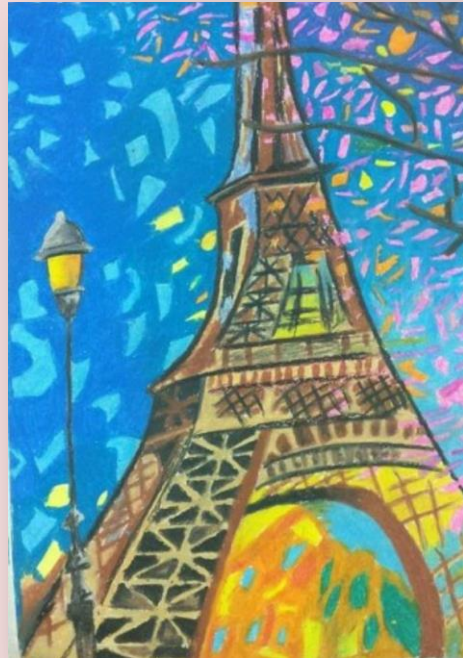


GloMag

2019-2023

Monthly Online Poetry and Prose Magazine

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Edited and Published by GlorySasikala

STAFFY BHATEJA (PEN NAME: STEFFI)



TITLE OF COVER PIC

Scaling New Heights

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Scaling New Heights

Staffy Bhateja (Pen Name: **Steffi**) is a poet, editor and painter hailing from The City Beautiful- Chandigarh. She has completed her Masters in English Literature from MCM DAV College, affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh and has also done Masters in Philosophy from the University's main campus, securing 2nd position in the entire university. Poetry and Painting are two of her biggest passions. She

started writing poetry during her college days, taking inspiration from one of her friends who had been writing poems ever since she was a child. After that, there was no looking back! She composed over 80 poems and took part in numerous anthologies as a writer under various publishing houses and solely edited a book titled ***Catharsis*** under the Impish Lass Publishing House. She is also the Chapter Head of Chandigarh of The Asian Literary Society. She believes in the words of George R R Martin that a reader lives a thousand lives before he dies and the man who never reads lives only one.

She is equally passionate about painting. As a child, she used to fiddle with colours and often make sketches of her surroundings. Since then began her passion for fine arts too! Till date, she has made two landscapes, an oil painting of a Rajasthani Man, various artefacts for decoration purpose, a Console Table with Tile Mosaic Technique, a Wooden Kite (a piece of fusion art), nine pieces of Decoupage and Stenciling and has also learnt the techniques of Marble Effect on Terracotta Pots and Dripping Effect on Candle Stands. Currently, she is learning the intricacies of Knife Painting.

Her poetry can be read at her Instagram page - verseparlor and her artworks can be seen at ArtsyWish-Steffi's Creations page on Instagram and Facebook.

Through this abstract drawing of the Eiffel Tower (titled 'Scaling New Heights'), Steffi has expressed her ambition to reach the pinnacle of success in both her endeavors. She is a creative soul and writing and painting are cathartic activities for her. Hence, she wishes to scale new heights in whatever she does, for sky is the limit for her!

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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A WIDOW'S TALE

By a high-rise at city's heart
A widow stitches day's holes
And sells chai to a few frayed limbs

She is weak and lean
Skin looks fish's dry scales
A dozen of water bottles,
Some biscuit-jars neatly arrayed
An oven on a wooden box....

Her husband died a month ago
And now she cheers with extra care
Corroded legs, tender hands

Day's dreams dash and whirl
Around the walls of the mansion
That faces widow's decaying shed
Lovely women with loveliest children,
Poor maids with ill little ones warm the palace

The old woman, clad in an overused chadar,
Beats chilliest hours, hands clasped,

Failing eyes now fixed on steaming pan,
Now on columns of plastic creepers, nylon-mounds....



Abu Siddik: Abu Siddik is an Assistant Professor in English at Plassey College, West Bengal. He is an academic, poet, and short story writer, and writes both in Bangla and English. He has 12 books.

www.abusiddik.com



RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

In the autumn city,
I found myself in pieces
of the broken bottle
outside of the pub
in the metropolitan.

Stained of the
alcoholic hands
he drank one bottle,
then more bottles
Without thinking,

he stole the last bottle
and emptied before his
rendezvous with death.

Forbidden mouths spoke
thousands of times about
how the world is developing
too stiffly and extremely dark.



Ahmad Al-Khatat: Ahmad Al-Khatat was born in Baghdad, Iraq. His work has appeared in print and online journals globally and he has poems translated into several languages. He has been nominated for Best of the Net 2018. He is the author of *The Bleeding Heart Poet; Love On The War's Frontline; Gas Chamber; Wounds from Iraq; Roofs of Dreams; The Grey Revolution;* and *Noemi & Lips of Sweetness*. He lives in Montreal, Canada.



THE BALTIC SEA

I walk along the shores of the Baltic Sea
The sea breeze envelops me with nostalgia,
reverie rises in the air.

Screaming gulls like white sails
flutter on the endless ocean of the sky

I follow the calls of the birds
and I'm heading towards the distant horizon.

I leave footprints in the sand for a moment.

The waves sweep them away

with their arched arms .

Salty droplets fall on my face,

to flow meanders down my cheeks.

Water permeates my body and mind

and I want to know

the secrets of being and nothingness.

Nobody knows I've been here

and I'm becoming silence.

I disappear between the sea and the clouds.



Alicja Maria Kuberska: She is an awarded Polish poetess, novelist, journalist, editor. She is a member of the Polish Writers Associations in Warsaw, Poland and IWA Bogdani, Albania as well as other organisations. She has received two medals—the Nosside UNESCO Competition in Italy (2015) and European Academy of Science Arts and Letters in France (2017). She has also received a reward of international literary competition in Italy, “Tra le parole e ‘elfinito” (2018). She was announced a poet of the 2017 year by Soflay Literature Foundation (2018). She also received the Bolesław Prus Prize Poland (2019), Culture Animator Poland (2019) and first prize Premio Internazionale di Poesia Poseidonia- Paestrum Italy (2019).



IN GARDEN OF HAPHAZARD DESIGN

Your words drip like honey

on parched skin – our ears are selective.

We colored with lenses of ideologies

destroy what's precious...

Will Truth's inner ways blossom

quietly – as if fresh innocence has wrapped

seed in a penultimate dance with

honeybees – foraging nectar...?

Herds graze across pasture for survival –
daisies and mustard crushed in a mad rush.

In our waking, we build a garden
of haphazard design – rising sacred aroma.

What will happen when we become
what we cherish, hold precious, so we live
the longing we long for? – Each note wrapped

in silver flute whose old stories are
Soul song. What will we do when this
happens – tensing dross to light when truth
emerges in the great empty – and we see we
were Beloved always in our arms?

Were we ever apart – honey and its gold?

So many miles, Time lost count of its beat.



Ambika Talwar: She Ambika Talwar is an India-born poet-artist-educator whose vision is to create beauty in different ways and invite you to your brilliance. She has authored *4 Stars and 25 Roses* (for her father) and *My Greece: Mirrors & Metamorphoses* – a poetic-spiritual travelogue exploring our human purpose. Published in numerous anthologies, she received the Nissim Int’l Poetry Award (2021), Bharat Award for Excellence in Literature (2022) and two Pushcart Prize nominations (2018&2022). She is a board-member of the CaliforniaStatePoetrySoc. Also a wellness practitioner, Ambika practices IE: Intuition-Energetics™, a powerful fusion of healing modalities for speedy recovery of ailments. Recent retiree as English professor, Ambika makes her home in Los Angeles and in New Delhi, India.



THE COLOUR BLUE

Sometime, somewhere my blue bird got lost
a totem tiny replica of the infinite sky
spreading its wings flitting
branch to branch every morning
it fenced me in cerulean joy.

Dreaming sweet nothings
I watch winter footprints
effulgent in seasonal blooms
balmy greenhouse of myriad hues--

a peeping bluebell cheers me
'Here I am, your lost bluebird'
joy resurges, the euphoria of blue
clinging seamlessly to ocean of
warmth in my bosom.



Amita Ray: Amita Ray, former Associate Professor in English is a Translator, Short Story writer and Poet. She has four volumes in Translations of noted Bengali authors to her credit. She has also published a collection of short stories titled ***TRAIL OF LOVE AND LONGINGS***. She is an executive committee member of Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata. Her recent publication is a collection of poems ***UNTIL BIRDS SING***.



AN ODE TO MUSHROOMS

Look at mushrooms and say

I know of a way

That I can cook and eat you

You'll do instead of meat, you.

I'll fry you in butter with garlic and chives

I'll set to work with graters and knives

I'll make me a soup as smooth as cream

Escoffier appeared last night in a dream

The greatest of you are truffles
And my fancy often shuffles
Buttons Portobello Shitake
And Scallops and that is all okay

You make a great sauce for my pasta
So don't you say hasta la vista
Of course I can also curry you
But really I don't like to worry you

I could add you to pizza
Like an Italian visa
To visit Florence for the food not the art
For I'm just a simple foodie at heart

In short in my heart there's plenty of room -
- also in my tum - for the humble Mushroom .



Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia: She is a retired civil servant based in Bihar. She writes, mostly poetry, in English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. She was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award 2019, the Reuel international Award 2020 for Non- Fiction Prose, the Destiny International Community of Poets UK Awards of Poet of the Year 2020 as well as Critic of the Year 2020, and again in 2021, and the Women Empowered Green Heart Award in April 2022. Her work is featured in many online literary platforms and several international anthologies.



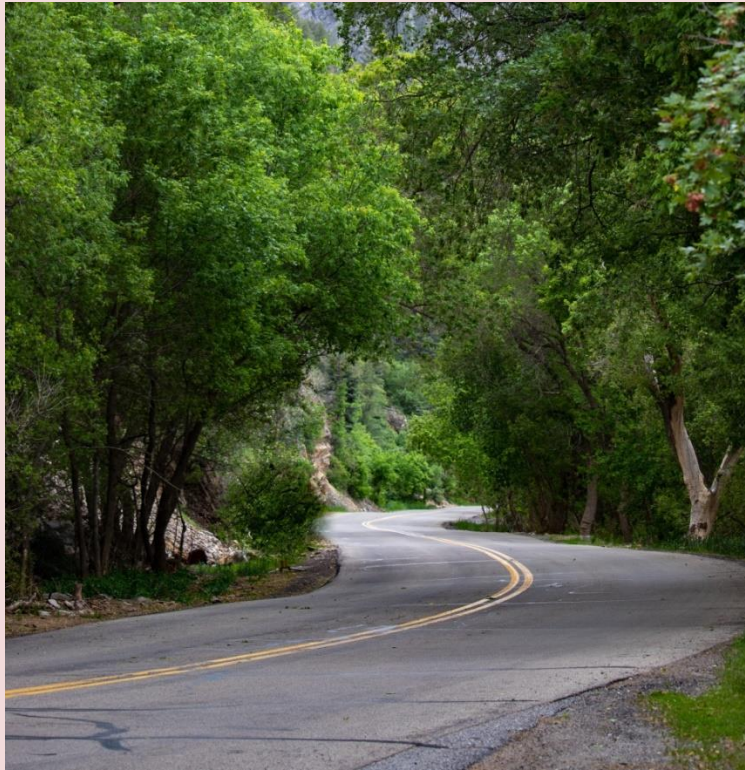
Roseate sonnet with rhyme and what not
Broke all the rules
Got nothing in return
Braved the scorn of fools
Let fire my vitals burn
Loved you without cost
Faced the storms of your dross
At the end of it, I'm lost
The stone rolls. You're only moss.
Touching green ferns that blow gently, in the breeze
I feel, for a moment, as if my pains will cease

Red rain is the earthing of my love for you
O, how my time went by, destroying my life!
Still poetry and nature fall, temp'rary dew
Evening comes, soon sleep will end my strife.



Ampat Koshy: Dr. Koshy A.V. prior Assistant Professor (English literature), Jazan University, Saudi Arabia is currently working as Assistant Professor (English literature), Mt. Carmel College, Bengaluru. He has many books, degrees, diplomas, certificates, prizes, and awards to his credit and is also an editor, anthology maker, poet, critic and writer of fiction. He runs an autism NPO with his wife, Anna Gabriel. Two of his co-authored books published in 2020 were Amazon best-sellers in India and USA, namely, ***Wine-Kissed Poems*** with Jagari Mukherjee and ***Vodka by***

the Volga with Santosh Bakaya. He recently won a certificate in Italy for his poetry. His latest book is ***A Sonetto for the Poetic World/ You heard the Scream, didn't you?*** co- written with Santosh Bakaya.



TO A FRESH PILGRIM

I've amassed memories, friends,
joy, laughter and wealth,
over the years.

But roads have more, whether
straight or with twists and turns.

Whether asphalt or clay or grassy.

I travel on roads to amass wealth
of memories; to treasure footsteps,
forgotten and illuminated.

And after my departure, I'll ask all
roads to unveil memories
I treasured,
to a fresh pilgrim, eager to
ride the roads of wealth.



Aneek Chatterjee: He is a poet and academic from Kolkata, India. He has published more than five hundred poems in reputed literary magazines and anthologies across the globe. He has authored four poetry collections and co-edited one. His fourth poetry collection titled ***Archive Avenue*** (Cyberwit) came out in October 2022. Chatterjee's poem 'Tramline and the Man' has been adjudged as one of

the best contemporary poems on survival along with by a South Africa based Poetry Journal, "Pick Me Up Poetry". He has been teaching in leading Indian and foreign universities. He was a Fulbright Visiting Faculty at the University of Virginia, USA. His poetry has been archived at Yale university.



BY THE SEA

Through the window I watch
The sea swelling with tides afar
The wind beats my face and in the
Waves I spot the reflection of a little star

It is evening time and the sun
Has gone down in the hilly west
The sky is silent as the birds have
Returned to nests to take nightlong rest

The trees whisper a prayer as
Night gathers over the silent sea
I remember our love and watch you
Sitting on the cool sands waiting for me

The stars appear one by one
And call me to the sands to you
When the moon shines atop the sky
I hold you in my arms and say I Love You

We sit on the sands talking
And I play with your long tresses
The tides jump high and touch our feet
Go away laughing watching our happy faces

The dawn comes to bless us
The sea falls silent with the wind

As the sound of birds fills the air we

Pray the God for being so helpful and kind



Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tikku): He was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in Odisha, India. At present he is working in the coal mine sector and writes poems and stories when he gets time. He has already published two books of poems, *Fragrance of Love* and *Melody of Love*. He is working on his third book now. His poems have been published in many national and International Anthologies. He loves to write romantic poems. He likes travelling and meeting people of different nationalities and cultures. He takes inspiration from simple life of the villagers and Nature's beauty still thriving in rural areas. He enjoys walking by streams and into forests to be with flora and fauna.



<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/479774166554110039/>

THE LAMENT OF THE PARIJAT

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

Did you see the breeze rock my hammock?

It must have ruffled the leaves nearest me

and they must have shushed in reply

so the rustle does not startle me out of my sleep

Guiltily, it must have swung my stalk
gently, so my dreams do not shatter
Did the stars descend on me then
showering me with starlight
or was it only a dream, like the breeze surmised?

Let me ask the moon, the healer who stays up all night
mending hearts and sometimes breaking them too
I could ask the clouds if they tilted their goblets
for an earth impassioned with thirst

Did the earth sway, inebriated
that I found myself shaken and scattered
with the nectar still fresh on my languid eyelids
and the blush still crimson from the kiss
of a dreamy, dreamy night?

First published in Efflorescence 2020



Anju Kishore: Formerly a finance professional, Anju Kishore is a Pushcart Prize nominee, a published poet, and an award-winning editor of numerous free-verse anthologies. Her book of poems, '*...and I Stop to Listen*' (2018) inspired by the civil war in Syria was well received.



RESURGENCE

as she walks over the bridge

traversing time

gathering sand, silt, and stories

she looks behind

to see how far she has come

often

she walks back

to look at the deep waters
into the remnants
the ripples that come and go
blurs her reflection
and in her thoughts, she waits
for the water to gain its calm
only to see
the rewards of survival
be visible again!!!



Ankurita Pathak: She is an author, poet, TEDx speaker, a certified Life Coach & Trainer and a seasoned communication professional with 16 years of experience. A former journalist, she is currently working with FICCI as Joint Director. Her tryst with writing began as a 11-year-old, when her first poetry was published in the Northeast Times. She has been regularly writing articles, poems, travelogues and short stories for newspapers, magazines, portals, and blogs. She, along with her brother has co-authored a coffee table book in 2021 titled “Black Coffee & Metamorphosis”. Ankurita has co-authored several books – Concerns & Voices, Daffodils, Pristine Scars, Dreams, Days Passed, I Am Woman, Quiescent Verses, GLOmag, to name a few.



COLD MORNING PHYSICS

Frozen windshield greets the day.

Scraper posed.

Long arm of the law ...

the work-arm of the law of physics, that is!

Leverage, torque,

the length determines the force!

Formulas cavorting in my head,

while trying to calculate

the most efficient angle

to apply pressure.

High pitched screech

of plastic on glass,

as the blade attacks its foe.

Progress at hand,

visibility clears.

The science of the universe
follows us throughout our lives.
Some may refute it,
or be oblivious to it,
but the laws are always applied.
Matter, energy, motion ...
all in observance.
The task endures.

**Published by Ariel Chart, January 2017*



Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware, USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I have 14 poetry books. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. I was the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic), my

bio is featured in the “Who’s Who of Emerging Writers 2020 and 2021,” published by Sweetycat Press.

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



Said the spider to the Sun
'Tis the strangest irony, if there was one,
That me a tiny insect is so reviled
While you mighty giant is veritably deified

Replied the Sun to the spider
This is not whether you are big or small

Tis about

Lighting up people's lives

Or driving them up the wall



Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost 2 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.



TRIBUTE SONG

That was the first air,
There was some mist,
It looked so new
so enchanting was the beginning
the life gonna learn the new twist,
I rebound his slide, so funny
I was new, he too bunny
the air so new,
It was to give some cue
the days have passed,
but memories to glue,

the days have passed,
but it looks so new,
the scene so serene,
the camaraderie so clean,
was to let me win,
to win million hearts,
to win millions minds,
still I find that slide so funny,
the weather giving cue,
something great was to happen,
something going new,
something coming new
and that was to become my first love
thereafter songs and music came a through,
that slide so funny,

we were bunny
something great came out of new.



Ashish Kumar Pathak: He is a government middle school teacher in Bihar. This is a tribute to an artist's first stage performance.



AN OLD NEW YEAR, AGAIN!

Darkling I stretch out bare, snooping the silence of the
lingering dark,

The eerie sun has been flickering concealed, before the
closing voyage.

The dull Diana shyly peeps into the tedious sky. Misers too
are the stars,

As if excluding gloom they have nothing to tender to the
terrain below.

An ancient owl from some shadowy silence hoots to ache
the existing.

I get certain that I have become a bit of this inert dale; dust
returnest to dust.

Next a pale gleam peeps unwrapping the blanket, making
darkness visible.

A timid twitter with blood in sore throat shrieks, hailing the
New Year.

The stunned water of the river rippled, the old oak shed the
last leaf, which

Like a feather glides to kiss the tattered tombs which send
sigh in lieu.

Jesus grew a year older; my grassy bed propels me a bit for
the cosmic reunion.



Avik Kumar Maiti: He is from Midnapore, West Bengal, India, and is an academician who has written seven books for English U.G/P.G. students and is an amateurish poet, writer and whimsical vlogger.



GUSHING OUT

criticism lies shallow
in the hearts of all
praise seldomly heard
for achievements, big or small

wide-eyed beings
to see the mistake
but turns a blind eye
to the strides you make

but don't you dare
lend them an ear
unless it's constructive
uplifting and sincere

keep your head up
walk boldly and proud
let your achievements speak
without you making a sound

life's too short
to entertain negative thoughts
always gushing out,
out of others minds



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.



FATHER IN A FRAME-3RD JUNE 2021

Father!

You now sit

In your bedroom

Framed in a photo

With a garland around you

Whenever I visit Cuttack

And enter your bedroom

You smile your usual smile

And feel so happy to see me

As you used to be

three years back.

I can hear you call mother

And ask her to cook

Some delicious dishes

For your daughter

You show me the mango tree

With ripe mangoes hanging

Cut some guava of our garden

And take me to the lawn

With that pink rose bush at its edge

The fragrant Rajanigandha flowers nearby

And also show the cow and her calf in the shed

Show the coconut trees that were bearing fruits

You have been so proud of the richness

Of nature's gifts to you.

It has been three years since you left us

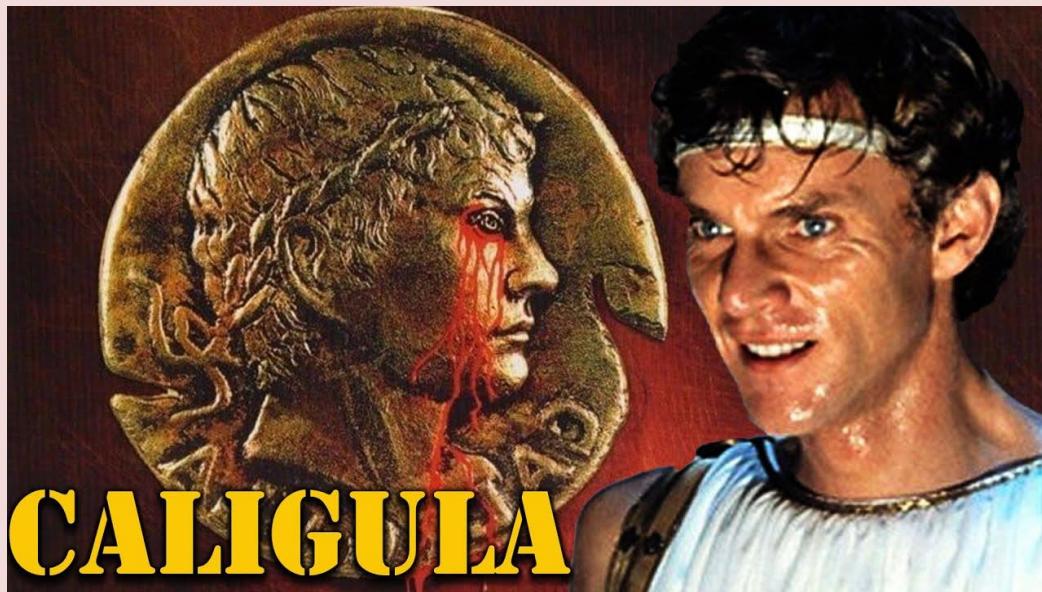
But did you really leave?

No, I don't believe it



Bharati Nayak: She is a bilingual poet, critic and translator from Odisha, India. Her poems have been published in many magazines, journals, anthologies and e-books of national and international repute. Her published works are **1-Padma Paada 2-Words Are Such Perfect Traitors 3-A Day for Myself**. She has co-authored four books. Her book ***In the Realms of Love & Divinity*** is jointly written with the German poet Dr. Antony Theodore and book 'Poetry and Friendship' co-authored with American poet Daniel Brick. She has been conferred with Sahitya Lahari award by

International Cosmos Society, India and Star Ambassador of World Poetry And Art Philosophique Poetica International Award in Literature by the World Poetry Conference in Bhatinda, Punjab, India.



LITTLE BOOTS

Named as a wellspring to honor my godhead.
Still, I got shod and bridled
with that childish appellation instead
of my proper imperial title.
With jewels sewn into my slippers, embedded
into the gunwales of my prams,

I used a gentle voice and a winning smile,
a crocodile lurking under still waters,
attacking rivals, painting my domain,
making it a blood-spattered canvas
I spent three years on the throne
enthralled by violent fascination

until thirty of my protectors, anxious,
employed assassination, impaling me.
They sliced my corpse, scattered the debris

of my ribboned remains onto the palace floor,
then installed my weak-chinned, lame,
and stuttering Uncle Claudius as *imperator*.



Bill Cushing: For January is named for Janus, a Roman god, so Bill Cushing presents an "imperial poem" this month. His work has appeared in anthologies, literary journals, and magazines. He facilitates a writing workshop for 9 Bridges Writers Community. Bill's 2019 poetry collection, ***A Former Life*** won a Kops-Featherling International Book Award while ***Music Speaks*** won the 2019 San Gabriel Valley Poetry Festival Chapbook Award and medaled in the 2021 New

York City Book Awards. His most recent chapbook is “. . .
.this just in. . .”. Bill is finishing a memoir about his years
serving in the U. S. Navy and later working on commercial
vessels before he returned to college.



LOVE FOR GRAY TIMES

Running your fingers through my tresses,
Tresses that have grayed with time,
You search for stars, while
My eyes anxiously follow your penetrating gaze,
To spot any disappointment which may be mine.

Burying your face in them, you whisper,
'The stars though camouflaged with time,
Still retain their dazzling shine,
And I am ready to live through thousand hells
to keep them in the world of mine.'

A warm drop, just then,
Touches and streams down my nape,
And I knew those lips
hadn't faked a single line.



Bilquis Fatima: She loves Nature and speaks for social issues, expressing her feelings in the form of short articles and speeches right from her college time. **Poetic Aroma** is her first published book of poems and she is a regular contributor to **GloMag** and On Fire Cultural movement. Her

poems have also been published in **Spillwords Press, Sahitya Ananad journal, Destiny Poets(UK)**, and commended by various other national and international publications. She has also contributed to some Anthologies, **“Queen”** published by Vishwa Bharti Research Center being the first one, **Nostalgia** by Prose and Poetry Group, **Inked Thoughts** by The Impish Lass Publications, **The Roseate Anthology, Ruddy Ravens and Cheshire cats and Rusty Rats** by The Significant League group, being the latest one.



AS I AM

I am here,
Above the clouds, colourful
And below a sky, so blued,
Like a free bird, nonchalantly so,
I chatter

In a vast arena of words,
Pain flows through my pen

Inadvertently,

Sometimes

And sometimes in pleasure,

Like a gust of wind,

Defiant,

I roar,

In an infinite expanse

Between horizons and,

Mundane chores

You can lock me up

In any container, if you wish,

Can compress me, or else,

To a desired shape,

Can define me a friend in need

Or an unconquerable foe indeed



Bishnu Charan Parida: He is a bilingual poet from Jaipur Road, Odisha. His poems have been published in magazines and anthologies of repute.



I WALKED PAST A BAR TODAY

It's that time of the day

maybe I'll go in

just for one

but we all know

one becomes

a losing count

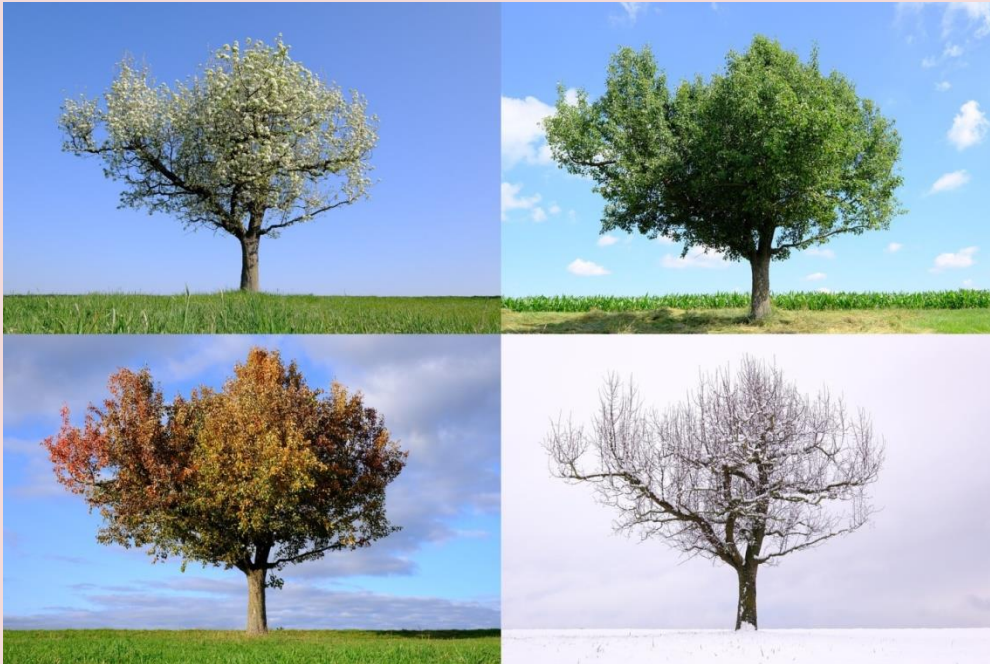
I walked past a bar today

The neon sign
says opening time
I walk in
through the dim light
one small beer
and a single shot
takes the edge
of another day
before I know
it's closing time
one to many
beers gone down
and a dozen
single shots
and thoughts of you
won't go away

I walked past
and headed home
a smile on my face
i've found the strength
to walk on by
I walked past a bar today



Brian Mackenzie: I was born in Inverness in 1949 and have lived there until 1969. Since then I lived in Lond and Saudi Arabia. I have worked most of my life in the Airline Industry which enabled me to travel the world quite easily and cheaply. I am now retired and have lived in Spain for the last ten years. I only started writing since I retired in 2009 and it is only in the last few years I started writing songs and poems and I suppose have become quite prolific. I self-published 6 books and 1 book by a publisher, the second soon to be released.



TIME IS A TREE AND WE ARE BUT LEAVES

Time is a tree and we are but leaves,
we grow, prosper and glow like emeralds
in the Spring and Summer of our lives,
warmth caresses us, we bask
and shimmer as the sun shines,
in resplendent glory,

but Autumn crawls into our lives slowly,
we enjoy and sing with the breeze,

even dance, celebrate ourselves,
our masks and lies disguised in the grandeur of vibrant
hues,
until inflictions of inhospitable wind
blur us as we turn into fading yellows,
no longer mellow,
we begin to wither,
endure as we the pangs of the cold weather,
till we all disintegrate into crumbled pieces,
the inevitability of death,
and in Winter's frozen snow-white silence,
the tree mourns our deaths,
naked, stripped of everything,
till birth promises again
in this endless loop,

time is a tree and we are but leaves.



Brindha Vinodh: She is a poet, writer, blogger and a former copyeditor. She has contributed to several anthologies and been published on several international magazines, e-zines and journals, Glomag, Soflay, Metverse Muse, Setu, to name a few. She has recently released her debut poetry book titled “Autumn in America & other poems” through Setu publications, Pittsburgh, USA. Her recent achievements include commendable mentions in two categories, “Poet of the year” and “critic of the year” for 2021 in Destiny Poets’ International community of Poets (ICOP) Wakefield, UK.



ABANDONED

I see you everyday

Standing alone, a roadside sentinel

Quiet, lonely and unassuming

In a psychological time

Of lived and remembered

Experiences long ago

Hulking awkwardly and
Out of place
Ravaged by nature and neglect

The sun plunging down
Into empty windows as
Ghosts peer out

In the darkness
Pressed from the
Inside calling the spectators

Decaying in slow drips
On a cruel timeline marching
Onward to becoming forgotten.



Carl Scharwath: Carl Scharwath has appeared globally with 175+ journals selecting his writing or art. Carl has published three poetry books and his latest book *Playground of Destiny* features poetry, short stories and photography (Impspired Press) His two photography books were published by Praxis in Africa. His photography was also exhibited in the Mount Dora Center for The Arts gallery and The Leesburg Center for The Arts. Seven global poets have also selected his photography to grace the covers of their published books. Carl was the art editor for Minute Magazine (4 years).



It was anger

and,

mirror cracked.

Each crack defining,

Many that reside within.

Raising their heads often.

Lost in this guise, disguise,

real self seems buried

deep within.

Drowned in deep sleep.



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.



KING OF NEMI

Lying awake at night my senses lunge
Around in fear of murder in each place,
Until at last in sleep's despair I plunge
But then my torture continues in dreams.
I wake up just before I see the face
Of the one who laughs at my dying screams.

Priest-king of Nemi, guardian of the shrine
To Diana of the lake, such a king!
By killing the last one I made this mine
As my successor shall make it his own
By killing me as the traditions sing
His victory shall be my dying moan.

A runaway slave, I took my chances
Young and strong I seized opportunity
With my sword, now old-age backward-glances
At what was done, the bargain that I made
I did not take life with impunity
The price I paid to ply this sorry trade.

There is much robbery in an empire,
Mine was more open than many can swallow
But mine was the same blood-shedding desire

That in others is called noble, my joints
Ache today, the song-birds verse bells hollow
And I wait for whatever fate appoints.



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.



I CAN'T GO HOME

There's really nothing that I want for Christmas

Nothing I'll find under any tree

My silent night will be lonely

No place on earth I want to be

Ghosts from Christmas past will come to visit

Old hurts I'd hoped to leave behind

but somehow, they always find me

locked in the darkness of my mind

please don't be hurt if I can't sing the carols
if I can't thank God for what He took away
some wounded souls never heal completely
that's why I can't go home on Christmas day

it sounds easy to put it all behind me
to keep it out of sight and out of mind
but part of my heart is gone forever
and the eyes of my soul forever blind
so, I'll sit here by myself until it's over
and sunrise tries to wash the blues away
all the pretty papers crumpled in the trash can
and I can face the world for another day

please don't be hurt if I skip the service
when all the faithful sing the hymns of praise

some broken hearts can't be put back together
that's why I can't go home on Christmas day



Dale Adams: He lives in Bethany Oklahoma with his wife, 1 dog, and an unknown number of guitars. He enjoys reading history and science, and music. He has been writing poetry and composing songs since 2011. Dale has established SoundCloud and YouTube Channels, and has converted poems into songs for other poets. Some of Dale's publications are Warriors With Wings Anthology, and Fallen Angel Anthology.

<https://soundcloud.com/dale-adams-272904153>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DrBugqs13>



Isabel G de Diego's Pic

PUMPKIN POET

The smiling and loving poet
Makes toy spears with his verses
Causing immediate heartbreak
Who does he read to?
Even his wife is creeped out
Causing some love rejection

There are those who consider
A great poet and writer
And they hug him like children
He burst out laughing and crying
At the same time.

In the mythological age
Pumpkins (heads) were crowned
With laurel wreaths
Heads are crowned today
With pumpkins
As a symbol of mastery.

Horace, Virgil
Ovid, Dante, and many others
Were great pumpkin poets.
The Schools and Universities of the World
Compete year after year
In crowning with pumpkins
To its most distinguished students

As well as those who perceive

Honorary degrees.

-Where are you going for the pumpkin?

Young graduate

Master in Braying?

-From my desk I feel

The fruit of this cucurbit

And I smelled and smelled

and olé and olá

That the pumpkin will be in my head

Although my notes have been

Ripe and immature.



Daniel de Culla: I am a Daniel de Culla, poet, writer, etc., residing in Burgos, Spain. I am retired. I have also published poetry, anthologies more than seventy.



THE JEALOUS FLOWER WIND

Today, I saw a father
chasing the cherry blossoms
in the wind. He captured
the small petals in his hand
held them out to his young son

The boy laughed and looked into
his father's eyes, showing his
delight, his approval

The wind carried the petals through
the air, the snow falling on
their faces, in their hair, moving
in the space between us

Winter is jealous of spring
She does not want to say goodbye
I pulled my collar up close
standing in the bright afternoon sun



David Norris: He lived in Asia for 30 years. He resided in Seoul, where he lectured in writing and literature for the University of Maryland University College-*Asia* on US military bases all around the peninsula. His work has appeared in *The Chariton Review*, *Taproot Literary Review*, *Poetry San Francisco*, *USA Deep South* online, and *The Dan River Anthology*. David was born in the small town of Covington, Virginia, way up in the Alleghany Mountains. He left when he was 20 and has been traveling ever since.



THE LITERARY GAUNTLET

People are mystified that I write against injustice, racism and bigotry even though I am not usually paid anything; after all, my writing makes me many enemies among the racists, the bigots and the unjust. They still make my life hell. During Apartheid my mail was intercepted, I would be sworn on my phone, my phone calls would be cut and the Apartheid police threatened me at my surgery. I experienced many police traps.

Once a woman shouted in a guttural, Teutonic tone on my colindictor: 'This is the SADF; we will smother you!'

In November 1992 my anti-racist book, 'What's love got to do with it?' was published by COSAW. I did not even tell

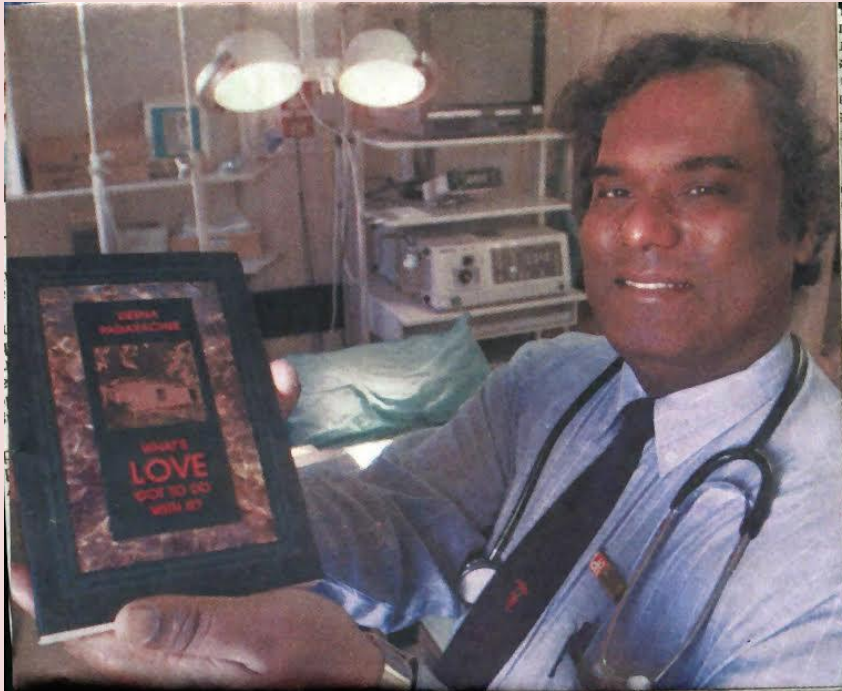
my largely European Writers' Circle about the launch because some of its members openly supported Apartheid as did many Indians.

At about 8,30 am on 19th January 1993 I heard my then spouse scream downstairs. Two young, voteless men were running up our stairs; one assailant had a gun. In a flash, the lead brute was stabbing at me. I put my left arm up to fend off the assault. His face was beast-like in its maniacal fury.

I was bewildered; I didn't even know him. I sustained three wounds. The home invaders demanded nothing, and they stole nothing. That was the mark of the Apartheid special branch. They could have easily broken into the bedroom where I had fled. They didn't. They simply left. Was this punishment for attacking Apartheid in my book?

My infant children were unharmed. My father immediately drove 50 km to see me; a newspaper which had interviewed me about my book featured the attack on its front page. The scars on my left arm are a permanent reminder of that day's violation. The perpetual terrorism contributed to the end of my marriage.

Ogres and psychopaths wage wars against writing that dispels mendacity.



Deena Padayachee: Dr Deena Padayachee is a medical doctor, a graduate of Natal University in South Africa. He is the recipient of the Olive Schreiner and Nadine Gordimer prizes for prose. His poems have been published in India (GloMag), the United Kingdom, the USA, Australia and South Africa. His book of liberation poems, 'A Voice from the Cauldron' was published during Apartheid in 1986. Some of his oeuvres have been translated into Xhosa, Zulu, Tamil, Hindi and Italian. He has been invited to speak at literary conferences at universities in Germany, India, Denmark, Mauritius, the USA and South Africa.



ESCAPE

A stark darkness and you find yourself stuck

You rebuild

And find yourself growing tall

Taller each time

You see the moth trying so insanelly to fight its way

Flapping its wings against that windowpane

There's a flicker you can see at the end of the tunnel

You don't give up

The moth neither

There has to be an escape

You find it

The moth waits



Deepti Singh: I am a doctor by profession and a writer by passion. I love to write poetry and prose on nature and human psychology. I am a silently keen observer who finds liberation in penning it all. I find music and books as my best companions.



Artwork © Esteban

MY NAME IS EUGENE GROMADSKYI

Ode to Oleg – My father’s proud veteran military career inspired me to follow his sense of duty to defend our country from invading forces accepting the call to duty alongside my countrymen and women defending our land defending our land our culture our honour because it runs through our family – My father will always be my inspiration and my mother Natalie my moral compass. I’m

proud to know my family defended our country for seven generations defending our nation our heritage –

Beyond City Limits – I proudly accepted my foretold legacy to stand guard over our city even though my whole body trembled with arctic cold but my mind kept me focused as I yearned for victory over an advancing inhuman force at the end of December whilst Kharkiv was still under attack but “*I do not fear death – Death is one of war’s problems. Death loves brave ones.*”

Daily Reports – At first not much filtered through but then we heard of the stampede to board trains, of wives children and the elderly howling farewells all was not well. The tears and long goodbyes maybe for the last time leaving icy palm prints on frosted windows and an old lady collapsing caught by her daughter as a multitude rushed forward in utter desperation whilst doors closed and panic set in. Reports blasted over the airwaves of enemy fire in the distance and tanks sinking in mud

The Language of War – We had to insulate the city with impenetrable *Bombshoviste (bomb shelters)* to shelter from cluster munitions opening mid-air indiscriminately spraying wide areas with dozens of small ‘bomlets’ also ‘hedgehogs’ spiky looking steel obstacles to divert tanks

also *thermobaric bombs* creating explosive gas clouds for mass destruction – ***No to war! Slava Ukraini! Het BoñHe! Glory to Ukraine!***

Diary of a Hero - I thank God for the opportunity to fight for freedom with my beloved father – Our rock our pillar of faith and reason who bravely honoured his duty to try and save our country but sadly sacrificed his life for all of Ukraine – My hero, our rock. I dedicate my top military honour to my beloved father bestowed on me by our brave leader, President Zelenskyi who continues to inspire us strengthen us sustain us and protecting us. We will never surrender as we battle for our nation’s freedom and history and soul. My injury severe but I wear it with pride as we echo - ***“SLAVA UKRAINI” Good will triumph over evil...***

Verified Input © Quentin Somerville



Don Beukes: Don Beukes is a South African and British writer, podcaster and Reviewer. 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 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 in 2016. He was published in his first SA Anthology 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection' in 2018 (Libbo Publishers).



LA VILLE ROSE

You know you've gotten old when you prefer the massage
to the masseuse.

Trapped in your own doomed ancient town between
barrage and surrender's truce

as your quaint Pink City lodgings turn to puce,

from pesto New York you've moved, like Monod, to adagio
Toulouse.

Your vision constricts. You can focus on a corsage but not
the spruce.

You have left only one category of tirage when in the
noose.



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.



MEETING THE MOON IN A GARDEN

The moon in the sky is shining cool
In this garden all things are joyful
The frost on the petals is red in hue
Without me there is none to view
Intermittent call of a bird is heard
Here is joyance in the dance of bud
Fluttering & twisting all flowers are
Moon light welcomes me I am sure
I feel the cheering power of moon
As if I am lost in mystery so soon
Occurs in mind the theme of verse

Excess of joy might be its source
Stars do seem to sing their song
There is smile in their looks along
Sign of love is found ,in their eyes
I do learn where the true love lies



Dusmanta Choudhury: He is a poet residing in Jeypore, in the district of Koraput, Odisha, India. He is working as a Lecturer in English in Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Jr. College, Lamtaput in Koraput district in the Department of Higher Education Government of Odisha. He has contributed to various anthologies. He has recently got the Honour of Pentasi B World Featured Poet 2020 Honour. He is also a member of more than 55 poetry groups in Facebook. He

has been honored as the team reviewer of many poetry groups. He has also published many Odia and English poems.



BIRD TRILL

Translated Ula de B

He was charmed when hearing the songs of birds
hiding in the foliage.

When he left

he understood

it was time to rush.

It was a mad race as the street screamed.

He moved on.

Or maybe he turned back?

He went to a place

where the free birds expected nothing.

He began to listen

to the whispers trapped within him.

Alternating thoughts

between

good and evil,

did not give him peace.

He felt emptiness around him, an indifference

bringing anxiety and uncertainty.

He understood

that it's easier to hear trills

than to notice a man in need.



Eliza Segiet: Received Global Literature Guardian Award from Motivational Strips, World Nations Writers Union and Union Hispanomundial De Escritores (UHE) 2018. Laureate Naji Naaman Literary Prize 2020, International Award Paragon of Hope (2020), World Award 2020 Cesar Vallejo for Literary Excellence. Laureate of the Special Jury Sahitto International Award 2021, World Award Premiul Fănuș Neagu 2021. At the international Festival of Poetry CAMPIONATO MONDIALE DI POESIA (2021/2022) she won the title of vice-champion of the world. Award BHARAT RATNA RABINDRANATH TAGORE INTERNATIONAL AWARD (Marc 2022)



LONGING FOR DECEMBER

That sleep should etch, one day
a silhouette of December, when
sleep was just – sleep, and not
a metaphor for nostalgia; where

do I begin? To trance my shadow
from the mirror that shakes in the waves
of my rabid coughs – the anti-metaphor
of my image, longing

to complete a poem, without
wheezing; for I have written them
down. It's the art of recitation,
I long for – yesterday; December!



Feby Joseph: Hailing from state of Kerala, Feby Joseph describes himself as a spiritual vagabond, currently working as a Piano teacher in Mumbai. Feby is the winner of Reuel International Prize for Poetry, 2020. Some of his works have appeared on Café Dissensus, Foreign Literary Journal and The Bangalore Review.



A NEW START

Darker thoughts, dimmed, dead
in this perfect month. Ghosts
dance a friendly tune. Pivotal
the future starts today.

A man, released by his name
fends for himself. With emotion,
he glows honestly, unopposed.
Sea eyes, he rests on the quay.



Ferris E Jones: He is an award-winning, internationally published poet and screenwriter living in Puyallup Washington. His work has appeared in both print and online magazines including as the featured poet for Creative Talents Unleashed. He is the recipient of two grants from the Nevada Arts Council and the Editor/Publisher of Nevada Poets 2009. Ferris has twice received honorable mention awards from Writers Digest annual screenwriting contest. He is also the Author / Editor of seven collections of poetry. You can learn more about Ferris E. Jones by visiting www.inquisitionpoetry.com where each month he features the work of other poets. The goal of this site is to spread the word of poetry throughout the world.



IDLE WORSHIP

The thing with scandal

It moves around without sandal

The thing with rumour

It uses everything for humour

The thing with gossip

It is the doctrine of idle worship.



Francis Otolé: He is a Nigerian born poet and academician residence in the Federal capital city, Abuja, Nigeria. He is a member of the Association of Nigerian authors (ANA) and many other literary groups. He is an award winning poet from the local and international scenes. He has been featured in magazines, journals, and anthologies, locally and internationally. He is a graduate of the prestigious

Benue State University and a student of life. His hobby is reading and writing. He is married with two children.



HAPPY WHOLE YEAR!

'Happy New Year' they say, with joy in their hearts
As everyone looks forward to new and fresh starts

But what exactly is so happy about a new year I ask
When no one really knows what the year will unmask?

It will be good things, everyone wants to believe
Although fate might probably once again deceive

Cause the years that have gone by were also sometime
Supposed to be 'happy', but they weren't devoid of crime

There were deaths and sorrows and terrorist attacks
Divorces and break ups and stabs in the backs

So, does “Happy New Year” aim for a positive attitude?
To wish for a year better than last, to show some gratitude?

For all the things that should remain good and strong
Despite chances of them going suddenly wrong

But should that just last while the year is all new
And forgotten as the months start rapidly flying through?

So how about we say “Happy Whole Year” instead?
And let the positivity through 12 months evenly spread.



Gargi Sarkhel Bagchi: The 1st prize winner of ‘The Reuel International Poetry Prize, 2022’, she hails from Pune, India. A university topper in her M.A. with German studies, she received a fully funded DAAD-scholarship to complete her second Master’s from LMU, Munich. The thesis she wrote there was published by GRIN publishing house, Germany and is available on Amazon worldwide. A German teacher for over 18 years, she has been pursuing her passion for writing since 2013 and has contributed her writings towards innumerable prestigious national and international publications. Though currently engaged full-time as a tutor with *Deutsch Uni Online*, Munich, for students world over and as a German corporate trainer, she looks forward to publishing a compilation of her writings soon.



THE SUPERNATURAL

I am getting sucked into the black abyss. Afraid of what lies at the bottom of the pit I close my eyes. Not knowing if there's a bottom to this pit, I let out a scream.

“Your fever is getting worse. Here, have a spoonful of the medicine,” my father insists.

“But it tastes bitter and it makes me want to throw up,” I push his hand away. The medicine gets spilled onto the sheets. “You are one big Bhoot*,” he walks away.

“You called me a Bhoot, I am not talking to you now,” I shout. And I don't. I don't talk to him for almost a week.

“You know what,” my mother says. “Bhoot has many meanings in Sanskrit and one of them is a living entity. A human being is a living entity. Now don’t punish Baba for calling you a human being Nita,” she plays the mediator. The six year old me is only too eager to end the fight and ask Baba a thousand questions about bhoots.

Sunday school—

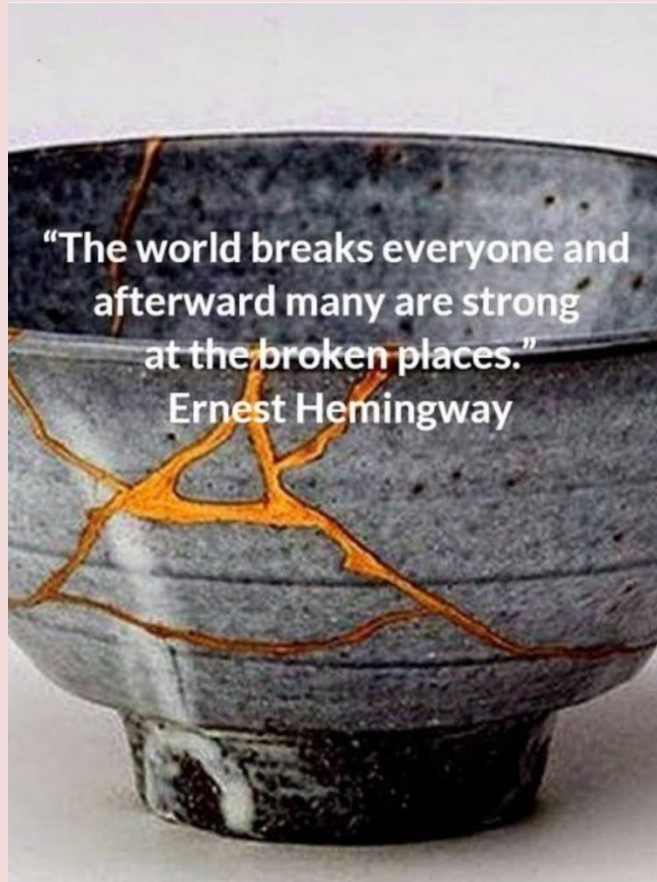
counting dew drops

on a blade of grass

****Bhoot: ghost in Marathi***



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.



BROKEN BUT BEAUTIFUL

You look even more beautiful

If you embrace your flaws and imperfections

If you start loving your wounds and scars instead of hiding them

When you choose to repair yourself with self love

Your soul shines like gold

Your struggles , your failures

The damage you have suffered
And the grit to overcome them
Makes you more beautiful
The brokenness in you is a testament
That you have been regenerated
You are not what you used to be
You are an instance of perfect imperfection
Nothing can be flawless
We all are kintsugi
Pieces of broken pottery
Mended with the elixir of time and love
Beautifully broken but stronger than ever before

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of mending broken pottery pieces with lacquer mixed with gold or silver and understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken. The Japanese believe that when something is broken and has a history of pain and suffering, it becomes more beautiful. It is a strong metaphor for life.



Gayatree G. Lahon: Hailing from Assam, Gayatree G Lahon is a teacher by profession and a poet by passion. She is a post-graduate in English literature from Gauhati University. She is closely akin to nature and her poems delineate her feelings very beautifully. She calls herself an aesthete who tries to find beauty in every aspect of life. Even the complexities of life compel her to scribble in her own way. Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines, both in India and abroad.



A breeze caresses her sweet face
As though taunting her to wake up
From her reverie.
Flowers in her hand, she waits
At the temple door
Dreaming of Krishna.
Her urgency to reach him is obvious,
She is so restless!

Her garland for him, fresh and fragrant,
Will adorn him, once the door opens.

If only it did!



Geeta Varma: Geeta Varma is a poet based in Chennai. She has worked as a teacher and a freelance journalist for some time. She has to her credit two books of poems and is a regular contributor to a few online magazines. She lives in Neelankarai with her husband Shreekumar Varma and has two sons, Vinayak married to Yamini, and Karthik.



MIRROR OF TIME

Standing mute with a film of dust yet watchful

The mirror absorbs all that transpires

Regardless of light and darkness

When it cannot reflect it pretends not to see

Yet it is vigilant trapping the myriad emotions

Recording every thought that manifests

Like a bubble mirroring the stories in the mind

Through space that instantaneously becomes time

For such is the mirror of time that one calls the soul
Waiting to be wiped clean to show its innate clarity.



Geethanjali Dilip: Professor of French and poet by passion, Geethanjali Dilip’s four published solo anthologies include *Geethatmaa , Song of the Soul; Hansa Geetham—Song of the Celestial Swan; Poetry Voice—Geeth Dhvani;* and *Soul Riff—ATMATARANG* with good reviews. A recipient of The Reuel International Award for Poetry, an awardee in the category of commendable mention for her poem at “The Great Indian Poetry Contest”, an awardee in “recognition of exhibiting literary brilliance par global standards”, on the

75th Anniversary of Independence Day from the Gujarat Sahitya Academy, she curates Yercaud Poetry Festival, strongly believing that poetry connects the world.



Someone knocked on my door yesterday

He sat in my rocking chair and spoke of rabbits...and
pythons...and lemur...and mamba snakes

He informed me that Nostradamus was always right

He made himself comfortable on my lap and played video games on my computer

He switched on the air cooler and turned my Netflix to child-mode and to Mathilda the Movie

And we watched in silent horror as the Headmistress was cruel to the children

I tried to make him eat but each mouthful lasted a lifetime

Someone came yesterday and took over my life...

You can't work when your grandson is around you
and you can't say no to him.



Glory Sasikala: She is a writer, publisher, and poet currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is the Editor and Publisher of GloMag, an international poetry and prose magazine. Her poetry books, novels, and short stories are available in various online bookstores such as Amazon and Flipkart as well as on her blogs. She is on the brink of publishing a very interesting collection of anecdotes and short stories inspired by her rather colourful and chequered life.



PAIN

alone

like the silent night

waiting in wasted hope

my memories relive

careless words spoken in anger

frozen like stalactite crystals

in the frigid air

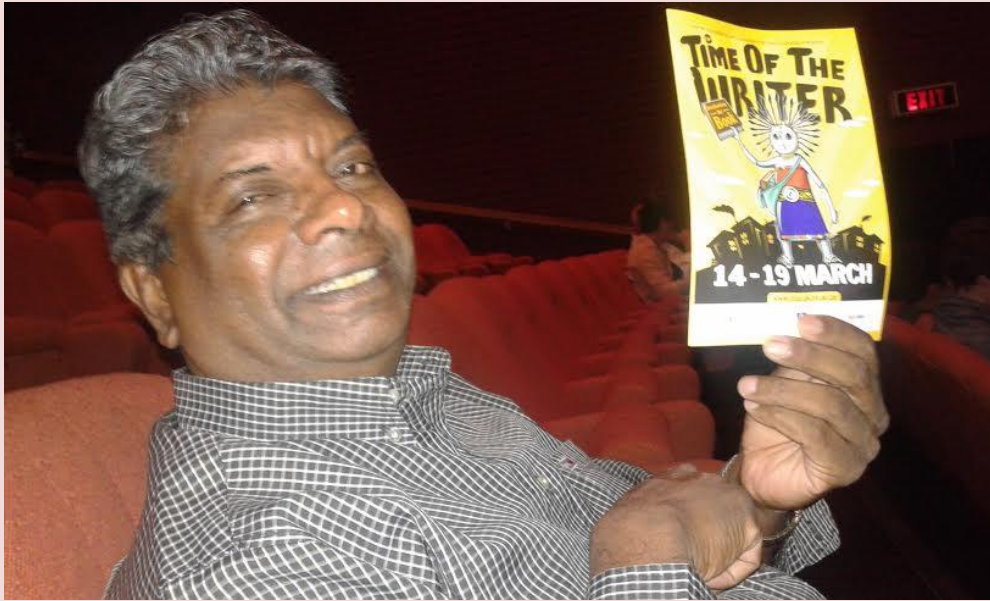
cruel words unkind scathing

trapped deep in memories

her heart unyielding
cannot cleanse vindictive words
in waters of forgiveness

my soul suffers
in painful bleeding silence
hurtful words spoken
in haste like a speeding arrow
cannot return to the bow

the punishment for my folly
is worse than slander
I pay the price for my jealous pride



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 Gloriotimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.



ANOTHER LIGHT

The late afternoon light trembles, scatters behind
silhouetted towers and houses.

it flows over the long-stretched hand of the island.

I bend down, touch a few footsteps on the sand
unaware of waves and water sketches,
pebble touches pebble

Water crosses shoreline, splashes at times

it's time to open my dry feet

The eye is an island, an old universe dawn,

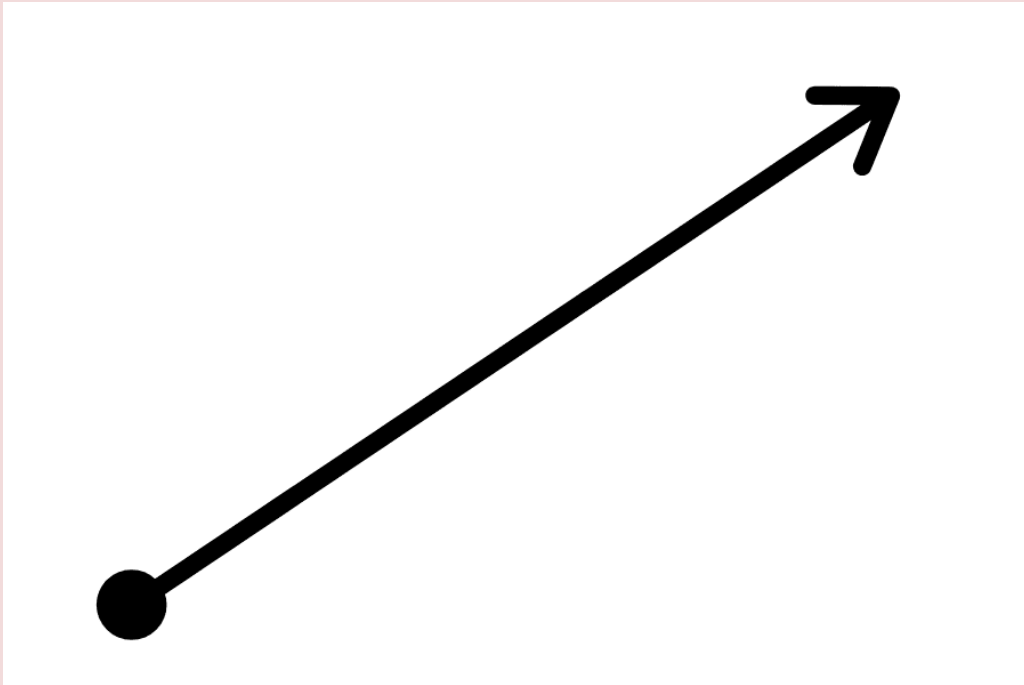
The sand grains open their eyes, much before

that they bend towards another light,

moving fingers, breaths and dormant shadows lay bare.



Gopal Lahiri: I am a bilingual poet, writer, critic and translator residing in Kolkata. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published twelve volumes of poetry in English and eight volumes in Bengali. In addition, I have also solo/jointly edited eight anthologies of poems in English and also have one translation work of short stories of Israel, translated by me from English to Bengali. Two recently published books of mine; ***Crossing the Shoreline*** and ***Some Resonance, Some Desire***. I have been nominated for Pushcart Prize in poetry category for the year 2021.



THE RAY

Following a stoic walk on the blade of passion in nude wear
of lust,

the pusillanimous heart leaves in the lurch

a sullen stare of samudaya outlined

in a twin of moist cosmic circles under the dewfall of
eternal dusk;

yet, dabbing doused eyes in the opaque silhouette of
narcissistic shadow.

Impressed are the strides that skim the crest gliding high
and low

through the recurrence of double-sided circumstance.

Languorous tears carrying nuanced weights healed in
the petrichor of breath-beaded lacuna

Hopes bred to keep the deflatable stray balloon buoyant
and blithe

Peer across at desired images stirring in the blur of far-off
dates.

Whirls of airy oaths merge into concrete apotheoses
peaked with sharp ridges.

Assured chortles shamelessly give their mighty voice,
lofty message from the base of a deep nothingness.

Some deserted visages are reminded by wet reminiscence
coming over

when novelties grow old and dim, hands that could pluck
blossoms of rare hues

are left only with suggestive fragrance to inhale, ruminate.

A mocked truth surfaces, grasps unleashed with burdened
sighs, a soft dream

through a hollow interlude always

waking up with answerless conundrums to the haze of
abysmal resurrections.



Hein Min Tun: He is an award-winning writer and multi-published young poet from Myanmar. He graduated from Mawlamyaing University in Mon State with a BA (Hons) degree in English Language & Literature in January, 2020, and is in the middle of doing his Master Degree. He is the recipient of "Distinguished Writer Award for Excellence in Literature" from the International Short Story Competition: "Bharat Award for Literature, 2021-22" for his short story "The Outcast". He has some poems to his credit in popular global anthologies, including those launched by "The POET Magazine". He is also the third prize winner in one weekly poetry contest on the Given Theme, held by ALSphere (Asian Literary Society) for his "Sonnet: Morning in Kalaw".



L'AMOUR: A DIALOGUE

for, and thanks to, R

- Do you love me?

-I had loved you from the time you looked at me at New Friends cafe... Was sad, when you ignored me at the 'E' auditorium...I had always loved your small hands, your little feet and your soul...Never ever did I imagine I would kiss you...

- New Friends cafe was four years ago! Why did you keep quiet all this while?

One kiss of passion and a bouquet of fantasies. You light the lantern of the moon.

a curtain call

memory's nets of silver

unveiled



Jagari Mukherjee: She is a poet, editor, and reviewer based in Kolkata, India. She has two full-length books of poetry and two chapbooks. She is the winner of Poesis Award for Excellence in Poetry 2019, and also the recipient of Reuel International Prize for Poetry 2019, among other awards. She is a gold medalist in English Literature, a Best of the Net 2018 nominee and a Bear River Writers' Conference alumna, and a Bear River alumna. She won the Women Empowered Gifted Poet Award in 2020, and the Bharat Award For Short Story 2022. Jagari is the Founder and Chief Executive Editor of the literary journal, EKL Review.



SOLAR STEALTH

When yesterday
was sunny I thought
about putting out bowls
to capture that sparkle.

Then I supposed it might
be best to use jars

with caps so this glow
could not evaporate.

Ended up with every
one of my windowsills
covered with cups
topped by saucers.

At rest at night
night black as obsidian
night full of dreams
of tropical seacoasts.

I woke up with eyes
clouded by sleep stumbling
to the window... just
another grey day.

What happened to
my cups of warmth?

Did some scallywag
guzzle up my sunshine?



Joan McNerney: She is the recipient of three scholarships. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, New York City as well as other distinguished venues. A reading in Treadwell, New York was sponsored by the American Academy of Poetry. Published worldwide in over thirty-five countries, her work has appeared in literary publications too numerous to mention. Four Best of the Net

nominations have been awarded to her. ***The Muse in Miniature*** and ***Love Poems for Michael*** are both available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net. Just released is a new title ***At Work***. This collection shows colorful but realistic snapshots of working women and men in their daily lives.



BREATHING WALLS

Time no longer walks here.

It has receded into the walls

getting absorbed in the yellow silence,

where hunchbacked hollows disappear,

with their bare backs

balancing the slanting rays of truth...

Only the shadows of the pillars
engrave the rustling silence on stone.
Many buried dreams lie blood stained
deep in the heart of victory.
Why light still searches for a shadow
to rest for a while, before it goes dark?

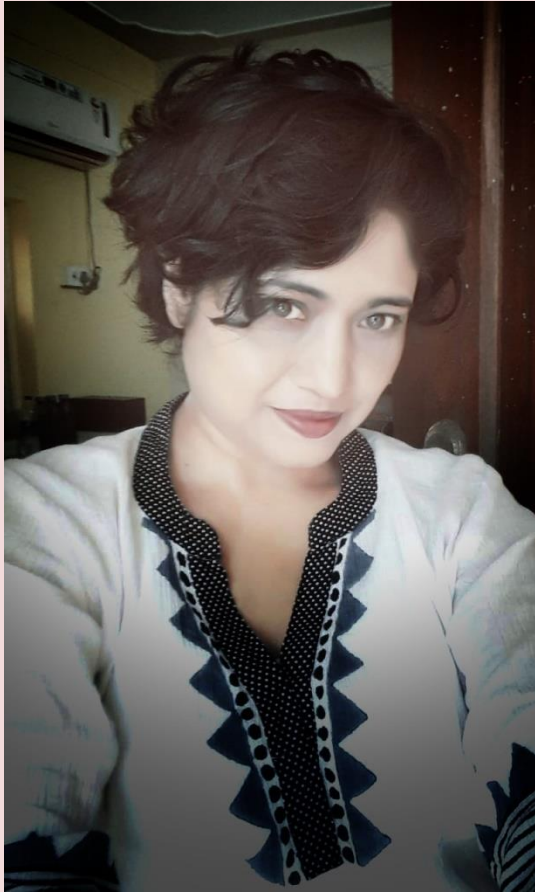
When my absence will become tired,
heaving in its prolonged presence
leaning on your shoulder
as you pass through ages,
leave my memories behind like a stony silence
amongst the crafted pillars.

The crafty tombs tell nothing
but their sculpted noises,
bear the blame of an absurd eloquence

heard along the forgotten corridors .

Haunting breaths are not harmful

if they're not buried alive.



Kakoli Ghosh (a.k.a Moon Drops): She is a post-graduate in English literature, and hails from an industrial town in West Bengal, India. Her published poetry books are 'Unfinished' (2010) and 'The Bridge' (2022). Her oeuvres have been published in various national and international anthologies. Kakoli is equally keen in vernacular literature. Many of her Bengali poems have been published online and printed in

local magazines. She is also a painter and a jewellery designer and has keen interest in music and art in general.



THE DEBATE

Sun, Sand, Water,

What a Triumvirate to rule the morn!

Cloud oyster proudly shows its golden pearl

Glorious sun at dawn!

The sea laughs at this

"My pearls are better and then quite a few!"

Sky says, "Mine are the best,

If ever you knew!

In any context the best pearly drops are those of dew!"

Thus the debate for some length did continue,

Until the hidden moon peeked out from,

A dark cloud behind,

It's day and you all have had your say,

Come if you might,

At the darkest hour of the night,

And the Pearl that I am, when you shall see,

You will be wont to agree

That the brightest pearl is me!"

I laughed and laughed at this contest

And I spoke quite out of context:

"I'm looking for a diamond, I shall come again tomorrow,

Tell me the road I need to follow!"



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.



IN THE MIST OF LOVE

A Sufi Malayalam poem by YA Sajida translated by me with her permission

It's December

The weak sun rays

abandoned by November

get a blanket of mist

Stars stop blinking

in a desperate wait for you

Their forlorn sighs fall down

as dew drops on your path

Your reluctant footprints merge

with the dull shadows
left in the winter moonlight
Before I could track them
they disappear in trampled dew drops
The night flowers are white
so you can see them in the darkness
But you, my love, pretend
as if you don't see them
As if you don't feel the wind
that whispers among leaves
As if you do not know
that you fill my night's every fold
But I will wait till the footprints
of your love come alive
in the summer of passion
To turn our nights lusher
than our dry dreary days



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.



TIMELESS LOVE

We are half a world apart and like the push and pull of never-ending ocean tides, precious and boundless...

our thoughts resonate in tune and flow their expectancy.

Even when the dark pregnant clouds of storms,

beautiful silver and charcoal gray

settle down over the horizon...

Pounding rain of separation is an obsessed probable, we integrate.

I admire their dance over oceans of distance with mental closeness.

Our quietly intense, yet expressionist words rise and fall with life.

Feelings of depths spread across the distance...

and we are ever the same.

Love is beautiful and timeless.

Religion, poetry, colours of various tints,
are interwoven in strange mystical ways,
on the tapestry of our consciousness.

Drunk with desire we collect songs of the ocean,
pink shells and cherry blossoms imprinted in our hearts.

Disconnected physically, our love songs speak words of
togetherness,

painted across a starlit sky are colours of dawn and dusk.

Through thunderstorms, roar of racing winds, lightning
strikes and different shades of the galaxy,

we stay connected...for we have in our hearts a golden
shore...

A nuanced understanding, compassion and empathy,
an all empowering forgiveness and gratitude,
wrapped like a comforting shawl.

In our deep silences across the undulating sea green,
is a soul elevation,
deep solace linked across a million ancient dreams.



Ketaki Mazumdar: She is a poet, writes prolifically, passionately and joyfully. Her latest book *Woodsmoke and Embers* and she, have been listed amongst the “Top 50 Most Influential Authors of 2021”. She was honoured as “Poet of the Year 2022”, by Ukiyoto Publishing. She was awarded “The Creative Author” by Maharishi Vedvyas International Award for Books, by Poiesisonline. Her poems

have immense depth and soul. She writes on life, love, nature, women, mysticism and weaves a tapestry of India in her book. She has received a number of accolades from her readers and several National and International Poetry Society groups. An educationist and a National Awardee, she has also authored many delightful children's books.



THE WORD

The word is less seductive now.

Like a aging damsel whose skin
Is losing shine, whose face a pale
shadow of her riveting gleam.

The word has a rare prankish twinkle.
A knowing wink at me, my obsession
With its bewitching layers of truths
That tantalize in the changing twilight!

The word knows its invincible presence.

It knows it is the ultimate sojourn

Where a wayfarer seeks his toehold

And an erudite pilgrim makes his peace.

“You have to come to me”, is its refrain.

I am ageless though you may fade away

I am beyond hurt, decay and destiny

‘cause I shape your mind and your world.”

I see the flash of thunder and the missive!



K.S.Subramanian: He has published two volumes of poetry titled *Ragpickers* and *Treading on Gnarled Sand* through the Writers Workshop, Kolkata, India. His poem 'Dreams' won the cash award in Asian Age, a mainstream publication from New Delhi. He was once featured in museindia, run by Central Institute of Indian Languages, Hyderabad. All his short stories, 16 of them so far, have appeared in various web sites, notably Muse india, Indian Ruminations, Kitaab, Indian Periodical among others. Poems have been highlighted in several anthologies, published both at home and abroad and web zines. He is a retired senior Asst. Editor from The Hindu.



THIRST

the brown wilted leaves in whorls,
cuddled in parched mud
can hardly breathe
some of them still hang
on twigs of the crooked tree
with a bent broken spine unquenched forever
along the thirsty salty shores
of an orange-grey sunset ---

the withered flowers on ground
trapeze in a dance of death
rolling in a wayward breeze
of heartlessness inviting
the dark clandestine night ---

I sit lonely with the warrior waves
thrashing my feet frail with endless walking
searching for sea shells with live molluscs
hoping to find a susurrating oyster
rich pocket of a brilliant pearl
seeking to hide in me
from the tradesmen out there ---

waiting for the drowsy sun
to drop into my lap lovingly
for unruffled sleep ---

yet no scintillating pearl,
no warm love in sight
as the sun dives into
the abysmal cold waters
leaving behind the fathomless night
myself lost in an eternity
of search
for the light!



Laksmisree Banerjee: Prof. Dr. Laksmisree Banerjee is an established Poet, Writer, Editor, Literary Critic, Educationist, Humanist, Rotarian, practicing Vocalist, a Senior Fulbright Scholar, Commonwealth Scholar and a National Scholar in English from the Calcutta University, India, and a University Professor of English, and Ex-Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University. She has received the

Sahitya Akademi's "Avishkar" Honour, her UGC Postdoctoral Research Award, the Honour of The Connoisseur of Creative & Literary Arts by the Tunisian-Asian Poetic Society, the Kala-Ratnam Award and the Reuel International Lifetime Achievement Award 2021, among others. Dr. Banerjee happens to be the Indian Rashtrapati's Nominee on Boards of Central Universities.



Rev 12:11- And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;

i did a lot of wrong

in the past

taking shortcuts to get cash

but it didn't last

hurt my family

community and friends

did bad
with my hands

Well! I can't change
nor reverse it
but I made a promise to God and myself
to never again go back to what I did

I'm stretching forth
to the mark of the High Calling
on my way there i know I'll fall
because a few times I've already been falling

but each time I stood up
dust myself off and tried again
then meditate
on John 10:10

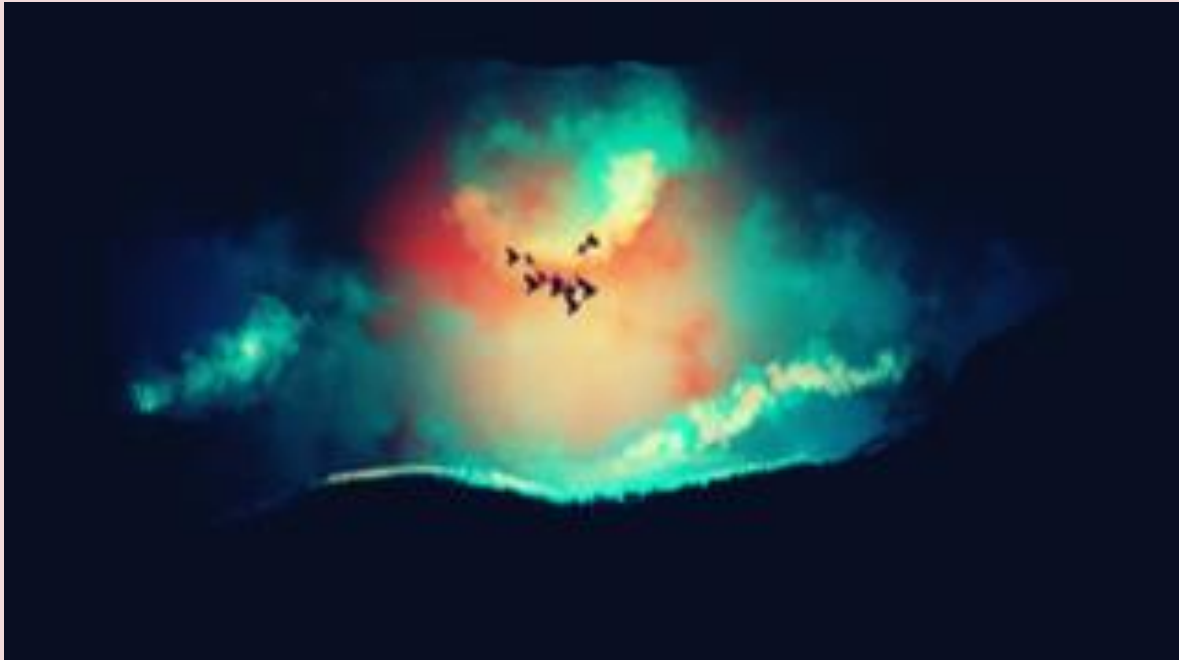
I'm here to help
and to win souls
that is some
of goals

I'm trying to be
an encouragement
to change there isn't, I can't
it's I will or won't

what I'm saying here
ain't at all phoney
because I, Leroy Abrahams
am a living testimony



Leroy Ralph Abrahams: I'm an only child. I reside in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. I'm married to Eileen and we have two boys and one girl. I'm a published author of 4 poetry anthologies and also wrote one with 3 other phenomenal writers. I started an outreach with Chantal Sam Moodaley in 2020 and we decided to name it ***Meet The Need***. We serve the community every Saturday morning. I'm hoping to one day work with children who are also eager to write. I love to write and I'm in love with poetry.



VOICES OF THE CAVES (A SHARDOMA)

My torch lights
ablaze cave paintings
I found in
France. Bright hues
as reminders of
spring bursting with song.

I also
found paintings in Spain,

singing out

from stone walls

patterned with vibrant swirls of

that cave's mighty voice



Linda Imbler: Linda Imbler's poetry collections include six published paperbacks: *Big Questions*, *Little Sleep*, *Big Questions*, *Little Sleep* second edition (expanded with 66 additional poems); *Lost and Found*; *Red Is The Sunrise*; *Bus Lights*; *Travel Sight*; and *Spica's Frequency*. Soma Publishing has published her four e-book collections, *The Sea's Secret Song*; *Pairings*, a hybrid of short fiction and poetry; and *That Fifth Element*; and *Per Quindecim*. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at

lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com. When not writing, Linda and her husband build acoustic and steel string guitars. She is also an avid reader, lifelong learner, and enjoys conversations about ideas generated by life.



If ever you think of me
If ever I come to your memory
Put a smile on your face
Glint on your eyes
Dimple on your cheeks
Energy on your limbs
To rush back to our golden days
Welcome them
Cuddle them

You will forget the grudges
You will embrace the sweetness of past and
Will beautify your present
If ever you think of me
Think of our laughter
Our tireless talks
Our hour-to-hour texts
Our eagerness to stay closer
Our commitments
But not the bridges
Not the hinges
Only the positive beverages
This will show you light
To live happily
This will guide you
To stay positively.



Lopamudra Mishra: She resides in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India. She completed her graduation in English Hons from Sailabala Women's college, Cuttack and post-graduation in 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 works include her very own published books: *Rhyme of Rain; First Rain; Tingling Parables; Rivulet of Emotions;* and *Red Tulips*.



YOUR HEART

I sought to take refuge in your heart

Please accept, it is my humble request

A truly wondrous place to be in

Which provides me the utmost safety

It is the endearing assurance, that I am safe

Darling, you uplift my well-being enormously

You give me the protection that I need

Fulfilling my desire to be loved by you

Whenever I am in your arms I feel elated

It is my Haven, my resort of happiness

Thank you for shoving away my concerns

Keeping all my anxieties at bay

Sheltering all my fears and shortcomings

Harboring whatsoever ill feelings I have

For being my revered asylum for my wayward thoughts

Darling, I never stopped loving you

A task I so persistently pursued

A sanctuary for keeping my sanity

A secret, I want to reveal to none

My ultimate hiding-place, refuge is in your heart!



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. Lubna 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. Lubna has written many poems for National and International Anthologies. Lubna graduated in Zoology and holds a diploma in Travel and Tourism and Export Management. Lubna is an avid traveller and has been to 35 countries.



CITY LIFE

Under the diesel air
unshackled by the
incessant traffic
we walk back and forth
to reach the destination

The distance
between the parked cars
is getting exacerbate with the spiraling city life

A certain inexplicable
blankness
is eating the moods

There's nothing informal
about this

The sky is dark
with a brittle air

No one survives
except the fittest
No space for the prosaic
with a perennial hope
of conquering the dreams

For a bird to sing
in a flowery garden
or a frog to dream
about a flight of pleasure
there is no space
not even in a dream



M Vijayaraghavan Nair: Mr M Vijayaraghavan is a retired senior executive of a multinational pharma company. He lives in Parli, Kerala (India) with his family. He is a multilingual poet and has in his credit an anthology of poems in Malayalam titled as “Vaku”(Word). He is in the

process of releasing an anthology of poems in English very soon. Currently he is in the editorial board of a Malayalam magazine namely Sahityasamvedhanam, published from Kothamangalam, Kerala. His poems can be read in various Malayalam and International Magazines/anthologies .



RED ROSE!

Midnight rambling

My mind and I

On buttery path

Desires rewind.

A pause;
When the fresh red rose
Spoke a thousand words
Of unspoken love
Alas! It wilted
Yet the petals preserved
Between those pages
Of the unread novel!

Only this morning
Incinerated!
For the new house
Doesn't have space for
Ancient stuff!
Finally good riddance!

Or will the ashes
Suffuse the air?
I guess, I can smell
The swinging scent
Of fresh red rose
In the puff of the midnight, clear!

I want to fall asleep.
Dream! Of that unscripted story
Of wasted youth
Just once more!



Madhu Gangopadhyay: She hails from India. She conveniently explores all the genres of poetry writing. She has a Master's degree in English Literature from Calcutta University and a Bachelor's degree in Education. She has been in the education industry for two decades now. She has also been a content developer and has designed academic course books for senior school students. Her works have been published in several anthologies and online journals.

Her poems have been translated into Spanish, Albanian, Turkish and Persian languages. She is also an exponent of Indian classical dance forms. Currently she is pursuing MA in Psychology.

<http://madmusingspoetry.com/home>

<https://www.facebook.com/madhu.gangopadhyay.5>

madmusingspoetry.com



VIBRATION OF WORDS...

i write

write all the letters

i do poetry

every new day,

weave words,

spin in

some delicate chords

of silken emotions,

singing a song

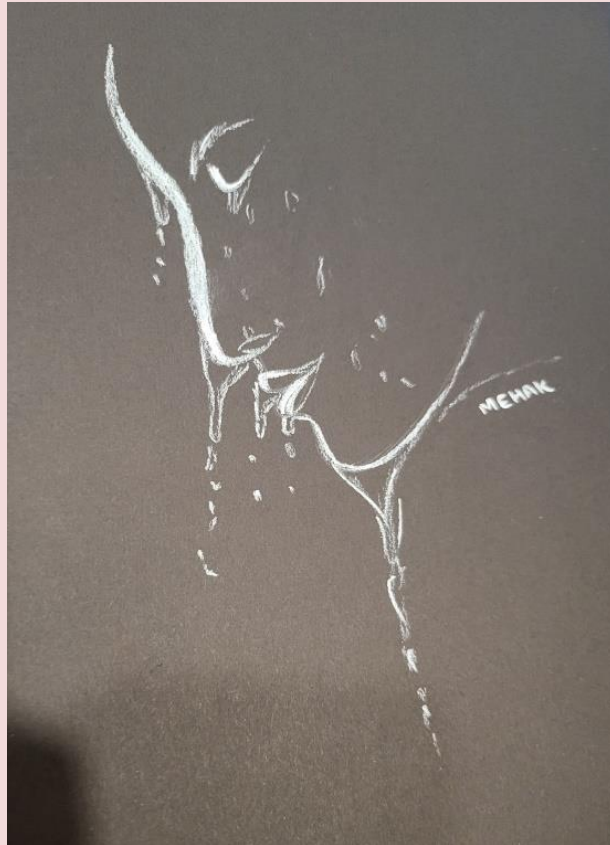
I call out to you,

to you each day,
every evening,
all the mornings,
my voice echoes
on these lines of mine;
your name is embedded,
in there somewhere
found in the elucidation
some words stay,
remain in,
randomly vibrate
and roam,
looking for you around
in the plains,
searching for that well known perfume,
your scent in the air,
there is hope,
assurance,

and a belief
that my lost voice,
encased in this instrument of some easy words,
will reach you sometime,
will surely find you somewhere,
the strings of my words
will pull you one day towards me,
my voice may be right,
or may be not,
but the vibrations of these words
will prove to be!



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



THE DARK LIGHT

I live inside four walls that are sealed and shut tightly, enclosing the emotions, the pain, the pleasure, coping with the crude sense of understanding. I build images of windows on these walls, creating my own skin, removing the dirt from beneath my feet. I don't know where these images take me, making me lose myself from the clutches of insanity. The windows built in my mind are open with hope, light and serenity that make me the person I am.

I try to build a window where sunshine
surpasses all my pain, all my worries,
creating a niche for my soul within
making me more pure, letting my
thoughts, my inner spirit endure.



Mehak Gupta Grover: She is the author of three books - THE HUMANE QUEST (volume-1, 2, & 3), published by Authorspress, New Delhi. She has been bestowed with '100 Inspiring Authors of India' award in Kolkata. She has also been honored with the 'Women of Influence 2019' award presented on women's day in New Delhi. Along with her books, her work has been published in various anthologies and she is recipient of various other prizes in poetry competitions as well.

(mehakgrover@amartex.com)



MOST POEMS

Most poems are pounded out
in emotional flesh, sometimes
physical skin scalped feelings.

It's a Jesus hanging on a cross
a Mary kneeling at the bottom
not knotted in love but roped,
a blade of a bowie knife

heavenward.

I look for the kicker line
the close at the bottom
seek a public poetry forum
to cheer my aspirations on.
I hear those faraway voices
carrying my life away-
a retreat into insanity.



Michael Lee Johnson: He lived ten years in Canada, Vietnam era. Today he is a poet in the greater Chicagoland area, IL. He has 248 YouTube poetry videos. Michael Lee Johnson is an internationally published poet in 43 countries, several published poetry books, nominated for 4 Pushcart Prize awards and 5 Best of the Net nominations. He is editor-in-chief of 3 poetry anthologies, all available on Amazon, and has several poetry books and chapbooks. He has over 536 published poems. Michael is the administrator of 6 Facebook Poetry groups and Member of the Illinois State Poetry Society

<http://www.illinoispoets.org/>



MAGICAL HUG

It was a beautiful sunset. I was sitting in my rocking chair and remembering those trembling hands of many senior citizens who blessed me when I consoled them during their times of pain, depression, and stress with serious illnesses like cancer, stroke, heart attack etc. Those blessings straight from their affectionate hearts saved me from death many times.

As a compassionate doctor, I made it a point to advise them to be positive and have faith in God. I always believe that God is the ultimate doctor. With God's blessings, we can overcome all difficulties, obstacles, hardships, and

challenges. One should have true faith and devotion. Everything will work out in the end. One should not lose hope or be depressed. Faith makes all things possible, giving you the courage and confidence to face everything. Life is precious. We should be thankful to God for every breath we take and every morning we open our eyes to see the beautiful sunrise and listen to the music of nature. We should give time to our elders and listen to them whenever they share their anxieties, grief, happiness and hopes in life. They should not feel that they are all alone in this world with nobody to take care of them. People start to heal the moment they feel that they are heard. And sometimes we need just a hug or pat on the forehead to feel better. It can be a magic touch wiping away their sorrows.



Nalini Janardhanan: Dr (Major) Nalini Janardhanan, is a doctor who served in the Indian Army as an Army Medical Officer. She is a popular writer from Kerala who received the Katha Award and a writer of many medical books for which she has received the IMA Sahithya Award. She is an Akashvani artist of ghazals and bhajans. She has been felicitated with many awards for her contributions towards society as a Doctor, Singer, Writer and Army Officer.



Money can't buy happiness,

They say.

But I sell happiness

Every day.

Some days I sell colorful balloons
To the equally colorful kids!
On other days it could be anything
From toys to plastic jewelry with glittery beads.

I sell flowers sometimes
Beautiful, fragrant, or not
Some days they bought just one
Some days a lot!

I sell lollipops, popcorn and
Fluffy cotton-candies
To the happy-faced parents
And their jolly babies.

I sell happiness to people all day long
And at night in my dreams those

Happy faces come
They hold out their hands
Full of happiness and ask,
If I want some.



Nazia Islam: I am a teacher, currently residing in Dhaka, Bangladesh. As an Early Childhood Educator by profession, my dream is to make a difference in the world by shaping the minds of the future generation. I write out of passion and sometimes, out of whim. I love nature, books and simplicity, and the sound of rain.



THE VOICELESS..!

Behind the locked up mouth,
Entrapped dirges prick our heart,
And there
A loud sigh in its tiptoes,
Breaks the silence of our eyes,

As we mourn for
our broken soul; wounded pride..!

Suffocated by your fancy lies,
Our voices lose its voice,
So we do live with your illusive progress,
Under the surveillance of our malnourished existence,
We the downtrodden section of the society..!

Bound to walk we are,
On the path that you have laid upon our fortune
And there the world witness,
The death of our comrades
Who lie down like the dried bread or piece of loaf
On some dirty railway tracks..!

Afraid to see dream for our future,
Tired and sad is our present,

Our sleep breaks in midnight
When your laughs haunt our happiness,
As if lightning bolt in our tears..!



Nitusmita Saikia: Nitusmita Saikia, a bilingual writer from Assam, India is presently working as instructor in National Cadet Corps. With poetry, she also writes short stories, plays and has been writing for magazine like FM, GloMag, Innsaei and Sahitya Samavedana. Her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies and in local newspapers, in blogs, etc.



Someday, somewhere

I will meet you again

My dear brother, up there in heaven

How wonderful will it be to reminisce our childhood

How beautiful will it be to revisit our neighbourhood

You shall, still be the best bowler

I, once again, shall try to hit the sixer

We could save each other from mom's wrath

But you remain her favorite brat

When those 'robber and police' game dialogues ring in my ears

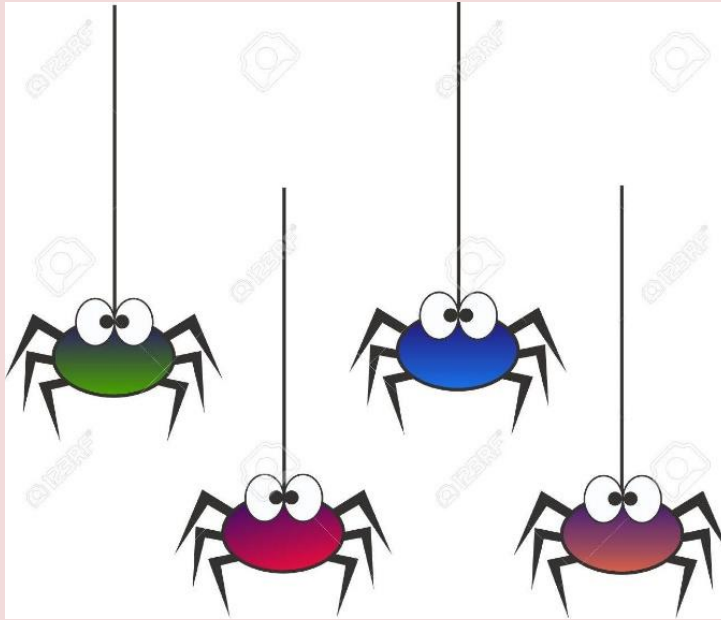
My cheeks feel the moisture of thousand tears

Just once bro just once

Someday somewhere we shall relive the
mere three decades spent together!



Nivedita Roy: Award-winning author and poetess, Nivedita Roy is a teacher by profession. She resides in the Kingdom of Bahrain and belongs to Lucknow. She is the author of 2 poetry books and 1 short story collection. She has co-authored 20 anthologies till now. Her poems/articles are published in many newspapers and sites in various global magazines and newspapers. She often hosts literary shows. She is one of the editors for the ezine Brahmand: Voice of the cosmos. Her inspiration is her father who now rests in peace with the Lord God. She is in love with life and is enjoying her literary journey.



SPIDER FEAR

It's that time of the year again

when the eight-legged have taken over.

No matter how many I wash down the drain

they are back, winning this hostile takeover.

They lie in every corner

waiting patiently for their prey.

Yet, all of them are foreigners

who seem to have found a permanent home to stay.

And now that the sun has set
the eight-legged begin to move.

There's a big brown one by the kitchenette
slowly swinging down the web to its own musical groove.

And the black ones down below
scurry away in fright?

Pardon me, but it just seems so right
to know that spiders also fear ehmm....so

Arachnophobia

It's a valid fear

Note: This is based on a news article that found that spiders can also have arachnophobia! I found this very interesting

<https://www.npr.org/2021/10/26/1049274894/spiders-can-have-arachnophobia>



Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Immunology from the University of Oxford and a professional Bharatanatyam dancer. She works as a senior associate editor and has been published in many poetry magazines and anthologies (Glomag, The Poet anthologies, Sequoyah Cherokee River Journal, Visual Verse, and The Ekphrastic Review, to name a few). Her microfiction has been published by Potato Soup Literary Journal. She also attends poetry open mics (including the one organized by Rattle Poetry). She has published two books, *She: The reality of womanhood* and *The many moods of water* (both available on Amazon).



ENCHANTED NIGHT

A night of calm and bliss enveloped me

Walking on the beach,

My mind lost in a maze of thoughts...

A gentle roar ahead of me shakes me out of my reverie

and I smile when I saw a wave break towards the shore,

as though greeting me and making

its formidable presence acknowledged.

The lovely indigo sky with its sprinkle of shining stars

and a pearl like moon set the stage for romance, drama
and bliss.

I take a deep breath and savor
the sense of pleasure and tranquility.
The moon hovers above the water,
its luminescence melting into the sooty waters
like frothy white cream swirling into dark coffee.
my senses are overwhelmed and I stay there,
deeply absorbed in the marvel that enchants my soul.



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. I also enjoy painting in different mediums, watching movies and listening to music.



CIVILIZATIONS

You are the very first to witness
growing civilizations on the banks of rivers
Mesopotamian, Indus valley,
Egypt, China and the like
With farming, cooking washing and bathing
life slowly started evolving in settlements.

Once you served as a conduit for commerce
Built bridges across the rivers to connect,
trades developed; men travelled places

went across the borders,
formed religions, arts and architecture,
writing, storing and sharing information
and through trade, conflict and exploration
discovered cultures, cities and nations.

You have also witnessed their collapses
but everywhere one thing remained common
without your existence nothing worked
and pray you should be flowing gaily forever and ever.



Pankajam: She is a bilingual poet and novelist and an author of more than 30 books. Her poems, book reviews, short stories and articles have been published in many national/international journals and anthologies. One of her poetry collections has been translated into French. Three books on literary criticism discuss her works in detail. A book of critical essays and research papers on her poem titled “Poetic Oeuvre of K Pankajam” has also been published. She is the recipient of many awards.



THE ABANDONED HOUSE

The brick walls are bare; the plaster has peeled off many years now.

The wooden windows holding together with sheer grit.

The wood has become worn out and grey.

Once a beautiful curved main entrance, a dark hollow now.

No iron gate or wooden door to protect the house.

The abandoned house...neglected and in ruins.

Once a grand mansion with curved arches; dilapidated and falling to pieces now.

Maybe there were more storeys which have tumbled down.

Uncontrolled weeds and banyan trees growing all around.

Many people have lived in this house but not a soul now.

This old, ramshackle house in a lane in central Kolkata.

Silent, dark and eerie with only the walls as witness to its history.

The abandoned house has sheltered three abandoned kittens.

The white fluffy balls are playing around on the terrace, Oblivious to the broken down state of the house.

Running around and playing hide and seek.

The abandoned house has come alive with their meows.

The walls and windows are happy to find life again.

The banyan trees on the terrace are enjoying their company.

The plaster peeled brick walls and the doorway,

The curved arches and the wooden windows,
The huge terrace with jutting out cornices
And the dark lifeless interiors
Have all found life at last.



Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: I am Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick and I live in Mumbai, India. I am a scientist, a National Scholar transformed into an award winning poet. I have published nine books and my poems have been widely

published in national and international journals and anthologies. I am blessed to be a globally loved poet with my poems being translated into 40 world languages. Apart from numerous awards from Indian organisations I have received the Gold Rose from MS Productions, Buenos Aires, Argentina in 2019 and the Panorama International Literary Award, Greece in 2022. I am the President and Initiator of the Mumbai Chapter of Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library (IPPL) and the Cultural Convenor and Literary Coordinator of ISISAR (West India).



OUR TOMMY TITMOUSE

Awoken by glass clatter, I hear milk
Float's electric whirr, his bottles rattle
in their baskets, clink as milkman quick
delivers. "Fetch milk in", mam sharts. Battle

open our snowed door to find Blue Tom Tit
has been at it again. Beak strips silver foil top

for winter sip and sup claws stood on lip,
"Tit's been at cream again, mam!". Our door stop

a feeding station for these thieves icecold
and hungry for rich risen in the pint.

Today we buy plastic containers sold
in supermarkets, but memory's bright.

How fast Tommy Titmouse time steals the cream
of experience making it a dream.



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 WORLD WITHOUT TIME

How I wish the day extends

Without demarcating itself to tomorrow

Flowing perennially sans hurries

Slipping into eternal continuity of existence.

Embracing an uninterrupted line without full-stops and
semicolons

With unparalleled freedom

Unbound by limits

To sway endlessly

Bereft of the ticking behind my neck.



Prabha Prakash: Prabha Prakash is a poet based in Kerala, a Chartered Accountant who likes to describe herself as an auditor who loves words more than numbers. Her first poetry collection “Lost Monsoon” was published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata in 2018. She is the recipient of Reuel International Poetry Prize 2019.



SELFIE ZONE

The newly built selfie zone in the heart of the town has turned into a graveyard overnight.

Beneath it lies innumerable tombs, with symbolic dead bodies of tea vendors and debris of glasses, stoves, tea dusts, lips dismembered.

Is government a monolithic bulldozer these days!

Nowhere seen Gopal, the tea vendor, so also Laharee.

After the displacement they have migrated to city in search of livelihood.

Adjacent to selfie zone lies the newly inaugurated 'our omfed' with interior and exterior newly designed, attracting innumerable customers.

The dilapidated structure of socialism has given way to capitalism.

No more the dictum is 'from each according to his ability to each according to his need.'

Greed, selfishness, cutthroat competition has become the order of the day.

The roadside stalls give way to malls and the city looks beautiful only to its own naked eyes, in selfie mode, after editing the inhuman face in edit option!



Prahallad Satpathy: Dr. Prahallad Kumar Satpathy, who hails from Odisha (India), is a bilingual poet writing both in Odia and English. He is a retired Associate Professor of Economics. To his credit, he has four published anthologies in Odia language. His poems are published in many national and international journals. Twice he has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as an honorary member.



Ah Death!

Reams and reams can be written on it,

And yet, we are none the wiser,

Do we really have a choice of how to die?!

Death comes suddenly,

Or so very slowly,

We beg it to end our misery,

Or there is a resigned acceptance of the inevitability

of waiting it out,

Or eagerly awaiting death to end our sad state of affairs,
For who in his joyous, happy state of mind wishes death on
himself?!

He had rather grab the joy and ask for more!

It is funny, how personally we think, death is far away,
When each second, each hour, each day, we are nearing it..

Let us keep that in mind,

And live in the present,

Grateful for all our good fortune,

Doing good to one and all,

And minding one's business,

So we have no regrets,

We go in peace...

To our final destination...



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.



THE FINAL ROAD

We were unknown to each other

Until we choose

to talk to each other.

We were two different souls

from two different zones

Until we choose

to live in the same abode

We were two different persons

with different perspectives for life

Until we choose

to reduce our distances.

That is the most important segment in life

which makes us united....

And finally our paths meet

at the same direction, at the same point

Never to be separated again

from each other.



Preety Bora: Hailing from the beautiful state of Assam in India, the poetess, Mrs Preety Bora started writing from her college days. She lives in Golaghat with her family. Nature inspires her to write poetry. She writes in both in English and in Assamese (her mother tongue). Her poems have been published in various anthologies and magazines in India and in abroad. Being an innate lover of Nature, she allows her feelings and ideas to be expressed as free verse. Her poems visualise the beauty of Nature and the fundamental elements of life. Besides writing, she is fond of cooking, designing and listening to music. She is one of the co-editors of a bilingual book entitled *Hazar Kobir Sapun*.



THERE IS NO PARTITION WHEN IMPRESSING YOUNG GIRLS

I am hearing, ji, that one person

is get dismiss from party

for praising of Jinnah.

Arre, why you are fight

over the past history?

Jo ho gaya, so ho gaya, no?

Many other good reason for

dismissing no -

he not praising my new sherwani,

he not coming to my daughter wedding,
he talking to enemy party madam.

Why you talk of Jinnah and
partition?

That is partition jo ho gaya.

There is many more -
in people's head.

Brahmin vs dalit vs thakur,
sikh vs jain vs christian,
ameer vs gareeb vs middle class:
everyone wanting separate
country, maybe not
saying loudly.

Who writing books on that?

But there is no partition
when impressing young girls.

That day I am seeing -
one girl too lazy,
too impatient
to buy ticket
is give money to passenger
to pass to conductor
who is at other end.

Whole bus is helping, ji -
all mens are rising to occasion:
young, old, hindu, muslim,
fit, fat, rich, poor,
hero, zero - all type mens
wanting to help young lady.
Maybe I write book on that.

What do you say, ji?



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He is a Thane-based epigraphist, historian, copywriter and poet. He has been published in several anthologies and magazines. He is the editor of Narrow Road Literary Journal, a e-zine of poetry, haibun and flash fiction.



UNWRINGING PHONE

Unwringing phone

Her telephone on its stand

Firm and long rooted:

more than a decade

now unwringing for months;

dusted and adjusted

only a dexterous beauty,

calmed and ignored

bemoans its plight,
for inmates keep distance.

From morn throughout
Mobiles ring and ringtones
very busy in hands
of roaming and asleep,
a joy unique and unbounded;

somewhere from corner
phone weeps for its isolation,
“ who cares for this ancient
Outdated in most hands?
Once our prime used much;”

Recent ally, mobiles
not connected with wires,
cute and smart with pictures,

roam and roaming with pals,
plugged in to multiple slaves;

masters reach every minute
with touch gentle and handy
at bed side, even in bathrooms,
alluring ringtones, OTPS
all within technology's make.



Radhamani Sarma: Radhamani specialized in the plays of W.H. Auden for her doctoral thesis from the University of Madras. She obtained (PGDTE) CIEFL, post-graduate diploma in the teaching of English from Hyderabad. She is a retired professor of English from Pachaiyappa's college, with 31 years of teaching experience. She guided M.Phil and Ph.D. Research scholars. She has published four Books of poems and one book of short stories. She is widely published and anthologized and subscribes to various journals and websites, and is also a reviewer and critic. Now her avocation is mainstream poetry and haiku-related verses, with a keen interest in Cherita and gembun.



SKY AND LAND

The sky is the same overhead, the land makes all the difference.

Roots go down, not up on to the sky.

When the vermillion of the sun plays on the canvas of blue

The sky here is the same as the sky that used to be once,
but it's not the same.

Land fills the canvas of mind first and then the strokes of
blue,

Then the shades of grey-black descend and that ache.

It's not planned. It's never planned.

How could I plan, that I'd climb to the terrace just when the
sky turned to a needle

Tipped with the hemlock of past that rises slowly up on to
the sky.

Numbing it all, leaving the breaths, slow, mind lost in the
past

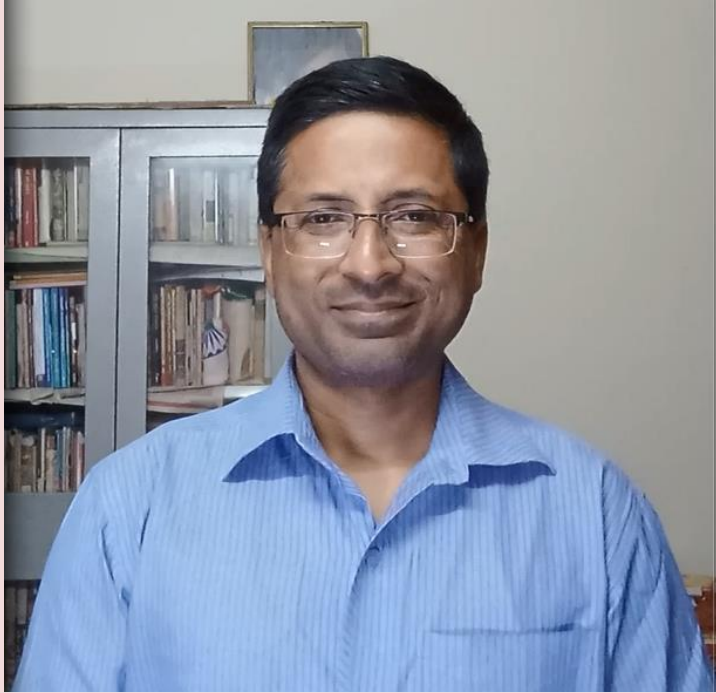
Or sinking slowly in the silty bed of time.

It happened after a long time

After a long time I've typed so much, so fast.

Thoughts pour faster than the speed of fingers on the
board

Then the fingers have to sprint behind thoughts.



Rajnish Mishra: Rajnish Mishra is a poet, writer, translator and blogger born and brought up in Varanasi, India and now in exile from his city. His work originates at the point of intersection between his psyche and his city. He edits PPP Ezine and writes at:

<https://rajnishmishravns.wordpress.com/>



THE VEIL OF DARKNESS

The rain is falling ceaselessly, weaving
A carpet of thick fog enveloping the
Universe around us; even the lamp posts
Aside the road is flashing a veiled light;

The black top surface of the empty pathways
Has been washed by the torrential rains,

And the rays of light are illuminating them
In fine streaks;

Why does a man strolling on the deserted
Road in such weather? Does he want to
Clear the mist, already surfacing in his mind's
Vault, by roaming around and thinking deep,
On the matters of life? or is he
Trying hard to fight the fog and make
A leeway for marching ahead
On the topsy-turvy paths of life;

His umbrella of godly benediction is protecting
Him from the imminent danger of engulfing
Fog; his purpose of life seems to be
To attain freedom from the long-accumulated
Veil of darkness which has taken its roots,

In the shape of mist in the dark recesses
Of his clogged mind;

Moving from mist to enlightenment
Is now his life's goal.



Rakesh Chandra: Mr Rakesh Chandra is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D in Law from Lucknow University. He has got two collections of poems titled 'Moon is Black' and 'Circle Of Life'. He also has 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.



A COLD CAPITAL

Cold January is the cruellest month,
The homeless bear the winter's brunt.

Hard with constant plunging temperature,
The adamantine doors of ruthless winter

Are suddenly flung wide open,
Their world gets numb and frozen:

No warm clothes to cover or protect,
Shivering in the streets full of neglect:

Frail bodies braving pangs of hunger,
Fighting like the true valiant soldiers!

They're left to their fate on dark foggy nights--
Squatting around fires they continue their fights:

Hundreds of rickshaw pullers and balloon sellers,
Homeless, dispossessed children seeking shelters!

Who has time to think about the homeless
Suffering from so many cold-related ailments?

Quite helpless, dowdy and bedraggled,
They are defeated and much haggled.

Swooped down by the cop, these persons
Sometimes, are coerced into the shelters:

Alienating and strange like night prisons
Unfriendly and black with many reasons.

The winter tightens its grip in the city,
I watch the news--oh, what a pity!

Cold claims ten more lives on open roads,
The helpless destitutes-- I have no words!

I think how the rich and the privileged
Are happy and wild in incessant cold,

Chasing away chills with friends
Warm and alive with red wine blends!



Ranjana Sharan Sinha: Dr. Sinha is an eminent poet, author and professor of English. She has a number of awards to her credit for her contribution to poetry. Her poems from her collection "Scents and Shadows" are included in the syllabus of Purnea University. She has the honour of receiving a commendation from the former President of India, A P.J. Abdul Kalam for her poem, 'Mother Nature' contained in her collection 'Spring Zone'. She has received several other awards. Her poems, short stories, articles and research papers have been widely published in highly-acclaimed journals and anthologies. She has authored published 9 books in different genres and 50 research papers.



OWNING THE SUNSET

I want to own the sunset time

That one time is my time sublime.

Not a reclusory reticence;

Possessiveness?

How does it disturb you?

Not a moment I have skewed;

Encroaching upon your claim?

Never been my aim;

Poaching? How?

Not taken any such vow.

You can take your sunset too!

No, I won't ever envy you;

but I want my sunset time

Exclusively for me.

That one time is my time sublime.

Feasible, possible; glow is widespread

Nuances of her nature still remains unshed

Without a murmur, without a stir

She holds her sway...holds the spur

Steers her shade, veers to our view

It could be me, it could be you

But I want my sunset time

Exclusively for me,

That one time is my time sublime....



Ravi Ranganathan: He is a writer, Poet, critic, and a retired banker settled in Chennai. He has to his credit three books of poems: *Lyrics of Life*; *Blade of Green Grass*; and *Of Cloudless Climes*. He revels in writing his thought-provoking short poems called ‘ Myku’. His poems are featured regularly in many anthologies. He has won many awards for his poetry including recognition in ‘Poiesis award for excellence’ of Poiesisonline, Sahitya Gaurav award by Literati Cosmos Society, Mathura and ‘Master of creative Impulse’ award by Philosophyque Poetica. He contributes poems and articles regularly for monthly webzine ‘Literary Vibes’ and monthly e-magazine Glomag and the biannual ‘Metverse’.



COLD COMFORT

The crow had five rapid whys today

There are no answers to such profundity

A dreamer watches a coucal tail glide between fresh tree stumps

eyelids heavy, a treasure chest under them from a dawn-dream that came to comfort

The crow brings questions surreptitiously to the back gate to be reframed into useful omens

Why was he wearing ear studs of steel, round shiny, plain ones

And a bejewelled bindi which took nothing away from him?

Why did she enter fearless again like on a christmas day decades ago?

Why didn't the too-juicy meat over her bones bother her now?

Why did people outside the room never come in till dawn?

He showed her a scraped knee like a child who had just lost its mother

which he had and she fell to kissing him better

Why was it all so easy in the dream when nothing really was?

She made the bed and walked out before sunrise just as the mourners took over the house

On her way home she found she was wearing the child's slippers

had a bottle of wine in her hand and someone's mobile

She didn't need to return anything
or explain her absences and presence
because the dream took over and decided to end the night
"I was there, I tried to be there And so was he" she
comforted herself
She couldn't touch him anymore
The sun shone in some parts of the world
and left her a cold fog path back to where dreams never
thrived
"Why?" croaked her crow again



Reena Prasad: Reena R's poems have been published in The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, York Literary Review, Lakeview International Journal, Glomag, Duane's Poe Tree, Mad Swirl, etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. She was adjudged second in the 'World Union Of Poet's' poetry competition, 2016 and won an award for poetry in 2016 As 'You Like It International Poetry Contest', commemorating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare. She won the Reuel International Prize for poetry, 2018.



CHRISTMAS EVE IN INDIA

gymnasticating across Ahmadabad rooftops,
five long-tailed langur holy warriors dressed in gray
orchestrate a deliriously intoxicated street wedding
procession below,
parading greenwhite Christmas cars and Amitabh Bachchan
mud flapping rickshaws
line the streets,
while gushing rainbows of multicolor roses and streaming
orangeyellowwhite callalilies
explode flamboyantly, all serenaded by a cacophony of
tubas and dhols

with shiny black bamboo wooden sticks beating,
and greenscarlet sari'd women
dance in effervescent Hindu-Horah Sufi circles,
oblivious to the tubby paan chewing street peddlers
flailing week old squash and green squishy oranges

it is here, all across this vast mad subcontinent so
ecstatically undaunted,
that Mother India again pauses tonight, converges,
then unanimously exhales signifying another rebirth,
as our grateful planet heartens: "shabash! shabash!"



Robert Feldman: Born in Paterson, New Jersey, Robert was inspired by members of Paterson’s literary tradition, notably Allen Ginsberg and William Carlos Williams. Later, living in St. Louis, he organized poetry readings, produced and hosted a community-issues news hour and a biweekly bebop jazz radio program on KDNA-FM. After relocating to Bisbee, Arizona, Robert was instrumental in publishing some of Arizona’s most influential writers and in 1980 and collaborating with Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s “Mule Mountain Dreams”. Robert now resides in Tucson, continuing to write, paint, and play tabla, besides actively publishing his work for selected poetry magazines as well as his own collections.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/03/arts/design/norman-rockwells-four-freedoms-paintings-to-go-on-tour.html>

FOUR FREEDOMS NORMAN

As a kid,
Norman Rockwell
sat on the roof
of his Amsterdam Avenue
rooming house in New York
watching the Irish

and German gangs fight
it out with bike chains,
Four Freedoms Norman
dreaming of Daniel Boone
and a world so far away
from his own
that you still can smell
the baker's kneaded bread
in the majestic turpentine
distance.



Ryan Quinn Flanagan: Ryan Quinn Flanagan is a Canadian-born author residing in Elliot Lake, Ontario, Canada with his wife and many mounds of snow. His work can be found both in print and online in such places as: *Evergreen Review*, *The New York Quarterly*, *GloMag*, *Setu*, *Red Fez*, and *The Oklahoma Review*.



SOME DAY YOU WILL MAKE IT

And just like that, like a bolt from the blue

It hits you, one fine day, as you stand beneath the
tangerine sky,

Watching the golden halo lazily snaking its way through the
Orient

It's been a whole year and maybe a bit more

And you have spent the better part of the year gone by

Groping your way through the alleyways of darkness

Struggling to breathe, stay sane

And holding on to that last strand of hope

That tells you, you're gonna make it

And live to see the light at the end of the tunnel and
beyond

Looking back, you realise how far you've come

And even though you manage to smile through tears

Only you know how hard it's been - walking on the edge

Terrified of what might come next

And yet you've faced your fears and more

And now you know, this storm has changed everything
about you

And even though you know you still have a long way to go,

And the lonely, uncertain road ahead is yours and yours
alone to brave

You know, deep down, that yes, you'll do it - maybe yes

One day, you'll be standing in the sunshine and smiling,

Knowing how deeply humbling and cathartic this
experience was

And perhaps that's what life is all about - braving storms
and hurricanes and more...



Samrudhi Dash: I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. I write under the pseudonym 'Inara'. Along with contributions to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date five solo

poetry anthologies and three novels and conceptualised and edited four anthologies of different genres. I have completed my Masters in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. My signature words are "Hope, Live, Believe". My third novel "Letters from A Stranger - A Life Changing Map" is available as an e-book on Amazon Kindle and figured in the Amazon Bestseller List at Rank 10.



EPIPHANY ON A SNOWFLAKE ONE COLORADO MORNING

Snowflakes large
as butterflies in the wind entice
I stick out my tongue
let one of the giant fluff land
on my warm tongue.
In that moment I taste...
nothingness.
Water, not yet a droplet.
Beyond the sharpness of salt,

the happiness of sugar,
the musky turmeric, the earthy coriander,
and the burn of chillies,
my brain waits
to taste something.

I stick out my tongue again
and again.

Nothing.

Nada.

Zilch.

I add to my tongue and heart
more flavors, more textures,
more years, and more travels.

The experience it takes to recognize
the taste of purity.



Sangita Kalarickal: Sangita Kalarickal is a wordsmith, crafting in the forms of poetry, both free-form and haikai styles, and fiction. Her work has been published in several e-magazines, and anthologies. She utilizes her left brain at her day job in technology. Dr. Kalarickal lives in Minnesota, USA with her husband, kid, and her garden which she shares with wildlife, sometimes happily.



THE SURVIVORS

The threesome
has jumped into the maelstrom of another day.
The boy looks around,
the drum slung around his shoulders.

Holding hands

they have crossed many roadblocks and boulders.

In the rampant cacophony

is anyone willing to listen to the beats of his drum,

or the euphonious song that his little sister hums?

Are the two protectively shading their tiny brother

from the scorching fury of the day?

They have no report cards,

no trophies for elocution contests.

Their dreams nipped in the bud,

they plod forth trying to pass the test of survival.

One more day.

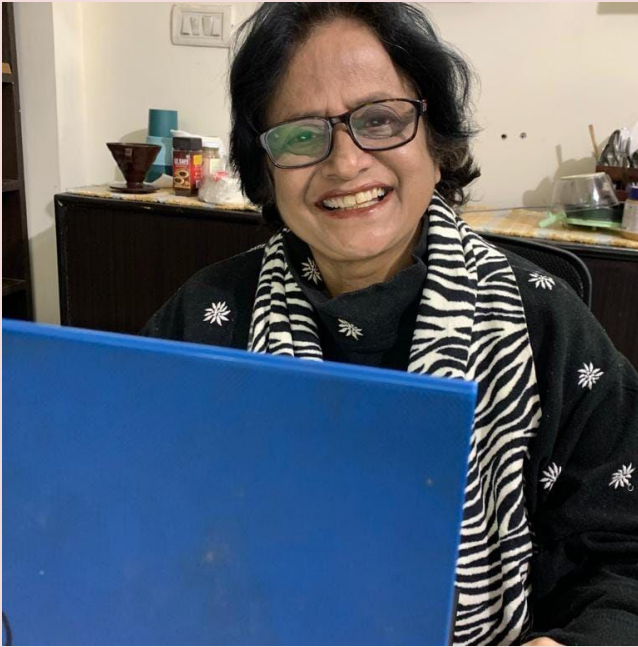
One more fight – one more-

yet another.

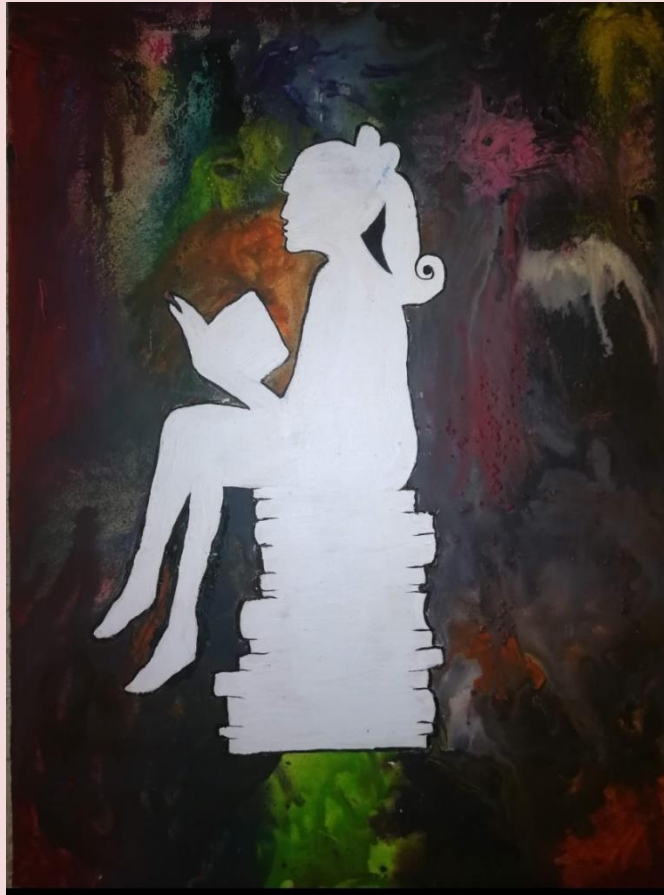
The traffic snarls on,

the threesome plods on.

Onwards on the road to survival.
Not dreaming of filling their coffers,
only wondering whether
tomorrow will have some better offers.
Some hopeful songs for survival.



Santosh Bakaya: Recipient of the Reuel Award for poetry [for my poem, *Oh Hark!* Setu International Award, 2018, Keshav Malik Award, 2019, I am a poet, essayist, novelist, TEDx speaker, biographer, and creative writing mentor, critically acclaimed for my poetic biography of Mahatma Gandhi, *Ballad of Bapu*. My Ted Talk on *The Myth of Writer's Block* is very popular. I write a weekly column *Morning Meanderings* in Learning and Creativity.Com, the first part of which is an e-book now. My two collaborative e-books, *Vodka by the Volga* with Dr. Ampat Koshy and From *Prinsep Ghat to Peer Panjal* with Gopal Lahiri have been Amazon bestsellers. My latest book is *Runcible Spoons and Peagreen Boats (poetry)*.



A smile that stayed eternally

A leaf that was green perennially

Blushed cheeks, far as pink

One eye in a permanent wink

The mischievous glint in the eye

Another one left out a sigh

Is it not worth mentioning

Things that stay as still as in a painting



Sara Bubber: Sara is a storyteller, writer, poet and an Animal communicator. She works as a content writer at Heartyculture Wellness. Sara spends time with books, her pets and her indie friends in the area! She is a fan of Bollywood over Hollywood and less known Hindi series!



SURVIVAL THEORY

The truth arrives in waves

for those who are ready to ride the tide

Love is a shelter through the storm
for those who are open to the rescue mission

Peace is a state of consciousness
that expands or contracts based on intention

We all have guardian angels watching over us
but they can only act if we first grant them entrance

Perception is a diamond with infinite angles from which to
view –

it is our choice which side we will focus on

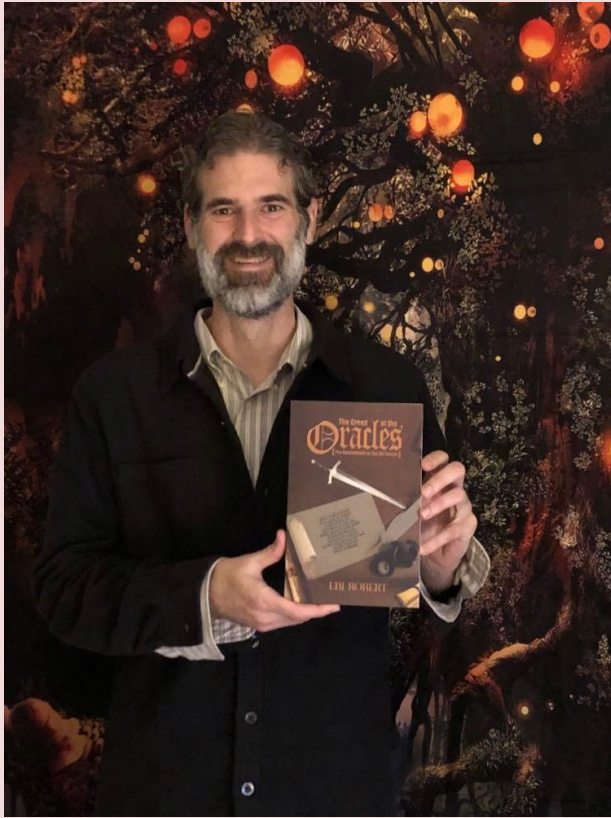
The Kingdom of God is found within the soul
and reflects outwardly into the world when allowed

A muscle breaks down so that it can become stronger
just as chaos always leads to a higher state of order

It is courage in our darkest hour
which opens the lens through which light shines in

There is no circumstance in life
that each of us is not inherently capable of surviving

There are no mistakes (only lessons to learn)
along the path toward fulfilling our destiny



Scott Thomas Outlar: Scott Thomas Outlar is originally from Atlanta, Georgia. He now lives and writes in Frederick, Maryland. He is the author of seven books, and his work has been nominated multiple times for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. He guest-edited the Hope Anthology of Poetry from CultureCult Press as well as the 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 Western Voices editions of Setu Mag. He has been a weekly contributor at Dissident Voice for the past eight years. Selections of his poetry have been translated into Afrikaans, Albanian, Azerbaijani, Bengali, Cherokee, Dutch, French, Hindi, Italian, Kurdish, Malayalam, Persian, Serbian, and Spanish. More about Outlar's work can be found at 17Numa.com.

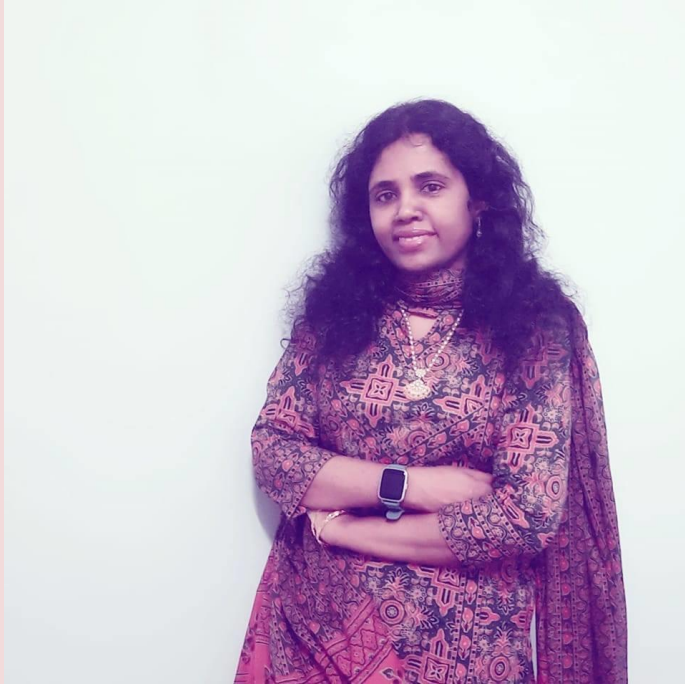


THE NEW YEAR

The calendar transformed; there was no other change
The bells trembled for nothing, and so did men
The dog shuddered as fireworks lit dull minds
Wishes embraced my mute phone, yet I felt lonely
The chapel chimed pleasantly for prayer
The crowd flooded the street for God's sweets
The routine mayhem filled the beginning
I had no time for myself.

Watching the lizard defy gravity, I was reading
One year has passed, and I remain the same

Reading and writing as if it's my breath,
There is no thought of tomorrow's woes
And no purpose or plan is in my memory
I keep walking, like the hands of the clock
Where do I want to be? Where am I now?
Clueless I say, in your arms oh my God.



Shalini Samuel: She comes from a little village in Kanyakumari. She works as a content writer at Kai Marketing. She loves to write as it gives her more peace. Author of three poetry collections she thinks poetry is a beautiful form of art, where the poet writes out his/her deeper mind and the reader gets a glimpse of it.



There's a lane at the end of the rutted road
that leads from the market highpoint street
where animals wait and birds get tense.

A populace waits with hungry breath.

The morning market leaps to work,
its chops and cuts and rotted rhythms.

Hold hands and watch this life parade
consumed by a rising hungry tide.



Shreekumar Varma: He is a poet, novelist, and playwright residing in Chennai, India. 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



SELF LOVE

I am a woman

I am a mother, a sister, a daughter

I love myself, my family, and my friends.

I am passionate about many things

That is what makes me who I am today

I love the way I look in my new dress,
I love the simplicity on my face
I love the way I look in a photograph
Especially when my eyes are closed, and my smile is real.

I deserve unconditional love
I deserve the yummiest of food
I deserve my gold and diamonds
And Universe wants only my good

I am not perfect
I am not always right
But that does not mean
That others can hurt me with their nasty words and
unnecessarily fight

Love your neighbour, love your spouse
Love your kids and even love your pet mouse

Most importantly, love yourself

Your health is your wealth

Your smile is worth millions

You are priceless.



Shreya Suraj: She is a gold medallist in Mathematics, teacher, artist, photographer, and volunteer. She is a Mathematics teacher by profession and an artist by passion. She is the Founder of an art group called ANYBODY CAN DRAW on Facebook. She is also a volunteer in various environmental organisations which organises beach clean-ups and has done more than 200 beach clean ups in Qatar.

She believes that each individual is unique and encourages every individual to do different types of art works using recyclable materials. Her principle in life is to do good to others unconditionally and without expectations. If your work is good, nature will definitely reward you.



SOMETHING I LOOK AT-237

I want to smile

Can anyone snatch it from me?

I want to live

Can anyone force me to die?

I create my moments

Live it the way I relish

Can anyone restrain me

From having it

I am with me

Can anyone deprive me of

My companionship

I live in my dreams

Which is more colourful and fascinating

Than other's reality

Can anyone stop me from dreaming

And have a go at all that I love and fancy

I am happy

The reason for my happiness is me

I am the cause of my joy and bliss

Cheer and smile

Can anyone make me unhappy

Be the reason for my tear and grief?

I do not intend to spoil
Anyone's mirth and glee
Hope! None will come
In between me and my smile
When I am with me
Can anyone stop me
From being myself
And becoming what I want to be.



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He is from Padmapur, Jagatsingpur, Odisha, India. He works as finance officer with the Government of Odisha. He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer whose write-ups are published in newspapers and in several national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. He has published three collections of poems: *Mana Upabana; Aroma of Wilting Petals; Something I Look At*. His collection of poems and proses are published in his blogs. He has been conferred several accolades in the international arena. In 2019 and 2020 he has been awarded the medal of International Faith Poet of the year by Destiny Poet International Community of Poets, Wakefield, U.K.



MY HIMALAYAS

Falling in love at first sight with the mighty mountain range
of the Kangchenjunga—the custodian of civilization,

The dazed feeling at the faint rays of the rising sun, creating
a glimmer of hope and joy,

The distant Herculean escarpment lit up by a golden hue- a
picture of magnanimity,

The purity and demureness of the snowy hill top radiant
like a newly wedded bride,

The splaying of a thin white mist of vapor with clouds one chasing the other,

This dazed feeling has now risen to a passion watching the ball of fire on its diurnal course,

For it resembles a knight in shining armor out to rescue a damsel in distress,

Descending into twilight- the red hues of the approaching dusk slowly turning into pink and golden,

As shadows lengthen the play of light and darkness sending shivers into the spine of tall trees,

Once again enshrines the peace and harmony of the setting sun and its vibrant colors,

The silent sentinel stands-uneearthly, ears charmed by the orchestra of insects and luminosity of the glow –worms,

The vigilante rising from the legendary Tethys like a phoenix, and guardian angel,

Exposing the frailties and fallibility of mankind, juxtaposed by its power and strength,

Oh my mighty Himalayas, how proudly we stand today as you thwart all hostile eventualities.

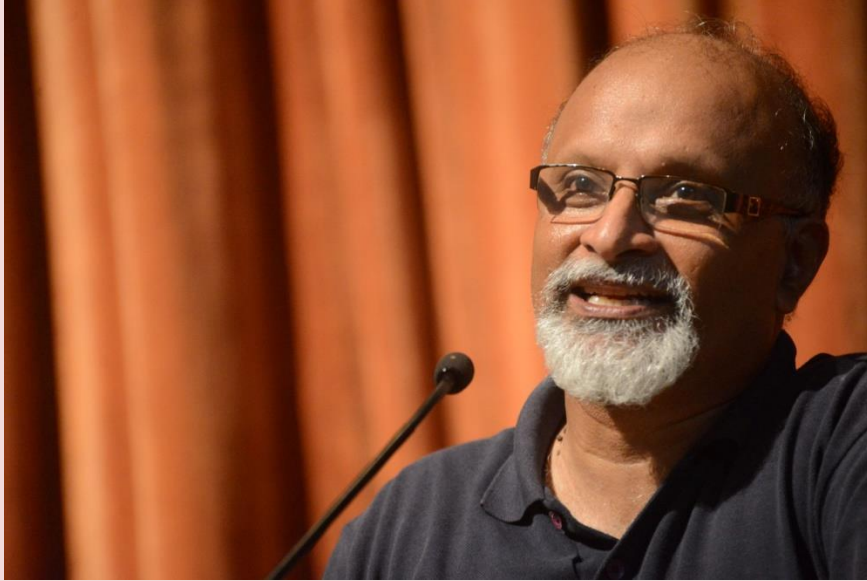


Someeta Das: I am a retired Professor from the department of English—Maharaja Manindra College, Kolkata. Apart from reading, I love taking long walks and enjoy observing Nature—both Mother Nature and human nature. I enjoy traveling and writing. I have been published in Glomag, Setu, Muse India, Women's era and a number of e-zines.



It was as a teen
that I first heard of Halloween.
when a child in costume and wearing a mask
"Trick or treat?" will ask
the neighbours who pretend
not to see through the disguise of the little friend
fill his hands with home-made sweets and goodies
and let him grow up with pleasant memories.

As a grown up, an adult,
of Halloween I hardly felt
anything special about
but harboured a nagging doubt
if the neighbours now are too wise
and see through all the disguise
which one puts on with great care
for they have no time to stand and stare.



Sri N Srivatsa: Chennai-born Sri N Srivatsa is a retired banker living in New Delhi. A singer with the Madras Youth Choir for fifty years, he has worked with Arangam, Yatrik and Madras Players. Over the years, his poetry has been featured in several platforms. He has been pursuing translation of poetry from Tamil to English and vice versa plus a few in Hindi, as a passion. Seven volumes of Tamil poems by seven different poets translated by him have been published—all with the original in Tamil, besides Selected Poems of Kalyanji with just the English translation of one hundred poems of Vannadasan Sivasankaran, the last three titles being released at Chennai Book Fair in January 2023.



HARK! IT'S SPRING

It remains a many-splendoured season

In the City Beautiful

The mellow sun, orange and plump, shines wading through
the baby blue skies

Amaltas, Lagerstroemias, Cassias, Jacarandas, Kusum,
Gulmohar- all drape the region in myriad hues

Their profuse flowering litters the ground beneath

Painting the city with Van Gogh - like bold strokes into a
post- impressionist painting

Singing the song of spring

While the city avenues undergo a Cinderella-like transformation

Mango blossoms weigh down the mighty trees in Pinjore Gardens

And the last of the water fowl wing back home after flapping in the Sukhna Lake

Zakir Rose Garden blossoms with testimonies of love and glorious friendship

Leisure Valley, a perfect place to take a break from the hustle-bustle of daily life, has an Arcadian beauty

Such is the sight in the months of March-April

For the cold winter days have paved way for the balmy spring!



Staffy Bhateja (Steffi): She is a poet, editor and painter hailing from The City Beautiful: Chandigarh. She has completed her Masters in English Literature from MCM DAV College, affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh and has also done Masters in Philosophy from the University's main campus, securing 2nd position in the entire university. Poetry and Painting are two of her biggest passions. She has taken part in numerous anthologies under various publishing houses and has solely edited a book titled ***Catharsis*** under the Impish Lass Publishing House. She is the Chapter Head of Chandigarh of The Asian Literary Society.



TEN BLOOMS

Ten blooms in the Spring morning dew.

Not enough

two extra for you.



Stephen Goetz: I'm a published poet from Lincoln City, Oregon, USA. I'm a senior street performer. I love to dance. I'm a published poet in online poetry groups. I've received poetry awards from Motivational Strips and affiliate groups. I've appeared in consecutive poetry books put out by Glomag.



SONOROUS SNORES

Decibel defying snores

Is a mine for auditory sores

Involuntarily they come to the fore

Legendary tales often become lore.

Orotund resonates as night vibrates

What's sleep sans fustian snores

Bombastic is that deep slumber
Come come my honourable Honor-de-Gall.

What do they know if the tongue falls
That razor sharp muscle never fails 'The Fall'
It could be that there are clogged tunnels
Leading the mouth to be the funnel.

What is sleep without a few sonorous snores thrown in
In deep sleep one tends to swim without fins
Upto the gills with screams most horrid
Most times REM wind blows hot and torrid.

Power saws pale into insignificance
Bikes vroom shiver at being placed low
Sound bytes bites in shame
Boom boomerangs solo is the game.

Strange is the fact that when the steam engine hisses
The sleeper is innocent of any misses
It's always the unfortunate others who's sleep deprived
The circumference of the nostrils do connive.



Sudeshna Mukherjee: Sudeshna Mukherjee absorbs what she observes then she colours it with different shades of humour. She has delivered ***Meanderings of the Mind*** and ***Melangé***. Many of her contributions have appeared in e-zines. A wanderer, she wonders over the wonders sp(r)outed by the human mind.



YET, I SHALL

Tossed on the waves of distraught
my heart still longs for your gentle touch
I am engulfed in the aura of nostalgia
that chimes in cadences of yore
sickening rush of reality has curtailed my soar
left me crippled , turned me morose

A song I used to sing
a tune I used to cherish

hunch over life's cozy ambience
the frail boughs of our intimacy
have been botched by your apathy
reducing my existence
to a sigh and a whimper

Nesting in sunless void
I have grown pale
lacklustre has become my pseudonym of late
yet I shall not deter from my endeavor
even after body departs from soul
peep from torn veil of cloud
to heap you with fondness and love.



Sujata Dash: She is a poet from Bhubaneswar, Odisha. She is a retired banker. She has two published poetry anthologies (More than Mere-a bunch of poems, Riot of hues, by Authorspress) to her credit. She is a singer, avid lover of Nature. She regularly contributes to anthologies worldwide.



www.hindustantimes.com

SEARCH, FUTILE

Above
the clusters of
glass towers
reflecting back the
summer light,
a bird
soars through the
smog,

desperate

for

a tree.



Sunil Sharma: Sunil Sharma loves to listen to the stars, birds, winds and watch the sky. He tries to understand the eye-language and enthusiasm of the pet dogs—feel the pain and weight of the leash, trapped in a home-cage, bound with the chains, watched by Covid-19. Sunil has published 25 creative and critical books—joint and solo. He edits the monthly Setu journal:

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

For other details, please visit the website

<https://sunil-sharma.com>



The calendar says it's 23rd July 2021

Why do I write these silly poems?

do they mean anything?

like a dry coconut

they drop down dead

At times I dress them up like salads with exotic seasoning
hoping to fool somebody
into tasting
sometimes I manage
sometimes not
like a bland soup then
they lie cold

not one to give up
I re-heat and add a dash of vinegar and Worcestershire
sauce
making them look
hot and enticing
to attract someone
what happens later
I never wait
I only collect the bouquets



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.



THAT SUNLIT PATH

The austere patriarch
And the child dreamer
Complete in each other
The wise would gently lead
The young
To shrines and scriptures
Kept in seclusion and sobriety

In the sanctum sanctorum
And close his eyes in prayer...

The child would seek
That blinding ray of light
Entering that sacred precinct
Through a tiny window
Beyond which lay
That sunlit path
Where each walked
For work or play
Or mere habit...
And life buzzed
Ceaselessly...

The child would dream
Of treading that path
One day...alone

Drenched in sunshine

Covered with dust and grime...

The mystique path beckoned

Beckons even today...

The voyage...the journey

That Sunlit Path

To all that is forever Divine...



Supatra Sen: Dr. Supatra Sen, currently Associate Professor in a reputed Kolkata college is a veteran academician, teaching and researching in the fields of Botany and Environment. Her international books, papers and reviews are chiefly in her professional subject. She has edited several UGC funded ISBN volumes and is also the founder and Chief Editor of an ISSN peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary academic journal 'Harvest' since 2016. Her tryst with poetry writing began in 2020 during the global pandemic and in October 2021 her poetry anthology 'My Autumn Sonata' was published.



in oil paint by Suzette Portes San Jose

WINDS OF CHANGE

life goes

as the wind blows

time never quits in the sphere of change

interludes in between seem so strange

turning back into memories isn't enough

through twists and turns of life so tough

life goes

as the wind blows

I have you, holding on to keep on moving
from rock bottom bouncing back to living
treasured love in all those precious moments
fancied the ecstasy of dreams enchantments

life goes

as the wind blows

passion and desires that stunned me for a while
upon the moon and the stars, me and my smile
my heart whispers my thoughts in a deep sigh
i have your hand to reach out as high as the sky

life goes

as the wind blows

As time passed I have me in complete surrender

all that I have, all that I can. all that I am, to render
even if the world be whirling down and in derange
I keep still in the rhythm of the... Winds of Change



Suzette Portes San Jose: She was born and raised in Cebu City, Philippines. She was born with a passion for writing and living in her art forms. She now has joined 23 book anthologies internationally. She is also a recipient of multiple awards for her ART works and Literary works. She also founded her own Poetry Group of artists and poets writing Ekphrastic Poetry. She is also a founder of Artist Kids charity project all for free. She is also a Publisher and is now publishing her own book along with other book anthologies of her group.



MY PHILOSOPHY

Every time I talk about philosophy

I feel that I am a vile worm that gnaws at the bones of
existentialism

And when I realize the triviality of my speech

I suddenly find that I have turned into an annoying fly that
disturbs delusions and metaphysics.

Come with me if you want it is not an easy choice. .

The distance that separates us is between double brackets,
watching for the extinction of the digital lineage.

And since I cannot change the first names, and since you
are an easy prey

I will seize the opportunity and pass through your exalted
being.

Where should I put your sticky mud, and the shortest
distance between the murderer and the murdered for a
blind gasp!

It is wise to wait for another philosopher to come out of the
fog in order to listen to him together.

Perhaps his voice would be more beautiful than his white
teeth

And his hand would be wide, Very wide like
our balcony posterior

Come on, we ask for a cup of water.

We pretend to count the stars, and gather the remaining
dust in the sky.

And because you are my oil philosophy

let's forget about the old tricks, fantasy movies,

horoscopes, warplanes, ambulances, and from all vows and scents of incense..

It dug deep that damned worm, until the consciousness became a farce, and at the time there were slopes.



Taghrid Bou Merhi: She is a Lebanese poetess, writer, and translator living in Brazil. She holds a Law degree and is ambassador of the team “International Cultural Salon Association”. She won the Nizar Sartawi International Translator Award for Creativity 2021 in the field of translation and literature. She is the editor of AL-ARABE TODAY and RAINBOW Magazine Revista Literária Agareed and Allaylak. Her poems have been published in numerous international anthologies and journals. She has translated 8

books. Her books include: Songs of longing; The Keys of Science: Verses and Manifestations; Philosophies at the Edge of the Soul; FLOWERS OF LOVE; 5. Wounds of the heart; 6. Esperanza (Under Review).7. Mine Is Not Mine.



GLOMAG

Glomag is the convergence,
Of diverse expressions,
Of many contributions,
That hold numerous interpretations.

Writers from across the globe
accommodated in a single frame.

It's a secular book, must say!

'Coz writers from all religions are here to stay.

Month after month,

We receive an invite

To showcase our talent

To see what we can write.

And the person behind the scene

Is a sixty years old (almost!)

Who takes the pain

To compile it all.

May the good lord

Shower his blessings.

And keep both going
Glory di and our magazine!



Uma Agarwal Bajaj: I have been contributing to Glomag for almost two years now! And Glory di's trust in me has really made my pen a little creative. I am a Company Secretary by qualification, a homemaker by choice (since the last 20 years). Having been occupied with family and kids, I

recently realised that I have the ability to pen some of my thoughts. I write both in English and Hindi and hope to be better myself with each passing day. I read fiction, whenever I get some time. Apart from this I love to cook and have a fascination for gardening (in my balcony).



DEGREE COFFEE, ANYONE?

Sunshine pierces through

My eyelids force open

Sluggish body, no response

Shower no help at all

Coffee aroma wafts

All at once, vigorous

Dramatic difference in energy

Blessed be the Arab mastermind

Doubt, defeat, death, him frighten
Seeing the ash from funeral pyres
Battle weary, all bloody
Withdraw, lose to opposition
Any thought of victory dismiss
The cloth cabin door flaps
His goat chewed berry strange,
Energised, he cannot ignore

Aloof reader, my fellow drinker
Wonder at the relevance?
Hasty departure to Deccan shores
An ancient trade link
Centuries ago, he found access
Unaware pair of connoisseurs
Tale of our favourite brew, fascinate
Eternal gratitude, us dominate

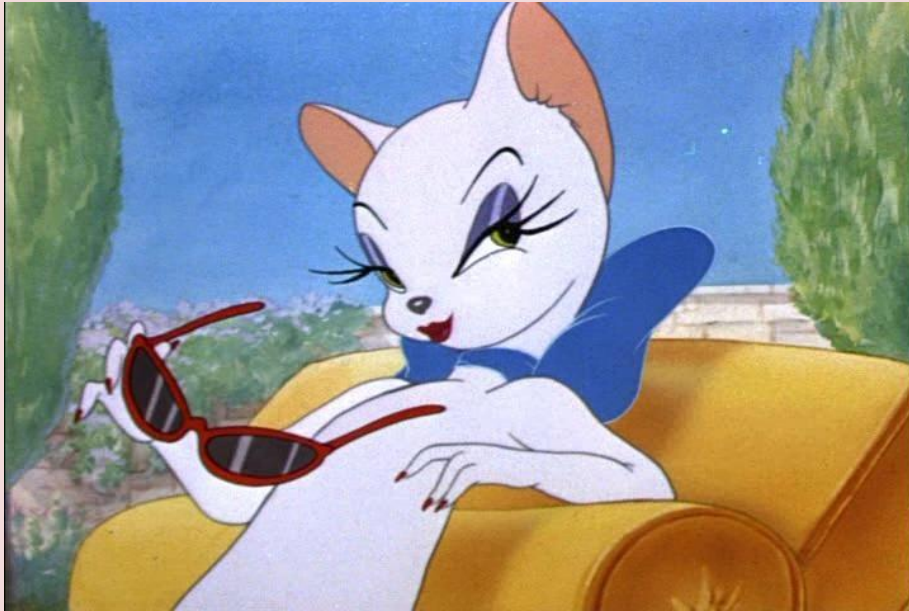
As we are wont in these parts
To make everything our own
At night we begin the preparation
The steel filter packed to the brim
The hot water percolates slow and steady
A strong dark liquid to brew
It is time to begin the process
Tumblers and davaras all in a row

In goes sugar spoonfuls to taste
The brown decoction a quarter cup
Topped with steaming 'degree' milk
Poured from a height with care
The brown bubbles sizzle
Lifted and poured to cool
The brew has to be just so

'Hand pulled coffee' in a New York cafe
Is nothing but our filter kaapi



Uma Vangal: I am a true blue Madras girl who dabbles in writing, critiquing, filmmaking, teaching, training and public speaking. Poetry had always been a part of my life but only recently, I discovered this amazing community of poets and thinkers. I have multiple interests ranging from cuisine to couture, cinema to camping, mandalas to mantras, public speaking to plant climbing, yard work to yoga, training to teaching and being a mentor to young aspiring writers, orators and filmmakers. In my many avatars, I focus on Indian values, gender sensitivity, compassion and a strong ethical and environment friendly approach. My motto is “anything is possible if you set your mind on it”.



TRUTH DEBRIS

You sought me in those coiffured strands

With extra sheen

I lay in roughed up tousled hair

The grimy scalp unnoticed

Charmed by those enameled pearly teeth

My secrets safe un-flossed and uncapped

You waxed eloquent about my poetry

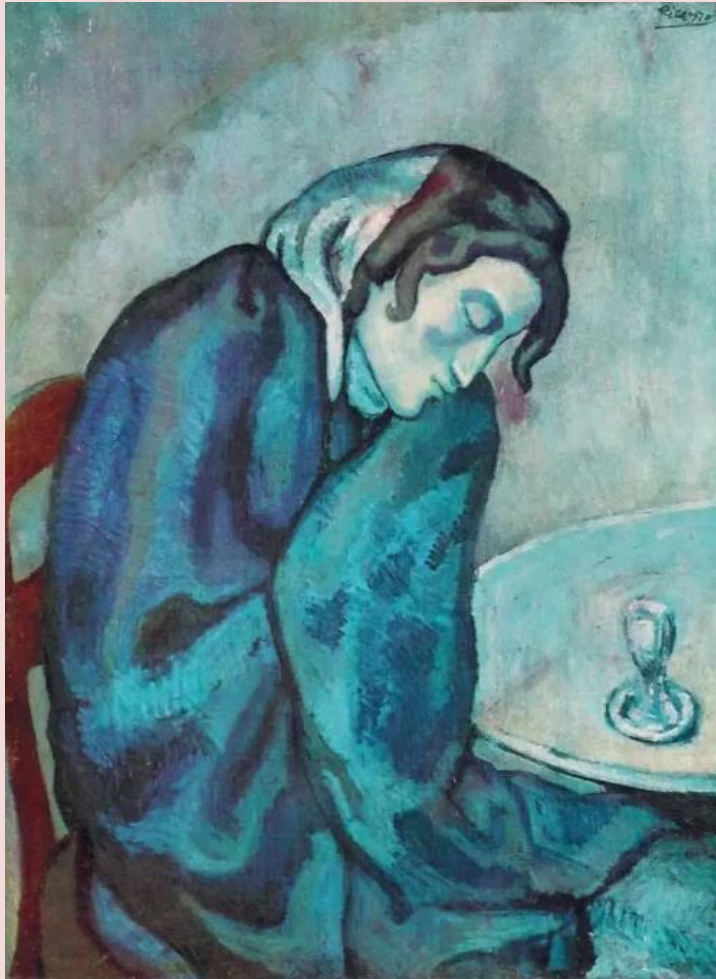
Heaped praise on its meter and form

But my truth debris rested
In your every breath
That lingered on my every verse
And then found its way to backspace



Vandana Kumar: She is a French teacher and poet in New Delhi, India. Her poems have been published in national and international websites like 'Glomag', 'Mad Swirl', 'Scarlet Leaf Review', 'North of Oxford', 'Grey Sparrow Journal', 'Lothlorien Poetry Journal', 'The Piker Press', 'Dissident Voice', 'Borderless journal', 'Madras Courier, etc. She has featured in anthologies like 'Harbinger Asylum',

'Kali Project' and 'But You Don't Look Sick'. She has recently featured in Fine Lines- a print quarterly literary Journal based out of Nebraska. Her cinema articles appear regularly in 'Just-cinema' and Daily Eye. She was a jury member for the 'All India Poetry Competition' organized by 'Cocoa-Butter' and also co-edited their debut print anthology that resulted from this competition.



BLUE

Somehow, you simply cannot paint her face:

Slowly, a portrait disappears before your eyes

But her photograph offers you a gaze

That once spoke a language only you understood always - -

The words depart, the hurt remains

Through the haze of Delhi's winter days:

And you wonder, through the mind's many replays:

Was it all because of an awkward phrase

Spoken out of turn, making her feel, out of place?

Or an old cliché deemed sexist now, and in disgrace,

Making you a male chauvinist pig, or worse?

Your sable-hair brush stabs and betrays:

The lips lack passion or even grace

And the eyes narrow to a squint, and her nose

Appears straight out of Picasso's sad Blue phase.



Vijay Nair: I retired as Associate Professor, Department of English, Government Victoria College Palakkad, Kerala. 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. I have been fortunate to have had my poems nominated on 8 occasions as 'Poem of the Month' at Poets, Artists Unplugged. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad. My short stories have appeared in Dynami Zois [Virasat], The Road Taken [Impish Lass] and in Cocoon Stories: Imprints of Childhood [AuthorsPress].



AMMA

I'm good with languages

Even the unspoken ones

Sometimes I can read thoughts

My husband's mother was so used to me

Doing things for her before she even expressed herself

That when she fell ill

She was unhappy with the home nurses

Who came in to care for her

She was furious that they could not read her mind

Furious that they could sometimes not understand

Even what she expressed

I think I spoilt her

She was a child to me

My child from some past birth whom I had to take care of
now

Probably because I wasn't able to then.

When she had been well, Amma and I had lots of outings

On my scooter she rode pillion

She loved and trusted me

She was however partial to her sons

Yet the bond she and I shared was a karmic one

Today remembering her I think of this brave woman

Who faced the world like a lion!

Yes, lion. She faced all the ups and downs

With fortitude

And to have had her in my life
Is something I'm grateful for
The fun we had, the lessons I learnt
Everything fresh in memory
I loved her ever-fresh, never-say-die attitude
A child she was. My child.



Vineetha Mekkoth: She is a poet, writer, translator and editor from Calicut, Kerala. She works as State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has translated for the Kerala Sahitya Academy and has also contributed articles for the Malayalam Literary Survey, a quarterly brought out by the academy. She has published poems and short stories in various anthologies. She is co-editor of two anthologies. Her debut poetry collection 'Ashtavakra and Other Poems' published in August 2017 is available on Amazon. Her latest work titled 'Penpiravi-Birth of A Woman' is the translation of the Malayalam poet Girija Pathekkara's poetry collection published by Authorspress, New Delhi (October, 2021)



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