfect the pauses

And then do the 'male playback'

On your behalf



Vandana Kumar: I am a poet, residing in New Delhi, India. I work as a Teacher. I have contributed to various anthologies.



<https://www.harpercollins.com.au/9780207188398/just-another-ordinary-day/>

DAYS AND NIGHTS

For what it's worth
when someone asked how you were doing
you said you tried today,
for what it's worth
you didn't make notes of
how to move forward with a swollen feet,
you knew you didn't have to inspire anyone today by
moving mountains that are volcanic,

today was not about being the hero of the story,
for what it's worth
years later,
when you remember this day,
it'll be a story to tell
but nothing to say
and there is so much value
in that ordinariness
that you and I barely acknowledge.



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.



UNSPOKEN FRAGRANCE

When verses of prayerful praise flow
To enchant the stirring spirit of pious minds,
Each hymn striking a chord, a glory of the Lord,
A pathway to liberation across worldly attachments
From earthly father, mother, guru, friend,
Be they man, woman, young, old,
Wild winds or the life-sustaining breath,
Winding rivers or the bloodstream of the veins,
The earthly body or the elevated soul,
The one that moves or the one that stays —

In the Divine garden, germinated with blossoms afresh,
Each one of uniquely variegated splendour,
The roses, jasmines, marigolds, lotuses,
The perfume that wafts is neither cloying nor distinct
But a harmony of essences of the sweetest aromas
That linger into timelessness
Beyond birth, beyond death,
Beyond hate, fear, difference,
Beyond Om, beyond Amen,
A love unspoken yet vividly heard,
A heartfelt prayer that reaches, where it must —
The Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient Universal spirit.



Vidya Shankar: A poet, writer, blogger, motivational speaker, mindfulness practitioner, and yoga enthusiast, residing in Chennai, India, I have been in ELT for more than two decades. I have been contributing articles to an international newspaper column as well as poetry and stories to anthologies and literary platforms. Myself a 'book' with the Human Library, I have also published a book of poems.



IN MANCHESTER

After the shock, words are rendered meaningless:

The scene is replayed on the screen within. Again and again

Young fans running through a smoke of screams--

The absurdity sinks in slowly

Soaking up the blood of teenage dreams.

We now know Saffie will not turn nine

And Georgina will not be hugged

By her idol Ariana again

And Olivia's mother's heartfelt hope

Was touching but in vain.

For some this waiting for the missing
Is living through many deaths in one lifetime
Though nothing is left unsaid of this loss of sense
With snapshots shared in sorrowful silence:
Another massacre of the innocents.

A blast of evil madness at the end
Of an evening of harmless entertainment
With young, adoring, shrieking fans singing along
To "One Last Time",
Ariana Grande's final song.



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



SAPPHIRE CALL

The kingfisher sits on the bough
Overhanging the vacant plot above
It faces the hill and trills
It calls again and again
A brilliant blue call
Sometimes it flies and I feel
The call going around like an echo
On blue brown wings of sapphire.
The earth -
I stand at the centre
Now, I am that echoing trill

Now, I sit on the leafy bough
My sapphire wings take me to the sky
To the pond
And beyond



Vineetha Mekkoth: She is a poet, writer, translator and editor. She lives with her family in Calicut, Kerala. She is working as Assistant State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has been translating for the Kerala Sahitya Academy since 2014 and has also contributed articles for

the Malayalam Literary Survey, a quarterly brought out by the academy. She has published poems in various anthologies including the Brian Wrixon anthologies 'Words on the Winds of Change' and 'Women of One World', The Current International Anthology of English Poems, Amaravati Poetic Prism 2018, in the ezines Glomag, Duanespoetree, Mad Swirl magazine, Setu Magazine, Destiny Poets, Learning and Creativity. She is co-editor of 'A Dangerous predicament and other snippets: The Great Balancing Act in Indian Families' and also co-editor and participating poet of the anthology 'Umbilical Chords: An Anthology on Parents Remembered' published in 2015. Her short stories have been published online in Readomania, the journal Langlit and in the collection 'Silhouette I & II and other Short Stories'. Her debut poetry collection 'Ashtavakra and Other Poems' was published in August 2017 which is available on Amazon.



FETTERS

My mother brought me up alone. She had no helping hands to look after me. She had to cook, clean the house (although the house was one small room) wash the dishes and along with that deal with the difficult child that I was. Once, when no one was watching, I poured a bowl of hot water over myself. Still I don't have any signs of burn on my body, except the ones I have on my soul. So, after this incidence, while cooking, my mother began tying me with a rope. In the beginning, I struggled and cried but later I started enjoying it. I, in fact, begged my mother to tie me. It soon became an obsession.

This is how we are, we even celebrate fetters, we do that every year. We have misinterpreted it to that extent that we suppose it as freedom when in fact we have not even chosen it yet.



Vivek Nath Mishra: Author's short stories have appeared in The Hindu, Queen mob's Teahouse, Muse India, The Criterion Journal, Literary Yard, Indian Ruminations, Prachya Review, Indus women writing, and on many other platforms. His debut book 'Birdsongs of Love and Despair' will be published in June.



SHROUD OF SOLITUDE

I seem to be engulfed
In a shroud of solitude
My thoughts reaching out
To you my love
Regardless of where you are.

As far as memories can recall
The sprightly days
Become more vivid
And start floating

With a host of words
Whispering in my ears.

I start groping for words
To give vent to my feelings
Words will ever fall short
Even if they touch the sky
To express how badly your visage
I long to espy.

Still cannot believe
We were living
In a world of make-believe
The memories still haunt
Left am I in a chant.



Zulfiqar Parvez: He is the Vice Principal cum O Levels English Language Teacher, London Grace International School, Dhaka. He has done his Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi.



ciao! 😊