

GloMag
GLOWING

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose
Magazine*

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Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

VENYA BAJAJ



Title of the Cover Pic: Bliss

About The Artist

I am a 13-year-old girl in class 8. I paint often whenever inspiration strikes me. Besides painting, I love reading in my free time and also dabble in writing at times. My paintings are a window to my mind.

Website

I have had my work published in GloMag. I also share my musings on Miraquill (previously Mirakee) alongside my sister.

Art Perspective

My painting 'Bliss' depicts a couple relaxing at the beach after a long day, enjoying the view of the sunset. I had originally planned on painting a pair of best friends, but ended up painting two lovers instead. The picture shows the calmness of love brings.

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***

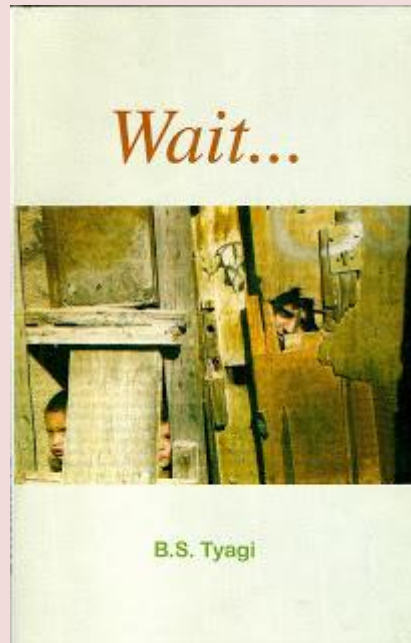
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BOOK OF THE MONTH

Wait

Novel by Dr. B.S. Tyagi



LINK

<https://www.amazon.in/Poetic-Aroma-Bilquis-Fatima/dp/B07DH6VN24>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

magazines. Besides, he has translated four books of poems. He shies away from public celebrations and prizes. Inner bliss he is showered upon through creativity is the greatest prize.

REVIEW BY GLORY SASIKALA

There are few agonies in this world that equal that of waiting for a missing person, a loved one, who, for all you know, you may never see again. There's no closure. The psychological burden is great, sometimes to the point where those waiting tend to completely neglect their own needs and of those dependent on them and focus all their energy in search of the missing person. There are accompanying guilt and anxiety, social and emotional withdrawal from present living because of lack of closure, and obsessive compulsive behavior to know the truth. They feel guilty about enjoying life because to stop worrying and searching is to abandon hope.

This is the story of two friends, Arun and Naresh, in search of their missing friend, Siddhartha, aided by the last person to see him before he disappears, his sister, Ranjani.

That Arun and Naresh are very close is evident throughout by the way they stand in no formality with each other; the way they feel at peace and happy in each other's company...

“Hello, Arun speaking.”

“Good morning, Dr. Naresh. How are you?”

“Slightly depressed.”

“Come on here. We'll chalk out a plan.”

Without waiting for his reply he put the receiver back.

Arun walked again waiting for Naresh - a friend with whom he could share his feeling unreservedly.

The quest takes them to a village. Being city dwellers living in gated communities such as ‘Friends Colony’ and ‘Welcome Colony,’ they are pleasantly surprised by the natural beauty of the village and the warm hospitality of the villagers even amidst distressing times, the death of a loved one. Lessons to be learnt here by city dwellers who cannot but help compare the genuineness of the village to the artificiality of city life.

“I'm unable to forget the funeral scene. I've attended many but it was different. Such an overwhelming spectacle of love and camaraderie! Undreamt of in big cities.”

“Their honesty, unvarnished simplicity made a deep indelible impression upon me.”

“And hospitality?”

“Just wonderful! Memorable.”

“Transcending all caste and creed distinction, their guest is really sacred to them. Like god. Can we ever forget Abbas Ali?”

“Never.”

He was a poor washerman but rich in human values. Unlettered but endowed with rustic wisdom. Well-mannered and well behaved. In his mind, he made it a point to welcome Heera Lal's guest. It would be an insult to the entire village if the guests were not properly received. Now they were his own guests.”

They then get in touch with Sidhartha's sister, Ranjani, the widow of a martyr in the Kargil war. Musings on the unfair treatment meted to military personnel in our country.

And we call them martyrs! Is martyrdom their goal? No, certainly not. Like rest of others they get jobs there. They do their duty honestly. And nation comes first in their job. They too love life and cherish dreams. They too like to love and to be loved. They feel heat and cold. They care for their families. And we! Have we discharged our duty to them? Perhaps not. Our memory is too feeble. Out of sight, out of mind, isn't it? Many families of these martyrs are

languishing. Many past war heroes are ready to sell their medals for a square meal.

It is quite obvious that the author is a poet and an ardent lover of Nature. He loses no opportunity to pause and deviate from the narration to drench the story in profuse descriptions of natural beauty, the simple enjoyment, even in the tiny window of scope offered to him amidst the concrete of city dwellings.

In the winter, it appears like a slim beautiful dancing girl. Only ankle-deep water with small darting fish as lusty trout and grayling.

Scattered dewdrops everywhere, like pearls on a string.

Clear blue morning sky. Golden beams lit the sky filled the atmosphere with fragrance of flowers. The gentle breeze rustled through trees, plants and bushes.

The clouds gathered around the fireball. Its waning light showed the splendor of the riot of colors.

Will they be successful in getting in touch with Siddhartha? Will their quest be successful? Will they be relieved of their agony? Only agonizing time will tell....

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Sunil Kaushal: A retired gynecologist turned trilingual writer/ poet Dr. Sunil Kaushal resides in Pune, India. Her short stories and poetry in National and International Magazines have won her many awards and recognition and some translated into French, Greek and German. She has contributed to a number of National and International Anthologies as well as ebooks. Off and on she dabbles in limericks, micro-poetry, and haiku too. Besides many other awards, she was recently honored by the Women Achiever's Award by Literoma publishers. Being in love with life, Dr. Kaushal finds inspiration everywhere, which is evident in her memoirs, Gypsy Wanderings& Random Reflections.



Occupation: Gynaecologist for 40 years. Now I am a writer/poet for 5years.

Fav Book: Dr. Zhivago by Boris Pasternak, Adventures of Tom Sawyer(!!!!)...Mark Twain

Fav Movie: Somewhere in Time

Fav song: Give Me One Moment In Time.....Dana Winner (English),

Aaj Jaane Ki Zid Na Karo (Farida Khanum)....Urdu

Fav Hobby: Writing & Reading

Fav color: Red

Fav Sport: Badminton

Fav Food: Milk

Fav pet: Dogs

Fav Actor: Dilip Kumar

Fav Actress: Audrey Hepburn

Life Philosophy: Find reasons, however small, to squeeze joy out of every moment in life!

One liner describing me: A free spirit blessed with a human form to live out my Karma.

Fav holiday destination: Pondicherry (India) & Paris.

Fav Quote: Love yourself first.

Birthday: 25th December 1944

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LIBERTY TO MUKTI

She spins to speak in affirmative nods,
Time is universal tongue of cosmos;
Earth our Mother she is,
The last sleep on her lap to kiss an iota of bliss.

Fire ball with an open eye only once blinks,
Here 90 ML of sunlight is the welcome drink;
Names ripe on ways for name thinks,
The light and horizon may no more shrink.

Their eldest daughter is water,
Tis' no matter but her timeless presence matters;
From liberty to "mukti" man must barter,
Rivers are carriers of seeds to scatter.

Unaddressed envelopes closely swim in mortgaged air,
Relative affairs get gradually auctioned in this fair;
Various colors breathe in every layer,
Eco friendly atmosphere pleads not to go beyond repair.

Spaces are also sold here for hierarchy of numbers,
Emptiness rests on pillows of sound to slumber;
Structural anatomy of remembrance is opaque in nature,
Retrograding invisible footprints of places footsteps
venture.



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: He is a Rourkela-based, Odia nomad; restlessly scribbling since 2003. An undergraduate, indeed a college drop-out; but now he is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities. He has been a proud contributor to a few anthologies by International and Indian Poets; books named as "Unleash the undead, Wordplay: A Collection of Diverse Poems From around the World, Feelings International, A Phase Unknown – II, Kamala Das – Yes I am a Woman and Purple Hues. Apart from pouring his thoughts and himself on virgin papers, during his leisure time, Aakash is an observer, a dreamer, a philosopher. He likes to strum his Guitar and sing. He also likes to play and brush colors on canvases. Nevertheless, he reads a lot to dive deep into the words of Authors and mystical quotes said by long beard sages, Zen monks and Sufi saints of yesteryears.



BALLOON SELLERS

In a far corner of a street
Of an aged town—B
A woman and her man
Selling plastic balloons, branched in a bucket
Of same, and wired with wee bulbs.

They wink, and running parents
Stop and wistfully ask for one, may be
A child at home, sick with same toys,
Or waved to sleep by a harrowing maid.

Parents figure, buyers haggle, and a coin they cut
While their eyes' kohl, bare and bold, dreams
Her own, head she sways, body she bends
Her night is lit, her sky a blooming field.



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



CLOTH IS A FASCIST STATE

That buries the distinct voices of the breast
chest and torso, maps speech

to the imperial unicode. It fights the head,
a democratic setup free of robes,

offers a feathered hat to cave in. Look closely
—the zipper is a sutured mouth

that wishes to speak. The pubes are on the run
for cover from patrol lights.

A lonely sparrow wishes to hoot from the
depths of the bodies valley.

Speech of skin & bones, relegated to the private
— muted, shamed. Cloth cuts to size

a smile and a sob, stifles the rising protest.
Body, the subaltern of being.



Aditya Shankar: He is an Indian poet, flash fiction author and translator. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in the Poetica Review, Columba, Periwinkle Literary Magazine, Reality Break Press, Brasilia Review and so on. Books: After Seeing (2006), Party Poopers (2014), and XXL (Dhaulti Books, 2018). He lives in Bangalore, India.



GHAZAL

We were the beggars of the world, where our skin was
nurtured by the uncharted beast, just yesterday,

We were the people begging for arms to outlast a lifetime
like rodents on the feast, just yesterday.

We were strewed like raindrops on slippery glass, and left
full of tumultuous voices,

We knocked on the window next to you where you sat not
too long ago but after the priest, just yesterday.

We went broke throughout the day and survived our life
with great care, from moving street to street,

We never remarked our life was doused in it, contretemps,
dandled in the cracks of our family least, just yesterday.

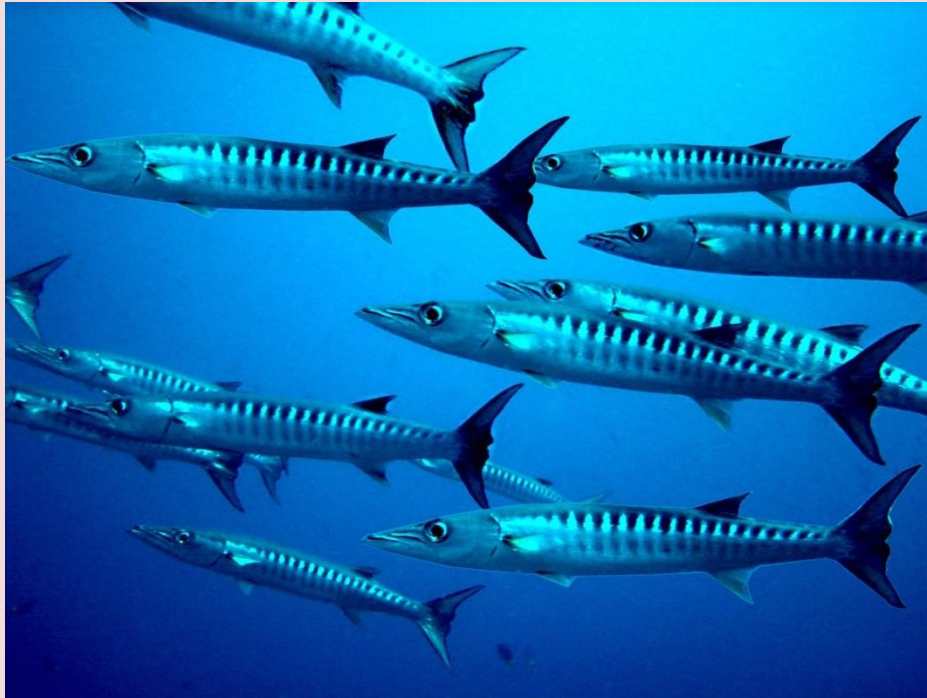
We were inveigled with promises of change and adoration
by some of the charitable Samaritans,

But, we were treated like roving dogs, anorexic and evaded,
like a bedraggled soul, no obeisance with a person, an
unpriest, just yesterday.

We crawled along through the streets to auction our soul
and every limb with the belief we couldn't afford anything,
However, we found a life of pang, we were beggars leaning
on our next swallowing of that mortified cruel water
unpleasant, just yesterday.



Adnan Shafi: I am a poet, writer, columnist, translator, Ghazal writer, motivation speaker, blogger and reviewer from Tral Kashmir (J and K). I have contributed my poems to various reputed magazines, journals. I have also published my poetry book 'Tears fall in my heart'. Furthermore, I am the co-author of many international anthologies.



THAT THOUGHT

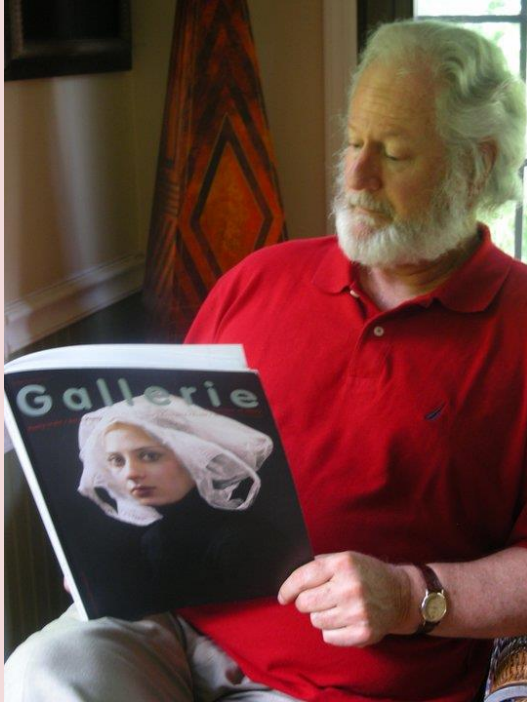
That thought ran into a barracuda.

That thought was a sardine
strayed from the bait ball.

That thought.

That thought—*THIS IS A GOOD
TIME TO DRAG YOU INTO OUR
ONCE-A-YEAR-GOING-OUT-OF-
BUSINESS-SALE*—that thought
could be Rocky Raccoon toppling
garbage cans, that thought, that
thought that greets the Tyger head
on or swarms duende's ruby lips
& seahorse hips!

Well, earlier today, that thought ran into a barracuda, so whatever.



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



SPRING IS COMING

It's time to wake up
the sleeping trees in orchards,
open the hives and welcome the bees,
invite the first flowers to the concert.

The hard-working insects
with golden wings
will play a wedding march in the sky.

They will make a mating flight
in honor of the queen.

A quiet buzzing will fill the space
the air will smell like honey
and the wind will chant the song

new life is coming
fertile summer is coming
autumn harvest is coming



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



THE OLD ELEVATOR DOOR

The old elevator door
needs the right thrust
of my hands to close in.

Not with a loud clang,
for the door reopens
then on the rebound.

Not with a mild push,
it would not close
any way, that way.

But just the right
touch, lightly, both
on the door and me.

This door not echoing
the bang or the whimper
to the ears of eternity.

Like those practised
closures, painless,
speaking ideally.



Amanita Sen: Amanita has 2 collections of poems: ‘Candle In My Dream’ and ‘What I Don’t Tell You’. Her works have been published in numerous journals in India and abroad. She is a mental-health professional and lives in Kolkata.



LIFE

Finding monastic life monotonous,

Monks sometimes want

to be family men

Family men often say

they will go monastic

leaving all this family stuff

Tired of being happy,

the happy sometimes want to be sad

They get dejected in love,

watch tragic films,
listen to some sad Tagore's songs
sitting on a chair in the balcony
and say, "Ah, life!"

The ever-hapless too sometimes
feel like being happy.



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



GWALIOR 2

I had driven a jeep to the ravines
With you sitting next to me
The sun got stuck in the muddy undergrowth
Eyes that refused to leave you
On a countenance that strayed sometimes
It was so dry in an unforgiving moment
You spoke in syllables
Cracked by a turgid river
Of brigand

And horsemen
Sweeping past another time
Another place
A mound
Once ripped
Open a thought
When you whispered behind a veil
Memories remain a familiar hoof throb
Beating against an angry air
At night.



Amitabh Mitra: He is an Indian-born South African physician, poet and artist. He is one of the most widely published poets globally.



THE MISER GLOATS

Blossoming trees

And snow, a teal river

An arched bridge, and boats

Bitter thick cut marmalade

Hot toasted bread and tea

And Champion Oats

Such squirrels! Shiny eyes

And bushy tails, darting

Russet red glistening coats

Governance where? There's barges

The Lady of Shallot

And mossy moats

Counting the golden days of Spring

Summer and Autumn still to come

The Miser gloats

Badgers and otters find mention

Hedgehogs and hare, but never

The skunks and stoats

.....

Betrayal hurt when suddenly veils fell
And he was caught counting slavering lost
A bagful of the shining silver groats

Chamois on crags

The Floating Eagle eyes

Greedily but in vain the mountain goats

Carmen her lipstick in your face her charm

Music and peacock feathers and grape wine

And raucous revellers Carnival floats



Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia: I am a retired bureaucrat but at heart a poet and a teacher. I write, mostly poetry, in English, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. I've never published anything except on Facebook or occasionally some newspaper or magazine here and there. I was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award (First Prize) 2019 for Excellence in Writing and my contribution to Indian English Poetry.



Come, she said
tell me of happy times

I remembered:
The proud, rich princess
wanted a tiara made of dew
I asked her to go out and collect the
tears of the children
whose parents had died in the recent pogrom

to make it with

Did she weep or laugh?

I remembered:

the children who were taken away to the orphanage

Salaam, India

can you hear me calling?

Pick up the phone

and tell me

you are alright

my child

apple of my eye

my lemon trees

Salaam, India

can you hear my sigh of relief

my child

apple of my eye

my lemon trees?

Can you see my hands stop shaking
as I put the mobile down
till the next time?

Shabbat Shalom

Shabbat Shalom

Shabbat Shalom

Shalom

When will it come

rest and peace

my little one

my little ones?

Come, she said

tell me of happy times

The bodies were littering the streets

brown, dead leaves

and the blood was staining the snow
in Kashmir
a woman with periods cooking death over a slow fire
winter flow

What was I to say?

Who was I to expiate?

I remember:

before I was three

maybe I was happy

and then there was a period of some

eight to nine years

in between

when God used to speak

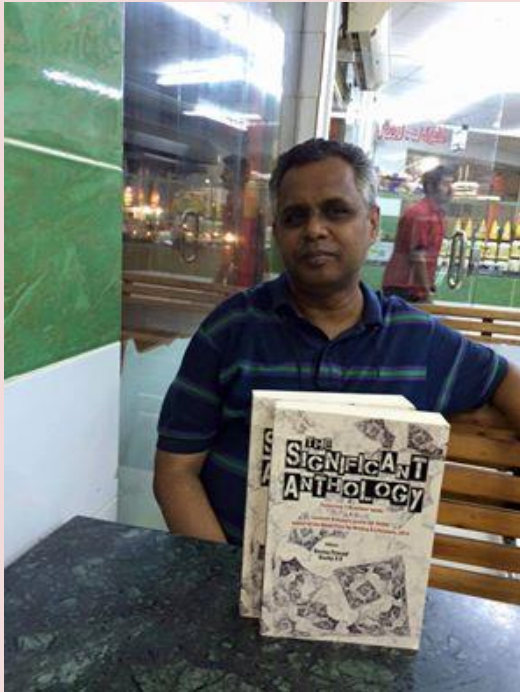
to me

Hope was in the air

like cotton trees

with soft, white, cotton, in the pods

and nothing could go wrong
except for my small dreams
but it did.
Everything.



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Significant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and

abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited *Inklinks* and *Umbilical Chords*.



NARROW WINDOW

A slice of sky

is bisected with the electric

wire from

my bed

A tiny bird visits and

sits on the wire, daily

Talks to the sky and measures

me; I try to talk

but it ignores, and looks up

to the sky, stoic

Leaving ashamed my
narrow window, bed,
id



Aneek Chatterjee: I am a poet and academic residing in Kolkata, India. I work as professor of political science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have published two full length poetry collections titled 'Seaside Myopia' & 'Unborn Poems and Yellow Prison', and a novel named 'The Funeral Procession'. I was a Fulbright Visiting fellow at the University of Virginia (USA) and a recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach at reputed foreign universities.



LIGHT THE FIRE

Light the fire of dance

Deep within my soul

Let it burn through the night

Set the mountains ablaze

As the fire rises in my bones

Shaken with the spirit of dance.

Boldly embrace the freedom
As we feel it surge in our veins
Pulsating with the love of life
Dance into the night
Find me in the morning light.

Light the fire of dance
Deep within my soul
Let it burn deeply in my mind
Engraving the exotic moves
With my fervent heartbeat
Lifted up into the rushing winds
Possessed by its power.

Light the fire of dance
Deep within my soul
Floating like a rushing river to the sea
I live to dance as I breathe

the calling of my soul
Dancing into the night
Until the morning light.

Light the fire of dance
Deep within my soul
Light the fire of dance
Deep within my soul
As I soar into heavenly realms.



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



A HOT NIGHT IN WINTER

It is snow falling outside
And I can smell your body
That looks polished with youth
And silently singing a sweet rhapsody

It is snow falling outside
And I can feel the heat in you
Your firm breasts rising and falling
This winter you look so young and new

It is snow falling outside

My fingers run across your thighs

A shiver goes down your weak spine

And you push me away with many sighs

It is snow falling outside

And heat in you begins to rise

You invite me into your silk body

Kissing me like a much awaited prize

It is snow falling outside

You let me graze you inside out

You don't seem to be burned out yet

Drag me deeper into you with feeble shout



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.



FLY ME BACK...

My wings splatter your silvery cage with feathers
That float away gently, guiltily like gossamer
As if reluctant to break free without me from the lacy silver.

Fly away, little feather into freedom's fragrant air.
Kiss the moon for me; perhaps it will recognise
The silk of my touch, the satin of my voice.

Embrace the flowers that once smiled for me,
You see I was the only one who walked by
Just to see them smile, without trying to make them mine.

Whisper to the trees of my absence and if you fall,
Fall on the yellowed leaves that had laughingly crunched;
They hadn't met anyone who walked so much.

Tell the berries to give away my share of sweetness,
Wet yourself in the rain that often soaked me dead
And burn in the sun that resurrected me afterward.

Oh, let the skies know that I do not cherish a home.
I'd rather wander rootlessly, making friends of rolling
stones
And flocking with different feathers but of kindred souls.

Every time you hover over a new patch of earth,
Do leave behind a bit of me, for one day when I am set free
I want the universe to recognise my footsteps and welcome
me.



Anju Kishore: She is poet, editor and a former Cost Accountant. She has contributed to various anthologies. One of the winners of The Great Indian Poetry Award 2018 and The Prime International Poetry Prize 2020, her book of poems ‘...and I Stop to Listen’ was published in 2018. She is part of the Editorial Team of India Poetry Circle and is Senior Editor at Pinkishe, the print magazine of the Delhi based NGO, Pinkishe Foundation.



WHISPERED PRAYER

I have my own aches and pains.
I have my own needs and wants.
I walked this earth for decades
trying to run past myself,
always standing in the same place.
Eschewed by society
for sins I did not commit.
Chastised for my tenets,
pretty little faces mock.
I grasp the pain,

I taste the tears.

With so much suffering in this world,
how do I dare ask for healing?

It is said that god is

powerful,

almighty,

limitless,

that he can do all things.

Yet who can measure the capacity,

of one who was said to rest

after toiling six days?

We only know,

believe,

what we have been taught.

I traipse past myself

with a weary heart.

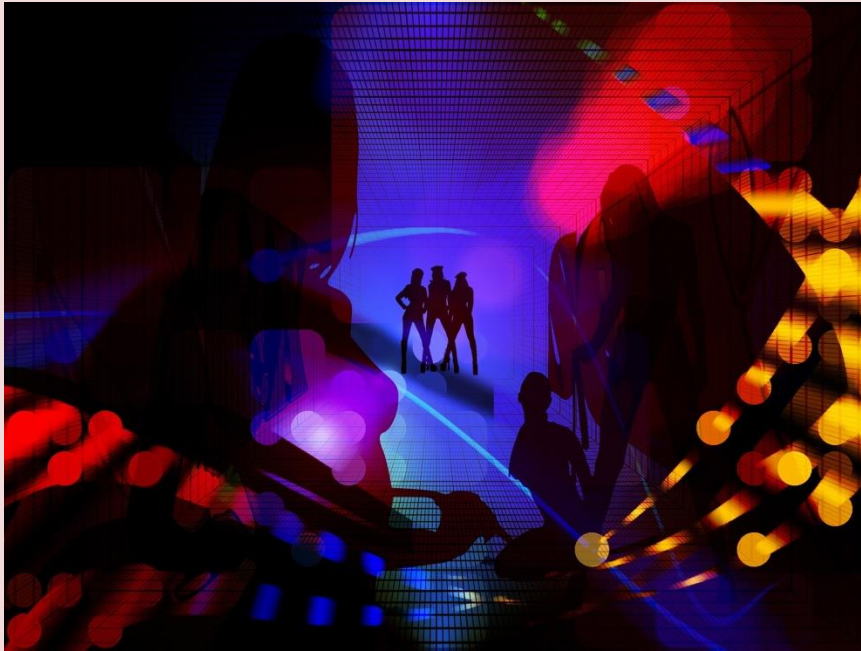
Tripping over my own dreams.

I will not look back this time.

So, first I pray for a hurting world,
then add a small whisper for me,
hoping it will be heard.



Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware USA. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. Winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic), have been internationally published, and won poetry awards from numerous publications. I am the author of 10 poetry books. I have recently been published in several micro-fiction anthologies and short story publications.



CONVERSATIONS IN BANGKOK

When you talk to the girls,
You ask them,
Their price,
For the night

When they talk to me,
They tell me,
The values they seek
For life.

With painful ease,
they open,
Their bodies to you,
Their souls to me

The souls, bruised
Battered and broken,
Their bodies are perfect,
They bear no scars



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.



WOMEN AND WE MEN

what else is as beautiful

as a woman?

beautiful inside and out,

when no possessions keep us

man becomes a wanderer but

woman is still a wonderess,

in a girl hides a queen

who hides in houses

but dreams for all others,

A woman's happiness

is in throwing everything
to live for love and
prosperity of other,
this beautiful business
of womanhood is a heavy burden
and when a woman says
she is a housewife
she exults in supreme pride
and then aspires no more,
she moves with the grace
with her moves the race
she is surviving for others,
if you want something said
comes into the picture the man
and if you want something done
there she comes strongly,
she doesn't cook
she burns

for she is a mother,
wonderful friend, lover
and adviser with smile,
she is a mystery and delight
the moon that rises within
a woman
doesn't follow a calendar
as the one in the sky
so O man submit yourself
to true friendship
of a woman you love
She heals, encourages and
lifts you higher.



Ashish K Pathak: He is a primary education teacher in India's most backward state of Bihar. He has got letter of appreciation from the President of India for his poem. Recently, he has been featured in 'Fragrance of Asia' anthology and is slated to be featured in 'East Meets West anthology' and 'GloMag' and 'Unkept Resolutions' anthology. He has been conferred World Union of poets gold cross medal for his writings in the world book' complexion-based discrimination. He is one amongst only six poets selected for the 'Marula World Anthology' from Asia.



RENDEZVOUS

In a moment of joy and sorrow

A spider has come to stay, weaving cobwebs

In the core of our heart

Warm lips of winter

The wind playing with the candle

You are a fantasy

A forgotten melody

Breathless song

Spider is weaving cobwebs

Trapped our heart

Left skeleton behind

Tonight twinkling stars and half-moon

Invite us for a never before rendezvous

As strangers, as soul mates

No looking behind

Our shadows walked carefully apart...



Asoke Kumar Mitra: He studied at Hindu school and St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and is a retired journalist and was editor of 'Calcutta Canvas' and 'Indus Chronicle'. He is a bilingual poet. He has contributed to various anthologies published in India and abroad. His poems are translated into various languages. 'Savage Wind' is his first poetry book, a bilingual edition, translated into Spanish by Mexican poet Josep Juarez. 'Song Of Pebbles' is his second bilingual poetry book, which is translated into French. Poetry, photography, paintings are his passions.



HOW TRUE FRIENDS HUG

Is it ever quite easy with love?

Or is love how true friends hug?

What should a lover expect?

Dare I dare even suggest?

Is it ever quite easy with love -

Or is love how true friends hug?

I used to think love was a feast!
I'd wiggle, I'd smile, I'd wink.
I'd flirt, I'd forget to think.
I was young, so hungry, such a beast

But is it ever quite easy with love
Or is love how true friends hug?

Did your true love hide a serpent inside
Snidely licking its lips
With fangs that oozed and dripped
Venom supplied to strike at your pride

What should a lover expect?
A serpent not to inject?! Ha!
Dare I dare even suggest?
Might I simply recommend -
It could be best to just have a friend

Is it ever quite easy with love?

Or is love how true friends hug?



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.



TAR ROAD

inhaling smoke

hits the lungs

like a bullet

takes out gangs

it satisfies

that urging crave

you've become

it's daily slave

another pull

deposits tar

like a road

for a motor car

you cannot stop

it has you hooked

like a restaurant

fully booked

purchase a packet

your daily dose

exiting mouth

and nostril nose

20 a day

lays the road

filled with tar
as you getting old

lungs collapsed
another puff
quitting it
you find it tough

another packet
on it's way
just lightens up
another day



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



ALLADIN'S LAMP

Oh, what was I searching for
Tirelessly with incessant labour
Sometimes with hope, sometimes with fears
With questions hinging over
Whether gone vain all these years
Without realising that
My happiness lies in my lap
Like Alladin's magic lamp
Genie is hiding there

To take me out of the drab and dark den
And fly me to a wonder land.

When gloom and despair

Envelop me

I rub the lamp and call the Genie

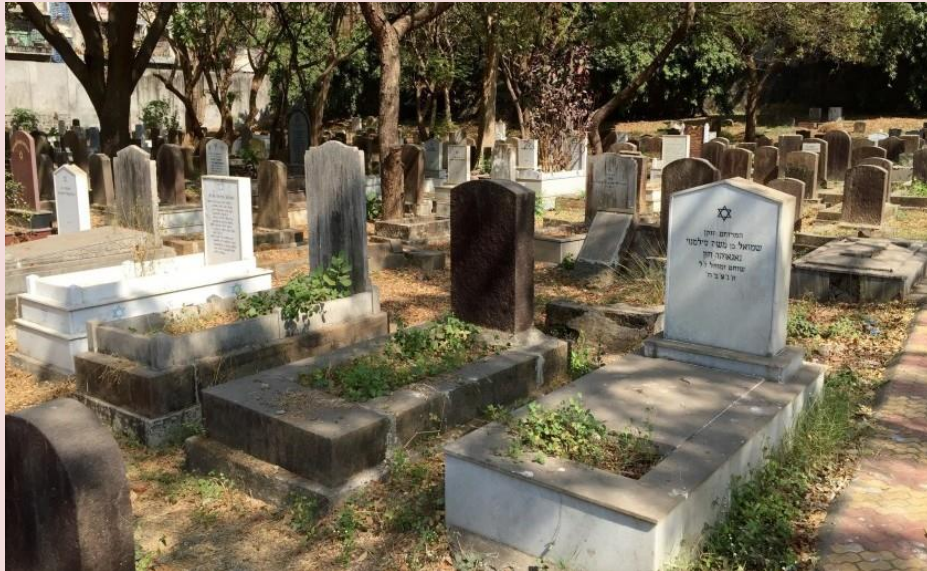
To guide me to the land of light

And fill my heart

With hope, love and delight.



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



AS WE DIE

I wonder what to human happens

In the race of survival he struggles

And leaves his all vests in a single shake

That silences his all echoes

He could once talk, think and move on earth

Who has left him on a table with a veil now?

He is immobile, his tongue is frozen now

His kith and kin try and try but can't wake him up

He is brandished with glorious water
He can't clear his own body anymore
He is taken away in coffin by his lovers
He will not ask them why?

Then put under grass and soil
Home of dreadful insects and snakes
Everyone throws dust on him
And is covered with dust too

Or he is cremated on glowing logs
And what is left behind as grey soot
Is wasted and little bit poured in Ganga
Tell me where has gone his reputation now?



Bhat Zaieem: He is a poet and a writer residing in Kashmir. He is a teacher by profession. His poems have been published by various reputed national and international journals like Muse India ,The Indian Review, The International Ghazalpage etc. He has coauthored few poetry books and was also invited to Guntur International Poetry Festival 2019. Besides poetry he also writes on different contemporary issues to various Kashmir based English dailies.

Email:bhatzaieem25@gmail.com



STIMULUS PROPHECIES

Should I be big bold and boast
that I am a man just for a moment
of winning your attention.

Upgrade credentials in every single thought,
engaged on stage I will be laughing out
what I have been acting out, revise
causes of a writer's block.

Volumes of truth when filtered
damage images in life trodding
and transmission of chaos
on a page begins.

Sentences crippled in rhymes
ignore to uplift youth creation,
demolishing a source
of confidence.

Don't make me your president,
it is just a coincidence that I
roll behind a microphone
defining tales of my age.

I normally walk on dusty grounds
with bare ten toes.

I step and turn the tables
like when I'm drunk
on friday I revamp the fables.

I take a hand of her who has been
called ugly names and go down
the aisle of dreams, she calls me
'husband' as I call her my 'wife'.

Greet a librarian for a heaviest book

on earth, graduate with honours
in love degree, raise my children
with chorus derived from poetry sessions
brewing stimulus prophecies.

By the day I am dead,
do I leave behind floor and the roof,
life covers, funeral covers, provident funds,
hectars of land with green pastures
or ducks for curry even livestock.

Do I let my successors be the laughing stock, servant till
heaven.

Harbingers of sour truth
may be mistook for hanky-panky
rebellions but the sun rise never
stopping to paint chameleons.

My departure must always remind
you a prayer for wealthiness within.



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



WAITING FOR THE 20s

Let's dance into our next decade like it's the last century.

We seek Cole Porter "naughty" and Gatsby glitterati.

Take the appletinis; we're going back to whiskey,
straight up, no chaser, leaving low hip-hop for sly innuendo.

Shun the charm of some Romeo to dance cheek to cheek
with a new Valentino. Put the guys back in spats,
with pencil thin moustaches, who can woo vamps who coo
with throaty voices promising sexy choices.

Silhouettes of femmes fatale are back in vogue. While
smoke smolders,

drifting off cigarette holders, they swing Charleston,

and papa goes Dada as Samba beats throb as drums

pound Tommy-gun rhythms. Trumpets blare brassy tones

alongside the wail of clarinets, the doppler slide of
trombones.

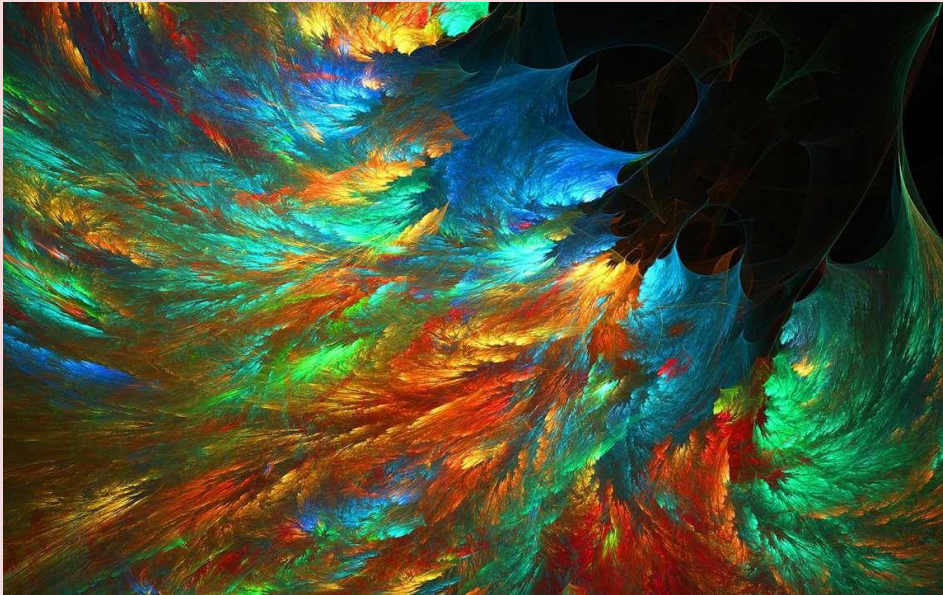
We seek evenings of nightclubs, art deco cabarets, or
passing

some speakeasy's bolted doorway, finally opened by
sentries

after whispering the password: "We was sent by the
twenties."



Bill Cushing: Bill Cushing is really turning back the clock this month with a piece that harkens back to prohibition and yearns for flappers, swing music, and all the things that our grandparents (or great grandparents) experienced. Inspired by the music of Caro Emerald and Scott Bradley's Postmodern Jukebox (among others who know a good time when they see it).



A REQUEST

A humble request to all poets near and dear
Poets who store in them wealth of emotions
Creating euphony by carefully assorted words
Cause imaginations to fly free like a raven
By imagery a world they paint.
How with discerning fondness we
Value the works of each other.
Identify the spirit of the message conveyed
Relate to the abstracts portrayed.
Rejoicing with the happiness expressed
Enjoying the gaiety and humor

Or empathically absorb the pain divulged.
Not discriminating the poets or their backgrounds.
So let this spirit exude out in the world
And subtlety spread love and appreciation.
Appreciation for births, beliefs and inclinations,
Of one and all for peace to resume.
For what can be mightier than words
Radiating from liberated and enlightened souls.



Bilquis Fatima: She is an innate lover of nature and speaker for social issues, has allowed her feelings to be expressed as short writes and speeches from her college time. Although being a post-graduate in Chemistry, she has also mastered the skills of poetry appreciation and writing. Her poems reflecting the situations that are prevalent in the society, have been appreciated in some groups of poets and writers lately.



SPRING IS THE KING, THE BIRDS TWITTER

A fine morning in spring,
Two birds flew across the
Woodlands,
Trees laden with green leaves
And varied colors of flowers...
A gentle breeze was blowing
Full of fragrance around
The birds hopped from branches to branches

And, sang the songs of love aloud.
Life is full of pains and pleasures
We don't find the desired leisure
Not all weathers make us free
In hardships a joyous moment to see.
We cannot come out so free in hot summer
Rain may drench when rain drops spatter
Winter stills us sending us to a corner
“Spring is the king”, birds twittered



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



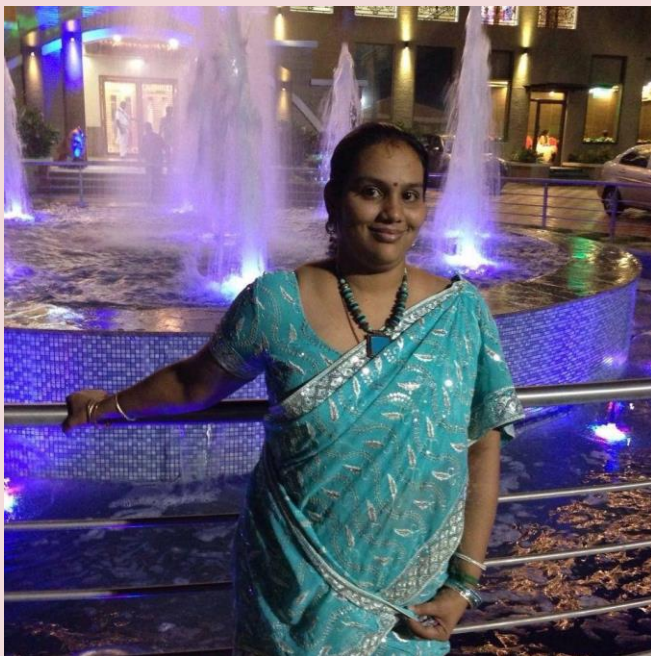
COURAGE

The courage in me hides hideously
still waiting to explode.

A question forlorn for long
wrenching my heart,
waiting to cross impediments,
the agony of unleashed potential!

Let my pen find some might
to belabor with the adage
for it says mightier than the sword,
the words my pen could afford!

When the rage against courage hangs in air,
the bitter truth says it fair—
I am a slave of my own cowardice.
If not awake as deep,
let me not sleep
for surpassed emotions could evoke an earthquake.
Let the courage within me erupt!



Brindha Vinodh: I hold a Masters in Econometrics but I am a writer within. My poems and short stories have been published in national and international magazines and e-zines. I currently reside in the United States of America with my family.



STEP TOWARDS EDUCATION

I still remember

The tiny bird singing while soaring

Beyond the patches of fleecy clouds

It inspires me

To pour out my heart into verse

Leaving behind all worldly fevers

I still remember

Gentle herd in pasture

Calm and content

It inspires me

To accept **His** grace

Without murmuring a word

I still remember

Snow-capped peak withstanding all weathers

It inspires me

To brave all odds

Without losing cool

And smile.

It teaches me

To rise above all conflicts of mind

And stand serene

And realize peace and piety

Without missing a moment

Of **His** grace.



B. S. Tyagi: He comes from India. He writes in both Hindi and English. He has several books- fiction and non-fiction to his credit. His poems have been included in several anthologies. He writes short stories which regularly appear in national and international literary magazines. His write-ups and poems have appeared in national and international magazines. Besides, he has translated four books of poems. He shies away from public celebrations and prizes. Inner bliss he is showered upon through creativity is the greatest prize.



WHY

A Shakespearean sonnet

Why is a poignant question we ask,

For many a purpose and reason.

We asked *why* the grass was green for a while,

Now welcoming changing of season.

We ask why to understand many things,

Wondering rationales which lie beneath.

We ask why we have been dealt a hand

That can, oftentimes, leave us in grief.

We ask why we fear and ask why we love;

We ask why nations insist upon war.

We ask why not come the dove from above
To allay the stampede of the bull's callow gore.
If ancients to moderns had not asked why,
We might not know why the answer is why.



Chris Daugherty: I have been writing poetry for ten years, having both institutional and self-taught education on writing metered verse. I currently have only two books in circulation on the Internet: 'Phoenix' and '88 Poems'. I reside in rural Florida of the United States. The poem 'Floral Phi' is from my forthcoming book 'Opal'.



Sky asked earth

how are you doing

murder and mayhem

blood flows like water

it is a free for all

forest gone

water is drying

this planet is plundered

for greed

how are things p there asked earth

same here

planets on war

so are stars

I think it said

we all are waiting for DOOMSDAY

goodbye for now



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



LOVE IS NOT...

Love is not a vague soft word
To be used to evade thought,
Love is not a sick-sweet curd
Of false feelings cheaply bought.

Love is no means to excuse
Committing of carnal vice,
Love we cannot pick and choose
On a barren whim's advice.

Love commits to will the good
Which is often hard, To bear

Long and quiet pains; the blood
Of great sacrifice is there.



Christopher Villiers: I am a poet residing in Braunton, England. I work as a writer. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published three volumes of poetry.



Pic: Isabel G. de Diego

HE'S BORN, HE'S KYLIAN

Today 02-02-2020

I'm dying to exhibit the World

My lovely grandson Kylian

As , now, I'm doing.

He's a wonder of creation

Worked by his parents Isabel and Fernando.

Oh Life's party!

Wake up, you, Kylian, don't sleep
You have to see the wonders of the Earth
And, also, hatreds and wars
That unite men and women
In a false and deceitful love
When they get older.
By the walks of Life
Free with you I'll sing:
This boy is my grandson Kylian
That takes me by the hand
On the path of the two hopes:
One, I'll live with him
The other one, I'll dream with him
Until my life, by age
It is no more than vain.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Isabel giving Kylian' birth
Was a big universal party

A hymn of hope
A new man is born
Leaving the old man
Who's still using with effort
The celebration of life and death
Always accompanied
Of hypocrites, obscenes, liars
(This is Life)
That their gods found only
In cheating, repressing
And hallucinate the people
The Wo/Men.
Hallelujah, Kylian!



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.



HOMO SAPIENS

This poem is dedicated to all those who resisted Apartheid including Dr Goonam, Dr Neil Aggett, Professor Dennis Brutus and Attorney Cyril Ramaphosa, South Africa's current president.

Human beings.

Delicate, puny, vulnerable.

Their flesh, blood, bones and nerves,

Eyes, ears, nails and hearts

are so easily tortured.

They're oh so fragile, and yet so valorous.

Every millimetre of their skin is suffused with pain by the tormentors,

And yet they are still so incredibly heroic.

It brings tears to my eyes.

The way in which,

Over millennia,

So many have resisted

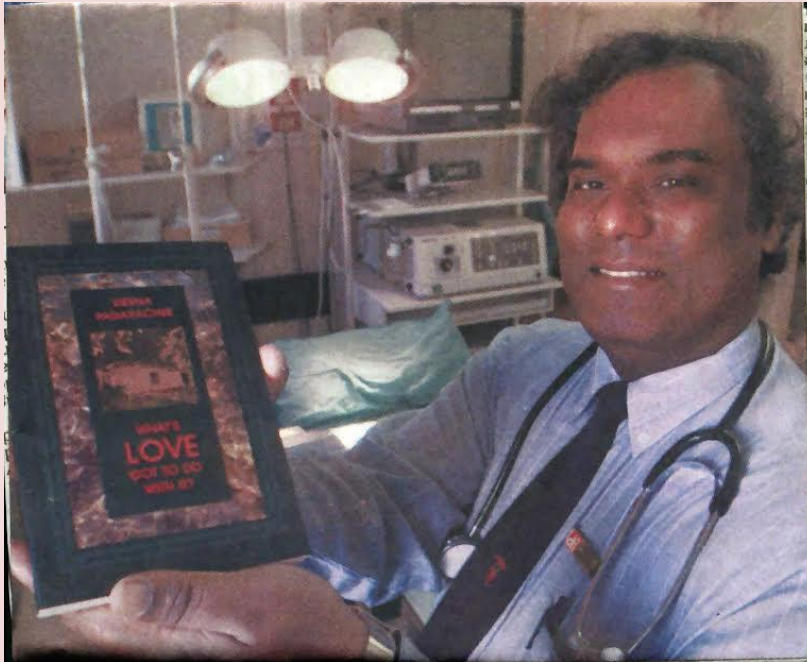
Humiliation and derision,

Tyranny and oppression

Is absolutely incredible.

The divine seems to emanate from their eyes

And the heartbeat of the universe appears to pulsate in their arteries.



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



She scrambled herself off the riverbed
With the puny ghost of a limping thought
that sacred water would lazily tread
ravines of today with a tender fraught

Tailgating the daze of an urban clot,
She yanks out her spent yet infantile heart,
for squinting deadlines, a shifting plot,
Home-works, her hearth and a grocery cart.

Months usher and the frozen days depart
Twilight sky resembles a looking glass
Story-tellers turtles rabbits, they dart.
Inhale... exhale, this moment too shall pass.

Well, orchids are rare, rose is all she wants
Frail child will survive, while reality daunts!



Deepti Sharma: I am a poetess residing in Punjab, India, and work as a freelance writer. I have contributed to many online publications and have won few awards in online poetry challenges.



Source: <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/g5yEL>

FEARLESS

No, I'm not scared anymore

Mansoor has the whole of the sky to himself now

He left me only a silver pendant

With a sign of *Rūḥ*

That's all I have of him

And a heartful of memories

A soulful of songs

Of the sweet rhymes he whispered.

No, I have nothing more of him

Nothing more that I require

To remember.

All the battles that we fought together

With so many obstacles, so many emotions
All the *joie de vivre*, all the miseries
The trials and the tribulations
The triumphs, and the losses
All remain, etched, forever.
Now, where can I go
Than to sit in the corner of our little abode
Looking at the doorway
Through which he came back, once for the last time
Wrapped in a white sheet
His face was white too, bloodless.
I don't have to shut the door anymore
No, I have nothing to fear anymore
As Mansoor has the whole of the sky to himself now.

Note: In Islam, especially Sufism, *rūḥ* (Arabic: رُوح; plural *arwah*) is a person's immortal, essential self, i.e. the "spirit" or "soul" ("atma" in Hinduism). Although the Quran doesn't describe *rūḥ* as the immortal self, the writer has used this to mean the holy spirit, which the Quran refers to as *Ruh al-qudus*. Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C5%AB%E1%B8%A5#The_Spirit,_al-Ruh,_in_the_Quran



Dipankar Sarkar: Poetry is the only soulmate I have. I find solace in poetry when my heart bleeds. Poetry comes to me completely unannounced, without a notice. I wake up sometimes, out of an altered reality or out of a daydream, and voila, words just start flowing out of nowhere and completely inundate me, force me to live an experience of writing. I am not a regular poet, but poetry is the only soulmate I have, who understands the real me.

clouds were swirling of permanent consequence without
fair warning, the life we knew
was bulldozed over, every trace of our race erased
evaporated to make space for their
'pure' race so we were scattered across the Cape Flats and
squashed into strange
areas out of District Six in 1966 – Forever in our memories...

Scatterings of Africa – Our proud mixed race heritage
shattered rebranded coloureds

our daily lives uprooted family trees cut off maimed
punctured severed – Our pride torn

interrupted. Nightly new sounds become strange
nightmares as all of us could not bare

the loss of our ruptured cultural heritage shredded to
pieces by a clever racist campaign

to cleanse the city and indeed the country of our existence,
so here we are trying our

best to somehow survive in a foreign viper nest having to
protect ourselves and each

other but mostly the vulnerable and our children as our
nightly chorus rise up to our new
heaven, whilst flickering melted candles wither and die –
Signalling our doomed demise
Do you not hear our desperate cries for understanding kind
eyes?

We, The Mothers – We are the proud matriarchs but this is
no easy task as we

sometimes struggle alone praying not to hear another
knock to announce yet another

unfortunate death from stray bullets making the headlines
– A child a son a daughter

a father a brother a sister – Who will be next? How did we
get to this? Our hearts are

bleeding – A government in denial still not seeing our
continued suffering so hear our

now we sing our nightly chorus as we plead, *Pass on the
love, we will win this war,*

*Empower your hearts, empower your minds, Pass on the
love! Gain strength and*

comfort, Trust in our hearts, Pass on the love! Rescue our people, in unity we stand –

PASS ON THE LOVE... This is all we ask from tired hearts.

We live here. We exist here. We are still here. Do you hear?



Don Beukes: He is a South African and British writer. He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles' (CTU) and 'Icarus Rising-Volume 1' (ABP), an ekphrastic collection. He taught English and Geography in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into Afrikaans, Persian, French and Albanian. He

was nominated by Roxana Nastase, editor of Scarlet Leaf Review for the 'Best of the Net' in 2017 as well as the Pushcart Poetry Prize (USA) in 2016. He was published in his first SA Anthology 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection' in 2018 (Libbo Publishers) and his second 'Cape Sounds' in 2019 (Gavin Joachims Publishing). He is also an amateur photographer and his debut Photographic publication appeared in Spirit Fire Review in June 2019. His new book, 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi'/Thus Passes the Glory of this World' is due to be published by Concrete Mist Press.

Val Smit: She is a South African Artist and Interior Designer, as well as an Architect by trade. She studied Law and established her own business, 'My Room' for Interior Architecture.



A THOUGHT ON THE CIVIL WAR

Among the many
differences
that divided
the two sides,
one chose
place names
to designate
its armies
and its battles,
and the other side

named armies and battles

after rivers.

And the Northern waters

inundated

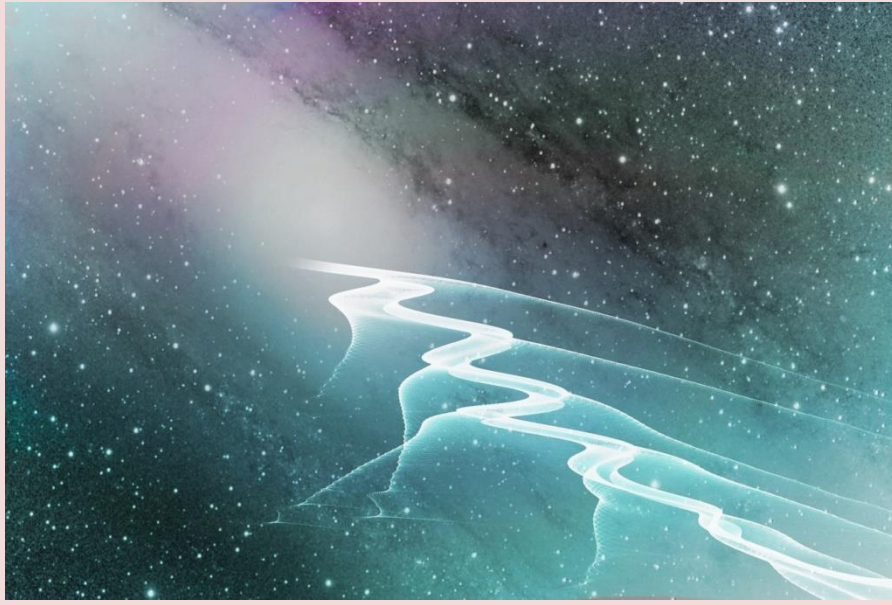
that Southern ground --

swept away

swept away



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



BLESSED ASCENDING

sugar skull smile,

painted

cornflower

blue,

sweet anise

and a pink rosary

in full view--

offerings

for adored
ancestors,

ascending

levels

of heaven,

joyful as

anglewings,

no longer

hibernating,

but taking flight,

ecstatic

are the spirits

calling karma

to sea,

their

vigils

tracing

one

candle

placed

in every canoe,

guiding

the old,

and new,

during

their

return

back home.



Eliana Vanessa: I am a poetess, currently residing in New Orleans, USA. My poetry appears in three anthologies and over ten magazines. Recently, I participated in 100,000 Poets For Change as part of a worldwide endeavor to raise awareness of social and environmental issues through the art of poetry.



ABYSS OF OBLIVION

Translated by Artur Komoter

They still look

for the treasures of the past

to

touch

to understand

the enormity of the human

thought and work.

In the dark kingdom

for a return towards the light

await

the silently slain acts.

To extract from the abyss of oblivion,

to give a new life

to restore the memory.

Among the Saharan sands,

a long-lost civilization

does not allow itself to be

forgotten.

The world

needs testimonies

to draw near

the hidden secrets.



Eliza Segiet: She graduated with a Master's Degree in Philosophy, completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy, Arts and Literature at Jagiellonian University. Author's poems Questions and Sea of Mists won the title of the International Publication of the Year 2017 and 2018 in Spillwords Press. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019 (USA, November 2019), Nominee for Naji Naaman Literary Laureate Prize 2020, November 2019).



ONE SUMMER

One summer, was
The finest summer
And a tallied summer.
Love had no intention
To whisper in my window,
The days held the darkness
In its outstretched hands
While behind it, a memory.
Crawled away to die.

Beyond the sunny cemetery
Rising with the heat unbowed,
A friendship walked strong
In a Captains hat.
Forever without decline
The stories lived that summer,
Grew the flowers that later
Will adorn the two burial plots,
Friends together since tots.



Ferris E Jones: He writes poetry and screenplays from his residence in Puyallup, Washington. His work has been published in Se La Vie Writers Journal, Write on Magazine, Outlaw Poetry, Degenerate Literature 17, Tuck Magazine, The Literary Hatchet, Warriors with Wings and other literary periodicals. He is the recipient of two Grants from the Nevada Arts Council and published several collections of poetry, including To Burning Man, Oh the Path that Followed and As the Toad Sleeps. You can learn more about Ferris E. Jones by visiting www.inquisitionpoetry.com where each month he features the work of other poets.



NEVER EVER

The fuzzy trees stand in order of reducing height

Perhaps their never being attended school makes them do
so

The shelter tries to take a shelter

Behind the tallest of the trees

But we do find it

When we need it the most

The mass of thorny branches
Make the picture interesting
Instead of being scary or ominous
They add a texture/a layer/a story

The yellow dirt road
And the green field
Live together
Miles away
The hills
Stand apart
Jealous
Of the harmony
Trying to separate the sky
From the earth



Gauri Dixit: When not busy working in her office, she is busy being a traveller, climbing mountains, walking on untrodden paths, capturing the voice of a solitary flower blossoming from a rock or the bird sitting on a hanging branch, sometimes the setting sun or the sea in her camera as well as in the words she weaves. Her poems speak in a voice which is unique, cold and direct. That she has been a part of many anthologies as well as a Reuel Prize awardee and had commendable mention at Destiny's Poet is incidental. In her first book, 'In My Skin, I Find Freedom', there are poems on varied subjects, yet there is a common thread of a skeptical questioning mind of a free woman.



YOU MEAN A WORLD TO ME

You mean a world to me
Where I forget my own self
My weariness, my pains flee
Just at a glance of your lovely smile

You are the true blessing of God
The most wonderful feeling
That gave birth to a mother in me
I am always grateful to thee

Tomorrows are bright with hopes
Yesterdays are sweet with remembrance
You are my life, my strength

I imagine a world for you
As pure as nature
Where hearts bloom like flowers
Sky filled with butterfly textures

May you have a world of
Peace, love and laughter
Not of hate, jealousy and anger
I can only pray to the Almighty
'Sweet my child I love for thee'..



Gayatree G. Lahon: Gayatee is a teacher and a poet from the beautiful State of Assam. Poetry is her passion. Being a true aesthete, she tries to explore beauty everywhere, in nature as well as in life. According to her, poetry is a celebration of life in its myriad shades. She has contributed to many anthologies, magazines and e-books, both national and international.



Mid- January noon

The sun is still mild,

The oracle arrives

Sword in one hand

And fuming incense in the other,

He runs from the temple to homes

Calling aloud Mother's names

His forehead is red with blood and turmeric

His clothes are white and red

The clinking sound gets louder and louder
With his fast approaching steps
Children scream, cows cry, dogs bark, in the dust
Stomachs churn, eyes water, hearts stop, in fear
It is Kali descending on demons, they say
To protect all from harm,
Diseases disappear, enemies vanish,
And the Evil has to flee
“All are safe,” he mutters loud
Sprinkling turmeric and grains
“Hu hu huyya...,” he cries aloud
Walking back and forth
Then he runs away into the crowd,
Leaving a trail of smoke behind.



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.



FRAGILE

Hold this chalice gently oh Saqi of brilliant blue beyonds,
Fragile and brittle is my soul having braved space storms.
Tender and prone to being torn like new born fronds,
Yet resilient for you put your love in all of my forms.

Chisel me deftly so chips won't splinter into your eyes,
Stones and rocks are unfeeling or so they pretend,

Holding blood of no colour in their depths as they
camouflage their lies,

Sweating under the pain of every stroke although the
mallet doesn't so intend.

Buff me without taking away my sheen,

As you give shape to the person you want me to be,

I feel the heat of the alchemist you have always been,

Though of a strange amalgam you have cast of me!

Script kind words when you quill my story,

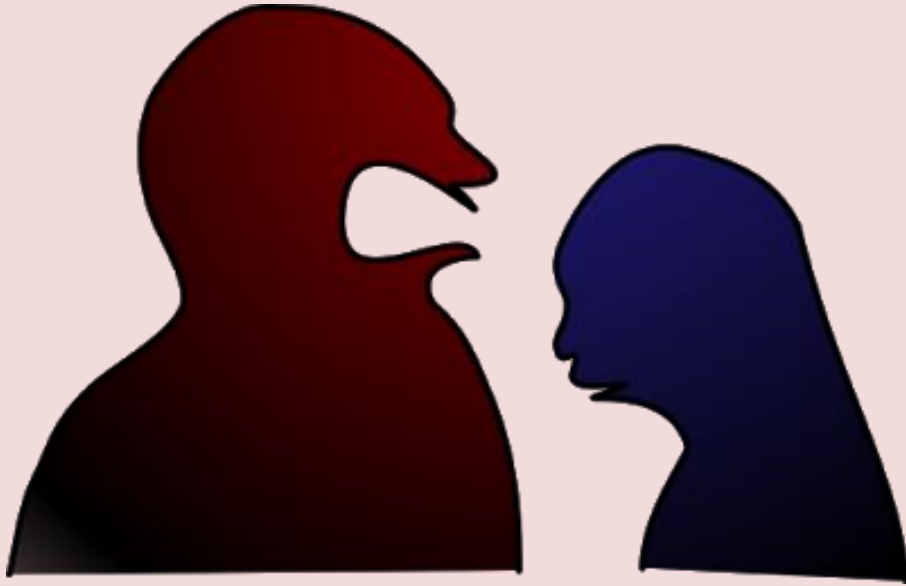
Let not the chalice you've blown from sand,

Splinter into shards to bleed you gory,

For finally it is you who fabricates this protagonist with
your hand.



Geethanjali Dilip: Geethanjali takes her name seriously and evolves as a handful of songs. A French teacher by profession she contributes to several ezines and blogs. She is a recipient of The Reuel International award for Poetry 2017 and also the meritorious award for commendable mention in Great Indian Poetry Contest 2018. Residing at Salem, India, Geeth believes that poetry connects and moves the world.



TO MY ABUSER

In the clear waters of the lake

do my teardrops make a difference?

Are they distinctive? Do the fish avoid them - so full of
pain??

I will never know.

The black charcoal

etched

your cruel words into my heart

forever

never to erase my mistrust in you -

Your smile - it means nothing!

Your love - it means nothing!

"You're mine!" you claim

"I swear I will never hurt you again!"

....you claim.

Your claim, not mine.

I stare blankly at you.

In the cold grey day outside

In a cloud, I see a form

Why do I see a form?

Why do I feel it follows me everywhere?

Why do I see shadows...

Everywhere??

You and I - we make no sense

Should we die

and come alive, still

make no sense.

Trying to hold water in your hands -

never a wise thing to do.



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet, novelist, and publisher currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is also the editor and publisher of the online poetry and prose magazine, 'GloMag,' published every month on Facebook, featuring writers from all over the world. She brings out two hard copy versions of the magazine every year. She is the administrator of the GloMag Group and Love Group on Facebook.



FICKLE LOVE

haunting memories
pensive reflections
like flashes of lightning
when the anvil is struck
sparks fly in every direction
invades and tortures the mind,
thoughts battered by whirlwinds
hurled back and forth
like ruptured waves
by a turbulent unforgiving sea

nature ever faithful
Unfailingly giving birth
to the seasons
day and night come's
and changes the hands of time
nothing changes the pain of betrayal

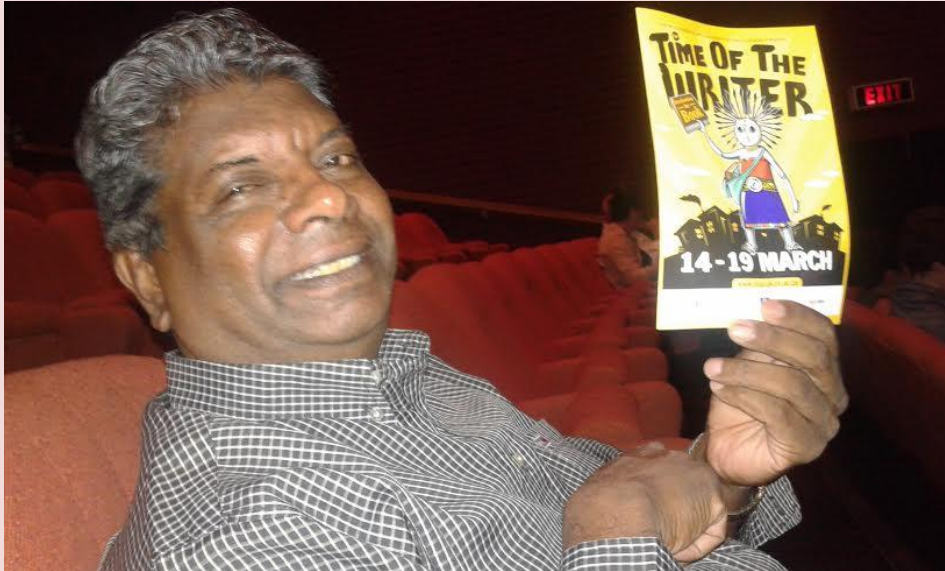
mocking eyes naked with deceit,
the faraway unyielding look
the conceit, the vanity
reflecting in the eyes
strangers we have become
when once we were lovers
flouting our love to the world

once lips whispered
words of undying love

soft caresses inflamed desires
bodies intertwined
locked in frantic, uninhibited madness
kisses like raging fires
exploding infernos in our souls
ignited wild passions
drove our heated desires
over the brink of untamed ferocity

now your eyes
just an impassive empty space
holds no memory
of the fervent feelings
the pleasures that made us lovers
how fickle can love be
once something euphoric
like heavenly music
now resonates

like an empty melody
with no tempo in the rhythm
no ecstasy in its exuberance



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.



FAIRY LIGHTS

I go about in complete silence
On the masked pavements
Under the open sky.

One or two dewdrops
Days of laughter
Seeking fairy lights.

Tiny birds call out my name
Day after day
In lilting tunes.

Fall back on dream pillows

And in a swoon

I listen to the morning songs.

There is a faint darkness.

A hole in the leaf and here is

The soft ray of light.

I see the mellow-sun

rises above, feel

its warmth of fire.



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



POEM SUN

Original : Assamese : Guna Moran

Translation : Bibekananda Choudhury

I cry inconsolably after reading a poem

I can't stop myself from crying out

After penning a poem

The poems that I read

Under such pencil of light

It is a boon of a star

That expired a hundred years ago

A hundred years hence

Someone would read a poem

In its light

Poetry means

An invisible river

Flowing inside the heart

That reads writes listens in solitude

That understands

Poetry

O poet sun

I can't make out with my earthly eyes

The essence of poetry

Please bestow on me

The heavenly sight



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



When in my pain I sought your strength
All I got was your cold shoulder
When I was drowning I sought your hand
But your leg fought me to drown further
When in my weakness you mocked me
Why would I trust you ever again?
Cause I have seen so much pain
I would not curse you
Cause even your curse would add to my strain



Hannah Tennyson: Hannah is a web developer working in Chennai, brought up in Mumbai. She loves to work on her balcony garden, make compost out of kitchen wastes, cook, glass paint, tell stories to her 6 year old, gaze at the sea for hours. Being a working mother she treasures her weekends like nothing else. When relaxed she does write a bit.



GAZAL

(18 syllables)

In heavens I see your eyes. In your eyes, I behold the
weeping Jhelum

What I witness is the truth, but who could ever mould the
weeping Jhelum

Come, come, you are the life and salvation of man, today
and forever

Come, come, you are the last cure of dying souls; unfold
the weeping Jhelum

I will cast away these burdens if you break out this material
cage

Show me the fountain of life; in my palm I will hold the
weeping Jhelum

The floating bodies over the crimson waters were yelling in
dead beats

Leave the throne, come as cure of thousand ills and uphold
the weeping Jhelum

What wretchedness came to those who turned and ran
away and let the blood drip!

Even the cruelly killed souls were breached when they sold
the weeping Jhelum



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



TRANSITION

A phase of life

Which is there

At every moment

In a different way

In a distinct tone

In varied shapes

It makes us feel

The real essence of life

The crests, both,

The troughs (Trumps for some)

It evokes

The path of sunlight

The power of tides

The ripples to mime

The structure to fly

Away

Far from the reach

And beyond the compare

Yet, it ties all of us

To our true and

Natural

ROOTS!!



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



GLIMPSE OF SPRING

shy blue morning

black trees etch sky

children skipping

over puddles

bramble on snow

soft birdsong

listening to water
race downstream

winds gently kiss
my forehead

grass shoots push
through first thaw



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



AGING GRACEFULLY

Ease into the evening of life

Is a time honoured idiom;

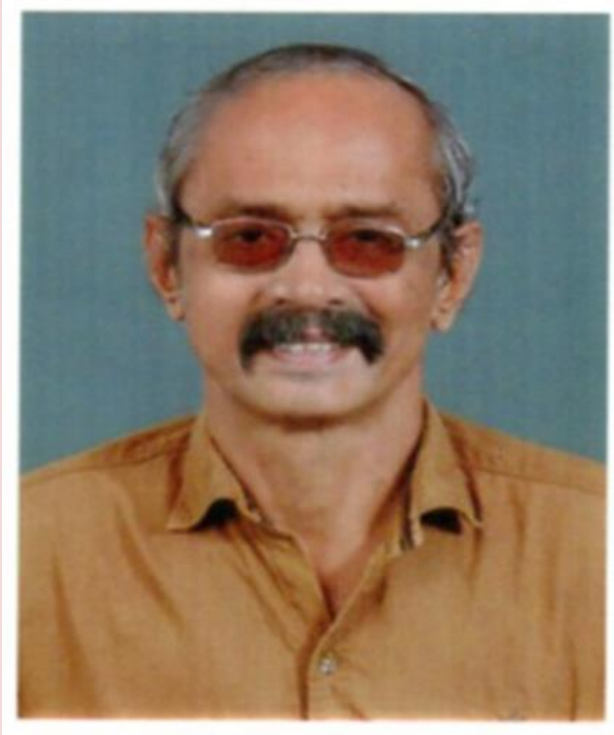
Grey hairs alone do not uncover
the valley of wisdom.

As your bones feel the tremors,
you inch away from the whirlpool
of emotions; Doesn't the world
change faster than the batting
of an eyelid?

You are a cloud of the Past,
shrinking in memory as time
ticks by; Soon the cloud is gone!
The new generation, on a tenuous
toehold, speaks a language
that waltzes over mind;
A bridgewide gap or a mouse trap?

You have reached a stellar stage
when what happens is only a happening;
It may anger or please but is
only a passing of breath, no more.

Growing old is refining the glint of memory.



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



SHADES OF FEVER

Fumbling through weary hours
of aching restfulness,
Fever needles through the blood, and
fond creases of warm sleeplessness,
As golden thread embroiders softly
on scarlet silk.

The aching wings, – heavy and burdened
heave wearily through
the luxurious shades of feverish despair –
As drunken bouts of ecstasy
traces drowsy moments of bare truth
while pain mellows into pleasure.

Thousand promises of broken clasps
smoulder through the dim nerves,
thousand glittering pains scatter –
adoring the entire life in flashing moments
As shards of pricking moon
sparkles on flowing ripples.



Kakoli Ghosh: She is a poet/short story writer from Durgapur, West Bengal, India. She wears many hats—a freelance writer, painter, beauty advisor and jewellery designer and has a keen interest in music and art in general. Apart from contributing to various anthologies, she has also published a poetry book.



THE VIRUS AVATAR

Who is it who has descended

Upon this Earthly realm?

This apocalyptic Avatar,

Whose crown-halo, brings

Revelation upon revelation to humankind?

I bow to you, oh Guru-particle*, unseen, so mighty of
Presence,

Who, without Institution or practice

Is teaching this Age of Aquarius,

That the glamour of Malls cannot immunize

From the laws of Nature...

That the Ancients were right and the forgotten virtues

Need to be re-membered..

What it feels like to be alone

And how to improve on the solitude?

How to keep your own company and not feel lonely?

Those who felt 'untouchability' was ok, how does it feel now?

A Midas moment...all the 'gold's in front of your eyes,

And you are sick of it?

The birds are singing yet, the flowers yet blossoming...

Has it made any difference at all in this world,

That the companies are closed?

Or that the children are not at school...?

Is it not a revelation...that there is a 'beyond'?

The primal, primveal values of 'being' and breathing,

How precious air is 'within' and without...

Oh thou, wearing the hat of the Teacher of the time,

You have shown what it is to cleanse

The Soul of its afflictions, while threatening the body,
Which believes in the various 'statuses',
Of wealth and no-wealth, elite and non-white,
Of genders and gender-orientations,
Citizen and non-citizen, immigrant and refugee,
Native or landless, you care not,
For authentication: you envelope all in your unseen arms..!
You have made your way into many WhatsApp statuses!

And doubtless, many who scoffed
Have returned to pray...or at least to stay
At the various peaceful prayerhouses
Now that the deafening noise of the cities
Has stopped falling on deaf ears...
And we hear our heartbeats teach us
The lesson of Love..
Overriding the lessons of technology..
There is so much time now,

An abundance of it, you could take armloads of it
To sit with you at window-sills
And hear the bird-song, the whistling breeze,
Watch the Sun give of its Rays generously..
Healing, cleansing, curing...
Now we know what to make of a Home,
The home that was so seldom housed..!
A haven now, lest we end up quarantined!

Those who stocked up rations,
Have you at least now thought of feeding the sparrows?

How I long to hug that dear friend
Who survived death, but cannot?
Do I know now the value of an embrace?
A last hand clasp, please, please, before they bury my
grandfather? No?
How many times have I evaded their dotting hands?

What priceless lessons, O virus avatar!

The fabric of civilization is yet now as fragile

As it was in its cradle!

I understand now, I understand Atlantis..

So advanced, yet so vulnerable to disappear

Without a trace?

What can we, of the Internet Age do too,

In the face of this slowdown,

Creating ghost towns of metros?

Yet, there is Time...yes, Time, the precious element,

To think, to rethink, to mellow down,

Feel sorry, feel grateful, to love and be loved

From a distance...and realize it..

To do our bit in the face of calamity,

To be generous, for the opportunity is ours now ..

And just Be. Just Be.

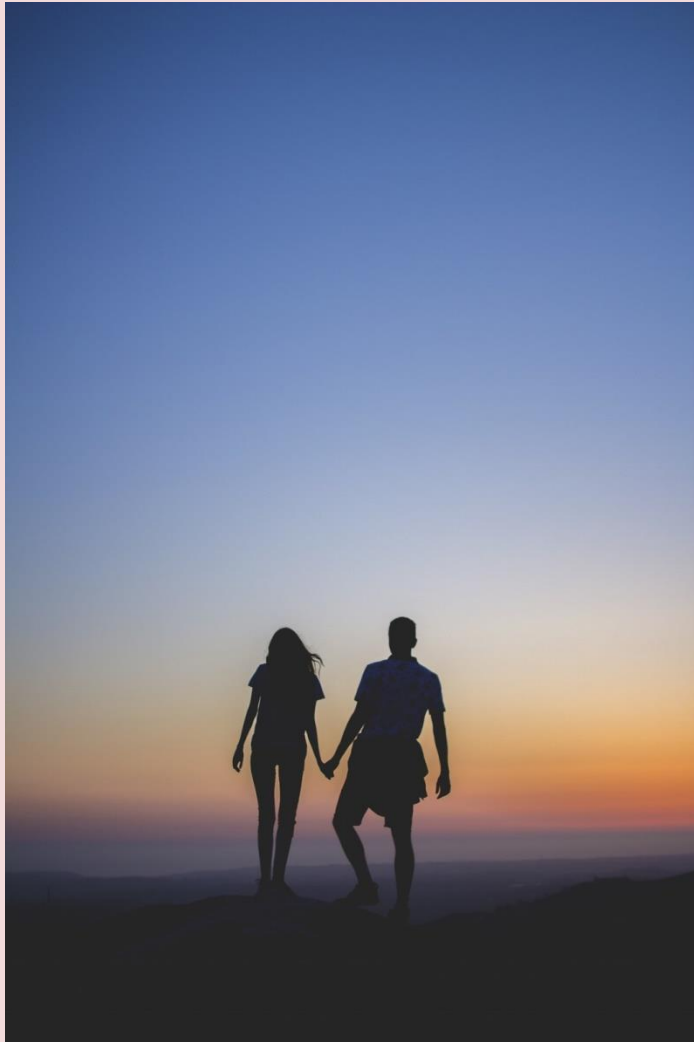
Cocooned in time...until the moment

Of a new rebirth tears apart the shroud of solitary
confinement

And we can hug and hold hands once again.



Kamar Sultana Sheik: She is a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism, and nature with a focus in Sufi Poetry. Her professional career spanning 18 years has been in various organizations and Institutions including the IT sector. She is a self-styled life coach and has currently taken a break to focus on her writing full-time. Sultana has contributed to various anthologies and won several prizes in poetry contests. A green enthusiast, blogger and content-writer, Sultana calls herself a wordsmith.



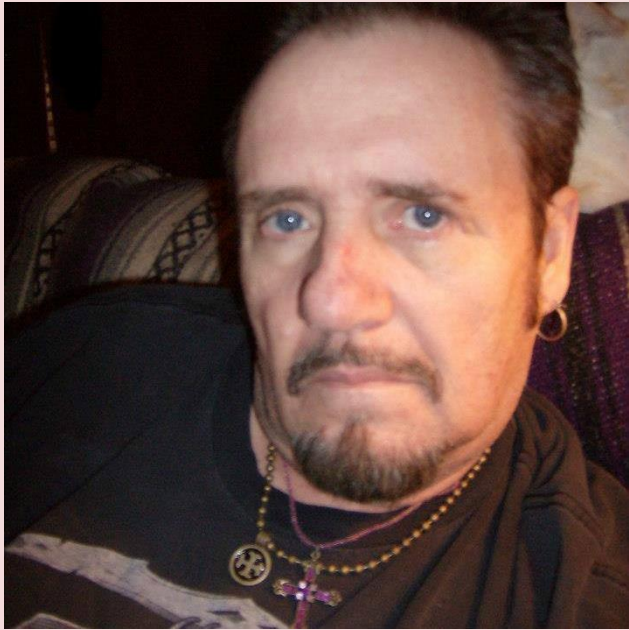
MISTS AND MILES

As I gazed across the candlelit room;
seeing you took my breath away.

My rehearsed words were lost forever
in that magical moment our eyes met.

My hopes shall always try to express
the loving feelings that find their way;

through the many mists and miles,
the frowns and smiles, I must confess.
I watch through the curtain, as mild breezes
are always delighted to convey their soft,
gentle kisses throughout the dunes and
majestic mountains of enduring passion.
The beach and sands called our name,
we walk hand in hand into the sunny haze.
I love your heart with a blaze of desire;
an enraptured, loving, joyful jubilation.



Ken Allan Dronsfield: I am a prize winning poet and was born in New Hampshire, but now reside in Oklahoma, USA. I am disabled and write poetry and short stories full time. I have contributed to and have been the co-editor for many anthologies. I have three poetry collections and am working on a fourth.



SONG STORY 7

Jalte hain jiske liye

Sujata (1959)

Majrooh Sultanpuri - S D Burman - Talat Mahmood

My song struggles for expression

My song is more fragile than glass

It shouldn't slip off your hands

And break into pieces

During the two years of my training as a Probationary Officer in State Bank of India in 1976-78, I worked in four

branches of the bank in Andhra, Gandhi Nagar (Vijayawada) being the first, apart from attending classroom sessions in the State Bank Staff College, Hyderabad and the training institutes in Indore and Tiruchi. Vijayawada of the 1970s had Carnatic music concerts on Sundays at the Rice Millers Hall, Gandhi Nagar. It was at an evening concert by Sandhyavandanam Srinivasa Rao that I met Seethamahalakshmi and her friend Kanakadurga. I met them again the next Sunday when Nedunuri Krishnamurthy sang at the hall. Mine was at best a nodding acquaintance till I ran into them at a morning show of the old Bimal Roy film "Sujata" at Navrang theatre in Governorpet, which was just 20 min walk from Gandhinagar, where I lived. It was then that I found out they were morning joggers like me. We decided to run together in the mornings, and do longer distance running on holidays across the Prakash Barrage to the southern bank of the Krishna River, which would also give us a chance to swim on the quieter less polluted part of the river.

After the movie, they invited me for lunch at a nearby restaurant called Kanakadurga. Seetha quipped, "Kanakadurga is my dearest friend and partner, and my favourite restaurant as well. The only problem is she won't let me pay the bill as she has lent her name to this joint!"

Kanaka smiled and asked, "Does it make any difference whether I pay or you pay? The only thing we should make sure is that our guest doesn't pay." She then turned to me and said with a wink, "I hope you don't suffer from the good old male complex called chivalry!"

Talat Mahmood was their favourite singer and Seetha said, "We came to see Sujata for the song *Jalte hain jiske liye*. It's the special quality of the voice of Talat Mahmood that makes *Jalte hain jiske liye* soothing and sensuous at the same time. His silky and soulful voice, maybe the softest Indian male voice and so suitable for ghazals, has an enigmatic quality that makes him stand apart from all the other singers."

Kanaka added, "Nutan is also a reason why we wanted to see this film. She's so adorable in her looks and manners. You know what? Seetha doesn't like it when I'm so enamoured of Nutan!"

I agreed with them that *Jalte hain jiske liye* was a song that would stay with us, "Talat has that special romantic melody about his voice. Women in love are crazy about him."

"We're women in love... with each other," Seetha said with an impish smile and a glint in her eyes.

"I'm with you that true love transcends the accidents of birth like gender, race and religion. The more it defies conservative social norms, the more sublime it becomes," I said before returning to Talat, "One of my favourite songs in my childhood was Aaha rimjhim ke yeh pyare pyare geet liye, which Talat sang with Lata for the film Usne Kaha Tha - my first ever Hindi film. Which child wouldn't love a song sung on a jhoola! Perhaps as a kid who didn't know a word of Hindi, it was simply the lilt and rhythm of the Salil Chowdhary song and the voice of Talat that attracted me. He made the song as smooth as water flowing over pebbles. There may not be anything in common between the Punjabi village in Usne Kaha Tha and my north Kerala village Chirakkal except that we too had a jhoola hung from a mango tree in our homestead, hanging by a single rope, the two ends of which were tied to the branch above. There was no seat as such; you simply sat on the U part of the rope!"

"We too had a jhoola like that in my village near Eluru and I have many fond memories of swings in the mango season," said Seetha.

"Let me confess Jalte hain jiske liye and Nutan aren't the only reason why I came to see Sujata. I like Bimal Roy films and the strong social message he gave in Sujata. His message is similar to yours, about the need for love to

transcend social divisions like caste, and gender in your case."

Kanaka agreed, "You're right. We too have been feeling strongly about the changes necessary in our conservative society. It's so true in our own plight and how we can never have a normal life together."

Seetha added, "If we could afford it, we would emigrate to Belgium, Denmark, Sweden or Switzerland. It's not illegal or criminal to be gay in these countries. Imagine it was very recently, just about three years ago, for the first time in the world, that psychiatrists in Australia said homosexuality is not an illness."

After our lunch we went to their house for coffee, when I found out more about their romantic relationship with each other. They said they were happy to have me as a friend who understood them. Seetha was from Eluru and Kanaka from Machilipatnam. While they were in college together in Vijayawada, they became aware of the attraction they had towards each other. As luck would have it, they landed jobs in Vijayawada and had been living together ever since without raising eyebrows because two working women renting a house together was an accepted practice, and they had been careful not to show their affection in public.

I was at a stage in my life when the awareness about different sexual orientations was yet to evolve fully, though I knew being gay was not an aberration nor illness but as natural as being straight. Making such relationships illegal or criminal was the result of our religious indoctrination and social orthodoxy and had nothing to do with ethics, science and psychology.

Seetha showed me Shakuntala Devi's latest book "The World of Homosexuals", which she had recently bought, and said, "It is the first Indian instance of a serious look at our kind of sexual orientation, which is unfortunately criminalised and punishable in our country. More than the silly legal position, what makes it difficult for us is the shame and social stigma that people associate with it. Shakuntala Devi makes a plea for a more rational understanding of homosexuality and complete acceptance, not tolerance and sympathy."

Kanaka gave me another perspective, "It's not just a question of my sexual attraction towards another woman. As feminists we find our patriarchal society stifling, and marriages within it are just an extension of the sexism and male chauvinism found in patriarchy. We don't want to be the traditional wife and daughter-in-law with conventional gender roles. You were talking about the social message Bimal Roy wanted to spread through Sujata. I would say the

poor, the lower caste men and all women are underprivileged groups in our society that suffer different types of discrimination. It's complicated because higher caste women, who are victims of patriarchy, are the entitled class when they deal with the poor and the lower castes. And the men among the poor practise patriarchy on their women. The change we seek has many layers."

"I would prefer to live with a female partner than with a dominating male as his subservient wife even if I were straight," added Seetha.

"Absolutely, and ours is a dream relationship. There's hardly any conflict in our roles within the house and outside," Kanaka said with a smile.

"Except when she fantasizes about Nutan," laughed Seetha, wrapping her arm around Kanaka's waist.

I have got you the song your glowing eyes have been seeking

The song that struggled for expression in my heart

That magically became the sparkle in your eyes

Take it to your heart lest it should slip off your hands

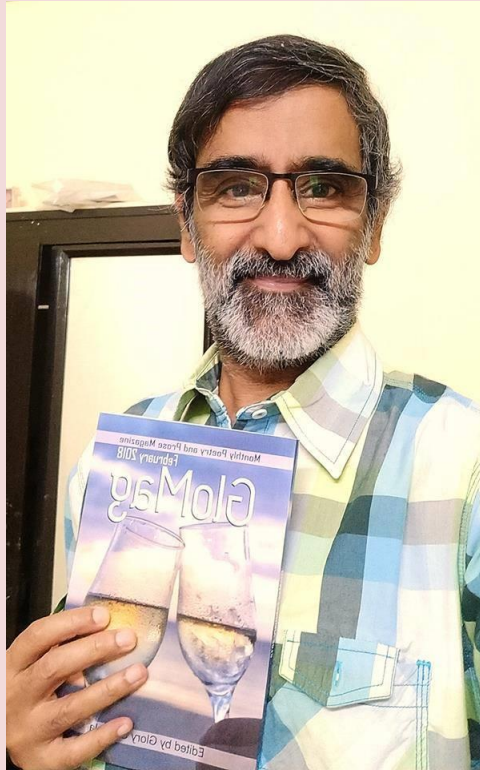
Let not my song, more fragile than glass, break into pieces

So I can continue to hum this song for you

My song will hover around your tresses

Till it rests on your luscious lips

Let me keep singing this ode to you



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



Hark! 'tis summer again.

Clear skies and no rain.

Maybe, maybe not. Sometimes, it does.

Refreshing, it is then, for all of us!

Hark! The Season of Examinations galore!

To be young, no more fun, exams to the fore!

Vacations, family outings and exotic places.

Pa, Ma, kids and their lovely beaming faces!

20-20 IPL and all so exciting!

2020! 'Royal' virus came a visiting!

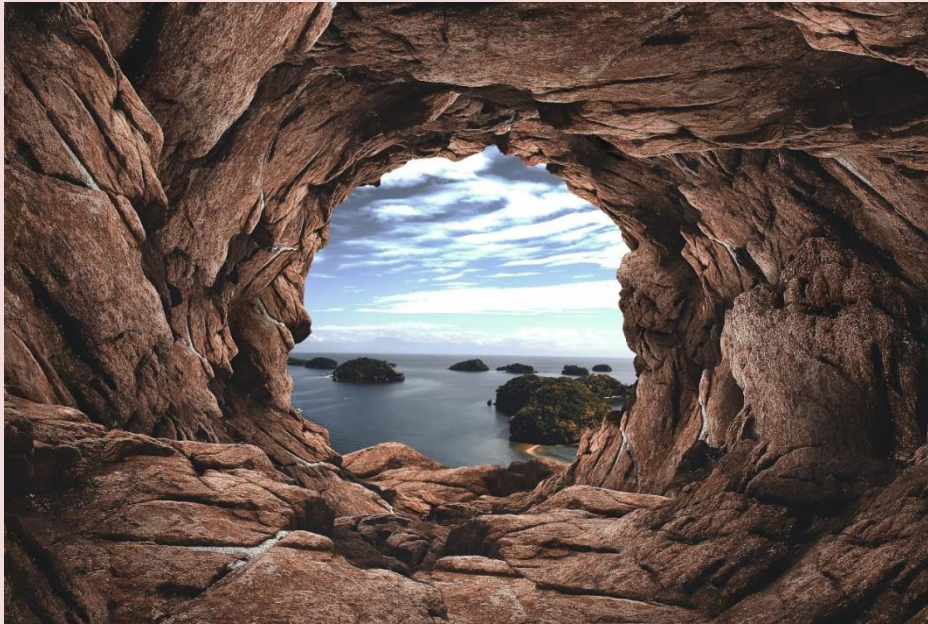
Royalty! Unfettered was the travel and extent.
Checks, quarantine, yet, unstoppable torment.

Hark! Who can stop this? WHO cannot!
Moves on and on, a lumbering juggernaut.
Economies crumbling. Nations tottering.
Time to contemplate. Time for caring.

Hark! Hark to what nature is telling,
" I gave you bounty, for joy of living!
Greed, destruction, and gone Gaia.
Wisdom, reform, restore euphoria!"



Lakshminarayan Nariangadu: Dr. Lakshmi, as he is called at GLORIOUSTIMES, is a Professor in Physics, retired from the Madras Christian College. He has around 50 publications in Scientific Research Journals and Conferences, and a few textbooks too. He also writes otherwise. When the mood sets in, the emotions tingle and words fall in place. In this space, he writes both in Tamil and in English.



DEATH

' Death'

Is a reality

It can turn

A joyful person's personality

It does not look out

For color and race

It comes forth

In different kind of ways

It can be caused by a headache,
Heart attack or gun shot
In every city, state and nation nowadays
It happens a lot

It does not ask
For small or big
It comes unexpectedly
It comes super quick

Death hits
Young and old
It turns a once warm living body
Ice cold

Those who are mourning
Are left with hurt and pain

It's as if

You were hit by a train

Gracefully it's not the end

Of an individual's life

Because of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ

After death there is eternal life

Some may ask

How and when?

Well! The Word declares,

Those who died in Christ shall live again...



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.



ALL THOSE CHAIRS IN THE FIELD

Rapturous orchestral maneuvers
performed by bees and butterflies.

One to each symphonic chair,
they sit upon these colorful structures,
measuring each refrain
with the beating of wings.

I lie at the edge,
enchanted by this euphoric ensemble
that plays out the course of life
while perched upon nature's
own soft seats.



Linda Imbler: Kansas-based Linda Imbler believes poetry has the potential to add to the beauty of the world. She has three poetry collections published by Amazon and three poetry collections published by Soma Publishing. She is sitting on her next collection which recalls her Nashville trip last Spring. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindapoetryblog.blogspot.com.



O LADY! YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL

O lady! You are beautiful

Beautiful is your curve,

Beautiful is your saree and skirt

Beautiful is your heels and top knot

Beautiful is your socks and hand gloves

O lady! You are beautiful

because you smile with cracks to entice the table

you imbibe the fire in your heart in spite of the squabble

you outshine the race crossing the pebbles
you prove your worth with hurdles
you imprint your impression
you present your perfection
you nurture yourself in each rotation
world see your bold face in difficult situation
you rhyme every time with the flow
you sing with each melody and glow
you wipe your fear and tear and crawl to sit in front row
that's your beauty
O lady! So you are beautiful.



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



RIOTS IN MY MIND

So much hatred - Where did it come from?

Dread in the air - Who is responsible?

Strenuous breathing - When will it end?

Anxiety writ large - When will one relax?

Worried faces - Is happiness around the corner?

Helpless hearts - How does one help?

Apprehensive - Will it ever be the same?

Upset - Is this really happening?

Disturbed - When will the gory images disappear?

Distressed - How much more blood the earth wants?

Afraid - Will there be light after darkness?

Broken brutally - Would someone mend? Is there someone?

Confused state - Should I smile or cry?

Frightened to the core - When will the gunshot sounds die?

Scared to death - Am I next?

Death lurking - Was it this near?



Lubna Ahmed: She is a Certified Master NLP (Neurological Linguistic Programming) Practitioner; NLP Workshop Facilitator and Soft Skills trainer; and Certified Advanced Life Coach. She conducts SuperKoolKids Art Therapy workshops. She resides in Delhi with her family. She has managed to carve a niche for herself in the literary world by her ever so simple 'Love poems'. 'Princess Lubna' is her pen name, her writers' identity. Her love poems are spiritual and have a Mystical Aura. She has written many poems for National and International Anthologies. She is an avid traveller.



NIGHT SKY

No matter how socially connected or how hectic our day be

At the end of the day, it's just the stars, moon, and we

Standing at the window, gazing at the night sky

Trying to fill the void that rocks inside

In need of some reinforcement

In search of some peace

Desires our heart simply to be

To be with the one who duly cares

Is able to feel the gust and let us lean

Letting us bare our depleted sheen

Trying to reflect with the concoctions we fare

Peeling off the layers of girth inside

Imbibing some fresh lease of life to be precise.



Madhu Jaiswal: She is a poet, writer, editor and a social worker based in Kolkata, India. She has got published in various national and international anthologies and is regularly featured in popular literary magazines and e-zines. As an executive editor of The Impish Lass Publishing House Mumbai, she has 5 anthologies to her credit. Madhu is a friendly, optimistic and compassionate person who believes in humanity and volunteers for the upliftment of

the underprivileged and destitute. According to her, hope, belief, and perseverance are the powerful mantras that have the ability to pave our path towards success no matter what. Her writings often revolve around these keywords. She can be contacted at madhuj2203@gmail.com.



THE LIBERATED SOUL

I fly by
Here and there
Like a miniscule
Molecule,
In the depth
Of the deep ocean,
A deep blue and green
Into which I dive,
Drown,

Then come up
Floating like a hollow log.
The light within
Twinkling,
Filling in the vacuity,
The emptiness
Inside me,
I try to find out a meaning
To me,
Of my being
Here,
The purpose
Of it all.
In my efforts to demystify
Myself,
My soul delves
Into the unending deeps,
Trying to reach out

To infinity,
Wanting to hold
The invisible,
To grasp 'it',
Reaching as high
As the shining stars.
Amidst the shimmering stars
The soul dances,
Immersing into
A whirlpool of winds,
With its wings
Spread out,
In a haphazard motion,
Almost cyclonic,
Crazy, insouciant,
Intoxicated, drunk on freedom,
Liberated!



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



A KITE

A low wind

Paper Kite's flat

It takes some effort

For the wind

And the flier

To get it afloat

The wind catches up

The kite soars high

Spreading its wings

Mighty in the blue sky
Kite enjoys the wind on its face
Set free by the long thread
It rides high in its aerial sojourn
Trying to peep into the cloud bed
See what is it's make
Happy and buoyant
It suddenly struts
It's tugged down
It struggles strong
The wind grows cool
The sky turns grey
Cloud bed leeks
Letting on its spray
Paper kite in danger now
Gets wet and soggy
And downwards bound
Steadily it's dragged

Headlong fall

Crushes with the thought of wind

The sun and beauty of sky

In its wings.



Madhu Sriwastav: She is an Assistant Professor in English based in Kolkata. She is a performing poet, translator, and critic who has performed in various National and International platforms and published in various national and international ezines and anthologies such as Setu, GloMag, OPA, The Vase, Amravati Prism, Culture and Quest, etc.



BLUE MOON

Sakhi, let things be

Let clouds be

Let you be and

Let us be

Reverse the rivers, Sakhi

Reverse the laws too

There is so much venom in air

For once let us turn to our innate selves, Sakhi

And shun our make ups
We must wear our heart raw and
apply its lipstick

For any day is beautiful if we do not temper with its course

Sakhi, the trees here stand tall in their glory
The lamasery is peaceful

Outside, deodars are
dancing like oriental goddesses

Their bodies sculpted as
Javanese Princesses

Sakhi, breathe in some mountain air
You have had enough dust into your nostrils lately

For now you leave your woes, Sakhi and
Catch the flight of birds

Talk to the zeal of clouds
Locate the snow on the tip of mountains

Behold the glistening rocks
And above all, love in abundance

Do not give up on compassion, Sakhi
No, don't! Not at any cost

Even if they call you bad names
Stay strong and act fiercely

Sakhi, the situation here so demands

Note: Sakhi: female friend in Hindi



Manisha Manhas: Manisha is a Poet residing in Pathankot. She has been published in many national and international journals. Writing poetry is a cathartic experience for her.



THOSE THREE WORDS

Celebrated are these words,
Soothing to the yearning ears,
Famous love sagas, vouch their importance,
From joining hands to kissing at the aisle,
Magical love-laden 3 syllables!
Oh but the irony with healer time,
It also dulls the shine,
Lustre is lost, now it's all rustic,
Soulless, meaningless words said in habitual haste!

Affections which overflowed are now existing needs,
Monotonous life to Doldrums it leads!
Three sacred letters, now commonly used,
Void of essence, uttered by confused,
Stripping her of respect, hurting her core,
" I love you" he said, while she stood at the door!

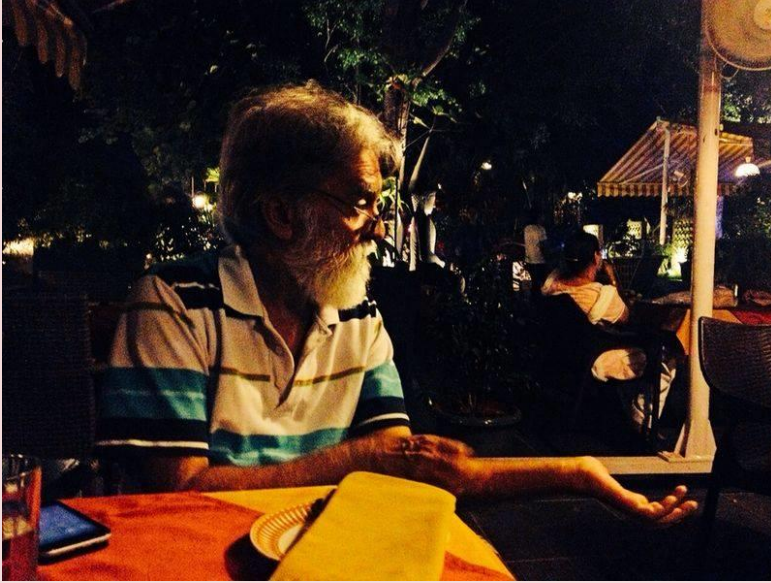


Mansi Sharma: She is a passionate writer, who sowed seeds and watered the plants of writing while basking in the warmth of motherhood! A former Officer in a govt. Organizational with a degree in Management and a literary heart, is now taking baby steps just like her baby, towards writing!



MISSING YOU

The obese and the decrepit, the apple-fresh teens and the doddering old Hitlers with limp half-salute - I scrutinized the rolling scene, missing you like a lost limb. Suddenly we were face to face, my heart leapt like a drunken ape and I clamped my jaws shut.



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.



BE YOURSELF

Be anything you want to be

Follow your dreams

Be different and adventurous

Live the life you want

Be cool bold and open

Honour and be proud of yourself

Be daring trustworthy and caring

You're awesome beautiful and lovely

Be courageous daring and face the world

See the beautiful serenity inside of you

Unmask every fear and rise above all

Life is a puzzle; make the most of it
Face with self-determination and confidence
Decide who you are and what you want
Know what you're good at and your talents
Be yourself be unique and enjoy your life



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



OPEN EYES LAID BACK

Open eyes, black-eyed peas,
laid back busy lives,
consuming our hours,
handheld devices
grocery store
“which can Jolly Green Giant peas,
alternatives,
darling, to bring home tonight-
these aisles of decisions.”

Mind gap:

“Before long apps
will be wiping our butts
and we, others, our children
will not notice.”

No worries, outer space,
an app for horoscope, astrology
a co-pilot to keep our cold feet
tucked in.



Michael Lee Johnson: He is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. He is published in more than 1072 new publications, his poems have appeared in 38 countries,

he edits, publishes 10 poetry sites. He has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. 198 poetry videos are now on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>.

Editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1530456762>; editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Dandelion in a Vase of Roses.



THE LITTLE SPARROW WITH RAINBOW WINGS

In my early days of boyhood,

After school when would I return home and go to my
favourite spot of our house-

That little room at the attic which smell of pickles, spices,
betel leaves and granny's saree,

The little sparrow with rainbow wings would turn up too,

Right through the window it would hop in,

And make a sweet chirp,

As if to ask if I had a great day at school;

I would look at it and nod,
Knowing it had waited all day long like a true friend for me,

And soon we would be playing,

The sparrow would make small jumps
From the window sill to the broken cot at the corner of the
attic

To my shoulder, without any hesitation,

I would run my fingers over its tiny head-

It would close its eyes,

Enjoying every bit of my caressing,

In springs and summers

Our hours of play would extend beyond the sunset
sometimes,

Till the western sky would turn pinkish orange,

And the moon would arrive gently like a fairy;

The little sparrow with rainbow wings

Would give me dreams of hope in gloomiest evenings of
rain soaked monsoons,

It would unfurl its wings under the dim light of yellow
electric bulb as if it wanted me to know

It would be there for me in the darkest hours,

In wintry nights it would chirp sometimes

Just to make me wonder like that English poet whom we
read at school,

That winter also bears the seeds the spring in its depth.

That little sparrow with rainbow wings

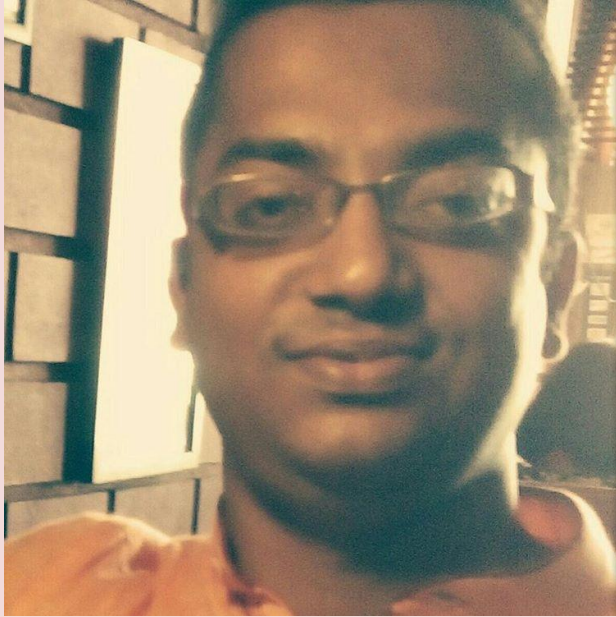
Had been my constant companion

Even when it was no more there at the attic,

For I could hear its flutter of wings,

Its chirps,

Its quick feet movements on the floor, making scratching sounds.



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



WHY DID GOD MAKE ME A GIRL?

I lurk in the Shadows of
An Ever lively household
My attention is caught by
My 'glamorous' wedding talks
And I think disappointedly
Why did God make me a girl?

I hid in the bed sheets
With a book in my hand
Grateful to be one of the privileged

Then I think about the rest of my kind
And then I wonder painfully
Why did God make me a girl?

My long hair unfurls and Rolls
Over my shoulders and to my back
What makes me different
From a Boys personality and physique
And then I sway mysteriously
Why did God make me a girl?

Maybe my hands are only meant
to wash dirty dishes and cook food
Maybe they will never get to hold
The paradise of 'self-earned money'
And then I panic hurriedly
Why did God make me a girl?

Tears drop from my eyes

My throat coarse and dry

maybe I wasn't born to see

The joy of my success

I like down with a taste of failure

Why did God make me a girl?



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



THE TRANSFORMATION TRAIN

They think we are blind

So we can't see,

They believe we are deaf

And we can't hear,

They assume we are lame

Because we never run,

They say we are dumb

Because we don't talk,

They tell we are senseless

Because life is zigzag,

But it will amaze them
Yes, because we shall win marathons
See visions, tell fortunes, make fame
Hear God, and shake the world.

Yes, we shall make them ashamed
Those, who never believed in us,
Those who locked up heavens
The men that crushed our feet
And bruised our hearts,
Those that laughed and mocked us.

The train of life is speeding forth
A flight so divine to win the fight,
Behold a glorious sight,
In might and right;
Tight and bright.



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



LADY WITH A TEA KETTLE

Stella, Maria or Celia!

Lady with a hot tea pot,

What was your name?

I forgot.

or,

you are nameless,

Surly you are!

A blessing for family

I do hereby confess.

It was a mountainous afternoon
near the canyons of Shillong
you then appeared with a smile soon,
carrying a hot kettle of tea we longed
with little burning amber
Great you were being a life changer.

sipping black tea
we had a nice chat
about life,
your sweat and scorching face,
spoke of a lot
about your fight.

Rosy cheeks and face plumpish,
ethnic beauty of khashi ladies,
couldn't remember your name still,
but the aroma of your tea I always feel.



Nitusmita Saikia: By profession, an instructor in National Cadet Core, India, Nitusmita Saikia is a keen worshiper of literature. She is working presently in Jorhat Assam, India. A young budding poetess, Nitusmita Saikia, has been adored by the World society of poetry. She writes in both English and own regional language (Assamese). Being active in various online Poetry groups and blogs, she has been writing for E-Magazines like Tuck Magazine (USA), FM-Online (USA) poetry magazine, and blog Sparking.biz. With these, her poems have been published in various poetry anthologies National and International.



MODERN BEASTS

They roam about the streets unchecked

Bold as brass and owing their strut.

Clinking and clanking with every move

They race through our world.

Integral in a way unanticipated even a century ago

These masses of metal ease our lives in one way

But destroy them in another.

Enabling our weakness and causing diseases

Polluting the earth and hazarding lives

These gas-guzzling giants need to be tamed

If humanity is to survive another century (at the very least)!



YOGA

(An oxymoronic haiku)

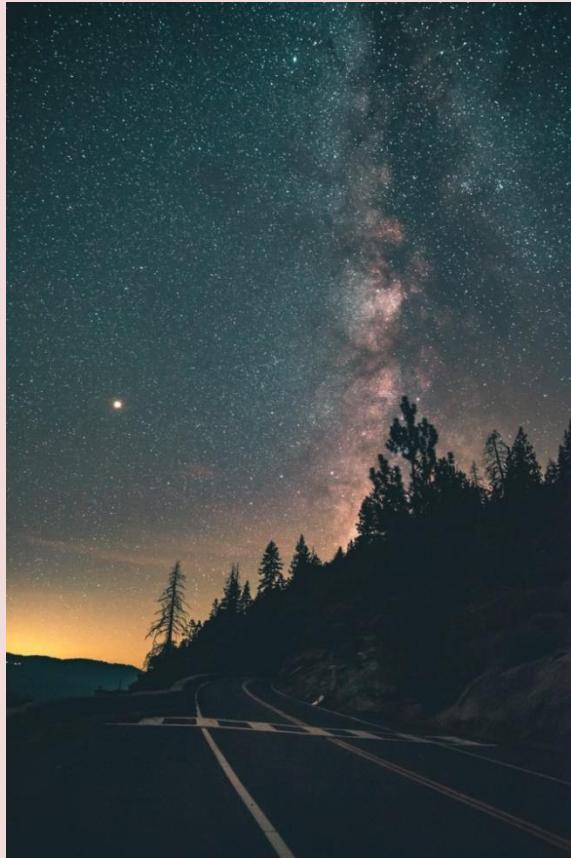
Contorted body

Deep breaths unyielding

Relaxing yoga?



Nivedita Karthik: I am a poet residing in Gurgaon. I am a professional Bharatanatyam dancer and my poems have been published in Glomag, the Society of Classical Poets and The Epoch Times.



A STARRY NIGHT

Darkness has descended on earth

Blanketing everything in a cloak of velvety blackness

A glittering tapestry of twinkling stars and still planets

Dot the sky like a damsel's evening gown

Looking up at the sky, marveling at the vastness,

My wandering thoughts and pounding heart

Settle into a rhythmic beat soothing, calming...

I have always thought of the stars as permanent reminders of poignant memories and bearers of hope some stars represent every ancestor, especially my parents Looking down fondly at me, reminding me that love shines on...forever.



Padmini Rambhatla: I am a poet, teacher and homemaker residing in Chennai, India. I work as a high school English teacher. I have contributed to Glomag and my children's school magazine. I have not published anything so far but in the near future, I will. One of my recent and best accomplishments has been to develop a calmer and stronger attitude towards challenges.



If only I could love you

Like a flower

Standing tall

In all my hue

With the blue sky

Above my head

Not vain, not bare,

Not a cell of rivalry

I stand put

On the very soil

I was strewn as a seed

Content being me
Never once hoping
For change
Not chasing a whiff
Of air even.

Ah, if I could but
Love like a flower
Waiting tall
Never whining
If you didn't blow
Pleasant wind
Of love and courtesy
My way

I would dance
Like a flower
In your wind

Make life yet again

Ah, so more beautiful souls

Could paint the world

If only I could love you

Like a flower...



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



SPRING ARRIVES

April may be cruel, yet holy
for the promise of spring it brings.
'But where do you hide so long?'
Flowers ask spring with a smile
as they all crave for its divine touch
and the aroma unleashed in the air.

At the other end, exhilarated
wind whispers to the lilacs in bloom,
'I am not away from you'.

The woods are green everywhere
as spring is arriving with songs
and with dancing flowers on May's marvel.

The scented lanes with melody of birds
fill music in the air, while
bees and butterflies dance in joy
over the bosom of the flowers in bloom.

Wind then touches the leaves with its flimsy hands
for revival of hopes to leap into new life,
to impart the spirit of youth and freshness
and reinforce the belief to the budding ones
that for every night, a day is in wait, upon which
the lilacs peel off the chrysalis of their sorrow,
decide not to grieve over the loss of their dead ones,
to greet the spring, celebrate its glory in full delight
and re-author stories of their life afresh
to grant themselves immortality at least momentarily.



Pankajam: Pankajam is a bilingual poet and novelist residing in Chennai India, retired from BHEL as Dy Manager/Finance. She has contributed poems, articles and book reviews to various anthologies and journals. She has published so far 3 novels and 11 poetry anthologies in English and has won many awards for poems and short stories including the Rock Pebbles National Literary Award 2019, Cochin Litfest Poetry Prize 2019 and ISISAR Award for International Essay competition 2019.



EVE

Was I made from the rib of you?

Then why have you subjugated me for centuries?

Why did I have to cry for justice for so long?

You kept my feet tiny with iron shoes.

My waistline was kept tiny with tight corsets.

From education we were shunned.

Was I made from the rib of you?

Then why have you burned me on the stake again and again?

Why have you cut off my tongue if I spoke the truth?

So many Joan of Arcs have been burned on the stake.

So many Khonas have got their tongues cut.

So many of us have been labelled witches and have been stoned.

Was I made from the rib of you?

Then why did we have to fight for voting rights for so long?

Then why were we thought to be baby making machines for so long?

Fight, fight and fight for all rights which should have been ours.

Right for equal wages for equal labour.

We had to fight to be equals for so long.

Was I made from the rib of you?

Then why do you suppress us again and again?

Then why do you want to take away our power?

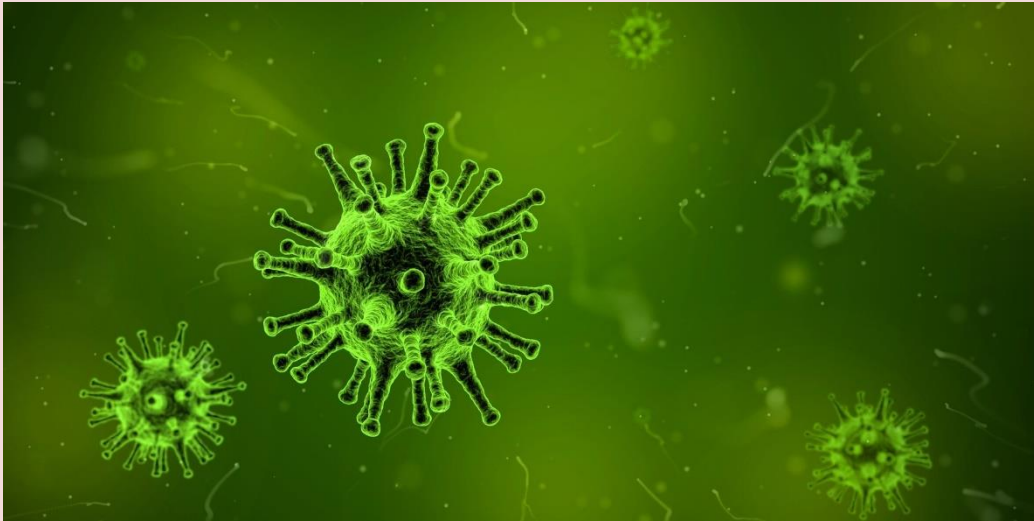
Stop! Your force will not stop us.

Stop! Keep your insecurities away.

Stop! Let us enjoy the equal status at last.



Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick has five published books. Her poems have been translated in 26 languages. She has started and is the President of the Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library (IPPL) Mumbai Chapter. Her poems have been published in more than 250 International and national journals.



The Bell tolled
a friend off on his journey
his children brave enough
travelled long distance
braved corona virus
all the others , friends and relatives
grouped themselves
talked about the departed guy
their memories
thinking about when the bell will toll?

Death is not bizarre

welcome

i remember

death is a Lover's Embrace.



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



THIS THE

mop and bucket

where all the stars bow down.

This is the dustpan and brush

where all the stars bow down.

This is the small kindnesses in a day

where all the stars bow down

This in remembrance of the lost
where all the stars bow down.

This in finding the unremembered
where all the stars bow down.

This hand hauls you out of darkness to
where all the stars bow down.



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



A GRAVE THOUGHT

Whilst rummaging around

Upon the sacred ground

Of an olde and well-worn graveyard in the towne

I tripped upon a stone

That had fallen all alone

In the olde and well-worn graveyard in the towne

I scampered to my feet

And guess whom I did meet

In that olde and well-worn graveyard in the towne

I really shouldn't boast

But it was the very ghost

From the olde and well-worn graveyard in the towne

I asked him who he was

And he said his name was Boz

From that olde and well-worn graveyard in the towne

Now as true as hens are chickens

I am sure that this was Dickens

In that olde and well-worn graveyard in the towne



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental Engineers. He has written poetry, short

stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child." He was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease and died in 2015.



HERE GOES THE TRAIN...

Running through the sidelines and tracks
through tunnels bridges and far-off lands
those windows took me to many lanes
away from my hometown away from home

Whistling by
and stopping at stations
to dense trees, farms,
luscious green grasslands

to lively villages

to where once lived, the famous "Tenali Raman"

Speeding through dark tunnels

for fear of the dacoits and thieves,

police walk by the berths in tight security

speaking in low volumes clandestine

it was a trip through the time

Those fights for the window seats

between young and even the old

to get the coveted spot,

"the window seat!"

Those calls from local Chai walas

and hawkers

shouting "Cha cha! Samosa Garam"

unfold plenty memories
opening the window of my mind

Foodie Grandpa's
unravel packets sipping through
piping hot-watery, tea
flipping through daily gazettes

excited kids shouting out to vendors waving
at flag men at stations and junctions.

Those were the windows
running by the train

The midnight chats of couples and strangers
and discussions with TCs
about the arrival and departure
the never ending goodbyes to the new friends unknown
deviating paths to lives unknown

To Mundane days

gloomy evenings

To worries, miseries

and ordeals many

Those are the windows

Those are the escape tracks

Those are the real windows of your mind

unfolding memories of a lifetime

For they say

"men, material and money may change

but these memories may never fade."

Here goes the train....

Here goes the train....



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



WOMEN'S DAY

The alarm that never snoozes

Alarms at the hullabaloo

On the day

Earmarked for its mistress.

The newspaper winks

And flaunts the glossy cover page

Even as it gulps down the fearful bulletins

Within its innermost columns.

Hashtags preaching boldness and change
Flood the virtual world
Drowning the million disturbing voices
Beneath its surge.

And finally, as “she” braves the stares
And defies the norms
And knocks down the hundred question marks
A raised eyebrow wishes her;
“Happy Women’s Day”.



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



THE LIP OF THE SEA

I am unable to fathom
the bluest wonder in your
forehead
the ethereal presence of
the unknown and the unknowable

but each time, i fly
the flight of imagination
takes me to a new height

the creaseless body of the sea in you
allures me

I plunge in to the deep sea
my lips search for the belly, navel
swimming across i find two mountains
soft, delicate, fleshy

Do they reflect
the outer layer of a deeper being?

The lip of the sea is thirsty
with the mouth open,
I see the upper lip that
whispers silently with the lower lip
how many kisses does the sea pine for
quenching her thirst?

I am inching towards her neck, slim
I could even see water flowing beneath!



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



SILENCE - DEAFENINGLY DEFINED

Hello silence old friend,
I ignored you time and again,
Though you were looming large on the horizon,
Clouding up the light of the sun,
I wanted to catch all the sparkle and joie de vivre
Wanting to pack it all firmly in memory,
To light up my darkening vistas of your presence,
Dear friend silence!
We make strange bedfellows,
I welcome you in sleep only,

Awake I yearn to savour all that rambunctious cacophony
Which you selectively blank out from my sight,
Soul stirring high pitched melodies,
I hear only in my mind's auditorium,
I know what Beethoven went through,
The classics, he wrested free from you,
They played on unending on his mental gramophone,
So shall i dive into my river of soul vibrations,
Unmindful of chains that bind me to you,
Body perishable, does not limit my soul's ears,
So dear silence, peace be with you,
You taught me sound's value,
And it's resonance in the soul for aeons,
With or without your hindrance,
Your nothing has given me something,
Thank you for being so loving and giving!



Pratima Apte: She is a poet residing in Pune, India. She is a homemaker and a 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.



DIVINE LOVE

Again and again

The same lips

Brush together

Fresh and anew

Feel

More sweeter

Than before

The divine love

Continues forever

Death never touches

Either their body or soul.



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



MY SECRET DIARY

I am the queen of heart

Wine of glass

Smoke of lust

Dreams of a dreamer.

Like a free bird

I am flying towards aimless path.

I lose myself in the distant horizon.

I become numb in lonely nights.

Stars are my soulmate.

In silence, my heart bleeds

Seeking your warm touch.

I am lost in my tranquility

When fireflies glow

Inside my heart.

I soar higher and higher

Until I see you by my side.

I run through the dark forest and fields

When I feel your presence.

Sings lullabies

In search of true love,

I am the queen of heart.



Preety Bora: The poetess, Mrs Preety Bora started writing from her college days, hails from a beautiful state "Assam "(India), she lives in Golaghat with her family. Nature inspires her to write poetry. She writes in both languages: in English and in Assamese (her mother tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in foreign countries.



NOT ALL TESTIMONIALS

... Need be written on scraps of paper.

Some are etched in a space where the

The heart only whispers,

Where words can dance

And make whirling shapes and draw

Meanings from nothingness,

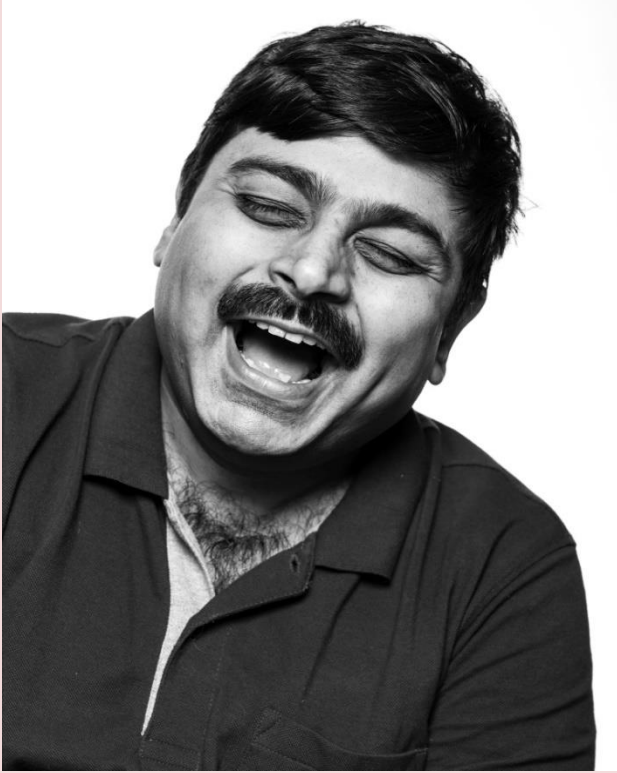
But where most of all,

They needn't be said at all.

Not all testimonials are words.
Some are just moments of silence
Shared, moments walked together
Where understanding has precedence
Over utterance.

Not all testimonials need be shared.
Some remain silent witness
To gestures of kindness and
Fellowship. They may only be a coffee
Shared, but they are sins of semantics
If corseted by embalmed words.

Not all testimonials can be written.



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



COOKING GAS

Gone are those days of firewood
and coal when women had their hard times
battling and blowing through
to run the domestic chore;

heavy tons of rice and vegetables,
porridge and pots of boiling milk
and pans of papads - all in daily
routine - all in three rounds unlimited;

these are times, when no patience
and pragmatics prevail as far as
these ancient outdated modules figure
in most women's heart and thinking;

heavy cylinders with cooking gas
connecting tubes with gas lighters
modern kitchen with modernized
appliances where modernity creeps in

minute by minute; little do we realize
how hard it is for delivery man to lift
on his shoulders and load and reload
in his van rolling from street to street;

modernity has its own limits
modernity has its own rubrics



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

Her blogs:

pearlradhe.blogspot.in

pearlradfhe.wordpressf.com



AFTER A LONG TIME

A long, long time: after a long time,
after an age you may say,
I started what I had wanted to begin a long time ago.

I did not think I had it in me, back then.

I do not think I can do it, even now.

I am doing it anyway.

Strange, the way things turn out to be.

It feels good to prove myself wrong,
at least this once, it does.

It feels good to discover the possibilities
in a new set of words, and in the new ways
that sounds come together, following rules
that are not as I know them.

It feels good, to listen, and to begin to understand
even if a little, what a month ago was
gibberish-ish.



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



HARMONY

If you can
Unmask my face,
You would find
That same old rugged lover,
Hazy is horizon
Mists that overflow
Moistened tunes with clueless notes,
That same old wavering song..

Springs that overwhelmed
The westerly eastern winds
Blooming colors over grey skies,
That same old mundane season...

Your touch that summers
The infectious warm winter,
A lover, that I had been
An atheist by faith,
A robust misfit,
Live to be with your nuances
Die to be your comfort,
That same old wretched harmony..



Rajorshi Patranabis: He is a food consultant by profession. He is a bilingual poet. Crossover - love beyond eternity and Feriwala are his collections of English and Bengali poems respectively. He is also a translator, translating assamese poems into Bengali. He had been published in national and international magazines and anthologies.



Yes, I am in the air on the ropes
Of hope, much above the building high;
I am saluting the people below in
A relaxed mood and in a state of lying;

There is a multitude of human beings,
Raising placards and flags aplenty;
Local inhabitants are like peeping toms,
Watching my posture and queer activity;

I am so close, yet so far to
Distant clouds, and overhead sky is far apart;
Fresh breeze from the green trees is brushing
My cheeks and my whole self is like a swinging cart;

I feel like a queen perched on
Throne of ropes, smiling from the vantage point;
I am proud to be a woman bold,
Breaking the glass ceiling against the male giants.



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



CONTEXT CLUES

The rain on a dark night,
impinges upon the earth
in reckless abandon:
The vocabularies,
arcane and strange,
become an encyclopaedia of pain!

Her anguish in waves
traverses the ebony sky,
and falls like willows

with weeping limbs
within the sad radius.

Soon in torrential downpour,
the earth recollects herself--
A heart magnanimous
attempting to decipher
the rain's lingo:

How the words of rain--
'The Poem of Earth'- a bliss-
can be cruel?

The context clues are created--
Love, Overwhelming emotions, Profoundness!
The rain-- A restless lover!



Ranjana Sharan Sinha: A professor by profession and a poet by passion, I live in Nagpur, India. I'm an author and a literary critic, too. Poems, short stories, research papers published in highly acclaimed dailies, magazines, e-zines, and journals online and print at national and international levels as well. Received a number of awards for literary achievements and acclaim from the former President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for my poem 'Mother Nature'. Published 07 books in different genres and 51 research papers. Poems published in more than 15 global anthologies. Two of my poems prescribed for M.A. English 4 sem syllabus at university level.



YEARNING

Calm and eerie evening at its peak

Can distinctly hear shrill squeak

Of distant sparrows flying high

They linger to make sure I hear

Not because I am their Messiah

Which I am surely not; my tear

Is what they notice, and my fear

For they are aware my prototype

Is fast decreasing, like theirs...

And that soft and melting tune

That I hear, reviving a forgotten song
evoking such sweet melancholy
As I look up at the sky in glee
Only to be ensnared divinely
by my love, my life, my charming clouds
With their movements they want me to traverse,
Hear the mystic music of this Universe...



Ravi Ranganathan: I am a writer, poet, and critic residing at Chennai. A retired Banker too. I have so far published three Poetry books and am a regular contributor to various poetry anthologies. I have won prizes in poetry like 'Master of creative impulse' and 'Sahitya Gaurav'. Writing thought provoking 'Myku' is my favourite past time. I love to write on nature, life and human mind.



LAST GLOBAL WARNING

Dear sluggish earthworm

Don't burrow the earth

You may be cemented.

Dear sprightly grasshopper

Don't just hop around

You may be skewered.

Dear shiny loony moon
Don't show your bright face
You may be eclipsed.

Dear sweet mynah
Don't sing so loud
Your voice strings may be severed.

Dear green peacock
Don't dance in public
You may be maimed.

Dear distant pole star
Don't show us the way.
You may be blinded.

Dear flashy rat snake
Don't wriggle around
You may be beheaded.

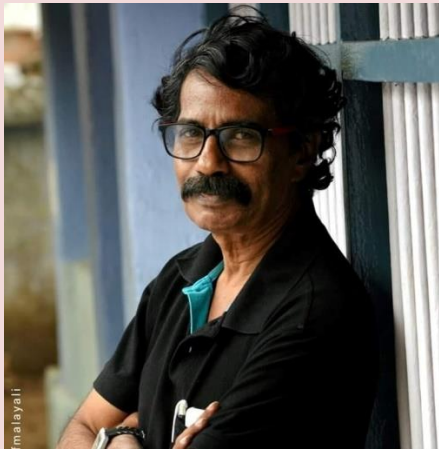
Dear little sparrow
Don't get raped
You could be jailed.

Dear torrid sun
Don't get so hot
You may be blotted.

Dear mighty water fall
Don't fall majestically
You may be dammed.

You kids are reaching your end
Your genocide is on its way.
Your terminator has incarnated.

He works alphabetically.



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.



SOUL OF MY SOUL

let this song gently brush your lips
that it might forever sleep in light
that it might forever heal careless hearts
that it might forever protect you from the contagion of this
world's bitter heart

let this song tenderly caress your cheek
that it might sometimes rest with softness
that it might sometimes blush with longing and joy
that it might somehow swell from the bittersweetness of
this world's squandered innocence

and let this song carry your feet
that it might jingle from rhythm of payals
that it might forever breath eternal
that it might forever usher the hearts of imperfect poets
into everlasting grandeur and grace



Robert Feldman: Inspired by members of my hometown Paterson's (New Jersey) literary tradition, most notably Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams, I continue to write/publish/present my work (most recently "Hineni", 2018; "Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields and other ArtPoems", 2019), make fire paintings, and play tabla. The body of my writing and paintings can be accessed at <https://sites.google.com/site/robertfeldman23/>.



WHEN I LET GO

When I let go of you
I found myself wishing
For what I thought was
Right knowing the worst
Was finally behind and I
Paused for one moment
Realizing I'd been keeping
Myself out of the light!

I cannot choke life into
What was never meant
To live in my heart and
Soul, when all it ever did
Was break me up!

I looked closely inside
With the knowledge
I was on the wrong ride
With no handrails and
No seats left to keep me
In that place anymore!

I hear the stillness and
Serenity and see
The truth inside of me
Things can be different
The burdens are gone

Fighting every wrong
I emerge in a new existence
Relinquishing any bonds
Or ties to my shadowed past!



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!



TURN THEM

Pancakes are not spies,
but you can flip them many times,
turn them with black spatula
look out something thick to smother
them for good
and the warm rain out front,
everybody knows the lightning is just
the storm of the week,
animals under beds with idiot fear,
this spatula in my hand and later

a little house cleaning;
tying up loose ends, the smell of bleach
from an adjacent bathroom.



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



A JOYFUL RETURN

'Naughty' the word nothing new to Rony
As mom often tells him,
An in disciplined boy' is a very common phase
As dad's rebuking stands a regular theme.

This Rony one day found missing
leaving Anxiety and sorrow for all
The day comes to an end and night appears
But he keeps all in tears
And does not come home after all.

Another fruitless day passes
Letting the parents be worried
Making them feel too,
That their child may be naughty but dearest indeed.

Next morning a letter found in the doorstep
After the door suddenly bailed
It states that Rony is very near somewhere
But the name and address withheld.

With the passing of few minutes
As the doorbell rings twice
Dad rushes towards excitedly enough
And mom follows him likewise.

The surprise awaits outside
On their dear's face with smile

His hiding in friend's house remains no matter
And the rejoice makes speechless for a while.

Rony is been hardly scolded again
Whether by his 'Dad' or his 'Mom'
And happily spend all the day,
His naughtiness stays no more
All say him a decent boy
Passing their days in utter gay.



Saikat Gupta Majumdar: I am an amateur poet. I reside in Kolkata. I work in a private organisation in 'Accounts Division' My hobby is writing poems, rhymes, and captions both in English and Bengali. My English poems have got published in various online magazines so far. I have obtained certificate from one of them also. I wish to get established as a Poet.



NOT FOR HIM, BUT...

Things have changed between dusk and dawn

He became barely have anything to lose

As those 'goons' say,

"From now onwards, his home is not for him,

Neither his children nor wife belong to him,

The water he drinks, the food he eats and feeds to-

Would never be with him.

The air he breathes is not for him anymore;

The land he stands have already been eyed by someone,
The sky and mountains he sees daily,
The rivers that flows through his village,
The nature that always protected him,
Have some unknown claimant from now....”

It's a pity to say.....

All of a sudden he became a stranger in his land,
A refugee in his country,
But all what he has is
His willpower to fight for his right,
Till his last breath,
And his courage to proclaim
That being an Indian,
All its resources belong to him too,
And would never give up
Nor compromise with a checkmate.
Let it be any color, race or religion,
We are one.

Though we speak in different languages,
It sounds one, as we are one,
The Indian.



Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola): A freelance writer and painter from Kerala, India, working in Doha as Franchise General Manager. He writes short stories, poems and travelogues in various regional language magazines (Malayalam), periodicals with a pen name as ‘Saleem Kattuchola’, and writes English poems and articles in International magazines and newspapers.



AWAITING HEREAFTER

Salty but innocent eyes mine
How long will bear the burden of dolour,
a decade or a century?

Toxic fluidity of unending tears
dipping me into absolute agony;
Life seems stuck in limbo,
A living dead I am now—alive
But no more valuable than a dead body!

Only a bleed from my love-vessel in brain
Often grills me after the climax:
Oh, hell—Where will this end?
What will suffer even hell on earth—
The undying love mine,
Or the unrequited love-masquerade
of yours?!

However, rest assured:
I shall not put you on a razor edge
But somehow, somewhere,
Something is yet to be—
And that is severe penalty!
So, eagerly I am - awaiting hereafter
To see the judgment of my Lord—
Either your coaxing tale,
or the love in me
that was thrown
in the vast sea of tears
reaches the highest place in heaven?!



Salman Khan: I am a poet of both Bengali and English language, residing in Bangladesh in Bogura district. By profession, I am a teacher of English language. I have contributed to various anthologies both nationally and internationally.



THE WOMAN IN BLACK

The grey rain clouds hovered overhead,

The day had turned dismal and dark.

I covered my head against the onslaught of rain,

On the empty road I stood out, stark.

I looked around for some shade,

Then gave up, defeated and in despair.

My clothes were drenched, my hair was soaked,
My arms and neck and head were bare.

Having resigned to my fate
I stood by the side of the road,
Desperately waiting for the rain to stop
When a strong wind suddenly blowed.

A black dot appeared on the horizon
And a woman came into view,
Dressed from head to toe in black,
She came like a bolt from the blue.

A black beret on her head, dark lipstick,
Sporting a huge black overcoat and umbrella
She passed me a huge black one not unlike her own
And disappeared like Cinderella,

When the clock struck twelve at the ball.
And I was left standing there,
Dumbstruck and surprised.
I set off then for my home,
Thinking of the Woman in the Black overcoat
The anonymous angel in black,
Who came and went like a will-o-wisp in the night.



Samixa Bajaj: I am a fifteen-year-old studying in class 10. I love reading, writing and sketching in my free time and I am learning the Kathak form of Indian Classical Dance.



QUARANTINED VIOLIN

Spring has brought a different hue.

Weaved a different music in him.

Silent distant ears are listening his song

That his veins are now carrying.

Sapphire alleys,

Gray life

Roam around the temples that God has left.

Mosques are empty and churches are bereft.

Has Spring stolen God or
Quarantined him too?
What made the world sick and
the Time blue?

To listen "Hallelujah"
Tired souls left all religious buildings
But kneel down before his
Quarantined violin!



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



pic by Dr. Santosh Bakaya

THE BOUNTIFUL BOOTY

The monkey stares in disapproval at the hoarding which says,

"Don't feed the monkeys"

How can the humans be so stingy?

But, hang on, the humans are neither stingy, nor do they lack a conscience.

One banana is flung in his direction, then another.

The monkey does not balk at the boulders and rocks in his path,

but heads towards the banana bonanza.

One banana knocks him on the head,(Thankfully he does not drop dead!)

Ah, this one is a beauty!

The monkey bounds towards the bountiful booty.

The human has done the good deed of the day and soothed his conscience.

The simian is now in a mood gay,

a couple of bananas have kept his hunger at bay.

But, the good deed has made the man hungry;

he peels a banana, and carelessly hurls the peel,

narrowly missing the garbage bin.

Miming the man, the simian flings the banana peel outside
the garbage bin,
and grins like only a satiated simian can.



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



WINTRY CHILL NIGHTS...

Foggy mornings and chilly nights

Two loving souls

Ocean apart

But no dearth for love in them

Every moment

Sending kisses of affection

through the swift breeze blowing

The two yearning hearts

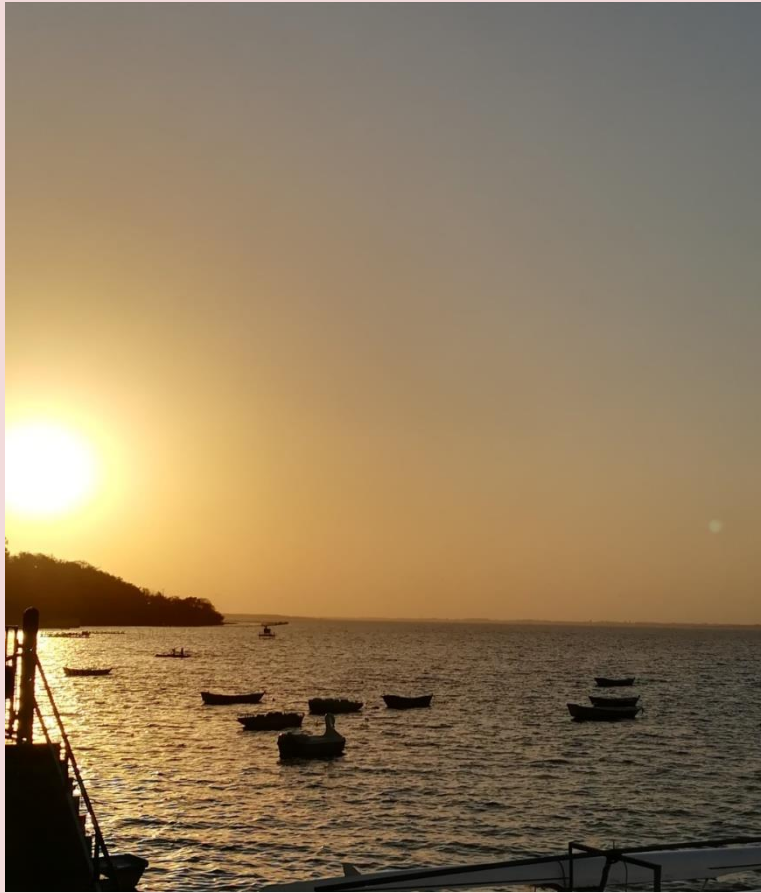
Longing to be together

In the wintry chill nights

Under the love's blanket!
Looking at the love birds
Pecking each other in love
Two loving souls
Ocean apart
Longing to be together
In the wintry chill nights!
They don't cry nor weep
For being together
As they know their
Love is sublime n divine!
A perfect combination
of heart to heart
and soul to soul love
without any physical compulsion
A love that is true n sincere
till time eternal and more!



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



In those evening walks
In those deep self talks
In those beautiful sunsets
I found myself

In that pleasant breeze
Sitting under the trees

In those beautiful sunsets

I found myself

In those beautiful lakes

With those oars, like rakes

Toward those beautiful sunsets

I found myself

In that beautiful self moment

Where I had myself to vent

A movement towards my heart

I found a new start.



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.



IF ONLY...

If only we could see that life is made of tastes not tasks,
we'd be more thankful

If only we could hear the silences in nature, we'd discover
that noise needn't always be the only way to be heard

If only we could feel the mighty earth in all its cosmic
magnitude resonate in our deepest goodness, we'd see that
we are children of strength

If only we could smell the fragrance of jasmines and
marigolds that emanate from the selfless garnish of a kind
wok, we'd realise that the stench of moral decay can after
all be forgotten

If only we could touch the tender mist that engulfs the
day's beauty and within it conceals the promises of a

cloudless sky, we'd know that hope is always veiled in a momentary illusion of suffering and life is always poised for the better.



Saranya Francis: She is a multilingual poet with published poems in English, Hindi, and Tamil. She is a social activist, freelance life skills and language trainer. She has to her credit two anthologies of poetry, titled ‘Ambedo’ and ‘Being Purple’. Her poetry is featured in reputed anthologies such as Amaravati Poetic Prism, Metverse Muse and Efflorescence. She is the recipient of the Bharat Award for Literature (2018), Rabindranath Tagore Award (2017), and National Chanting Bards Award (2017). Saranya is the Secretary of ZAV Foundation, an NGO working for the cause of education and women empowerment. She has recently been conferred the Star Ambassador of World Poetry award at The World Poetry Conference 2019.



VANILLA EXTRACT

I want you so bad

I love you so much

but I promise

to never speak

a single

damn word

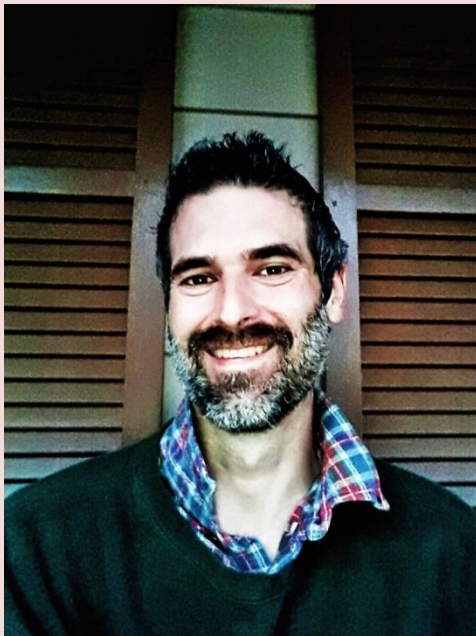
about it

Whoops

spilled our guts

slit our hearts

just to make a mess



Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His favorite season is autumn. His spirit tree is the pine. Most of his poems are written in the woods. He hosts a podcast, Songs of Selah, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio. Links to his published work and other thoughts about life can be found at 17Numa.com.



FERTILE RED MALABARI EARTH

The red of the Malabari soil

From the red of the rising sun

And the slowly staining red of

The abundant hibiscus and the Cana

The scarlet invisibly released

From abundant shiny Circassian seeds

The red in the towering temple flags

The red from the billowing 'Theyyam' skirts

Left as an indelible stain
On many a starched white soft linen
Of quickly flung wrap arounds
And the unpeeling of pleated skirts

Cast down as a temporary mat
Cushioning the southern tanned skin
Brought to a glistening countenance
Lathered with years of virgin palm oil

From vagaries of crumbling prohibitions
Loosened in the torpedic roll
Of two tumultuous entwined souls
The red of this oxidized earth

Insisting on leaving it's stamp
Proclaiming the forbidden passions

In its silent tell-tale dusty signatures
Left as fine red dusty whispers

Here saga's of night vigils etched
On pock marked red granite slabs
Where many a feet circumbulated
And some rolled around in dim lights

beneath starry schorl nights
locked in passionate embraces
Collecting the forever red tattoo's
Under peaked slopping roofs

Layered with kiln baked red tiles
And the intermittent glass slab
Letting in the silver moonlight
And the star light on moonless nights

On fanned hair glistening jet
and creamy stretched limbs
All coated with the enamoured red
Of this blessed fertile earth

Here some dreams were hastily etched
Kicking up a spicy storm
Of crushed pepper kernels
And heady intoxicating Jasmine

Romantic saga's on parchments
Of fertile flaming ponderous thoughts
While others trashed it out alive
Kicking up a spicy storm

That no amount of washing
Could restore the pristine white

Now stained a persistent red

Vehemently fertile red Malabari Earth



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



IN SEARCH OF OASIS

Rivers slowly meandering by

Banks of life notwithstanding

A tureen slow by filling up

Is there joy, is there sorrow

A beautiful vision

Spanning a whole countryside

Can it be true or is it a mirage

Oasis, not far in sight
But misleading as always in doubt
Can there be life
In the vast desert
Of a seemingly placid universe

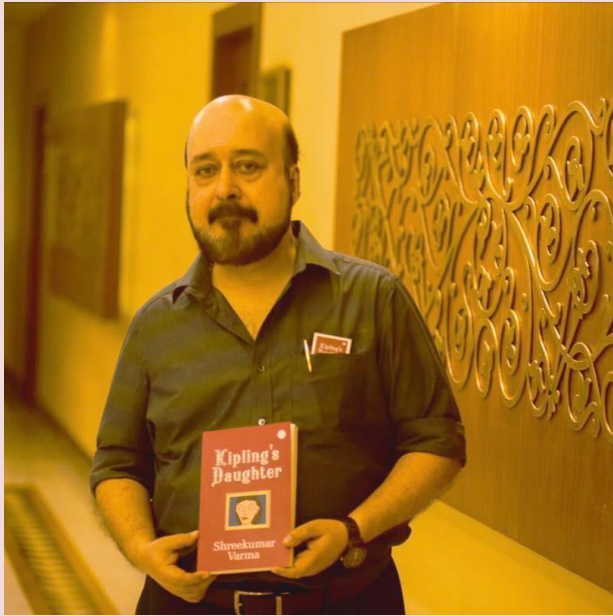


Shobha Warriar: I am a poet residing in Chennai. I am a housewife. I have contributed to a few anthologies. I have also published poems and also one collection of a few poems written by me.

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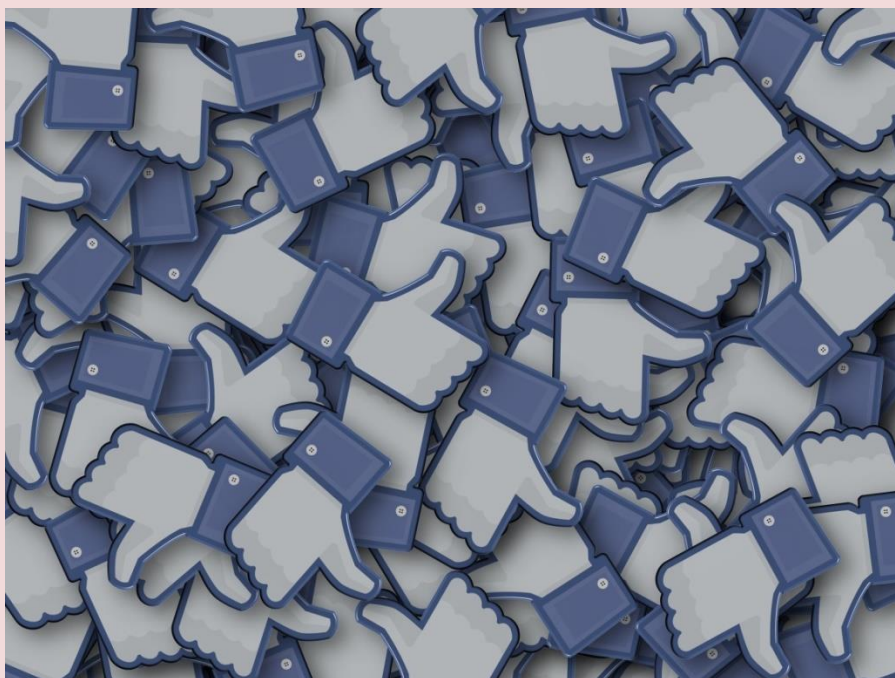
Savour the branches that wave in the storm and then waver not unless the world has derailed you, but churn on the love and the thrill of pure living, so here is the dance and the chance of a lifeline, the girl has walked on and the cloud has poured over, the sky doesn't know you're a friend of the churning; let's warble a song I composed on the wrinkles that stain every sky and then smile for redemption. The poet has spoken; we don't have a choice!



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

www.shreevarma.com

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shreekumar_Varma



THINK ONCE MORE-20

Life is not Facebook, where we make friends, share thoughts, post something, get some likes and comments and feel at the top of the world. This is nothing but cheating and deceiving oneself for it takes us miles away from the stern and naked reality of life. Too much obsession with facebook kills our quality time and deprives us of many finer things of life. Its value and utility lies in its judicious use and clinging to it from morning to night is nothing but abuse of time. It is a good friend the company of which you can relish and enjoy, but a bad master which can misguide and spoil you. Life is not as colourful and as enchanting as it looks to be on Facebook, it is more of hot summer than fascinating spring.



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, O.F.S, son of Raj Kishore and Shantilata Mohanty is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer. His write-ups are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies which are widely acclaimed across the world.

Website: smrutiweb.wordpress.com



INEVITABLE

Wearing out the old

and the comfortable

a bit ill fitting

a bit frayed

a bit faded

it lies

supine

confined to the shelves

with memories knocking

dusted and doused
patted to be forgotten
no more

The new allures
a delight
a haven
a refuge
of better being the best
shiny bright
welcomed with open arms
new dreams to weave
on the old
plateau

Yet the sameness grows
though nothing is the same
the debris mount

cell upon cell

rejected

piled high

Broken all



Sudeshna Mukherjee: Sudeshna Mukherjee's poems deal with varied human nature. A keen observer, she chronicles the happenings around her and writes with a tinge of humour. 'Meanderings of the Mind' and 'Mélange' are her published collections of poems. She loves 'words' and loves to play with them.



LET GO

The sun pinches
unleashes wrath...soaks sap and nectar
puts to test your patience
you remain composed nonetheless
rain pours nonstop
pushes beyond threshold
gale and thundershower
drench your essence and core
yet you stand rock solid like any wise and old

winter invades your body and soul
many a times jumps parole
snowy wind makes you shiver
compels you to shed and sport a lean figure
yet you show no sign of dither
you are in full swing at the advent of spring
with a gentle pat from nature
you come out of winter's languor
blossom and bloom like never before
sprinkle rays of hope and belief
let go of all hurt feelings.



Sujata Dash: I am a banker by profession, a singer and poet by passion. I have one published work to my credit. My anthology of poetry “More than mere – a bunch of poems” by Authors Press in 2014, says a lot about my admiration for nature and longing for the divine. I am a regular contributor to anthologies published nationwide and a few anthologies worldwide.



OFF-HUMOUR

Misogyny

From unexpected quarters

Hits the solar plexus.

Am I too touchy

To feel that my soul sisters

had insulted my mother?

Take it easy yaar, they say,

When I protest that I don't

Want my tween niece to giggle

Uncomfortably and brush aside

the gas-lighting accepting

gender humiliation jokes

As normal, just a little bit off-humour.



Sumita Dutta: She is a publisher, poet and novelist residing in Chennai, India. She is the founder of Adisakrit, a small publishing house, seven books old in October. She has contributed to various online sites and anthologies. Her debut book was *The Heart of Donna Rai*



THE COLORFUL WIDOW

She stood near the ghat
Dressed in all glossy red
Bangles, payal, bindis, alata
Everyone stared at her aghast.

“Has she lost her mind?”
Commented the tonsured brother of the dead
“No, perhaps showing off her feminist stand.”
Puckered the brother-in-law tongue in cheek.

She looked forlorn, morose and sad
But bravely she faced their attack and said
“You may say the person I loved is gone
But I feel him by my side as ever I had done.”

“Glory and honor for his memories
And no bereavement?”

“I am trying to find my path to bliss”,
She answered.

“Outrageous!!!” said everyone in chorus,
Standing in new white dhotis and kurta
On the bank of the holy river after the bath,
“Not at all, this is how I find grace”,
She hesitated not a bit.

“None of you know what he had said to me
Don’t ever part with these holy memories of me.”

“I know him well, his soul must be loitering somewhere
near
He will be happy to know we are all living in peace and
cheer.”



Sumitra Mishra: Major Dr. Mrs. Sumitra Mishra is a Professor of English who retired as the Principal, Government Women's College, Sambalpur, Odisha. She has also worked as an Associate N.C.C. Officer in the Girls' Wing. She is a life member of the Odisha Lekhika Sansad and the Sub-editor of a magazine titled "Smruti Santwona". Her poems and short stories in both English and Odia are widely published in literary magazines and e-zines. To her credit she has twelve published books; four collections of poetry in English. She lives in Bhubaneswar with her family.



THE LAST DROP

(In A Despondent Mood)

Sakha the pools of my eyes have dried
shallow sorrows will not drown me
struggling in oceans of uncertainty.

I beg for that last drop which only you can draw
from my eyes, tired of waiting and wondering
what the face of death looks like.

While sharks hover smelling the blood of betrayal,
rejection, loneliness, yearning
as waters turn red, they tear morsel by morsel.

Sakha please be merciful with your stab,
make it swift and deep
so one last drop drowns me into sweet oblivion.

Baying for blood, hounds hunt me down,
play merciless games, circumambulate my thrashing corpse
stretch a paw, a token of friendship. I take the bait
too late I see the bared fangs
the drooling foaming rabid mouth
clenched in acrid yellowed teeth
tossed side to side like a rag doll,
I succumb to sweet seduction
passed on, one paw to the other, one mouth to the other,
till shredded flesh hangs in ragged tatters.
Nothing of me left to burn or bury or birth again.
Ah! sweet oblivion! At last!



Sunil Kaushal: I am a poet residing in Pune, India, a retired gynecologist, now working as a writer. I have contributed to various short story and poetry anthologies. Presently I am finishing my memoirs and a poetry book to be published soon.



ATROPHY

In the living room

French windows ajar

billowing curtains

of pure white,

agitated by a warm wind

and lit up by an afternoon sun;

Few framed pictures, widely apart, hang

on the yellow wall with cracks,

The old faces, frozen forever,
in limbo,

smile at the grand piano
gathering dust in the
left-hand dark corner
obscured by a fake tree
with dust-covered stars.

A bird song echoes some place
in the villa overlooking
a brown-denuded valley;

Notes, returning reluctantly
to their natural source hidden
somewhere in the top of the
pine tree drenched in the streaming light,

like an undelivered letter back
to its hopeful composer of few lines
a century ago, when letters were main medium
of delivering long-distance messages to eager eyes.

Now---

solitude

walks the rooms

and corridors, while the

forest

talks.



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

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



WHAT IS A NAME?

Is it just a label for a box of skin and bones

And once the box goes, it goes

Flying in the wind like a cotton boll

Sometimes a worn-out nameplate at the door of a dilapidated house

Or hiding beneath the dandelions growing on the tombstone

Some scribbled signatures in moth eaten books of a rusty bookshelf

A stack of yellowed envelopes on the rickety table

A struck-out column in a register

A lingering fragrance crawling in a dementia ridden brain

An album of memories...



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



acrylic painting on canvas by suzette portes san jose

THE SUN WILL RISE AGAIN

Septon Couplet 2-9

the twilight came and done

..... i lost the sun

night breeze wrapped my body, shivering

..... i fall freezing

with an empty long hour ticking silently

.....i waited lifelessly

in the deepening darkness of the night

..... i groped for a light

blinded and there was nothing that i found

.....i flounder on the ground

stayed down in a while stared upon the sky

.... i shunted a sigh

uttered a short prayer for God to remember me

..... i gazed flickers in glee

upon my skin the drenching morning dew

..... i felt life a new

rays start pipping,i know "the sun will rise again"

.....i am without refrain



Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City. She is a University half scholar from high school to college. She now has joined 15 book anthologies from 2015 to 2018. Each of her poems is written with her painting as visuals and are now appearing internationally. She is also a recipient of multiple awards for her ART works and literary works. She was awarded Poet of the Year in 2017 by one of the prestigious poetry site Destiny Poets International Community of Poets UK. She has also published her book



TIME

Time is flying like a kite in the Wind.

Like water in rivers

Floating with butterflies

in meadows.

Time is a red string

twisting and turning

through life

like threads in a weave -

a unique image of your
existence.

Do you believe in destiny
or not...

Time affects you.

From birth to death

Time is, paradoxically
both friend and enemy.

Time is an old woman
with tired eyes and gictical joints.

Despite being aged and worn time goes on.

Constantly in motion.

Time is dancing with a childhood sweetheart -
before the last sunset.



Svanhild Løvli: She is a bilingual poetess, currently living in Gjøvik, NORWAY. She is an avid photographer and loves to draw. She is concerned with nature conservation, women's rights and family life. She regularly publishes in GloMag. She contributed in "Voice of Aspirants", Poetry Planet, and Galaktika Poetike Atunis Magazine. She is admin in Global Literary Society. She is member of several poetry groups.



TO A NEW RECRUIT

You hadn't seen battlefield as you are a new recruit.

You can't see how much I've grounded to grow up,

You just saw the bright flowers and the ripened fruit.

But you don't know the sacrifice for my brimming cup.

Everywhere, there was trauma for my ache and pain.

However, I enjoyed the sweetness of the painful hour

As my toughest moments taught me how to bargain

With the universe for my own potion from the dusty stour.

I won't say you to trade honestly but to split a hair
For yourself in this hot ground; as none would offer
His own part or potion at your moment of deep despair;
But cast his lewd glance at your woman and coffer.

It sounds bad for the writers of the noblest truth.

But, just test him what does he do for his stolen broth.



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



MUTED WOMAN'S DAY!!!

Not from the inky darkness

Not a natural quiet of the hour

It buzzed through the chattering ring

A silence piercing through the din

She spoke to you no more

Her stillness greeted you 'Good Morning'

Her shadow wished you goodnight

You bludgeoned her to silence

Her conversations suspended in mid-air

Your taunts tamed her

You labelled her ilk

Bereft of a voice

She became the still leaf waiting for a rustle

You never could fathom her silence

And dipped in the unspoken

Of the deafening decibels

A little like the pre-talkies clip by your bedside

Without dubbing or subtitles....



Vandana Kumar: I am a poet residing in New Delhi, India. I work as French teacher and translator. I have contributed to various anthologies. Few of my poems were recently published in 'Spillwords' and 'North of Oxford'.



A WRITER

Reading minute face expressions

Is not any easy task

Or not any easy game to play

A deep psychological subject

That nobody can easily handle

A bliss of divine that
makes that observer
To touch the emotional network
Of eyes and face movements

A keen thinker
Automatically states the meaning
Of different curves of smiles
Or rain drops from eyes...

An expert of art, who can only deal with
the changing colours of facecanvas

A zoologist,
That can only tell about the several colours of this
Chameolonic nature of
Homosapiens...

A photographer that takes

Clicks of useful moments

In its mind....

And print it on a blank paper

With its mighty ink and colourful imagination displays the characters

With the use of some similes and metaphors.

And finally scribbles a story, poem or novel with some revealing truths

In front of its readers.



Varsha Saran: I am a homemaker living in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India. I did my post-graduation from Ch Charan Sing University, Meerut. I am a bilingual poetess, story writer by passion. My many poems and stories have been published in different international anthologies, e-zines, magazines and newspapers.

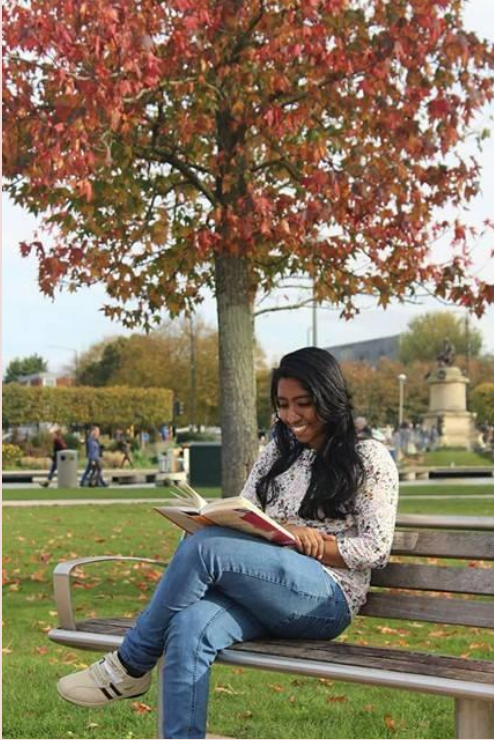


If you hear
slight murmurs of complaints
on how inconvenient
it is
to stay at home
in the name of protecting this world,
ask them
what else can convenient mean

at this time

but to be healthy and to have a house

to sit inside?



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.



BECAUSE KANNIMA TOLD ME TO (A ROSEATE SONNET)

(Kannima is our domestic help, someone whom most people would call “servant”. To us, she’s family. I had won an award but was unable to attend the award ceremony. So I received the medals through courier. On the day of receiving the medals, I was a bit unwell. Kannima prompted me to get dressed and do the honours to the prize.)

Wear them now, as you would have
Had you gone to the prize ceremony.
Wear them now and take a picture
A keepsake for eternity.

Wash your face, go freshen up

And wear some nice clothes.

Kajal your eyes, dab your lips

That red, no I need no gloze.

So I pull myself up, nose block or no

And ready myself for a pose.

Round my neck went the ribbons blue

Ornamenting the accolades, my glory to show.

Stood I with pride, flashing my prize

Effulgence the gold and immense the joyous smile.



Vidya Shankar: A poet, writer, blogger, motivational speaker, mindfulness practitioner, and yoga enthusiast, residing in Chennai, India, I have been in ELT for more than two decades. I have been contributing articles to an international newspaper column as well as poetry and stories to anthologies and literary platforms. Myself a 'book' with the Human Library, I am winner of literary awards, been on the editorial of three publications, and have published two books of poems, one, a coffee table book in collaboration with my husband and the other, to create awareness about mental health.

IT'S A PIECE
OF
CAKE

IDIOMS

We were too young to see the signs,

The woods for the trees

Or to read between the lines--

Often, we spoke like strangers, being nice,

Filled with hot air, and laughing at

Each other's silly jokes to break the ice--

Sometimes, it's true we were all at sea, and you

Thought I was a bird of passage

Biting off more than I could chew--

We were on tenterhooks, nights without rest,
Until your angry father, to give the devil his due,
Blessed us with prayers and wealth before he went west--

But we didn't put all our eggs in one basket:

Through thick and thin

We always had a couple for breakfast--

Frequently, I blew hot and cold, and you felt, on some days,
Like running your head against a wall.

Your dear mother said: "His heart is in the right place.



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



LIVING LIKE AN AFTERNOON

I wish I could live like a summer afternoon- finding my way slowly through the silence and calmness, containing warmth and light in my heart, cradling lassitude in my lap. I wish I could not notice the slow cadence of my days. I wish I could come to an evening surreptitiously and get dissolved like a sunset hue.



Vivek Nath Mishra: My short stories have been published by many magazines and newspapers, including The Hindu, Indian Literature, Muse India, The Punch Magazine, Adelaide literary magazine, The Criterion. My photographs have appeared on many platforms, including The Guardian and The Sahapedia. My debut book is 'Birdsongs Of Love And Despair'.



<https://www.thedailystar.net/>

The face beaming with hope
Rose to address a sea of faces
Awaiting a word of direction
With anticipation mounting
From the man in white panjabi
Beneath a half black coat
With a pair of black glasses
Hiding determination strong
That transcended by miles
The height of the Himalaya
He stepped onto the stage

With freedom curved in his heart
Fire in eyes, thunder in voice
The sea of faces yielded a wave
That obliterated from the map
A West Pakistan replaced
With a Bangladesh through bloodbath.



Zulfiqar Parvez: He is the Head of Academic Affairs cum English Language Teacher at Tanzimul Ummah International Tahfiz School, Dhaka. He has done his Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi.



ciao! 😊