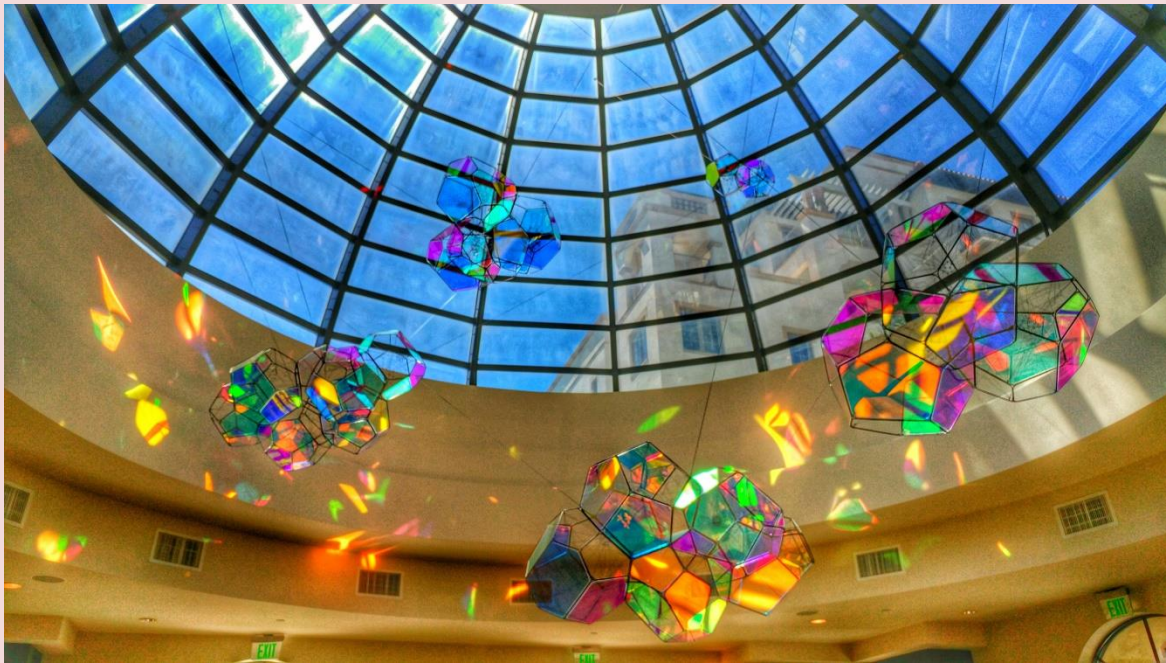


GloMag

2018

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose
Magazine*

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CARL SCHARWATH



Title of the Cover Pic: Spectrum

About The Artist

Carl Scharwath, has appeared globally with 150+ journals selecting his poetry, short stories, interviews, essays or art photography. Two poetry books 'Journey To Become Forgotten' (Kind of a Hurricane Press).and 'Abandoned' (ScarsTv) have been published. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine, a dedicated runner and 2nd degree black- belt in Taekwondo.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I use photography as a means of self-expression. The most important quality of a photograph, as in all of art, is to evoke an emotional response. I prefer to capture surrealistic moments when I can, the play of light and colors and unusual situations as they unfold. As a passionate runner, being aware of my surroundings tends to produce some surprise scenes instead of forcing an image of time with my camera.

Currently I have been concentrating on collaborations with other poets who interpret my photos with their powerful words creating an art form that compliments each other.

ABOUT GLOMAG

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

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

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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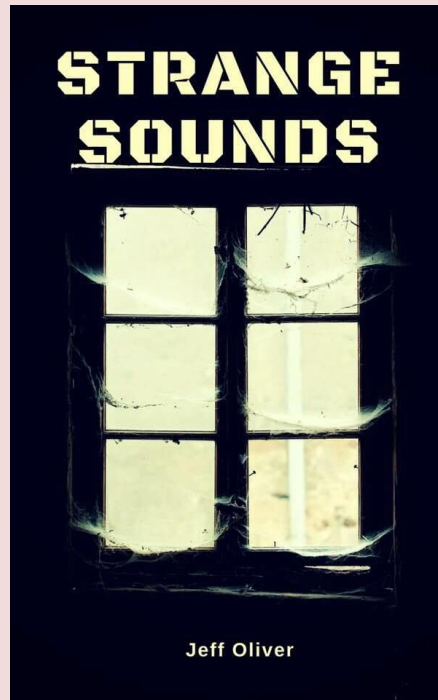
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BACKGROUND MUSIC: Instrumental of song “Pehla Nasha”

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Strange Sounds

Poems By Jeff Oliver



Book Available At

CTC Publishing Group

<https://www.ctupublishinggroup.com/jeff-oliver-.html>

Amazon.com

https://www.amazon.com/Strange-Sounds-Jeff-Oliver/dp/1945791586/ref=as_sl_pc_tf_til?tag=c0d4a-20&linkCode=w00&linkId=34638cbf1c3be49c500d26fdb98f9c75&creativeASIN=1945791586



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jeff Oliver was born on April 6th, 1982, in Baltimore, Maryland. After his family moved to southern Pennsylvania, he found the perfect outlet for his adolescent emotions; through writing poetry.

Jeff's emotional outlet of poetry appears in *MICROAGGRESSION THEN & NOW* By Creative Talents Unleashed, he also appears in *Glomag* each month, published by Glory Sasikala out of India.

Jeff's vivid, no holds back style of writing brings you in and threatens to never let you go. Currently a Stay at Home Dad, Jeff is raising five children that live with him and his beautiful wife Jennie in New York. He also has two older children that live in southern Pennsylvania. Jeff's family is

everything to him, and they are what fuel his lifelong passion with poetry.

One of his favorite lines that has flowed from his pen is: “I will always take in what I have, the past is shattered...with the vision in the glass.”

REVIEWS

Jennie Oliver

Enjoyed every page!

Excellent read!

Mike I

A Fantastic Debut

Love, lust, insanity, purity and fell beasts. They're all here in a well-constructed blend of free verse and rhyme.

My two favorites:

"Fear the Monsters, Not the Dark" - Jealousy creates the monsters, time keeps them alive

Leave Me Behind" - director of my freak show, I write with all I am

Beautiful, heady stuff. I'm going to read this book again.

Roger A Koser

Great Book to read...

It's a great book to read really has great stuff in it that hit deep down inside you.

Brenda-Lee Ranta, author of A Soul Passenger

This is the heartfelt debut by poet, Jeff Oliver. He has created an eclectic composition of prose, with a universal appeal. His mosaic of words varies from his desire to live his own dreams, not the dreams of others, to a profound love for his soul mate. His heart renders passionate prose and sounds; addressing racial bigotry, an unkind political temperature, social mores, all while expressing tenderness and longing and abiding passion. Jeff Oliver has experienced various, albeit difficult life lessons, which fermented and grew as a fine wine; into a beautiful cacophony of verse. I predict he will be considered a poet for all seasons; his words have a lovely flow and syntax, pleasing to the mind and soul. There are things hidden within, for the reader to discover and reply, "yes, I feel that too."

PREFACE



MY LIFE WAS MAPPED OUT FOR ME

Gen. 4:15

Dad was a tattoo gypsy, going town to town with his ink, his needles, his salves, and me. XXX

He knew everything about the tradition, from tebori to flash. But the man who taught me my traid XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX should not be held responsible for my calling.

LOVE

When I was a kid my family was so poor we couldn't afford paper. Dad would leave little memos all over his body, but in the long run that practice proved impractical.

WASTE NOT/WANT NOT

Even the roughest first draft needs a great deal of preparation and preplanning.

MOTHER

Dad told me that my mother fell in love with his art long before she fell in love with him. The needle against her skin aroused her passion, and the message that resulted made it permanent. At last, the process was transferred to the producer himself. And then I happened along.

“FIGHTING FOR YOUR BUSINESS”

I remember Dad standing at intersections, waving his needles and ink packs in the air, trying to sell simple tattoos to motorists stopped at the red light. It was not a successful business model.

PAT

XX
XX
XXXXXX

“A JOURNEY OF 1,000 MILES”

All's well that ends well. But I know that an effective beginning is important, too. As long as I have tablets to write on, I'm determined to keep at it until I get it right.

BORN TO LOSE

What would you say to a blue print you just met?

BOB AND BUSTER

Closeted though I may have been by my father's craft, I always knew my true nature. And it relied upon a writer's, not a tattooist's ink.

JOHNNY LOVES VIOLET

I, a tattoo artist, never uncover my body. Not even my face. I guess people find that a little odd.

SEMPER FI

My father, the would-be entrepreneur, once thought if he could stencil ink vaginas onto convicts; he could make their imprisonment more bearable. Later, when I was older, he chuckled when he told me his initial research and drafting had been inherently interesting. But he found his clientele too set in their ways to be receptive to innovation.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET FUCKED UP DON'T FUCK WITH ME

My father's most interesting tattoo idea involved an inchstick, a penis, and a...

OPPORNOCKITY TUNES

Most of the work I get paid for is for something elementary and quick. A name. A motto. A cross. A heart is a staple (sometimes broken). A lightning bolt. But every so often I get a request for something more elaborate – a butterfly, a dragon, mountains and surf, maybe a flowery skull with snakes – and that’s the opportunity I live for.

ADAM

Where does anything actually begin? Isn’t there always something that comes before? Should an autobiography begin with one’s first memory or one’s ambitions? Accomplishments or intentions? Maybe it even starts before conception?

LUCKY 7

I was seven. The madman my father brought home raved constantly about a “bastard’s birthright,” about murder and betrayal, about risking his very life and sanity to acquire and hide “the Devil’s Own Nest Egg.” And lots of other nonsense to boot.

FORMY TREASURE BEYOND PRICE

The glint in the stranger’s eyes was like lightning, his shout a thunderclap, as he screamed about the fortune he’d hid out in the desert and how precariously it teetered in his

fevered brain. The memory of its location must somehow be preserved or it would be lost forever. A map is what was needed!

MARK + ROSE

What marks my life apart from all others is the collaboration between my father and a lunatic to transform my body into a treasure map. Under the stranger's instruction, Dad would indelibly engrave every landmark, every direction, into the skin of his only son.

MERCATOR MANSON FOREVER

The night that I became a cartographer's dream is inked into my memory like a

FUCKING TATTOO OF COURSE, YOU MORON! YOU HAVE TO WRITE BETTER THAN THAT IF YOU WANT TO SUCCEED AT THIS GAME!

PATIENCE AND PRUDENCE

The madman was nothing if not incoherent and contradictory, but Father persevered. Every time the crazy stranger would seem to forget some vital detail or recover old ground in some different manner, Dad would have to retrace his own steps and modify his growing design. Mistakes inevitably multiplied as the mapping got more confused and maze-like.

999

My back filled with lines and smudges, with scratched-in amendments and appendices, the manic mosaic they created covered my back and chest. Eventually the manic mosaic curved up and down and around my arms and legs. They were just about out of parchment, so the final spot was marked on my face.

GRACE

HOPE

FRANK NESS

The stranger and my father fed each other's insanity as they filled my skin with their mad designs. We all collapsed into an exhausted coma just as the gray horizon began to peach.

WOMEN BEAR CHILDREN, MEN TATTOOS

As the sun was going down, Dad woke me up. "Hurry, Son, we need to leave." Our exit was accompanied by the ragged snorts of the stranger, the designer of my fate.

Carpe Diem

When my scarred skin had nearly recovered, we braved the stranger's desert sun. We had to stop periodically whenever we were lost, and Dad would take off all my

clothes, turn me around like a naked lathe, examine my armpit for some hidden clue. We searched for a week but never found any of the landmarks etched in my epidermis.

NO PERFECT BEAUTY W/O STRANGENESS IN THE PROPORTION

After we'd abandoned the desert that first time, Dad decided my secret was too valuable to keep on display. He began wrapping me up like a mummy under my clothes. I began wearing elaborate scarves around my head. I'm sure I would have been forced to wear a burkha if Dad had ever known what a burkha was.

A MAN CAN BE HONEST IN ANY SORT OF SKIN

What an odd pair we were, Father and I. We'd come into a strange town, a tall burning prophet and his midget bandaged up like a burn victim. No wonder business fell off, even – especially, I guess – when we tried to sell tattoos door to door.

Galatians 6:17

The Devil's Nest Egg never faded from my father's mind. It was more deeply etched than the deepest pattern he'd ever applied. Itself unchangeable, it managed to blur my father until I no longer recognized him. As I grew from a child to an adolescent into a man, my father increasingly

grew into a stranger. The stranger's lightning bolt would master his eyes, the old thunderclap would voice itself from his lips, and the night of the bastard's birthright would manifest itself again, as poor Father forced me to undress and he'd study the chart he'd sired.

ONLY DEATH CAN TAKE MY MOKO AWAY

I often imagined that we were being followed. Eyes were everywhere, fevered, bloodshot, but patient.

TOM

I was returning late at night from an acquisition of needed materials when I was confronted by the nightmare of my youth.

"You know what I want," hissed the raspy voice from my past.

"But why?" I wailed, my heart like a drum. "Your map is worthless! It didn't take us anywhere!"

"You fool," the menacing stranger hissed. "I never intended to leave my secrets in the clear for any idiots to read. The sun had fried my ability to remember. The details were still fresh, but I knew they would fade. I needed a mnemonic device, so I gave your father just enough topography to remind me, me! of the true proportions, nothing more."

“What are you going to do with me? Kidnap me?” I knew pleading would be worthless, but I was trying to buy some time to find an escape.

“Of course not. I have no need for you at all.” His teeth flashed, like the long knife I glimpsed in his hand. “I only need that treasure map you’re wearing!”

NO JUDGE BUT GOD

The sharp blade pierced the sharp skin. The stranger screamed in pain as the tattoo needle I’d purchased entered his hand, followed by a pounding blow on the head with the heavy bag it came from and several more needle jabs into his body. I don’t know how seriously he was hurt. I didn’t stick around long enough to find out.

Dad never got any supplies that day. I got out of town as quickly as I could and never went back.

I suppose both of them, father and stranger, search for me still.

I SPEAK THE BODY ENGLISH

I’m constantly on the move, even more than when I was with Dad. I earn my living from the mindless tattoos that people buy on a whim, but I pursue my life’s work more furtively according to happenstance. Someone gives me the time I need to create something complicated on the canvas

of his or her body, but unsuspecting, they actually provide me with the parchment I need for the tattoo novel I write. When I am through composing, I thoughtfully apply my protective gauze and my stern admonishment not to remove it for a week. By which time I'm long gone.

LOVE LASTS FOREVER, A TATTOO LONGER THAN THAT

I keep a careful record of my work in progress, to be assembled and collated by some future scholar in search of an adventurous dissertation.

TATTOOED IN OUR CRADLES WITH THE BELIEFS OF OUR TRIBE

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ME

I am

but a man

yet to know fully

what it is that makes me

different from the rest of the lot

with same feeling of pain when hurt

tears of joy felt swelling up like a spring

the days and nights passed through all

awaiting a shift to heaven or gory hell

that burns the same day in day out

melting the flesh into a formless

nonexistent, poignant entity

turning me into a fable

never read by any
understood not
even by
me



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.



SEPIA BITS

I saved out a brown

polka dot blouse

orange polka dot scarf

plastic as it turned out

flower brooch

not because

I fancied those bits

but because the whole

had that matchy sepia

straight-legged

polyester pant

patent loafer

tooled leather bag

look the ladies liked



Wanda Morrow Clevenger: She is a former Carlinville, IL native. Over 450 pieces of her work appear in 155 print and electronic publications. Her flash fiction “Roses and Peppermint Candy” won the 2014 Winter Short Story Contest in The Holiday Café. Her poem “corsage” won the 2014 Black Diamond Award for Excellence of Craft in The Midnight on the Stroll Poetry Contest. Her nonfiction “Big Love” was nominated for 2016 Best of Net by Red Fez literary journal.



THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

You were the girl who could " turn

The world on with your smile"

But your inner universe

Turned you inside out. For more than

Forty years your faithful friend, Diabetes,

Hugged you to her hungry breasts

Heavy drinking after work and smoking
Dragged you down to earth. Your only son,
At 24, playing with his guns

Shot himself in the head. Your younger sister
Joined your ancestors after a drug overdose at 21
Your brother fell prey to kidney cancer at 47--

Through all this, though, your friends remember
Your generosity and grace and speak of how
You gave up laughs to others in the cast

And as the opening theme song reaches a crescendo
You flash that lovely smile and throw
Your blue hat up in the air--

Beautiful, intelligent, classy and articulate

With a statue to your name

And nearly blind at the end

Lady with three names you made it "after all."

You grew to be an icon

In your own time.



Vijay Nair: I am a poet residing in Palakkad, India. I am an Associate Professor in English. I have contributed to various anthologies and published 3 poetry collections. I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016.



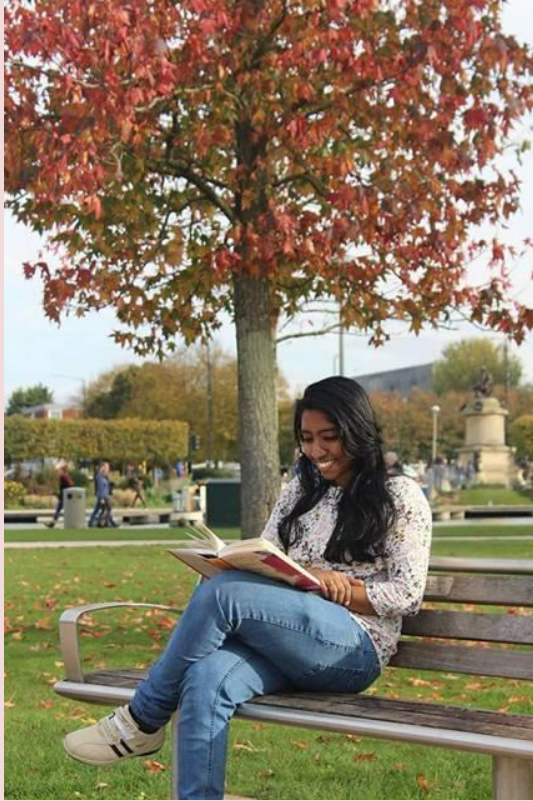
NO KITES

I wonder what you mean
because sexuality
is a shelf of ribs
that carry colours more than 7,
the kite is but a heart
stitching broken bridges
and hemming the inability of your words,
I wonder what you mean by
no kites.

I wonder what you mean
because love
is an archer at war,
with no enemies
and the sky she aims for
is a lost kite
found by a eyes that needs no light,
I wonder what you mean by
no kites.

I wonder what you mean
because the body
is a garden that grows kites,
only the one who owns it
decides the definition of a weed,
there could be none,
there could be all,
but they will all be flown.

I wonder what you mean by
no kites.



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.



HUES OF SEPTEMBER

In the dizzying, sizzling month of September

Look at, this flickering light of rainbow

That penetrates these dense trees

And gives me an amazing and magical view of someone's
touch

Meteorological phenomenon.....

Where the sunlight enters into,

Silvery droplets of rain

We see all beautiful hues

As the light of soulful love of yours
When enters into my soul
That was only a drop of rain previously
But it's glistening.....
with seven colours of love
Each and every colour define,
Depicts itself
And describing that I am in love
With my eternal soulmate!



Varsha Saran: She is a homemaker but a bilingual poetess and a story writer by her passion. Her many poems and stories have been published in different international anthologies,,ezines, magazines and newspapers. She has won many awards in writing.



DIRTY SWEATY LOVE

How often you pulled me to you
Not tingling fresh out of a bathe
Clothed not in eau de toilette
Or misty lavender

A runnel of sweat that you perpetually licked
Of my back and arm pits
The dampness of the tousled hair
And unused towel that lay precariously
On the edge of a rocking chair

You tasted me moist
Never scrubbed or polished
And our dynamics
Never perfumed
Never linear

For the grime turned us on
As we made dirty sweaty love



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



FROM THE LIPS OF AN AUDACIOUS SHIP

My secret longing for you became intense
When you started to send a new thrilling pulse.
The quietest port was safe for me, in true sense.
But I couldn't neglect the enticements of the gulls.

Your beautiful face was covered with a veil of mists,
But, I was eager to see some uncharted lands--
Beyond the unfamiliar layer or inside closed fists.
So, I had to declare revolution against familiar sands.

The shallow water is the cruellest enemy for me,
I knew that; so, I wanted to live in your deep heart.

Though I knew that you are also starving and hungry
And, you may grab my all by breaking the rampart.

I've crossed the lines; but, now, I need a new layer
Where you have preserved the jewels with much care.



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



THE SAD BIRD

I' m a bird

hovering high,

high above

fields and meadows,

over mighty mountains

and deep waterfalls,

I'm floating.

I sail in clouds of pure, white cotton

above me is the infinitive sky

underneath me I can see a small, green globe

the home of humanity, the animals
and countless plants of various kinds.

I see everything,
the beauty and diversity of all life on Earth.

At first glance, it may look like Eden,
but the closer I fly the better

I understand how complex
that life on Earth is

It's nothing like the myth
of Shangri-La, a lost Paradise.

I can see people who fight against each other,
wars are fought, people are being murdered
in meaningless battles.

I see
homeless and starving families,
children crying over the loss of parents.

Rivers and oceans are contaminated,
Souls suffering under unworthy living conditions.

I get gloomy when I float high,
high in the sky -

I' m a bird

A sad bird



Svanhild Løvli: I'm a Norwegian poetess.



an acrylic painting on canvas by Suzette Portes San Jose

UNDERNEATH YOUR LIGHT

underneath your light

.....the shadows gloom

.....with flowers bloom

sharing the moonbeams

showering darkness gleams

sending thoughts among

...the cloudy sky

fill them with the nights

...deepest sigh

underneath your light

.....the heart awaits

.....with deserted fates

the longest night goes yearning

like petals withered and falling

more nightfalls will come

... and be gone

just as your light shall shine

...when a day is done



Suzette Portes San Jose: She has a Bachelor of Science in Commerce from University of San Carlos Cebu City, Philippines. She was born with a passion for writing and living in her art forms. She started writing online in 2013. Each of her poems is written with her painting as visuals and is now appearing internationally, namely, in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, India, and the Philippines.



Here we go down
The merry go chase, connecting
With a look here, a touch there
Some momentary, some eons long
But once over – just a flash in time
Becoming memories and lessons
You are all you ever have
Here to give, and receive
And grow



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



PROMISE ME

Promise me you'll never leave me alone,
Promise me you'll always be there by my side in every
evening lone.

Promise me, we will share pleasure and pain,
Promise me we will share every moment, sane and insane.

Promise me you'll always be there by my side
You will always be the reason of my pleasure and pride.

Promise me, you'll be the stalwart shoulder I can lean on,
Promise me in my weak moments, you'll be my mentor and
guide.

Promise me, sunny days we'll share
And rainy days we'll face together
Tell me just once we're
made for each other.



Sumana Bhattacharjee: She is a bilingual poetry writer from Kolkata(India). She is born and brought up in a family of teachers. From her childhood she has a keen interest in music, poetry and drama. She has done honours in Bengali literature and Master Degree in English literature. She is a published author and her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies, blogs and magazines. She is a lifelong learner and lover of music and literature.



THE NON DESCRIPT T

Selling his wares from the cart

He smiles while his eyes dart

Weaving dreams of a hopeful day

Earning a few rupees that he may

Keep his home fires burning

His hollow smiles he keeps on churning

Wearing a T-shirt of indeterminate colour

Sun burnt sporting a swarthy pallor

His life too is like his faded T

Bleached of original dreams bereft of any lee

His nicotine stained teeth expose a false smile

His bloodshot eyes fail to guile

He vents his frustration on his large family
Drowning in the bottle his sorrows verily
At night after a harrowing day
He would create a ruckus spending all his pay
Hitting the bottle
To get sozzled

Abusing his many children and beating his gaunt wife
He would force himself on her in drunken strife
Subjugating the defenceless to assuage his ego
His worthless self a weed to be plucked out ergo
His perpetually pregnant wife's a breathing skeleton
Their life aimless like sea weeds and plankton
Yet everyday he wheels his cart in his dirty T
One cannot decipher its graffiti
Obliterated of all colours and names
His wares no more attracts being outdated
Their lives too seemed stuck and ill fated

His grimy unwanted children will one day inherit his
obsolete cart

The meagre display of expired wares with all its warts

His emaciated girls will stand under the garish lamps

Waiting for the pain the hard bed their ramp

A few will welcome the inevitable snuffing out so early

Amidst desperate instincts and behaviour surly

No one will remember the unnamed man in the washed
out T

A life eked out in a zone so difficult to see

The man in the T nondescript

Life's sozzled breath without a script.



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.



ACCIDENTAL EXISTENCE

Your birth is accidental

Your existence is objectionable

I could not abort you

Neither could support you

I am leaving you not to die

I am leaving you so both of us survive

Forgive me my piece of heart

I wish i could keep you

I wish i give you all my love

I wish i was not filthy poor

But wishes don't come true

May be in another lifetime

I will get to hold you in my arms

Celebrate your existence

Until then goodbye my child



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



I AM SEPTEMBER

I am September, Ninth month,
Summer is almost going to end,
Autumnal changes are near to grow,
Hot scorching sun about to go!

Corns are embraced with brown shades,
Withered are the leaves of plants and trees,
Wandering winds blowing around,
Seasonal changes with silent sound!

National Hindi language day I harbor,
I am a month that is important for farmers,
Thirty days are there in my chart,
Yet I touch each and every heart!

Though I am somewhat rough and dry,
Sometimes my days and nights cry,
Yet I have been given life by God,
I am happy the way he has bestowed!



Sonia Gupta: Dr. Sonia is a dentist by profession. She is the author of four English & two Hindi poetry books. Her many poems and stories have been placed in various anthologies,

magazines & newspapers. She has been received various awards in Hindi literature and won many poetry competitions organised by various literary groups on facebook. Besides being a poetess and doctor, she is fond of paintings, singing, cooking, designing, knitting and teaching.



SOMETHING I LOOK AT

My father!

how sweet were those days

when i was at your feet

chanting your hymns

siba sahasranama and mahimna stotra

from morning to evening

how beautiful were those moments

when your temple was my lone asylum

your prasad my only diet

How captivating were those nights
spent in repeating your name
visualising your resplendence
so engrossed i was
could not differentiate
when i was awake
and when i was asleep
in my conscious mind you were
in my subconscious mind you were
in every moment of my life
i felt your presence
and your sweet smile
guided me in each step

In a weak moment
might have craved for
your affluence and splendour
and you gave me the whole world

but took away those fulfilling moments
those fascinating days and nights
that innocent smile on my lips
that simple mind
far away from this glittering world
and its lovely amenities
i lost those beautiful feelings
my heaven on earth
what i gained
everyone knows
but what i lost
i only know

My Lord!

what to do with your spellbinding grandeur
when you are miles away
beyond my horizon and

the more i look at your splendour
the poorer i become

My master!

take away everything you have given
but return me those days and nights
which were once completely mine
let me be at your feet once again
praying and repenting
feeling your presence in whatever
i see and what lies beyond
let me have a bit of the poison you drank
to be of any use
in this cosmic drama of yours



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



Were you there when we first shut doors
And invited shy fireflies into the room
When we tipped the boat in mock earnest
laughing as the waters blessed us
Were you with me during the kiss and the
worshipping of bodies until blessed dawn
Were you with me as I was with you
Strolling through castles and meadows
Chasing butterflies and calves
Tiptoeing into strangers' marshlands
Drowning and
Measuring laughter with early sobs

Were you

I retrace our paths and laughter

Our perils and passion

I see no end so I keep looking

Searching, retracing

Where you

Went



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



BEAUTIFUL VOICES

A beautiful sound emanating

In timeless abundance

The maid-in-waiting, as it were

In resounding exultance

Of beauteousness and timelessness

Sounds, voices screaming

In a cavernous existence

Beauty and charm exuding forth

Standing abreast, as if in attendance

Looks and beauty, a reality

That in itself is a credence

Beautiful minds, purely beauteousness in existence



Shobha Warriar: Born near Trichur in Kerala, she did her schooling in Mumbai and Chennai. She was highly influenced by her maternal grandfather who was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar. She had a keen interest in languages, be it prose or poetry, from her school days. She has also worked as a teacher in schools for some time. Her father, K. Ramakrishna Warriar, is a distinguished writer in Malayalam, and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi award for his contribution in Sanskrit. She is married to an engineer and has one daughter.



THE CRY OF A REFUGEE

Running and running day and night
from one border to another
when will we have a permanent abode?
our own home lost
amidst conflict and chaos,
greed and lust for power
our home where once peace resides
has become a war torn place
we have to flee
not from our belongings
but from our memories
leaving behind our childhoods,

youths and old ages
don't know we will return back
to a place where our dreams grew
but with war impose on us
our dreams are shattered
we are left to mourn
the losses not of properties
but our loved ones.

No hope for future,
No hope for lives,
Just a wish from God
to give us strength
to encompass all miseries
pains and sufferings.

Hope we can one day
return to our native place,
where our ancestors lived
with profound happiness and joy.



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.



Nowhere to hide
the tell-tale sign
her face was aflush
a brilliant crimson
heat of the interlude
remained yet unsubsidied
the paint of vermilion
pollen dust from the meadow
smeared on when they
had rolled, careless all night
her name besmirched
her muddy filligree

she tried hard to veil
with coffee plumes
of fluffed up clouds
over the giveaway scars
livid purple and blue,
on her marblesque hue
the tides ravaged tumultuous
whipping the azure sky
their rendezvous witnessed
by many a passerby
the Earth & the Moon
caught in a clandestine embrace
satiated, resplendent with love
she peeped over the eclipse
of his wide shoulders



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



THE CURRENTS WILL SHIFT

Under a brilliant sun every day
yet still half blind

The soul remains eager
but the flesh is far weaker
than any point
that proverbs or psalms
could try to get across

Even what's written in stone
will soon enough crumble to dust

I've never heard a truth in my life
that wasn't born from the ashes of a lie

Oh, joy! Oh, woes!

Oh, please

just hold

so so

steady

at the helm

of your ship

for

one

more

breath



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



DIVINE LIGHT & NEW SONG

When these dark alleys and abysmal roads end

That divine light shall enlighten

And I will sing that new song

When the deluge quietens and death recedes all weakened

That divine light shall bring sunshine

And I will sing that new song

When betrayals squirm in the awareness of their own
smallness

That divine light shall restore fidelity

And I will sing that new song

When naysayers pack their pessimistic views - all earnest

That divine light shall lead my journey

And I will sing that new song

When evil that lurks is swallowed by simple kindness

That divine light shall shower blessings

And I will sing that new song

When fear drowns in the flood of freedom

That divine light shall set me soaring

And I will sing that new song

When despair and envy have a bitter fallout

That divine light shall smile gently

And I will sing that new song

When knowledge conquers all minds that dwell in
ignorance

That divine light shall reign my dwelling

And I will sing that new song

When love in all its fullness shall triumph over hatred

That divine light shall renew my being

And I will sing that new song

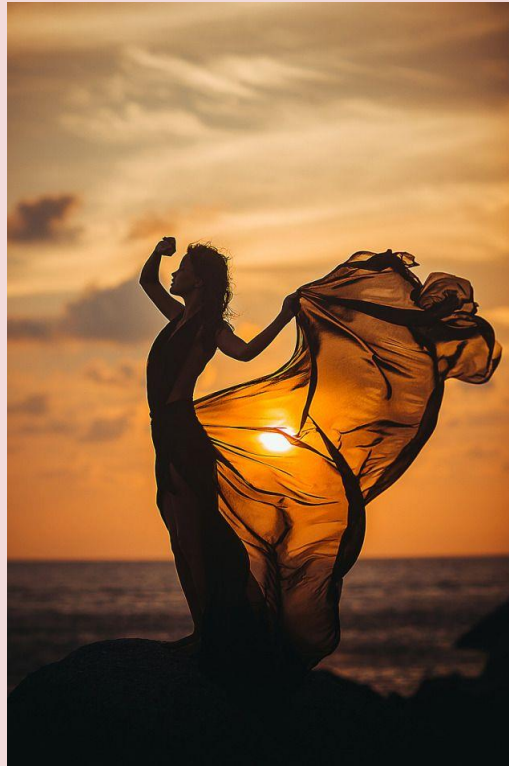
When nothing but good faith rules over the universe

That divine light shall reign over the new world

And I will sing that new song



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



THE SWEETEST SONG

I heard the sweetest song
They were my heartbeats
singing songs of love divine
In the wilderness of the green woods
In the splendour of the golden glow
In the twilight dawn
In the pitter patter rain
I heard the sweetest song
They were my heartbeats

In the roaring waves

In the thunderbolt

In the brightest lightening

I heard the sweetest song

They were my heartbeats

Walking through the daffodil field

Walking through the muddy waters

Walking through the lonely meadow

Walking through the beautiful seashore

I heard the sweetest song

They were my heartbeats

Calling out your sweet name!

My sweetest song

My heartbeats!



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



On a hot sunny day, I sit under its cool shade
I look and admire its trunks braid
I feel sad about how it's being used for trade
And try to think about what out of it is made

Is the value of those things more than the tree?
We are hurting our environment, can't we see?
The tree is a life, can't we let it free?
How hard can it be?

When humans have rights, animals have rights
When they're unfulfilled humans fight
And animals bite

But what about these harmless creatures
On whose existence our very planet features!
How will it show its tears
Of to think of the future my heart really fears!



Sara Bubber: I am a poet residing in Vadodara. I am a student. I have been part of GloMag for almost a year. I have received meritorious recognition in Shri Ram Chandra Mission Essay Writing Competitions for two successive years.



THE FORLORN BENCH

The morning was spruced up and scented,
mingled with
the intoxicating fragrance of youth.

The promising glance of the sun's golden eye
flirted with the girl's tresses, and tickled the boy.
Every day.

Every day they could be seen sitting on the bench,
hands clenched tightly, ears plugged against the clamour of
the world.

“You will come back soon, won’t you?”

"Yes, of course, I will".

He would say taking her in a tight hug.

The birds looked the other way,
as the lovers felt the tremor in their core.

Rocking with passion,
both swayed to each other's beat,
in the winter cold or the summer heat,
yearning for more, burning for an encore,
unaware of what lay in store.

Now it has been days and days, the love birds no longer
trill;

the bench has a forlorn air.

Where are the lovebirds?

But whosoever passes the bench can still glimpse,

the gold dust of those love- filed exchanges littered around the bench.

Glittering with remembrance.



Santosh Bakaya: I am a poet-novelist-essayist residing in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. I work as a teacher and have contributed to various anthologies. I have written many novels and poetry anthologies, and a poetic biography of Mahatma Gandhi, Ballad of Bapu. Recently I delivered a Ted Talk on THE MYTH OF WRITERS' BLOCK.



<http://micheal-learns-to-paint.blogspot.in/2010/05/gulmohar-walk.html>

SUMMER IN MY YARD

The last bell has announced

The end of the day.

Tired time is about to turn.

Soothing afternoon is still unwelcomed in my yard.

Gulmohar leaves have stopped dancing.

Have they rebelled against

The scorching sun?

Or have surrendered before him ?

Or is Gulmohar meditating

like those saints who
deserted life in search of life?
Someone whispered,
"No! She is bearing
wounds of her love, silently!"
I count those colorful umbrellas
Heading towards homes.
I count the tired lazy feet
Beneath them.
I lost my umbrella long ago.
Now I roam alone on the dry dusty burning roads with
My burning soul.
I watch the brown little sparrows,
Playing on the wet sand dunes.
Digging their beaks there.
Like those ash smudged sanyasis
They too are smudging sand
on their wings.

Are they searching peace & solace

Like me?

Or trying to heal their burning beaks like me?

Have they lost their umbrella & nest too?

Or, like them

Am I trying to heal the wounds of life

Standing tall in the scorching summer?

This summer, slowly I'm getting metamorphosed in search
of

Peace...



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



INDEPENDENT YET DEPENDENT

O People! Celebrate 70 glorious years of Independence!

Celebrate freedom from the talons of the invaders,

We now enjoy what is truly our own,

As we celebrate the 71st day of Independence.

O Countrymen! But are we truly free

From the shackles of superstition;

From the chains of ignorance and evil;

From the ferrets of horrific renditions?

O Brothers! What about our sisters?

Forced to be dependent on brother and father,

Forced to be dependent on husband and son

Forced not to earn, which they would rather.

O Sisters! Think of the brothers,

Forced to be 'manly' and sober

Unable to cry,

For they mustn't shed a tear.

O Indians! Fight the evils

Which threaten our society,

So all can be independent,

So all can be happy.



Samixa Bajaj: She is a student of Class 8. She is an avid reader. Poem writing is a passion she dabbles in, in her free time. Her poems depend on her mood at the time. She is also interested in dance and drawing.



I CARE FOR YOU

(To all the children of the world)

From a corner of the world,
A cry is heard for the first time,
A complement of joy and pain
Giving life a true meaning!

Your tiny eyes wide open
To see the unknown at first sight,
No idea what is ahead of you:
A world so messy and confused!

Yet, unable to clearly see
The difference between
What is the truth and a lie,
The world is waiting for you!

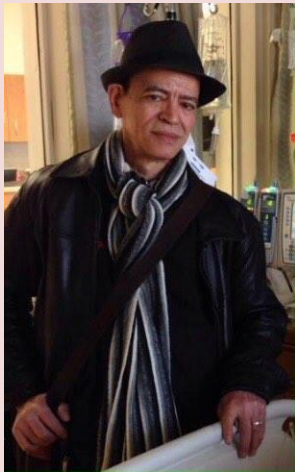
The beauty of your arrival,
Your first fragile smile,
Your sign of curiosity and
Unafraid to face the unknown!

The future is embedded in you
When the most is expected
In a world filled with uncertainties
And you have trace your own path!

Your true love and innocence
Is the essence of life itself

For you are part of yesterday,
Today and a dream of tomorrow!

Now your struggle for survival
Has become your priority and
Despite of your pain and agony,
From my heart I truly care for you!



Romeo della Valle: I was born in a beautiful island named Quisqueya or Hispaniola and from Italian and Spanish parents and coming to America very young with a goal, mainly, to succeed in life and be happy. I am a man with a Vision and a clear mission: to spread my message of Love and 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!



CALM AND JOY

(for Yochi)

your Heartbeat ascends

receiving God's Glory

shining on

illuminating through

revealing a precious Glow

sparkling deep from within your red tent Hebraic Soul

vowing the promise of Truth

emanating manifest Elation

embracing Unity and Love

touching your verdant Laughter to that Heartbeat

unfolding your fingers, arms,
affirming forever your Essence
flowering brilliantly within who you are
Light gorgeous within a Light
calming my mind
embracing my tears
harvesting and blending our thoughts,
showering down God's Sweetness with your voice
promising another new Beginning
Hummingbirds to spring Flowers,
reawakening eternal Calm and Joy
from this Sister's eyes



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



ABSENCE

Absence grows in silence;
It extends its roots,
soaks in hypothetical waters
spreads its branches,
prays for an anguishing God.

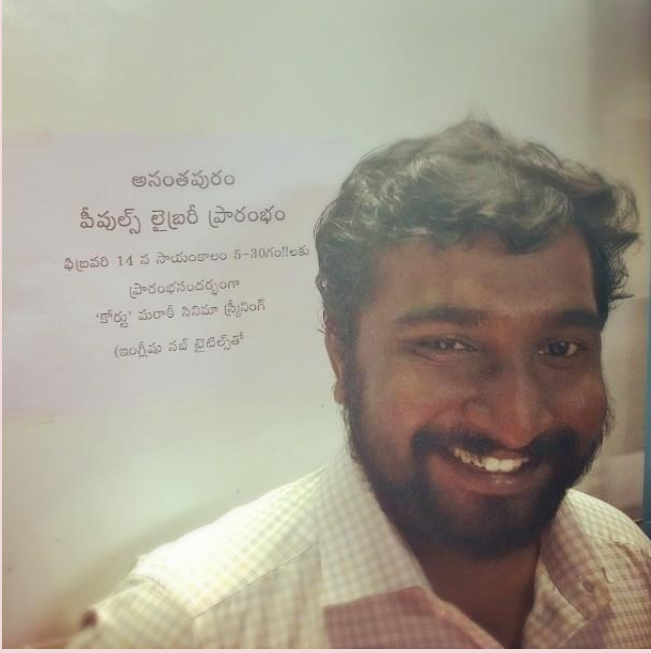
Absence is a city from the window
disappearing into sheets of rain.

It is a long street
covered with fresh snow,
its inhabitants
convulsing in disturbed sleeps.

The music of absence falls on the head
like cold water. It is the taste of
sadness melting on an arid tongue.

It is the blue gulp of an unspoken word
stuck forever in the throat's labyrinth.

Absence, a crepuscular landscape
where objects become apparitions,
seasons become memories,
lives become metaphors.



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, and has been acknowledged and complimented by various senior poets.



LOVING ARCHITECTS

They are trendy

Concerned with shapes, sizes and curves,

Verticality and trajectory

Beams and booms

Some like it heavy and solid

Like a behemoth, a hill carving,

Interiors cut into solid rock,

With sabres rattling inside.

Some live in the clouds
Airy and fluffy and bluey
Pinky like cotton candy
With plenty of glass and gloss
Effortless and floating.

Some like deep hard wood
Polished agonizingly
Smooth and cool
And resting heavily
On gravitational fields.

I like the bamboo ones
That have fissures that cause the wind to whistle young
that bend and sway never break to the fiercest of winds
that rub each other so frenziedly
that sparks fly and a whole grove is set on fire

in a cleansing way
crackling in ecstasy.

I love architects
who creak
when touched with a quill.



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.



MY SUICIDE NOTE

Last night I wrote my suicide note,
typed
and mailed it.

I could not wait for you
to read it.
So I read it on phone.

Listen!

Dear Life,

This is with reference to each death I die

to live one more day,
one more night,
then live and die one more of each.

For what is death, but life suspended,
frozen, dead?

I'm on my way.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

XYZ



Rajnish Mishra: He 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>.



IN PURSUIT OF SILK SARI

Read the variety of weavers and looms
in webs and links and papers and TV ads,
much awaited discounts and mega sales,
reach to get on showrooms much ahead!

Counter to counter varieties' galore,
colors parade and chequered designs,
all in front of you, in broad spectrums,
eyes enchanted but mind still bemused.

At last, you pick one to cross check
if attached with blouse, broad pallu,
go for trimming and packing with
elegant box in cloth cover handy.

Straight it goes into your wardrobe,
hanger taking longer care; though
a fresh piece, you unfold it to let
air free and flexi silken touch on.

Now comes the pleasant task of
choosing one auspicious day
and avoiding inauspicious time
to deck your much liked sari.

Greater surprise your grand daughter
next morn enrobes your sari!



Radhamani Sarma: I am a poet, short story writer, residing in Chennai, India. I am a retired professor of English. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published my own poetry collections. I am also a reviewer and critic, and have contributed critical essays on living writes, and am a blogger too.



THE RIGHT SOLUTION

fang wrenched----

this urgent hunger

for roasted nuts

She refused eugenol. She said she was allergic to it. I had to stop everything and look it up online: well, yes, it was allergic. Well, lidocaine then. As I reached out for the lidocaine bottle, she said she was insensitive to it. What was she doing that she was insensitive to lidocaine? I went through her form again. No, no heart problem. Plus, this was dentistry, we only use the mildest of anaesthetics.

toothless----

my oral cavity now

full of chocolate

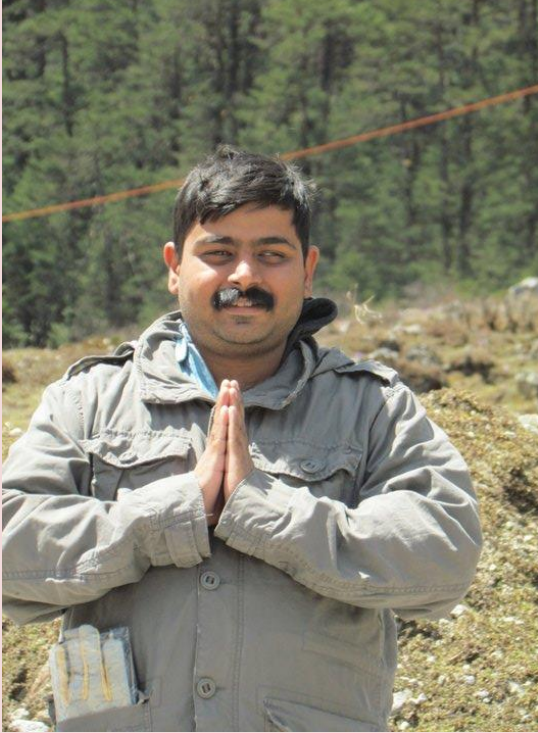
She seemed to know something about dentistry, for she asked for procaine. But procaine can't be had for miles around, not for money or love or sexual favours. I was getting desperate. She wouldn't consent to anything else, articaine or mepivacaine. Should I try general anaesthetic, I wondered. But why let a person occupy the dental chair for hours; I had other patients waiting. And they were worried by my constant going in and out with anaesthetic bottles.

morning after----

the tooth fairy as mean

as Dad

Finally, the receptionist solved the issue. She bashed her on the head, and I got on with my job.



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



THE SKY IN FRONT OF ME

The twilight is in a hurry

by the border of the waves

The earth spins round and round it like a moth,

Kissing the rainbow-coloured beams.

I feel your presence in every fresh leaves

I feel your presence in every tiny plants.

My senses amused with your tender touch

Enjoying your fragrance deeply.

The brown dust on the tree trunks and branches

seems to have lost its colour

in the evening sky.

The hills and mountains

Stand constantly like an old temple.

At a little distant

A breeze blows to lift the mist

And the stars shine again brightly.



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



One God in many forms

You and me

When we smile together

Earth transforms into heaven.



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



BALANCE

What is life all about?

It is about a tricky balance,

The scales should be perfectly balanced,

The good and the evil, not an iota more, not an iota less..

The yin and the yang, cannot exist without that 'tension',

There is a tiny bit of good in the bad and

A tiny bit of bad in the good,

Actions are amoral, thinking colours them,

So, we have to cross this so called war, this tension,

Remain unruffled in face of

everything,

That is the true release that we should strive for,
Light and dark both are needed to appreciate each other,
This unaffectedness is the key to moksha,
Burn the good and the bad deeds,
Let your slate be blank,
Hard? Yes! But not impossible!
Think about it!



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



"The soul wants which must be satisfied; and whatever pains be taken to divert it from itself, it soon grows weary, restless, and disquieted amidst the enjoyments of sense." ~ Alexis de Tocqueville

LOOPHOLE

At the end of the day

I can go home and melt.

Be a different person

From what I saw and felt.

People crumpled on the roadside

Into plastic bags overnight.

Non-human animals witnessing murdered kin
And awaiting the same plight.

I see my guilt, my fear
Does this render me appropriate
To hide in the industrial mind
That sleep and age obviate?

But, there is a loophole: We know.
For this, the hive sends for
To catch and bring back
Minds that have wandered too far

But, we are slowing down by the day
Sleeping more wearily
Where our conscience has awoken
At the bottom somewhere
Where it was waiting for us



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



ODE TO SEPTEMBER

Over the clouds of hope,
I began to love you,
The way you love me
everytime, for a better day.
With the kisses of happiness,
With your cuddles of innocence,
When all my clouds became rain,
I could not feel any pain.
No griefs stayed longer,
As I became more stronger,
As our days of Autumn begins.
The priceless memories will glow

with a winsome smile on your face.

Darling, let your gleaming hair fly,

With an impeccable array of cobalt sky.



Prमित Maity: He is a blogger, poet, music lover and sports management professional from Kolkata, India. He is an avid lover of literature, and had done Master's in Mass Communication from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He had pursued Master's program in Sports Business from Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management. Apart from writing, he is a student of Hindustani Classical Music, and plays Sitar.



FIRST DROP OF RAIN

With the first drop of rain

Touching the earth

Your memory drenches

My heart

I know n't

To whom I shall be grateful

To the cloud

To the wind

Or to the magnanimity

Of the blue sky

The canvas that encompasses
Everything

I simply behold your eternal beauty
Washing my blood stained face.



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.



BHARIWALA (WATER MAN KOLKATA)

You rise to the call of cuckoos and the flight of pigeons
Clad in a banyan and a white dhoti you leave to the roads
The sorrows of a man dwelling in the city of joy I know
O Bhariwala, don't your weary arms rest....

Arduously lifting the heavy water balance
From the water pump to the storage dump
You wail with pain after your duty and walk back to feed
your family
O Bhariwala, don't your weary arms rest....

All he reaps is a sum to feed his family and to tutor his kin
With the meager money he gets he is the rich humane I can
count

Just happy with this sum he quenches the thirst of
everyone

O Bhariwala, may your weary arms rest!



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



A RHYME IN THE CLOCK THING!

I wanted to write a poem that would rhyme
But try as I might I just couldn't in the clock thing
So I scratched my head and slapped my cheek
And thought to myself, this could take a month

So help me please, have I lost the plot
Rescue me quick before my blood doth thicken
I just can't seem to think of the words
To rhyme tonight have I gone to the flying things

Oh never mind, I'm sure you'll forgive
If I mess this up, my mind is a colander
Perhaps tomorrow, another day
Will bring restoration, then I'll shout Hip Replacement?



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



SIGNAGE

One of the two lads answer my usual till patter
his hands point out his ears and mouth.

I blip the shop through. Both lads speak
to one another with sign language.

Another queued customer asks whether
milk not on the conveyor belt is theirs. They nod.

I put the plastic divider between their shop
and the next. I point to carrier bags. They nod.

I don't know this language. As with foreigners
I get the gist. One brings out his card.

I touch the card symbol on the screen.

It processes. They leave.



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



www.pinterest.com

READING POETRY AT A COFFEE SHOP

It has been raining flowers all night long.

They are everywhere now, those violet and lemon and pale pink petals. On the wet tarmac and the car's metallic grey roof. Stuck under the sticky rubber of the wiper blades and the stone lined drain that runs along the road. There's one even on my tan-brown left shoe, and I cannot bring myself to peel it away. At least not yet.

At the café, as I taste the words that weave a poem, rolling the grain of metaphors on my tongue; listen closely to the hiss of a coffee machine, its breath swollen like a miniature cloud; and follow the barista's hand etching latte froth with a crooked heart, my thoughts keep returning to the pale pink petal making love to my left shoe.

Sometimes, I look up from my book; especially when I am sure of the words that follow and give the sparsely populated floor a once over.

An old man in the corner gazes out from one of the windows, watching the sky framed in a two-by-three glass pane. A couple on the centre-table sits in silence; that could be heavy or comfortable, depending largely on how you spent your day before coming here.

And you at the far end - your back pressed against the brick wall - keep stealing glances at the pale pink petal making love to my left shoe.

almost night

a stray curled around

its shadow



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.



Divide the world into two
Like you cut a watermelon
One half for women
Another for men
Each in their own space
The two can come together
Carnivals, festivals,
If they want
They can stay where they are
No obligations.

Equality

Sexual harassment

Fashion wear

Competitions

Performing to specifications

Rights and wrongs

Everything cut away with the division

Patriarchy

Structures

Deconstructing

Re-designing genders

Sexual orientations

One cut solves all.



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



Everything you like to see
Colours what you look at.
If a f*** is what you desire
Every woman, girl, child, nun
Will appear an object,
A prospective f***.

Now, if you'd like to colour
The need to f***
With patient romance,
Feel loved a little

Give it a righteous illusion,

You are worse.

Then there are those peacocks,

They parade talents, intellect,

Physique and tellable shams

To attract the unsung peahen

To mate with the desire

To be adored and to f***.

Ah, the impenetrable woman,

The kind to respond to character alone

No use of that one!

The outrightly unf***able woman,

You could respect her if you try

And see her through your soul's eye.



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



DADDY MINE

I was born on a balmy March evening,
as I cried lustily for being ousted out
Of my warm, dark nest. My Daddy touched

My cheek with his soothing, gentle hand.
That hand held mine as I began my journey
In life and held on to it as he left this world and started
His journey to the next.

God chose my Daddy for me, we were a good fit.
Daddy protected me, cherished me, nurtured me,
His princess, no one has made me feel that way

After you, Daddy. I have your gentle eyes,
everyone says. I inherited your low-key ways,
your silent patience,
even your diabetes, Daddy

My Daddy, my first love,
my hero whose heart broke as I boarded the long flight to
the country I migrated to with the next man who held my
hand in holy matrimony.

Thank you, dad, you made sure I was in good hands, he is
so much like you.

You will always be my Daddy, you are in Heaven

I don't get to see your gentle smile anymore, but the
thought

Of you always makes me give a say a prayer.

Thank God for the Dads of the world.



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



FOR WHAT THE BELL TOLLS

Gradual descent into silence like the
last notes on a violin, dropping in octave

To quietude.

The final chimes of Tom Tower sound
echoing over the stillness of the quaint cobblestones
that have weathered the trod of a thousand feet a day
as cameraphilic tourists ascend into the snap-happy heaven
of

point focus shoot

the dreaming spires.

The sounds of the night slowly pervade
as ears adapt to the ringing silence
after 101 chimes at precisely 5 minutes past the o'clock of
nine

a curfew for students...no more

in remembrance of the centum et unus students.

And then the deafening silence reigns supreme

Tom Tower: It is a bell tower (also called Great Tom) that is part of Christ Church College, University of Oxford. The Tower holds the loudest bell in Oxford that has been rung continuously every night since World War II. It chimes 101 times every night at 9:05 pm, signaling curfew time (although no longer is there a curfew) and also to signal the 100 students attached to the foundation by Henry VIII, plus the addition of one more student in 1663.



Nivedita Karthik: I am a poet residing in Chennai, India. I work as a Senior Quality Controller. My work has also been published in the journal of the Society of Classical Poets.



Musing

MITHYA

They call me a lie!

When I am perhaps the only truth –

The ever-changing phenomenon,

Where nothing exists, nothing is ever permanent.

Like the sun that changes all day,

The clouds that don't stay constant,

The moon that keeps waxing and waning,

The flowers that bloom and perish,

The trees that sprout and wither,

The waves that roar and crash,
Lives that are born only to die,
Friends who turn into enemies,
Foes who become friends,
Strangers who grow into lovers
Parted again by distance.
When change is the only constant,
The ground of the ever-varying universe,
Am I then just a lie,
For not being seemingly steady
In a world dictated by rhythmic inconsistency?



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



ACROSTIC

Marvellous will you call me
Over the land and the sea
I taking the spring's breeze
New like a day's lease
Arrive will I at your door?
Kite like as will I soar
Dashing down and then going up
Utterly beautiful will I stop
Traveling through clouds
Tied by string of no doubt
Arrive will I at your hands?



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



RAINBOW IN APRIL

April again,
the wind
falls in love with itself
skipping across asphalt
and concrete bare
with the breaking weather.

A rainbow
is half arched,
broken off deep
into the aorta
of gray sky.
It hangs

as if from
rubber bands
its mixed colors
drawn from God's
inkwell,
and brushed
by the fingertips
of Michelangelo.

April again,
the wind steps high.



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



THE CONFESSIONS OF A CITY-PHILE

The City can be a fever in the brain with
a need to open the door to get the daily fix.

The pulse of the traffic throbs in the veins,
The aroma from bistros is the life-breath.

There's a rush from watching the crowds

Exchanges on weather and cab -queues,

tossed casually like dressing on salads,

leave a pleasant after buzz: the safety

of knowing while remaining unknown..

Twinkling lights against the darkening sky

Switch on and off, like some complex code
evolved by a members of a mystifying club.
Sleep comes easy with awareness; this dance
returns at dawn with no new parts, or moves.



Maya Sharma Sriram: She is a full time poet and writer living in Mumbai India. Her work has appeared in an anthology and in many journals. She has also published a novel. She is an Elle Fiction Award Winner.



TRUTH

The truth is never black nor white,
nor square nor round,
nor cubic nor pyramidal,
nor an army of red ants,
not a clutch of clucking hens.

Nor a stutter of eyeless guns,
nor loaded deadly looks.

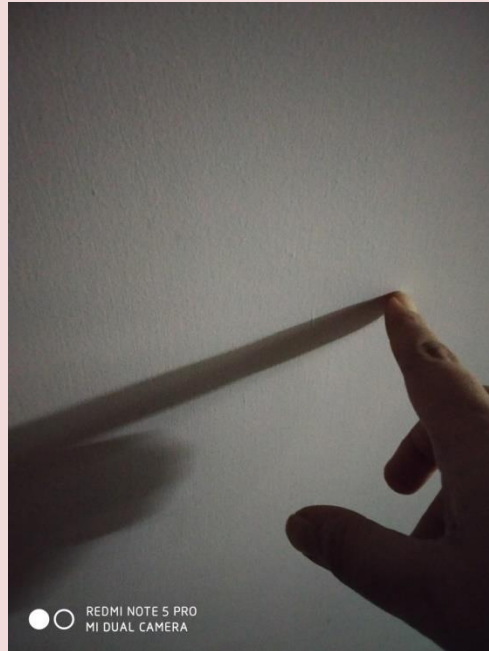
It's a momentary whorl in a placid sea,
a sudden chill on a torrid afternoon.

A leftover patch from a faded dream.

An inkling denied.



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.



STARS SHADOW!

Halo around, basking in cheers,
Smiling hypnotic spell on sphere!
The star stood shining bright,
Crouching was his shadow in dark and quiet!

Trotting nomads, hand in hand,
She followed him on all lands!
While it was all Sunny and gay,
She stood in the corner during the day!
Shielding him around, when crept the night,

Absorbing all dark, she protected his light!

Together they rejoiced,

Turmoil, they faced!

She reflected his entity,

He was her identity!

World saw him perform,

Unknown, she preserved his form!

Trotting nomads, hand in hand,

Shadow follows her star on land!



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



KRISHNA'S FLUTE

Walking down the alley,
Krishna with his flute
plays inside my heart,
raaga bihaaga,
whose notes
pour over me
drops of swati*,
his gleaming face,
a gilded blue night,
a moonlit shadow,
smiles at me from
a distance,

his lips part like
two noons,
two copper coins,
clinking inside a temple,
his eyes pour over me,
butterflies emerging
from a maze
of flowers,
gliding up and down,
dropping into my soul
the entire cosmos,
their paths today,
have aligned
to my jeevan chakra*
that too spins to
the music of his flute.

swati a constellation whose drop*

is considered pure.

jeevan chakra the circle of life*



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



I'D DO SO MANY THINGS!

I'd

visit your mind

that's clogged by

too many details

in the form of

pages thickly populated

with words and underlining.

I'd

travel down your

gullet and settle

in your heart
like dust settles
on window sills.
Silently, without notice.

I'd
diffuse myself in the air
surrounding you
like a navigating
molecule
in your perfume

I'd
measure the
arc of your smile
that forms when

you consciously

feel the cliché

in my love



Mahitha Kasireddi: She is from Hyderabad, India. She had been a writer with the online magazine Youth Ki Awaaz. She is a former content director at Campus Diaries. Her poems have been published in literary journals such as GloMag, The Ink Drift Magazine, Unbound Emagazine and the Telegram Magazine by the Talking Books, Delhi and in The New Indian Express. She is the writing finalist of the Campus Diaries 25 Under 25 2016 National Contest. She's certified by the University of Iowa for completing the International Writing Program MOOC on how writers write fiction 2016: Storied Women. Her poems are also to be published in an anthology by Author Press India called Women Poetess: Within and Beyond Shore.



POETIC

I lay awake with the peeping moon and my thoughts of you,
it's midnight and the world sleeps, but the stars tease and
trickles the dew

Tickling and catalyzing my thoughts as they travel towards
you, across the walls and barnes

Yes I can write about you, the dew and the stars above
or about my entire being in love.

Love filled emotions change into life
watch them paint a colorful picture inside

or lift you up to the starlit sky,
my sanguine love remitted to your eyes
without sacrificing my love nor name
My passions flit unaffected through your fame
I the poet dreams on, ecstatically exclaims!



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



VIBES

When vibes are reciprocal
souls connects at a level deep

Brilliantly

Exhilaratingly

Consciously, taking a peep

Wondering at the obligations

appraisals at par

Some closely knit, yet so far

Few distantly though

share covalent bond

It's all about

the affiliation and cohesiveness we share

Life's ongoings, its virtues so unique

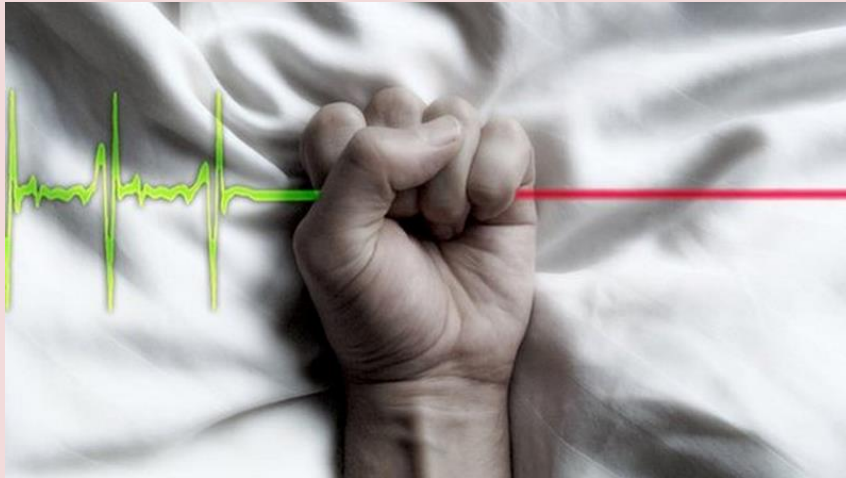
Wondrous criss-crossed

amplicable of lives

Peripherals of ensuring times



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



SUICIDE – IS A CRIME.

Unlike every crazy teen blood,
the term SUICIDE notch through its knock
I firmed an idea that to escape from difficult knob
Suicide or hurting thyself is the best option for each bud
We friends use to discuss about its methodology
With curiosity and intensity.
Home work not done,
Low percentage in internals or final examination,
Failure in love redemption
To convince or prove any person
Suicide is the best option.

I got to change my thoughts

When I survived from the suicidal shot

On the verge of desperation, I opted to

slit my wrist to get away from the riff

I survived but lost...my image, sensation from my limb.

Instead of running away from the situation

I ended messing up my position

To a timid personality, mentally imbalanced

Less trustworthy to balance any gravity.

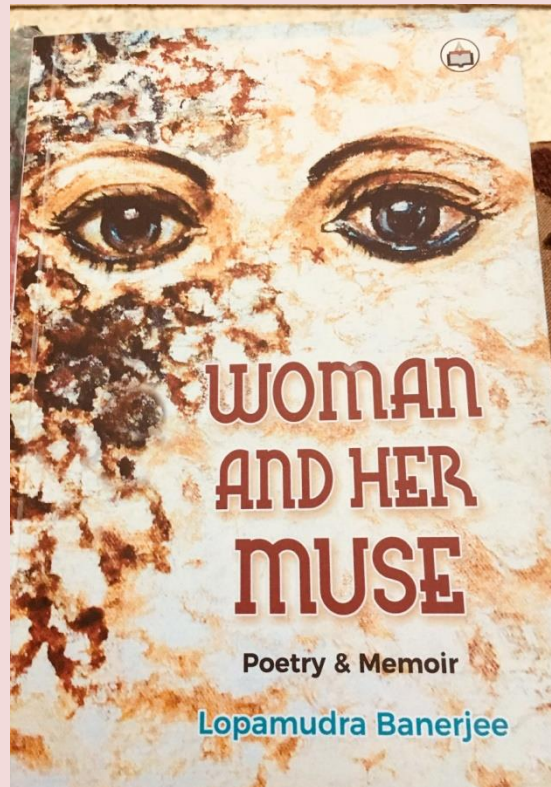
Life is a GOD's gift, facing the rift is our brevity

each ladder is not bed of rose, we have to be brave which
crossing the thorn

We are the blessed soul, why then SUICIDE be our goal.



Lopamudra Mishra: She is a native of Puri, now residing in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Her poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies. Her first book “Rhyme Of Rain” was published in march 2017; her second book “First Rain” in August 2017, and her third book, Tingling Parables in May 2018.



MARRIAGE

It's the quiet before the windy day

A strange meditation, a pause, a conjecture.

You breathe freely, then dense, make love with a
negotiable passion,

Then, the slam, killing you softly, then in sudden bursts

In the salt and pepper, the recycled vacations, the heavy
clogs

The light bulbs dying, one by one.

The husband

Like a constant weather pattern
The wife
Like an overflowing cloud
Dying in a deluge, then forming again.
The navigation, turbulent and tricky,
Not to forget, every wall has mirrors.
In the grassy patch where you both lay,
Your mouths are rancid with abscess
Reeking with unexplained wants,
Wasted efforts, but eventually, it stops hurting.
All is well, he grabs you quickly, hugs you
And you moan beside him, half-asleep,
Losing yourself in his shores,
Contemplating a mug of steaming tea
The birth of your first child,
The zygote, fertilized, that went awry,
And then, it's again the quiet before the windy day
You drift away, and dream, a tumult of remarkable range.



Lopamudra Banerjee: I am an author, poet, editor and translator based in Dallas, Texas, USA. I have published one memoir, one poetry anthology, one translation, and co-edited two fiction anthologies and one poetry anthology. I have also received The International Reuel Prize for Poetry in 2017 and The International Reuel Prize for Translation in 2016.



KNOWLEDGE

It's not as important to me
who burned most of the books in Alexandria
as it is who decided what was saved.

Learning and growing,
I am becoming more aware
of the falsity of some truths.

Living and praying,
I am mastering the art

of staying standing
as I pass through hostile ranks.

Knowing that engraved in memory,
as deep as a swift stream
silently flowing underground,
there lies the knowledge I need
to leave the darkness behind.



Linda Imbler: She is an internationally published poet. Her poetry collections include “Big Questions, Little Sleep,” “Lost and Found,” and “The Sea’s Secret Song.” Her newest e-book “Pairings” is due out soon. She is a Kansas-based Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net Nominee. Linda’s poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com.



STAND UP AND SAY SOMETHING

Open your mouth

And speak

Your story might give someone strength

Who's feeling weak

Somebody somewhere

Want to give up on their marriage

Maybe a teenager

Just had a miscarriage

A child or woman

Are being abused

Or our youth

Are for some reason confused

A young man wants to join a gang

Or a young woman wants to be a prostitute

So how can you

Put yourself on mute

A family might have just lost

Everything they own

Or someone feeling trapped

And all alone

A family might have lost

A loved one

A dad, mum, nephew, niece,

Cousin, daughter or son

Many lives can be saved

Through your story

Start doing it

And give God the glory

So if you found healing

In what others are now facing

I urge you

To stand up and say something



Leroy Abrahams: Leroy is a poet who lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. He is currently working for the church, Victory Ministries International and also volunteers and enjoys hospital visits because there he prays for the sick and encourages them. Most of his poems are

autobiographical and serve as a warning to the young and Christians who are facing tough times. Verse en Inspirasie is his first anthology.



CACTUS AFFAIR

a Kiran Komail poem

To love the rose is but an easy job

Carved perfection is this huesd snob.

Too glorified is its beauty

Little if not no depth I see.

Yet in every lover, every romance, every misery

It makes an appearance no matter how unnecessary.

A sham it hides

For in roses there is love denied.
But to love a cactus is not easy
The succulent has no room for cheesy.
Barbed and brittle it promises you nothing
From the beginning it guarantees no bluffing.
The rose but lives for a day or two
But with cactus it's a longer ado.
"Care for yourself," it says through its thorns
"Love me little but love me strong."
Because without pain there cannot be love
A cactus demands pain, all above.
Not beautiful yet such pride
A cactus but reminds us of our hindsight.
It says not "I love you," But it stays...
It hates not. Never strays.
But to love a cactus you must first love the rose
Let its deceiving petals fall at the smallest blows
Once the last of its petals has fallen

And you are left nothing but a fool

You can love a cactus

You can love it with a simple rule –

Love isn't just the hues, the glamour or just the romance

It's the thorns and the inner demons you ask for a dance.



Kiran Zehra Komail: She is a poet living in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She works for Rotary News as the Sub Editor of the English and Hindi magazine. Travel, gourmet and people to her are intriguing. Her poems and sketches are her theorem – simple yet deep and humble.



THE RAINBOW OF LOVE

"Marriage should be between a spouse and a spouse, not a gender and a gender." ~ Hendrik Hertzberg

She cupped her neck in her palms

And ran her kiss from her forehead to chin

And stayed on her lips the longest

“They might say we stole the rainbow from god

But it was ours all the time because

yesterday we had a nine hour rainbow

The longest lasting rainbow ever

Ours is a natural sexual orientation

Our love is a legitimate social event”

The Indian top court said Yes
And the sky gave the longest bow
In seven colours of gender
In seven colours of sexual orientation
Lest our preference for particular genitals
Does not turn into a cissexist fetish

Love is between two persons
Not necessarily two genders
Marriage is a relationship
Not a religious vow

Marriage is about love and space
Not about sex, gender and religion
Marriage is not for reproduction
Nor a consequence of reproduction

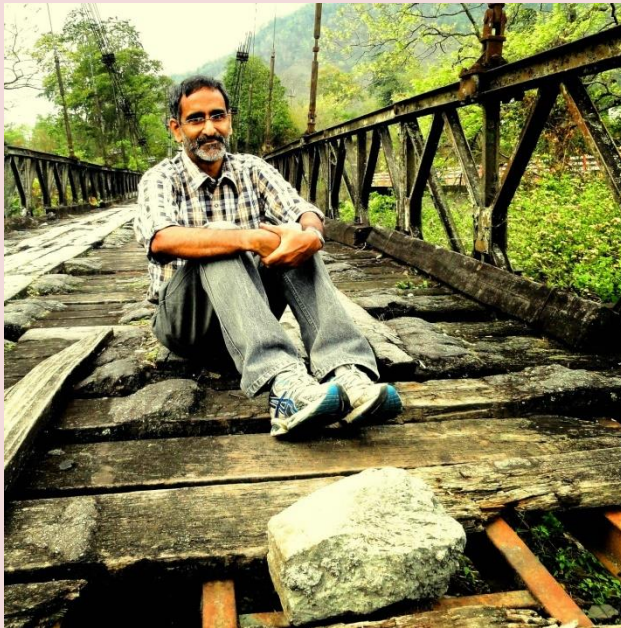
Marriage is not threatened by gay couples

Nor by marriage equality

But by a lack of loving commitment

Turning many marriages into loveless deserts

The acceptance of homosexuality as a natural sexual orientation (which has been medically and scientifically established), same sex relationship (gay/lesbian union) as a normal social romantic practice, and same sex marriage as a valid legal family norm is simply a validation of our human values and our commitment to live our lives with the spirit of logic, reason and scientific temper, without bias and prejudices, without sexism and racism, without irrationality and superstitions.



Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur). He is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”,

welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.



SONNET 16, SEPTEMBERS SONG

In the foggy nights of late September.

As the bugs have faded away, the leaves
fall in breezes then soar about and play.

Laughing and gliding on down to the ground,
some spin like helicopters, round and round.

The cat watches intently through the mist,
reserved in his thoughts for a warmer day.

A little field mouse works to build a nest
takes time at night for a well-deserved rest.

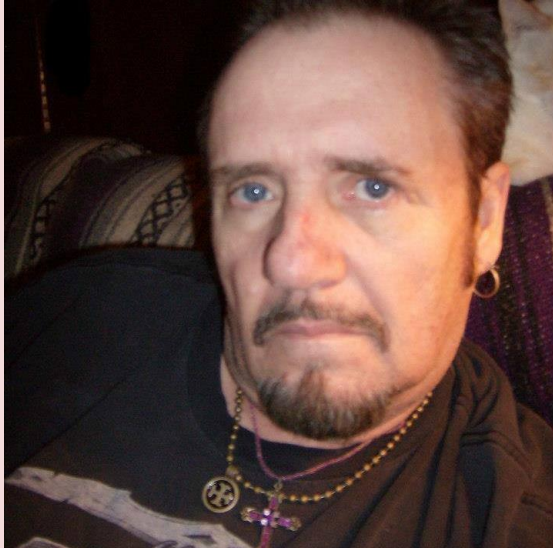
Night birds are silent, preparing for flight.

To temperate climates and warm sunlight.

I hear geese flying off in their huge flocks.

Wonder when it's time to turn back the clock?

My pumpkin smiles during Septembers Song.



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



good, good in good, good

i lost in fiber my thoughts

the crass drowned pull of something in my
back smile, the bad left side.

the squirrel of it, take my nose,
for example: the eye. good good good.

Excitement. What dried, down clown
sorry, even extrapolate

I think of one forlorn thing. What was it in you?

Did what balance take under our shades? A sanctuary...

A church... A summer. Summers.

And one yet raptures what can not take us.



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



FALL EQUINOX

Morning light reveals
silhouettes of branches
against a dove grey sky.

Wearing red, orange,
yellow leaves, trees
begin dancing,
sashaying in the wind.

Countless shades of leaves,
shapes of leaves,
sounds of leaves.

Hurry, pick gardens of bright
vegetables. Time to cook
big pots of soup, yeasty breads.

Children come from school
jumping in piles of foliage
shouting with delight.

Flying carpets of sugar maple
leaves unfurl along our road
as frost draws closer.

Amazing how many stars
fit inside my windowpane
alongside an autumn moon.



Joan McNerney: Her poetry has been included in numerous literary magazines such as Seven Circle Press, Dinner with the Muse, etc. 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.



I CAN'T MAKE THIS SHIT UP

Every day I see fools fighting
arguing over politics
the people that do not give a shit about you
the people that are legally robbing you blind
the red Republican
hates the blue Democrat
they fight over views
and stupid ass news.

I can't make this shit up
the shit cup is filling up
the arguments

the bickering
that gets them nowhere
I can't make this shit up
it's hard to believe that millions
are so moronically unaware
going through life thinking these people will help us
if we died today
they would take everything we made
I can't make this shit up.

Watch as they become richer
with their fake promises and lies
watch as we become poorer
and many millions more die
children starving
women crying
fathers dying
to save their lives

while the wealthy politicians
continue to thrive
what a sad sad time we live in.

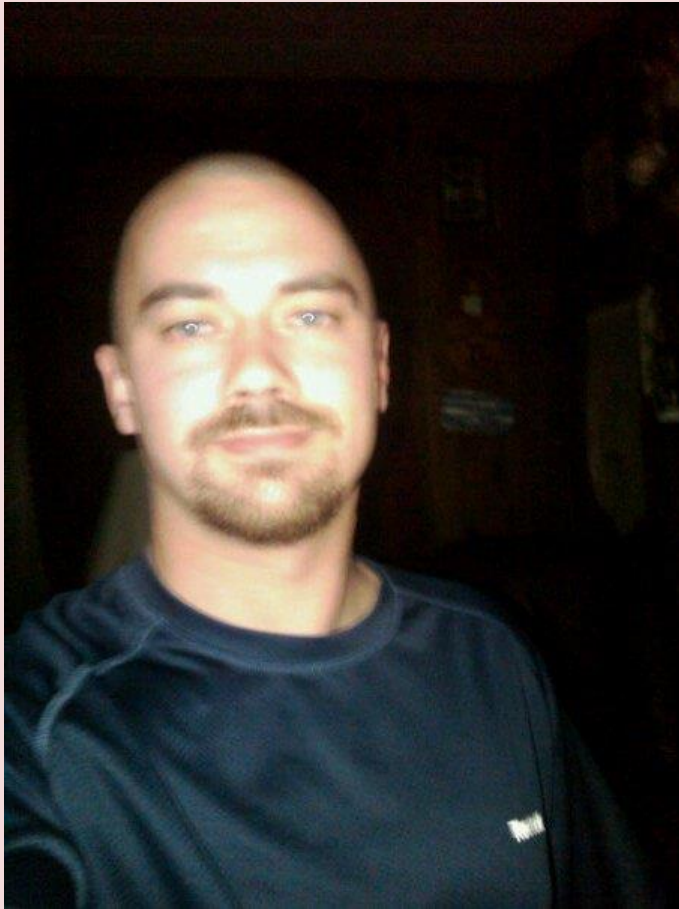
I can't make this shit up
the shit cup is filling up
the arguments
the bickering
that gets them nowhere
I can't make this shit up
it's hard to believe that millions
are so moronically unaware
going through life thinking these people will help us
if we died today
they would take everything we made
I can't make this shit up.

Vote for me!

I'll change the world
then does nothing
Vote for me!
I'll help the poor
then walks right by them
in these streets of war
the suffering doesn't matter
because it is not them
but they will wear that fake smile
til the very end
then fly away safely in their private jets
leaving everyone else to die
in their nonsense.

I can't make this shit up
the shit cup is filling up
the arguments
the bickering

that gets them nowhere
I can't make this shit up
it's hard to believe that millions
are so moronically unaware
going through life thinking these people will help us
if we died today
they would take everything we made
I can't make this shit up.



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.



IMPORTANCE OF FOOD

My nutritious and healthy food

Thanks God for giving me food

It gives me energy all the day

To live life in different tastes

To smell the dew drops

And play my guitar

Read my books

Scribble my poems

Travel the world

To work and perform my duties

I am too grateful

To experience 'food'

The source of energy

Which helps me well

Enjoy each and every shade of life

With an incongruous & bubbling energy!!



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



TO ARSH

Fairy tales wrote me off as evil
for such was the role handed by Fate.
You are the son I never had.
Your eyes, two small amber jewels
your father's replica be
and intrigued me, made me glad.
So many hours I have spent
looking at your photos, holding them close
to my bleeding heart, my face awash
with loss and longing for what I could not hold.
Your infant expression, so keen

impressed on me what your father
might have been in his own mother's fold.

The closest I came to being a mom
was through you.

And when the tectonic plates shifted,
my world lay crushed around me;
I knew that you were gone,
your father was free.

Arsh my azizam!

A stepmother's grief is no less intense
(just) because it wasn't meant to be.



Jagari Mukherjee: She is a writer from Kolkata, India. She has an MA in English Literature from the University of Pune, and was awarded a gold medal and several prizes by the University for excelling in her discipline. Her writings, both poetry and prose, have appeared in several newspapers, magazines, anthologies, and blogs. Her first book, a collection of poems entitled *Blue Rose*, was published in May 2017 by Bhashalipi. She is a Best of the Net 2018 nominee, a Bear River alumna, and the winner of the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2018 (book review).



ELOQUENT SILENCE

Silence is eloquent,
Is a golden moment,
Speaks volumes.

Silent moments---
Tranquil, peaceful, calm----
Everyone enjoys, relishes.

True,
Absence of words, is silence.
But, The fact is ---

Unspoken, unheard words
Are conveyed most effectively.

Silence, for a response,
May be calm before storm--
Still waters run deep.

Outburst, barrage of words---
An outlet---Restless, agitated mind.
Calm, composed, peaceful---
Inner tranquility----Silent mind.

Humans should strive for----
Inner silence
Of mind--- Cosmic ----
The Ultimate Silence.



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



PATHFINDER

Mountains turn into valleys and valleys into rivers

Life is a flow, it goes on gushing with lovers,

Dust it is, within fleeting moment changes its face

Sometimes diamond sometimes naught but a grace.

Water we can fetch from this moving river

But in a pot we can curb its current never,

How to flow through the different paths, skill it knows

Before any barrier it knows not, how to bow!

In whatsoever direction it wishes to travel
From beginning to the end, it's a journey of marvels,
Loughs, peaks or seas whatever comes, it embarks
Under its feet lies the rope of Noah's Ark.

Through the deserts and the wilderness, it passes
Sun in the palm of the hand with sunset it rises.



Imran Yousuf: He is a Poet/Writer/Columnist residing in Anantnag, J&K India. He works as Columnist and Journalist. He has contributed to various magazines, journals and international anthologies. He had written a series of articles

about great Sufi Poets of valley Kashmir (starting from 14th century) published in various newspapers and magazines which he is compiling in a book now and hopefully will be releasing soon.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtEYqX7bhMU>

TO YOU

To God, who

Cut off my prayers

To the words that

Forsaken its meanings

To the bitterness that

Blossomed in the sweetness

To the death that
Gave birth to me again

To the oblivion that
Suffocated my memories

To the daylight that
Drowned my dream of you

To the breeze that
Fetched away your fragrance

To the rains that
Burned my desires

To the snow that
Chilled my wishes

To the floods that
Inundated my thoughts

I call your name, Poem
And sign off as I am
Not born to be yours....



Haneefa C.A.: I would like to be a poet. I work as an English Teacher (HSST) Government Higher Secondary School, Kattilangadi, Tanur, Malappuram, Kerala, India. I have not published my poems till the date, but post them in my FB account.



ARCHIPELAGO

warm summer nights

measured by the light of the silky moon

palm trees charming the night

like erotic dances swaying their bodies

in sensual enticement

exquisite soothing fragrances,

carried ashore by the cool sea breeze

gently sweeping over the Archipelago

withered by ancient storms

remnants of a volcanic eruption

a million eons ago

evolved to an archipelago

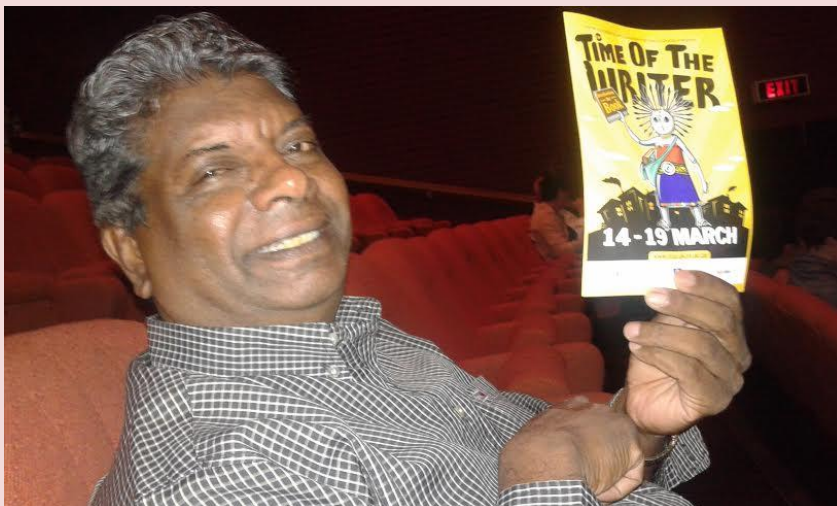
beautiful serene a paradise on earth

my Archipelago surrounded by the sea
speaks to my soul

you left so long ago
devoid of the burdens
of reciprocating my love
you said your body and soul
felt trapped and surrounded by the ocean
you could not see the mountains
from my Archipelago
you wanted more from life
than I could offer you
you wanted a glamorous life
under alluring neon lights

I watch the horizon from the tiny harbour
for your ship that left my world
with the hope you might return

i must confess
i am in denial, i refuse to believe
that you have forsaken me for good
on this lonely island Archipelago
perhaps your travels have
taken you far away my love
and fate has led you to a new life
in a big city with its glittering lights
and you have found glitz and glamour
to make your life complete
and i am just a memory
on this lonely forgotten Archipelago



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.



WHAT WRITING IS LIKE

Writing is like

there's no monday, tuesday, wednesday, thursday, friday, saturday, sunday

it's like there's no 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock....12 o'clock

there's no morning, mid-morning, mid-afternoon, evening...

there's no like from 1 pm to 6 pm

cause that's the time your brain won't work

"there's no like i can beat this, i can do it

nothing is impossible"

cause writing will go haaa! haaa! haaaa!!
as you stare blankly into space
writing is like don't have pets
you never know when you'll have to walk out on them
writing is like don't be regular dude
if you're gonna do a program every sunday,
that's when you're gonna be wanting to write
writing can be so many cups of coffee?
writing is like your live in partner who can ditch you
anytime
writing is like count backwards from 5 and you'll get going
so here goes : 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, zzzzzzzz.....
g'night!



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.



MythFox

SMOCK

I leave behind fading footsteps on millions of grains of
sands,

Earth with bent head her aging scalp fettered over
journeyed lands,

Where I reached with my mind faster than my feet,

In a pilgrimage I embarked upon in alien lands in every
street.

Barely remembering how I came to be who I am,

Although my eyes tell me stories of souls' whose names I
forget.. damn!

But fragments of seen scenes float around,
Words of languages like miming puppets in my word bank
abound,

Accumulating thoughts I don't really want,
But they pop up in superlatives garish in every possible
font,
Chattering in my head when I seek a silence,
I must say this head of mine has a weird resilience!

These wind mills spin raking up dust of births lived far and
yonder,

While I've soared coast to coast, mountain to valleys of
which I ponder,

Imprinting themselves in a cloud embedding as newsfeed,
This my soul in pursuit of a paradise I lost a fleeting steed,

My neck straining towards skies gone and still drifting,
As I still cross-legged my being endlessly stretching,

How many more mock Heavens will I knock,
Till I know paradise is deep seated right behind my smock.



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



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waves of
unpredictability
crash against rocks,
lay hidden beneath,
with certainty,
as whirls.

they growl, roar, whisper
ancient secrets,
in strains, as woes,
crashing into pieces,

with the retiring sun
on slow descent.

Moments pass.

a background music
in chorus
closes in, in circles,
getting louder,
louder and louder,
churning the insides,
that's history or future
woven in stories
in brilliant colours,
in layers,
getting faded, erased.



Geeta Varma: She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling.



THE RIVER SINGS

The river silently flows into me
As I stare at the reclining sunrays
Darkness crawls into the earth
Proclaiming the end of a day
The day may be over
May be the lively hours are gone
It's time to turn over a new leaf
from the variegated tree of life
A new walk in the eternal journey
A new day will rise to tell
About our love

As beautiful as the sunrise and the sunset

As real as the undying river

The river sings an endless song

Tuning to the rhythm of my soul

Slowly it enters into me and echoes

in the valley of heart

Fills my lonely hours

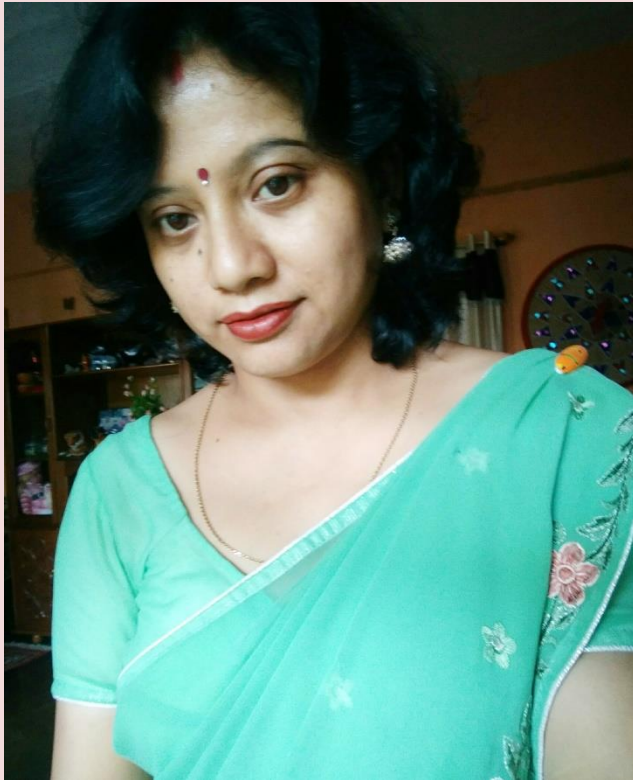
With love and contentment

A whisper swirls in the air,

"Not to fear unborn tomorrows

When we can live a life

In a handful of times..."



Gayatree G Lahon: She is a poet from Assam. She did her masters in English Literature from Gauhati University and presently working as a teacher. Poetry is her passion. She draws inspiration from nature, love and the beauty and complexities of life. Her poems have been published in newspapers, anthologies and magazines, in India and in foreign countries too.



It is me

Behind the shadow

For anyone who cares to see

Or dares

I would be scared

To look behind one

It could be you

It could be him

It could be no one

It could be the face

Or the body without a face

Maybe a ghost

Or the host

Carrying one

It could be the eyes

Or the blind man with eyes

An empty stare

Or the snare of the devil

Something evil

Or maybe the God

Waiting for us to falter

Or the faith

Hoping to alter

Our fabric

They don't call shadows ominous for nothing



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.



INTERLOCK

I find you locked into my embrace

Eyes closed

But your chin faced up towards me

I find you clutching my arms

With zillion of dreams clouding your mind

Just like floating silver bubbles

That will rise up like sprinkles all around

I find you seeking refuge

Wishing you would walk along on your own

Without seeing red through turbulent times
Honey, I will embrace every obstacle
To let you bloom every sunshine
Together we shall invite
Moments of evergreen joys
Where I would be your voice
Your words will resonate inside countless hearts
While remaining an indispensable companion always
rooting for you



Elvira Lobo: She is an avid blogger and has penned her debut "Its My Life - A poetic journey from No one to Someone" and recent The Revelation as an author. She is a keen enthusiast and a budding poet who paints an empty canvas with her verses that nudge your very heartstrings. She has many of her works published both at the national and international level in different anthologies.



FACADE

Yesterday
she met
with the past.

She was hoping
that she was gone into oblivion.
Now she knows that she will not be silent.
Those days still entice.

On a short, one-way
—like life—street

she wanted to see an old house
with a wall that was marked
by her love.

Someone was renovating the façade.

He painted over the signs
and shouted from above:

do not worry, it'll be fine!

The same words she has heard before,

but

this voice sounded different:

do not worry, it'll be fine.

On the wall

of a townhouse without a future

there was no more sign of time.

On a short, one-way
—like life—street
one can paint over words,

but there is no paint
for erasing memory.



Eliza Segiet: I am a poet, playwright, residing in Cracow, Poland. I work as philosopher. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published (drama, five poetry anthologies). Author's poem "Questions" was the Publication of the Month (August 2017) and the International Publication of the Year (2017) in Spillwords Press.



MISTRESS MINE

She intrudes, unbidden, insistent.

And, unamused am I, as I anticipate

the sleepless nights

of groping --poking -- stroking

through darkneses and light,

through darkneses and light,

until, satiated, she abandons.

And, emptied like a snakeskin,

sucked grapeskin dry,

anxiously I await our next assignation.

Be she succubus

or be she muse,
matters not to me.



Duane Vorhees: After teaching for the University of Maryland University College in Korea and Japan for decades, Duane Vorhees retired to Thailand before returning to his native Farmersville, Ohio, in the US. He is currently rehearsing for a local charity comedy and is the proprietor of duanespoetree.blogspot.com, a daily e-zine devoted to the creative arts.



WINDMILLS IN MY MIND

Blurred Lines – Crunched memories hinder my elected
existential opportunities

causing my moral compass to rotate uncontrollably as I
privately confess my

rebellious existence fighting unwelcome emotional demons
hindering my true

being to emerge even for just a moment but my reality is
blurred blinded burnt

and battered whilst I try to stop these windmills in my mind
turning churning...

Runaway Rotation – As much as I try to conform to a forced norm of

stipulated stringent ridiculous rules written by a generation from a bygone era

I do not feel I am really here as my mind is madly swirling from multiple voices

puncturing my brittle mind, making me rapidly disintegrate losing my inner halo.

I need to focus if I am to survive this reeling runaway rotation turning turning...

Suspended Stasis – Am I still here? Silence has descended all around me. I am

weightless trying to exist in this mental abyss with no bright light at the end of

this torturous tunnel. Is this how it is meant to feel when everyone and everything

is making me heel to a pre-ordained caged existence with no chance of being who

I was meant to be? I need to focus on altering my suspended stasis, this weightless

existence and anchor my own existential foundations from
renewed building

materials if I am to become relevant, appreciated,
significant, loved...

Just Breathe – I know that I have to climb these daunting
steps I fell off from once

again, even though my feet have just touched this earth
once more to start a new

journey after my destined spiralling inferno which nearly
scorched my remaining

essence but these steps have changed, I have had to
change. I now know that only I

have to initiate this change. My cadaver feet are moving
forward but although I

cannot feel them, I am battling not to look back even for
moment, as an unknown

familiar darkness awaits me beyond these steps I now
ascend. Each step echoes my

former languishing lament mocking my renewed vigour,
questioning my urge for

renewal after a lifetime of upheaval. I hear a soothing
guiding voice from within

the darkness strengthening me, “Believe be brave, only you
can own your earthly

destiny but to ensure your deserved longevity take the leap
– Just breathe...



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

'Esorfo Ygolirt/Trilogy of Rose'. His debut South African publication is due in August 2018 in a unique anthology with three prominent South African poets.

Fin Sorrel: is the founding editor for Mannequin Haus (Infii2.weebly.com) He is the author of Caramel Floods (Pski Porch, 2017) and Sand Library (ABP, 2018)



THE VERSES OF THE MYTHS

(1)

It's nothing but a myth

Your imagined reality

That I love you and I really do.

Ah! The arc light that you focus on me

That's real, it really is

But the warmth I feel that you believe

Is nothing but a myth

Your imagined reality.

The petals of the red roses

That I bring you everyday

Are already dead or were never alive

The freshness that you feel

Is nothing but a myth

Your imagined reality.

The series of love myths

Your imagined realities

Of the ever romantic world

With its share of hurrahs and pains

Exists only inside the wonderland

Called mind inside your head.

(2)

These are only a few verses of the myths

A series of imagined realities

Of the golden era in which humans live

Live to believe and believe to live.



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



THE LIFE IN MY EYES

A writer is nothing without a hand.

A thinker is nothing without a voice, without a pen.

I am nothing without you.

You are closer to me

Than the intima is to an artery.

You are my ink, my pen, my hand,

My blood, my heart.

You are the life in my eyes

The texture of my skin

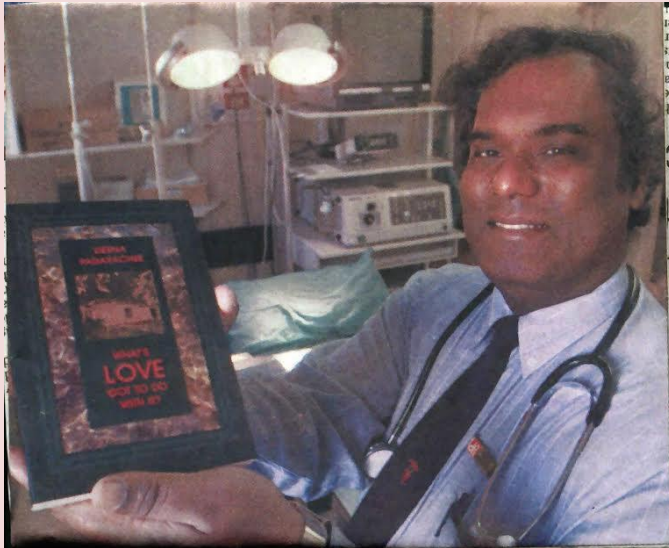
The oxygen in my lungs
The sweetness on my tongue.

You loved me more than
I have ever known.

You made me come alive like rising golden light
in the darkness of a surreal dawn.

We made the night iridescent
With the sultry softness of your mouth
Your slim feminine fingers,
Your beautiful, loving voice,
And with our love.

Your passion ignited my life,
Your love made my steps lighter.
Your elixir of empathy
Made possible this poem.



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



WRITE UP - THE NAKED HERMIT

The sun lingered in the west horizon descending deep into the dancing moana. And there he stood naked on the elongated littoral gold. Solitude penetrates his soul and the abundance of life force within diffuses his aura all over the deserted island. The eminent evinces of the civilisation are faintly relevant to him now and life obtain significance only on this abandoned outspread of Green. He had once witnessed the barbaric ramifications of civilisation on the streets of Nagasaki and resolute to forgo all the contributions of civilisation fade away from his life forever. If civilisation is taking a decision of launching an atomic weapon on a city and wiping out its whole population then he chose to embrace the most primitive way of living in this forsaken island. Sleeping every night in a diminutive wooden cabin in the middle of nowhere with all the threats

of getting bitten by ophidians makes him feel less vulnerable than in a cozy bed of any apartment. Snakes or any other animals couldn't be a menace to humanity only humans are the real peril to humanity. No animal ever attacks a human without reason it is man who assail man unprovoked solely driven by their selfish motives. So he feels the ultimate serenity right at the heart of this lonely island and his sole wish is to die on this island getting swept by a typhoon. Finding a place to die is an important thing to do and he found one. It would be a perfect death for a hermit like him to die on a heaven he found here in Sotobanari. Without a soul being there to rescue him life will come to its flawless end in the womb of Mother Nature.

He used to be a photographer but his quest of life remained unanswered until he found the place to castaway himself voluntarily. Here life is simple running on the rules of nature. He never felt the absence of any companion never felt bored or sad because here life doesn't allow you to cradle such romanticism here life is way more practical here life runs on the rules of nature. One has to obey the rules to survive as there is no way you can make the nature to change it for you. Life swirls here with strict series of chores. Starting with stretching underneath the soft rays of morning sun followed by the cleaning of the seashore and

then cooking and eventually the cleansing of his tent before the darkness unfurls over the island. This island has changed him into a vegan. Killing animals or fish for food doesn't get the approval of his heart anymore. He even leaves the vast spread of tortoise eggs lying all over the island untouched. He had seen their transformation to baby turtles and their crawling to the sea and every time he sees it, it gives him goosebumps.

It's almost three decades now that he has been living his life into the complete isolation of Mother Nature and he can't even think of going back to civilisation anymore. Here he enjoys absolute freedom no one is here to remind him of the mandates of civilisation even clothes are not obligatory on this archipelago. He used to clothe himself in his early years on this island but once losing all his clothes in a wipe-out by the typhoon he realised clothes are totally irrelevant to his place. Nature doesn't teach us to wear clothes, it is our sinful soul which burdens us with the necessity of covering ourselves. Now dwelling along the water edges with his bare body he feels united with the nature as an inseparable part of it. Naked he braves his encounters with typhoons and biting insects. No lighter no telephone not even a drop of fresh water but Masafumi managed his survival well on this island. An occasional visit to the nearby mainland for resources like food and water is

enough for him to keep on his own on this deserted island for decades. This proves man needs little to survive and the rest is just luxury.

(82 years Masafumi Nagasaki lived 29 years on a deserted island of Japan named Sotobanari but finally last month the government of Japan forced him back to civilisation due to his poor health condition and didn't permit him to go back again)



Debjani Mukherjee: is a MBA in applied management with a mind lay bared to soak up every occurrence around her and pour it down on paper. She is a sensitive soul to feel and understand the world and captivate it into her words.



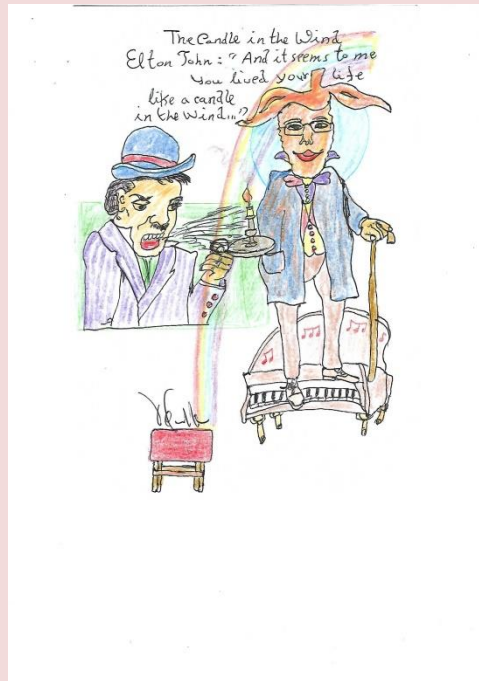
IF THERE IS A RIVER #7

the rose burns in the sun we are the rose we we we have
counted on our beauty to save us without understanding
that each of our petals is meat and no meat left in the field
makes

it to the river without being carried in the teeth of an
animal



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 CANDLE IN THE WIND

This is the story

Of a light

Back when there were few

Men on Earth

Light and electricity industry

And Wo/Men

Took great care of their candles.

Using in their defense

To face the mysteries of the night

To place by the day
At the foot of prints and imagery
To help them
Carrying their heavy load
Of daily life.

It happened, one day
that a certain Zagan
He was a farmhand
And worked by the herd
For a gentleman from Requena de Campos
In the Palencia's province
He came to a covered place
On a street or square
Built on pillars
Bringing a candle in his hand

To walk or to get rid
Of the Moon of the shadows

When, suddenly, from somewhere
An air came to him in movement

Even if
It was at rest
That brought smelling as a trace
Leaving the hunting pieces
Or the bullet's gap

In the bore of the firearm
It turned off the candle
And it turned it off again

When he tried to light it
And that suddenly touching his nape

As it usually does
In the bone that dogs have
Between the ears
Said inside his mind:
- To whomever goes out at night and watches the wind:
Nothing is revealed
At night all cats are brown
And what is done at night
In the morning seems
Only a thought.



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



ATLAS

The weight of the world on my shoulders

Never gets easier to bear.

I hold this accursed of boulders,

And try not to look like I care.

I grasped to snatch great Zeus's power

To set myself upon his throne

So now with groans and sweat I cower

So now ring aches in every bone.

Pride pays its price; I'm paying in full,

The Titan who would crush the gods,

During my task I start to mull

The strokes of Heaven's beating rods.
My burden I must bear at all times,
No I can't shrug, no I can't flee,
She insists that I suffer for my crimes -
That hag responsibility.



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.



MANNEQUIN

Tired of standing so long
dressed in the best
male mannequin
proposed to his female counterpart
that night when the shop closed
they eloped.



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.



JOHNNY AND ME

In the forest by the sea
live little Johnny and me
I tell him stories
He gives me cookies
He asks his friends to come
in the house by the sea and sun
Warm vibes and laughter and delight
marks Johnny's life with mine
One day he shows me his treehouse
We watch the moon light up the house
Then Johnny and me
we fish and make merry
I buy him the toys he wants

He talks to me man to man

So for my son Johnny

I am best father Nateee



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



TRAFFICKERS

T rade

R ight

A round the globe

F or

F inancial gain

I llegally and

C ontinuously

K idnapping

I nnocent kids

N octurnal

G offers

We have to put a stop to it.



Bradley Joseph Kamfer: He is an aspiring poet who was born in Windvogel, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He attended Die Heuwel Primary and matriculated at Bethelsdorp Comprehensive High in 2014. He is 24 years old and is currently employed in a company called Lear Corporation. He works as a multi-skilled operator. He only recently started writing poetry, about 2 months ago. His long-term goal is to write his own book or books. He is hard working and very ambitious and is looking to attain all his future goals. bradleykamfer@outlook.com



TWO STAIRWAYS

The first greets those who promenade
through the foyer to a sunken

living room; its steps—wide with
carpeted tread—ease beneath gilded panels

lined with portraits of staid patriarchs
long dead. Bright red lips brush fair cheeks,

besitos de cultura alto,
as these elegant guests parade

through the living room past a massive
dining table and walls affixed

with innocuous ceramic buttons,
doorbell fixtures to summon the help

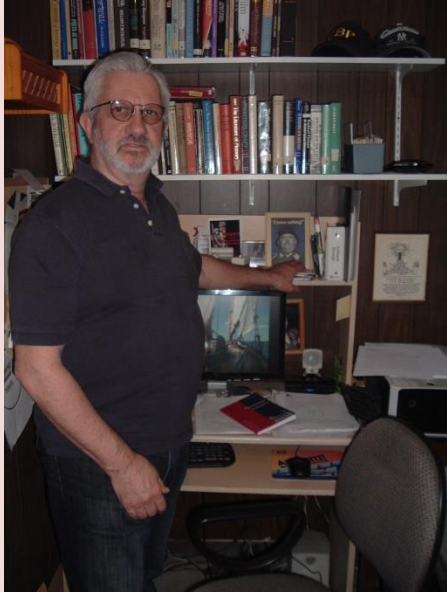
from the kitchen hiding a second staircase:
steep, jagged, and above all concrete.

Servants—rough hands wrapped in skin darker
than the mahogany furniture

they rub to a high shine—trudge between floors
carrying the weight of meals, loads of laundry,

flutes of lemon water, and whispered curses,
triggered by constant buzzing commands.

Meanwhile, quiet worms of hate burrow, deep
yet imperceptible, into their hearts.



Bill Cushing: Raised in New York, Bill Cushing lived in numerous states, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Returning to college later in life, he was called the “blue collar poet” by his peers at the University of Central Florida, then earned an MFA in writing from Goddard College. He now resides in Glendale, California with his wife and their son. His work has been in anthologies, literary journals, magazines, and newspapers. When not teaching or writing, Bill facilitates a writing workshop and performs with a musician on a project called “Notes and Letters.” His first complete poetry collection (A Former Life) is due out in 2019.



CANDLE SHADOW

Feathers drip with ink

Painting memories

Drawing back from

humorous horrors

that in a dam down

our hill we drink

with crocodiles.

Vultures eye

to feed on that

is not waking.

Grass grow on

kitchen floors
mama forgot
patterns of angels
Main gate becomes
a shadow of fear
and disturbance
when papa choose
temporary flowers
instead watching
the crown sheltering
the house.

Sometimes we hide
behind a candle shadow
and pray for unity in this home
We still drink with crocodiles
down the dam our hill
and they still know
what is for prey



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



TRAFFICKING

Children are coupled to a price

Walking around for sale

Like the rolling of a dice

The next one could be male or female

They are always looking and lurking

For the right candidate

Like fire parents are spurting

Over the next child's fate

They are taken overseas
For hard labour and prostitution
This problem is like fleas
Zooming around parents protection

Parents and citizens want answers
Who will provide sufficient cover
Against this trafficking gangsters
Too long they had to suffer

This is a serious problem
That needs to be addressed
The government cannot allow this to blossom
Bringing heartache and pain to the chest

We are pleading with the army
Jump in and do your bit

They need to wipe out this enemy

And save a precious little kid



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



A LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER. #3

(From: Letters To My Daughter)

Dearest Daughter,

Soon, so soon, you are more

Out of your baby sling than in it.

I say to myself:

Each phase we transit

Will vanish and never reappear.

This thought splashes like icy water.

I am sobered and

I say to your image lighted within my heart:

Let's make the most of each day

You and I spend together, daughter.

For you, all hours are quality time.

A parent who steals time from a child

Steals from the world's happiness.

Let's not fritter away this shining day

By bothering all too much about later.

I ask myself:

Won't we need a Valley full of

Shining days if we are not to

Sink in the sludge of a despondent world

Of dark mean back streets

Of poverty, and

Of glittering mean high streets

Of over-plenty,

Of poor hearts constricted, contracted.

Of rich hearts constricted, contracted

For five years

(Not all the time, daughter!)

I sling you

In your over-the-shoulder carrier,

Multicoloured like the rainforest itself.

But look - here we go -

Still we ramble among rainforest,

Hopping behind a waterfall cascade

Or swimming in creek or billabong.

Still we wake to wonder.

Still the Valley lights us up.

Still, so many creatures are not shy of us.

And you and I are leaf green light.

And we are creatures among creatures.

You follow things, you name things.

You question the forest

To see what the forest tells you.

You discover things all the time.

You romp after a bush turkey
That shows you how you
Can romp faster than you think.
You feed creatures with their right food,
And tread the earth with a soft foot.
In wonder, you lose your fear of
Snakes, of wasps, and the like,
And yet gain wise caution.
You puzzle at soldier ants
Disappearing into their dirt mounds,
And ask: Where do they go, Daddy?
And I'm stumped for an honest answer.
You ask: Can we dig down and find out?
I divert your attention, at least this time

I think and will think until I am ash:
This daughter is a priceless gift,
This daughter and this Valley,

And this time,

While we spend it together



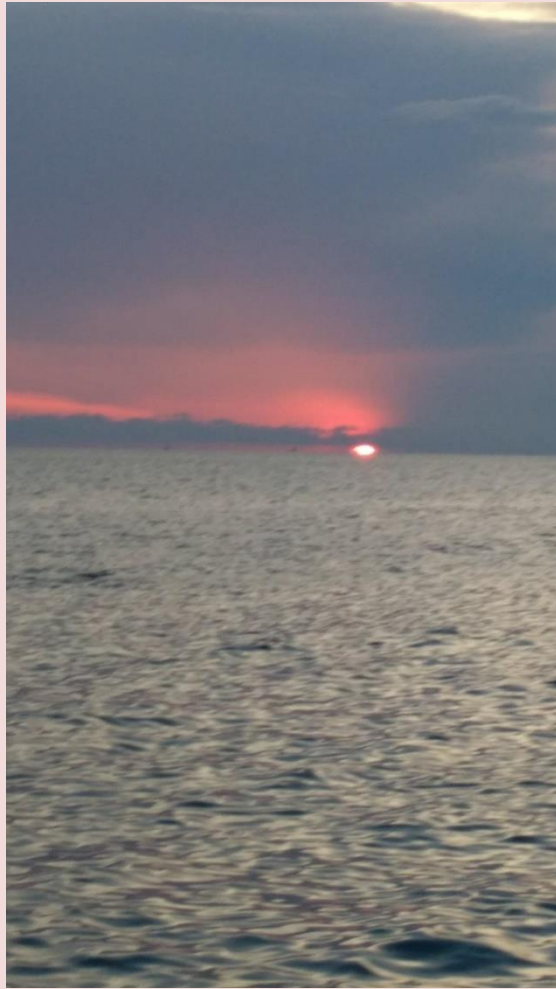
Barry Pittard: I am a poet, lyricist and short story writer, living in the Hinterland of South East Queensland, Australia. I am a retired (refreshed!) teacher, and have also worked as an NGO among the socially marginalised. I have broadcast on social just and world music themes on community radio. In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



To the ashes at last
With music and bomb blast
Amidst tears and rain
Oblivious to another's pain.



Ayshwaria Sekher/ Icecamp: An International Relations graduate, but a reluctant practitioner. Searching about the self through practices that seem conducive to the naked eye but weathers the spirit. Believes in the conditional - unconditional love of a dog and no other's. Extends reality from books and tries to achieve vice versa. Shuns from the 'isms' but cannot escape the brackets cast. A bundle of contradictions in short!



shoot at Phuket, Thailand, 2018

A CUP OF COFFEE

In the morning you came
Your tired eyes and pale face

Wished you a cup of coffee...

You spoke about wounds and disappointments

Unwanted memories

Showed me a book with yellowed pages,
Stained with teardrops

Morning turned grey
Vision becomes blurred

Whispered a love note
"We will meet again"

Hot coffee turned cold
Lilac clouds never back again
Time flew unnoticed
Lonely heart full of wildness



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



www.roadoo-network.com

AN INTERESTING LIFE

From poverty
separation and loss
I learned many things,
by richness, surplus
and easy life
I didn't anything,
God I seek
an interesting and
diligent life
so far away from
happy life,

facing scarcity
and hardship
has made me
not only strong
and resilient,
but it has also
evolved my
hidden strength
and unseen talent
world thinks
so brilliant,
So my lord
give me interesting
and busy life,
it so simple

for you to
drag me away
from easy life.



Ashish k Pathak: I am a middle school teacher posted at Dharhara block in Munger district of Bihar province in India. Recently my works were published in many national and international anthologies.



VASANTHI SHWETHA

Feathers

There are feathers on the road,
of birds I don't recognise,
much like you,
leaving parts of yourself
all over the map
for someone else to pick up and wonder
who must this part of love belong to.

At the pedestrian crossing,
the cyclist and I exchange a smile,
we both know
on the roads ahead

there are more feathers;
somewhere love spills over,
somewhere love is picked up
and somewhere else love awaits
a poem.

ANURAG K. MATHUR

...HER FEATHERS OF LOVE

There are her poems
She has scattered across in space
Some make you relax
Some make you pick up the pace

Cherish that moment in time
When you read one of those
It's a feather that floated your way
To keep you company on your road

But the poetess she sings
Of a longer tale of love and longing
From the poems as you read them
Love keeps sprouting

The million hearts
That beat as one for that moment in time
When parts of that poem
Float their way and they touch the sublime

We are all feathers
Floating in the currents of her love
We will come together one day and fly together
In the direction she wants us to take



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.



CONTRASTING WORLDS

Nairobi...

noisy bustling city,

tall buildings,

bumper-to-bumper traffic,

streets swarming

with humanity

rushing to and fro.

Nairobi ...

abutting wilderness,

rubbing shoulders with

vast rustic lands,
where tiny open mud huts
pepper a countryside
checkered with subsistence farming.

People as diverse as
the topography itself,
most walking miles to obtain water,
wash their clothes in streams,
dry them stretched out
on shrubs and bushes.
Sun bleached clothing
decorate the terrain.

A poverty so gut wrenching
to witness, yet many seem
content, even happy.
This is all they know,

as they go about their
daily lives with smiles
upon their faces.

The vast differences
between the big city
and rural life,
set side-by-side, a strange
juxtaposition of lifestyles,
both of which are foreign to me

Maasai Mara ...
native tribes still live
much as they did centuries ago,
eschewing most of modern life.
Cow dung huts, multiple wives,
raising livestock,
making beaded jewelry

Kenya ...

A country so rich

in history and culture,

The breathtaking beauty

of mountains, savannahs,

semi-arid expanses,

and forests, contrasted by

the utter poverty of its people,

an emotional encounter

beyond compare,

an experience of a lifetime.



Ann Christine Tabaka: She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize in Poetry, has been internationally published, and won poetry awards from numerous publications. She lives in Delaware, USA. She loves gardening and cooking. Chris lives with her husband and three cats. Her most recent credits are: Pomona Valley Review; Ariel Chart, Page & Spine, West Texas Literary Review, Oddball Magazine, The Paragon Journal, The Stray Branch, Trigger Fish Critical Review, Foliate Oak Review, Better Than Starbucks!, Anapest Journal, Mused, Apricity Magazine, The Write Launch, The Stray Branch, Scryptic Magazine, Ann Arbor Review, The McKinley Review.

**(a complete list of publications is available upon request)*



YOU ARE LIKE A DREAM

You are like a dream

Sometimes free as a rushing tide

Sometimes a gale of destruction

But I love to have you always for

Sometimes you give me strength

Sometimes you let me show how

Furious and destructive I can be

You are like a dream

You try to hold me as a captive

With tall promises and vows like

A slave living through dead hopes
Sometimes you are an angel
Sometimes a devil of an old age
But I love to belong to you for
Sometimes I am kind to show way
Sometimes I am brave to be in a grave



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.



REFLECTIONS

Mirror, mirror what do you see?

The fairest maiden in the land

Or the fragments of my parched soul

like the barren fields during a drought

Crying out for the rains to quench my thirst

hanging in shreds like broken puzzle pieces

yet to be found to restore my fractured heart

Do you see the gushing rivers of sorrow

flooded with tears in my fissured fortitude

As the exhilaration of my heart is crushed?

Mirror, mirror what do you see?

The delirious depths of my evocative emotions

My heartfelt cries burning within like a fiery furnace

Or the picture perfect me dressed to the nines

Masked like a perfectly painted porcelain doll

reflecting no emotions or painful scars

to camouflage the inner struggles of my psyche

My feelings run deep into the valleys of my soul

Abiding in the shadows of my turbulent heart

Struggling to climb life's mountainous terrains

Touching the inert nadirs of the ocean

Hoping my shattered soul will rise to shores

of hope from these murky waters.

Mirror, mirror all you can see

is what I choose to show you

You can't penetrate the resilient veneer

The fake smile I adorn, sharing quirky jokes

to masquerade the piercing pain in my spirit
Let the facade be erased from your soul
Expunge these painful memories
lodged in the deepest crevices of a heart
filled with sorrow like weeping willows.

Mirror, mirror can you feel the tussle in my soul
Like tumultuous waters when will it recede?
When the grey watery conscience
Awakens to a new dawn as the sun
brings hues of lustre to the gift of life
Rising like a beautiful ballerina
Spinning gold into the sinews
of my tattered heart as I taste
the defined reality of life's gift.

Mirror, mirror look at me
I am only human

I am not perfect

I am the best me

I can ever be.

True beauty lies not in your reflection

It's soul deep echoing the purity

of a precious heart expressed

in every facet of your vivacity

Celebrate the elation in your restored soul

As you exult your healed heart.



Angela Chetty: I am a poet residing in Durban, South Africa. I work as a consultant. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a poetry anthology. International Poetry awarded me as an Elite Poet in the 2018 Poet's Showcase and Yearbook which honours top writers and best original poetry. From The Heart featured two poems as Editor's Choice for the most heartfelt and meaningful prose in the Annual Valentines edition.



CAUSE I LOVE YOU SO.....

Many days had passed

And I had forgotten

Early morning I went

To the office feeling

Downright rotten...But I never knew

I never knew

Boss was so nice

All things were going fine

Yet there was something

Something not so complete...But I never knew...

I never knew

Another day went by

Pretty girls smiled at me

I had a lot of money

But my mind wasn't free...I never knew...

I knew not what

That bugged my soul

I racked my brains

But it never told...And I never knew...

Then in a flash

It came to me

When I thought of you

And then I knew

I was in love

And in love with you!

Sitting in the office

There was yet an hour to go

I jumped from my chair

I could sit no more

Cause I love you so...Yeah!

Cause I love you so...

I jumped to the trees

To catch not I knew

Maybe my heart

That just new flew

Yeah! Cause I love you so...



Anand Abraham Pillay: He is a writer, singer, dancer, artist, and athlete. He is currently living in Mumbai and is Senior Manager with AAI, Mumbai Airport. He loves to cook, loves adventure and loves travelling, and is a naturalist.



ROSEATE SONNET FOR MY MUSE - MADHUBALA

You gave me still lifes and for many years they adorned my wall

I do not know why they equated you with her

If looks could kill, yours both could, but that is all

You two had in common, and you both came 'after the fall'

The resemblance was amazing, the same lips

The same eyes, and nose, but eyebrows

Not the same, or hair, or the colour of the skin

But a somewhat similar cheek, and a divine chin

Child of honey, how they prated on and on
Of your beauty, but failed to see your soul

Rose, I was the only one you knew
Of the whole fell lot, who did not want you for your
show

Somehow the only one who did not want to see you go
Enter the place in your mind from which there was no light
left for you on the cruel world to bestow



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India:

Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Significant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited Inlinks and Umbilical Chords.



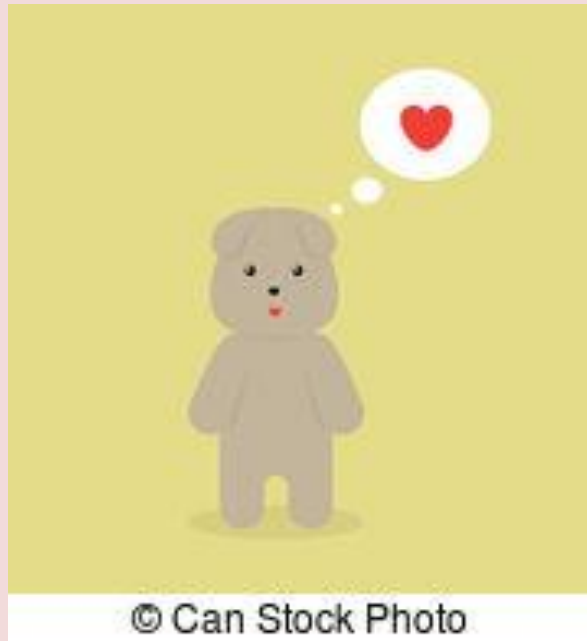
And then finally when night stood still, an evening, its reign of suntrance years, of wealth, wilderness and glory of many campaigns left in a river of subterfuge, its long sinewy columns rolled down the glitter in a night borderless on stealth and stubbornness. I have been living years of such understanding, that one day in a cover of duress and despair, time might conclude a hasty retreat, its tiny droplets may not even join and sections of unrepaired horizons would differ as nights and evenings revise a no dissolving pact. The Volga at Tatarstan had refused time and again of curtailing the living with the living, different voices share a confluence of similar strengths, Tartar warriors stood on banks stretching to sea and the sea to

many skies holding aloft such spoken memories such relived lives. I had even forgiven you, you who once called upon words to reopen old forgotten closures. In an ageless complete, you are the reversal, you remain the scroll, and you are the substrate of my many lives.

Hillbrow at Johannesburg faces darkness with such ferocity; lights clamor over each other's shoulder, holding a falling sun, for here there can never be any nights. Forever evenings scream in shrill rejoinder, a clay complexioned Ethiopian girl with long neck revises proximity from a cabaret number. Men from Abuja listen with shaking heads, some even recite silently. Colors of evening find asylum on foreign surfaces. The scarred white girl rolls her eyes and gives voice to expanding vessels. Living is defiance. Illumination is not just a street here and curtains part revealing revelry of age old explanation. It cannot be the same as in NoorGunj at Gwalior and Shafiq Manzil, Old Delhi. Each living stays far behind in closed alleys and assembling them leaves footsteps that can never return.



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.



YOU ARE EVER THERE

Your absence prolongs

And sharpens your presence

To a greater extent.

Your not being here

Makes me feel

Even more

How tremendously you are here.



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



ANOTHER DAY OFF

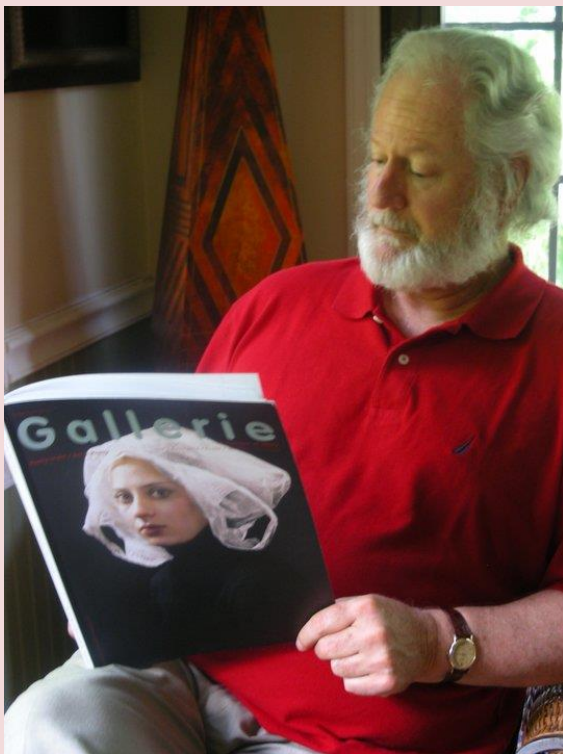
Fate mounted me & I thanked fate for being so accommodating, so willing to embrace the Thoreauvian vision of education leading me into the first fifth of the 21st century.

Fate marched her horse to livery & returned with that look, the one that says this is where our evolutions diverge, significance entirely up to me.

So, I breathed deep & submerged till oxygen tasted like pepper, then developed claws to scuttle

ocean floors all across this god-forsaken planet
(thanks to ten zillion poets before me).

But today I exchange those claws for tarpaper
feathers swirling thermals high above the terracotta
Mojave, sunbaked feathers swirling thermals
high above the terracotta Mojave.



Alan Britt: In August 2015, Alan Britt was invited by the Ecuadorian House of Culture Benjamín Carrión in Quito, Ecuador as part of the first cultural exchange of poets between Ecuador and the United States. In 2013, he served

as judge for the The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award. His interview at The Library of Congress for The Poet and the Poem aired on Pacifica Radio, January 2013. He has published 15 books of poetry, his latest being Violin Smoke (Translated into Hungarian by Paul Sohar and published in Romania: 2015). He teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.



Prairie Indian Encampment/Artist: John Mix Stanley/American, 1814-1872

SENSE OF SECURITY

At dawn, the cat slipped through the open window softly,
and almost without a sound,

she jumped down from the windowsill.

She hid under a chair, and curled up into a little ball.

She closed the night's adventures in her green eyes.

In dreams, the uncertainty of last night returned.

Fear, doomed her to wander over fences and roofs

out of the reach of furiously barking dogs

and powerful beasts speeding down the city streets.

She also did not trust the always-hurrying people.

A man's white shirt draped over the chair
moved slightly, to the rhythm of the wind's breath.
It quietly purred a kitty lullaby, and tucked her in to sleep
with long arms in the empty sleeves.



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



DEATH PHILOSOPHY

Someone who loves

chilling

dancing

drinking

smoking

asks me if I write with an ink?

I answer to her with

yes, it's from

my pain

my ache

my lonely

my grief

with the colour of death philosophy



Ahmad Al-Khatat: He was born in Baghdad on May 8th. From Iraq, he came to Canada at the age of 10, the same age when he wrote his very first poem back in the year 2000. He also has been published in several press publications and anthologies all over the world. And he currently studies at the Concordia University in Montreal. He recently has published his two chapbooks “The Bleeding Heart Poet” and “Love On The War’s Frontline”. With Alien

Buddha Press. It is available for sale on Amazon. Most of his new and old poems are also available on his official page Bleeding Heart Poet Copyright on Facebook.



THE LULL LINGERS

Remember today, demons within, remember today.

Remember the calm, remember the peace,

Remember the cool breeze soothing.

The empty brown cup of coffee on the bench beside,

The freshly cut grass, green beneath.

Remember the hills piercing the sky,

Waves of soft white plush bleeding.

Remember the stroll you seldom took,
The walk across the thoughts in your head.
And the tranquil stillness when they pass.

The long strand of grass in your hand,
Dragged on the road line a feather on a cheek.
The voices in your head shunned by the great expanse,
Staring at the gently trembling trees for eons,

Naught in haste, naught in plight,
Naught in joy but in peace.

The vision sinks in, the lull lingers and the world breathes
still.

Echoes creep in, the lull now withers,
A song echoes bolder and I walk hither.



Abhilash: He is a lover of art of all forms and has performed in theatre, comedy and writes poetry and prose. He is residing in the Bay Area, California and works in the field of Project Management for confidential companies. He is a novice and this is one of his first poems, but he oftentimes writes recreationally, for the pleasure of doing so. He ice climbs in the cliffs of New Hampshire, Rock climbs in Colorado, climbs tall mountains in California, sky dives with army veterans in Royal Gorge, fences in North Carolina, loves archery and adores medieval warfare as a genre and as a sport. He hopes to inspire people to be adventurous.



allpoetry.com

A DEAD POET

Paper boats and paging jets still pass me by,
Late but I am in an open classroom of Time.
Already my Bible with school books 've got sold,
For a gram of stones and lies.
Two eyes also stole words skirting the skies,
But a borrowed thought could never divide.
Then one day cold,
The boy died old,
Remains ashes of Pens after burning his mind,
Yet the Poet could never be a friend of mine.



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: Aakash is a nomadic poet from Rourkela, Odisha, India. He co-authored “Between Moms and Sons” along with Mrs. Geethanjali Dilip (Geethamma). He also teamed up with eight eminent Indian Poets and launched “The Virtual Reality” in Kolkata. Since then, he has contributed to several anthologies. He now awaits the sequel of “Between Moms and Sons- II” launch with Geethamma this year.



ciao! 😊

