

GloMag

2017

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Magazine*

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ROBERT FELDMAN



Title of the Cover Pic: The Elephant

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Composing imaginative, solid poetry is throwing words around (and sometimes catching them) from various points of consciousness, blending and chewing and pondering them until some light shows itself and until the poet “looks at it right”.

For me, painting shares this same extended metaphor, the same muse at birth. I am an active person by nature, and painting provides another avenue, another trail to explore those multifarious paths leading to “mother ocean”, our

reservoir. It is the action, personified by brush or spatula or spray can or my throwing arm that attracts me to paint.

And ultimately, it is the colors, like words, that cultivate and hopefully blossom into visual gardens that seal the deal.

“The Elephant” is part of a series of fire paintings I have been making on and off for many years. Inspired by the innovative painter Yves Klein, I have experimented with using a torch to literally burn paint and plaster and canvas to break down the mediums, synchronistically creating new textures and hues.

ABOUT GLOMAG

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

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

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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BACKGROUND MUSIC: “Nisarisa” theme from movie “Jeans” by A.R. Rahman.

PREFACE

Anurag K Mathur

(a gentle man of words and contemplation, with a wide range of interests, especially an abiding interest in the well-being and happiness of his fellow humans, regardless of their age, gender or ideology)



DON'T LOOK NOW, WE'RE CHANGING

“Sorry,” she said, “I don’t have change”

And I wondered...

This whole situation these days is again about shyly asking for, with the ever present fear of rejection - for change...

Well, whatever happens to the change...I mean we hear this all the while, I don’t have change (so please give me) and you usually give it on demand.....so what do they do

with all the change they pile up ? If they don't pile up where does it all go?

“Bring the change you want”

Who said it? Barack Obama? Gandhi? Martin Luther King? Mark Twain?

Correct answer – Bus conductor in state transport bus.

So we don't know where change goes....for that matter do we know from where it comes? The only constant is change said someone. And then we had Mr. Obama famously say, “In one week, at this defining moment in history, you can give this country the change we need.”

So America was supposed to change. But what about the rest of us? Well, “the old order changeth, giving place to new”but to me that happens every day, every minute, every second we are in a different world than what it was in the last second, minute or day or year, but we don't measure change in such tiny increments.

We wait for big milestones. So America changed because we had an underdog as a President who in his own words, “neither the pollsters nor the pundits were ready to give much of a chance” at the start of his campaign. But do you think America changed WHEN he became President? If you look around, not really. America had begun changing years

ago, getting READY for the acceptance of this guy as the President even though at a sub-conscious level, slowly but definitely a day at a time – small measure indeed for a large nation, but that’s what eventually propelled a man with his background into The Oval Office.

(Recently we saw something similar happen with his successor too.)

So if a nation like the US of A which has been a traditional holder of conservative values has changed so much, where are we? What are we changing? Or changing from? Or changing into?

Hark back to 1985. That was the year our then Prime Minister late Mr. Rajiv Gandhi had famously remarked, “Our administrative machinery is cumbersome, archaic and alien to the needs and aspirations of the people. It has successfully resisted the imperative of change “

“You must be the change you want to see in the world,”
Gandhi M.K.

But is it so easy to embrace change? Personally speaking, yes and no. Yes because one gets bored pretty fast of doing the same thing and wants to make it better all the time. No, because at another level one is not prepared to change...Happens to all of us. We are happy to change a

phone or even a car maybe, but the decision to change an address is more stressful and painful, the decision to change a partner, sometimes even more so.

Interestingly, one of the funny things about people who may change partners is that their brands of the cigarettes or booze or drugs don't change at all! So you see, we are ready to change, but only at a certain level, not at every level, every time.

The French say it so well, "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" (The more things change the more they remain the same.)

In my humble personal view, change is like drinking water. Consume some of it in measured quantities, with regularity. But overdo it and it can be dangerous. It's worth noting that on its own, the planet took thousands and millions of years to change and the resultant life forms, but manual intervention caused both to change in relatively extremely short bursts of time with disastrous consequences for both.

You'd be wondering where is this all leading to. I mean I've changed my thought tracks and my style of writing every few paragraphs.

But that IS the point.

To demonstrate change.

Now hopefully you think different than you did before reading this.

If yes, I have changed something in you.

If not, you are highly resistant and wary of change. Was it because you've had more than your share of change?

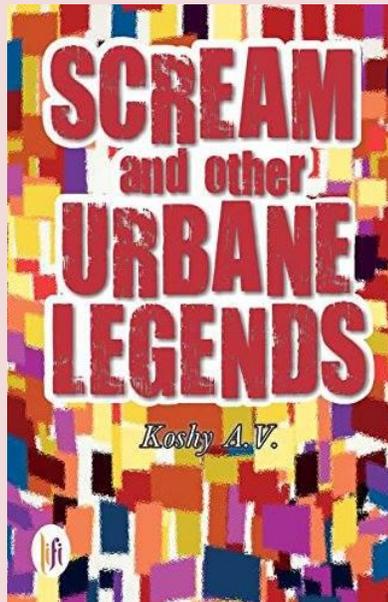
Too much of change is also a pain. Jingles and jangles every time you move. Better give it to her who asks for it.

And yes, if you benefit from it, Keep The Change!

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Scream And Other Urban Legends

Published by LiFi Publications



Amazon

https://www.amazon.in/Scream-Other-Urbane-Legends-Koshy/dp/9382536582/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1507826041&sr=8-1&keywords=scream+and+other+urbane+legends

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=scream%20and%20other%20urbane%20legends%20by%20dr%20koshy%20av>

Flipkart

<https://www.flipkart.com/scream-other-urbane-legends/p/itmegg8fzxzmmhug?pid=9789382536581>

REVIEW

Top customer reviews/5.0 out of 5 starsMasterpiece!/on 6 March 2017

Dr. Koshy AV is an author, critic, poet and academician. His book *Scream and other Urbane Legends* is a doorway to classic literature. While reading, one can realize that how aptly he has taken references from classic literature to stitch up the seducing stories or one can see a heavy reliance on allusions and intertextuality. In the words of the author, "A study of classic literature has helped me tremendously. Everywhere the reader will find a heavy reliance on allusions and intertextuality used consciously, including many classics and great writers in its sweep, and these add a rich dimension to my writing for those who get the significance and referentiality in its full measure." Very few authors are able to this and that too successfully.

The author has made a successful attempt in carefully penning down short stories that are poetic in nature.

As already mentioned above, every story shall take you back in time in the realm of classic literature and even

classic music. So one can say that every story is like a time machine that takes your brain train into the stations of legendary writers, artists, musicians and much more and which keeps you utterly engrossed in Koshy's creativeness and wittiness. Every story has been written with great dedication and it shows the boundless wisdom that the author possesses.

The author is successful in creating twists and turns in few stories that leaves an indelible effect upon the minds and hearts of the readers.

For example, in the story 'Aouda: The Confluence', one transcends from the road to the industrial city to a mesmerizing and mysterious world etched down by the author's splendid imagery and as one reaches the climax he/she is astonished as to 'What the hell just happened. Did I just wake up from a dream?'

The story, 'The Junction' reminds me of a quote from the classic novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez. "Things have a life of their own. It's simply a matter of waking up their souls." The author has portrayed the junction as an observer who silently beholds the happenings of a day that arrives and departs in front of its vision and when the night emerges how it ponders upon the untold stories that lie deep down its memory lane.

Creation Myths on Poetry: A Trialogue is a masterpiece where the author has beautifully crafted the essence of pure poetry in the first two myths and in the third one he criticizes as to how that essence has been lost by providing an example of plagiarism.

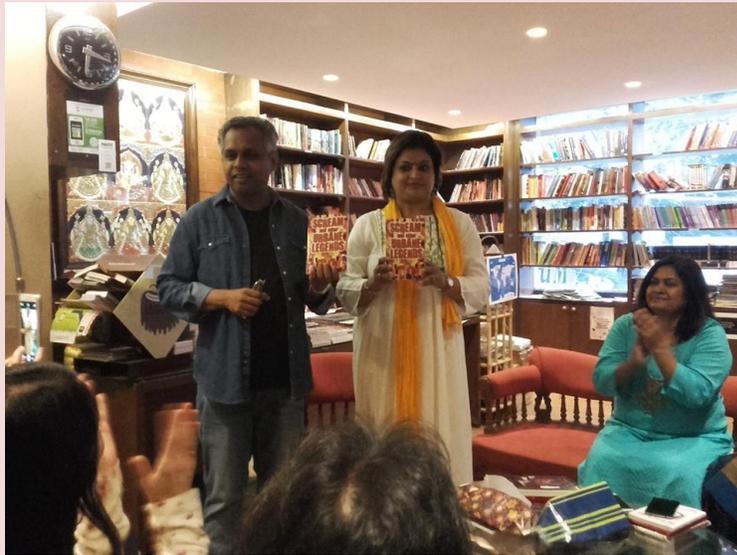
Apart from the above mentioned stories, the following ones left an incredible impact on me namely 'The Sculptor', 'The Gran'dad and the Little Boy who wanted to be a Poet – a tribute to Isaac Babel', 'The Poor Poet', 'The Writer Who Lost it at the Edge of the World', 'The Last Scarecrow', 'The Tenth Muse', 'Not Dark... Yet' (after Beckett), 'Written on the Body', 'Scream' 'Lady Nina' (Impressed as to how the author has forged a short story out of a song. Commendable work.), 'Sandhya', 'Lalita' and 'Raktha Rakshas'.

Quoting from Anamika –

“When love and hate collide. Poems explode. In the interim of the internecine interstice where the interface lies.”

The novella, Anamika deals with the sufferings through which a poet goes through in love and hate. With some brilliant references from classic literature the author has worked wonders in scripting this story. The poems within the story are excellent.

Thus, if I have to sum it up, *Scream and other Urbane Legends* is a classic book itself that shall seduce your introspection leaving you intoxicated with beauty and creativity that the author has successfully applied.



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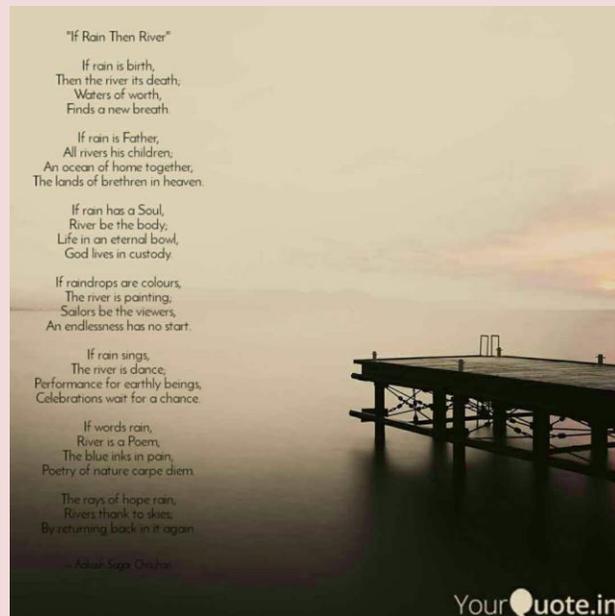
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If rain is birth

Then the river its death;

Waters of worth

Finds a new breath.

If rain is Father,

All rivers his children;

An ocean of home together,

The lands of brethren in heaven.

If rain has a Soul,
River be the body;
Life in an eternal bowl,
God lives in custody.

If raindrops are colours,
The river is painting;
Sailors be the viewers,
An endless has no start.

If rain sings,
The river is dance;
Performance for earthly beings,
Celebrations wait for a chance.

If words rain,
Rivers is a Poem;

The blue inks in pain,
Poetry of nature carpe diem.

The rays of hope rain,
Rivers thank to skies;
By returning back in it again.



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: He is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities residing in Rourkela. He co-authored the book "Between Moms & Sons" along with Geethanjali Dilip in 2016.



BALLAD OF THE FORTUNE TELLER

Slip me a golden coin and I'll spin you
a tale of past lives that glittered
like egrets of white lightning
leaping from a fistful of diamonds.

Lean close to my silver platter and hear
black tea leaves whisper your
Prince sliding jewels over celery
pale knuckles. Look closer as a servant

carries the twittering cage of a nightingale
across the sun-woven carpet
beside your purple velvet canopy bed.
At your leisure with a gilded spoon

you tapped quail eggs and sipped
guava nectar from a miniature

jade goblet. Oops! Your time
expires; another awaits in the

shadows behind you. Of course, past lives
are *always* noble! Why else would we
possibly want them? What a silly question!
Now what do you expect me to do

with your counterfeit coins of golden alloy?
Slip me a golden coin and I'll
spin you a tale of past lives that glittered
like egrets of white lightning leaping

from a fistful of diamonds.



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

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



I AM THE POET

I am the poet

Thousands of years old

At one era known as

Aeschylus or Homer...

At another as Gower or Chaucer...

I am the poet--

It is I who have written "The Iliad"

Possessing the name Homer

It is I who have penned "Aeneid"

Possessing the name Virgil

I am the poet

I know all the languages of the world

I've written "Mahabharata" in Sanskrit

"Charyapada" in Bengali

"Beowulf" in English and all the poems

In the languages I willed to pen in

I am the poet

I belong to all places--

All ages

I am the poet

Having umpteen names

I am Sophocles; I am Agathon

I am Shakespeare; I am Milton

I am Wordsworth; I am Tennyson

I am Vidyapati; I am Alaol

I am Tagore; I am Nazrul

I am Lorca; I am Neruda

I am all the poets of the globe.



Aminool Islam: A bilingual poet, he weaves poetry in both Bengali, his mother tongue, and English. He also weaves English sonnets. He did his M.A in English literature from National University, Bangladesh. He is currently the sub-editor of a literary magazine named Neeharika.



MUKTIBODH

Written in commemoration of Hindi Poet Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh's Death Anniversary

Depth and darkness

Within a realm

Life

Corridors echo

Its shuffling footsteps

Footsteps echo

Corridors

Again

Dimmed in disappearing

He walks

He walks

Imprisoned in a phantom

Fountainhead



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.



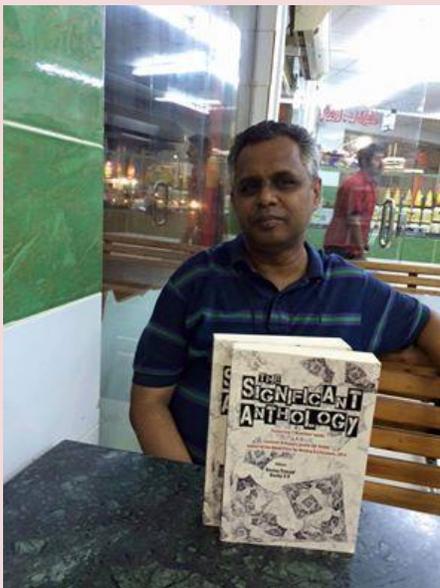
Lana Del Rey in Tropico: a film/as Eve her version

IMITATING MILTON

When the first stories were told
when a day could be a thousand years
or a thousand years a day
when time was not there yet
when man was made and woman
in the image of God who was male and female
and there was freedom to eat of all the fruits of earth
even the fruit of the tree of life
when man was naked
and so was woman

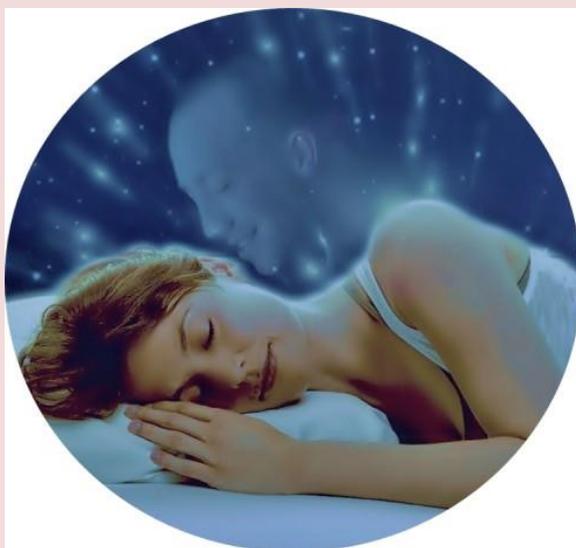
and they made love without shame or fear
when angels were thrilled to see their younger friends
and the serpent used to talk and walked on legs
when the knowledge of good and evil was not yet a part of
life
when animals and birds with men and women happily
dwelt
when the trees were in full foliage and the plants luxuriant
when that garden was called delight and paradise
there and then was when poetry was rife
Mother of all living, Eve, do you remember
how easy it was to speak in song and rhyme
how soft and sweet and low your voice was
how before the fall your tresses were a sight
as were your thighs and no one could deny
the grandeur of your face was pure light
your breasts were honeyed and your skin perfumed?
Adam could not away from you a moment stay
Then came the fall when you learned of things both dark

and bitter and was out from thence
thrown till time runs its course
one day to return not just ignorant
and innocent but tested, tried and tempted
and no longer able to fall, triumphant in all toil
For that day, all mankind waits in a way
When Eve returns and claims her rightful sway.



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele

Baron etc. He also runs The Significant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited *Inklinks* and *Umbilical Chords*.



MY SWEET DREAMS

Silvery moonbeams dancing

Showering moon dust in the night sky

The waves serenade me with a lullaby

As I gently fall asleep

Carefully weaving a thousand sweet dreams

Like spinning on a never-ending carousel

With sweet candy and ice-cream.

I watch you playing beautiful melodies

Intrigued by your penetrating eyes

As you captivate my rapturous heart

I am the only one in this vast arena
The music echoes in my impassioned soul
Tis sweet, oh so sweet
I don't want it to end

Sweet, sweet dreams as you gently
Float flying with me into the cumulous clouds
Reaching the heavenly spheres
Dreaming of you time and time again
A stranger in real life,
yet a familiar countenance
in my sweet dreams.

You have touched me deeply
You are my dream lover
Ah! my beautiful sweet dream.



Angela Chetty: She is an avid poet and lyricist who lives in Durban, South Africa. Angela imbibes her work with a deep passion and belief that words can touch hearts and change lives. The depths of her soulful prose, cuts across different genres, talking to matters of the heart. Poetry is music for her soul; like oxygen, the breath of her life. In 2013, Heartfelt moments - A Treasure Trove was published www.heartfeltmomentspoetry.com. Her poems have been selected for the Contemporary Poetry Digest, Evergreen Journal of Poetry, Contemporary Poetry Journal and has been featured in various special publications including Valentine's, New England Anthology, International Poetry Digest, From the Heart and 2017 Poetry Showcase and Yearbook. In 2016 and 2017 Angela was recognized as an Elite Poet. Three of her poems have been selected as the TOP 100 poems for 2017 by International Poetry.



BACK TO MY LOVE

Night has fallen on the land
Owl has given a warning hoot
Looking at the serene moon I
Sing a song of love with the flute

The song of love from heart
That once we both cherished
Living afar from each other
The pure love we have missed

I will be waiting for you
Singing in the solitary night

The stars and the moon with me
To my lonely heart shedding light

I will see the sign in the sky
When you will reach my land
Taking you in my arms I will get
Back my love by kissing your hand



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.



MADRUGADA

The madrugada descends

like a sheet,

settles

wet on mosaic tiled terrace,

paver-blocked road,

on the iron bars of the gate

the night watchman opens

at the honk and glare of a two wheeler.

Pure as a girl's first moisture,
the madrugada descends,
paints a perfect crystal sheen
on black reptilian skin
of faux saddle.

On the intoxicated October highway,
its breeze and breath, still carrying
the sharp sweet smell
of the recursive saptaparni,

the weights of past pillions
rest separately,
rest assuredly
on the empty seat behind.



Anish Vyavahare: Writer, brand builder, quizzer, public speaker, event organiser, psychology, advertising and writing teacher - essentially if there is a job to be done, I do it. Or get you people for it. I have a long standing affair with eating, cooking and Wikipedia. I like to travel if there is someone from the land to show me around. So if you want to invite me to where you are, I am welcome. :) For the serious stuff, I teach UG and PG Mass Media students. I help businesses do smart marketing where they build a strong brand, make money and do some really cool stuff to engage with their audience. I have been running a Poetry open mic in Thane, called Poetry Tuesday, for the last 5 years (almost!). I teach basic creative writing to beginners. And I have recently launched a multi-lingual Youtube channel called The Poetry Affair of India where you are welcome to feature with your poetry! You can check us out here - bit.ly/1LnZdUB



WASH ME CLEAN

Rain wash down over me
and sing away my tears.
I walk alone on whispers,
fragile as faith confronted.

The tension reaching out,
with languid fingers of longing
grasping at my throat.

Conclusions never complying.

Prayers go unanswered
floating on a sea of doubt.

The litany of lust prevails
devouring the holy with the damned.

I beseech the ancient ones
to rescue my true self
and let the rain cleanse
my desires with its song.



Ann Christine Tabaka: She was born and lives in Delaware. She is a published poet, an artist, a chemist, and a personal trainer. She loves gardening, cooking, and the ocean. Chris lives with her husband and two cats. Her poems have been published in numerous national and international poetry journals, reviews, and anthologies. Chris has been selected as the resident Haiku poet for Stanzaic Stylings.



ELEMENTS OF LOVE

A whiff of fresh air
caressed my curls
inhaled through my nostrils
that gave life to my soul
My love is a breather!

The rush of sparkling water
cooled my agonized mind
filled my parched mouth
that quenched my thirst
My love is a succor!

A handful of wet earth
stained my unsoiled hand
and the smell lingered in my heart
that produced new shoots
My love is a nourisher!

The light from the burning embers
warmed my wriggled soles
brightened my lovely face
that illumined the pervaded darkness
My love is a beacon of light!

A glance at the horizon
suffused an aura of tranquility
flew high with boundless freedom
that extended the peripheries of love
My love is eternal!



Annapurna Sharma: She is a nutrition lecturer turned writer. Her short stories, poems and articles have been published in Women’s Era, Reader’s Digest, several online portals, in anthologies – “A Quick Read” compiled by C.A. Simonson, Taj Mahal Review, Amaravati Poetic Prism 2016, Oh My Sweetest Love – A Timeless Treasure and WWW Women, Wit & Wisdom – an International Multilingual Poetry Anthology of Women Poets. Poems in English, Hindi, Telugu and Bengali will be published in forthcoming anthology – Amaravati Poetic Prism 2017. She is adjudged winner of the Muse India/Your Space/Editor’s Pick Competition, her poem to be published in forthcoming Muse India ejournal.



VICTORIAN MAN

I'm a Victorian man

I live as best as I can

The year is 1895

Today's the trial of Wilde

On opium high is my baby,

It makes it stronger, well, maybe...

My wife's behind laundry pot

The kitchen is steaming hot

Her voice reaches to higher note:

"I need to have my vote!"

Escaped into the wild rain

I walk fast to catch my train

Seven to eight we are used to work
Until our backbones hurt
We the pillars of society
Bare everything with notoriety,
While rich damsels buy their bows
We watch our toilets overflow
Oh heavens, will it ever end!
There is so many a thing that need be mend



Annika Lindok: She is an English teacher and a freelance translator, living in Estonia. Her work has previously been published in Scryptic Magazine, Five 2 One, Peacock

Journal, Quail Bell Magazine, Zoetic Press's Nonbinary Review and others, upcoming in Degenerate Literature and Ariel Chart. She is a prose editor for Escapism Literary Magazine.



THE LOOK

Sometimes in the seconds that it takes to wait at a traffic light.....

The lights change as we approach them and my friend Inder who is driving, removes his sandaled foot off the accelerator to let the car cruise to the STOP line. A few seconds later an auto rickshaw screeches to a halt on our left. Through the rolled up tinted glass of my window I gaze lazily to my side and see her sequined salwar fall off her knees, to rest on a pair of beautiful stiletto-shod feet, which taper off to her silver painted toes." I wonder what she looks like ", mumbles Inder from his driver's seat.

Hmmm.....so do I

32.....31.....30.....29.....28.....27.....A pair of beautifully manicured hands, retrieve a largish gold bracelet and fasten it on the right wrist. The sun catches

the sparklers on her ring and shoots off slivers of light in our direction.

"Wow" says Inder. "Will we know what you look like Princess?" I wonder

16.....15.....14.....13.....12.....

And then it happens.

She leans forward, her eyes, limpid pools, squinting oh so slightly, to adjust to the glare, before quickly scanning her beautiful face in our tinted glass, a trace of a frown, as her eyebrows arch. She releases her dark tresses which now undammed by the ribbon, cascade in a huge wave down her shoulders to her back as she quickly runs a brush through the tide. She notices my gaze and blushes faintly before disappearing back.

Was that a trace of a smile I see on those lips? The lights changed again.

And we are gone.

END (OR IS THE BEGINNING?)



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.



CRAVING

It's not enchantment but emotion that drives,
The chirr of cricket into an empty heart,
When it's cold enough to rest for repose
And shuns works to have the veil too close.
The humming and buzzing serves as hearth
To keep it warm, to get the blood restored.
Be it the silent owl, aloof, save hooting
Be it the firmament, blurred by scudding clouds,
Be it the fields, too arid after reaping;
All strive to live, to beat, to breathe, to wink.

And just a dark envelope, a strong wind,
A mild drizzling serves the soul of each.
All live and wish to live and hold it long
For not the taste of vibgyor life
But the hunger of its song.



Arka Chakraborty: He is an undergraduate student of English literature and he writes poems in both Bengali and English, currently he is in Ramakrishna Mission Residential College, Narendrapur. He tries to let his poems speak for him and is unable to pay his debt to his friend philosopher and guide Mr. Avik Kumar Maity for instigating the creative urge inside. Till date he is a resident of Midnapore, West Bengal.



PAINTING THE SKY WITH GRIEF

Blue is not the colour, nor is snowy- white or sun-licked grey.

I paint the sky with water.

The tear.

The colour of solitude brewing in the eyes of a half-dead widow

The outcast.

The color of fear stuck in the eyes of fish lings abandoned by the oceans

The homeless.

The color of quivering silence screaming in the veins of trees uprooted

The wingless.

The color of screams rolling down from the eyes of newborns denied air

The neglected.

The color of fear boiling under the nerves of those who venture out in the dark

The powerless.

I paint the earth too with water.

The color is tear.

Mind you

If love has a hue, it's not rose-pink or blood-red

If hope has a hue, it's not lemon-yellow or chilli-red

If happiness has a hue, it's not leaf-green or sea-blue
If grief has a hue, it's not black as you thought

Let me tell you, everything in the world is tinted with a tear-hue

The watery hue

For, rain is a painting perfect for a world soaked in sorrow.

For, sky is a canvas

Painted with grief.



Aash Ashitha: She is a journalist with the Times of India, Bangalore. She writes poems in Malayalam and occasionally in English. Translations of her poems have been published in English in Raed Leaf-India journal and in German in Street Voice journal. She has a collection of short stories to her credit in Malayalam. Her translation of 'Mohanaswamy', a collection of stories by Kannada writer Vasudhendra, was recently published by DC Books, Kerala. One of her poems was featured in the journal brought out by the Bangalore Litfest 2016.



TIME...

Time rumbles, hands of god

Sea waves take shapes,

Ageless allure

Sand and stone

And now your song...

You sing the tide's ebb and flow

And now a vow... you will never

See my face at your door again.

Errant wind

Delicate

Beautiful

Endless

Intangible

Loneliness

Blinking...

I dwell in you

Like a dark abyss

Time emerge from where?

Crazy hours are back...



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



KEEP OUT

This world has been -
Contaminated
By evil minded thoughts -
Polluted
By powerful
Control freaks
With never minded
Streaks
Like dark clouds
Hanging over a plain
Their fruitless efforts
Are unlike saturated rain
Only interested in

Their own agenda
While spreading
False propaganda
Seeking wealth
Around the hour
Portraying concern
Over a withered flower
But behind closed doors
They plot and scheme
They bury nations
Hopes and dreams
They've infiltrated
The universe
Like an epidemic
Humanity's curse
A world in tatters
Haunted by political matters
Charismatic voices

Clatters

Deceiving multitudes

In support

Riding on their backs

Like an escort

Keep out

This world is doomed

It is with greed

And clutter consumed

You are entering

An evil den

This rainbow

An array of men

Portraying colours

You'll appreciate

But they cannot wait

To determine your fate

Keep out

Their hands are claws

Their mouths

Are like a crocodiles jaws



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



WOOL WISHES

"She shines queenly, around her I
do not admire being less than a king."

There must be a little delay backstage,
you know makeups.

"I hate improvisations,
it's not that I'm a slow learner,
it's just not my thing."

Let me tell you about her.

"She calls a spade a spade,
rock into your face,

tough into your throat
if you are domestic abuser."

She has got a black belt,

I'm not scared of her.

I am her man,

she's tender like when I'm drunk

on Fridays, she leads me to bed,

untie my shoe laces and pull off

my socks.

"Do not envy my conscience

another dream woke up last night."



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



“AFGHAN GIRL”: THE ELEGY OF A REFUGEE

From fruit and the petals of flowers drip drops of liquid -
an expression of love from lips of Pashtun parents
who named their daughter

Sharbat - the sweet syrup of Asia.

The mountains of Afghanistan heaved with sorrow -

her syrup curdled in the blood of mangled limbs and rotting
corpses,

flesh torn on the killing fields of greed

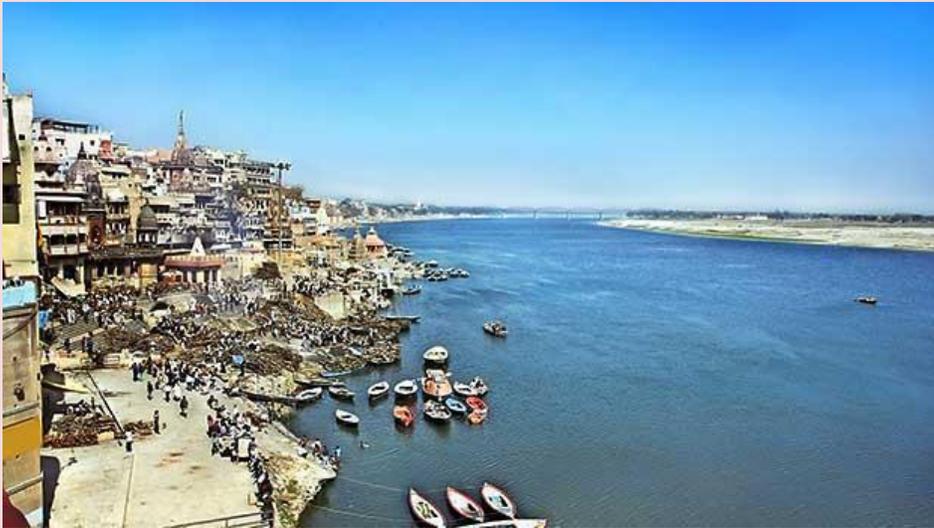
when an orphan was born as refugee.

Ill-fated to conquest's power -

ghosts retrieved from the debris of death
shudder from the shock of artillery as shrieks of horror
collapse to anonymity,
unceremonious -
on tombstones of rubble.
Sharbat bewitched him with her marine-green eyes -
the photographer who flashed her seering accusation to a
world
indelibly haunted by "Afghan Girl";
the cover girl with no poise, pout or portfolio.
Her mystique is unveiled beneath the smear of red -
in eyes that claw the feral animal
with nothing but life to sustain her dead soul.



Bilkis Moola: She is an Educator who resides in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga Province Image result for sunrise clipart. Her first published anthology, “Wounds and Wings: A Lyrical Salve Through Metaphor” was received throughout South Africa and launched her poetic persona. It evolved as an introspective quest for recovery from her personal narrative of an abusive marriage. Her poetry is a delicate negotiation of patriotism and ethnicity. Bilkis Moola navigates a pluralistic dialogue towards multiculturalism and transformational activism in post-apartheid South Africa as “A Sprightly Cultural Hybrid In Metamorphosis” <https://static.xx.fbcdn.net/images/emoji.php/v7/ff9/1.5/16/1f41e.png>. She presently divides her time between professional responsibilities and post-graduate studies in Education. Her pen continues to sketch the flotsam in her mind from the passion in her heart on shreds of paper that bloom into poems.



STORIES OF THE GHATS

Every day, this river gulps fire ablaze,
From chalices of human flesh-
Drunken, yet yearning for more-
She surges across a terrain of thirsts.

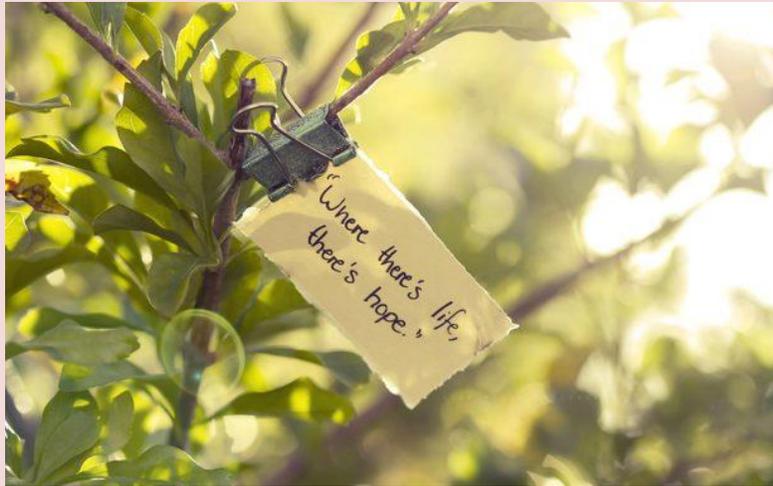
The sun drowns to glowering stillness in her currents-
The moon is a dirge drifting on her wavelets;
Having turned into stars, the dead wink from afar
Eyeing the dying embers of their pyres.

From every shore to the ghats, boats ferry stories
Shrouded corpses waiting to unroll
Scrolls after scrolls filled with sad tales.
The river takes them all, ingesting into her fluid self-
Cells that swell at the mere touch of salvation.

This river cannot stop living or loving-
She passes time gathering untold yarns,
Taking them apart thread by thread-
Untying the knots of life, she stays undead-
Timelessly.



Bini B.S.: She is an academic fellow and program officer at Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Gujarat. She is the editor of *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*. Her poems were part of an anthology of corporeal poems titled *A Strange Place Other than Earlobes: Five Poets, Seventy Voices*. She is the winner of the 2016 J. Talbot Winchell award for her contributions to the discipline of general semantics, which she received in a ceremony in New York in 2016.



THE INTRUDER

Slowly the clock moves on
My life and yours move not
She holds me in her vice like grip
Her terror fills my world and I cannot sleep
I feel the silence of the stalked
and could not hold you when you walked
Away from me because of a fault
You say it isn't my fault and we are not a full-stop
Today I can hope that her drinking won't break my slumber
Tomorrow I can work and this in all despair remember
But it will end say our well-wishers and I believe
Tomorrow life starts, no dreamy make believe



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



SILENCE

Sound of silence

have you heard

how can you

used to din

when silence descends like a fog

you feel everything is fine

then you cannot even hear your own breathing

this silence silences even that

that is the sound of silence.



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



SO IN LOVE

I am so in love

Only the Father knows

Who lives above

I need you in my life

Because even a day without you

Feels like a cut from a knife

Stay with me don't ever go

Without you I don't know

We share and care for each other

Our love bond will never be broken by another

Without you I am incomplete

On a daily basis your love is what I need

Sometimes our relationship is tough sometimes rough

But our bond remain strong because of love

I am glad to have you in my life

You are always there in times of strive

Although we have some difficulties we are still together

And ready to stay like this forever

We will be lovers till

The end of time

Our lives are joyful and complete

Even without a dime

We love one another

Like no one would ever

Be able to love each other



Chantesica Jonkers: She was born on the 3 February 2005 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. She is a learner at Bethelsdorp Road Primary School in grade 7. Chantesica started writing poetry after losing her dad in 2016. This was her way of dealing with the loss of a loved one and expressing her emotional state. This led to her enjoying writing so much that she continued writing poetry. Her first poem "My Dad" she treasures like a piece of gold. She hopes to write an Anthology in the near future.



EURYDICE CONFRONTS ORPHEUS

Now why couldn't you just leave me alone,
Safe in this cave of shady forgetting?
Could you not think I'd have views of my own
And wish to stay in this twilight setting?
Spring, summer and the harvest are all past
My bones are sleeping softly under snow,
Yet you still hunger for what could not last,
And back to earth with your folly I go.
You strum your lyre self-importantly,
Demanding all obey its order,
Dragging me from Hades. Won't you see?

I wish to stay within its firm border.

Then you look back at me and understand,

That dear death has become my true homeland.



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.



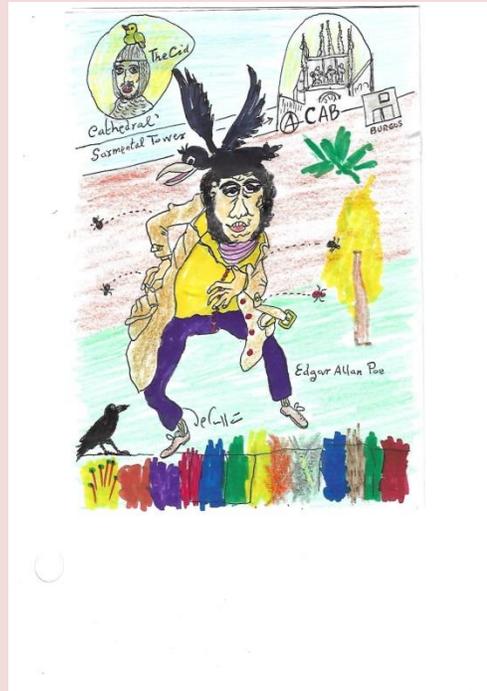
FORGOTTEN FIGMENTS

A desolate
wicker basket
dusty, in the corner of
the small garret
filled with snippets
of unremembered
memories
Crumpled fragments,
scribbled scraps,
neatly written
pieces of paper,

with one thing
in common
Remnants of the
forgotten figments
of a poet's mind



Dagine Aignend: Dagine Aignend is a pseudonym for the Dutch poetess and photographic artist Inge Wesdijk. She likes hard rock music and fantasy books, is a vegetarian and spends a lot of time with her animals. Dagine posted some of her poems her fun project website www.dagine.com. She's the co-editor of Degenerate Literature, a poetry, flash fiction, Arts E-zine. She has been published in several Poetry Review Magazines, in the anthology's 'Where Are You From?' and 'Dandelion in a Vase of Roses'.



A RAVEN ON POE'S BUD

I'm on the terrace of the CAB, Burgos Art Center

That looks at the Cathedral' needles

And a raven appeared to me by chance

Giving a good peck

At the tip of the lover's bud

For having fallen asleep

At five in the afternoon

With a dream of Love hands off.

I was well asleep

When, upon awakening by the beak

I jerked him off
Revolting himself very confused and dazed.

I denied him
I swore to pluck the feathers
Whenever I can.

When I saw the Cathedral's spires
I found the hairpins that my mother used
To get rid of the worms in the ass
And I blessed her, kissing her a lot
For saving me from that itch
That I bore without meaning to.
My mother showed great feeling
Cursing the worms
Squashing these on a handkerchief.

In the Burgos Art Center
Tired of good books
And mousetrap exhibitions of pictures
In front of the door

On its label where we read CAB
Some rascals have put ahead an "A"
Remaining ACAB.
I baptized the raven
Putting to him the name of Poe
And announcing:
"Better is a crow on hands
That Poe following the crowd".



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



TRUMP AS A FIRE WITHOUT LIGHT #354

Last night in Ohio they used pepper-spray on protesters. The rising was never yellow. It's not yellow now. We can survive a nation without light. We will be there, in the end, when the light returns to us like a wandering beast from the forest. Those of us in this have no exit strategy. We have our names. We have our families. We'll give up the rest if that's what it takes.



Darren C. Demaree: He is the author of five poetry collections, most recently “The Nineteen Steps Between Us” (2016, After the Pause Press). He is the Managing

Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology and Ovenbird Poetry. He is currently living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.



THE INDIFFERENT

How is it possible for sensitive, analytical writers to write exclusively about animals and nature, the scenery and feelings? in a riven country like South Africa?

How is it possible to ignore the poverty, the pain and the suffering?

How is it possible to ignore the omnipresent racism, the rejection, the terror and the humiliation the pathological psychology that permeates everything and submerges our country in a shroud?

How is it possible for a writer to analyse so minutely
Every aspect of the petal of a flower
but ignore the cauldron
that has been deliberately created in our country?

How is it possible for writers to care so much for pets and
animals,

For rhino, elephants, cats, dogs and horses,

And yet be so indifferent about the pain of the people?

How is it possible for writers to write about life

In Apartheid South Africa

Yet ignore the racism in Apartheid South Africa?

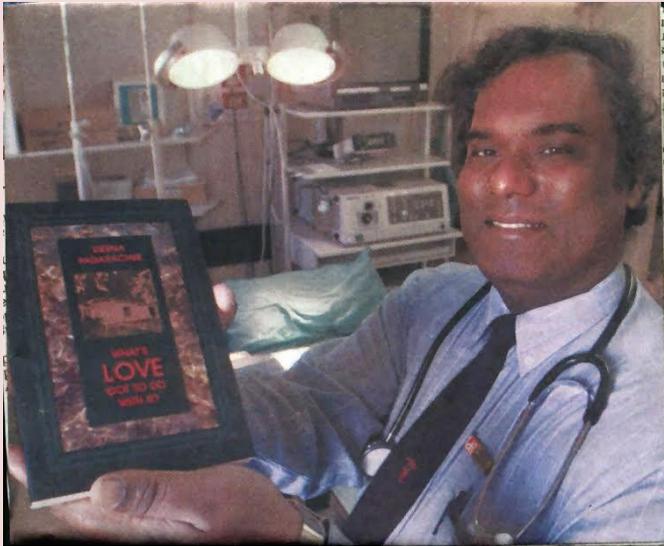
How in heaven's name is it possible,

unless these writers are saying

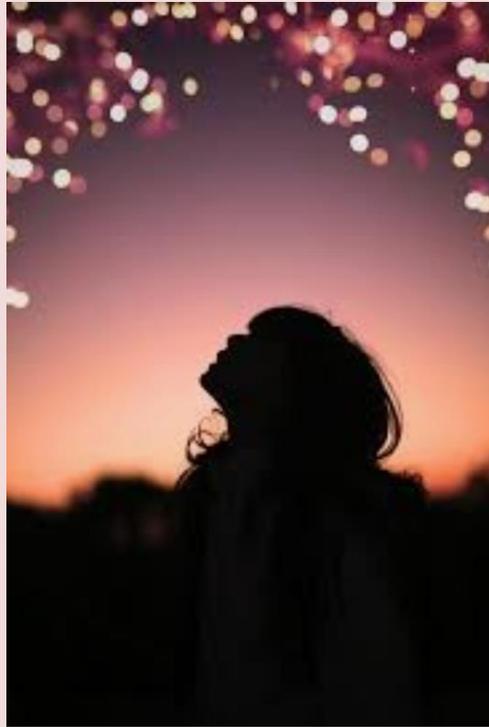
that they are proudly racist

and would rather not analyse

what they are?



Deena Padayachee: He is a South African born medical doctor who is the winner of the Nadine Gordimer Prize for prose. Crux, Wasafiri, Skive, Glomag and the Indiana Voice Journal have all featured his work. He has delivered lectures on his writing at the universities of Copenhagen, Tuebingen and Louisiana. His book of short stories, What's love got to do with it? was awarded the Olive Schreiner prize. His prose features in the University of Cambridge's Writing from South Africa, the Reader's Digest's Best South African short stories and A century of South African short stories.



A WISH

What if wishes couldn't travel a thousand miles

Would the crimsons still scath the scapes in the warm
evenings

Would the white split itself like a rainbow in those loving
eyes

As lights go dim and the night whispers lullabies into sleepy
dreams

And a wisp of breeze caresses those scented lips wantonly

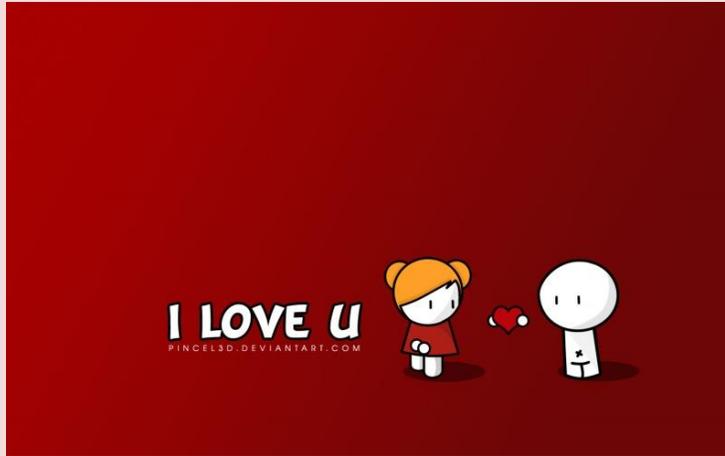
What if wishes couldn't travel a thousand miles

Would longing hearts cease to beat to an enchanting
rhapsody
That only love could arise
When distances seem to be everlasting or never-ending
And desires burn you like stub of a cigar leaving bitterness
Its wishes that spark and light up the dark
And life spreads out to start afresh yet again
And yes wishes are fluff and wishes are care
So here's a wish for you my love, just to
hug you tight and say

” Hey there!”



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



VALENTINE'S DAY!

To this Valentine's Day

Where there was rose bed for others

Her eyes had thorns in them..

Thorns from the unruffled and stagnant

Rock bed for her..

Staring at the locked phone

And playing with the feckless games..

Inadvertently waiting for his call..

Which she knew then was a thing of past

Which would never ever come true..

Little though her heart knew the truth!!

Adamant of showing him the petulance,

And not falling for his counterfeited promise,
Where the minutes were passing by her
A small note of his flashing on her screen
“My life would be nothing without you to share it with”
Made a miracle once again..
Brought back the tears in her eyes,
For she realized this was the best ever he could gift
To this special day!!



Devayani Deshmukh: She is pursuing a master's degree in computer science in the USA. She is highly interested in writing.



I STILL HAVE TO RETURN TO MY HOME

One truth

That has never occurred to me

Should it occur to me now?

That there's silence in death.

All the passions, all the agonies,

All the triumphs, all the defeats,

Disappear in death.

There's silence in death.

It's rough and stormy for me today,

So, is it silence that I'm looking for?

Tears roll down the cheeks of the moon

A violinist plays a melancholic tune

My feet tremble,
Do I have a sea in my eyes?
It's only grey if I look ahead
But the afternoon flowers are still to bloom,
And I know there's green on the other side
I can flow with a wild stream
I can surely grow a few sunflowers
I can travel to the secret town
Where people have gold in their hearts.
There's silence in death I know
But I still have to find my soul
I still have to return to my home.



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



H-U-M-A-N-I-T-Y

Emergence – This is not a test signal. If you can hear my voice and see me then you have survived the nuclear winter

and are now inhabiting the last remaining human settlement

on our ravaged planet. All electronic devices on earth have been

destroyed by targeted EMP attacks, crippling and ceasing all means

of communication for decades. You are but a sample of a species that once was and for some still are but have now been awoken from your cryogenic slumber. Do not be alarmed your first reaction would be to flee but you are not afforded such liberty or notion on this intergalactic station.

Testimony – I can see your burning fear your insatiable need to understand why you are here now with me as your unknown voice of reason and perceived authority – You, now a new minority hoping to cautiously hesitantly bow down to any authority here, now in this future era, trying to furiously remember your previous human

slumber, each one of you used to just being a voting
number – Yes

I know your questions swirling inside your foggy vaporised
memories

locked in days of yesterday, of known enemies with the
power to end

you all well now you know it has happened. You
understood what

complacency would cost all of mankind and yet here you
are, left

behind now existing as a different kind.

Visions of you – The nightmares you now see in your ignited
memories

are what you allowed to happen. It came all of a sudden –
Blinding

beautiful light multiplying in both hemispheres, fiery
mushrooms lit

up the skies whilst acid rain watered the bitter earth as the
select few

yes you were destined to be saved and wake up here with
me to create

once again a new community, a civil society. We have much
to achieve

this is now your elected destiny so if you decide to stay I
will guide you

into a new day...



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

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

His debut collection is available here

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

Luke Borrill (Artist): He hails from the beautiful Mother City of South Africa - Cape Town. He is in his second year of studies which he is majoring in English and Communication Sciences. He grew up surrounded by music, art and writing, so it comes as no surprise that he has inherited these traits. He thoroughly enjoys relaxing in the form of either artistic sketching or playing guitar. As an Artist his vision is to create dark and mood altering atmospheres out of his work; especially when interpreting his own perception of someone else's artwork he incorporates his own unique style.



I DON'T WANT TO BE.

I don't want to be your passport girl
when the world is at my feet
wrapped in my youthfulness and cocooned in my bosom.
I don't want to be your bitch
Spread-eagled
Barking as you violate my inner soul
Steal from me my womaninity and my voice
And delve in my feminine fears.

I don't want to be your world of Candy, Sara Baartman and Kwezi.

My world is in my hands and I own it!

I don't want to be a blessed clitutterance

Or a vaginal monologue.

I am not an alternative nor a choice.

I am a priority!

I don't want to be the trophy, the breasts and the buttocks

But the brain, the beauty and the boardroom belle.

I don't want to be a pseudonym nor a name

When my name is written in the stars.

I am not a purpose nor a bet to be wagered

But a goal and a lifetime journey.

Look at me . . .

I don't want to be . . . you.



Fiona Khan: An award-winning, internationally published author and poet. I have been writing short stories, 15 children's books, poems and a novel published internationally in various magazines and anthologies. I am also an academic and an environmentalist.



Blood

gore

and all that,

you never knew

it was for real

and then you meet them

at a turn.

The mall

fades in comparison

but you have never known any other places to compare.

You watch
from behind a tree.
There's
so much to shop
and technically
everything's for free.

You watch some
record some,
pick some,
buy some
till the bag is full.

A small voice from the back prods,
"Shop
till you drop dead".

But you have never ever liked the idea of death
a life without breath.

You pick pace
to get back to the race.
Peace folds itself
a handkerchief in your pocket
still damp
from the wash.
Both of you
put back the swords,
aren't you both in a hurry
to declare allegiance with the world.



Gauri Dixit: She is a software professional from Pune, India. She is an avid reader and regularly writes in poetry groups on Facebook. Her poems have been published in multiple

anthologies. Her poems were featured in the Poet's Corner for the E-zine 'Mind Creative' published from Sydney Australia and Learning and Creativity e magazine.



FOUR LETTER BAD WORD

A truck, a duck, even running amok
Is easier to stop having to say
A puck, some luck, a well-earned buck
I'd rather give some of these away.

Muck, havoc, a piece of good chuck
None of these can take its place
Stuck, a schmuck, can't stop myself cluck
That four letter bad word, it stays.

Struck, awestruck, I seek how to swear
With less violence in my ways.

Stuck, dumbstruck, I'm brokenly bare

The sound of that bad word, it just slays.



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



HAPPINESS

A colourful joy takes wing
Leaving a fresh imprint
Of an exotic touch
The moment it sits on my hand
My pains go into an exile
I fondle it carefully
But it flits away
As much as I chase
It becomes fainter and fainter

Happiness..!

Rapture of brief moments
Captivating yet elusive
Slips away from my grasp
Like a colourful butterfly
With multicoloured soft satin wings
Colours are hopes that intend to soar high
And hopes are like the horizon
That never ends..

Happiness is not a pursuit
It is an ethereal experience
Things we own are transient
Only the inner voice of the soul is
Eternal, sublime
That never shouts but whispers
Amidst all chaos
Happiness is living every moment
With love, peace and gratitude

It is a flower that blooms inside
Spreading a blissful aura all around...



Gayatree G Lahon: She is a teacher by profession and a poet by passion. She is a post graduate in English Literature from Gauhati University. Being an aesthetic, her pen draws inspiration from nature and the surrounding beauty of life. Nature heals our wounds, she believes in it. Her poems have been published in many national and international magazines and anthologies.



Unaware,

The crowds

Racing against dreams,

Converge.

We cross our paths

Past a maze of traps and exits

Winding and unwinding,

Every turn is a surprise.

A giant clutter, traffic jams, at the signal,

Moving slowly, stops.

There are children selling plastic fans and new books,

A circle of contemplating monks on the footpath,

Is still, beside women selling jasmine and roses,

All stare at the future ahead.
A changing city of progress!
A picture perfect
Full of crowded crumbling buildings,
Overflowing garbage, street dogs,
And Men, chasing dreams,
As time flies.



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



FOREST STREAM

Tripping on undulations of ragged mountain boulders,
Downstream through embracing viridian forest shoulders,
Frothing with an exuberance of a vagrant teenager,
Here bounds a stream of minds' retrospection sober.
Aeons of having meandered in a seemingly staid path
beaten,
The mind-stream counts the bends it has inadvertently
taken,
Singing with the changing skies that do what they do best,
Carrying their stories mirrored on a ground dancing on
every wave crest,

For isn't this mind a perennial river that gushes from a fountainhead,
Leaving behind dazzling gems of verses in an ocean bed?
Of radiant colours that touch their ripples concentric,
Thoughts stained with pigments of words turning epic.

Embedded as memories as earth wears jewels resplendent,
Suspended delicately in life's balance of woods verdant,
In an onward journey that carves its way where rivers merge,
Every river a precious story of an odyssey in realization to surge,

A forest stream leaves its anecdotes on trails of reedy banks,
Where good, bad, right, wrong, and all dualities ever flank,
And the foliage of endless souls dip to listen to the rush,
Of a cascade of an endless journey gurgling in a gush.



Geethanjali Dilip: She passionately contributes poems to poetry platforms in literary blogs and Facebook, including The Significant League, GloMag, Different Truths etc. A professor of French heading Zone Francophone at Salem, India, she has published two anthologies, "Between Moms and Sons" and "The Virtual Reality" in collaboration with several renowned poets. Her poems have been featured in several anthologies. Geeth believes poetry is the breath of the soul. She has been awarded the prestigious Reuel International Prize for Poetry 2017 by The Significant League headed by Dr. Ampat Koshy.



THOUGHTS OF GIBRALTAR

Summer rolls on

In gasping heat

But evenings are cooler now

So, I look forward to sweet September

The trees outside

Do not murmur

So the night will be sticky

Though the doors stand open

To the breeze that does not come

Baleful 120 degree heat
Glares over Cordoba
And Madrid fries and sizzles
While storms advance

The sea is refreshing
For a while
Until the heat
Claws its way into my body

The water-jar stands by
Coffee swims in a mug on the table
Mouth-watering cool juice is in my glass
And I frantically pour in moisture
That my body sweats out

The long, burning summer
Is endless

Will September ever come

With halcyon breezes

Night sweats

The doors are ajar

Dawn comes cool

With cloud over

The dolphins leap

In a clear sea

And the Barbary apes

Scratch after orange peel

The Rock is a monumental fort

Guarded by a frontier

Across which the traffic streams

As far as the wicked barbs

To bar the airport runway

North African shores

Beckon the little boat

Ferrying the tourists

Across

Picture postcard dream

Of shots of Gibraltar

While tawdry restaurants line

Casement Square

All the way up Main Street

Spanglish spoken 'ere

Amid the wrinkle of tills

And pound note bills

Like confetti



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



KODAI POEM

Mona,
how did you know
there was still life
beneath the ashes?
my dark grey skies
are sleepless nights -
the many that have passed
a guarantee that life is short,
is meaningless
unless I gave it meaning.
somedays i could put my feet

on the ground
and write on a blank paper
somedays, i just stare at a wall badly in need of paint.

this one time, you said
and i decided, this one time
i shall let that unruly child out again
who had been taught so well by life not to laugh.
this one time
i shall forget lessons of a lifetime
and let that Goblin peep...

she danced!

she sang!

she pranced!

she wanted to dig a potato?

she wanted to throw a fish into the lake?

she wore crazy tourist hat and glasses?

The Gamin is now back in the box
but I can feel her presence in me
In the form of two devilishly bright eyes
grinning and shining in the dark....



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. She is a language editor and quality analyst by profession.



THE ROAD IS MY HOME

the long and winding road
miles and miles going nowhere
life stretched like a highway
it hangs in perpetual solitude
around every bend, every incline
the miles stretches for infinity
and the years just flew by
one by one
I searched for heaven
till hope became despair
but the search went on and on

and along the byways of life
I wondered a solitary vagabond
it's a very cold and broken road
a distant highway to nowhere
alone in the remote wilderness
far, far from home

I searched for paradise
waiting to catch a falling star
when no stars lit the night sky
drowning in my sorrows
for sorrows are all I had
to drown in

it's the same road
I took the day I left home
the miles eat into you soul
when you are cold and tired and alone
tear drops fall

you miss the loved ones you left behind

everything looks the same

I know it a mirage an illusion

time changes everything

our minds refuse to believe

what the eyes truly see

there is no turning back

I said my good byes

left the old life behind

all the love in the world

is not enough to hold me

to this place I once called home

the flowers know

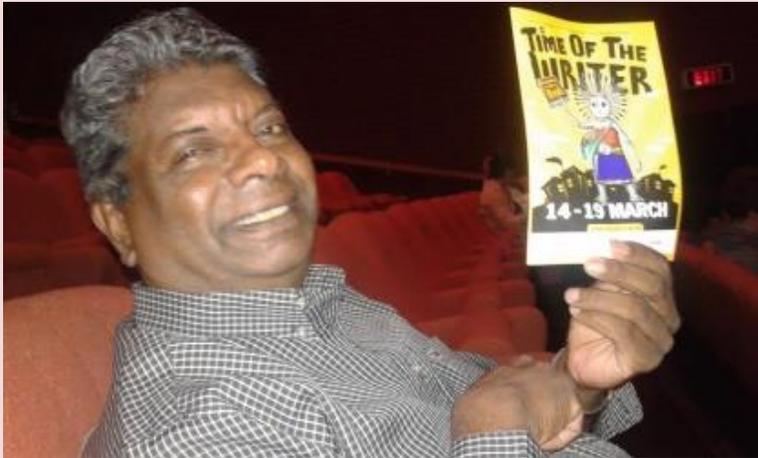
when the bees will return

the night understands

when the moon does not appear

my soul knows

that the road is my home



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.



LOOSE CHANGE

he chuckles, “you’ll never have to fret about becoming one of them”

and it’s funny to him since he is insinuating that I will never discover how to be similar to them, to maintain an organized house, have a genuine work plan, be a high quality wife and

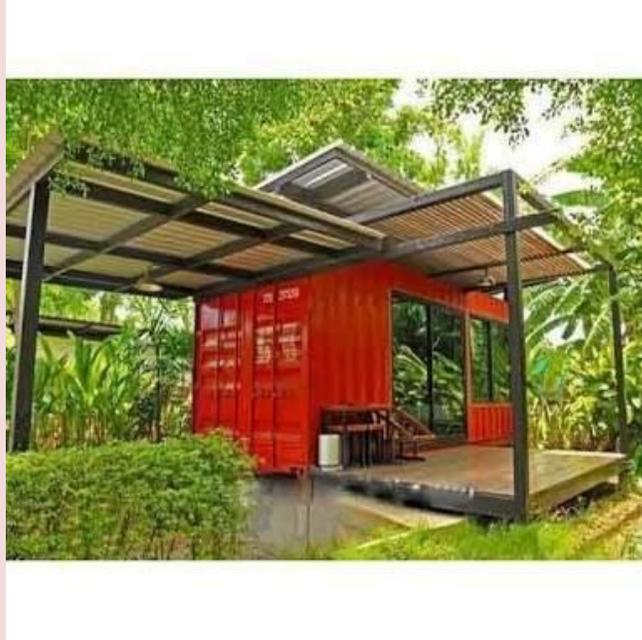
soccer mom. I don’t desire to be like them at all, but I could be, I know I could be taught to do all that, without difficulty, transform into some easily-annoyed valium housewife, scowling at imperceptible

grime, dust motes, could even
run the vacuum now and then. he mocks
me once more, talks about my mother, pronounces
how fortunate I am to have married
him when I did since the way I am now,
at this moment in time,
only miserable, solitary elderly
men, only genuine trash
would want to be with me.



Holly Day: She has taught writing classes at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota, since 2000. Her poetry has recently appeared in Tampa Review, SLAB, and

Gargoyle, while her newest nonfiction book, Tattoos FAQ, is coming out from Backbeat Books at the end of 2017.



Dancing rhythms and lilies
In the fest of happiness daily
Ecstatic to witness
Lost in a spree to jingle
This garden, and these flowers
Are a source to make it
Bountiful and vintage vibes
I just love the ripe
Fruits and the nectar sucking butterfly
In its wisdom free
It all loves to be a part of

Farm house or some heaven
The vacations spent, are good to remember
The elegance trapped in the lap
Is just impossible to forget
Delicacy and all the pleasure
Resides in here, in the single expectation!!



Jayant Singhal: A voracious reader and an enraptured author, Jayant Singhal, under the animated pseudonym of 'Saaransh'. He began nurturing the passion for expressing the enchanted aura of the world through his pen just a few months ago. Having a strong affinity for English language, he loves to feel the imbuing effect of it. He is currently writing a Facebook page, "Aroma - The Essence of Life".

Dazzling through the twists and turns of this beautiful voyage, commonly known as 'Life', he is en route to the bewitching nature of happiness and peace.



CONTROLLED WORDS

Her thoughts scattered
Through the dark of night
Fear is what pushes her to fight
Her eyes turned black
From the blackened light
Her demons have left her
For the first time in her life

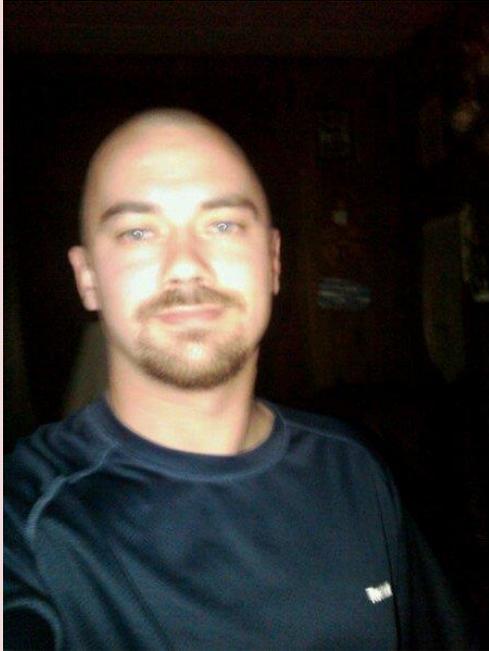
She's no longer controlled
By the darkness
She's no longer told
What to say

She has the strength now
To see what's left
She has now passed
The darkness test
She's no longer controlled
By her memories
Of a torturous past
She's piecing back together
Her shattered hour glass

No longer controlled by its madness
No longer controlled by its pain
No longer controlled by memories
Of the once burning rain
She let the demons out today
She won't go down again
Because the past that used to haunt her
Is gone just like her sin

No longer controlled by her madness

Time for life to begin...



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.



PRESENT

You gave me
five brown pods
to grow in
my garden bed.

I put them
in a glass jar
with my locket.

Five brown pods
winding through
heaven. Weaving
night with winter
wishes for wisteria.

In a flower dress
wandering over
perfumed fields
I sleepwalk
searching for
my golden locket
and your embrace.



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



IF DEATH COMES CALLING TONIGHT! (VILLANELLE)

If death comes calling tonight,
Clad in robes of silken black,
Hasten, hasten, it before the first light.

After the fading of early twilight,
If the end comes, do not turn it back,
If death comes calling tonight.

Hide him in shadows, if the light's too bright,
And do not let time turn in its track,
Hasten, hasten, it before the first light.

To leave the world and end the long fight,
He concedes, he fought bravely, nary much luck,
If death comes calling tonight.

It can come in some fancy flight,
A gun, a bomb, or, a rumble and quake,
Hasten, hasten, it before the first light.

Sorry world, all this was so fleeting, alright,
He has no regrets, no turning back,
If death comes calling tonight,
Hasten, hasten, it before the first light.



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



VICTIM

tangled up in my interior

of worked meat and

acid

lies you

to make tender

my more hoarse renditions

falling apart between my bitter

swears and pratfalls of mercy heart.

You insist on remaining intact. This

must be hell, or aversion

to heaven which is still

conquerable. We both tremble
for it, at it, never knowing ourselves
damaging in the course.

I

cannot give up, thus, you, either.

the sun and moon blanche
for retreat as I carry you

forward, meaning nothing
to the passing faces which turn

ugly, turn into you as sand blows
off like illusion, revealing baked

white, smooth, new again, ready
to be written upon.

I fill it with nasty diversion
fill it with you.



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



KILLER WHALE GAME

(1) Though Blue Whale is a self-destructive social network game mostly enslaving the vulnerable youngsters leading to self-injury and death, we're mostly aware of its harmful consequences and have mostly stayed clear of it consciously. But we seem to be unaware of a more destructive social game called Killer Whale, which has been played by a large segment of population worldwide irrespective of age, sex and nationality.

(2) Killer Whale is mostly played offline controlled by an invisible game master, who inspires awe, admiration and subservience to an extreme extent among the willing but mesmerised players expecting various rewards in this life and afterlife.

(3) Like in the Blue Whale game, here too the master never appears in person. The players know him only through

game manuals, which are perhaps the most popular books in the history of humankind, selling the maximum numbers. The precise details are never given in the game manuals or scriptures. It's mostly left to the imagination of the players to know and realise the master.

(4) The faith in the master and the game is so intense in the players they soon forget it's a game and start living their lives according to what the master, his manuals and his salespersons say without doubts or scepticism. Even ordinary day to day activities are attributed to the grace and blessings of the invisible master. The players are conditioned to thank the master for giving food to eat, for passing exams and for doing anything in life.

(5) Killer Whale has some benign forms (which only affects the players psychologically and stunts their thinking capacity), and some malignant forms which require players to carry out commands not only to kill themselves but many others around them including non-players for no reason.

(6) Most versions of the Killer Whale game are 1000-2000 years old. One popular version started when a talking snake asked a nude girl to eat an apple. The invisible masters, portrayed mostly in fancy dress costumes, ask the players

to keep praising the master 24/7, and to treat non-players as enemies, who deserve punishment including death.

(7) The game commands are mostly about hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly rituals to be carried out meticulously at the expense of the players even if they don't make any sense, or the expenses are exorbitant. The players are asked to starve, spend sleepless nights, inflict pain on themselves and others, kill animals, light candles/oil lamps (even when non-polluting options like electric lights are available), jump about and shout nonsense as if mad, roll in mud, pierce body parts with sharp instruments, hanging lime/chillies inside and in front of houses, cook on public roads, sing loudly songs praising the master and his agents, and to stop others even by violence from travelling, eating certain types of meat etc.

(8) Some of the daily commands are to wake up at odd hours, keep saying the same thing again and again, hit the head on the floor, talk and cry to stones and metals, decorate body parts with ashes, colours, beads and tattoos. Periodic visits to places commanded by the master's agents and celebrations to honour the master are other usual commands.

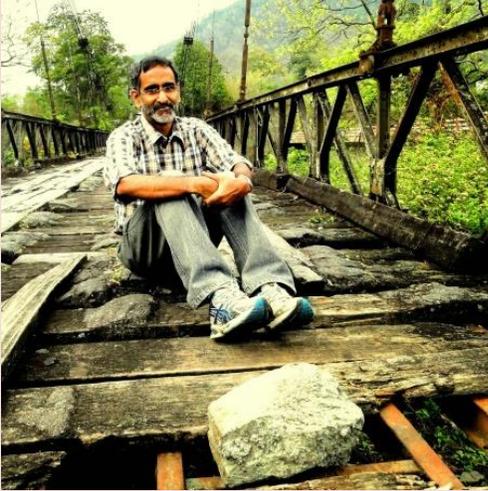
(9) Killer Whale players are known to deteriorate into psychological disorders that make them obey commands to

do/say things that won't stand the scrutiny of logic and reason and to harvest crosses, whip themselves, imagine themselves responsible for protecting animals like cows, and try to attract players of other Killer Whale games to their own games.

(10) Those who quit playing Killer Whale games could end up being shamed or harmed or murdered by those who continue to play the game.

(11) Another major difference from the Blue Whale game is that small children are forced to play Killer Whale games by their parents and other adults. Adult players are commanded by agents of the master to make their children play.

(12) The biggest danger to society from the Killer Whale game is that it is actively promoted and encouraged by people in authority, who even incite hatred and violence against those who refuse to play the game.



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



NO PRIDE

Holding it with pride,
This was my victory
All mine to rejoice!
This was my pride.

And in the mirror
Day after day, Everyday
What grew was my pride
All mine to rejoice!

Mute to love or care
Losing each one by my side!
What grew was my pride
All mine to rejoice

And in the mirror
I aged one day
With nobody beside
But only pride

Not so alike
A young flower emerged
She loved she cared
But no pride

Trouble came, came the storm
She loved she cared
She stood strong
But no pride

Baffled I asked
Where is your pride?
She smile, she laughed
But no pride

It was time and I knew
She was the one
The guider the light
And yet again no pride.

She won hearts
She was dreamware
Her silence shone
She was happy with no pride!



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



GRACE BEHIND BARS

You can easily

End up in jail

Like when you stand in court

And the magistrate say, "No Bail"

That place will become your home

When you are busy with crime

Like robbing, cheating and stealing

Just to get a dime

On numerous occasions for the above reasons

I ended up in there

And every time I called upon the Lord

He showed me that He care

Although I wondered

Around with a knife

I know now for certain

That His Grace kept me alive

The Father of the all sufficient Grace

Kept me safe and secure with His Mighty right Hand

Jesus proved

That He is Truly my best Friend

His Amazing Grace

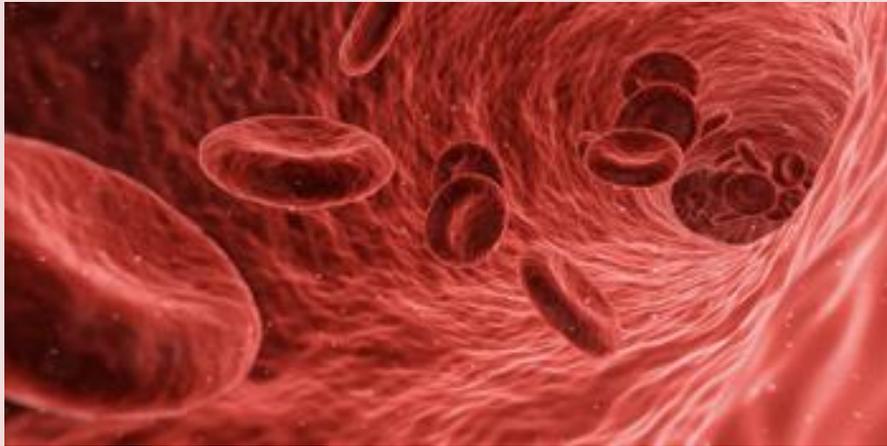
Made the prison bars melt

When I was declared free

You can just imagine how I felt
Today I have a story to tell
Carrying a lot of invisible scars
But what you need to know
Is that, "There's most certainly Grace behind bars"



Leroy Ralph Abrahams (1976): He lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale, with his wife and two sons and a daughter. He is currently working for the church, Victory Ministries International and also volunteers at times. Leroy loves to write, love people and children and God's Word. He enjoys hospital visits because there he prays for the sick and encourages them. Leroy's poems are true and full of emotion that leaves the reader in a good mood. 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 and he promises that it's not his last.



BLOOD

I have always been proud
of my distinguished benefit to this Earth,
surpassed only by oxygen.

Yet, at times,
my portrayal is less than benevolent.

My most precious essence:
red as cherries, apples, Oklahoma dust,
spilled in the street for the price of territory.

Frozen by horrors of truthful revelation,
thickened by cold, boiled by outrage.

Or depict me as the moon's command over ladies,
offering womanhood, granting new life.

Some believe one shed me to deliver this world.
Lifetime loyalties have been sworn in my name.

See me as you will.



Linda Imbler: She is the author of the published poetry collection “Big Questions, Little Sleep.” Her work has appeared in numerous journals. Linda’s creative process and a current, complete listing of sites which have or will publish her work can be found at lindapoetryblog.blogspot.com. This writer, yoga practitioner, and classical guitar player lives in Wichita, Kansas, with her husband, Mike the Luthier, several very intelligent saltwater fish, and a steadily growing family of guitars.



HARVESTING

It's raining

Although it's not season rainy

Drops of water, drops of tears, drops of rain

Rolling down

Drenched eyelids, full of moisture, smokey vision

Trying to express from its inner

It's cloudy

You know it's not season rainy

Our dreams floating like clouds

Our dreams pouring like rain

This is the golden month of October

This is the time before winter

This is the season of reaping and gathering

Ripe fruits, seasonal crops

Let's go to sow seeds

Seeds of brand new dreams.



Lipika Ghosh: Contemporary poet and short story writer of Bengali literature. Active period from 1995 to present. Written five books, collections of Bengali poems named 'Ekhon ja likhchhi' (2008), 'Aro kichhukkhon' (2009), 'Silent mode' (2010), 'Meherban' (2011), 'Turning point' (2014). Supporting humanity, supporting to save greenery.



EBB AND FLOW

The vivacious roaring seas.

Waxing and waning enormously.

Depicting our state of mind so articulately.

Its only up to us, we are the ones to decide.

Which stature to let shine and which one to let whine.

Sea waves are symbols which depicts,

The scuffle going on in our faculty.

So many emotions going on,

running parallel in our ingenuity.

Always ruffling and rattling,
On the shores of reality.
Devoid of unanimity, things are so incalculable.
Human zeals, why art thou always so insatiable?
Enigma of life, may test your patience eventually.
Don't lose heart, you will win ultimately.
When there's deep passion to evolve above all.
Everything rises up eventually,
How earnest may be the fall.
A new dawn breaks with the bright sun rising up above.
Providing solace in a beautiful way to our pacing minds.
Colourful hues fills the vibrant sky with golden rays.
Admiring the tranquil view.
Blissful thoughts ebb and flow in my bosom.
I wonder O Divine! thou, show amity in so many wonderful
various ways.



Madhu Jaiswal: Born on 22nd March, she is an avid bilingual poetess who is based in Kolkata. She believes writing is an art. A writer or poet paints a painting with the use of words instead of colours. She is a housewife who devotes her free time to the world of poetry.



THE DEW DROP

He was tanning, under the sun, hammering
The hearts of the stones, as his heart beat alone,
Sweat streaming down, his face, rays harsh upon
His whole self, making him an elf,
In front of the blaze of the sun, his daze
Nearly blurred, as he struggled
To prove his worth, trying to unearth,
All of Destiny's puzzle, as his body frizzles
And hurts and aches, as one by one the rocks break
Under his thrust, his throat, choking with thirst
And as he was on the verge of breaking and was set to
merge
With the dust, he just converted, his senses got alerted,

As he saw her figure, from the horizon appear.

Filled with new zest and vigour, her face provided him succour,

As his heart speedily tick tocks, her smile to him was like dew drops,

Comforting and soothing one, under the scorching sun,

And as they closed in, their eyes met, with a loving look she wiped his sweat,

Her eyes moist and wet to see him toil and whet

His desire and love for her, fragrant and burning like myrrh.

She embraced him and planted a kiss, granting him his moment of bliss

And happiness, and planting in him a new desire, as enchanting

As his dream, she, her love flowering,

Filling him up with a new energy, complete with synergy,

His heart content, singing and dancing,

He set down again to hammering and tanning.

He found his aim in reaching to her, to be able of her love and care,

In her smile and eyes, he found the elixir of his life,
She gifted him her selfless love and gifted him his self, his
life there of!!



Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English), writing by the name of Madhumita. A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. Her works have been published in various national and international magazines, newspapers, web magazines, ezines, journals, anthologies. The author of "THE NIGHT JASMINE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS", is also the winner of ICON OF THE YEAR-LIFESKILLS COUNSELLOR 2015-2016 , CREATIVE WRITER OF THE YEAR 2016 and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing. She is an avid animal lover too, her motto in life being "Live & Love Life ".



LONELINESS

One of them,
from the beautiful porcelain pair,
broke .

It had arrived with a crack on
its fragile body ,
and could not sustain the hurt.

Bubble wrapped with utmost care
since it was her favourite pair ,
and made the mornings aromatic with their favourite
Darjeeling second flush ,
by the verandah.

A teardrop rolled down
as the crockeries were unpacked
in her new apartment.
Her old maid, Shahida,
stared at her with a strangeness ,
"Why weep for a cup
when your own man has betrayed you ?"
her rustic knowledge argued.

Now she drowns
the bitter aftertaste of her loss
in lonely coffee mugs.



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

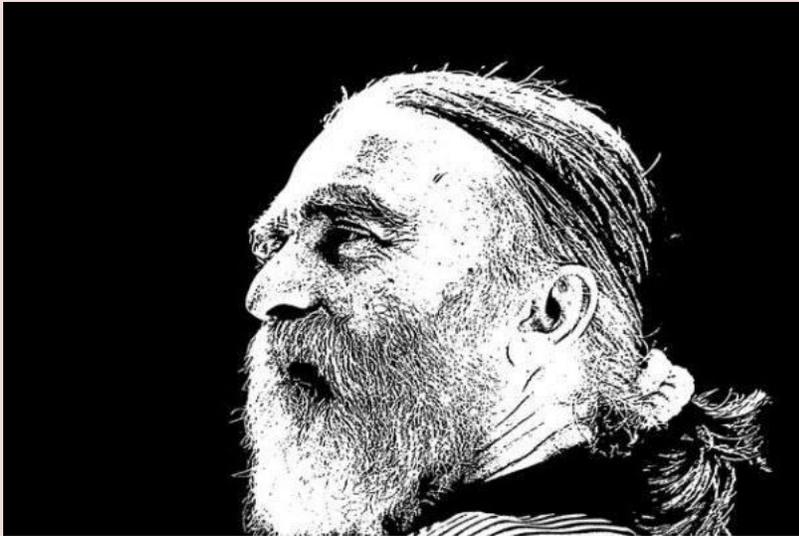


SEASIDE CREMATION

a poem without a conscience
is rain falling on a funeral pyre
a poem without a purpose
is the last ember extinguished
a poem without a muse
is the sea that smells of the dead
a poem without a poet
is a water molecule freed
from space and time



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



A thin line

separates genius from insanity

droll reality from celestial visions

bothersome do's and don'ts from driven passion

often poets must live like Gulliver lying helpless

on hot sands of reality, whilst Lilliputians pompously

annunciate their astonishingly hollow rules.

Giants must die thirsting, hungry and frustrated...

faceless formless beings that look like constellations in a
dark sky... have we progressed at all ?



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.



LEAVE ME ALONE

Why do you need me now?

When you have ignored me

My messages

My presence

My need

My time

My love

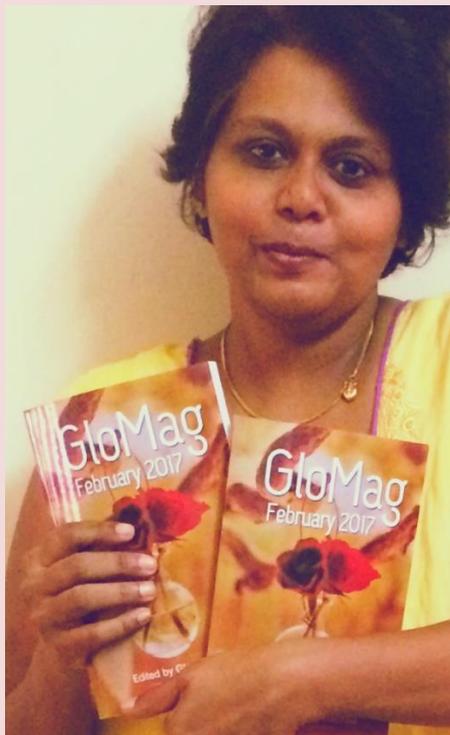
You want to make me a clown

And tease me in front of others

And make them all happy forever

Show them I mean nothing to you

Want to frustrate me
Want me to get angry
Want me to lose control
Want me to shout at you
And earn me a bad name
You don't like my silence now
Now enjoy missing me always



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

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



HEAVEN IS MY HORSE FLY

A common horse fly
peripatetic traveler
vacationing in my world
into my bathroom,
(ride me cowboy, fly)
it's summer time-
lands on my toilet seat
pit stops at Nikki's Bar & Grill,
kitty litter box, refuels.
Thirteen round trips
buzzing my skin and skull-

he calls them “short runs.”

Steady pilot, good mileage,

frequent flier credits.

I swat his war journey,

splat, downed, then, an abrupt end.



Michael Lee Johnson: He lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era. 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 more than 930 small press magazines in 33 different countries or republics, and he edits 10 poetry sites. Michael is the author of *The Lost American: From Exile to Freedom*, several chapbooks of poetry, including *From Which Place the Morning Rises* and

Challenge of Night and Day, and Chicago Poems. 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. He is also the editor/publisher of anthology, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze: A second poetry anthology, Dandelion in a Vase of Roses.



THE WINGED ONE

And those birds which she kept caged in her soul for years long, they always wanted to go away flying, taking off from her shoulder perhaps. I just got the curious chance to see them as once she spoke about them. It had been a beautiful day of spring. The air was on the drier side. The trees were getting their new dresses. The roads of our town were getting fresh new coat of asphalt. She told me how one bird in her wanted to go all the way to Volos, a sea side town of Greece while another had the desire to go to Egypt. Then there had been another with a Mediterranean spirit. And another which longed to visit the Alps. And

another which had an ascetic bent, finding calm only in lonely caves of the Himalayas. 'But how do you keep them in you for so many years, without setting them free? Do they not quarrel? Do they not chatter and freak you out?' I asked her that day of spring when the weather had been particularly enchanting. The scent of blossoms was lingering in the air. The sky was clear like the one we oft see in picture postcards.

And hearing my query she smiled. 'A woman can keep a thousand birds in her and yet she can be perfectly sane with them, for she has a bit of her in each one of them and each one of them is her part. She knows them all too well and she feeds them, cares for them, loves them, caresses them and gives them the shelter. A woman is like a bird sanctuary. She keeps the chirpings as another layer of her emotive expressions. '

She said.

No she simply did not say that.

She spelt that.

I heard the wings fluttering soon after... wings of many birds, all fluttering at once.



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

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



SUNSET

Every sunset breaks my dream wings

Every twilight I die a little, bit by bit,

The eclipses too wait to eat

My sun and my moon

Leaving my stars in disarray.

The heart cries as I move away

Like Pegasus under the dark night sky

Struggling to stay in the milky way!

Lost in a chasm of thoughts grey

Cry for my childhood, when heart was wild and free

Not worried of tainted, adverse breeze
Could colour a rainbow with ease
In dreams, cross the seven seas
Dance and play with the fairies
Run and catch ethereal joys and ecstasies!

For, then knew not the differences
Between dreams and realities
And the day I did
The child within me died.
Each sunset bleeds the west horizon red!



Nandita Samanta: She was in a teaching profession, presently is a secretary of a creative organisation. She is a multilingual poet, a short story writer, a reviewer, a dancer and an artist. Her works are well appreciated and published and her paintings have been displayed at various exhibitions. Her published poetry collection is titled 'Scattered Moments'. Her poems, articles, short stories feature in various international and national anthologies, magazines, journals, newspapers and e-zines. Her poems have been aired in U.K. And US radio channels and also have been translated in different languages.



DEATH CERTIFICATE OF AN ORDINARY ARMY MAN

The jawan arrives home

Fresh from war

Covered from head to toe in sheets that smell of mothballs.

At the throat of his mohalla

The coffin-bearing car stops.

And a crowd of hands rush forward

To touch his feet.

They never noticed his face.

The jawan studied in the corner class of a pathshala for twelve years

But no classmate remembers his voice

Or how his hand rose in questions.

The jawan failed class 9 twice

But no teacher remembers

His cries for help

His inability to memorize, how algebra unfolds.

The jawan fought in thirty battles and three and a half wars

The jawan fired forty thousand rounds of bullets in a lifetime

The jawan was bedridden for twenty-seven months

But his relatives never asked whether the air was too thin at Siachen

Whether he had contracted dengue in Bangladesh

Whether all his friends returned home every vacation.

The jawan died unnamed
Government reports say.

But his name has since been mentioned
While murdering a teacher
While bludgeoning a father
While arresting homosexuals
While imprisoning college students.

And every time his name is taken,
In vain,
And in violence
The jawan turns a little,
Uncomfortably,
In his mothball-smelling coffin.



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



LIFE

Cruising smoothly down the highway of life
filled with much happy thoughts and joyous smiles
and not one roadblock of trouble and strife,
journeying swiftly o'er a thousand miles.

The omnipresent smile never curdles
while ensconced in a utopian land,
with promises of hope to clear hurdles
relying only on God's helping hand.

When all of a sudden problems arise
and all the promised hope has flown away,
racking our brains we finally surmise...
It's up to us to solve it any which way.

A life lived without trouble and sorrow
does not deserve to see a tomorrow.



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



AT THE LIBRARY

Vrijesh, strained his eyes
traversing through
the huge bookracks
which kissed the ceiling.
Kiss? No one seemed to mind.
Public kissing was allowed here.

In his small town in Odisha,
he had seen people kissing
each other behind
hillocks till someone shouted
'Eiiii Ki Korchooo.. Badmash toka'

and they ran behind them with a
chappal;
its one end hanging with
a loose safety pin.

Vrijesh couldn't even talk to a woman,
leave alone touching one.

He was like a cone flower,
a flower that looks like a
hybrid of the inverted
shuttle cock
and a sunflower.

He was a professunall at being a sye bai.

Now, the library was his Church
where he worshiped the

editors, publishers,
and writers who created

more than three worlds

(Trilok)

in his mind.

Jai Jagonnaath! he whispered to himself
as he picked the next book.

(Note: Trilok is a concept in Hinduism)



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



MANDODARI'S PLEA TO RAVANA

I, Mandodari, implore you,
Husband mine, leave Sita alone,
For she belongs to another man
Just as I am yours for all eternity.

Or so I thought, foolish me!

Do not make her a tool of your revenge,
For your hatred of noble Rama.

I, Mandodari, daughter of King Maya

And beautiful Hema am no stranger to rejection

I was an accident of their liaison, so my mother
Left me in my father's arms and went away.

I will support you, my love
For I never forgot my vows
When I walked seven steps around the holy fire
Behind you, on the glorious day of our wedding,
And I became your beloved wife.

I have seen your love for me,
So why this madness for another man's wife
Heed my words, do not commit this folly.
For your destiny is mine,
Or so I thought.

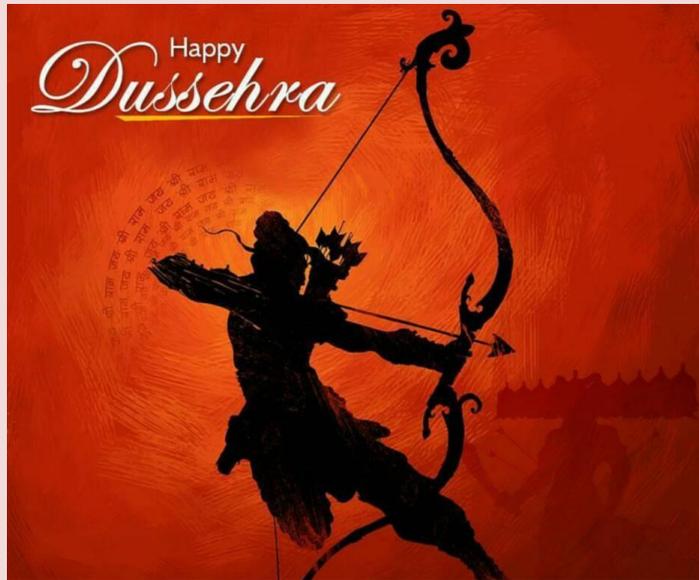
It wounds me, that even though
I am beautiful in my own right,
You look at another woman
With blind desire.

My words fall on deaf ears,

And I will lose, no matter what
So let me allow Destiny to
Finish the story of our lives.



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



BEAUTIFUL LIKE THE MOON

The moon looks beautiful tonight

Such beauty should be gazed at

With a beloved by your side.

Would it be harsh, I wonder

If I say, I think of you not out of love

But out of empty melancholy, tired and petulant

From reminiscing your laughter, words...

Lovers love, they leave

A thud driven deeper each time

Breaking me only to reveal

More of what lies within
Layers of virtue, shame, sin
Which seldom finds a match
With the temperament of another

You were a beautiful man
A divine sort of grace presiding over your impulses.
As I look at the beautiful moon
I worship your character with a sad sigh
A lonely vacant moment
Where I think of nothing else
But your calm demeanour
Warm words seeping into me
Through my ear and filling my senses
Transforming me
Into a beautiful, beautiful woman
Like the moon and this night...

So I write you another poem

Before I crumble at the thought of your love.



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



Pegasus beckoned

Flew with her beyond space

Landed in what people called Heaven

After a tour, felt Earth is better.

Las Vegas tragedy

Stampedes, suicides

Father in ICU

Still earth better?

Heard no wails

Screams, shouting

Joyous sounds

Whispers, cooing, hissing

Missed Earth.

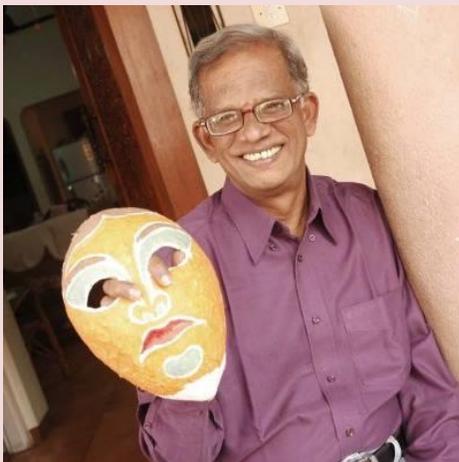
Smell the Green earth

Hear cooing

Watch the Golden Sunset

Taste the Mangoes

Heaven smelt like plastic flowers.



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



THE VOID INSIDE

The cigarette slowly burns its way up. A thin wisp of smoke from its tip tethers her to the evening sky. There is still another hour before the cafe fills up with people high on life and laughter.

She peers at the white catamaran bobbing up on coins of sunlight spilt over the ocean. Closer, a car honks its presence.

The promenade bustles with people in Brownian motion. A kid dressed in yellow pulls the sleeve of his father and points at a bunch of heart shaped balloons. A beggar clutching her soiled infant shakes an empty bowl in front of passers-by. A couple kiss nervously before parting ways.

As a rock dove flutters down on the next table to peck at bits of toast, she taps the sleeve of cigarette ash into a chipped teacup.

An empty beer-mug catches the setting sun. A newspaper protests in the salty breeze.

deep in shadow . . .

the blue vinca claims

her Mary Janes



Paresh Tiwari: An electrical engineer by profession, a creative writer, and illustrator by choice, Paresh Tiwari, grew up in the labyrinthine lanes of Lucknow. He took to Japanese literary short forms in the winter of 2012. Since

then his haiku, haibun, tanka, haiga, free-form poems and flash fiction pieces have been published in various journals, anthologies and books. His first collection of haiku and haibun 'An inch of sky' was published by 20 Notebooks Press and is available online.



RE EGRET

Where sea breezes gust woodland leaves
beneath a rookery of white birds

a midden of whitewash, an empty page,
broken eggs, white feathers,

dead birds not yet fox food.

Shattered shells are not broken pottery.

There is no bravery or stupidity here.

White feathers are just white feathers,

guano fertilises roots.

If no clarity to the folio of water

when it hunts,

with a blade for a beak,

neck extended, the white bird

walks slowly with frequent halts

to stand, stir its feet in the mud,

to inspire an image, a word,

its prey to move.

If no prey is seen

it may stir again

or move on,

in ripples.



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

Blues" published by OpPRESS (summer, 2017) and tentatively in autumn "The Headpoke" by Alien Buddha Press.



"Told you so."

AND IN THE END!

And in the end you meet

The beginning so sweet

As the great circle unwinds

At the bequest of great minds

Hello did I meet you here once before

Or was it your future coming around for some more

On the merry-go-round of all physical law

Defying the rules as they're thrown out the door

And twisting the Universe inside out

So the entrails of matter will start to doubt
Whether they are, or whether they're not
Or whether they're tied in a Gordian Knot
Confusion is Fusion in these final things
And it is all over as the Fat Lady Sings



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," which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.elfinchild.com In December 2013, he was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease and died in 2015.



I AM SEARCHING FOR MY PATCH OF LAND

Feeling lonely, deathlike

My city has shuttled down to another city for a change

Leaving me with garbages and hoardings

what shall I do with shopping malls and mannequins

What shall I do with park sans flowers and green grass

My existence is like that of a grasshopper

A vacant look all that I possess

The leopard has just changed spot

Whom to ask

Whether face is changing mirror or

The mirror is changing faces
What is the use of asking
Now that both the face and mirror
Are broken!

I am glancing at those tired paddling legs
And dead bodies
Faces are blurred
The earthquake has left me completely ruined
I am searching for my patch of land
With the land gone, my patch of the Sky too
Hanged are fruits in vendor's rope
Dilapidated are those temples and monuments
The civilization is buried

I am under debris
Mutilated, my body searching for the soul
Used to as such I was without the city

Shall I have to live now without a sky
Now that we share the same seismic zone

I have to remember a few things more
Death, devastation and not to forget the tectonic
- Movements of the earth's Lithosphere !!



Prahallad Satpathy: He hails from the Balangir district of Odisha (India). He is a bilingual poet. He writes both in Odia and English. So far he has published three anthology of poetry in Odia. His poems have been published in national anthologies like Scaling heights and international anthologies like Global Anthology on Peace and Harmony, Happy Isle, Feelings International, etc.

Dr. Satpathy is a Reader in economics, working at present in Rajendra autonomous college, Balangir (Odisha). He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as honorary member for two consecutive terms.



Life's train takes on different avatars,

At times like the goods train, gaining experience,

At times quick like the locals, on short distances, smooth,
regular routine,

Like the bullet train, too quick a journey, that fails to
register anything, in the soul,

Like the Express, taking in everything, to the destination,
safely.

Like overcrowded trains, waiting for a mishap to happen,

Like the phantom train of Partition, shocking everyone
around, begging for closure,

Like the empty train, which like the rolling stones, gathers
no moss,

A futile run, a chance wasted to better one's prospects,

We are the engine drivers of our life's trains,
Halt at each station, do the needful, keep on track,
Drive it carefully, to the final destination,
And earn a pat on the shoulder from the Station Master, for
a job well-done,
To rest, and be ready for another journey.



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



Everything is the best
In this beautiful world.
Sometimes we get it
Sometimes we miss it
Depends only on
Our own attitude.



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.



WHEN THE WORDS BECOME POETRY

My soul spreads out its wings
On the bluish waters of the river Brahmaputra,
Breaking all bounds and barriers.
My mind walks on the lovely paths
Playing the flute of love
Air is filled with the evening hues.
The winter sun slowly crept behind the clouds
Humming the joy of someone's scent.
The golden harp of my heart is vibrating with sweet music.
The bed of emptiness is getting filled with fragrance
Of someone's cold voice and breath.

Wings of love vanishes in the mist.
Somewhere a holy lamp burns with a dull flame,
Somewhere earth remains thirsty,
Somewhere little birds chirp with cry in the sky.
The beauty of nature cannot drown me in pleasure.
Words are muffled now.
Time takes away the sweet dreams from my sight
My painful heart weeps lonely
Longing for someone's warm touch,
On the bluish waters of the river Brahmaputra
Breaking all bounds and barriers.



Preety Bora: The poetess, who believes in herself, was born in the beautiful state of Assam, (India), and she lives in a

small city called "Golaghat" with her son and hubby. She weaves poetry in both languages: in English and in Assamese (Mother Tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in foreign countries too. She is highly inspired by Nature. Recently she is working on a bilingual book as a co-editor.



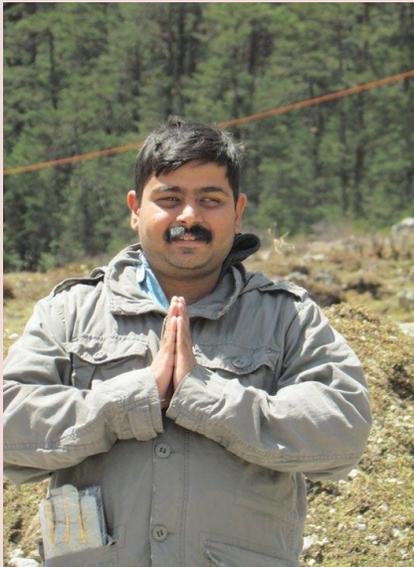
OCTOBER

This poem is dedicated to the Mumbaikars who perished at Elphinstone Road Station on 29 September 2017.

The snails dehydrate,
stew in their upturned shells
to be crushed by passers-by.
The man-high grass has turned
yellow and then brown.
The cows and goats are back
to eating plastic bags.

The frogs, crickets, mosquitoes
are heard no longer;
the rainclouds have gone away.

The time to die has come.



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



STEPPING INTO TRANSITION

A sudden metallic throb
strikes me threadbare-
drawing me - jittery
into a progressive cavalcade
like myrobalan tapping
the lost energy breathing
into a new Haven.

Rain battered city streets,
unmappable beyond our ken;
there still, more than the urchins,
the tattered clothes rowing the
paper boats immersing in water,
their sad predicament, their masters.
Their only reprieve is watery pastime.

What transition for these flooding
into rims and beyond boundary line?
what redemption for those roofless
lifeless, yet hanging on their coired breath?



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



RED IS THE COLOUR OF ROSE, INK THAT BLEEDS AS ROSE

A journey begins with a grimace

The ink bleeds with timeless emotions

O love, he plants a kiss on her forehead

Burning with unspoken desires

He moans with ecstasy, gasping and urging, she feels his
intention

A beguile of her contemplation, erupts like a volcano

Twisted and turning, she delivers a letter by the gusty wind

Moments after she woke the next morning, she felt the soft
glare of his essence, still remains fresh in the corner of
fantasy room

Oh love, he ignites the fire in her

To write a poem of wishes, that want to be a wish to bleed,
bleed and bleed



Rainy Sarmistha: She is a hotelier by profession, and a professional content writer as well, but always passionate about writing poems. Her poems are published in various literary magazines, international & national books. She loves nature and likes to walk in the forest. She loves all the beautiful things about the nature and poetry feeds her soul.



CLUTCH YOUR ANGER TIGHT

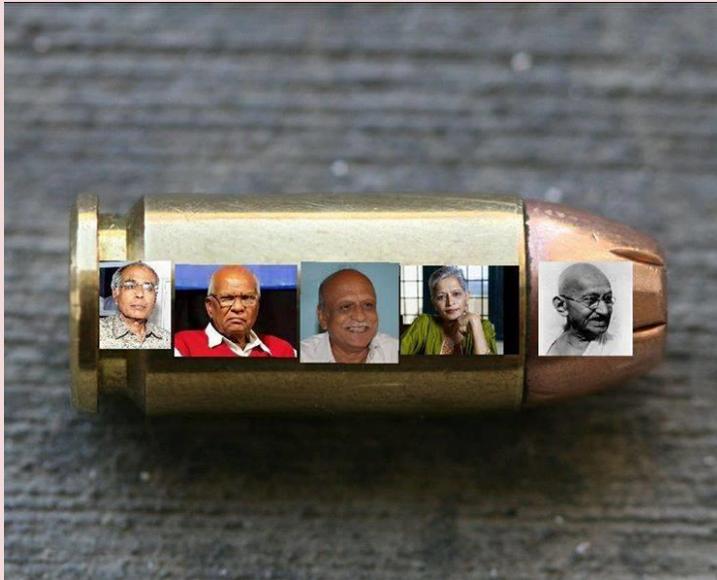
Clutch your anger tight,
hold it close,
hold it fast,
don't let it slip,
don't let it fade
away with time.
You need it in your lines.

You need it in your lines
That life writes
That days throw

On your mind
On your kind
For you want to
Clutch your anger tight.



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



**THE BULLET TRAIN BY POET AADHAR NO: 9876 5432 1001
(THE WORLD'S FIRST AADHAR LINKED POEM)**

The Shinkansen Model accelerates to
217 miles an hour, cutting journey time
to 3 hours from Ahmedabad to Mumbai.

Mukesh sings “ Meri gaadi hai japaani”
in a soulful studio radio.

Born post-war, Shinso Abe smiles
and waves and hugs like Hirohito.

This Bullet Train is the Brahmaasthra of the epics.
Or, the Narayanasthra or the Rama Bana.

Sometimes, it is a Mohanasthra that drugs
billions of people putting them in a daze.

There is another Bullet Train.

A 7.65 Calibre Make in India model
that passes through stations with
strange names like Kalburgi South
Pansare West and Dhabolkar Central,
its destination set in Bangalore
where it rockets through a pulsating heart.

This train now will pass through
Under skin arteries and veins and nerves
Tunneling through bone marrow and muscles
Till it comes to rest on a magnificent spine bridge,
perched like a toy train in a full moon night

till the slightest breeze causes the compartments
to topple into a depth less soul, one by one.

(Published in Countercurrents.org - 17/9/2017)



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



THE ONES WHO GO AWAY

We search for them

in the obituaries first

positive that we, with our hidden elephants of grief

are sure to outlive them

Our tears, the collective efforts

of lassoed poets and blues singers

put to work on particularly quiet evenings,

must not go waste;

We fear that the forty four year old mangled body under
the lorry

must be them

We notice how each face has lost grace (even before they
were dead)

in the newspaper

as if resigned to never being photographed in colour any
longer

Those two pages, a little moist with fervent prayers

and filled with the dead -

so good for parceling home the extra fries

now that we know they are not in there



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.



They oppress. We protest. They police.

We create history. They write textbooks. We go to their schools.

They call us enemies. We fight with ourselves. They televise our fight.

We die. They write news. We buy their newspapers.

They tell us what to speak. We speak their language. They dictate our thoughts.

We make art. They market it. We see art becoming commodity.

They invent psychiatry. We become depressed. They make drugs.

We labour. They profit. We get wages.

They pollute the earth. We catch diseases. They build hospitals.

We vote. They become ministers. We serve them.

They make laws. We get arrested. They chair courts.

We grow food. They belch with full stomachs. We starve.

They sell bombs. We die in wars. They celebrate patriotism.

We question. They give us God. We pray for answers.



Ro Hith: He is a poet and a medico from Andhra Pradesh, writing poetry since 7 years. His poetry has been published in various online magazines, including Muse India, The Four Quarterly, Istanbul Review, Kritya, New Mirage Journal and print magazines like Kavya English, which was applauded and complimented by various senior poets. Currently, he is

working on his first book of poems, which will be published shortly and an online magazine that deals with progressive poetry and translations from various Indian languages.



DEATH BY SUICIDE

solitude

dust

fossils of family footprints

lost, trails from the mind's sweat,

drunken blood

dark cold rain falling

cheapens any will left to survive, drenches

washes away the sweat,

bitterness

shackling

our eyes,

enslaving our voices

devouring will

only between dreams

chapters in books

is death reprieved

when breaths quicken

behind all the rubbish...

razorblades and bullets...

death will not allow alternatives

options, such as brilliance

logic

or some sweet memory,

and death never allows visions

improvised free rivers,

riffs-

never permits gardens,

perhaps weeds,

pastels,

fruit

perhaps bitter,

tears swimming along innocently,

perhaps vibrantly

no, this death incarcerates the heart,

strangles any inclination to imagine,

any passion to fly,

the urge to walk-

to seek sweet shelter...

this death violates the child inside us all!

yes, and this death flowers no angels

kids playing tag in driveways

hanging out late after baseball practice

opening and closing random lockers

pasting carnations into scrapbooks,
pigtails swinging
inkwells leaking
school bells banging
bonging

death only leaves behind puddles,
sinkholes,
hurtful feckless rumors
unbelief becoming gloom,
leaves behind those “wh” questions
haunting we survivors,
sommambulists
torpidly searching for
splinters to pick up,
where to place them,
how to rebuild a life lost,
leaves behind strangled voices that linger

eternally unanswered
echoing back at every turn
tragic questions without mouths-
answers minus zero

so this death will linger
long past the crowds
beyond countless holidays
cardless anniversaries,
way past gated rooftops
clotheslines
fresh baked bread
green blueberry fields,
and at last this loss
will solidify around our eyes
till we cannot recognize
our own visions profound,
and will seal our purple lips

till we may not ever taste honey drops,
and will mute our listening ears
till we cannot hear our parents' laughter
or recognize our baby's first song...

snow dripping from a tree
wending along into the gutter,
and it is only then
when we shall at last understand
that we must not understand such things
we cannot understand,
because within this death
Life is
always there
in the way



Robert Feldman: Born in Paterson, New Jersey, he was inspired at an early age by members of Paterson’s literary tradition. While living in St. Louis, he organized various poetry readings, produced and hosted a community issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. Robert was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona’s most influential writers such as Drummond Hadley and Michael Gregory, and in 1980, collaborated with Lawrence Ferlinghetti on his Bisbee publication, “Mule Mountain Dreams.” He has participated in dozens of poetry readings around the country, and continues to write, paint, and play tabla, besides working with high-school students as faculty advisor of the Park Vista Writers Workshop. Website: ww.albionmoonlight.net; email: rffeldman@gmail.com.



LET'S GET TOGETHER

When I am dreaming,
You are thinking
And when you are
Dreaming like an angel,
I am thinking just about you!

When you are quietly
Living in my future,
I am sadly in your past
But completely alone!

It seems that we can't
Coil our past and future
And turn it into a beautiful
Present but happy together!

Yes, you and I, as one
With our hearts and minds
Blended in the same frame:
Two bodies and one soul!

Let's make things happen,
Let's live the same present
And the no distant future
By sharing our common goal
Of blending our feelings,
Our dreams and thoughts
For the sake of love!



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



SMILE

Saw that charming belonging of the new face,
which was soothing and palliative to the eyes;
like the radiance in the sky before sunrise,
full of optimism along with a grace.

The same thing of one in teen was dynamic,
The heat of zeal and ardour could be felt,
Eternal was the originality and purity of it,
just like the redness of a rose, undying.

But ephemeral was the authenticity with time,
could locate the synthetic nature of it;

visible was the dilemma and intricacy in life,
still they masquerade to be truly blithe.

And came the period of one's life in which,
One reminisces about the past of his life;
Just like that of a new one, his was peaceful;
It was a blessing to me in the form of his SMILE.



Roshan Mishra: I am a Botany student of OUAT, Bhubaneswar. I love writing poems. Actually I am very much passionate about it. Whenever I experience something, I pen it down to make poems.

My poems are basically about the social issues, issues related with women, and beauty of nature. The ordinary things happening in the world give me inspiration to think on that and write on it.



IMAGINE

Imagine a day,

When flowers will bloom

But I won't be there to enjoy.

A day, when you will write

But I won't be there to read.

A morning when you will hug

But I won't embrace.

A night when you will talk

But I won't be there to listen.

The coffee mugs will stand empty
Stand still bearing the smell
Of our past evenings..

Imagine a day,
When you will call, but
I won't reply.

Imagine...

That day open your diary
Kiss your pen, embrace your words.
And You will find me lying in
Your poetry...



Sanhita Sinha: She is a native of Tripura, is a teacher, a bilingual poet. Her poems got published in different national and international anthologies, journals & magazines like "Heavens above poetry below," "A haiku Treasury," "In our own words," "Scaling heights," "Epitaphs," "Milenge," "IFLAC PEACE ANTHOLOGY," "BETRAYAL," KIRNOKAL," "ANTOHKORON," "RUPANTAR," "PURBHABASH," "GALAXY," etc. Apart from writing she is actively engaged in cultural activities too. She is a regular artist of television and radio too.



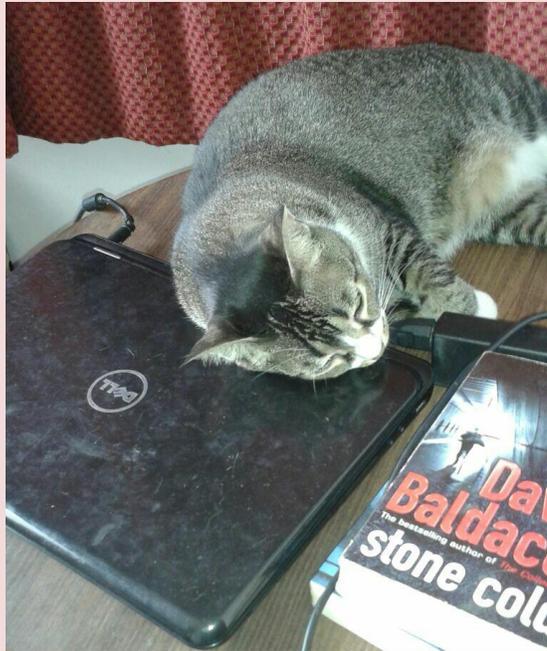
BOILERPLATE

Franchises of fear let loose their routine
on bargoers or bus conductors and others
slight as cackleberry shells. Deterision
is prerequisite of lived lives, verrucaes
come by and by.

When will politicos turn into physicians?
If it were literary work concinnity would
be the aim. Which mahatma will map this?



Sanjeev Sethi: He is the author of three books of poetry. His most recent collection is *This Summer and That Summer* (Bloomsbury, 2015). His poems are in venues around the world: *Empty Mirror*, *The Paragon Journal*, *Olentangy Review*, *Grey Sparrow Journal*, *Peacock Journal*, *Modern Poets Magazine*, *Faith Hope & Fiction*, *New Mystics*, *Yellow Mama*, *Stride Magazine*, *London Grip*, *3:AM Magazine*, and elsewhere. He lives in Mumbai, India.



A CAT'S DREAM

On the lappy, let me have a nap and be happy

If I am happy, the world is happy.

[Actually, I belong to the old school

And don't like these truncated words, like lappy and all ,
but rhyme also matters, and just realised cats can rhyme
too!]

Oh shucks!

The crux of the matter is that I am a bibliophile

And I don't like people who kill.

Lounging on the lappy, I nap and dream of books

Oh how I love thrillers, but hate crooks and killers

Why do they kill- these killers?

They give me a chill – these killers.

A paw I raise to salute the farmers, the tillers.

There was this white dove, I saw just the other day

Among a horde of pigeons gray.

On grain, they were hogging like gluttons.

But why did the white dove appear a little diffident?

Such fat pigeons!

And to think, at home they put me on a starvation diet –

Purr me!

“Do you have eyes for buttons?” Hey what was that?

A fat man was shouting at a shrimp of a man.

Why do they shout and scream?

I too have a dream – a cat’s dream.

On the laptop curled, I fantasize about a world

Where none has to beg for bread

And brushstrokes of blood red

Color orange poppies.

I shudder at the thought of those children

Who never came back home.

Oh shucks!

Am I talking through my hat?

Oh forgive me, I am just a cat

Cats don't dream, did you say?

Maybe, I am a cat with an identity crisis?

I must confess, this world is a mess.

I see mankind has been reduced to rats.

I am a cat, I dream of my kind of rat.

Not these human-rats -stumbling, fumbling,

Running blindly, scurrying, hurrying

Outracing each other in a bid to kill and maim.

A cat has nine lives, they proclaim.

At least, in one of my lives I want to be reborn

As a child who came home.

Oh rats! There they are – my kind of rats

Papa rats, mama rats, baby rats.....



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



In the serene dead of the night
When there was no chance of any light
The air stood still
As the night owl had its fill.

Then I saw something move
No no, the correct word is groove
And it moved in the waves
And yet again, silenced from all the caves.

It moved again and then again
And then I realised this was unknown to all men

Maybe I spoke to soon

I was the first to see the dance of the moon.



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.



LOVE IN HIMACHAL

Love at first sight it is,

No, I am not saying this to please

See, tall and sturdy there you stand

Those fearsome winters' you did withstand

Now couldn't take my eyes off you

People won't believe me, but I know you do

That handsome look you now adore

Pity those who tend to ignore

Man, you stole my heart

While I travelled part by part

No man on earth could compete

Your physique is indeed a treat
Am head over heels with your drill
For your posture is flawless and beautiful
And my! Look at your abs
Beyond match even for the Alps
My majestic hero is here
Yes, the Himalayas I proudly declare



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



ENOUGH IS (SOMETIMES) ENOUGH

From what tree
did this leaf fall,
and does it still stand tall
enough
to offer a haven near its heights
that can keep us safe
from the world
overflowing with water below?

What life has fallen
in this forest
to be swallowed

beneath the depths,
and can we still smile
at nature's glory
knowing all too well
how beauty fades with time?

What reflection of the future
has been captured in this moment,
and are our hearts
still sturdy enough
with the necessary strength
to pick up all the pieces
and find a solution
for the problems at hand?



Scott Thomas Outlar: He hosts the site 17Numa.wordpress.com where links to his published poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, reviews, books, and live performances can be found.



Chris Graves: Her friends call her Po. Her favorite color is white. It's simple and quiet. It gives life to all around it. She collects words and photographs. Taking pictures is an experience; it's something she must do. It allows her to see

and capture what perhaps may be unseen, overlooked or missing. More of her work can be found at rawpoetic.photos.



Slender fingers stretched out
Searching in the tousled sheets
Scattered bells of her silver anklet
Raising one up to the dawn light
The bell forlorn, muted its high ring
Lost were its gay companions
When ever once they made a pretty link
Intricately woven metallic braids
A long chain of unbroken? ring
In chorus joyously they did sing
This early morning though so different
The silver trinket lay dull and listless

Tarnished the exalted moonlit glow
The amorous adventures of late night
Had left trashing metal scattered all about
The tell-tale signs she best did gather
Silver bits dull and blackened
Gossamer curtains wafted shyly
Barely hiding French glass doors ajar
Sigh, what is yet another expense
As long as you visit again
oh as light as the fleeting midnight breeze
She will wait her ankles stretched
Fettered with brand new silver bonds
Let them be cast to the same fate
As long as you adorn your fists
Replacing its delicate grasp
With unrelenting hold till dawn



Seema K Jayaraman: She is poetess based out of Mumbai, India, tracing her roots to the mystical land of 'Naura' (Cannanore, Kerala). She is a mother of two young boys and a full time working professional in the IT Banking domain. She is widely travelled and exposed to both domestic and international cultures. She considers herself a pirouetting spirit, the energy she harnesses is expressed through her poetry. Her poetry is a journey of self-discovery and release from modern mundaneness, an expression of unrestrained creativity and paints a vivid picture, colorful presenting the myriad vibrancy of nature, at times stark depicting human strife and tragedy. She writes both free style and rhyme based verses. She also enjoys writing Haiku's and Tanka's. Her debut book Wings Of Rhapsody – A Dalliance Of Poems was released in June 2016.



**TRANSLATION OF SANDHYA NAVODITA'S 'MERE PAAS
KUCH RANG HAI TUMAHARE LIYE' (I HAVE FEW COLORS
FOR YOU)**

I have few colors for you
A few words, few fragrances
And few caressing memoirs

I have dreams for you
Some deep sleep
A little laughter, a little smile
And some sagging sadness

Mornings which are full of expectations
Evenings that are packed with desires

I have a world very beautiful with sparkling colors
Few clouds, dew drops, a little bit greener, watery.
I have these many natures' gifts for you.



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



THOUGHTS OF TIME

Thoughts of time abound everywhere

Is it a fantasy or reality

But some place

The sands of time catch up

On a brusque note

Always, every time standing on top

My father, fatherly as always

But uncle as relation

In reality and otherwise

Standing in front of God

Depicted as Time

Devoted completely as abode

Of Vishnu and Shiva

Standing as such

A myriad of colours passing by

My father thinking

Nonetheless inasmuch

There is none to deny

The fact that God in His true colours

Seemed associated with time

Depicted as such by followers



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



PATIENCE...

L-shaped elbows and a gaze smeared with waiting,
The old man's fingers plough through cotton-field cheeks--
I lasted longer than my father, so no complaints!
An antenna folds up on his roof, burdened by useless
signals.
A dog looks up at a cloudless sky, his tongue a piece of sun.
When the rain is fierce, he says, things are sure to grow.



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



DEEPAWALI HAS COME

Enlightening candles all around
Colourful diyas glowing on ground!
Every buddy is filled with joy
Children are buying crackers and toys!
Huzzy and buzzy in every street
Celebration moments with dishes sweet!
Maa Laxmi worship with sacred heart
Who takes all worries from this world apart!
Cleaning of the home
Whitewash in the rooms!
Comes once in a year
When everyone cheer!

Let us celebrate this festive of Diyas

Let us enjoy and have fun all dears!

Let this Deepawali bring peace and wealth

Let everyone be rich by health!



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



THE SEARCH FOR LESBOS (A POEM IN THREE PARTS)

I. THE VISION

Damp days

Desolate nights

Mundane lives

Roaming in despair.

Men and women

Meekly pack their selves

In square shaped shelves-

Keeping their cravings
rotting in rusted cages.

In this city
Of unspoken
Hatred, I live -
Spine stabbed
By sadistic time ...

This strange morning,
The unswerving lines
Of sluggish days
Become deviant.
Trapped traffic din
Holds shocking surprises.
A tremulous vision.

Rattling the souls
Radiant in green shadows
Sashays a naked woman
Raising her head to the horizon -
Rebellious breasts
Rocking with the winds
Rustic nipples
Suckling the clouds.
The sweat on her brow
Smells of desert winds.
On her firm frosted steps
Bloom snow lotuses.

Shunning the ogling eyes
She walks to the edge of the sea.
All women follow her footsteps,
Leaving their men behind
To gape numb - hearted .

Waves welcome her
When she surfs them.
The sea roars
In ecstasy and throbs
With myriad hues.

II. **THE JOURNEY**

On touching the cold waves
Women who are mothers
Lovers and daughters
Awake into their burden
Of forced memories and
Return to their familiar paths,
To their bubbles of happiness.

But I who never forgot
The secret trajectories

Etched in my heart
Remains drawn towards her.

I find myself
Traveling through tunnels
Of water,
torrents and lightnings,
A narrow chute
Of joy and pain.
I surf above my sorrows
To reach her.

III. **THE ISLAND**

I see an island
Which is her abode.
Her footfalls on sand
Make the breezes
Stay and sing...

Her fragrance
Enthralls me to my core.
The swaying forest in trance
Showers its honey on me.
And I see her eyes -
Like pools of blue
Where the secrets
Of my passion lie ...

I realize -
I am the missing piece
In the jigsaw puzzle
And we touch...

My cave of silence
Meets with her
Infinite horizon.
My lips of solitude

Fuses with her
Luscious misty mouth.
I become an estuary
In which float
The fallen flowers of her locks.

I feel the soft
Piercing roots.
I hear the voice
Of frozen glaciers thawing.
And I see the lone volcano
That erupts on the island,

And the souls of her lovers-
poetesses, prophets and witches
Dancing on the spewing fire.

Passion and pain merge
Into a kiss of life,
A breath of violence
Shaking the wings
From sluggish stagnation.
Soul rises to be
Reborn as verse.

And the seeds of love
Lie dormant
In the dark soil
Of my womb-
One day to sprout ...



Stalina Sbs: She is a chemistry teacher writing poems in Malayalam, English and Hindi. She has published her works in many of the leading periodicals in Malayalam such as Bhashaposhini ,Samakalika Malayalam Varika, Chandirika, Sthreesabdam ,Suryakanthi,Thorcha and in various ezines like Malayalanatu, Aksharam online,Gulmohar online,Nellu.net etc.



Ghost of past keeps on revisiting us

At times like a good Spirit

Filled with memories of love, victories and celebrations

At times like fear-provoking monster

Replete with worst of memories of loss, tears and defeat

Like a mirage, it always appears real

Our perception of belonging nourishes it

Oblivious of gift of now

We keep on going back

Trying to control the non-existent

Hoping against hope to set straight everything

Soul, body and mind lose Coordination

It turns us into living ghost

The mindful ones among us turn it around

Make most out of these experiences

Master the art of now

Exercise awareness to adept and evolve

And turn the ghost into dust



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



THE RED ROSE

Do not hold the red rose

Carefully devoid of its thorns

Unarmed it bleeds despite its striking pose

It cries silently its protective layer shorn.

Do not hold the red rose

The epitome of love's portrayal

Besmirched glum and morose

Betrayed by its own yet loyal.

Do not hold the red rose
Drooping and sagging in its stance
However loud and verbose
Capricious is not its glance.

Do not hold the red rose
In tandem or to abide
Pit her amongst her foes
Let her fame spread far and wide.

Let it bloom not to rue
Radiant and swaying in the wind
Give her what is her due
In that lies her victory's flint.

Love the red rose delicate
Bind it not to propagate

Let the red rose not suffocate

Once determined she might annihilate!



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



AN ODE TO A POET

Outskirts of the city

In a dank and chilly room

Shoddy curtain rare allows sun-rays

To play into the room,

Scarcity, poverty, disdain

Appreciate each other-

No one is there to blame,

Only works a poetic brain.

Yes! There lives a poet
Often he shuffles his hair
Guests and dear ones
Come to him rare.

He loves music and poetry
Some call it "unproductive activity"
It seems he has no other hobby!

He is never a beau
Rather indifferent to his attire
Often he is reason of haughty's satire!

Middle of his room there is a bed
In the corner, a plastic table almost brown
May be once it was red.

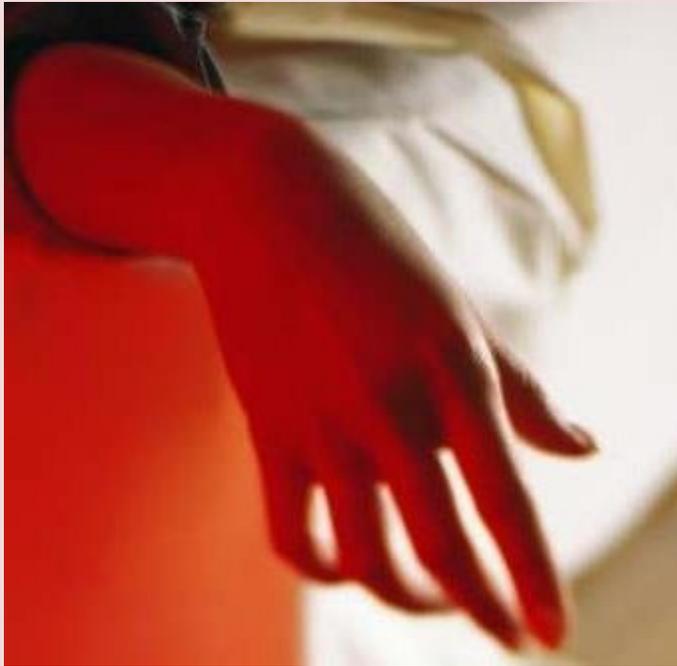
Titmouse peeping here and there
In the dead dark night they say cheers!
Yes! Here lives a poet
Often his food stuff only bread,
But his thoughts never fade,

One day the world may call him great
But may it happen after his death?



Sumana Bhattacharjee: She is an English poetry writer born and brought up in Kolkata, India. Music, poetry, and drama are her passions, and her poems have been published in various anthologies and blogs. She has published a book of poem, and desires for more in the future.

She has a poetry group of her own and she is working as an admin of three poetry groups. Poetry is her lifelong passion and she wants to continue it until her last breath.



She left her hand dangling
over the edge of the bed,
outside the mosquito net;
waiting for him to notice,
tuck it safely back inside.

He was studying at the table
absently fingering silk at hand,
Mind engrossed learning.

She was eight, he eighteen.

She fell asleep staring at his back.

He was sincere, responsible.

Next morning, she found her hand
by her side. Her knight, she smiled.
Sixteen years later he looked for her.
He was a doctor, specialised; now to marry.
But she'd fallen asleep again, and
someone else had taken her hand.
Unconscious, she allowed.
Having known a knight,
she thought they abound.
She awoke. Consciously her smile
self-generated, self-reliant.



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



BLUE

In the sea

with a craggy face

and a wide bosom

heaving/falling

with a playful breeze

dolphins, gulls, mermaids

and

the hump-back whales

splash in the depths

of

the dappled waters
the whales wear blue tunics
adorned
by white buttons
that shine like stars
in the slanted sun rays

and a poet watches
the natural splendour
from the Australian beach

a delightful scene
riot of colours
denied in the dull urban centres !



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

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

For more details, please visit the blog:

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



With a heavy heart she reached for the moon,
she reached for the moon for comfort.

A sprinkle of pale light hit her face
gave her no ease

but tears of glittering pearls.

She thought - nothing can grow out of
moonshine,

nothing can grow out of nothing!

The darkness got darker than ever before
and she hovered, she hovered
in an eye of a storm.

Unanswered questions started to appear,

Where did the dreams go?

The dreams of a happy, fulfilling life.

To an ocean beyond all seas?

She was caught in a maelstrom
of meaninglessness chatter
inside her brain.

The wind start to change,
in a blink of an eye.

A light breeze touched her hair - gently

A whispering voice from above,
asked her to look back on the sky again

A wonderful tabla was shown
a heavenly blanket strewn with myriads
of glittering stars.

The moon shone bright
and her heart felt light.

New ideas was born that night,

she started to think:

Something good can grow out of moonshine

something wonderful can grow out of nothing



Svanhild Løvli: I'm a Norwegian poetess.



HOW THE CREATION REVEALS ITSELF

Sometimes, the old and clumsy bricks giggle from inner wall,

But it happens as a gift from life with incomprehensible mercy.

As, it reminds us about the false pride from the triumph of a quarrel,

Or, it reminds us about the scope of new hope beyond the tangibility.

Sometimes, a sudden breeze tries to snuffle out the burning candle.

It is also life's gift of redemption for that particular burning flame.

Because, life wants to oscillate us between light and dark or
to dandle

Us between the known and unknown in a mode of the
newest game.

So life places itself on the highest pedestal after emanating
from a pit,

And it cannot deny the beacons from the mind of
superconscious.

Though, its staggered journey through narrow path faces a
retreat.

Or, a sudden demise prevents its journey through a
narrower pass.

As if, the finest creation reveals itself the truth and the
splendour,

Through life and life processes; but without any aid of an
expander.



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 specially sonnets. He wants to be acquainted with the universal mind through poetry.



AND WHAT HAS BEEN DECIDED

This is a short story with a long tale. I read it at the impressionable age of twenty-eight years. I was newly married, in a strange place, trying to make meaning of a new relationship, and learning that life has more nuances than I was let in for. Shashi's story came in on a magazine issued by the Telegraph, Kolkata. This was my introduction to a different avenue of thought. Her "what ifs" jolted me out of the complacency that marriage and a lovely child had brought.

My mind was freshly laid open to thoughts of grandiose self-awareness. I remember the heady feeling of power I felt when I repeated her arguments and observations verbatim to a senior person in the family. Soon enough I

was cut to size by family feeling that my education had gotten to my head. Shashi was shelved, not forgotten. She was now voraciously read and re read under cover and surreptitiously nurtured. Thus the public persona of Usha was born with sensitivity for others' feelings. My observation skills were already quite sharp as I wrote short stories. I honed my skills by observing and checking out with the subjects of my scrutiny.

Then I started working, marketing concepts. The training that I received under my boss put me on the path to great success at reading body language. I diligently used all my learning at his feet to good use. I was never ever a loner even though I loved my own company. In public places, at weddings and functions I would sit aside and guess the mood of people who passed my chair. I was vastly amused at the success rate and greatly pleased with my deductions. I had always been a great fan of Conan Doyle and re read all of his books. In fact I absolutely believed that every person had huge dramas behind him. I enjoyed picking out the facts and spinning a bit of fiction into what I had observed as facts. Lo and behold, a story would unfold.

When I read "And What Has Been Decided," all my instincts told me I had found my guru. I had already written a couple of stories that were intense and emotional. I was shy of showing them to anyone. After a lot of hesitation I sent off

some of them, typed double space by a typing pool on SP Mukherjee Road, to the only magazines I knew...Femina and Eve's Weekly. They all came back to roost until my entry into Glorioustimes and my introduction to Max, my literary guru a good twenty years later.

I was appalled at my own audacity. A woman cannot write openly about these things. Unfortunately I had drunk of Shashi's spirit and I wrote. It took Max's pokes and prods and gentle jeering at my back to post the stories on the forum. Every one of my efforts at prose or poetry reflected the gentle questioning of a thought or event or an issue that raged around me. Sometimes the arrogance of an enlightenment showed through. Sometimes my own frustration at not knowing what to infer, or not understanding my own responses would drive me back to thinking of Draupadi. That Draupadi who married five, understood none, loved one, and stood shunned by all her so-called saviors.

Her understanding of how she was tricked into believing that she was the cause of the War, rankled with me. Every time I played a cat's paw I remembered Draupadi. Every time my sentiments, desires, needs were played up to reach a secondary objective (read...a hidden agenda) I remembered Draupadi...Shashi's Draupadi.

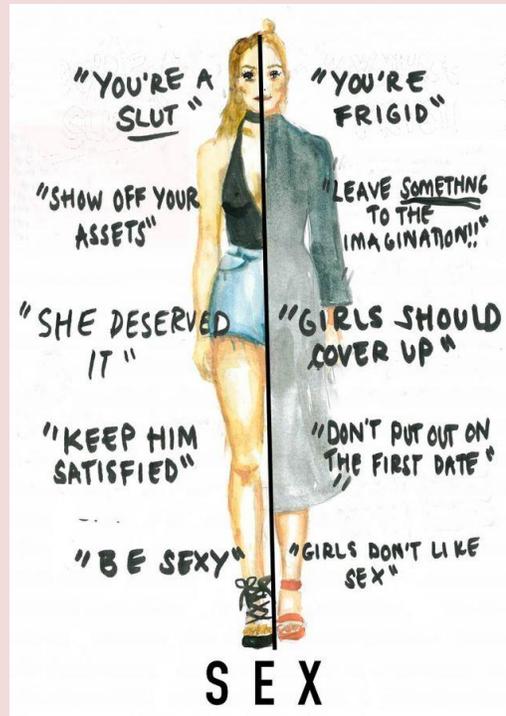
I still read other women writers. None of them has the same authenticity as Shashi. We are conditioned from birth about our roles in the life of men, and especially in our own families. I used to break out from stereo typed expectations, make an impact and settle back into old comfort zones. Reading Shashi triggered a great desire to know more of what other women think. In this regard I have to thank Uncle Sam for the free use of their libraries in the USIS. I spent four hours a week there for nearly seven months devouring books written by black writers; both men and women, more women than men. I realized their intrinsic strength. I was impressed by their immense social responsibility; their commitment; their positivity; their willingness to drop everything and show their solidarity to the cause of their brethren. I was extremely happy in those few months of my intro to the outside world.

I must thank Shashi for directing me to think for myself. I may not have reached her kind of conclusions. I have however been able to know my mind within and to know the manipulations of the world without. I have seen and understood that the empowerment women seek is not uniform. It varied from woman to woman, and was dictated by her economic status, education, stage of self-evolution,

peer pressure (both positive and negative) and the age of the dependents in her care. How complex life is. How diverse we are. Reading this short story was the turning point in my thought process.



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



LUSTY FANTASIES

Cached in her somewhere

Lusty fantasies

Imagined seedy bars

Stale smoke

Spreading legs for strange men

Gratifying the male gaze

Every now and then

An impulse to tour the seamier side of the district

Desire to play a 'belle du jour'
To master the heaving bosoms and painted lips
Garters and whips
As if born to the come hither look

Somewhere in those years of societal sermons
Woman ordained to conform
Or doomed to ill repute
Somewhere In that journey
From long conditioned contempt of a slut
And the insatiable desire to role play one
She fell in love
With the whore within



Vandana Kumar: She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She has done her masters in History from Lady Shri Ram College and her Diplôme from the Alliance Française de Delhi. She is a French teacher in a couple of schools and private institutes and also translates for various publishing houses and corporates. An active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi, she has a soft corner for Kolkata where she spent her childhood. Her various passions include singing, playing the piano, composing music and participating in local antakshari competitions. She describes herself as a dreamer...a wanderer and a certified incurable romantic...the romantic moorings worsened with all her fancy French studies. Poetry for her is her stress buster -her flight of fancy-and strangely – what keeps her rooted too.



FALLING STARS

When you forget to catch a falling star,
I believe that it hides inside your eyes
for you to see the world
through all the little things
you missed to notice,
like your soul that
resurrects love
one more time,
every time.



TRANSITIONS

Sometimes I move
my hands up in the air
jump and stretch
to touch the sky
and some other times
tightly wrap it around my body;
Both feels the same.
The only difference is
there is just one sky above
but in my body
I house a thousand of them

reminding me that

I am both the day and the night.



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.



WORDS

Words crying out for help

But lost in the crowd

Struggling to escape words

Words playing hide-and-seek

In the dark

Laughing all the way to the bank

Words shaking hands with words

Lying awake all night

Words dressed in white

Words covered in blood

Gasping for young breath

On hospital beds

Words nervously waiting for words

Whispering for a smile:

Words left unsaid.



Vijay Nair: He is retired as Associate Professor, Department of English, Government Victoria College Palakkad, Kerala. He taught English Language and Literature in various colleges for 31 years. His poems have appeared in several International Anthologies. He was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016.



MY COUNTRYMEN

Yes. I am a Hindu.

You are a Christian.

He is a Muslim.

There is a Sikh, a Parsi.

All of you are my brethren.

Our faiths make us different.

Our species makes us one.

Now we are afraid.

Afraid of each other.

Mistrust has built walls

Around each of us.

Built stone by stone
By vested interests.

I am what I am
And you are who you are
By the accident of our births.
So I followed a religion
And you followed another
By that same accident.
If by chance we had switched places
I would have been you
And you would have been me.

Basically we all are one.
It is important that this we see
In our minds, in our hearts.
Replace fear with confidence,
Mistrust with love.

There is no other way forward.

To live and let live our aim

it must be.

Many rulers have come and gone

Many have sown the same seeds

Yet we the people of India

Have survived and lived together

In peace.

That is the only way we can survive.

Hand in hand, together we must be.

Today we have to begin

Again

One step at a time.



Vineetha Mekkoth: Vineetha Mekkoth is a poet, writer, translator, editor. Lives with her family in Calicut. Translates for the Kerala Sahitya Akademi. Has published poems in various national and international anthologies. Her poetry collection, 'Ashtavakra and Other Poems' was published by Authorspress, New Delhi in August 2017.



THE RECTANGLE HOLE

is fashionable

to plan for hereafter

get the mini mallards

lined up

pre-pay headstones

divvy up trappings,

or leave it all

to a pet parrot

it can get hairy

the bank hoops

legal rigmarole

rush to the rectangle hole

it all says something

something personal

that is made no longer

personal

and now and again

it's necessary to sandblast

a name from a headstone



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



ALPHA DREAMS

The wolf bares fangs
even when sleeping.

Legs move
in rapid dream-twitches;
cheeks quiver from tickling
branches that swipe his head.

Leading the hunt,
he chases with others of the pack—

sweaty fear
fills his nostrils
and sanguine expectation
tingles through his thighs.

Nipping,
then ripping
at the flanks of a deer,
they jump
with him, as one.

Then, the imagined pack
straddles its fallen meal,
dining
without grace.

A lullaby of teeth,
as enamel scrapes against bone,
and the song of sinew,
stretching before tearing free from

the cooling carcass,
fill his night.



William P. Cushing: He continues his writing and is proud to present the poem "Alpha Dreams" to GloMag readers. It is being featured in a new collection of Southern California poets and one its lines ("lullaby of teeth") actually inspired the title of the anthology. By way of explanation, this piece began as a writing exercise he has used in his classes, since he also participates. As always, Bill welcomes anyone interested to contact him at piscespoet@yahoo.com.



THE NAF

The Naf with its waves

Will go down for a witness

To an atrocity unparallel

The waters brimming on the bank

Swell with the tears dropping

Off men, women, children,

Fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers

On the other side are houses

On fire with dreams shattered

The yards swarm with corpses

With eyes taken off the sockets

Breasts chopped off the chests

Mangled bodies of infants
Lie on the cursed land
With vultures flying overhead
Waiting to swoop down on the prey
On the other bank waits a mother
With compassion to bestow
Upon the souls in plight
With nowhere to go and
No place to call a home.



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



ciao! 😊