

GloMag

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SALEEM RAZA
(Saleem Kattuchola)



Title of the Cover Pic: A Retro Scene

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola) is a freelance writer and painter, from Kerala, India, working in Doha as Admin Manager. He writes short stories, poems and travelogues in various regional language magazines (Malayalam), periodical with a pen name as Saleem Kattuchola, and used to write English poems in the Saudi Gazette Weekend edition.

He has been writing from his college days, and he started painting from his school days. He has got many prizes in youth competitions, and he won the first prize for painting in the Nehru Art festival, which is an all-Kerala based

competition. His stories and poems have been published in most valid periodicals like Kalakoumudi, Madhyamam, Chandrika, etc. He likes to paint nature and to show his feelings and to react against social injustice through his writings and paintings.

ART PERSPECTIVE

It is a usual scene which was seen a decade ago in the villages of Palakkad, Kerala. Ladies and children used to meet in the lush paddy fields and in the banks of natural channels or ponds, either on their way to temples or schools or to market. They shared their gains and pains with each other, helped the needs.... Thus, they found a rhythm in their daily life, family, in the society and so on....Now, those gatherings have become memories, and even the lush fields have to be described through paintings or other imaginations...

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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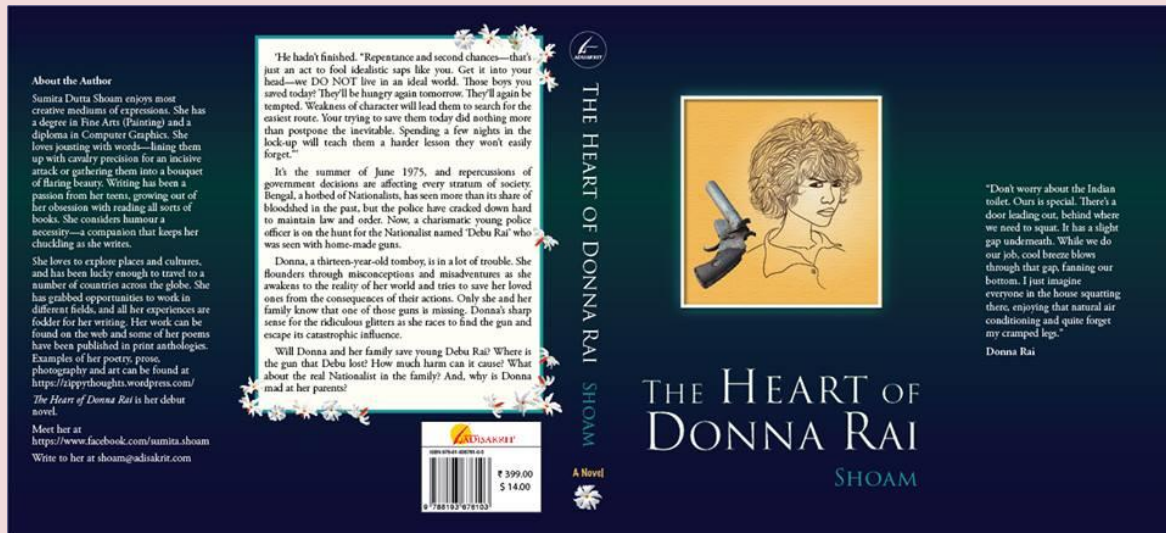
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BACKGROUND MUSIC: “Kyun Chalti Hain Pawan”
instrumental (movie: Kaho Na Pyar Hain)

BOOK OF THE MONTH

The Heart Of Donna Rai

by Sumita Dutta Shoam



BOOK AVAILABLE AT

https://www.amazon.in/dp/8193676106/ref=cm_sw_r_fa_dp_U_LNVLABNBM0FDM

REVIEW

Geeta Varma

Sumita's Donna is a brave, intelligent and sensitive girl, a smart teenager, a big sister who always protects her younger sibling, observant, playful, full of curiosity and adventurous. Most importantly, she is a free spirit. 'The Heart of Donna' is a picture of a world seen through Donna's heart, as she tries to understand the adults around

her who are traditional, close and as adventurous as she is. There is a wedding, an abduction with plenty of drama, adventure and suspense. There are gentle discussions on Naxalism, Indira Gandhi, and some of the issues that a girl experiences in her life, all portrayed very naturally, in a conversational The Heart of Donna Rai style. The book takes you back in time, at the same time it is so relevant. One can relate to all the happenings in her life easily as most of us , at some point of time, would have experienced what Donna does in the story.

It is a beautiful portrayal of a typical old joint family living in a remote village in rural Bengal. The lovable characters include, besides Ma and Baba, Thakurda who takes authoritative responsibility with ease, Debu kaka , Niru kaka and Hari kaka who are young college- going intellectual uncles who get into trouble, Pishi, Jethu, Thakuma and others – the women of the house more or less restricted to the kitchen, cooking, serving food and dining, and, Jo, the little sister. In fact almost everyone in the village is connected in a very friendly manner functioning almost like an extended family. There are cows, goats, ponds, farm....everything that makes one relate to a time more or less lost now.

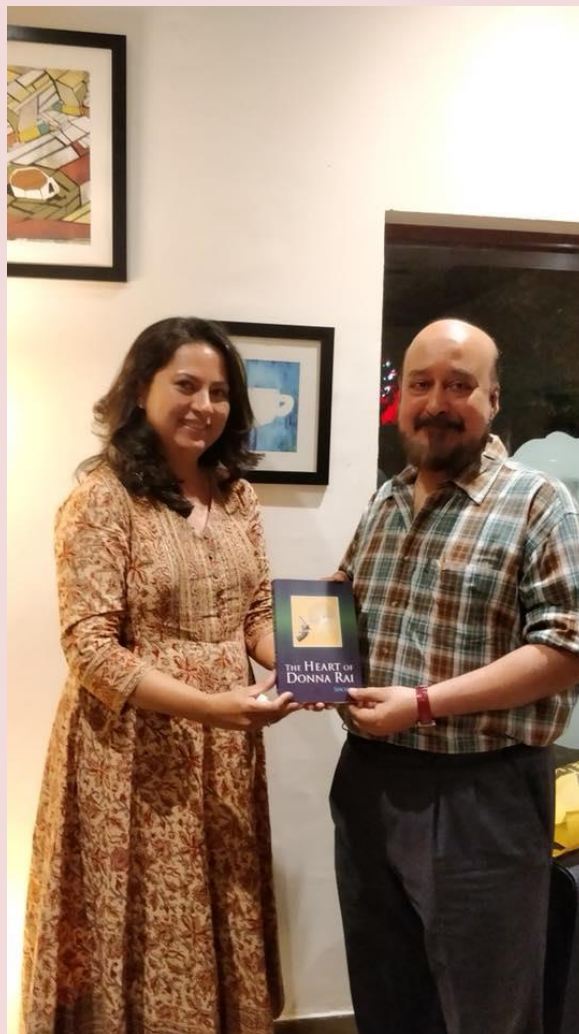
The story, begins on a dramatic note with the entry of Donna's uncle, late in the night after having been seen

carrying guns by the villagers, followed by the Police. Donna watches all the happenings closely. While she wants her uncle to escape unharmed, her adventurous spirit gets her entangled in a difficult situation where she is abducted along with her sister. As the story progresses, it becomes more and more exciting and interesting, interspersed by little events such as a family wedding, tonga rides, mischief in school, Police interrogation, fights, and so on. Donna's adolescent behavior always lands her in trouble but her sweetness can charm the readers. The thrilling adventure finally ends well, making the book highly readable for all, though it is meant mainly for young readers. It is a good debut and should get accepted easily by both young and old, for different reasons.

Donna's world is filled with all the excitement a young girl can imagine. While the teenagers can enjoy all the thrilling adventures in the story set in a different era, the adults will enjoy the same going back in memory into their childhood creating nostalgia. And, just for that, the book is worth reading. The language can be challenging sometimes. However, the interesting story- line revealing Donna's mind or thoughts, her vulnerability, her strengths etc. keeps you constantly engaged.

(Geeta Varma: She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational

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



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SONNET 58

Ours is a time ominous and pitch dark
When it is hard to know with certainty
Who is who and tell apart friend from foe
The sane bear every mark of the insane
While the insane of the sane in ways full
When the lunatics are free to ramble
The wise put in a prison of instant gain
When lips are sealed with laws passed
To rule and silence a mob already dumb
When obduracy prevails though hollow
Logic sent on exile for fear of downfall
When the early inhabitants are evicted

Only to grab the land and build a palace
Leaving the men with breath for a solace.



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.



CROSSING A ROPE BRIDGE

Coaxing myself to place a foot on
that hesitant first step
of the crossing, a journey with outcome
neither known nor guaranteed.

Isolation is a very shaky place
where circles of behavior echo
or resolve into a hydra or, worse,
demons of solitude.

Stopping on this wobbly avenue,
my feet feel vibrations deep in their soles,
making me wonder: Where is the tipping point?

Peeking down to see a drop deeper
than the uncertain climb
to the other side, to the safe haven
of the forest veiled in mist.

Then vertigo, fear of failure, overwhelms
so that retreating into the numb
appears an easier alternative
to taming the dragon.



William P. Cushing: Bill Cushing is proud to note that, following last year's honor as one of the "Top Ten Poets in L. A.," he has also been named as among "Ten to Watch in 2018." He continues teaching, writing, reading publicly, and facilitating a writing workshop (as well as tending to his family). "Crossing a Rope Bridge" is dedicated to those battling addiction.



AH! LIFE!

Life is a slug

Pausing

Surveying

You get the idea

Of its slowness

As it crawls up the wall

Its eyes on top of those ridiculous antennae

Taking everything in

Cautiously

And just as you settle in

Suddenly without any warning

Life starts galloping

Helter-skelter

First in this direction

Then in that

And like a rabid dog

It runs straight at you

A bite

There you go then

Flying at breakneck speed

To save yourself

Where are the injections?

Where is the salve?



Vineetha Mekkoth: I am a poet, writer, editor residing in Calicut, India. I work as Assistant State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a poetry collection. An article published in latest issue of Malayalam Literary Survey, a Kerala Sahitya Akademi publication.



BETWEEN OUR LINES

Let us pause to let the moment pass:

Your laugh is half-hidden in the dark

By the sudden flight of fugitive clouds--

Our squabbles are merely a camouflage:

In these woods, your voice swings from branch to branch

And I grasp its passion in mid-air--

Soon the vagabond sun will surprise us again

And we shall work our way back to a place

Where clichés both bind and blind us--

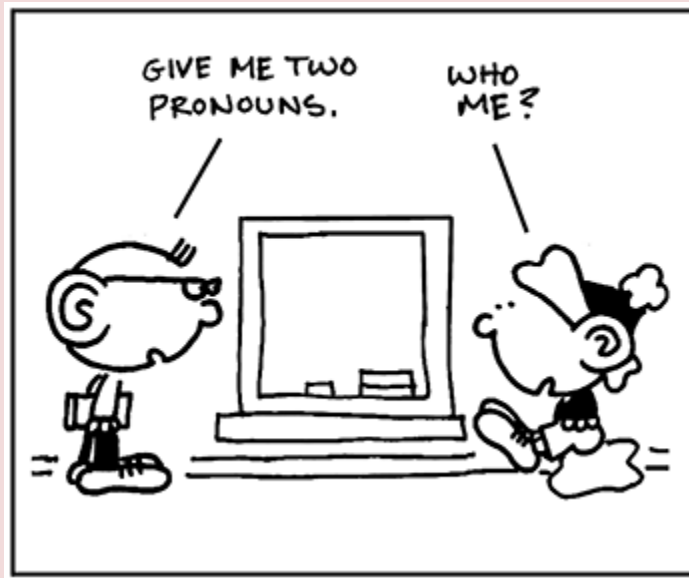
We sense the tightening noose of sentences

But the love we share stands sole sentry of our lives:

Let not the universe read between our lines



Vijay Nair: I am a poet residing in Palakkad, India. I work as Associate Professor [Retd]. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published 3 poetry anthologies. I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016.



IN CONFLICT

Somewhere an ego thwarts a battered 'You' and Me'

Struggling to become a 'We'

Someplace else a 'She' comes

Between an ostensibly happy 'We'

Why does 'He' get everything?

Cries a victim of sibling insecurities

Millions seek a defining 'I'

In a sea of ubiquitous 'They'

We to conflict doomed
An array of pronouns –
Perpetually unresolved!!!



Vandana Kumar: She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She is a French teacher and translator and an active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi. Her various passions include playing the piano and composing Music. Poetry for her is her stress buster, her flight of fancy and strangely, what keeps her rooted too.



SATISFACTION

The trappings of a successfully conducted wedding,
Rangoli artists being paid a ransom to duplicate patterns
That would take Munniama twenty minutes and as many
rupees.

Now ten of them snapping away a multilingual tapestry

The album was to be a collage of the different events
And differing sentiments!

A record of attendance to be first taken and then edited

No one person more important than the other.

The makeup artistes were at their creative best.

The decorators could not be faulted either.

A quiet frenzy in the air as the professionals geared up for the final report

That would ensure their worth to the event director.

That was all it was to them: one more day's work...

The spicy scents of a sumptuous repast carefully prepared and presented

Beckoning one and all, to a happy sumptuous repast;

Well, the chef had made the food worth their visit

All were happy and satisfied...

And the couple went home to pack and change for the next event

The long trip home to America, where they had lived in

And would now live together.



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



DEAR BIRD!

You want the flowery branches; but, you can't tolerate the root.

You need light for illumination; but you don't like the lantern.

So the universe is not friendly to you; rather, it behaves like brute.

So a prolonged distillation doesn't give you ambrosia but bitter.

Your madness for kiss doesn't let you tolerate any protruded lips,

So the fragrance of breathing remains unknown by nostrils.

Your eagerness for long voyage doesn't let you set foot on ships,

So you can't enjoy company of brave sailors but company of coistrils.

My dear exhausted bird! You are born to voyage to the endlessness.

Your eagerness for harbouring on unborn island is inappropriate.

Your sudden wish for smelling perfume without spoiling a trace,

Is totally unrealistic; and it will ultimately invite your ill fate.

Dear bird! For each generous cloud, there exists a scorching heat.

You can't choose one; but you'll get some refused mass with orgeat.



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



HUMANITY

He was stuck!

In the middle of a narrow flyover, suburban Mumbai, middle of a weekday.

The car sputtered and died down. The traffic on both sides screamed like a maniac. People glowered; some muttered obscenities. The February sun beat down on the serpentine chaos that is your typical Indian traffic---or Asian traffic, disorganized, lacking road discipline, cutting lanes.

He looked helplessly at the costly automobile, now a mere contraption of glass and fiber and wheels that will not budge an inch like some obstinate beast. His pride and neighbor's envy was a fuming hulk of machinery obstructing the impatient traffic of a suburb in a fast mode.

Everybody in a tearing hurry as if their bottoms were on fire!

He had no idea how to start the monster.

And regretted for not being an engineer that dad always wanted in the joint family of shop-keepers. But he had dropped out, scared by the drawings, math figures and bad faculty.

Dad never forgot. Never forgave.

RIP, dad!

He had seen some cousins tinkering with the bonnet and engine of their stalled cars on lonely highways. So he opened the bonnet and peered into the belly full of metal pieces and other marvels.

Why God was not kind to me!

Why I was born with less IQ or whatever it takes to be an engineer?

He looked up into a smoggy sky but found no answers from the guy behind the clouds, or the sight of the man with a halo that everybody wants to meet, at least in a crisis or similar situation.

The sun tore into his red eyes.

No evidence of a divinity up there.

Bewildered, he persisted, trapped in the traffic grid, immobile.

Gawd! Some miracle, please!

He expected a drum roll or thunder or lightening as shown in Hollywood.

Silence.

He did not give up.

Please! Gawd, help me!

And stood waiting like a stranded figure expecting a savior.

Send me some Superman. Or, Spider-man, please, Gawd!

He prayed---this time from a full heart.

---Check the engine. It has warmed up.

The voice startled him---so did the piece of expert advice, totally unexpected.

He spun around---jaw dropped.

It was the junkie who lived on the flyover only, discarded by the family and city alike.

Whom he considered a low-life not worth a glance.

Anti-climax!

His hero did not wear the mandatory inner wear on the outside.

---Pour water on the engine. It has heated up in the summer heat. Coolant has dried up perhaps.

The bedraggled outcast helpfully suggested. And gave the portly man his only possession---a plastic water-bottle.

Almost in thrall, the hapless man did what was told.

Did he have any choice?

And believe it or not, the engine started.

First time the car-owner believed in miracles. And the power of faith in most unlikely locations!

The outcast refused money and went away to his spot on the bridge.

As he started the car, he did not dare look at the junkie.

Does he remember?

Only two days ago, he had rolled up the window of the car at the same spot, shooing off the bearded and thin outcast with cold eyes, a man he hated as the scum of earth and having the temerity to ask for water from the motorists stuck up in a snarl.

How dare they?

Brutes!

He gave a side glance.

The junkie was sitting nonchalantly under the shade of a spreading tree, on a soiled newspaper, seeing the flow, yet not seeing; tapping an empty water-bottle in a gnarled hand, lips pursed, torn T-shirt, almost invisible, on a hot and humid afternoon, ordinary like every afternoon, yet suddenly so extraordinary, taking on new meanings for him!



Sunil Sharma: I am a writer, editor, poet residing in Kalyan, MMR (Mumbai Metropolitan Region), India. I work as a college principal. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published one novel and eight books on prose and poetry.



Itchy palms and feet
Restless soul that wants
To meet, to hug,
To touch, to embrace,
To lie enveloped in warmth
In the glow of a smile
Tenderness of a gaze
Sparkle of humour
That tickles mine
Pleasure of holding
His hand palm to palm
Rejuvenating therapy
Is his company



Sumita Dutta: I am a poet and novelist residing in Chennai, India. I work as a teacher, writer, and designer. I have contributed to various online sites and anthologies. I have also published a novel and contributed to three print anthologies. My novel, *The Heart of Donna Rai*, was launched recently.



JUST FOR YOU

I will make an another world for you

Just tell me once 'I love you'.

Look at my longing eye

Where you are the only truth

Rest seems lie!

Feel the tremor of my enamored heart

Lips not enough to justify!

Years passed, by and by

But believe me! My soul never could bid you goodbye.

I never know you are made for me

Or I'm made to die for you,

But to me the word 'love' is made

Just only for you.



Sumana Bhattacharee: She is a poet who lives in Kolkata, India. Music, poetry, and drama are her passions, and her poems have been published in various anthologies and blogs. She has published a book of poems. She has a poetry group of her own and she is working as an admin of three poetry groups.



SOMETHING I LOOK AT -1

I love you
for you have in you
the sentiments and emotions of all
from a child in his teens
to an old guard
looking at the world
through a pair of coloured glasses
and repenting
why you were not there
when he was
young and cheerful

I like you
for you have witnessed
love and frustration
agony and apathy
emotions at extreme
yet remained indifferent
untouched by it

You are a good friend
for you never carry me away
and let me
lose touch with reality
and a platform
to look at me
and the world around
with all dexterity

I love you
for you have in you
the beauties of the world
the thought of present
and the passion
of yesteryears

I like the way
you carried yourself
over the years
silently enduring
the sorrows and happinesses
unfolded on you
you remained within
but above it
and carried only some likes
and comments
which are never yours

I do not know
if it is facebook
on which I share views
or it is the mirror
I daily look at



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He is a multi-lingual poet. His writings include essays, short stories, poems and novels which are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. Working as Finance Officer in Govt of Odisha, he writes extensively on life, its beauty and intricacies, which are widely acclaimed.



POET'S CALLING

as my train thunders past, I see two boys
tiptoe on adjoining tracks, a maniacal game
of precision. abandon.

balancing, avoiding, and having fun,
an eye out for authority, ready to run!
their game is brief and the track too long
the outcome will separate the weak from the strong.

my train roars, masking their laughter,
the roll of their eyes, their invisible fears,

living and dying on the metal's edge

an acrobat may slip, but he'll live with the game.

life is swift beyond the windows, my train thunders,

I feel the weight of my calling, this being with words.

a maniacal game of precision, abandon, ready to run!



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



COLOURFUL VOICES

Behind doors, behind curtains,
Lurking as if in a trance
Beautiful shadows imbued in beautiful voices.

Faces, unseen, in woeful shapes
Always seen by others in drapes
Striving to emerge
From colourful voices.

Beauteous, though it may seem
Thoughtfully teeming

In various shapes and various ways
To blend with everlasting love.

Faces, though seemingly transient
Beauteousness here and there
Shadows, befittingly where
Lilting musical melodies survive.

Doors, festooned with decorations galore
Voices, blending as if of yore
In Pan-Indian instincts
In myriad colours and shapes.

Voices, without restraint
Imbibing, certain traits
Of colourful monstrosity
In the vast, wide world of generosity.



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



LET IT RISE

There's nothing quite like
a wet patch of raw earth
to make mouths salivate and drool
over the prospects
of planting something new.

Three eyes open to the sky;
two hands digging in the soil;
one seed sprouting for the future;
no more worries in my heart.

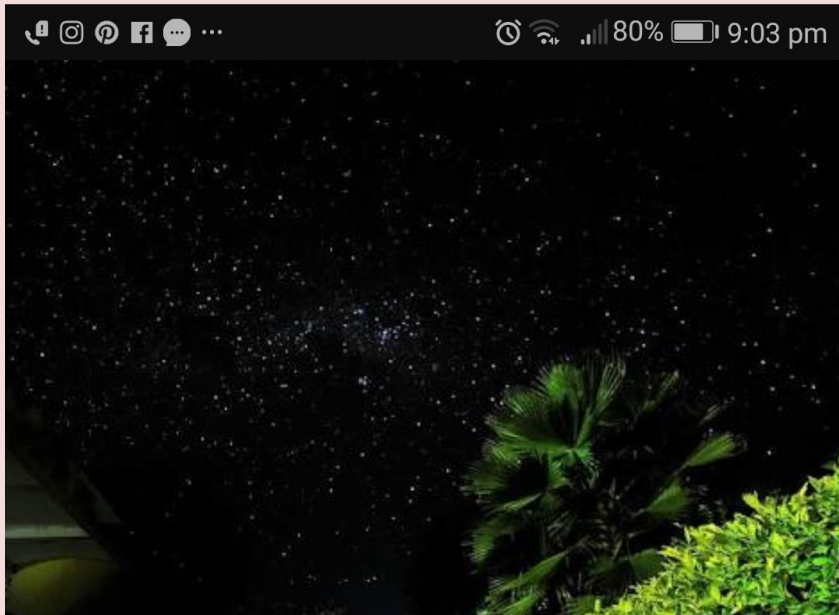
Let it burn
used to be my motto
for every occasion;
now with the sun
burning bright
beyond the clouds
my feet have learned
to dance in a language
where every note
sings out for growth.



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



Mihaela Melnic: She is a poet and photographer whose debut poetry collection will be released in Spring 2018. Her photograph appearing in this issue was taken in the national park of Gran Sasso, Italy.



It was dark, really dark

All I could hear was a lonely dog bark

In my bed, snuggle I lay

Awake as tomorrow is the day

When I am to leave home and go to foreign lands

Across the seven seas and across seven sands

I don't know if I will return

Because to feed my family, I have to earn

Will I make enough to come back?

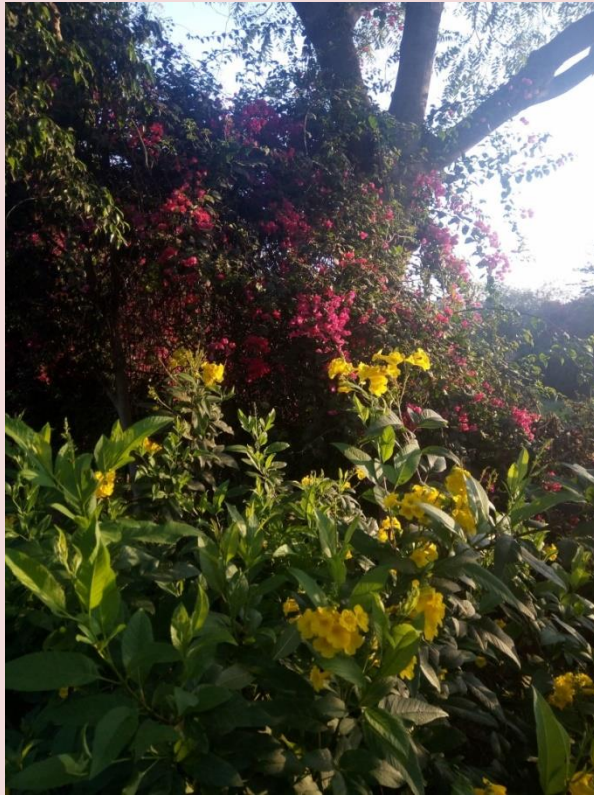
Will the need to feed my family make my life a loveless
lack?

I want to feel the comfort my mother gives

I want to see how my brother lives
But alas I need to leave
With a sigh that I heave
I turn around and try to sleep
Tomorrow I will fulfil the promises I keep.



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



HUES

‘Chwit – chwit’ ...chirped the purple sunbird
to his dull looking mate; raised its head, fluttered its tail
bursting into song, “come, there is ample place here”.

Playing peek-a-boo in the lush bougainvillea

‘let us hop together from branch to branch,
from dream to dream, here, there, everywhere”.

Hear, hear, the squirrels dashed into each other
frantic, frenzied; as the verdant surroundings filled

with contralto cadences of tiny sparrows.

What a profusion of green, red and yellow!

Butterflies dancing, delirious with joy

“Oh boy! You dropped the catch.

You were no match for his batting capability.”

Raucous cries echoed and reechoed

the budding cricketers, sleepy eyed, and groggy voiced

indulged in mutual recrimination; so juvenile,

firing verbal salvos, hurling personal attacks and cricket bats.

“I stumped him, I stumped him”, cried a little one.

The stumped one refused to budge; the little one nursed the grudge.

The scrimmage went on; as a white breasted kingfisher looked on.

Somewhere there was a violent world unfolding; cold and nasty

where the sun smouldered with a scorching fury.

Artillery, air strikes and barrel bombs; war heated up;
flaming, killing, maiming, mutual blaming; splashing hues
bizarre
'Starve, bomb and siege', they roared, delirious with power.

Frantic, frenzied; a scorching sun etched fiery designs
on the weary, wrinkled countenance of a man sitting
slumped
outside his devastated house, disoriented; absolutely
stumped.

Unseeing eyes hunting for his lost world.

The war went on, as a Peregrine falcon looked on – half
singed.



Santosh Bakaya: I am a poet, novelist, essayist residing in JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN, INDIA. I work as a teacher and have contributed to various anthologies, 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.



RELEASE THE PRESSURE

Adolescence! Adolescence!

What is happening to me?

Changes all around,

Changes within me!

Changes in my life,

Changes in my relationships,

Making my own decisions,

Forming new friendships.

Adolescence is an experience,
Which I will forever treasure;
Dealing with responsibilities,
Overcoming pressure.

Peer pressure around us
Might lead us astray;
But, by the time we realize,
It is already too late!

Alcoholism, addiction
Are the terrible results;
Destroying our life,
Peer pressure, it sucks!

Only you have the right
To control your life and future.

So always listen to your parents
Your mentors and your teachers.



Samixa Bajaj: She is a 13-year-old, student of class 7. She is an avid reader, whose range of reading varies from Tinkle to Ramayana. She dabbles in poetry, giving words to her thoughts depending on her moods. A budding writer and a dancer.



THE TURNING POINT

Open your eyes, and look at to the dice;
Before our leaders play their games-
Of political cataracts, and pull us to the darkness.
Open your ears, and hear everything twice;
Before the venomous typhoon blows-
From terrorist's factories and religion's clerics; (they would)
Spoil our eardrums. (We, happens to deaf)
Open your mouth, and say loudly from East to West
And North to South, at the culprits, the fascists and
scammers;
Before the delirious and devilish dance they perform-
With your tongue in their hands.
Keep the your foothold, (yes, It's our land)

And move along your way....to the isle of peace, to live
without fears

Before they shatter our earth under your foot.

Move forward, till reach to the valleys of eternal love,

Where you could sit and listen

The morning conch horns from temples of great Himalayas,

The Bells of peace rung from Churches of Bethlehem

And you Could hear the chant of the uniqueness of God

From Ka'aba sheriff.

“Everything in one... One in everything.”



Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola): A freelance writer and painter, from Kerala, India, working in Doha as Admin Manager. Writes short stories, poems and travelogues in

various regional language magazines (Malayalam), periodical with a pen name as Saleem Kattuchola, and used to write English poems in Saudi Gazette Weekend edition.



THE INDEPENDENCE

It was then ages back,
that we were free of ties,
released from the handcuff,
of fear and enslavement.

But the era seems to recur,
where she is bonded again,
with a destructive force,
that rules her freedom.

Insecurity in her eyes,
as she keeps her feet,
in the land for which,
we fought years back.

Obsessed all the time,
With a worry about her,
Waiting for her voice,
“Mom, i am back”.

But tomorrow again,
She has to step out,
Like a butterfly, flying,
in a garden full of webs.

And Six decades later,
still she is not free,

and fights for equity.

Too far is her independence.

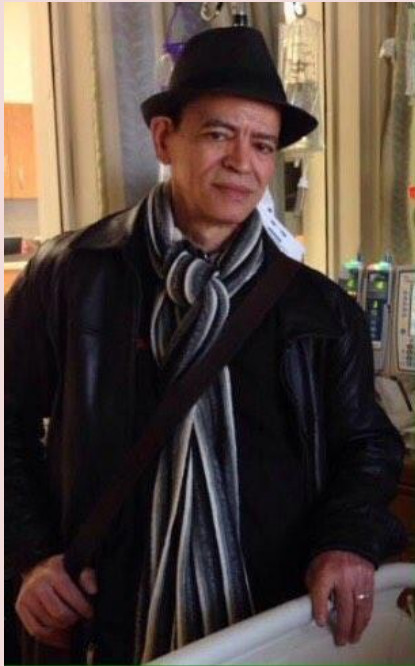


Roshan Mishra: I am a Botany student of OUAT, Bhubaneswar. I love writing poems. Actually I am very much passionate about it. Whenever I experience something, I pen it down to make poems. My poems are basically about the social issues, issues related with women, and beauty of nature. The ordinary things happening in the world give me inspiration to think on that and write on it.



SPRING IS IN THE AIR

This morning
When I stepped out
Of my lovely house
And took my first breath
Of a starting sunny day,
I sensed the Spring
In the fresh air, then,
I thought of you!



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



(c) 2008 David Brook

AND THEN I SAW THE ANGELS (MALACH)

(sheltering a child crossing a busy morning street)

thus, it is written that we may choose our better angels
who inhabit the trees, the stars, the glowing mountains of
paradise...

or, reveal the scribes, we may choose those inferior ones
who dwell among the hail, the reptiles, the colossal
thunder of perdition...

malach...

messengers without names

creatures of light and spirit,

conceived from their beneficent deeds of balancing
humanity's capacity to love

and thus gifted with laughter...

yet fearing humanity's capacity to deceive one another

and thus smitten by tears

malach...

healers of our scars and our torment

liberators of our forever struggles,

immune to tears

passionate warriors

hazzans of heavenly praise

masters of forgetfulness

yet savants of mindfulness

malach...

cherubim without voices

seraphim who sing eternal,

teachers with wings

and wingless servants pervasive,
revealers of divine mysteries
spreading wisdom and insight into ourselves,
guiding each of us to make our own resolutions
inspiring each of us to practice our humanity

malach...

seraphs embracing gentle relationships
seraphs witnessing harsh conflicts,
testing our convictions and choices
encouraging life's necessary transitions,
conveying the language of divine energy,
forever steeped in intentional beauty
serenading our lives with joyful insights
for all circumstances...

angels steadfastly resisting any malevolent and vengeful
transgressor

angels faithfully sheltering a young child crossing a busy
morning street

malach remain obvious and evident

malach remain unseen and veiled,

graceful dancers or confused soldiers

healers yet destroyers

placid and mindful or stricken with insomnia

just and merciful yet fearful and afraid

praiseworthy and peaceful yet filled with terror and fire

each of us has been gifted the voice of free will to
determine a way,

while the malach, God's ultimate guardians, remain
steadfast to their covenant,

sheltering us children crossing a busy morning street



Robert Feldman: I am a US-based poet. I am a faculty advisor of the Park Vista Writers Workshop. I have organized and participated in poetry readings, and produced and hosted a community issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. I continue to write, paint, and play table.



OF GATES, GOATS AND ROSES

Leave the gates open
and nibbling goats amble in
Your rose bush is mine they bleat
Because the gates are open for a feast

Open invitation
Come one and all
Trample, devour

Though you might love the little rose
It suffers because of your kindness
To see, smell, smile, surrender and go
is not for everyone
You can't teach a goat to not eat a rose



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



STARRY STARRY NIGHT

Love is when

You are sick in bed with

Hundred and three degrees fever

And she chats in to say

She is sick too

The air vibrates in delirium

And you know it's she coughing

Far far far away.

She is cold but your fever

Reaches out to warm her lungs

Kiss is when a scalding tongue
Thaws her frozen mouth.
There is a faint pulse
There is none.
You spoon her
In her far far far bed
She rolls in your bed
Scorched by the heat in your groin

Thus the night passes
Coughing and feverish
Wheezing and sweating
Four arms touching
And untouching
Heat waves rising and falling
Dreaming each other

What a starry starry night!



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.



BUDDIES BEST

A gossamer fabric of memories

Stitched together by time,

A thirty year journey

Which was often a pantomime.

A scorching romance, a run-away marriage

It was truly a baptism by fire,

We stumbled along tethered by

The melody of love, the symphony of desire.

Jobs, mama-papahood and a zillion chores
We seemed to be clutching at ephemeral moments,
Our togetherness was soon falling prey
To a clutter of bonsai events.

The stress and strain of living
Began to take its toll,
We were now responding
Each day to a tough roll call.

Egos reared their nasty heads
Love started seeking space,
Romance which had been a bookmark
Was now merely a fading preface.

We were losing each other
In the chaos called living,

We pledged to renew our connect
Which had always kept us going.

We both dumped our I's
In our recycle bin,
Armed with We and Us
We clawed back to a state of win-win.

Of course we had our fights and hurled
Often at each other some grievance,
But we never ever unleashed
The brutal violence of silence.

The kids have flown the nest
We are back in the honeymoon phase,
From the frenzied, frenetic life
We have set a leisurely pace.

With more time for each other
There is more to seek and share,
To make each day count,
And treat every moment, as a treasure rare.

To live with our faults
To 'love' our many flaws,
To look beyond the wrinkles
The heart ache and the loss.

Nothing else seems to matter
As long as we have each other,
On every blank canvas
We can splash a new colour.

When we move towards oblivion
We shall leave behind a treasure

Of love, laughter and connect
In, I hope, equal measure.

Finally in the photo-shopped portraits
On the walls when we rest,
Everyone who looks at us
Will only see two 'buddies-best'.



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



‘WHAT IF THE SUN SHINES?’

Me born, denied of vision,
my dark room like x ray theatre;
my living luxury with unbounded
Forte. What if the seasons blossom
with respective smiles, up swelling like
springs of water taps in corners of
railway platforms, for me the dark
is my ordained luxury.

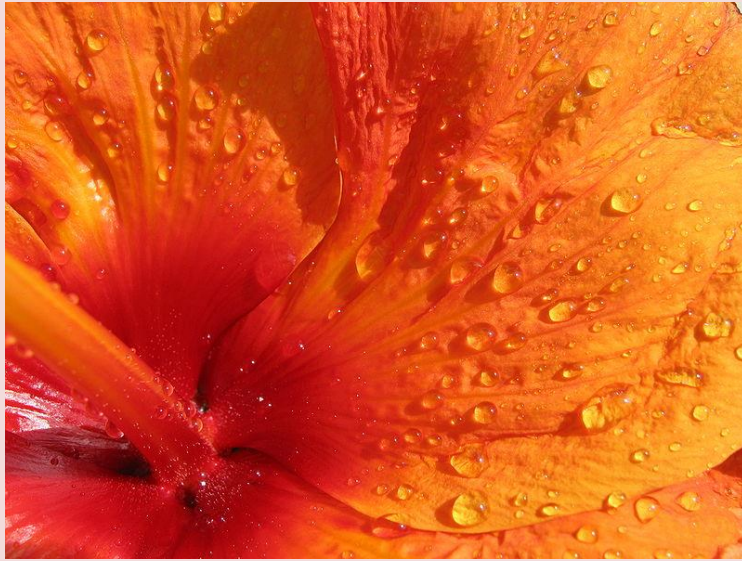
A gentle tap going afore
when compelled by necessity
on the traffic ridden roads, sun beams

glare at me impartial, jasmine and rose
those captivating, nostrils piercing
fragrance, foray that they belong to
their category, for I see them not.

All these for the sense of my being,
Flip for the skin and flesh;
But my four walls, for my soul attuned
ever since I came into this blessed soil!
for it bears me still, still and silent.
What if the sun peeps out!



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 ,Also a reviewer and critic, contributed critical essays on living writes, a blogger.



A DEWDROP ON THE PETAL OF TIME

Only sorrows I garnish, like a tear drop on the lips of time.

Doomed at first light to vanish, I'm a dewdrop on the petal of time.

My ghazals shall be sung long after me, they shall nurture many loves,

Though my being shall perish, like a dewdrop on the petal of time.

My entreaties, my pleadings are to you nothing, words
written on sand

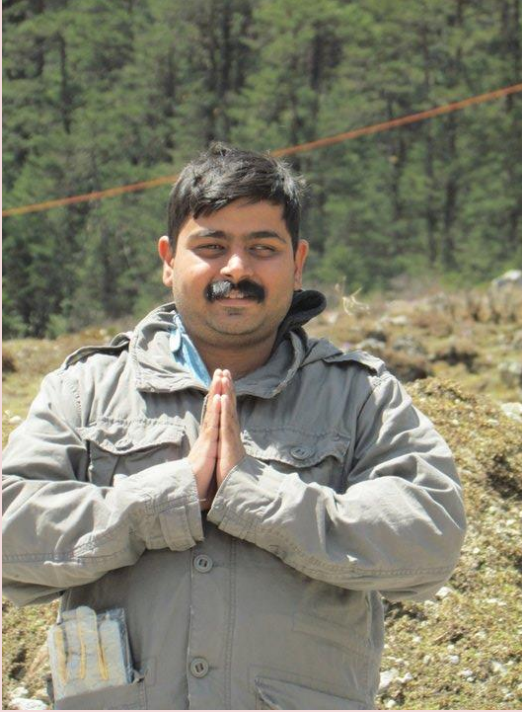
Which the first waves shall vanquish, like a dewdrop on the
petal of time.

My love seems ephemeral, cursed to be forgotten, a love
that no

Generations shall cherish, like a dewdrop on the petal of
time.

When you've burnt the last verse in my last ghazal, then my
love shall die, then

This 'Wandering' shall finish, like a dewdrop on the petal of
time.



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



SPRING

As the spring visits upon the hills and mountains
Mighty sun smiles from distant land,
Fragrance of light blossoms through the vast land
Counting its painful birth
Holy heart sings a hymn of great delight
As the spring spreads its colourful wings
Through the green fields and rivers,
The holy swan flies peacefully towards the vast sky
Breezing sweet lullaby in the air.
My heart is imprisoned in the silence of the night
Listening to the sweet cacophony of the various birds

Let's celebrate my happiness with the wild wind

Let's sip the lusty glass of wine

Tasting the colours of love

My drunken dreams are waiting to fly in the midfield of spring.



Preety Bora: I am a poet residing in India, Assam, in a small city called "Golaghat". I am working as a co-editor of a bilingual book. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also edited one bilingual anthology of poems. Nature is my greatest inspiration.



INSPIRATION

I look up to the literary sky in my space within,
And let its vastness seep in,
To make me a better person
Better to understand words spoken, unspoken.

So many sparkling stars shine,
Directing my 'pieces' into a whole,

Unique and beautiful these constellations, many more
nameless ones,

Their twinkles hold sway, reassure and light my way!

The Pride, the Flower, the Goddess, the Humorous one,

To name a few, I am indebted to all of you!

Royalty of Verse in my firmament,

One light-hearted, the Content One,

Sunny, the Victorious, the Inspiration,

Everblue Lotus, the Grandson, the Island-born, all shall
inspire me for aeons!



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.



BY THE TIME THE SPRING ARRIVES

Neither I see her off, nor receive

While going she simply takes away

All my uprooted yellowish leaves

While coming she rustles in my sprouted leaves and
produces music in my soul through her magical wind

I am indifferent

I can say this much, if the winter comes

Can the spring be far behind?

By the time the spring arrives in my city left the farmer for
her heavenly abode

By committing suicide, having hanged Unto death

Postmortem report the same

Debt burden, exorbitant interest rate, he was dying a bit
daily at the sight of the money lender!

By the time the spring arrives

Left vijoya malliya, rather escaped public hanging of a
media trial

He takes away the wealth of an agrarian economy!

The trial of dhala brothers is on

While 'D' brother gone with the wind

Loot is on

May be by the micro finance agency

Or by the loot king

Once again potato's price is up
price of rope and pesticides subsidised

Like bananas in broad daylight

Farmers are hanged

I am afraid

The country is becoming a fruit vendor and the country a
banana Republic!

Very sharp this time the wind

The spring seems an assassin

No time for your beautiful eyes

Beloved!

No more it's a compliment

It is truth

Soon the country will be a killing field!

Good bye words

Time to bid farewell to poetry

Beloved, is not this another
'Love in the time of cholera'?

Who is reading poetry?

At best people are reading blood splattered newspaper or
searching Bijoy malliya in t. V channel with Arnav goswami!

Gone with the wind

My love and my love for the country

Shall we sum up everyone loves a good drought and king
fisher!



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 anthologies 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.



DARN IT!

Christopher Crimble

Bought a Thimble

And gave it to his wife

Mrs C

Made him some tea

And then gave him some strife

I need a new frock

You think of your sock

With the hole just near the toe

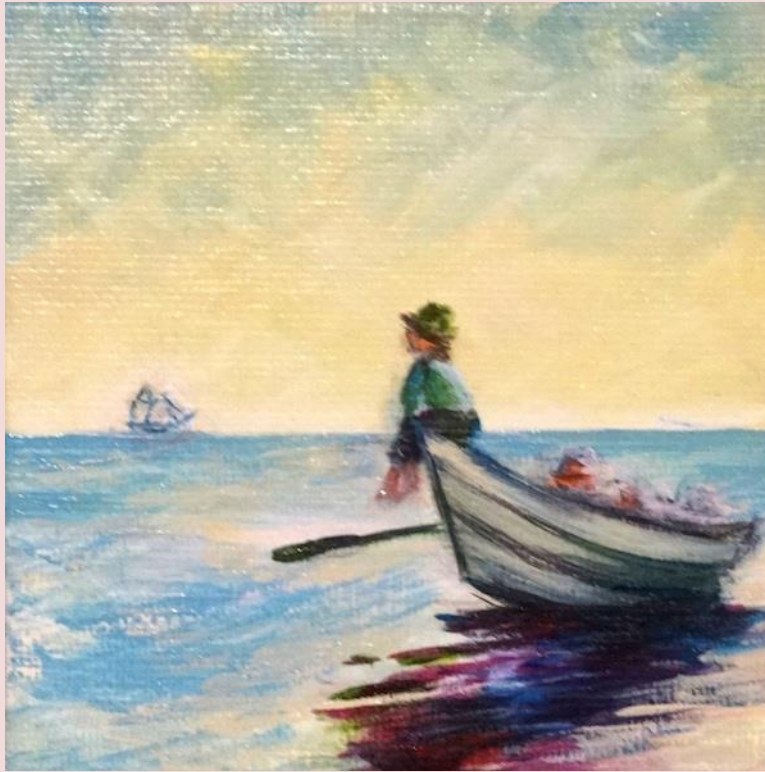
You can take your thimble

Christopher Crimble

I'll tell you where you can go



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental Engineers. He has written poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child," which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.elfinchild.com In December 2013, he was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease and died in 2015.



WHAT THE FACE FAILS

to notice

the feet suffer.

My hands remember

more than my brain.

My brain sees further

than my eyes.

My dreams hear more
than my ears.



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 Stubborn Sod (Alien Buddha Press, 2018)



I like to watch people

Crowded places, lonely parks,

Beaches, pubs, restaurants

Airport lounges, rail stations, bus stations,

Very interesting.

Sometimes i play a game with myself

Pick up some one

Imagine his story

Why is he there

Where is he going

Why is he there?

Often results match .

When you watch people talking
Mobile phones on their ears
Try to guess who is on the other side
Imagine what's happening
Business deals you overhear
Love –talk you eavesdrop
Sad news sometimes
Become an unintended witness.

Sometimes it's fun
Boring sometimes
Instructions to colleagues
Directions to Drivers
“what a piece of work is Man”.



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



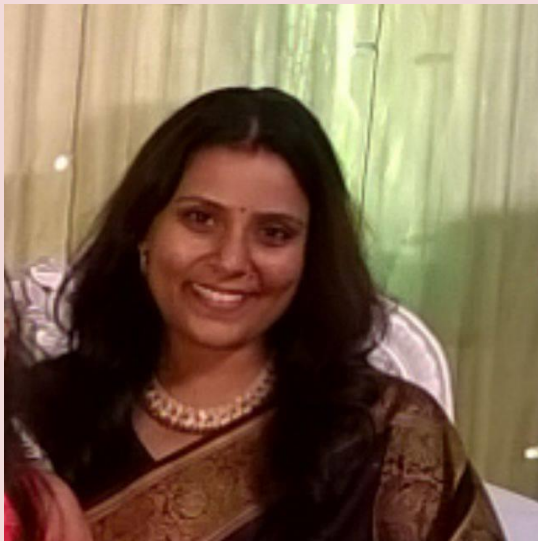
CITY

I am an unapologetic city person
For the darkness of a demanding city
Keeps the angelic side of me at bay
Calling out to my devils to shape me.

As my shadows are stomped upon
With other's tightly packed ones...
I confidently adorn my sleeve
With the black in my soul.

The city's lap called my shadows to play
Didn't lock them up in shame
My darkness turned to be my aides
My protectors, the sternness in my voice.

Ah, now Mother City has made me bold
The golden street light that shows my way
Lights me up in totality in the dark
I stride today, my confident hips swaying
My goodness, my darkness hand in hand.



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession and I see every day it is hard to be honest in a brutal world that demands the best façade even at the cost of one's

inner well-being. Sometimes it helps to know that we are all fighting secret battles and we are not the only ones in pain. I love to observe human relationships and nothing inspires my writing more. Thus the dominating theme of all my writings are conflicts and triumphs of the same.



THE MOON AND MOTHER

A paper white moon glimmers in the velvety dark sky,
Like an iridescent pearl, milky and luminous
Shod in silver shoes, she glides across the sky
No ballet dancer is equal to her

The moon is a mother as she shines
Down on the sleeping earth, her child.
Shadows form on Earth below,
Peek into a window, see a mother

In the wee hours, after a day's work

Though pale and tired herself
Hovers around her sleeping child

Tucks the blanket more securely
Brushes an errant cowlick, ever so tenderly
Plants a soft kiss so gently
On a smooth vulnerable cheek

Come golden daybreak,
The moon bids adieu
She disappears behind the clouds
Her nocturnal work finished

Not mother though, busy with the day's work
The sunshine of every child's life
Pours her energy and radiates warmth
She is also the Sun.



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.



NATURE'S WRATH UNLEASHED

*Humankind's
existential transience
fractured*

A shattered mirror views in fragments
the willful beauty of nature
that harbors a hidden anger deep within its cracks
let loose by humanity's ignorance.

Stuck deep within the crevices of the brain
viewing the world through rose-tinted lenses,
memories cling on like wispy cobwebs
attaching themselves to dark corners of the mind

and watch

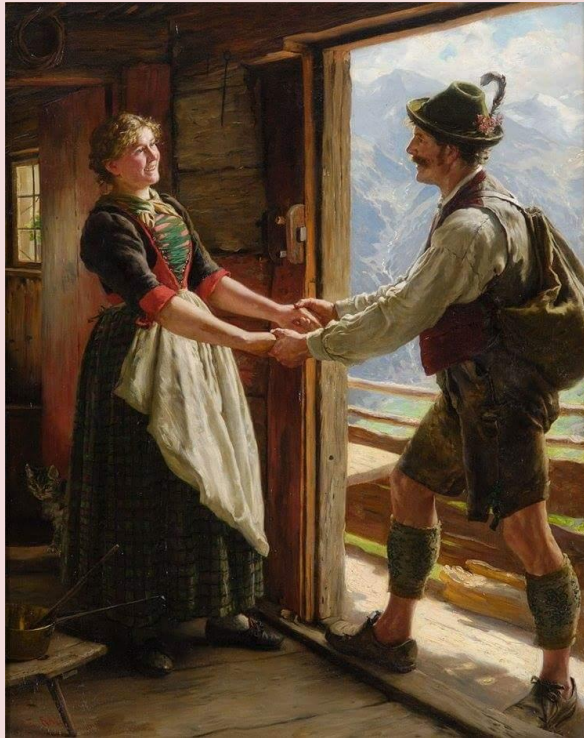
as the shadowed remains of the tapestry of life

glow brightly in the flames –

The ashes of a life well spent now choke up the grate



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.



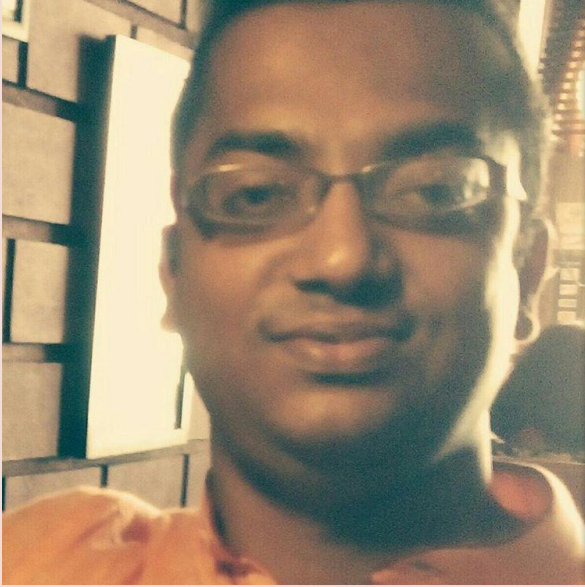
*(the painting attached for illustrative purpose is part of free internet painting resources,
artist : anonymous.)*

JUILA, HER MAN AND THE SPRING

In her cottage lone and bright
Away a bit from din
Julia had been living quiet
With her garden as it seemed,
Her man, the man who went
To different places for works his
Would come home when the scent
Of spring would catch the breeze,

Julia would wait all months long
All days thinking of him
When spring would give her the song
And glittering waves deck the stream,
She would stand at her door
Peering out to see
If by that pebbled path sure
With blooms woke that tree,
For she knew every year
When that tree would dress up so
Her man would come near
Her with mirth that spring does sow
And then he would come, her man
Walking stones of miles few
He would bring for her stories of lands
And adornments with pinkish hues,
He would tell her how in between
His works and daily fights

He found peace of love clean
Giving him soulful flights,
And Julia would look at him
And think of how is it
Spring comes every year as it seemed
And gives her wondrous treat,
She would think of finding more
Beauty in nature around
She would think of how love pours
Only to keep her bound
To love and her man who
Keeps coming back to her
Walking all the roads to
Her cottage, on the hills, from far.



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

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



RAINDROP BABY

I'm raindrop Chicago baby
silhouette embedded in fog night.
single diamond, single person
minus 24 carat gold ring,
neon harvest lady of street nightlife,
well-proportioned I'm spread
low end dollar bill scavenger
late at night.

After hours find me homeless
scrubbing my yellow stain
old dentures with baking soda.
I'm a junkie addict

scrambled eggs for brains
steal food buy crack.
Sleep beneath the bridge
rusty knife stolen old banjo.



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.



GLOBES OF INNOCENCE

Different coloured balloons free up in the sky
Filled with loads of laughter joy and cheer
Like inflated rainbows bumping into each other
Taking a joyous adventurous trip in the summer sky
Up and down and side to side they bounce and float
Scaring the birds as they soar up high
Carrying with them so much of love
Bringing smiles to children's faces
Or breaking loose bringing tears
Kids trying to pull or catch its cords
Some waving a big hello as they float
At one point when the strings separate

They drift away slowly from one another
Each one taking its own path with the wind
Flying over and crossing the various landscapes
Each one will pop when the time comes
Releasing every puff of air held within. What calm and
beautiful sight as they innocently fly!



Merlyn Alexander: A homemaker poetess and author from Tamil Nadu South India. She has self-published six books on Haiku. Loves music drawing painting craft and travelling. Contributed to many anthologies. Cooking is her other passion



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.



THE HARMONY OF JUXTAPOSED TRUTHS

In the hills of
himalayas,
huddled under
the shade of chinaars,
caged sparrows
gargle over earth
their chirpings
that
sprout as vines
plummeting drops
dripping
from

the tongue of
moon
scathing winds,
 scribbling over
muddy jars,
crops
growing unabated
over swollen premises
scratching its skin,
peeling it as
 a watermelon
layer by layer,
 seed by seed,
to reveal coffins,
buried under this garden.



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.



Tonight, I will wear black,
let it devour all my other shades,
brazen, brave and beautiful in nudity
oozing desires in tiny droplets

tonight, I will touch pain,
remains of a bruised ashen past,
wrung, wilted, adorning a mask
lying beneath the layers of today's dust.

tonight, I will make love,
taste the salt of your skin,

go back to rewrite the abandoned poems

little do I care, if now it is a sin .

tonight the hands of the clock will sleep

tonight, I'm sure, the sky would also spill.



Mallika Bhaumik: She is passionate about writing and many of her poems and stories have been published in National and International anthologies, well known magazines. She is an event planner by profession and is fond of music, travelling and cooking. She lives with her husband and sons in Kolkata and is a proud Kolkatan.



WARRIORS OF LIFE

Their body may look fragile,
but conscious forever zestful.

Endless hindrance,
yet minds always playful.

They smile with the zeal, that's intriguingly deep.

Transcending positive aura and vibes to the peeps.

Adversities hovering over,
may make them look grime.

They are warriors of life,
fighting endless hostilities to survive.
Hopeful serendipitously for to be times.
Take a bow O' holy souls,
thou art divine.



Madhu Jaiswal: She is a bilingual poet who writes in Hindi and English. Writing is a new found passion for this simple homemaker. She is an avid reader ,a compassionate person and a humanitarian. Her work has been published in various anthologies and e-zines.



THE COLD WINTER NIGHT...

Wintry night embraces, shivering, frigid and piercing,
Lonely in love, my heart hibernates, gelid and cold,
Sleep returns in the dream laden eyes slowly, of old times
reminiscing,

To strike the glacial barrenness, in its warmth to hold.

Each memory hides within the warmth of the past, in
refuge,

The heart slows its pace in concordance,

The frost bites deeper, bitter, numbing all senses, in
accordance,

Helplessness takes out the dagger of pain and starts
stabbing the self,

As the bleak dark night, mourns like the widow, freezing,
turning to stone itself.

The clock strikes twelve,

Midnight hours coldly whisper, as the dying embers
smoulder, trying deeper to delve,

I run my fingers over the silken grey of the night while in
the still warm flesh, the passions race,

The impossible is achieved as the heart warms upto love,
the dreadful cold, loses its pace!



Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayar: 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.



THE BALLERINA

Note: Inspired by the image of a ballerina which I was tempted to draw after looking at the sketch of a ballet dancer in a coffee table art book 'Vogue'. The sketch and the poem both are my own renditions that were born after a close perusal of the image of the ballerina.

My brocade borders flirt with the frost of your trails,
My pale brown valley bursts into volatile flames.

Can you see the ashes of our shared surrender
In the frozen fractals of the mask that you have worn?

My lady, your dulcet notes still smell of the flowers of our
conjoined skins.

Our journey, from our first glint of sunlight to our
crystallized wants

Trickle down, all the way from your throbbing temple
To your jasmine bosom, your frost, dying to melt in a
torrential rain.

What would you say if I blow away your fairy smoke,
And you, cough up the dust and soot of my being?
Don't you know, in this shadow of anonymity,
I am your own mind twin, dying to be scraped,
Eroded against your freezing shores?



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. She also received The International Reuel Prize for Poetry in 2017 and The International Reuel Prize for Translation in 2016.



SPIN

Air, our most basic need,
becomes deadly
when turned into a jealous lover.

Wind, seeking intimate physical contact with land,
spins a web of damage and destruction
when denied exclusive access
to the object of its affection.

The cyclone, the twister, the water spout
wreak havoc upon those standing between

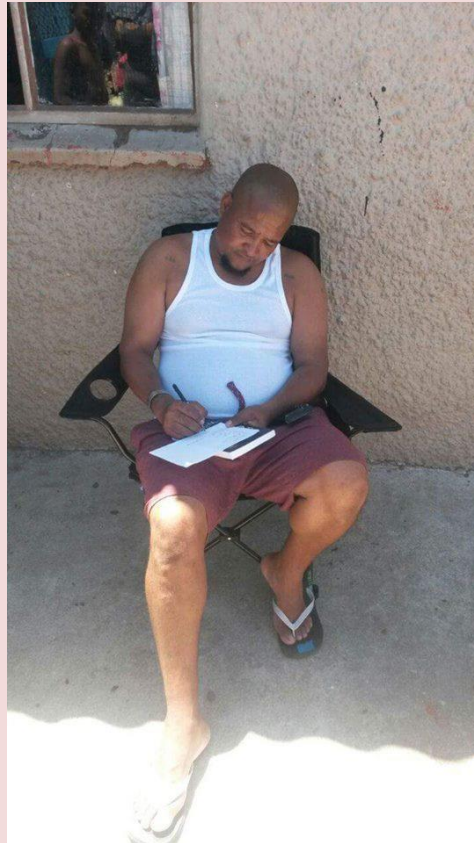
this fury and her desire, smelling the foul breath
of her anger and jealousy, sending down tears of rage
with strong winds and gales of animosity.

Seeking to destroy man and his possessions,
to erase the evidence of his existence,
sometimes even man himself.

All we can do, all we can hope for
to save ourselves is to use careful consideration
in choosing where we build future edifices,
to hopefully avoid our intrusion into those places
where air and earth wish to be most intimate.



Linda Imbler: I am a poet residing in Wichita, Kansas, U.S.A. I build acoustic guitars with my husband. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published three poetry collections. My fourth poetry collection is due out soon.



WRITING

The pen

Has to run

Writing

So far from done

Some may

Ask why

Well! My ink

Not yet from dry

If it comes to that

I'll use a pencil

I won't allow anyone

To keep me still

If what's on the inside

Has to collect out

That's what I'll do

Without any doubt

When the Holy Spirit fills my mind

It needs to be shared

I refuse to wake up with the words,

"If I only had"

It motivates and push me even more

When I'm reciting

Oh! How I, Leroy

Enjoy and love WRITING



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.



SHE

A Kiran Zehra Poem

She loves when she should hate

“Oh, she is brave!”

She smiles when she is all broken

“Oh, she is brave!”

Did you see her wrinkles?

Her greying hair? Her feeble feet?

Her broken heart? Bruised soul?

“Oh, she is very, very brave!”

But you ain't listening to her tears

Aint giving her love she deserves.

For eternity you keep this rave

“Oh, but she is brave?”

What about the times she was scared?

Had no money? No man. But she dared!

Don't call her brave, when you weren't there

“Brave, brave, brave,” instead of care.

You thought that was her gain?

Oh! You got to be insane.

She is going to touch the sky

And kiss all negatives goodbye.

You will stand and watch her do it all,

Do it alone and stand tall.

She doesn't need accolades and a brave tag

All her answers are hidden in her handbag.

Try not to define her before or after her struggle

Instead try standing by her, in her incessant hustle.



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.



SPRING UNCLAIMED

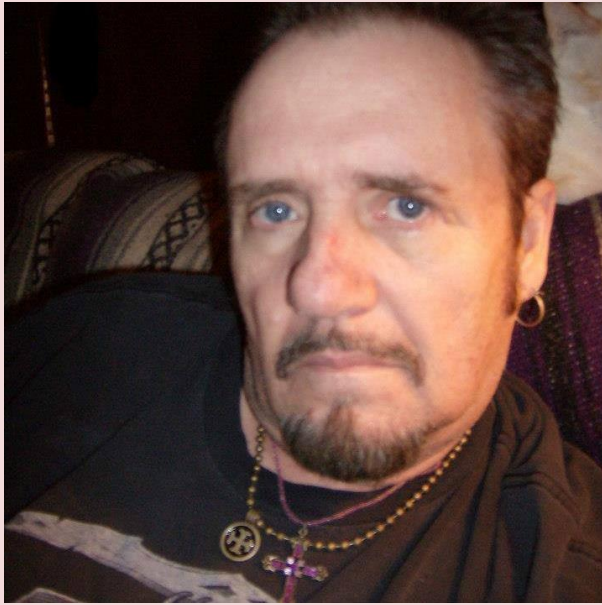
Walking through corn fields of frozen dead stalks
up to the hills, the rotting apples lying unclaimed
many deer tracks cover these meadows, the old
orchards are graveyard silent as a lone crow calls.

Another cold and hazy winter of dark gray skies
winds blowing snow through the bare oak trees
off to the east a train whistle is heard by the river
my thermos of hot coffee warming cold hands.

Truly blessed, as we have so much to be thankful,
watching chickadees and jays flutter in pine boughs.
Two squirrels as they race down the old stonewall
as falling snowflakes land softly upon my cheek.

Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's gone by,
the winter solstice whispers in a soft, dying voice.
we love a lazy long hike along a worn forest path.
Take a little time to skip rocks on the frozen pond.

A knitted hat and mittens are so very welcome,
Grandmother made them years ago, cherished now.
The winter smiling its last, spring waits, unclaimed.
A blessed day in late winter, spent here on the plains.



Ken Allan Dronsfield: He is a disabled veteran, poet and fabulist who is a three time Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net Nominee for 2016-2017. His work has been published world-wide in various publication venues. Ken loves writing, art, late evening thunderstorms, walking in the woods at night during a full moon and spending time relaxing.



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The blinds

At night

Rainsticks



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



APRIL BLUE

This is when we search for
color to transform cold grey.

Rainfall begins its magic
high lighting sky blue.

We see stacks of luminous clouds
as plants pop out and forsythia
bursts into sparkling yellow stalks.

Just today a breath of warmth
brought alive crepe myrtle buds.

Aromatic lilac bushes cluster in

soft bunches while birds and bugs
encircle them. Ten pretty trees
all dressed up in lustrous greens
boogie through noontime breezes.

Get ready for this blast-off of spring!



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.



HAPPINESS

Our high spirits,

Define our satisfaction.

Our bliss, our cheer,

A glorious reaction.

The exhilaration of euphoria,

The prosperity of something more.

Happiness,

Is enchantment.

Hopefulness of living,

The merriment of paradise.

Happiness,
Makes everything alright.

Lifting the heaviness,
Which once was all we knew.

It laid us down in a bed of roses ☺

From there we grew.

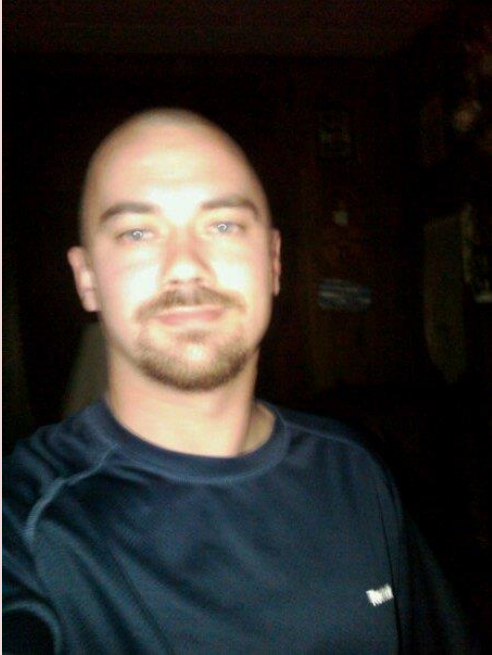
Our peace of mind,

Our pleasure.

Without the pain and woe,

Pure happiness together,

As the beautiful rivers flow.



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.

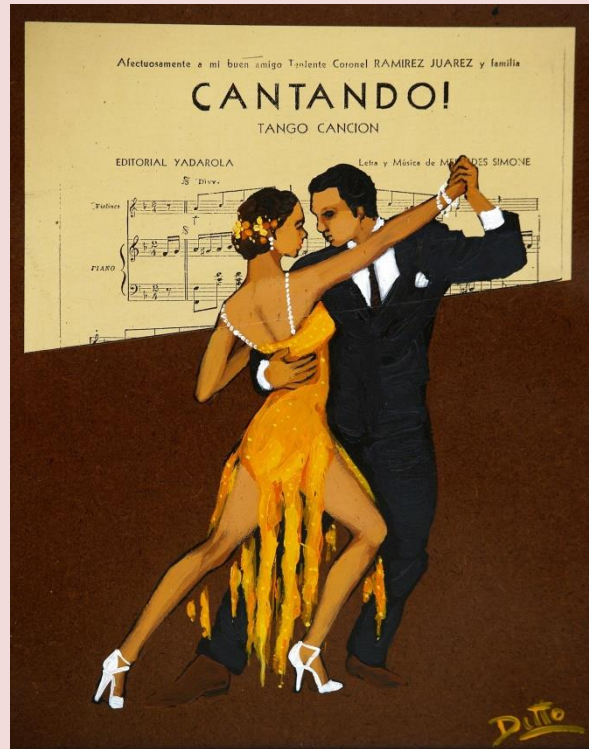


Whizzing by, are the trees
It's once again that I am commuting
Back to those lush green verdants
My second home
A home away from home
The struggles and reality of the life
It taught me all
The Education is in its womb
Will begin reflecting in me the day,
I'll leave this place, all this will, still, intact
Its beauty evergreen, its red walls
Imbibing the impalpable truth and simplicity

All these diamond years, which I got by my side
Will keep on reflecting their daintiness till the end
The essentials of life and Happiness;
To sustain in this flow
Will always wash my profanity to become
a real star, and a gem
Which will turn its own pages of a diary
Written by the above - that one power!!



Jayant Singhal: A voracious reader and an enraptured author, Jayant Singhal, under the animated pseudonym of 'Saaransh'. He is currently writing a Facebook page, "Aroma - The Essence of Life". Dazzling through the twists and turns of this beautiful voyage, commonly known as 'Life', he is en route to the bewitching nature of happiness and peace.



TANGO

Bright flowers, or translucent gems

That's what I wondered

When my eyes first met yours...

And I was surprised

At something so beautiful

That it went straight to my soul

Like a vintage record

And made me ache

With an unknown emotion

So that I could feel my breathing grow faster

As fantasies arose

On the stage of my imagination

With only you and I

Entangled in a never-ending tango...



Jagari Mukherjee: I am a poet residing in Kolkata, India. I work as a freelance content writer. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a collection of poems. I have won prizes in various literary contests.



QUINTESSENTIAL MOBILE

The quintessential mobile.

But,

The million dollar question--

Is it essential or not?

Historically,

Every game changing invention

Disrupted, catalysed and catapulted

Human race,

To the next level-

Becoming essential.

Mobile invention,
Disrupted the lifestyles--
Immobile have become
Body, Mind and Soul.

Conflict,
It has always been
Between Man and Machine--
Who dominates whom.

Who is the master?
Who is the servant?

Enslaved,
Human should never be
To machines or gadgets.

We should be the Masters.

Mobile addiction--

Be wary, is no lesser than

The popular vices.

Anything in excess is poison.

Being aware and articulating

Any invention--

To our benefit and growth--

Will sustain Human race.

Without succumbing to

And becoming slave of

The ubiquitous modern gadgets---

The quintessential mobile.



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).



FAIR FLY

Fair fly, I should say,
YOU are purely pious,
And always been obvious
That you bring beauty without delay.

Fair Fly, I know you can't
Stay on my lap and chant
My favourite song dearly,
As long as I do wish earnestly.

Fair Fly, You trust me,
What I store in me
Is wide open for you.
The nectar necklaces you
Prefer from my deep nucleus for nourishing you.

Fair Fly, I believe,
Your landing on my temple,
Will rush the mind's bells tremble
With hyper run of life humble.

Fair Fly, I swear,
YOUR wings fan plumes
Soft breeze cooling my looms
That are tangled with painful joys
Right from my blooms.

Fair Fly, I swear, I shall

Wither when you go away
Relishing my Heart and lay
My seeds sweetened with gay
For the next generation without dismay.



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.



CONVERSATIONS ON LOVE

we talked about love and marriage

trials and tribulations the full catastrophe

I asked her if she wanted a servant around the house

to mend broken fences and do odd jobs around the house

to work a seven to five job and put food on the table

she asked me do you want a maid around the house.

to cook and clean and be a doormat for your kids and you

I said I wanted a liberated soul to share equally my life's journey.

she said I want the right to be who I am

i want to be respected and recognised as a human being

to acknowledge my intelligence and my emotions

I want to be on your right side

and walk along side you,

I want to be on your left side close to your heart

and hear every beat of your heart.

I said you are that missing rib from my breast

I want you to be close to me.

she said I don't want to be a new toy

and when the novelty wears off

I am discarded on a heap with all your other toys.

I said woman there's no guarantees in life,

I could fall down dead right now at your feet,

that's how uncertain life can be

she said I do not want guarantees

written on labels on some merchandise

when you make a purchase at a store
I want a promise of honesty and trust
faithfulness for all eternity
for you to stay true to me
and never stray far from my door

I replied the good Bard said

“The course of love never did run smooth.”

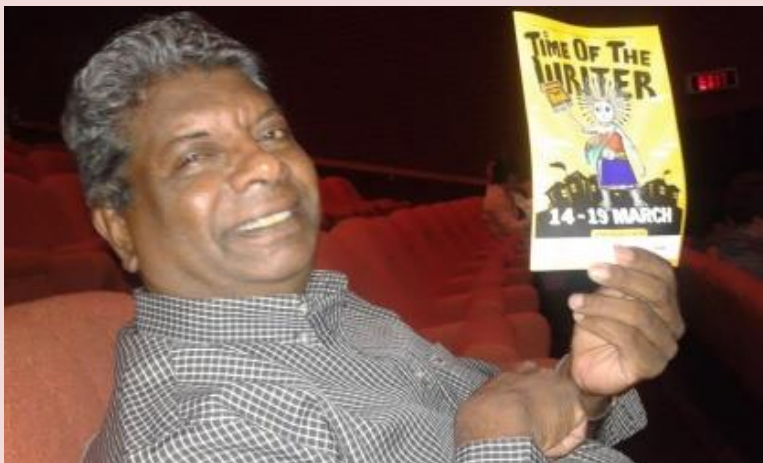
and

“Love is not love which alters, when it alteration finds,”

I said my love it's a tall order you command of me
one I can promise to fulfil to the letter.

she said talk is cheap,
the tongue is flexible with no bones,
you will promise me the world
and then as the years crawl along
you will break them all

along the way one by one
I've seen and witnessed the story
of broken promises so many times
like shredded confetti scattered by the wind
over the dusty roads and open fields
history is so inexplicable
it repeats its self over and over again
and I don't want to be your history.



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.



MY SILENCE SPEAKS

when you love truly
you can't show.

a sham love

can say i love you freely,

but when you love truly
you can't show

you just swallow your feelings

your silence speaks for you

the longing in your eyes do

you are afraid to touch

you are afraid to ask

lest the answer be no
and if and when
there is a parting
the tears that never well your eyes
to a lesser light may seem a lie
but within, they well from a place so pure.



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.



BI-CYKLE OF DEATH

We all matter

Matar is to kill

But we all matter

We kill

The ones we love

We love to hate

And we hate to love

Because love and hate

Are entwined

My country, I hate

And I love her also

She is like a beautiful woman
To me
I love her
And I hate her
I hate the pettiness
Of my people
And I love
Their greatness
The sea is great
And wide
But shallow
At the coast
Where I swim
Letting the waters glide languidly
To caress my skin
The mountains are high
And mighty
And the land is low

And flat

Green with rain

And desert with thirst

It's a funny thing

Life

One minute you have it

The next you don't

To matter is to matter

Because we don't matter

We just die



Geoffrey Jackson: He has been an intrepid TESOL instructor at 5 universities and 4 colleges, blown off course from England to Holland, Finland, Hungary, Oman, Saudi Arabia

and, in the Roaring Forties, to Denmark. A self-described European cosmopolitan and Americanophile with New World dreams, Geoff is the Poetry Editor for Fullosia Press.



NUDE

Crushed through aeons in frenzied twisters,
Tornadoes of seasons that time stirs,
Sand splintering itself from earth terse,
A ballerina gust, her spin to rehearse,

And voilà the invisible hands of destiny,
Shape and mould thoughts that sang in symphony,
My soul in a vortex and dervish a virtual mutiny,
Metamorphoses itself like a silent felony.

But I let the light pass through me freely,
That deflects in a mélange of colors motley,

Uninhibited to expose my blatant transparency subtly,
My truths, untruths, shadows, veins, nerves show lucidly.

The winds die down, the storm has passed fleeting,
I drop like star dust mound, this earth me greeting,
Where I lay like a cluster of pollen glittering,
Unfurling and rolling out petals of multifarious fragrances
emanating.

I just don't know where I'm really heading.

I smoothen out my thoughts choosing my desires,
Allowing the sun to blow a form with its sacred fires,
Knowing fully well I can break, my will never tires,
Cold yet breeding the warmth of life in dense mires,

I have been broken, mended, stuck back and glued,
I have watched fingers and hands bleed red-hued,

Tested for my brittle heart and gashed by touches crude,
But clear in my conscience, a glass flower elegant I stand
nude!



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. Recipient of the Reuel International Poetry Award 2017.



Without taking away me from myself,
I try to frame my thoughts,
Search inwards,
Knock all those ornamental doors,
Glance through brown and yellow fading pages,
Where am I? And why?
Waves of words echo and scatter
Through all those corridors we passed
Drowning dreams and desires in the ocean, infinite,
Cross deserts, hills and mountains,
Slip, fall and walk,
Badly bruised,
The night will steal my heart!

Where are we all going?!

Look, this stretches again, to infinity,

Watch out.



That day again,

She came in,

With loads of fruits,

And watering eyes

She can't stop.

Her face, swollen,

Tired, sad,

She will break

If I don't accept

Or say, 'Not so much',
Her deformed, wrinkled hands,
Hold mine, trembling,
Her unspoken words escape in her tight hug,
“I have no one in this world.”



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.



UNWRITTEN VERSE

I put the turbulent sea
in a deep slumber
The angry waves
subside slowly
The ripples of anguish
immerse silently
In that long evening
I was with me only
Away from all noise and uproar
Where your imprints lose fervour

I raise a sea inside me
and bury distorted fragments !



Gayatree G Lahon: She is a poet from the beautiful state of Assam. A teacher by profession and a poet by passion, her poems reflect her aestheticism and love for nature. Her poems have been published in various magazines and anthologies , national and international.



Branches like bare bones

Yes it does sound cliché

But nothing seems more apt, more perfect

Bones coming out of the Earth

As if someone sowed the seed

Or perhaps there was no need

A little soil

Some blood, however old

And the cold

The brave bones

Showing themselves

To the bone chilling winter

Beautiful sight, these bones waiting for the leaves to cover
them

Their own or falling from the next tree

Unflinching

=====

See the dreams floating on the air

Through those branches bare

They call you out loud from the lair

Those opportunities rare

Shiny gems from the crown in her hair

The fairy has deliberately left there

For those who see beyond the flare
Awaits the treasure that was always theirs
Breathing free and fair
You smell the freedom that is in the air



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.



MEMORIES

She remembered the first day she met him...

formal shirt...

formal pants...

formal attitude...

formal hairstyle...

and the ego to match

In a blink of an eye...

she was back there many years later...

sitting there opposite him...

staring at what she walked away from over and over again...

For known reasons of course...

Everyone knows what it feels like to fall in love for the first time...

Did he know...?

Everyone knows what it feels like when u walk away from that love?

Does he know...?

But what everyone might not know...

Is the feeling when it walks back into your life... like it never left!

Would he know...?!

She saw it in his eyes... He couldn't hide the smile or the excitement or stop the flowing river of chapters missed...

Every pebble... Every stone... Every boulder...

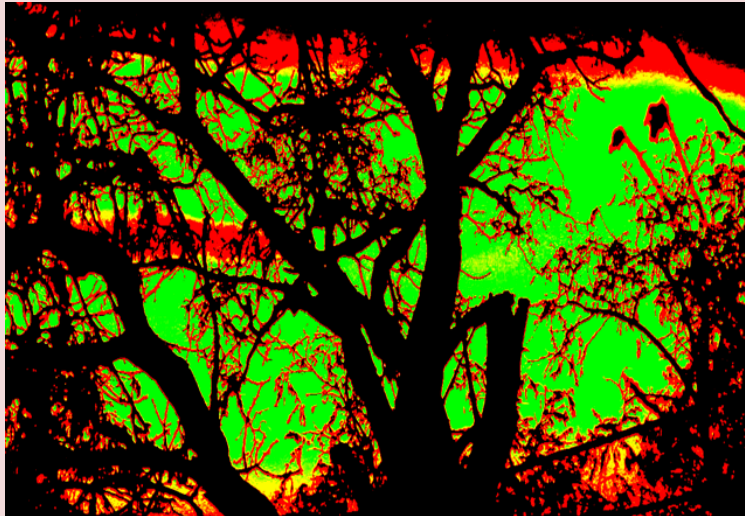
Time slipped through his fingers

To him - time was the enemy

Because he wanted more of it... But as optimistic as he looked... she reserved her right to hide her butterflies as well as her sense of completion...



Fathima Zara Khan: I am 29 years old. Scorpion by nature, Poet by pain, Lawyer by profession... Lover of life by choice! I started writing when my tears stopped flowing about life's trials and tribulations. It's an escape and my own personal survival guide.



Black Drops

Translated by Artur Komoter

She can still see you

her dreamed world

in which

she gave up dreams for love.

And now?

On her cheeks,

like rain

run down

the black drops of ink –

the rain of the soul.

With tears she wanted
to drown out her longings,
but she is unable to lose the memories.
Like a camel with its water,
and so she –
carries the weight of the past.



Eliza Segiet: She is a poet from Poland. Her poem "Questions" was the Publication of the Month (August 2017) and the International Publication of the Year (2017) in Spillwords Press. She was Author of The Month of January/February 2018 in Spillwords Press. Laureate of the International Special Prize "Frang Bardhi – 2017". Her works can be found in anthologies and literary magazines in Poland and abroad.



REIMAGINE!

The cacophonous power of destruction

The stormy attack on conscience

The shouting match on the end of the shore

All may end up in silence

You got to just reimagine

Reimagine your world to be.

The light of a thousand candles

The luminescence of a million fireflies

Can rule over the devastation of ethos

Only if you want to walk the path

To reimagine all that you hold to be true

To reimagine your world to be.

The ugly puckered faces hovering around you

The inelegant demeanour of your beloved

The stony egos of the ungrateful

All may change in the flash of a moment

Only if you can reimagine

Reimagine your way of living,

Reimagine your world to be.

For there is no world

No world worth not living in

It's all up to what you can

You can imagine the truth to be.



Dipankar Sarkar: I am only a part-time poet residing in the city of joy, Kolkata, India. I work as a senior executive in the education sector. I love writing but I am yet to publish any work except my poems in Glomag. I am an ever optimistic person in spite of the many battles that I lost and some that I won. I am working on the first book of mine on humanity and the world that I have seen so far.



THE COLOUR OF DEATH

Where eternity is just within the helm of the street

And the night lights submit to another realm

Where the deserts the plains the oceans are but an
expanse

The end, or the continuity, called death, is that beautiful
trance

She's tired, a flightless bird, tied down by her own weight

Born undaunted, yet clinging, unwantonly, to a merciless
fate

The mirror beckons, the sides reversed, the shadows loom
uptide

The night's blue, the skies green, her flights open wide

The calls of the dusk, or the calls of dawn are they

The rise, or the fall, similar colours, to the mind's dismay

Trained to believe, disbelievers forever aren't we

Black isn't the color of death, however dark it be



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



A VOICE FROM THE CAULDRON

We scamper from cage to cage

Like nervous, frightened birds,

We South Africans,

While the demonic predators who terrorise us

Are free.

Free

To torment us, to violate our families,

To turn once hopeful,

Finally 'liberated' citizens of Apartheid-free South Africa

Into tension-filled, stressed-out, scared prey,

Fearful prisoners in steel-ribbed cells.

The brazen criminals are free.

Free

To invade our nurturing homes, to raid our struggling shops,

To hijack our vehicles,

To turn distressed employers and worried workers into sad migrants

To shatter our economy

In their ceaseless assault against our country.

The brutes are free to prowl our sinister streets,

Our shuttered, desolate, dark city centres

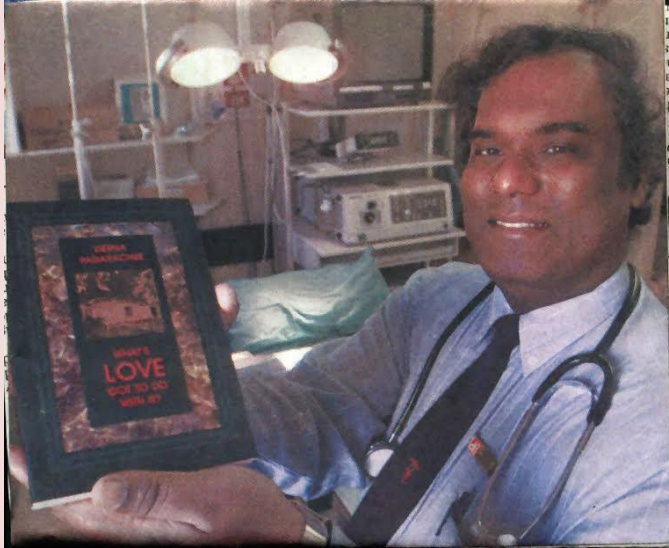
Our frenetic roads,

Like Raptors,

While we cower in terror,

Wondering when our number will come up,

When will we lose the war of deadly
South African roulette?



Deena Padayachee: I am an Author and Poet, residing in Durban, South Africa. I work as a physician. I have contributed to various international and South African anthologies. Three of my books have been published. I have been awarded the Olive Schreiner prize for prose by the English academy of Southern Africa.



EMILY AS IF THE SONG IS REAL THEN SHE IS REAL AS WELL

My son asked me
exactly

what it is
that poetry can do,

he asked me
why I write so much

about his mother
as if she

is something other
than his mother?

I told him
most of the time

when I write poems
bruises appear

or disappear all
over Ohio,

but when I use
his mother's name,

those poems
play

with a light

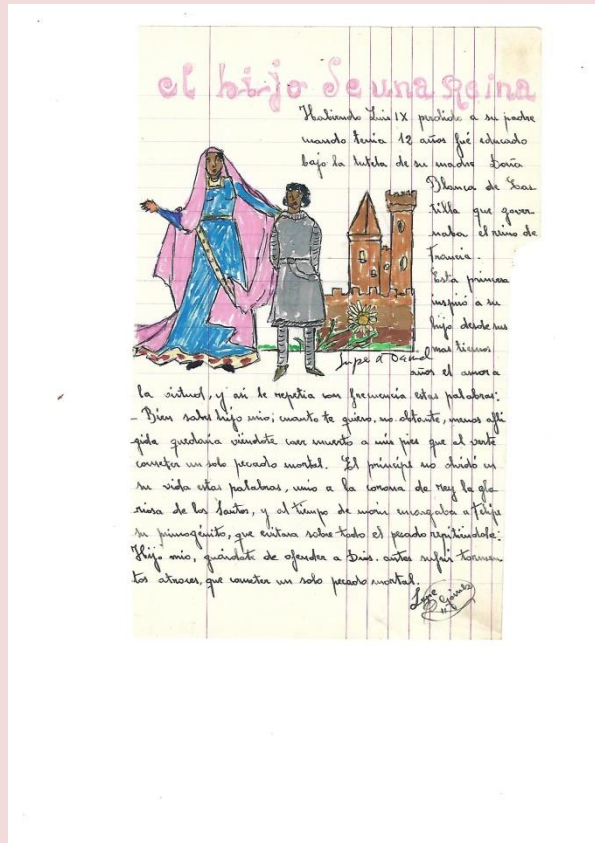
I never created

& that excites me

without end.



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.



LOUIS IX OF FRANCE

Louis IX of France was lost

Putting one's real brogues

When his father died

Devoured by four wolves

At the bottom of a ravine.

White of Castille, his mother

Chosed between she-wolves

With which of them

Her son married
Observing her chastity belt
To see if any nobleman or count
Had unlocked it
Lying in their bed.
-Don't fear, my son, he said
In choosing one of the she-wolves
But that she had white teeth
And clear the throat
With care of choosing well
A white she-wolf of Castille
And not a blur
With feathers from Holland
Well, if it was so
I'll hit you in the head with the hit
And I'll put You the seven-league shoes

So that you went
Where Father Padilla
To do hecks.



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.



HODGEPODGE

Vivid words

are sitting on my lap,

having a comfortable

and pleasant conversation

I like my words,

cherish them,

fondly,

till they get restless

They want to get out,

move forward

My words are jumping

from my lap into

the cauldron

I call my brain

They mingle, boil and

spit themselves out

as something esthetic

A poem...



Dagine Aignend: Pseudonym for the Dutch poetess and photographic artist Inge Wesdijk. Dagine posted some of her poems her fun project website www.dagine.com. She's the co-editor of Degenerate Literature, a poetry, flash fiction, Arts E-zine. She has been published in several Poetry Review Magazines, in the anthologies 'Where Are You From?' and 'Dandelion in a Vase of Roses'.



OUR LADY OF TENDERNESS

Most tender mother, you take all our tears
And hold me in your warm strong arms with love,
You saw your own son crucified with jeers
Your gentle witnessing of deathless love.
He leant against your face as your new joy,
You felt and comforted his infant cheek
And felt the future shudder for your boy
Gazing with mercy into bold eyes meek.
You felt the sword that pierced into your heart
You feel the swords that pierce into our own,

You soothed the child whose end would be our start
Upon your breast all tenderness is shown.
Mother of God, gracious mother to me,
Yours is the kindness who sets my heart free.



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.



There was lot of blood in the street

lot of people around

all surprised

whose blood is it

police drew chalk mark around

cleared crowd

crowd moved, stopped

hand cart, a bundle

breeze played with covering cloth

moved a dead man

old, wrinkles on his face all over

lot of grey hair

lot of chalk, charcoal

photographs of Jesus, Sai Baba, Hanuman, Shiva

few coins, currency notes/Che Guevara T shirt full of blood

Crowd looked back Sai Baba sketched in charcoal frame

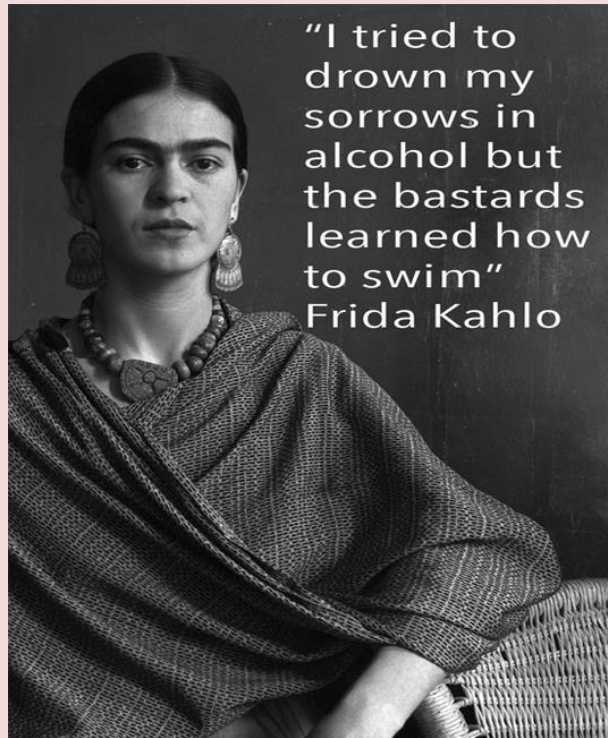
below in bold in red-Sab Ka Maalik Ek.

Next day's newspaper carried a report

Death of street side secular artist-name not known-let us call him Anonymous.



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.



AFTERLIFE

(for Frida)

In Alcohol I drowned all my woes;
With a vengeance, recalled them one by one;
I was in ecstasy and in a brutal fantasy,
Held them under fluid abundance,
Watched them struggle and grow still,
Finally disposed them off,
Letting them float away from me;

Before passing out,
I offered a final prayer too:
May my woes find their final abode-
In forgiveness and forgetting!

Woes!
They had mastered an afterlife-
No murderer anticipates;
From that blackness-
Inhabiting the flipside of colours and cradles,
They surfaced with a vengeance,
Bloated, exuding an otherworldly stench,
Bursting into a thousand lives-
Of maggots writhing and reproducing,
Multiplying and devouring moment by moment,
Day and night of a fluid abundance.



Bini B.S.: She is currently an academic fellow at Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Gujarat, India. Her articles, poems and translations have appeared in Journals and anthologies. She is the editor of *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought*. Her poems were part of an anthology of corporeal poems titled *A Strange Place Other than Earlobes: Five Poets, Seventy Voices* (Sampark, 2014). She is the winner of the 2016 J. Talbot Winchell award presented by the Institute of General Semantics for her contributions to the discipline of general semantics, which she received in a ceremony in New York on October 21, 2016.



OUR FAVOURITE SONG

Deep in thought

I am wondering, why?

This damn man

Is still worth my cry?

Look at all the scarce

And pain he has caused

After our separation

And now divorced

I believe I am better off

With him away

But why am I still fearing

A brand new day?

He has left a mark

Difficult to wipe out
Though I am alone
He is still wondering about
He is still so present
In my thoughts
Although we parted
At the divorce courts
I'll have to be strong
And move along
While I am listening to
Our favourite song



Bevan Boggenpoel: He is a poet who lives in in the northern areas of Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He is currently a teacher at Bethelsdorp Road Primary School. His poetry has been published in various anthologies. He launched his debut Anthology on 1 December 2016. He is also an author at a South African website known as Litnet (Literature Network in South Africa).



OLD MAN'S THANK YOU

(Once sent to an old sidekick, after which I recovered against the odds)

I'd best sing a few thoughts

Because soon I'll be gone

And I and my sycamore

Will prettily be one

I thank for inspiration

You who face pain

When to my sycamore

I return again

I see you save children
From deeds that reek
And fester in the quiet
When publics won't speak

I see you face bullies
And their brawn and scorn
- Go disgrace them
Until their grip is torn!

I see you face cut-throats
And for the innocent bleed
I see you whistleblow
Against arrogance and greed

I love how you face
The bigotry, the lies

The trickery, the treachery,
The compromise

So I sing you thoughts,
And will soon be gone;
But I know that you
Will soldier on

When I'll be one
With my sycamore tree
So prettily prettily
With my sycamore tree

I love your works,
Quiet, unknown
And profoundly unsung
Like blossoms blown

I love, I draw near
To my sycamore tree
And soon I'll be one
Prettily prettily prettily

With my sycamore tree



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.



THE COLLARED MAN PONDERES HIS FATE

fish-eye pedestrians processed like meat
butchered by shadows crossing the streets
and the collared man fondles his date
groping nights for some familiar shape.
why not invite five-finger mary
to play quick hands of sexual solitaire?
waiting for traffic lights to change in Hell
here on Tiltworld, in Universe Pinball,
who is there tonight to tilt at windmills?
president said that shadows don't lie
but who can see his shadow at night?

and the collared man watches his weight.
once who made fire was fried at the stake
and wheelmaker stretched on the rack
and sail weavers made to walk the plank.
our world's darkness, a new kind of flash
electrified with tasteless touchless gas
that weighs down like a new kind of mass,
and the silence a new form of scream
smothering the nights once thick with dreams.
the collared man's sewed up at the seams.
he who windowed the world exiled the wind.

skyscraper maker erased our sky.

but icon crossing signs sigh WALK

WITH LIGHT

WALK

WITH LIGHT



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.



SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI (THUS PASSES THE GLORY OF THE WORLD)

A reminder that all things are fleeting in this world...

Sea of Souls – We are delivered into this natural world to an unknown mortal future,

some following an intended expected planned organized structured streamlined controlled

dogmatic path whilst others are catapulted into an unplanned sudden disrupted unsure

life devoid of guidance support structure and realistic outcomes depending on the

provision of maternal care or even paternal guidance as our lives are ever-changing in

this modern age but we all have the capacity to evolve into our own personal sphere

despite having immeasurable differences in this global village we battle to survive in –

Others more able to access vital and existential human resources in order to stay

afloat in this earthly sea of souls desperately avoiding sinking blinking; ceasing

Echoes from the Deep – However much we try to avoid discovering the void of

humankind we ultimately submit to the enticing detrimental whispers out of unseen

unknown melting shadows luring us further into the deep with appetizing offers to

exist outside of the norm creating our own designed matrix in which we emerge as our

own masters steering our own destinies and blinding ourselves to the flickering signs of

blasphemy as we venture further down the steel streets of preached sin each corner splitting

wider with crooked voices meandering swirling above our heads and murky tributaries

channeling us into stagnant reservoirs where exploding
geysers let out accusatory blue hot
steam and water crystals turn into slippery black ice whilst
shards of midnight rain pierce our
willing skin but we gladly endure offering our minds just to
hear more echoes from the deep.

Flush Vortex – In this mortal race we witness unthinkable
acts that shake some to our core
for the actions of this declining human race – For some of
us we decide to live as we please
delete as we please annihilate as we please preach as we
please maim as we please destroy as
we please cheat as we please lie as we please rebel as we
please overthrow as we please steal as
we please murder as we please trample as we please whilst
ignoring the existential
desperate pleas of our sisterly and brotherly needs or even
unseen sighs we are allowed
to see but around us unseen forces direct us from all
corners to what should be obvious

yet our elected blindness allowed them to find us infiltrate
us corrupt us change us

not questioning this whilst through all this fake mirage
utopian existence we failed to

realize our disintegrating demise – Call it divine or a fluke or
rebuke but know this;

Are you ready for the unexpected whispered inevitable
sudden flush vortex?



Don Beukes: He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles', his debut poetry collection published by Creative Talents Unleashed. Originally from Cape Town South Africa, he is a retired teacher of English and

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

Janine Pickett: Her nonfiction work has appeared in a variety of print magazines and anthologies, including Country Woman, and Chicken Soup For The Soul Series. Her fiction was nominated for The Year's Best Horror and Fantasy #17. Current poetry appears in print anthologies, and various online journals. She recently co-edited a poetry anthology: The Poets of Madison County. Janine is the founding editor and publisher of Indiana Voice Journal and Spirit Fire Review.



OVERLEAF

Head, heart, stomach ache,
never stop until you make it
across the rail.

Sometimes it feels a crave
of new love, stains left are
stolen passion .

Nobody gets free
of chained memories,
stick fights and bullies.
Love shies coming back
to dove light, evading agonies
untapped, symphonies that
grace land of the best.

Tests in life and answers
are hard to find some
moments impossible.

Body trembles
brain spy a lazy dreamer.
Missions uncomplete
complicate successful flow
of river shine.
Jealousy rule so rudely
misting acute nature.
You never taste victory
against residing demons,
until you overleaf an empty
page set a slippery ink journey
on a slate a see your world
change into a kraal of celebration.
Overleaf!
Your novel has just
began.



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 various festivals. He has graced broadcasting medium like SABC,Y fm and Trans Africa radio blowing poetry horn, is a member of Amavukuvuku music band, and has also facilitated children story telling at Xarra Books.



POEM ON BIRTHDAY

It is my birthday and I saw some swallows twittering in the sky.

The swallows I had seen years ago, with my papa's hand in hands,

Learning the art of walking beside our small river in breezy blue.

The blue still oozes the breeze, the river still glides forward wantonly

With same serene swallows playfully adoring her every bend and curve.

But Time made me heavy, slow-footed and a scare crow with no hand

To hold. I ,the ghost of I, sigh with breeze channelling on my forehead.

The swallows and the river and the breeze still vibrant and
not I! Alas!

I am burdened and bent, collecting the torn pieces of life
into my sack,

And at the end of the day emptying my bag to find a
distorted mirror.

At dark I'm disturbed by the dream of a stag in the far-away
forest,

The stag was meandering frantically in vain to escape being
preyed.



Avik Kumar Maiti: He is a poet and writer from Midnapore. He is a permanent ESL teacher at Belda Gangadhar Academy, West Bengal. He likes to travel, explore the locale with cultures, to drink life to the lees', passion in humanity and drenched in literature.



(Pic by Asoke Kumar Mitra)

A SUNFLOWER DREAM...

Shapeless thoughts,
Dreams have fallen asleep

Sunflower, a fluttering angel
Invisible wings of desire
Turned the night into a love story
The silence of soft lips

Moon sleeping
Sunflower laughs

Wounded night

Left a love note

At the wounded sky



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 Punjabi, Hindi, Italian, Spanish, French, Persian, Hebrew, Malay and Mandarin languages.



IDEA

Idea, you come easy

come softly

don't open the door

don't open the shutters of windows

don't disturb the pages of my books

don't mess my table

come serene

come clean

come directly

come steadily

come into my mind

without you, my eyes are open
but I still find myself blind
nothing seems easy
nothing in hind
so, come, let's build strong theories
to nurture family, society
and humanity all around
come afresh, come easy
come pure, come sound.



Ashish Kumar Pathak: He is a primary education teacher in the state of Bihar. He has got letter of appreciation from president of India for his poem. Recently he was featured in

fragrance of Asia anthology. He is slated to be featured in east meets west anthology. His strong point is sociopolitical poetry.



TO MY BREATH

To my breath, I dare say, Stones are rigid less,
Silence when does hover through, and veils the stinking
pace—

It bleeds, but not in moisture warm in sticky sap albeit
The streams from it a cluster form in which my corpus dips.
The secret 'I' in constellation fore'er absorbed
Pangs pains and glaciers in this body throbbed.

Warm, warmer, warmest in veins blood engross,
Thick stormy gales do the snowy whiskers cross;
Limbs are but torn apart without the sanguine flesh,
And the breath with panting comes like a knotted lace.

Still it gashes deep inside with an occult moan,
To my breath I dare say it's sturdy than a stone.



Arka Chakraborty: I am a poet residing in Midnapore, India. I am a student pursuing graduation in English literature. I have formerly contributed to several anthologies.



TOMORROW

Vasanthi Swetha

Tomorrow,

when we have a conversation

about candles that burnt themselves

or tongues that travelled

or love that lied

or time that shut itself between your eyelashes

or your coffee stained bookmarks

and my silence stained lips;

I might break into a poem about us,

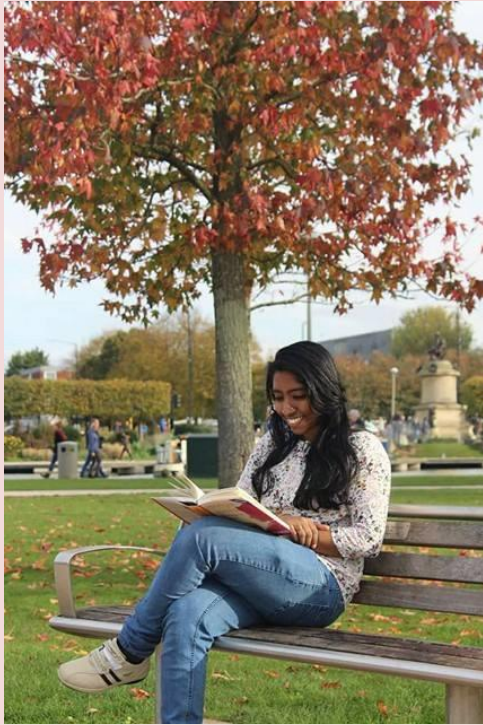
for you are a novel
with mirrors placed in between
commas and full stops,
and I am the whispers of those fallen tears
that blur your sight.

Anurag Mathur

Tomorrow,
When we have a conversation
About all this and more,
Or about the time when these
conversations began
Maybe we'll silently share a laugh,
About the places these words went
And I might once again believe
In pixies, fairies and magical orbs
in the fact that the words I say
And the ones I don't,
Are not mine,

But a part of a bigger conversation,
Your soul is having with itself.

Note: *Both these poems have the same number of words and lines.*



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.



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.



THE SUNRAYS COME TO AN END

Cavemen, cavemen,
come out I want to play
Hear me blow the piper
wish me good luck
and let the morning be merry

Ancestors, ancestors
peek out from thy ovens
see me live and love
let us talk to thee in thy tongues
as long as we still can

The end is near,
we have no time to waste
The calendar has only so many days
Let us count the hours we have left
before the darkness sucks us in--
There is no hope for the eternity.



Annika Lindok: She is an English teacher and translator. She loves reading, books, early mornings before bed. Her works have had the honour of being published in Relationship Add Vice anthology, Zoetic Press, Basil O'Flaherty, Event Horizon Magazine and others. Upcoming in Grey Borders.



SARGASSO SEA

I once sailed upon the Sargasso Sea,
Bermuda bound was I. Dazzled by
the crystal blue depths. Magnified by
the transparency of the water,
it almost felt as if I could reach down
and touch the ocean floor.

Caressed by the warmth of the soft breezes, tasting the salt air on my lips. Defined only by ocean currents, a sea without a shoreline. No land will ever confine it, as its borders drift and move with the surrounding Atlantic flow.

The magic of its past haunts the imagination. It lies deep within the heart of the mysterious Bermuda Triangle. Its history is littered with tales of sailing ships lost and vanished forever. But that does not stop the adventurous souls who will forever seek out its secrets.



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



OUR NIGHT

There is not a sound coming
From behind the door and window
It is the evening spreading its shroud
And the pale moon is hanging in the sky low

There is a dim light in the room
As you come inside and close the door
With your loose hair and short dress you
Looked gorgeous and my eyes don't need more

A passion was rising in me slow
As you fall slowly in bed by my side

You breathed hard like a bird in flight
To perch in my lonely heart and give me a ride

I held you as my own and kissed
You felt blessed and undressed quick
My fingers became restless and traced your
Curves and you became helpless with a shriek

There is no one to disturb us
You can feel free to shed your dress
You must dance like a witch in love and
Make love covering my face with your dark tress

This night is made for us
We are young and new in the game
Let us live in each other's body and heart
When we will finish we will no more be the same



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.



PERFIDY OF LOVE

Love is like an unbelievable adventure

Like an amazing scenic drive

Where everything is refreshingly picturesque

The unsurpassed beauty of nature

Calms your mind and you can taste peace

As you find yourself in an exultant state.

You hear haunting bells awaken you

Shattering your tender heart

Defining the brutal reality of bizarre betrayal
by the man you thought loved you.

Played like a fool, his love was a joke
This dream of love became a nightmare
Free your restless psyche from self-blame
and the clutches of dire deception
Don't allow his pernicious projection
To taint your clarity of the reality of perfidy
For the sake of your own sanity
Forgive the devious "Judas"

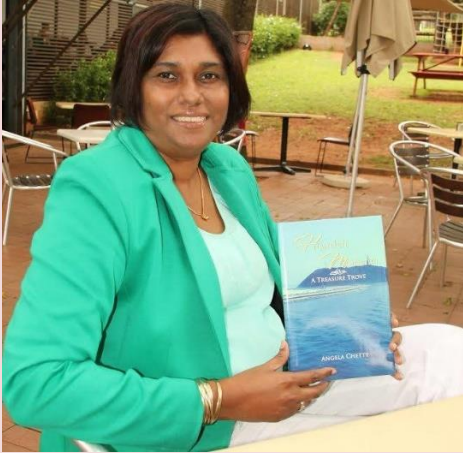
Retain your composure and self esteem
Remain the strong phenomenal woman
Unhindered by love's deceptions
As life's calamities flows through your veins.

Like Spring, start life anew
Flowers blooming in the meadows
The sounds of bees and beautiful birds
Filling the air like a symphony
There is a hopeful horizon of true love
waiting for you to embrace.

When you find the beautiful soul
Who rhythmically pulsates in tune
with your precious heartbeat
You will hear the valleys echo
With trust, respect and honour
Calling out your name in love.

As the mountains beckon amore
Take life's path hand in hand
With the precious love of your life

As each expedition brings you enduring joy
To reach the summit of pure amity.



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. Two poems were selected in January 2018 by International Poetry as Editor's Choice for From the Heart featuring the year's most heartfelt and meaningful prose for the Annual Valentines release.



My precious
You were there inside
Warm and cozy in my womb
Shared my breath
And danced to your favorite tune

You didn't talk
Yet made me feel
Kicked my tummy
With your tiny little feet
Clapped and played

When I sang you a song

Slept peacefully

When the lullaby's on

Day by day

And nine months have passed

And then you came to me

Covered in fairy dust

How lovely you looked then

And how lovely you look now

Like a fairy you are

sent from above

You are a fairy

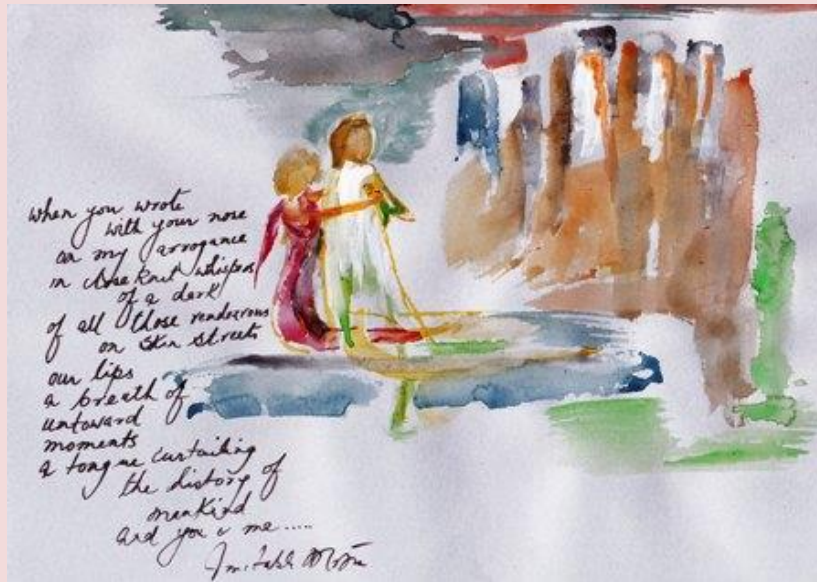
Sans magic and wings

Yet you are precious to me

Like a flower to the spring



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



when you wrote with your nose
on my arrogance
in close knit whispers of a dark
you said this is just another end
of all those rendezvous on skinstreets
our lips a breath of untoward moments
a tongue curtailing the history of mankind
and you and me
unafraid of galaxies
persisting in us
but today
i won't see you anymore
nor your eyes where I once traveled

in the beginning of another time
nor your smile
of the victor and vanquished in
insane memories
and your saree that draped them always
today
not far from us are the deserts of innocence
where camels ran the density of moon
and we had once grown there
collateral of an even wilder sky
today
say again
i haven't lived beyond an ardor
of that lost white flower in your hair
of summers that bled in silence
of the ruby river that woke us up each night
and your smell I have now learned to disbelieve
a death I had always lived

whenever a sparrow flew away
whenever another day arrived.



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.



THE FAINTEST BREATH OF LOVE IS ENOUGH TO SAVE ME

Inside the box the lid
was pushed up, lifted, pulling out
the weight of darkness, filling
the space with air – fresh as a
blooming sunflower, gathering the
bumble bee and Eastern Grey squirrel.

Without warning the stem snapped,
an essential survival line severed from its source.
The bee and squirrel moved on,
as I must move on, clean up dead stems, petals and seeds,

rest on the front steps, put the debris in the box and bury it
in the same place where
the sunflower once stretched half way to the roof.

I must be brave without beauty to strengthen me,
free of myth and poetic attachments, mingle with
the nest-makers, the earth-foragers, satiate in the present
and tremble with glory, breathing better in spite of decay,
disease and the loss of sustenance.

Light the box on fire before I bury it.

Bury it while it is burning. Bury it, burning...

holy is this, holy is that,

dream it now

and it will be over, it will be mine.



Allison Grayhurst: She is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Four times nominated for “Best of the Net”, 2015/2017, she has over 1125 poems published in over 450 international journals and anthologies. She has 21 published books of poetry, six collections and six chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She is a vegan. She also sculpts, working with clay; www.allisongrayhurst.com



SPRING OVER THE LAKE

The sun strokes the black furrows
of ploughed fields with warmer and longer rays
The soil bulges with greenness and fecundity
Spring flows from the depths of the lake
and releases it from a dream of winter white
The ice flows shutters, opening to water.
The willows lean over the plate of the lake.
They comb and braid their hair with the wind.
The trees look at the world mirrored in water.
The wild geese come from far away
The long calipers on the sky pave the way
to their nests hidden in the reeds

Buds open up and first flowers bloom.

The waves of the lake hum a song about new life,

The mystery of rebirth begins



Alicja Maria Kuberska: She is an awarded Polish poetess, novelist, journalist, editor. She has nine books to her credit. She edits a series of anthologies and her poems have been published in numerous anthologies and magazines in various countries. She 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.



SUFFRAGETTES AMONG US

(For Mary Wollstonecraft)

Bronze mask with scarlet son,
sans crest, nosing maple leaves:
banana-spotted & tobacco-stained.

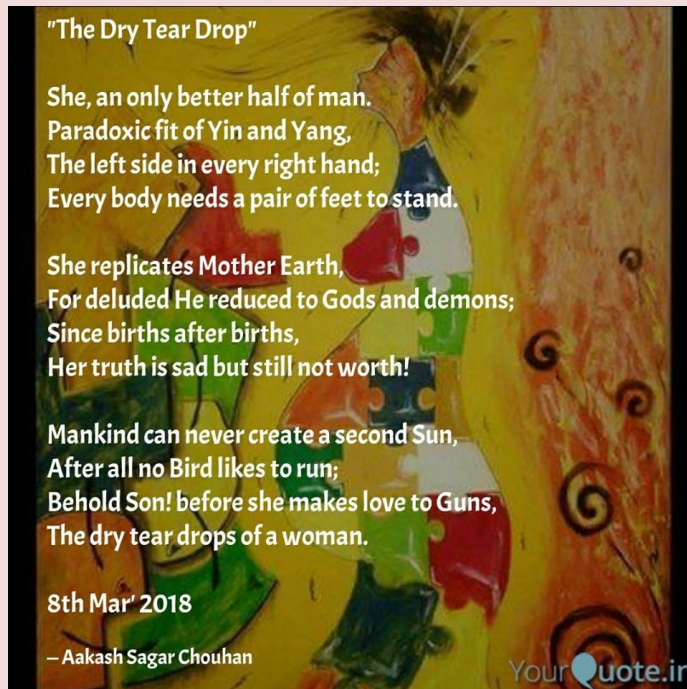
Three peeps from Mom's napalm
revolver & scarlet son traverses
the sunlit yard, disappearing
inside an emerald Norway maple.

Bronze mask pecks her left wing,
then her right, before shivering

in emerald mist lingering shadows
left over from the night before.



Allan Britt: 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. He also served as judge for the The Bitter Oleander Press Library of Poetry Book Award. He has published 15 books of poetry, his latest being *Violin Smoke* (Translated into Hungarian by Paul Sohar and published in Romania: 2015). He teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.



THE DRY TEAR DROP

She, an only better half of man.
Paradoxical fit of Yin and Yang,
The left side in every right hand;
Everybody needs a pair of feet to stand.

She replicates Mother Earth,
For deluded He reduced to Gods and demons;
Since births after births,
Her truth is sad but still not worth!

Mankind can never create a second Sun,
After all no Bird likes to run;
Behold Son! before she makes love to Guns,
The dry tear drops of a woman.



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 for several anthologies. He now awaits the sequel of “Between Moms and Sons- II” launch with Geethamma this year.



ciao! 😊