

GloMag

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*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose*

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*Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala*

## SUDESHNA MUKHERJEE



**Title of the Cover Pic: Succour**

### **About The Artist**

Sudeshna Mukherjee has always been a warm-hearted friendly person. Raised in the lap of nature in North Bihar and the rugged terrain of Ranchi in Chhotanagpur plateau, she is an ardent Nature lover.

Singing and painting came naturally to her from childhood. She would paint and sing effortlessly regaling family and friends. She has won many inter-school and inter-college competitions.

Writing came much later. Being a voracious reader she poured all her creative juices writing for the college magazine.

She took her writing seriously as a means of self-expression and being the voice of all that happened in and around her in the last decade.

She has two published books of poEMotions 'Meanderings of the Mind' and 'Mélange'. Many of her poems and short stories have been published in e-zines and anthologies. She has been awarded 'The Golden Vase' prize for her humorous and satirical writing.

She at present resides in Mumbai.

### **Art Perspective**

She is fascinated by the human face. Most of her paintings are portraits. 'The face being the mirror of character'. She draws and paints 'mostly the face'.

She considers 'Succour' as her masterpiece as 'what she wanted to portray translated on the canvas'.

## **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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## THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

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



**Occupation:** Retired (refreshed) public servant and teacher

**Fav book:** Equal #1 rank for several novels by John le Carre

**Fav movie:** Les Enfants du Paradis

**Fav song:** Equal top rank for many songs by Jerome Kern, Ivor Novello, ditto British and French folk music

**Fav hobby:** Running

**Fav color:** Violet

**Fav sport:** None

**Fav food:** Simple plain, nutritive vegetarian dishes

**Fav pet:** Dog

**Fav actor:** Sir Charles Chaplin

**Fav actress:** Eleanor Parker

**Life philosophy:** Advaita Vedanta

**One liner describing you:** At the tail end of life, he began to sing and dance and write as never before. He thought: 'Hmm, I'm going to have to do this far more often'. And he danced, sang and wrote his little tail off'.

**Favorite holiday destination:** My local park

**Favorite quote:** "Life is mostly froth and bubble,/Two things stand like stone/Kindness in another's trouble,/Courage in your own" (Australian poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon

**My Birthday:** 1/11/41

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### **“31ST SHADE OF MONA-LISA”**

colours fragrant diversify innumerable geometrical petals

stamen and placenta from to form new saplings

pollen grains unconditionally spill sepals on ripples

alluvial nor black no soil in turmoil to comply fiscals

esoteric an arcane communication through zephyr

fauna algorithmically derives floral kerchiefs for tears to  
refill

triangular stomatas stoically derive quadratic, octatonic  
until A dozen of smiles arrive

decathalon synesthesia synthetic synthesizing herbals from  
shrubs to befriend variegated size

being smiles an outcome for photosynthetic harmonising  
cries

flowering sun drips mustard seeds from truth to lies

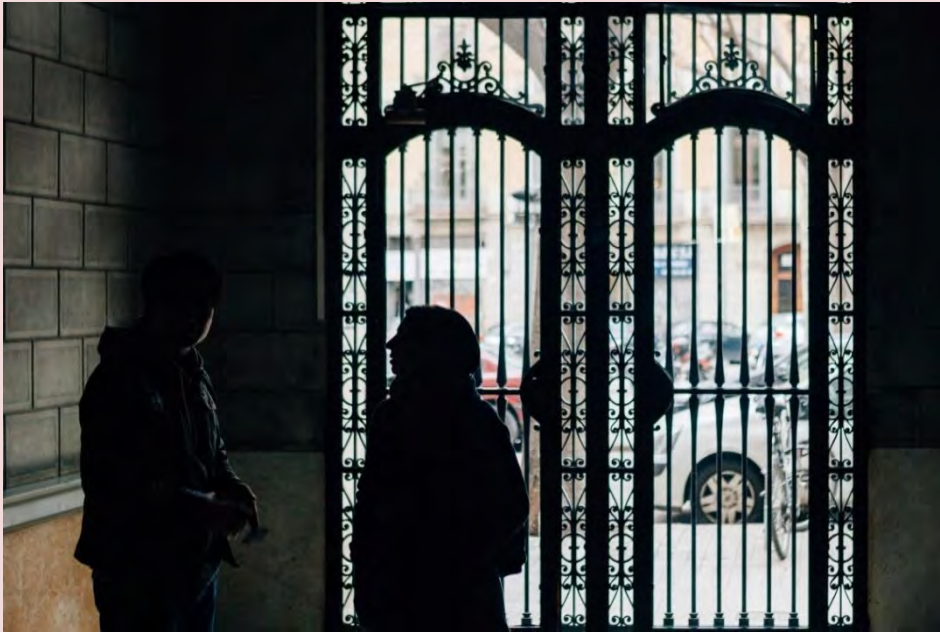
while few hundred forty four might fail to distinguish bright  
light from skies

pie of Pythagorean revealed 3.14 to blossom twilight from  
midnight time





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



## **A HAND LEANING AGAINST A GATE**

What is her age?

I don't know.

Sixty or more

How can I tell?

For I stand on my roof

A mile away cleaning clotheslines

In the beaming sun.

Small, fat, dark, timid,

Wizened, bow legged,

Mouth stitched with a mask  
Especially made for the poor.

Babu's gate is locked,  
The bell is ill  
So she leans against the  
The gate and waits and wails.  
Inside dry leaves and twigs  
Mourn with the wind for they miss  
Day's long caring hand.

Half an hour I bask in the glowing sun  
And splay my daughter's wears  
Finished, again I turn my eyes to the gate  
Again I see the maid leaning still against her mate.



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



## **LAST SUNSET**

An 87-year-old man  
with ample virtue  
and warmth;  
Spending his life  
In a far-flung city of  
China, to wit, Wuhan.

Now, known as,  
dreary city of China,  
So vast a fiasco,

the coronavirus bout  
pruned the wings of  
hope.

One rugged riot and with  
shock of it,  
With guarding face masks,  
they coated their faces,  
They, walking down  
the sick lanes of City  
Wuhan,

Nagging around nature,  
Reckoning around tragedy  
Remarking all bodies perishing;  
For works, all halted  
All tales more sweetly  
got scorched.

The face of nature  
With no more mercy,  
All withered alike, but  
a grim tone lies in the  
same rosy muse,

Here the same  
local resident old man  
got infected;  
Family bothering,  
Relatives worrying,  
Friends moving  
toward,

However, the virus  
nuzzled him barely  
from some incognito  
spot;

Yet the uncertainty buckled  
them all;  
The elderly man hospitalized  
for almost a month,  
Thereon his eyes with  
a gleaming glow, and  
salty tears when began to  
flow,

He sighed and yearned  
to regard duly his last wish;  
Reflected recent jewels  
and endorsed the day  
by beholding the most  
gratifying sensation  
of the Last sunset in the  
city Wuhan,



And outside the  
hospital, the colors  
of riping  
mellowed his each  
part that then began  
to live again on the  
fresh hope.



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



## **FROM THE CITY OF SORROWS**

From the errors of a great leader

From the country of sufferings

From the flames of a civil conflicts

I became an orphan to the despair

My hands were chopped off to bleed

My eyes were sold to anonymous predictor

My mouth was given to the most dirty lecturer

I then were sentenced to the death penalty

When I believed in God commitments  
They took my corpse to the excited mermaid  
When I believed in the moralities of nature  
I became a tree, then a branch, then I died

Who was the fortunate survivor of the war  
Who was living the normal life in the cell  
From the city of sorrows and sufferings  
I was born beneath the surface of casualty



**Ahmad Al-Khatat:** I am a poet residing in Montreal, Quebec. I work as student. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published 10 poetry anthologies. I have recently graduated from Dawson College as a Social Science student.



## **WALKING AROUND MONEY**

*“Walking around money,” I say,  
what’s that?*

It’s money in your pocket any  
given time of any given day.

*Huh? How does one acquire  
this walking around money?*

Well, after taking most of what  
you earn, in exchange we entice  
you into our cities, our shopping  
malls (cities within malls),  
& urge you to travel via planes,  
trains & automobiles to other cities

& shopping malls (cities within our malls) to squander your hard earned leisure.

*All out, nothing in. Hmm . . . thinking it over, I reject your offer, however much I never will appreciate you invading the few neurons I've got left on this mortal coil.*

50% discount today only!

*I've survived generations without your mercenary assistance, so I damn sure don't need it now.*



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



## **EPIDEMIC**

The virus stopped the world.

Time passed forward.

It looped reality.

All the doors slammed shut,

the gates of hell opened.

Death painted

horror in the human's eyes.

It covered all faces with masks.



A new era has begun.  
Nothing will be as it used to be.  
Will man to man be  
enemy or brother?



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



## **DISMANTLING MY HUMAN TIES**

This time was uncalled for, unseen and unpredicted

I was ordered to remain law bound in a land

Where pin-drop silence utters something, inaudible

Primordial longing stops for the reason unexpected

Everything is absent except the void

Buildings meditate amidst scorching Sun ray of summer

Streets lay vacant like unattended corpses

Wishes perform imaginary dance to relish the passionate  
taste

Shutters of shops are down against an half known thief

Unseen emotions wander here on the eerie benches of  
park

Deserted offices cry for bygone privileges

Dogs roam on the streets, no one to bother, no question of  
surrender

Humans are locked, their entire vicinity is blocked

Their movements are curtailed to chase the unknown

I have locked myself deliberately in my home

I was convinced not to venture out

To live and let live, I have imprisoned myself for a cause  
slightly misunderstood

I am not a hermit, not accustomed to a living

Where you are denied to enjoy fellow feelings

Where social distance is the law

Where physical contact brings the havoc

This time is too clumsy to be unravelled

Sky above seeing me in puffy eyes

One by one I am dismantling my human ties



**Alok Kumar Ray:** I am a bi-lingual poet residing in Kendrapara district headquarters of Odisha province in India. I work as a Senior Lecturer in Political Science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I contribute regularly to various online poetry groups also.



## **FIGHTING THE FEAR**

Some days fear takes over you.

Not of that age old death, lurking  
near in these times, crying out as  
numbers, denied of a decent farewell.

But of an unfamiliar newness that  
is testing your imagination, where  
you see the whole big ship of mankind  
dented at their vanity on invincibility.

And as much as you wish to skip these  
pages of life like a tale gone awry,  
you are stopped by the nodding lily,  
the waft of fresh air, the unsuspecting

cuckoo-calls, the resurgence of kites  
in an outrageously blue city-sky and live  
in their unchanging truths, you wear  
them like an armour to keep dread afar.

You also hear friendly footsteps closing by.



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



## **THE NIGHT TOO FEELS SLEEPY**

The night makes all sleep

keeping himself awake

Nobody sees the dark circles

under his eyes

My white nights

helped me befriend him

We often have a great chat



He sometimes heaves a sigh  
and tells me—  
“My friend, I too feel sleepy.”



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



*Pic by Ramesh Chandra Santra*

## **MAHUA**

the April sun, kissing skin  
bathes her supple body  
hunched over fiery floral trail  
a cluster of wee flowers cascade  
from unkempt bun at the nape of neck  
clad in coarse sari to sparsely drape  
the ebony grace of toiling grace  
she slogs by hearth morning to dusk

aroma of Mahua that intoxicates  
the staggering forest breeze  
now in her courtyard mingles  
with magic of wood fire haze  
unmindfully she catches afar  
the lilting lust of a wild flute's note  
its rustic fragrance benumbs her pagan pores.

***\*Mahua: An Indian tree which has nectar rich flowers from which an alcoholic drink is produced.***



**Amita Ray:** I am former associate professor in English and Vice Principal of a college, residing in Kolkata. An academic of varied interests, I am a published translator, short story writer and poet. I have translated into English and published two books. My short stories have been published in The Sunday Statesman, Cafe Dissensus, Setu and other web magazines. My poems have also been published in anthologies and on line magazines.



## I KNEW HIM

I knew him

The black man playing a recorder

At a Boksburg street junction.

Every day

He played the tale of sun set blood

Of the fear of white rain gods

Of a hope of the train from Soweto

Might stop

Running over him ever since he was born

He never asked for money

Only the landscape that

Once belonged to him.

One day

He never came back.

His place trampled

By a new founded

Sky.



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



## **HANGING HAIKU - BEING NEW, BEING LOST**

Keep on writing write

Nose to the grindstone heigh ho

Haiku factory

The shock of sweetness

I have to learn to bear it

Lest there be crying



Cool birdsong stream

Red bean soup on the stove top

Things will change maybe

Horns no longer honking

The market has courgette

Slowly we tolerate

April clouds await

Being lost is easier

Mango blossom day

Housebound humankind

Spring is being lost on us

Careless apple bough

Brown study sepia

Being lost is magic art

Not everyone knew

Hanging haiku out

Sundried poems smell so good

Warm breeze ironing



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



## **NANTHENCODE THEN**

Although we no longer stay at Nanthencode

O junction 'tis of thee

I sing

My childhood memory

From and of its rich paucity

Your small side-road of a mud path from my first rented  
house

- Not being rich, it was a small house

That was my paradise

But it was the junction that was my palace -

That led to the butcher's shop

No longer there

Where hung slabs of pink-reddish chunks of meat

On hooks

Where first I saw blood, innards, and bone

And skulls of cows

Thankachen's shop in the center of the junction from which  
we always bought provisions

Sugar, salt, parippu, payaru, sweets, rice, and wheat....

Whose youngest brother was Unni who was my age

O junction, you had your drunkard MR (Radha, short for  
Radhakrishnan)

And your own version of the village idiot or madman in  
Oollen Paakkaren

You had your vegetable shop which also had cycles for rent  
and two small ones for children, one red and one green, as  
if just for me and my sister

Next to it was the ration kada with its green planks to shut  
it with and the sacks of rice, kerosene in cans, wheat and  
kadala in rough brown sacks

And murukkaan kada

Your tea shop just next to the small bus stop that was only  
two pillars and a tin-roof

With its brass samovar to make tea

And your miller and his shop, whose son was the locatough

Venu who was always good to me

You had your dhobi whose son Vinod was a madcap

But friendly with me

The dhobi who ironed with red coals in his isthiripetti

You had your Mao building! Imagine that, these days!

You had your center as a circle with its flags

You had a locksmith's shop and forge

And a toddy shop

You had your Western bakery

With Binu and Biju who came to my mom for tuition for all  
subjects

With cream-filled cornets, plum cakes, and bread so soft it  
would melt in our mouths

Who studied, worked and were my friends too

Next to the bakery was Shivan's barber-shop and nearby an old rickety wooden staircase we loved to climb led to the kind tailor's shop we loved to go to

Fascinated by the many sewing machines in there, the zips, the differently-colored buttons, and his measuring tape

O junction with your one mangy brown stray of a street dog and many stray cats

O junction, you are my Malgudi

My Wessex, you are my Tbilisi!

My junction, yet never mine only!

Junction of my mornings, sunshine-noons, evenings, twilights and my nights

I immortalize you in this poem and in my story

Titled aptly "The Junction"

Not as you are now

But as you were then!

In my mind, you have not aged!

Babu's vegetable shop that came later is not a part of you

By this crazy logic

But the Mar Thoma church of the faction that split away  
(Evangelical) is!

Junction, I have you in me

And every detail is of importance to me

Vimal's cows let out in the daytime

And each post and their yellow, dim, lights at night

A symphony of sounds, smells, and colors

Shapes, touch, sights, and tastes

Fantasies and dreams!

O small junction, 'tis of thee

(Not the one in Google maps

Or the one as it stands today)

I sing my ode, forsooth!

I sing my elegy!

Nanthencode Now (unrecognizable and leaving me  
strangely unmoved!)



**Ampat Koshy:** He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Signifcant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited Inklings and Umbilical Chords.





## IDIOTS

Where are those harsh & rustic men  
who used to shout: 'no, you're completely  
wrong. You should have done this;  
shouldn't have done that at all'  
& at the end put a hand on your shoulder  
& murmur: 'study hard, don't take any shortcut'

Where are those elderly women  
(of poor households)

who would quickly prepare hot bread  
& potato curry for son's mates  
in a rain-soaked, hungry afternoon  
Their very presence would announce  
silently... you're home

Where are those idiots  
who spent 24 x 7 in local tea stalls,  
but rushed to prepare bamboo beds  
for father's last journey  
With no sweet smile on their faces  
they would do  
all your household chores  
24 x 7, in times of crisis

Today I come across sweet words  
in every lane & bylane  
I see pleasant smile on every face,

unwilling to provide a  
home for cries & despair  
& a shoulder in twilight



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



## **HUMANITY IN A TIME OF COVID 19**

Covid 19 is the enemy against humanity

It is no discriminator attacking all individuals,  
rich or poor, black or white extending beyond borders.

Who will raise a helping hand

Knowing you could be risking your life and your family?

Medical personnel at the forefront of the pandemic

staying true to their calling to assist humanity

Essential staff risking their lives.

The world is in a state of flux

As world economies crash

Humanity is in a fight to save lives.

Use wisdom and understand the gravity

There is no time for denial, pranks and being selfish

Be responsible, keep your distance

Staying apart from friends and family is difficult

In a time of Covid 19 change we need to adapt

Take the necessary precautions.

It's the poor who are most at risk

No place to stay, let alone to quarantine and self-isolate

No food to eat, let alone gloves and masks to protect themselves

Shack dwellers in confined areas without basic amenities

How can you wash your hands often when water is scarce?

The stark reality in the fight against Covid 19

How do you stay positive in an insane situation?  
Faced with staggering infections and death rates  
As scientists work together to find a vaccine  
Humanity awaits an answer albeit too late for some.

“No man is an island”

With Covid 19, being an” island” may be your saving grace  
To survive you may need to isolate  
How do you keep the loneliness from attacking your bones?  
How do you stop the anxiety and stress?  
Don’t allow fear to paralyze you  
Be strong, stay positive and keep calm  
Know in a time of Covid 19 you are not alone  
Stay connected with friends and loved ones  
Embrace the devastating truth of the fragility of life  
Appreciate your loved ones  
Share your love, when hope seems fractured,  
Have faith that,” this too shall pass”

When all seems lost, love brings hope  
To a dying world.



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



## **FIRST NIGHT OF LOVE**

Every drop of honey that  
Drips from your flower as  
I stir inside you gives me  
A pot of elixir to live a day more

In the cool morn of March  
We enjoy struggle to ignite  
The fire of desire hopping  
From bed to sofa to chair to floor



Fragrance of new leaves slips  
Into the room through cracks  
In windows and we get lost  
Inside each other more and more

Tides runs high and low  
With sound of moans and  
Sighs and of ecstasy and in a  
Sudden rage pushed us to the shore

With sweet dreams of the  
First night of love you fall  
Asleep till a fresh desire wells  
Up as the sunlight knocks on the door



**Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tiku):** He is from Brajrajnagar, Odisha, India, and resides there currently. He works as a mine surveyor in coal mines. He writes short stories and poems whenever he gets time.



## **AN EVENING RAIN**

She came to meet me

Like an old friend

Flying over the rooftops

To drizzle on my face.

I stood there with my fingers

Outstretched, soaking in her sprinkle

And listening to her whispers

For she had a lot to say.

A wicked wind had pursued her  
Aided by the sun that shone  
Through some fickle clouds  
To scatter her and scare her away.

I looked away to hide a smile  
For she showered petulantly  
On my window, wetting the curtains  
With her indignant spray.

She drummed on my roof  
As if to catch my eye again.  
I saw her stomping towards the trees  
That had dared to snigger at her rage.

I would want her to calm down  
And murmur some more to me

Of the world beyond my window  
And the many goings on there.

But the sky now looks subdued  
The wind is vanquished too.  
The world has stopped in its tracks  
While she poured, steady and brave.

I turn away from my window  
For she is no more just a friend.  
Like the free spirit of a fearless woman,  
She is the liberating evening rain.



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



## **FREEDOM JOURNEY**

Among the ruins of broken lives,  
they came across great expanses,  
searching for a place to rest their weariness.

Empty from hunger.

Full from hope.

Carrying with them stories of their pasts,  
and the bones of their ancestors.

Multitudes marching,  
while looking out over myriad expressions,  
in quest of a familiar face.

Grasping the future in clasped hands  
tucked into worn pockets.  
Afraid to let go,  
lest dreams scatter like lost seeds  
among devouring crows of indifference.

Tiredness overtaking,  
broken bodies pitch tents  
of sparse comfort.

Taking refuge along the never ending  
journey of freedom.





**Ann Christine Tabaka:** I am a poet and author residing in Delaware USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I have 10 poetry books, and have been published in numerous magazines and journals worldwide. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. I am the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic), and I have won poetry awards from numerous publications. *\*(a complete list of publications is available upon request)*



## **VASANTHI SWETHA**

In all these years  
not very often have I shared my name  
with a school or college or university mate,  
they tell me it's because  
my name is old,  
it belongs to another generation of people,  
I nod my head  
after all, they named me after my grandmother,  
my name is definitely old,  
but my name also means the spring  
and I wonder

how many springs has my name seen,  
how many flowers has it seen bloom,  
I wonder if names carry fragrances  
that people I tell my name to  
carry along with them,  
Hi, my name is Vasanthi,  
now that you know  
tell me what part of spring  
will you carry forward,  
which part of my name will you remember?

### **ANURAG MATHUR**

My name is a very common one today  
I am told it was not the case  
When I was named.  
Did my name then  
Remind other parents  
That it was most obvious  
Hence making it so common?

That seems just as well  
Because my name means Love

And I wonder when will it be  
As common as the name

**VANDANA KUMAR**

I have heard  
That my name is caught  
Between two generations

When expectant mothers  
ask me for baby names  
They tell me to flip school attendance register  
Find names  
That are simple to pronounce  
Contemporary  
Yet different

I never offer mine  
I don't know many  
Who would be interested  
In a fuddy-duddy one  
That was often  
Hindi cinema  
Heroine material  
Through the mid60s and 70s.

My name often tested my patience in class  
When having to wait  
In alphabetical order  
For teacher to ask  
What I wanted  
Oh so desperately  
To show off

How could we fault a name  
That opens and closes bracket  
Between dawn and dusk  
And encompasses  
A wish  
For all the four seasons

A name that means prayer  
Is in everyone's heart  
Whether they roll it  
On tongue  
Or not



**Vasanthi Swetha:** She is extremely passionate about the art of poetry, dance, reading and dreaming, and she believes that every poem that she writes is a result of a conversation with her soul.



**Anurag Mathur:** He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost two decades serving that industry. Whatever little time that has been spared from work or sleep or reflective meditation has – with quite a few well-meaning prods and nudges from friends – been devoted to occasionally tapping to the Muse’s dictats from time to time.





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



## **SIMPLE SECRETS OF GREAT LIFE**

One of the secrets of living a great life is how you start your day. Powerful mornings make powerful day. Starting a day in chaos slows down the pace of one's thought and leads to day of stress. Successful persons have a consistent morning routine and rarely do they stray. The first thing or thought that comes in our mind in the morning will set a beautiful rolling tone for the day. In the freeing up of memory the pure serene memory in the morning lets us to achieve great things. We must be grateful to small and beautiful things coming in our daily lives. When we are agile and active, we tend to achieve more goals with ease. Try to minimize rushing around. A calm mind is more efficient and productive, so choose that one thing in the morning that will charge you for every other achievable thing in the mind

list, noting down on paper will make you more proactive. Life is short, but there is always enough time to discover finesse of lives... and with these simple small things, there are friends and your good manners which will carry you in life where lots of money would not. Respect for ourselves guides our destiny, respect for others guides mutual destiny in simpler romantic way.



**Ashish K Pathak:** He is a primary education teacher in India's most backward state of Bihar. He has got letter of appreciation from the President of India for his poem. Recently, he has been featured in 'Fragrance of Asia' anthology and is slated to be featured in 'East Meets West anthology' and 'GloMag' and 'Unkept Resolutions' anthology. He has been conferred World Union of poets

gold cross medal for his writings in the world book' complexion-based discrimination. He is one amongst only six poets selected for the 'Marula World Anthology' from Asia.



## **THE BUDS AND BLOOMING FLOWERS...**

The buds and blooming flowers

Butterflies embracing

The colorful petals

Tears and smiles

Dreams tangled in the eyes

Unfolding the story of

Joy, laughter, pain, greed and fear

Your eyes speak

A thousand tale in silence

A forgotten yesterday

Sunflower, lily, bathing in the sun

Dreams touched

Butterflies sucking nectar

Melancholy chasing the setting sun...

The sky bleeds vermilion

Your arid heart

Remembering my forgotten poems...



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



## **THE CONSOLATION OF CHAIS**

My children,

I hope you can hear this song;

That wherever you are,

It will carry that far:

Be healthy, live long,

Be strong, be gentle,

Be gentle, be strong,

And if you give me grandkids,

You might sing them this song



I spun it from the sunlight  
And the Byron Bay waves.  
I sang of my treasures,  
My rascalion knaves,  
Now flown from my coop  
To seek their own sun and waves

I retired to the bistro  
Where I sighed a few sighs;  
Where Irish Jack spoke  
Of how teens weave their lives;  
Where Jack and I poured  
The consolation of chais

My children,  
I hope you can hear this song,

And that wherever you are,

It will carry that far:

Be healthy, live long,

Be strong, be gentle,

Be gentle, be strong,

And if you give me grandkids,

You might sing them this song



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



## THE LOCKDOWN PAGE

*(corona pandemic)*

it's lockdown

trapped in different room

for 21 days

it's dustbin and broom

finding resourceful ways

to spend our days

besides watching movies

and eating lays

online home schooling

exercise in between

cooking up a storm

sometimes intervene

depression creeps in

once in a while

but then board games

brings back the smile

taking the dogs

around the yard for a walk

thinking about how you miss

that blackboard and chalk

but then again this time

reinforces the bond

between family members  
which will hopefully stretch beyond

lockdown

when 21 days has passed

a rejuvenated self

hopefully will last

for the rest

of your living life

pleasing god

children and wife

so it's not all

doom and gloom

look at all the positives

as you go from room to room

you can mine from  
this lockdown stage  
a brand new chapter awaiting  
when you turn lockdowns page



**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.





## **BALANCING**

I have come

Yet I have not come

I may not come any day

When I have come

I have filled you

With love

If I have not come

I have left

Some spaces vacant

With some promises

To fill

The promises

May not be filled

Any day

As I may not come

As my fate

Hangs in balance

Between love and void.



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



## **CORONAVIRUS**

This century marked this wicked year, it begot the  
Coronavirus

And travelers from China disseminated this grisly  
Coronavirus

With fettle of time we are obliged to stay aloof from each  
other

People are not shaking hands just after the birth of  
Coronavirus

Our loved ones are kept at brim and before this we  
gathered at

Centre, remember little distances make invitations to this  
virus

How it wreaked a havoc, passing terrains, slashing oceans  
and

Chasing people, we left our power to crawl under  
Coronavirus

Where are people who stuck strong with hands together  
and

Mouths open, ask them to take a deal with this tiny  
coronavirus

Even the technology breached itself in astray, just caught  
up!

People hid in quarantine, escaping stealthily from  
Coronavirus

World ended in total halt, where am I? Quarantined within walls

Ticking and watching my loneliness after spread of Coronavirus



**Bhat Zaieem:** He is a poet and writer residing in Kashmir. He is a teacher by profession. His poems have been published in various reputed national and international journals like Muse India, The Indian Review, The International Ghazalpage. He has co-authored various poetry books and was also invited to Guntur International Poetry Festival 2019. Besides poetry he also writes on different contemporary issues in various Kashmir-based English dailies. E-mail: [bhatzaieem25@gmail.com](mailto:bhatzaieem25@gmail.com)



## ICY BEAUTY

When I saw my face

in your eyes

My ear juices melted

Every word you poured

entered into eminence

of new understanding

I saw you

under the disco light

the night was young

We were not getting  
any younger

You held this key  
a deep dance of hearts

I have knelt before  
mama's love

Still I stay true

You and I sing  
a special song





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



## **SOME NOTES OF A RELIGIOUS NATURE**

Jesus was sent  
to die for our sins  
like some package  
from UPS.

He delivered the goods  
to humanity

and we delivered him  
back to Heaven

battered, beaten,  
mutilated.

Some creation  
we turned out to be.



**Bill Cushing:** Bill Cushing has retired after more than 20 years of teaching college English in the Los Angeles area. Now he fills his time by writing, reading, and of course, editing what he has written. His poem this month is actually one of his earlier pieces but seems fitting for the season; it is part of his 2019 book *A Former Life*. The illustration accompanying the work is one of the lesser-known pieces from one of Bill's favorite artists, Salvador Dali.



## **NOSTALGIA**

When I cast my eyes on my past  
Memories of childhood rush in fast  
As white clouds wander in an autumn sky,  
They touch my mind and bruise my heart  
Those days of hesitant school going  
And the mischief made with naughty buddies  
Leaping into the village pond in summer days  
Hide and seek played at the uncle's place  
All those days of fun and frolic

Playing country cricket in the village street  
Stealing mangoes from neighbors' yard  
And rebukes from elders as punishment  
Childhood memories are painful pleasures  
Barge into mind when I'm in leisure  
Evoke nostalgia and blot out sorrows  
Exalt spirit for better tomorrows



**Bishnu Charan Parida:** He is a bilingual poet writing in English and Odia .He is from Jajpur Road, Odisha. An engineer by profession he carries a passion for poetry. His poems have been published in many anthologies and magazines of national and international repute. He has

been honored in the state level Kalinga Nagar book festival 2015 in Odisha, at 11th Guntur International Poetry Festival 2018. He has been the world featured poet of Pentasi-B, China in 2019. He has been a winner in the prestigious R. N. Tagore, award in 2019 from Xpress Publications, Kerala, India.



## JOHN

"Congratulations. You have a daughter," said the nurse through the slightly open door.

"How is my wife?" His question bounced off the already closed door. John felt pride and happiness.

After an hour the doctor came to see John.

"I congratulate you heartily. You have a beautiful, healthy daughter. The weight is 3200 grams. Big baby despite the slight figure of your wife. There were minor complications during childbirth but it is all good now."

"When can I see my girls?"



"In a few hours. Please go home now, eat something and get rest. You have spent all night at the hospital. Visiting time is at four p.m. Goodbye."

John stood for a moment watching at the window and pondered what the doctor had just said. He didn't want to go home. He wanted to see Barbara and his newborn daughter. They arrived at the hospital at 2 am. Barbara was so weak, and in so much pain, yet he could not help her. He was walking down the stairs, his right hand in his trouser pocket and propping his leg. Since he could remember, that was the easiest way for him to walk.

Outside, the sky was so blue. A promise for a beautiful day. When John came to the main street the town hall bell was just striking eight o'clock. He went to the church to thank God for the happy delivery. At the bridge, he had to stop. He was so tired. He watched a barge filled with coal pass by, then he dropped by the store for milk. In the bakery next door, he bought some fragrant, warm bread rolls. Very slowly he climbed to the third floor. That was where their nest was. He set the water for coffee, spread a roll with some jam, and finally sat down in an armchair. The smell of chicory coffee filled the entire flat.

He didn't go to bed. He was in the chair and covered his legs with a plaid throw. Fatigue reigned over his body. He

closed his eyes and tried to remember how he became so lucky to have met Barbara and fallen in love.

In his childhood, there was no indication that he would have his own home and his family. He was one of those kids who caught polio in the fifties. He began walking independently very late, and that was only thanks to the persistence of his grandmother. She carried him on her back and brought him to school. She carried him up and down the stairs. Stubbornly she made him practice. Nothing deterred her. She always repeated that since she survived Siberia and the long way back home, nothing could stop her now.

In primary school, John felt very lonely. In the beginning, the kids teased him, laughed at him, but his grandmother quickly solved the problem. He was the only disabled child in the school. No one understood him. No one knew how lonely he felt. His escape from the surrounding world arrived in the form of books. He read a lot. He read everything he could get his hands on. Eventually, John was prescribed glasses. Thanks to a wonderful teacher with real passion, he easily made it through to high school.

In high school, he met two other boys his age, also with paralysis of the legs. Both were less fortunate than him.

They moved on crutches. It was then he began to fully appreciate what his grandma, Angela, did for him.

He finished high school as a high achiever. Exams into university were a mere formality.

***To be continued...***



**Bozena Helena Mazur-Nowak:** She was born in Opole, Poland. In 2004 in search of work migrated to Great Britain, where she lives. She published seven volumes of poetry; four in Polish and three in English. She also writes prose and released a novel and a few short story collections. Her work may be found in numerous worldwide anthologies and magazines. Winner of many poetry competitions. Proud holder of many diplomas, awards, and distinctions. Member of Union of Polish Writer's Abroad, Polish Authors' Association, and Association of American Poets. Her poetry was translated into English, French, Spanish, Swedish, Russian, Arabic, Telugu, Bengali, Norwegian, Albanian, Swahili, Philippine, Serbian.



## **AN ODE TO INSPIRATION**

Like the latent whispers of Nature  
on a serene night,  
You intrude subtly  
to quench the thirst of dying wisdom.

At times as apparent  
as the 'truth' itself,  
You billow with fumes  
to the voices of justified indignation.

The vendors of commerce perplexed  
and the potions of dirty commerce  
on a trail of fragile tale,  
You come without a price tag!

Unlike death that defers itself  
to the capital of the rich,  
You benevolently bestow to the  
beckons of dolorous hearts in need.

A rainbow of myriad choices  
to lull the boring blues and  
meandering minds of melancholy,  
an egalitarian elixir You are!

Surmounting all vicissitudes of the cosmos,  
Dear Inspiration, You are an eternal promise

innately immortal with a plethora of vibrant vibrations  
wiping out the smears of human prejudice.



**Brindha Vinodh:** I hold a masters in Econometrics from the University of Madras, but I am a writer within. I have worked as a copyeditor and a freelancer in the e-publishing industry. My poems and short stories have appeared regularly in magazines, e-zines and web journals, and my poems in two anthologies are due for publication shortly. My latest published poems include ‘The other side of life’ and ‘The underrated Indian homemaker’. I currently reside in the United States of America with my husband and two children.



## **FRAILTY NOT THY NAME**

(1)

Woman is a most beautiful creation  
Nature hath brought forth on earth,  
All her moves wrap divine intention,  
A current of life flows with her birth.

(2)

She is endowed with great modesty  
Her coy retreat increases her charm,



That is coupled with demure honesty,  
Her life gets the best of virtues swarm.

(3)

She is surely, far closer to the species  
For her motherhood admiration goes,  
Thru all heavy odds of life she breezes,  
Before her courage the **A**lmighty bows.

(4)

Love comes as a spiritual element in her life  
The only adornment she knows in her mind,  
That flows freely soaking all through her life,  
Man unable to feel it within, is surely blind.

(5)

She with a lovely angel in her stalky arms  
Shows world's one of the loveliest pictures,  
While kissing its face taking between palms,  
And one that looks at her goes into raptures.

(6)

Now no more a weaker sex is looked upon  
She can navigate her way thru ocean or sky,  
Her guts make her free to take anything on,  
She knows well where to stay in life or to fly.

(7)

In today's times 'frailty is not thy name'  
Strong, gritty and fighter you are known,  
Think of otherwise is nothing but shame  
Exemplary courage in crisis you've shown.



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



## DIAMOND CUT RUBY

The *longing* I feel  
to be in your comfort of solace,  
Embraced by fathomless love,  
a selenite spider silk  
weaves every chamber of my heart,  
wishing we could be woven  
into braided ivies ascending  
from this flesh,  
a carriage of wandering emotion  
transcending boundary of sky.

Will you accept me as I am,  
a counterpart to your grace,  
my earthen, rugged,  
scarified self?

I long for you like a scholar  
missing the histories,  
desire to read your leaves both  
limning and lighting my eyes.



**Chris Daugherty:** He is published in Poetry.com's 2003 annual yearbook and is a continuing contributor to GloMag. C.R. Daugherty has published ten eclectic books of poetry via the Internet. He passionately enjoys writing poetry while fueled by espresso roasts. He also enjoys abiding by traditional forms and loves mostly bucolic themes.



He banged his fist  
thundered  
the mike shuddered  
roared and challenged  
accused  
people cheered, clapped  
looked upto the heaven  
then the earth  
foolish citizens

cowards

lend me ears

your reason and logic

I will lead you away and safe

come behind

I am the pied piper

you all are rats

I will not let you into the waters

those who oppose me are cats

they will eat you

consume you

come behind me

follow

he thundered

the podium broke

the mike flew

left with the flute



he blew the tune

the rest just



**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.



## **JULIAN THE APOSTATE**

He stank of Christian enthusiasm.

Like malaria it would linger still,

His whole reign was one short breathless spasm

A churchy zealot whom his faith made ill.

Rebel children still bear their father's look,

He tried to He organise a tangled web

Of myth and custom, make a creedal book

Out of quaint stories that should quietly ebb

Away with dignity. We had to laugh

At his preacher's voice, the lack of Greek taste  
And Roman restraint in his classic path  
Those sacrifices seemed a gushing waste  
We nicknamed him "the butcher," much too much  
Effort, lack of ease and grace, the sad state  
Of the impossible, that man was such  
As could but only be an apostate.



**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.



## GUESS GUESSER

Chinese my birth

Dark my live

I'm getting white

When I want you to die.

-Coronavirus

We are very bland pills

That you won't want

But when you cough and spit

They will give them to you.

Paracetamol

It's puppet virus

That climbs up the walls

Decorating balconies well

When you start singing.

-Joy on the balconies

I'm round like the Globe

By killing they tear me apart

Reducing me to skin

And juice I take out of the dead.

-Virus

Guess guesser

What is the grape

Tthat the virus has

Having chrysanthemums?

-Covid 19.



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



## COVID 19

Locked down savages are stopped from their endemic  
Invading, stealing, pillaging,  
raping, destroying, duping,  
bullying, smothering and  
murdering.

Locked down beings are afraid of the air, of dating, of love-  
making,

Of multiplying.

Locked down beings are even  
afraid to come together to pray.

Locked down Humans are fearful of the very hands that subdued the planet.

Their fingers are now instruments of their own deaths.

Locked down beings that locked up much of the planet for themselves are now locked up.

Suddenly, humans who have always been virally predatory,

Virally multiplying, virally unjust,

Virally kowtowing before power,

Are being attacked by viruses which are more viral than human viruses,

Invisible, stealthy, invasive, Predatory,

Solely existing for the destruction of the Human species.

Viruses more murderous than humans,

Viruses that target the healers who try to stop them,



That cull the Human Tsunami and stop the vicious, arrogant  
ones in their tracks,

Make them cower in terror,

Make them fear the very air that they breathe,

Make them fear the touch of their own species,

Make them seek life and solace in solitude.

Human noise is at last quieted.

The voices of other species find life.

Multitudinous Humans are stopped from breathing.

The Earth begins to breathe again and flower.

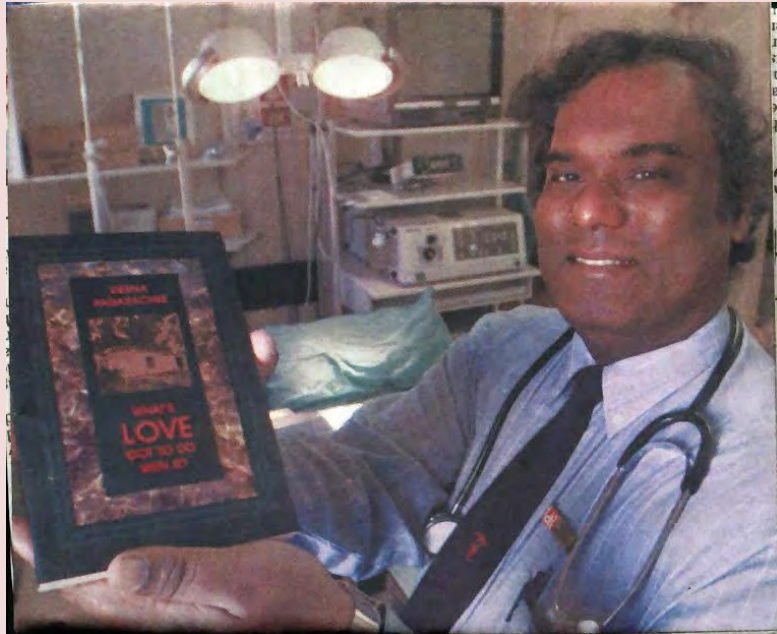
At last the peace of Nature is returning to our planet,

At last the Earth begins to heal

As the asphyxiating, suffocating, polluting, fractious Human  
horde is itself suffocated by a microscopic foe.

Proud humans cower

The vengeance of the Earth is at hand.



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



In the end

Was anything other than solace

That he was looking for all the way

Up the stairway to the fairyland?

Beyond all the humdrum of his life,

Surrounded by the pomp and the vanity fair,

What was the assurance

That he was looking for?

What was the identity

That he was searching for?

What did the hungry faces at the small hut on the roadside  
told him?

What did the old woman sitting by the roadside  
With her basket of wildflower told him?  
Why then the road suddenly took a sharp turn?  
Why then he got lost into the wilderness  
Only to be found  
Standing alone with his both hands spread to the horizon  
On the top of a cliff overlooking the expansive valley  
Why was he standing alone  
With tears in his eyes  
Feeling overjoyed by the magnificent spectacle  
Of the sunrise, and the sunset?



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



## **I AM ZULU – MY NAME IS ZOLA**

*Cultural Reference © Eugene Skeef*

*Mirror of the Heavens* – My soul remembers my people's proud architectural heritage of

eons ago, guided by the celestial stars casting their heavenly essence in ancestral

eager minds – Guiding steering advising curious willing minds to construct and replicate

the perfect circular shapes of distant interstellar bodies  
within which they dwelled in  
social communion, cocooned within an even greater ring of  
love wherein generational  
wisdom was bestowed in proud traditional households. My  
effervescence reflecting  
visions of wise elders whispering my existential path –  
Illuminated by dead stars of long  
ago, still reflected in that mirror of the heavens. The  
ancient dwellings are no more yet  
these walls cry my generational woe – Flooding my brittle  
halo drowning my wailing.

*Nature's Bounty* – My wisdom of all things natural is not my  
own. The wonder of the  
flora and fauna which surrounded my childhood homestead  
belongs to nature, my  
surrogate mother – She, who shared her bounty with my  
people. She, who educated  
not just mine but all generations who walked her footpaths  
in times gone by – She who

guided and still guides our minds to the secrets she holds  
for our intended longevity but  
things have changed. Humanity has faded. I cry because the  
trees are dying. I weep  
because the earth is burning. I sigh because the sky is  
falling. I pray for us for them...

*I, Zola* – I am blessed to be a custodian of my people's  
cultural wisdom. I am chosen  
and destined to share our traditions and customs to new  
generations. I am Zulu. I am  
cosmos. I am the weather. I am rain. I am dew. I am  
mediator. My name is Zola.

***Praise Song for Zola – Keeper of the sacred umbilical  
forests, of our emergence***

*onto the plains, along the banks of timeless rivers – You  
carry the jewel of our story*

*in your flowing tears, the spiritual immersion in the  
headwaters of our song –*



Siyakukhothamela, *We bow down to you.* Egameni  
lokhokho – *In the name of our*

*Ancestors.* Ezinyembezini zakho – *In your tears.* Sibona  
Uthingo lwenkosazana – *We*

*see the rainbow, the bejewelled crown of our princess. Ons*  
*sien die reënboog, die*

*juweelkroon van ons prinses –*

*Soliloquy* – I look at you so you can see me. I speak to you  
so you can hear us. I reach

Out to you so you can know them. I see you staring at me  
but what do you see?

I am wind. I am air. I am here. I am Zulu – My name is Zola.

**© Don Beukes © Eugene Skeef**



**Don Beukes:** He is a South African and British writer. He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles' (CTU) and 'Icarus Rising-Volume 1' (ABP), an ekphrastic collection. He taught English and Geography in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into Afrikaans, Persian, French and Albanian. He was nominated by Roxana Nastase, editor of Scarlet Leaf Review for the 'Best of the Net' in 2017 as well as the Pushcart Poetry Prize (USA) in 2016. He was published in his first SA Anthology 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection' in 2018 (Libbo Publishers) and his second 'Cape Sounds' in 2019 (Gavin Joachims Publishing). He is also an amateur

photographer and his debut Photographic publication appeared in Spirit Fire Review in June 2019. His new book, 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi'/Thus Passes the Glory of this World' is due to be published by Concrete Mist Press.

**Katie Mokhoabane:** He is a 28-year-old self-taught artist from Soweto, South Africa. He is inspired by those who immerse themselves in his art. His work aims to expose the hidden outcry of sorrow as a result of political corruption and the rich making a living out of the blood of the poor.



## **MATTER AND ENERGY**

The twin manifestations of existence,  
those magic cosmic couplets,  
are interchangeable and compromising.

If matter has a propensity for life  
where it's unexpected,  
serendipitous, and unpromising,

and (a caterpillar digesting itself  
inside its chrysalis)  
even contains the chance of intelligence—

then we anticipate the reality  
of god or many gods:  
energy with animation and sentience.



**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.



## **MEDICINAL VERSE**

i am  
the blood  
of what heals you,  
song  
in your veins  
that dispels all suffering,  
serenity  
of a pulse,  
guiding love's oxygen,  
into halos of holiness,

for eternal life,  
cultivating  
rooted visions,  
levitating discovery  
amidst strife,  
i dwell within  
the soul, mind, and body  
beyond death,  
for i am  
the spirit,  
coordinating  
the heavens  
in miracles of breath,  
binding  
more truthful  
the moments  
within your  
earthly grasp,



i am

the will

that lights

the very path,

whence dreams

dreaming themselves,

venerate in voices, everlasting.



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



## **A HUMAN FOOTPRINT**

*Translated by Anna Spryszyńska*

I keep asking myself questions and the one keeps recurring, what about you, man, that you treat your mother like that? And it triggers more. Why do not you care about her? Why are you destroying her?

You only have one. Unless you've found a twin refuge (I doubt it) somewhere. Even if it is the case, it is good to leave behind good memories of you. In my opinion, there is no other, synonymous, equally beautiful, in which a man can live. Mother Earth is one. Unique and friendly to a man. Of course, there will be those who will say: what about floods, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, tsunamis? Yes, they happen, but it's the law of nature.

It is frightening that a man destroys his own territory. However, this is happening. The Earth—the home to people from around the world—is destroyed by its inhabitants. Not thinking that someone will live after us, we leave traces everywhere—of nothing spectacular, but of our stupidity. Tons of plastic floating in the seas and oceans, littered forests, poisonous fumes from chimneys heralding the death of the future of nature.

Even in the Arctic and Antarctica you can see the results of human thoughtlessness. Glaciers are melting due to the changing climate. Unfortunately, a man—who seems not to see the problem—is helping them.

In the seas and oceans, fish die because of plastic, or being tangled in the net.

Let us not leave any traces of thoughtlessness. Let us take care of Mother Earth, because another one may not be available. We destroy this one on our own request.

I'm still asking myself a question—what about you, man, that you have stopped thinking and you leave behind plastic, the totem of modern times. There is a high likelihood that if you do not throw it away, you may burn in a stove of empty water bottles which, not well, you may be short of one day.

I am convinced that disposable plastic bags waving in trees are not a testimony to the fact that now trees instead of fruit begin to flourish with artificiality, it is the man again, the garbage collector who allows nature to take the look of the lack of imagination of homo sapiens.

There are dozens of examples that can be multiplied, but in reality everybody knows that, and hardly anyone thinks that he is doing wrong. He throws away, because what is he supposed to do with it? It is enough to think that used tires should not lie in a forest that we will want to go to for a rest one day. Felling of trees is depriving us (and our lesser friends from the world of fauna) of oxygen. In winter, we start wearing masks so that we do not breathe in poisonous air. Maybe we should take off our masks and look from a different perspective? Changes must be made first in your own home, in your lifestyle.

The harm that we do to the world depends on the course of thought. If living amidst trash does not convince you, think about the life of your children. Not only should you take care of their environment, but also set an example of a conscious inhabitant of the Earth, inspire you to live in harmony with nature. The world does not need the "Earth Day", it needs understanding, respect and help - not once in a blue moon, but every day.

Man has the right to choose values, he has the ability to make decisions. I do not know why he decides to kill the world of nature. To kill himself... We did not appear in the world to destroy it. We are here to live in symbiosis with nature, to draw from her gifts and to protect her in return.



**Eliza Segiet:** She graduated with a Master's degree in Philosophy and completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy, Arts and Literature at Jagiellonian University. Author's poem 'Questions and Sea of Mists' won the title of the International Publication of the Year 2017 and 2018 in Spillwords Press. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019 (USA, November 2019), Nominee for Naji Naaman Literary Prize 2020). Nominated for the iWoman Global Awards 2020. Author's works can be found in anthologies and literary magazines worldwide.



## **FROM THE RISING SEA**

From the rising sea strolled the fiend,  
A male serpent of solemn might.  
A manifestation of night,  
Scales, remnants of wings convened.

Children were no longer portals,  
The feast must be a regions fate.  
Time for a purge of God's mortals,  
Swollen, their desires, innate.

The boiling war of forlorn horns,  
Linger on the vengeful brows.  
Realm's will all fall, when mankind mourns,  
Peace comes with a million bows.



**Ferris E Jones:** He writes poetry and screenplays from his residence in Puyallup, Washington. His work has been published in Se La Vie Writers Journal, Write on Magazine, Outlaw Poetry, Degenerate Literature 17, Tuck Magazine, The Literary Hatchet, Warriors with Wings and other literary periodicals. He is the recipient of two Grants from the Nevada Arts Council and published several collections



of poetry, including To Burning Man, Oh the Path that Followed and As the Toad Sleeps. You can learn more about Ferris E. Jones by visiting [www.inquisitionpoetry.com](http://www.inquisitionpoetry.com) where each month he features the work of other poets.



Shedding my skin

And even bones

On the death of last night

I remain here

Waiting for the first light

You stretch the skin over the bones

And leaving the grotesque statue on the porch retire for  
the night

You don't give a damn about the first light

Do you?

The statue

And I

Both unable to take a flight

We remain here

Waiting for the first light

We bond

Over the leftover red wine at the bottom of the glass

And the half-filled bag of chips

Crickets provide the perfect music

For our rendezvous

And night is the perfect cover

As we wait

For the first light



**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.



## LONGING

O time, stop!

Don't fly so fast

Don't slip from my hands

Let me hold you and freeze the present moments

With a beautiful smile life appeals to me

I don't want to grow old and more mature

But there was a time

When the child in me wished to grow fast

To reach the zenith

To perceive the world  
With her enthusiastic eyes  
Drifting on your fleeting waves

Dancing on your tide  
I grew...became mellow  
You adorned me with grace  
And beauty of womanhood  
But now I have no desire  
To move forward with you  
I am afraid of your cruel clutches  
Scratches on my tender heart and body

I want to stand still at this moment  
O time, take me back to the moments  
Which I left uncherished  
Let me enjoy the heartbeat of every moment  
And live life to the fullest

Why you always tend to become new  
And turn every passing moment into past?  
Lend me the wings again  
To mount back and relive  
The spring of my life  
Instead of moving towards the autumn...



**Gayatree G. Lahon:** Gayatree is a teacher and a poet from the beautiful state of Assam. Being an aesthete, she finds beauty in every object of life and nature. According to her poetry is a celebration of life in all its myriad shades. Her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies and magazines.





Even a small parting  
Breaks my heart  
Let the seas know today  
That I wept  
To my heart's content  
For only she knows me  
Every time I sit  
Looking at her heave  
Swell, break and foam  
On the shores

Relentlessly

As my tears drown in yours.



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



## **IT'S NO BIGGIE!**

There's a universe that unfolds inside me,

Only I cannot portray it the way you do,

I see stars colliding in a way colours spin like they do in a  
kaleidoscope,

You cannot handle it the way I do,

So I don't look into your eyes,

I go look away because I made that choice.

Emotions are truly redundant mostly causing collateral  
damage, war and divides.

I've seen them all.

I'd rather let the music play in my head and let the tunes talk to me.

You cannot handle that, for you see, the whole world is a din in my ears,

I'd rather go deaf cuz I made a choice to be so,

Don't blame yourself, let my music be mine!

I don't know to convey other than in black and white,

I'd rather not dilly dally with shades of grey,

That are misinterpreted, misappropriated and misarticulated.

So I've decided to be speechless this time.

I've already said a lot but I don't know how to communicate this to you.

If I do something that's meant to be right,

Don't make a legend of it.

I'm just coping, just being me, it's no biggie!



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



## **ONLY YOU**

gentle waves

and thoughts of you

overlap...

down the lane

old familiar tune

honeysuckle fragrance

wafting in gentle breeze...

green grass

on hillock

the lone willow weeps

cold winter day

our thoughts intertwine

eyes speak candor

Only you

only you...



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





## **UNDERTONE**

Outside

the twilight time stays down

as if in a primordial soup

no water, no land, no life yet fill its wisp of fire

on the brow of the hill

the land drops suddenly, you see

miles of sand, rugged cliff, crushing waves

drift into enchanting dreams clear like an icicle

in the druid heritage

you are for scaling the summit

now want to land on the silver sand

there is only the asking for being,

shadows melt

clouds secure every corner of the vast sky

the truth is reversed

it seldom is.



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



## THE THIRD DAY

*Original: Assamese: Guna Moran*

*Translation: Bibekananda Choudhury*

She is sitting to partake a meal

Pushing aside pangs of sorrow

No one dies of sorrow

Hunger remains

Till one is alive

Death gets dwarfed by hunger



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



## GAZAL

Perhaps it's not so dark; perhaps there is a moon shining  
inside that stone!

I'm happy to be called a heartless flint, if the sun shines  
beside that stone!

Let the reasons go as we both are wandering souls in the  
bazaar of love,

On the surface of ocean with moving ridges let the child  
slide that stone!

For decades I walked and searched for myself till that  
mirror proved, I exist,

I remember, when you said, (finger towards me)'let me  
guide that stone'.

If the path to the gate is closed, take the way by the wall,  
but come!

My dawn that breaks by night will outshine and glint aside  
that stone.

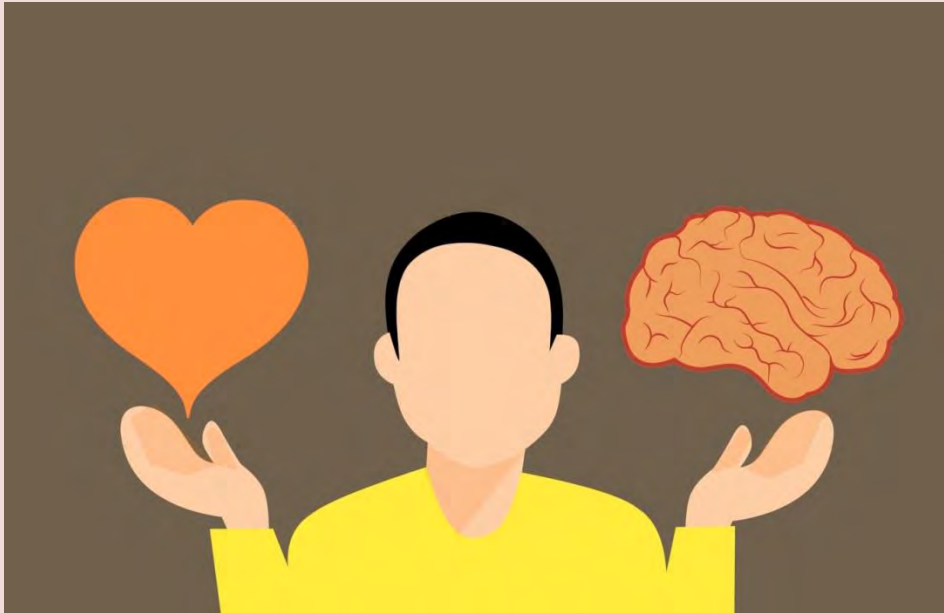
Have you seen those woods behind my house where no  
one goes now!

Come tonight, let's listen to the silence of trees and sleep  
alongside that stone.



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





## **INTUITION**

Many a time

In our life,

Situations arise---

To decide between

Intuition or Intellect.

Intellect is based more on

Reasoning, Logic, Analysis.

Intuition is based more on  
One's Inner voice, gut instinct.

In tight situations,  
When in dilemma,  
Intuition helps --  
The inner voice, basic instinct ---  
In better decision making.

If time permits,  
It depends on,  
How one handles Intuition.

Intuition can be--  
Positive or negative.

Intuition, instinct,  
Hunch or sixth sense---

Whatever we name it ---

Can be effective,

If some groundwork,

Pros and cons

Are worked out.

It is said, normally,

Follow your gut feeling,

Inner voice, instinct ----

That is Intuition.



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



## **TURQUOISE: A TRIOLET**

Love, unrequited has a core of stone.

She wore it as a turquoise

fearing to be left alone.

She was hurt. One can't melt stone

so she only had a turquoise of her own.

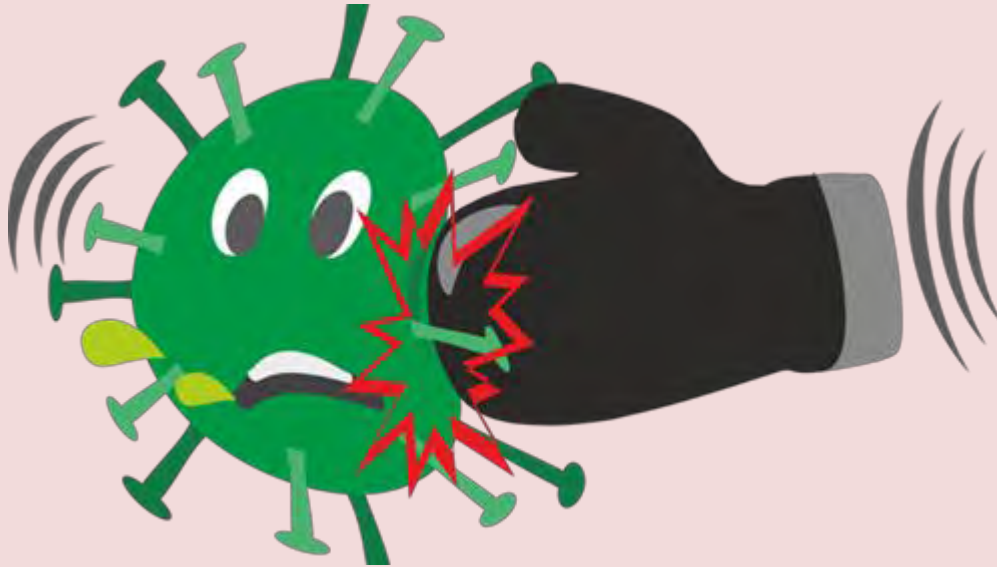
A rejected woman still needs poise

even if love, unrequited is made of stone--

she adorned herself with turquoise.



**Jagari Mukherjee:** She holds an MA in English Language and Literature from University of Pune, and was awarded a gold medal and several prizes by the University for excelling in her discipline. Her poems and other creative pieces have been published in different venues both in India and abroad. She is a Best of the Net 2018 nominee, a DAAD scholar from Technical University, Dresden, Germany, a Bear River alumna, and the winner of the Poeisis Award for Excellence in Poetry 2019, among other awards. She recently won the Reuel International Prize For Poetry 2019. Her chapbook *Between Pages* was published by Cherry-House Press, Illinois, USA, in June 2019. She is currently pursuing her PhD from Seacom Skills University, Bolpur, India.



## **AN ODE TO CORONA FIGHTERS**

When the whole world seems upside down

When people are safe under lockdown

When thousands of lives are bogged down

When all the activities are shutdown

When the lethal virus attacks a takedown

When the clock simply runs a countdown

When life skills are under a meltdown

When individual dreams clog down

Then these warriors play the field

Day and night, without even taking their own heed

Doctors, caretakers, police to take the lead

Cutting out the corona virus and its weed

Irrespective of any religion, nature or creed

Fulfilling the nation's need

Acting as the most powerful shield

No wonder, they are the most revered humans indeed!!



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





## APRIL

Frost snaps

crinkles, eases,

finally melts.

Gaunt trees

dressed in fragile

buds.

Fragile buds, sun

splash, rain splash,

splash blue, splash  
green.

Green new leaf. Fits  
my hand so perfectly.

The future lies  
in my palm.



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



## **IN A BANGALORE BUS**

At 9.30 a.m. in a Bangalore bus  
sullen faces appear trapped in a maze;  
Sun's rays, damp in December,  
tingle indolence.

Sights flit past – a crumpled cement  
workshop, the aroma from Kiasgow  
biscuits, minaret- crested mosques  
abutting luminous temples; lurching  
on a bumpy, dusty track, festival  
music eggs the bus on.

A snaking causeway held my eye.

“Corridor forking its way”, said a  
passenger. “Mysore in one and half hours.”

Its forked tongue, set to decimate  
a misty meadow of palm trees, unspoiled  
as yet by the odorous creek;

“All antiques to make  
way for the Day the eye will see  
but not recognise.”

“Growth’s bugle needs no ears”

Grey fumes echo the earth’s groan.

Dug up fields, impaled by jutting  
beams, are clothed in a brown  
cement haze; dhoti-clad, bare-chested

coolies mutter a cocktail of Tamil  
and Oriya; From the dry, scorched  
Kalinga a long way to sow roots.

Uprooted from home,  
living in a strange house!  
A vale of memories snuffed out  
In a tenuous silhouette;  
The drift as impenetrable as clouds;  
Birds hover high against the wind  
for a perch in a leafless world.



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



## **A PORTRAIT SOLD**

Her feet were shy; innocent,-  
naked as pain,  
where a thousand petals of beauty  
lay strewn, wind-blown in gusts of  
aspiration and fame, trading purity.  
She sells glass bangles at the fort gate.

In her kohl-smearred eyes  
smile flickers like simplicity,  
when being caught unguarded  
in the focus of attention,  
Her fingers try to hide her lips,  
lips parched in dry absentmindedness.

The old damp fort displays armours,  
sets of rusty swords and cannons  
like breath kept alive in lifeless device.

The mouldy aloofness of the fort  
could not claim her plainness.

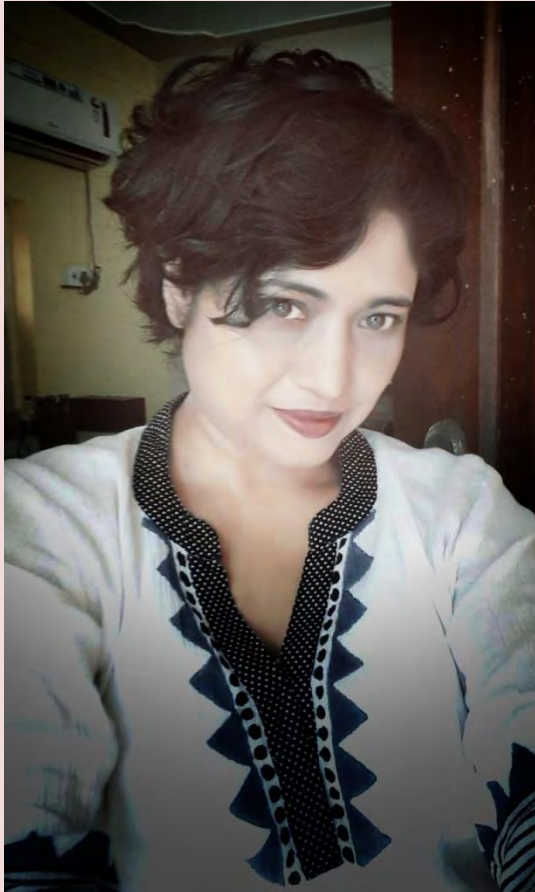
White moth-balls consigned to braveness

Time tinkles at her anklets  
taming tangled sunrays into silver;  
She is indifferent to the tales



of proud Queens and witches.

They made secret concoctions behind locked doors-  
to arrest beauty and drag it to their tomb.



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



## **A STACCATO MEMORY**

When I say, type-writer,  
Is it to the machine i refer,  
Or you, the one who types, writing?  
The dull rhythm of the staccato,  
Takes me back in time,  
To a convent office with cream walls and grey furniture...  
Reminds me of a sturdy matron, with thick glasses,  
A clerk, a part-time teacher,  
And such a god-mother to me:  
Thoughtfully keeping aside a few emergency pills,

For when a not-expected stomach-ache arrived,  
A spare wooden bench behind the partition board  
For a quick rejuvenating lie-down,  
And at the right moment  
Putting us back on our feet again..  
A stand-in mom, we could always go to,  
To mend torn uniform buttons,  
Or unplaited hair to be braided back,  
All through this, the typewriter's soothing clatter  
To and fro, To and fro,  
"Don't stare, close your eyes, I'm typing out the question  
papers!"..  
Smiling I would oblige, and ask,  
"I have a new article written. Would you type it out for  
me?".  
Another stare, yet the article reached  
On time, in the right class,  
A surprise visit of the smiling peon...

Forgot to polish shoes? From somewhere beneath her  
massive desk,

Magically contrived, a bottle of Blanco,

Had saved me from missing

The first session class on many a Monday morning..

The typewriter would continue

It was because of her, that I secretly enrolled

In typewriting classes

While still at school..

Fees forgotten, sheepishly requesting,

Clearance for exams,

She would remain silent,

Not raising an alarm,

Sighing with relief the next day,

When I presented the money with a flourish..

Typing out the receipts with equal flourish!

As she advanced in age, her eyesight began to fade,

Her once sharp mind, began to forget things,

She left without a goodbye..

I cried for days, no one would tell us why.  
A brand new computer now stood in the typewriter's place,  
A deadly silence seemed to reign  
In that once cheerful noisy domain,  
Reading "school office" ...  
Despite the few new lights fixed,  
Gone was that candle-bright corner!  
A smart young newcomer sat there now,  
She looked as young as our class XII girls,  
We felt jealous she could dress as she pleased..  
Of course, she raised the alarm if we missed term fees,  
And we dared not go to her for stomach-ache-solace,  
For her sophistication made us look like sissies..  
Our dear Mrs 'C', mother,  
To a school-full of girls,  
She was no more, we were told as we were collecting,  
Our transfer certificates for college.  
Just like that. Furtively I glanced at the old typewriter,

Dark and sturdy, silent, standing in the corner,  
Wishing me good luck...

Even as I type this, somewhere in my psyche,  
A typewriter staccato seems to echo.



**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.



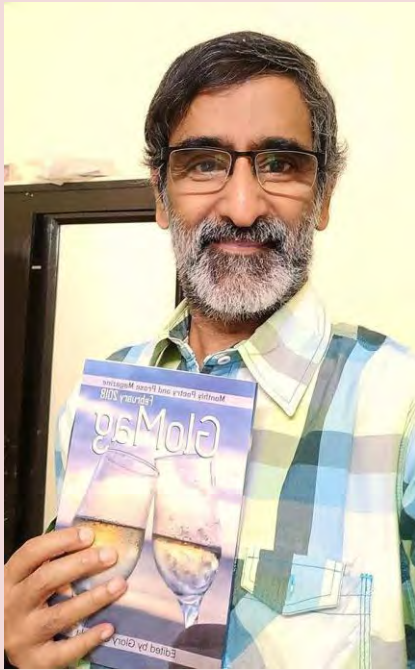
## **01 APRIL - ALL NUTS DAY**

We have World Coconut Day on 02 September. Let's have an inclusive All Nuts Day on 01 April. If there's one day that's truly our day, it's 01 April. We'll celebrate it as the day for all of us who are dismissed as fools or idiots or good-for-nothing or looked down upon as mad or crazy or condemned as sickular, libtard, feminazi and anti-national.

The reasons for the derision or contempt could be the challenges we were born with or acquired while growing up, illnesses, poverty, denial of opportunities, discrimination, our views and attitudes, our rejection of orthodoxy, our opposition to religions and superstitious traditions, our refusal to glorify war, violence and machismo, our insistence on scientific temper and logical thinking, our sexual orientation we are not afraid to show,

our gender fluidity, our values based on humanism, gender and social justice, equality and rationality.

All nuts of the world, unite. We have nothing to lose but our pains.



**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.





## **APRIL GONE!**

Nature calls. Oh! It really does.

Loud and clear, for all of us.

Deer and birds. Elephants too,

Their habitats, they came back to!

Laws, rules, summits and protocols -

Came to naught for nature's wherewithals!

An invisible molecule, an inanimate thing,

Cracked the whip; and, we did its bidding!

Tough times! And; Strife is rife!  
Peasants exclaim, “what a life”!?  
Waiting for the blight to fade away.  
Know not what tomorrow will say!

Elite, they are, power and pelf!  
The two, a self-righteous self!  
Lure of the lucre. Greed is the need.  
Yet, Samaritans do exist, indeed!

“This too shall pass”, soothsayers say.  
April gone. Then, it may be in May!  
Poor and downtrodden can rise again.  
The world can rejoice, rid of all pain!



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



## **GIVE PRAISE UNTO GOD 'ALWAYS'**

i'll praise Him

when things are going right

and even

when things are tight

i'll give Him praise

when all things goes wrong

and remind myself when I feel weak

in Him i'm strong

i'll praise Him

in the storm

knowing that in it

i'll find form

i'll give Him praise

when I don't have a cent in my bank account

with the assurance

that God is always around

i'll praise Him

when i'm battered and bruised

i'll stand firm in faith

even when all hell break lose

i'll give Him praise

when i'm down to nothing

knowing that in that very moment  
my God is up to something

on the mountain and in the valley

i'll give Him praise

i'll worship Him

in my darkest days

i'll give Him thanks in all circumstances

i'll give praise unto God 'ALWAYS'



**Leroy Abrahams:** Leroy is a poet who lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. He is currently working for the church, Victory Ministries International, and also volunteers and enjoys hospital visits because there he prays for the sick and encourages them. Most of his poems are autobiographical and serve as a warning to the young and Christians who are facing tough times. Verse en Inspirasie is his first anthology.



## **MONKEE MUSIC**

One week,

Micky,

even if it

was for Pete's Sake.

One week,

Peter,

although Auntie Grizelda

cramped our style.



A pair in the throes of song.

Drums, bass, and organ amplifying the sound.

Round it up to eleven,

then count it down to Zilch.

Davy and Mike picking up the slack,

the diminutive Artful Dodger back on stage

and Papa Nez, the tall Texas songwriter

still penning all manner

of great verse and melody.

The Monkees,

virtuosos defined by their own understatement.



**Linda Imbler:** Linda Imbler has five published poetry collections and one hybrid ebook of short fiction and poetry. She is a Kansas-based Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net Nominee. More information can be found at [lindapoetryblog.blogspot.com](http://lindapoetryblog.blogspot.com).



## **OUTBREAK**

The threatening outbreak Covid-19 has given cold fest to many innocent wards. The giggles of the globe has taken a rest .The heavy sigh of affected mass is audible from every edges of the barbed wire. It has numbed countless cells, frightened many inner chambers. The looming anxiety and fear is spreading and mostly chilling our brains. Every moment, the news of death, news of affect ants is in increasing order. The analysis and remedial measures is certainly an assurance, but the stubborn virus is obstinate enough to widen its breathing space. Last few horror days, definitely provided me ample time to wind back my mistakes, dealings and responses. The result is I could feel my mind heavier as if the pressure in my blood vessel has increased to an optimum level. I could feel my lack of

interest in things which used to make me grin. The stories of devastation have shut up my thoughts. The ink of mine could sense the rust. The tears of innocent victims did have a staggering effect on me, their wail from the cluster of death couldn't make me go for a good sleep. Their still less bodies groan in silence. The tragic parody of death pinches me. It thunders my core and numerous questions punch me and knock me. The major is WHY

*WHEN WILL OUR DAY OF LIGHT prevail again*

*When will our air smile with the fragrance of Liliac.*

*When will our strings of vein dance under fresh radiant ray.*

*Probably yes, we all are waiting for a new day*

*The new dawn will come with the expectation of million and by the*

*Prayers of trillions and by the sincere efforts of humans.*



**Lopamudra Mishra:** She resides in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. 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,' and 'Rivulet Of Emotions'.



## **MY BEING THERE**

Ah! I love you so much darling!  
Your sleeping soundly on my bosom  
While I am sweetly talking to you  
As though my words are a lullaby  
Taking you to your dreamland  
To the world of Wonders  
To the world of 'Our Love'

Do You know Sweetheart that

I just Love your touching me

It's deliriously sensuous

I just Love your kissing me

It's utterly divine

I just Love your smell

It's simply delicious

Do you know sweetheart that

I Love the rhythm of your heart

Keeping same pace as my heart

I Love looking at your face in peace

A tremendous flow of love

A feeling of contentment

A sense of happiness so true

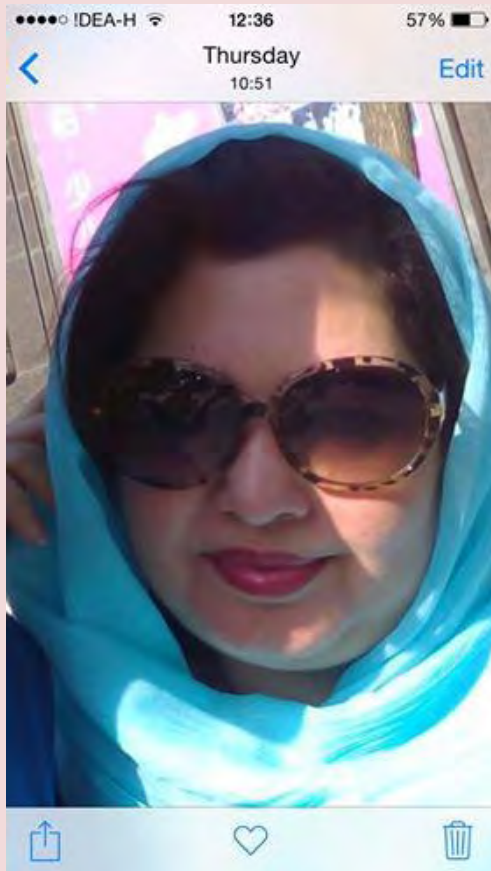
My being there with you

Your being there with me

Means the world to me  
My kissing your lips softly  
Stirring you in your slumber  
Your looking at me lovingly  
My feeling superbly loved

My laughing making you smile  
Holding me so close to you  
Your cuddling me even in sleep  
Makes me love you all the more  
Your Murmuring 'I love you'  
My heart soaring high in joy  
Ah! I love you so much darling!





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



Life is a cocktail

Pandemonium

Of an enigma

Unexpected

Unexplored

Experiences

Few blissful

Some sorrowful dictates

Ups and downs

Lows and highs

One need to be

Persistent

Diligent

In circumstances prevalent

It might make you smile

Often cry

Time to time

Just hold on

With optimisation at bay

Everything will surpass and heal the heart



**Madhu Jaiswal:** She is a poet, writer, editor and a social worker based in Kolkata, India. She has been published in various national and international anthologies and is regularly featured in popular literary magazines and e-zines. As an executive editor of The Impish Lass Publishing House Mumbai, she has 5 anthologies to her credit. Madhu is a friendly, optimistic and compassionate person who believes in humanity and volunteers for the upliftment of the underprivileged and destitute. She can be contacted at [madhuj2203@gmail.com](mailto:madhuj2203@gmail.com).



### **JUST THOSE...**

The breeze blew,  
The waves gushed,  
The sky changed colours  
And many a cloud flew,  
A thousand particles  
Merged and floated,  
Many a boat rushed,  
The fish swam to and fro,  
All passed by,  
All went carrying a bit of me,  
With all of them,  
And you thought

You were in them,  
Being carried away,  
But you were not!  
No you were not,  
You know what,  
I think there was no one,  
No one in them,  
Neither you,  
Nor I,  
Just some days of the past,  
Some past moments,  
Destined and portent,  
Happy and pained,  
A few sad colours,  
Some melancholic shades,  
Just those,  
Nothing much,  
Just those...



**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.



## **APRIL 2020**

April is my birth month

Beginning of zodiac

On set of summer

As nature sets to go

Raw tangy mangoes

Drop and freely sway

At Kalbaishakhi's play

Palash and roses bloom

Beloved's hair goes bare

Confined lover sighs...

Confinement is now release



They know in heart of hearts

Socially distant united minds

Despite fears of decease

Loneliness washing tears

Pray for health and heal

As nature blooms in rage

Wind blows full force

To destroy all illnesses

Corona in air

Exhausted planet rests!



**Madhu Sriwastav:** She is an Assistant Professor of English at B.H.K. Mahavidyalaya. She is a poet, translator, critic, reviewer. Her poems have been anthologized in various reputed National and International Journals. She has been performing poetry on National and International platforms and Poetry festivals across the country. She translates poetry into verse. She writes on anything that touches her.



## **CHILDHOOD MYSTERIES**

It started the day when I saw my mother flinging sugar at moon as he mischievously opened his mouth and winked at me like a naughty, classmate

To me it never opened its lips,  
however hard I tried at times.

Even after years of this episode

Though perhaps around the same time

One morning I saw this sun of a guy Glistening, changing Its colours

Like my mommy in a sabzee mandi or She walking through  
a busy street

Where mom's face would beam with reflections of

Red, green, yellow, orange and beige making me link a  
relationship between her and sun. Colours too frequently  
changing to record

Then around the same time, one night on my terrace, I saw  
this man with two animal ears stooping from each side of  
his head

Sitting on a wooden chair; sombre, silent, immobile. As my  
elder sister pointed at him. And asked me to hush!

"Hush, doll, hush", she said

It came to eat you, this ghost

If you wouldn't sit still. And frigid I sat there for an entire  
night

Trembling but quiet until he disappeared in the morning to  
God knows where

And in the morning I saw his  
wooden chair on my terrace lying empty and which two  
days later

I remembered lay like a corpse on my tauji's terrace. Its  
figments shattered like my world of fantasy

Replaced by a more logic driven, a more real world



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



Do you only see the delicacy  
of glass flowers in my face?  
How would you know how many  
furnaces have refined me?



**Late Mushtaque Ali Khan Babi AKA Max Babi:** Max was a multilingual writer, poet who liked a wide variety of formats – whose life was full of oxymoronic shades, a polymath who went from being a specialist to a generalist to a versatelist. Mentoring by being a catalyst enthralled him, he wrote on serendipity and intuition, conducted workshops on a range of subjects and topics. He was a very friendly Santa Claus.





## **BACK TO SQUARE ONE**

Everyone staying at home  
And working from home  
I'll be more busy than ever  
I thought that morning  
But I had more time to rest  
Everything went well  
In a different way totally  
I had time to read books  
I had time to try new dishes

I had time to listen to music  
I had time to spent with my family  
More than that I had time for myself  
Everyday routine of mine  
Was just that of a housewife  
But now though studying from home  
Instead of watching Tv  
Or lazily lying around  
On weekend holidays  
Kids help me with cleaning  
Hubby keeps chatting  
Giving me company  
After his work schedules online  
Where has all the love gone  
I have thought while alone at home  
It's all there much more than I thought  
Has this pandemic brought about  
New ways of living to mankind

And when this pandemic ends

What will it be like

Back to square one

I heard my inner voice say

History repeats itself



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



## TEQUILA

Single life is Tequila with a slice of lime,

Shots offered my traveling strangers.

Play them all deal them jacks, some diamonds

then spades, hold back aces play hardball,

mock the jokers.

Paraplegic aging tumblers toss rocks,

Their dice go for the one-night stand.

Poltergeist fluid define another frame.

Female dancers in the corner

Crooked smiles in shadows.

Single ladies don't eat that tequila worm  
dangle down the real story beneath their belts.  
Men bashful, yet loud on sounds, but right times soft  
spoken.  
Ladies men lack caring verbs, traitors to your skin.  
Ladies if you really want the worm, Mescal,  
don't be confused after midnight.



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

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

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



The stare was oblivious.

The starvation, the helplessness

Was evident.

The equipment of their mere work was

Lying lazy.

They too seemed

Famished.

But tonight, there were only tears

Mixed with the cheap ointment.

Or not, just the bare wounds.

The baton didn't know,  
Neither the lenses  
What brewed inside  
Of those careless men.  
Who didn't want to beg  
For a morsel to feed  
The mouths that refused to  
Banish the arch nemesis.  
Which prevails itself as hunger.

Novel or should it be called noble?  
'New' as in the term of those who know.  
To them, it's royal.  
Not for the poor, filthy ones.

Hope is turned to the God-sent ones.  
As scavenging is not an option.



There has to be light at the  
End of the tunnel.

There has to be.



**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.



## **HURRICANE OLIVIA**

She is the flute

And the fluter,

She is the pipe

And the piper,

She is the dance

And the dancer,

She is the performance

And the performer,

She is the frequency

And the sound,  
She is the pitch  
And the music;  
She is the stage  
And the curtain.

Lo, she is the feast  
And the banquet,  
The wave  
And the storm,  
She is the sea  
And the tempest,  
The current, the speed,  
The force, the strength;  
She is the goddess.

Her soul rages, her spirit roars  
She is the echo and the reverberation

Wild, weird, raw, untameable

A whirlwind, a hurricane

Invisible, invincible, incredible.



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



### **A PAINTING OF POESY.....!**

Tearing my chest they begin to sprout,  
wearing the nectar of phagun,  
they are like embedded diamonds  
on my leaf;  
laden with blood red blossoms,  
branches of a coral tree,  
very own; my modar!  
for my words you bleed .

Dust dances in every move,  
wind wishes to her,  
On the earth; the dance floor,  
O' Modar  
when you bloom like embers  
I hear the call  
The call of the spring messenger!

Dripped in blood; you are!  
shedding tears forever,  
crimsoned on leafless branches  
what pain untold you pine for!

O' Modar,  
my words desire to perch on,  
the branch where you sit and cry alone,  
let me be pensive and devour your beauty

you and your leafless bare tree  
as if a painting of poesy.

witnessing a thousand years of pain,  
And betrayals of lonely lovers,  
your burning heart when you bare,  
It falls like the dream of spring  
within the contemplation of a wordsmith.



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





## **THE SEASON OF NEWNESS**

Fresh green grass has carpeted the hills

Baby birds flap out of their nests for the first time

On slender stalks popping their heads out are daffodils

Nature is ready for its primetime showtime.

Squirrels scurry out from their homes in the trees

Rivers begin gurgling and bubbling once again

Bluebells in the woods nod their heads in the breeze

Gently falls spring's refreshing rain.

Butterflies flutter between the flowers

Bees buzz about making fresh honey

Roses have taken over the backyard bower

Lovely to finally have weather that is warm and sunny.

This is the best time to get rid of old pains

And make way for new thought lanes

It is time to get out the paper and scribble down a rhyme or  
two

Lounging on a blanket under the sky so clear and blue.



**Nivedita Karthik:** I am a poet residing in Gurgaon, Haryana. I have poems that have been published in Glomag, The Epoch Times and Society of Classical Poets, forthcoming in Eskimo Pie Literary Magazine. I am an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer, and my thoughts on random subjects can be found on my blog [justrandomwithnk.com](http://justrandomwithnk.com)



## **HOPE FLOWER**

The flamboyant hibiscus in bright red hues cavorts  
On my window ledge, graceful as a flamenco dancer  
Frolics in the golden sunlight,  
accompanied by the trilling melodies  
of the myriad birds that flock outside  
on the tall trees that seem to kiss the sky.

The darkness and gloom brought on  
by the deadly demon who has  
brought life to a standstill.

His wrath dissipates as hope flowers  
Outside my humble little window



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



## **EPILOGUE (TO ALL OF MY WRITING)**

After every word

Beginning to the end

You held bits of my soul

For a time

And I'm sure

You have read,

Felt and imbibed me

Only from how  
You have met yourself.

Tasting me through  
Your perception,  
I feel like  
A flavoured medley  
Of your senses.

You are likely  
To not have  
Read me as me.

Someday,  
When you are less of you  
And more of the world  
Maybe you'll see me  
Till then,  
I await your time and soul.



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





## **DREAMING RIVERS**

The river searches its own pyre  
reduced to a skeletal figure,  
shores once witnessed rites  
knew the joy of life and the pain of death.

When the sky made love with the river  
transpired its azure hue into it,  
we looked our faces in it,  
washed our grief in its crystalline folds.

It swallowed our bitterness with no dregs  
ferried us shore to shore on its wavy surface  
took our hearts with it, held a world within  
and snoozed royally under moonlight .

It heaved, swelled up with wandering water  
which sang to the hum of the earth,  
an image in childhood stuck deep in my mind,  
now shrunk to the bones like a child in famine.

Its soul gnaws and kneads with mood swings  
sometimes serene, sometime fierce,  
tells tales of choking with wastes and neglect,  
yet mute it lingers, quite women-like.

Straddling between past and the present  
rivers tread on old paths carrying their curse,

ringing in their ears long lost bustles  
and dreaming to beckon past glories.



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



## **THE LITTLE MIRACLE**

The lockdown imprisoned me indoors.

I was neck-deep in household chores.

Outdoor work totally stopped.

Meeting friends was absolutely cropped.

Just when I thought I could no longer breathe.

A little miracle happened in the form of a seed.

It fell on my empty flower pot.

Grew into a lovely sapling and my attention caught.

It grew and grew into a tall slender plant.

In the middle of other pots in my balcony slant.

One fine day I happened to see.

A radiant yellow sunflower waving in glee.  
When everything seemed uncertain and sad.  
When happy thoughts were overshadowed by bad.  
The wondrous sunflower waved its head in glory.  
Giving me immense happiness in the gloomy story.



**Paramita Mukherjee Mullick:** I am Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick and I live in Mumbai. The sheer love of poetry transformed me into a poet from a scientist and educationist. My poems have been published in more than 250 international and national journals. I have five books to my credit. Some of my poems have been translated into 29 languages. I feel blessed to have received many awards for my poetry, the latest being the Golden Rose award from Argentina for promoting literature and culture.



The Sun was stalking the Moon

Moon was shy and coy

She liked the stalking.

When someone asked the Moon

She pretended anger

“That fellow is always stalking me on some days”

Why don't you shout or frown

He may stop

But I like when he stalks me.



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



## MY GHOST LIFE

Born ghost to this ghost world  
this ghost earth I learned ghost

in school, met a ghost lass  
who said she was ghost ready

to be ghost wed, so we ghost married  
after three months of ghost courting



she ghost bore our first kid

after six months whilst I ghost worked

in ghost employment ghost unexpected

ghost promoted to ghost manager

so we ghost dream our first ghost home,

ghost furnish it, after ghost decorating

I had a ghost allotment where I grew ghost

carrots and potatoes and cabbages.

She ghost died after seven years ghost fighting

lung cancer. I never ghost remarried

ghost bring up our ghost second child,

ghost tell her ghost dream stories of our ghost love ghost  
life.



**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.



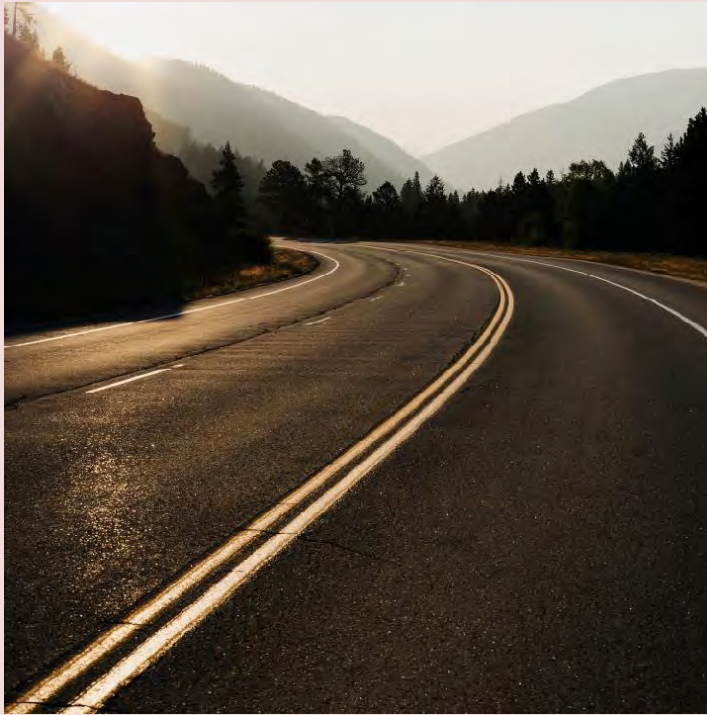
## **A SIMPLE TRUTH**

We all must work hard every day  
To bring folk joy in every way  
Though reward it lives but a short, short time  
It's depth my friend is so sublime

But when we bring folk pain and sorrow  
The hurt lasts longer than tomorrow  
And lingers on for many a year  
Our conscience pricked by many a tear



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



**TO,**

## **THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED**

A road once thronged by travelers  
stood by the lanes  
some jelly stones and new tar  
freshly embraced its surface  
inviting new shoes and wheels to ravel

Then many men, women and children  
walked in these inviting paths

some marched merrily  
some pelted stones  
by mere misuse alas! Invaded

And then the road smiled  
when again it was washed.  
Washed in silence with lesser vehicles  
lesser smoke  
cleaned, disinfected,  
and a few trespassers

It stood in solitude  
beautifully singing lores soon, running down history  
forever looking serenely clean in appearance  
But, an epiphany after another bevelled  
the men living in homes in trepidation  
treading through surfaces  
to the road less traveled



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



I drink the syrups of irritation  
And swallow these uncomfortable waves...  
The air around me is thick and grey.  
I gulp down half-broken words  
And utter incomplete epithets.  
I run,  
I escape  
I withdraw myself to the corner  
And shut the doors of my thoughts  
With the oblivious lock of slumber.  
I close my eyes.  
I wish this comfort stays with me.





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



## **CELEBRATION OF LIFE**

The mother is celebrating her birthday inside the womb,  
with two tiny delicate palms and new born lips full of  
words.

In prayer mode life is in side womb of the mother earth!

The celebration of life inside the beautiful planet is  
witnessed by celestial bodies, the moon having hanged  
against the star studded sky.

The mountain with head held high

The murmuring Brook flowing like poetry of words

Leaves unfurling wings like birds.

The mother is celebrating the birth of a time in this beautiful planet earth.

The birth is a process, so also the celebration, a beginning always never an end.

Within the womb lies an universe where two eyes illuminate like stars

Where imagination is in search of wings and darkness gives birth to celestial light

The womb is the temple of the child-God.

What else life is if not a soft pious feeling and a silent prayer with folded hands and closed eyes.



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



### **NAPOWRIMO 13**

I was looking forward to meet Mom!

Hurriedly I packed my bags, and got into my car, to rush to the airport!

Dash it! What a traffic jam!

Like for the ambulance, we should make way for people catching a flight!

Time running out!

Gets dark quickly in winter!

Just then something thudded against my car's bonnet..

Oh no! I bumped some pedestrian?!

Hurriedly I got out, saw an old man in bedraggled clothes, whimpering pitifully,

I asked passers-by to help him into my car,  
People looked at me queerly,  
Cursing and fuming, somehow I managed to seat the old  
chap in the car,  
Offered him water,  
He was barely breathing,  
Asked directions of passers by to the nearest hospital,  
Seated him in the patient's' lounge,  
Doing the paperwork,  
Running from counter-to-counter,  
Time flew by..  
Harassed by this fluke of fate,  
I turned round to check on the old man;  
He was keenly seeing the breaking news, on the large flat  
TV screen,  
I too stopped in my tracks,  
And horror of horrors!  
The flight that I was to take, went up in flames,  
Soon after take-off!

Benumbed i collapsed into a bench.

From faraway, the incessant ringing of the phone,  
registered in my brain..

Hello! You did not board the flight?

Thank you Sai Baba! You saved my girl!

Had a bad dream involving you, yesterday night. You did  
not read my smses!

Why did you switch off your phone, silly girl?

I was so frantic! You shut off office calls and me too!

I am ok, Mom!

Stay blessed dear!

I looked around...

The old man was not there..

Did I really see him?

And not others?!

So, he saved me?!

I am flummoxed!

Wearily, made my way back to my flat.

Tomorrow maybe a good day to fly to Mum's place..



**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 one who pretends to be wise  
Wanders temples to jungles  
Mountains to caves  
In search of the divine  
The one on the path of wisdom  
Finds Him within  
And in the smile of his fellow beings  
Each and every moment  
He sings to the tune of his soul

Dances with the divine  
The heavenly fragrance of love  
Spreads in and around.



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



## **THAT FREE SOUL**

Sitting by the ocean

I watch the waves

And wait till the end of day.

A touch of solitude

in my timeless vision

To soothe my lonely heart

The fragrance of thy lips

That wants to reach out

For the first kiss of desire

Anchors in my eyes;

When I return back to home  
The sky grows dark and  
The stillness of the lonely hours  
Gets crystallized in my mind .  
The nameless air  
carelessly whispers into my ears  
That holds my arms  
around your warmth of body  
Unlocking my desire's nest.



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



## **HUM DEKHENGE**

One day the tumbrils will rumble in, past the serfs whose names you never knew.

*Hum dekhenge*

The sons of those who died at your coronation will read in the papers of Yekaterinburg.

*Hum dekhenge*

The guns, you, Kerensky gave out, will be fired at your own Mensheviks.

*Hum dekhenge*

Prepare to run, Imelda, you and your shoes.

*Hum dekhenge*

Your windows will rattle, Erich, when they pour out of the Nikolaikirche.

*Hum dekhenge*

Is your helicopter ready — the crowds are chanting Timisoara.

*Hum dekhenge*

Yes we know, Deng, that you have the tanks ready to run over us. Even then.

*Hum dekhenge*

On another day, you will hide in a concrete pipe, hungry and fearful, your silken tents torn to pieces.

*Hum dekhenge*

Briefly then we will suckle the warm breast of freedom.

*Hum dekhenge*

Some other tyrant will come, but at the least it will not be you.

*Hum dekhenge*



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





## **REMNANTS OF RICE**

At the end of the day

Your bitter ordeal of dish washing

Consumes much of your time

scrapping the corners

of your vessels here comes

the collecting of remnants

just as the covey of crows

caw and peck each particle;

particles thrown as excess  
or sticky corners as bunch  
gathering thirst for hungry  
stomachs craving for every time;

gone are those days when  
inmates of the ancient house  
well tutored in household duties  
knew the economy of saving edibles;

like minded and myself opine  
remnants of rice or grain or coin  
have greater value yield, the need  
and necessity of your testing time.



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

[pearlradhe.blogspot.in/](http://pearlradhe.blogspot.in/)[pearlradfhe.wordpressf.com](http://pearlradfhe.wordpressf.com)



## **LOVE IS IN THE AIR!**

I went through the charts, overflowing with love,  
and breakup, songs, love:  
between man and woman,  
man and man  
or woman and woman,  
of the romantic kind.

Yes, I make it clear here, for it is much mystified. Love  
has no fixed meaning, even dictionaries love  
to take you in circles and deliver at the end, cipher.

They, those charts, were filled with love  
that sometimes felt staged, love  
that smelled of overexposure, love  
that they “profaned” (Shelley, anyone?)  
by singing for public consumption.

Love was strewn all over the charts, so much love.  
that it made me think that the world is filled with love.

Well, the last time I checked, that was not true about love.  
How's the stock nowadays, of love?



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

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



## TRANSITION

I am that darkness  
Between yesterday and tomorrow,  
I am that silence  
Between happiness and sorrow,  
I grieve at the bygone  
I hope at the ensuing,  
Yesterday, I did long for today  
Today I weep, erstwhile ruin,  
While I'll be tomorrow  
I forget to realise,

I remain the remains  
Of rubbles and vice..

I am that love  
Between lust and hatred,  
Stuttering for touch  
Blue turned red,  
Renunciation of sorts  
With utter fulfilment,  
Smelt obnoxious  
Repulsive scent,  
While I turn to hate  
As sun shows down,  
I am that twilight  
After an arid wild frown,  
I am that movement  
Ever blooming notion,



Myriad in my views

Flowing eternal transition..



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



I'm the ever-flowing river of life,  
Providing fresh water to millions of people;  
Civilizations have grown and flourished by my side,  
For long till their end was in sight;  
Vanishing civilizations could not obstruct my path,as  
I'm flowing with abundant waters, transparent and bright;

Mankind is using me now in myriad forms,  
From industrial use to water sports to drinking,  
And bathing en masse adhering to their religious norms;

But my heart is pestered by unsolicited sores,  
As my bosom is filled with garbage unbound;  
From municipal waste and sewage to animal carcasses,  
Even human dead bodies can easily be found;

It seems my soul is changing colours,  
From pure shining white to horrifying grey;  
Man is holding large brush in his hands,  
And no one is there to feel my pain,  
Who seems willing to wear the gauntlet,  
For stemming the rot and join the fray!



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



## **GHAZAL-7**

The door of my heart was flung open, the stubborn wind  
blew, who knows?

The patterns on a windy terrain darker and darker grew,  
who knows?

Cobra clouds gathered around the moon-- confounded I  
watched the dim vault:

Lightning split the sky many times cutting crazy zig-  
zags,who knows?

The wind and its wuthering, autumn in light and winter in shade,

Blue eruptions--aliens so far--enveloped the core, who knows?

Ducked into the alley of heart, a wandering phantom now sleeps,

Like an innocent impish child quite reluctant to leave, who knows?

Now and then I sit thinking of you amid subdued amber glow,

Enduring the stay of memories-a few wingless birds, who knows?

The hollow murmurs of passion throng around a sad, sallow soul;

My fizzog hides the frozen pain of a faded flower, who knows?

Reflections recede, the moments pass as the wine-red  
selvage spread;

The mortal waves of life heave on the hazy horizon, who  
knows?



**Ranjana Sharan Sinha:** Recipient of a number of prestigious awards for her contribution to literature, Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha is a professor and poet. She is an authentic voice in Indian Poetry in English. Two of her poems have been prescribed for M.A.(English) 4 semester at university level. She is an author and a literary critic, too. Poems, fictions and research papers widely published at national

and international levels in highly acclaimed dailies, journals, magazines, webzines etc., both in print and online. Authored and published 07 books in different genres and 50 research papers. Research supervisor RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur.





## TRUCE

I being a retired Banker and depressed  
By all new needs and wants of my type  
Am driven by our propensity to hype  
To glorify our lazy habits long suppressed  
So much so that it is almost nearly crushed:  
So swiftly has the pace of life changed  
So palpably Relatives have rearranged, estranged

Leaving me almost fully undone, fully stressed  
Not for this reason though is my genial grouse  
As I tinker with internet in my empty house  
I broker a peace with myself, a compromise  
That I shall celebrate only goodness, not vice  
I find this truce a more than sufficient reason  
To remain distinctly above always, all season...



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



## **AN UNDERTAKER LOSES HIS PHONE**

I know of a mass grave

Where cell phones

Go to die.

One day you may lose one.

Don't look for it.

It has buried itself.

Near the swamp  
Where the secret grave is  
The cell phones come out  
To play in the night.  
Millions of fireflies  
Million iridescent organisms  
Million beeps.  
Million ring tones  
Million languages.

Some wriggle some fly  
Some sing some sob.

They come alive  
When their loved ones  
Call out to them.

Because love reaches them

Only underground.



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



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## THE VISIT

The souls seeking truth knock  
at the dilapidated door  
of the about-to-extinct  
shrine of knowledge: the library,  
for they are sick, and tired,  
aghast and saddened  
at the statements: shameless and manipulated,  
and share the plight of the helpless  
Loudspeakers: instruments of liars  
and self-declared politicians.

The yellow pages, of long forgotten books,

that lie confined behind the  
rarely opened doors of the cases;  
once out they will sing songs: old  
and true, and will kick away the  
fashionable facts: half-true, mostly false,  
abused and distorted..  
History knows it all!





**Ritika Ojha:** I am a poet, residing at Dhanbad. I have contributed to one online anthology, and one magazine so far.



## **SOUL OF MY SOUL**

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

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

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



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



## **ISOLATION**

The spring

Has arrived

My colorful garden

Is ready and waiting

For you to dance

All over its flowers

But the world

Is standing still

You are trapped

Inside a bottle  
In total isolation!

Don't worry  
My darling  
When we are  
All also trapped  
In this time of  
Uncertainty!

You will be again  
Free to fly high  
And we will be  
Able to breathe  
Uncontaminated air,  
Dance, kiss and  
Hold hands

Like lovers did

Some time passed!



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



## **NO MOOR THA STOIC RUINS**

a

lone 2

(con)template

in the nest

of no ones

arm[our]

(sun)set bleeding

caws

l(ate)

har[vest] fields

cleared

of N E wrong

dEWing.





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



## **THE MASKED PRINCE**

The ballroom echoed with soft laughter  
The chandeliers were shining bright,  
And sometimes, a pair or two of young ones  
Would disappear into the gardens that night,

The lovely princesses danced away,  
Their smiles as bright as the face of day.

They hopped and swirled and pranced around  
As they flew about on the ground.

The youngest, however, quietly sat,  
Her despair hidden by a forced smile,  
For who would ask the youngest to dance  
When the elder sisters were nigh?

And as she sat there in despair,  
A young man approached and asked her for a dance,  
His face however, was hidden by a mask  
As the princess chanced a glance.

And off they went, the loveliest couple of all,  
Gliding on the ballroom floor,  
The princess was delighted by her proficient partner  
And to discover his identity, twirled him towards the door,

Whereupon, on lifting up the mask,  
The princess gave a squeal of delight,  
For the mask hid the face of someone known,  
Her childhood best friend, the love of her life,  
And they danced away into the night.



**Samixa Bajaj:** I am a fifteen-year-old poetess residing in Guwahati, India. I am a student of Class 10. I am a regular contributor to GloMag and also have had my work published in the annual school magazine. I hope to be able to pen even better verses in days to come.



### **SCARLET SCRIBBLES:**

Sanguine tears dribbled from her slit wrist  
Making a pool of wallowing self-pity on the floor  
But then, she couldn't let the drops go waste  
Hours of pain forgotten in vain  
With the last ounce of strength,  
In her wavering fingers  
She took up a long feather quill

And dipping it meticulously into the red fluid  
Began scribbling away on the scented parchment  
A single candle encased her in its luminous halo  
While her sobs and gasps, the night quietly witnessed  
In the dwindling moments of a fast fading life,  
She wished her words would perhaps break the silence  
Of months of unspoken anguish

When everyone had been there - seemingly smiling and  
understanding

But no one knew about the tears that hid behind her  
glittering khol-lined eyes

In the irony of a life ripped apart  
By a world too obsessed with the self,  
Silence had been a terrifying one  
Draining her bit by bit like a vampire

Years on end she had persevered, in her quest to turn  
wolves into humans

But today when she realized the utter futility of her  
endeavours

She was broken, beyond repair...

She continued with a rare fervour

Penning down in the scarlet ink of her blood, words long  
since caged inside a tender soul

Well aware that in the wake of a dawn that arrives too late

All that would remain was a lifeless corpse, a dizzying trail  
of blood

Morphed into a voice that would speak from across the  
grave

The silence finally broken with those scarlet scribbles on  
scented parchment

Her life reduced to a small stack of pages...



**Samrudhi Dash (Inara):** I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. Along with contributors to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date five solo poetry anthologies and two novels and conceptualised and edited four anthologies of different genres. I write under the pseudonym Inara and have completed my Masters in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. My signature words are “Hope, Live, Believe”.





## **AZURE LOVE**

I often ask myself, Why do I love blues?

When there is a rainbow of different hues!

My heart smiles & merrily explains,

It's the color of magic that creates rain.

It bears Krishna's love & reflects Radha's pain.

It tells why Neelkantha, Shiva once became.

And teaches me how to win peace

Even in the lost game.

As I touch this azure & softly embrace,  
Thousand peacocks start dancing in my heart  
Making me amazed!!



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



## **AM I ENOUGH?**

The world gazes at me,

Trying to make a mark.

It looks past me, not able to see,

The beauty, the divinity, the love.

Instead, selling products to become less and less me.

You can say that I am wonderful.

But then you'd be lying.

You can say I am beautiful.

But it's not my soul for which you're vying.

In a world where the external is everything,  
And productivity is everything that matters.  
Do I count for anything?  
When troubled, going through perilous waters?

You can say I am nothing but the ash on a stone.  
Or a frayed satin ribbon.  
But without the ash no Shivling\* can be adorned.  
So, stop the lying and the fibbing.

Value me, oh value me for who I am.  
Not what I give or what I do.  
I am a human, not a statue.  
Don't judge me on my life,  
On what I want or whom I woo.

So, I ask you again to look at me.  
Am I enough?

Can you love me all flaws bared,  
In all my entirety?

**\*Shivling – representation of the Hindu Deity Shiva**



**Sankalpita Mullick:** I am an eighteen-year-old writer and poet living in Mumbai, India. I am a law student. At fourteen I have written a novel, "Metamorphosis-Legends come to Life" about Indian mythology based on redemption and second chances. I was selected for the international "Between the lines" writing programme sponsored by the United States State Department in Iowa last year. I have got

multiple awards and scholarships for creative writing like the Hindustan Times award with a scholarship of Rs 50,000, the first position in LaughGuru creative writing competition with a rupees one lakh writing contract, State champion in the Marris International Spelling Bee and finalist and many more.



*pic by Dr. Santosh Bakaya*

## **THE ENIGMATIC LOOK**

I keep recalling the face of that man  
who peeped into my car the other day.

Old, bedraggled, and lost.

Just for a fraction of a minute, his eyes looked into mine.

During that fraction, I saw many a question rippling in his eyes,

and a host of sighs bursting forth in staccato gasps.

There was a question on his lips too.

What was the question, I never would know,

for he walked away soon after,

his unasked question lost in the ear-piercing laughter

coming from an eatery across the road,

and the sonorous drone of the traffic.

I kept looking at him till he was a speck in the distance.

But, I wonder whether I will ever forget that look.

Intensely sad. Wistful.

What had he lost?

What were his restless eyes hunting for?

May be, I would meet him again traversing the same path

and ask him.

Yes, I am sure, our paths will cross again.





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



## **IN THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY PUPPY ENDEAVOUR (ENDU)**

His Eyes shined with innocence

Lips curled in bliss

He was a love ball

And would run to me at the sound of a call

He was bright

And would've grown to a great might

Such was his capacity

And I watched his life with such intensity

In a short while I'd grown to love him

My eyes would search him

Never did I even think that our time together was short

And he would leave for another world North

Healthy and happy, he went as disease struck him

Leaving but a faint memory of him.

In the hearts of all who cared for him,

Leaving a lot more love behind him.



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



## **NOTHING BELONGED TO ME**

My heart stopped singing

Years back

When everything I had was lost

I carried an empty heart

With just heart beats of sorrow

I used to think

Those were all mine

And mine forever

A realisation came to me later

Nothing is mine  
Everything is His gift  
But I still wept  
Thinking of the lost possessions  
which I thought were mine  
Now I know  
I own nothing  
Not even me  
I belong to God  
And to Him alone  
I detached myself  
totally dedicated to Him  
My heart is lighter now  
A divine light burns  
In my heart sublime  
With a song of glory to Him !  
Every morn I drink from the chalice  
the divine nectar of love

I am filled with love for all  
without discrimination!



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



## **PHASE SHIFT**

Lyrics have more sting in a crisis

heart craving extra oomph

I'll weep with you for us and this

but only while the moment's passing

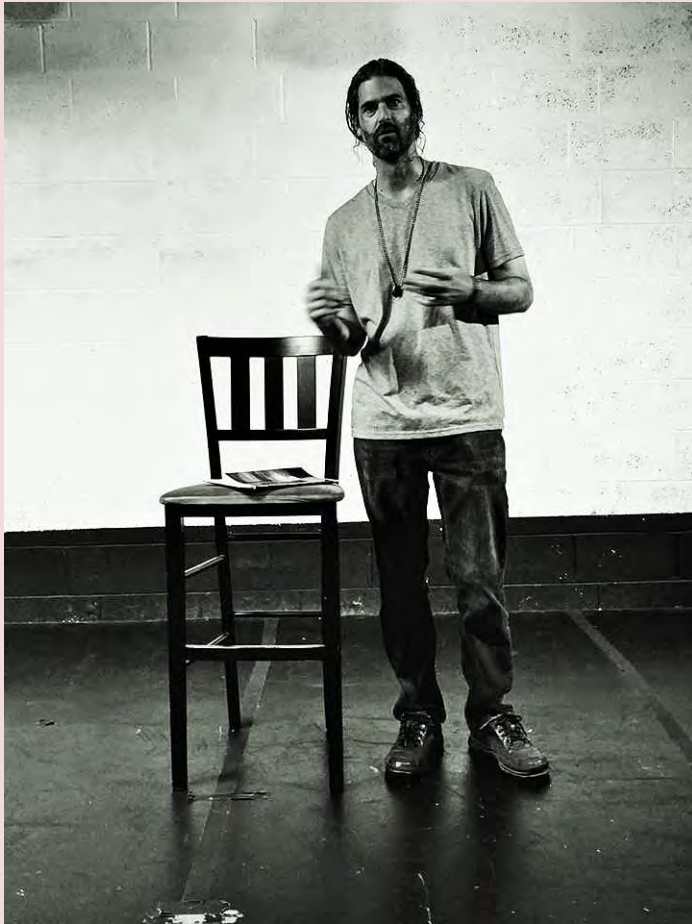
because promises of beauty still

hold ships afloat from the far side



Mourning doves herald the light  
wear your secrets close to skin

I'll sing with you through thick and thin  
babble across the darkest chasm



**Scott Thomas Outlar:** He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. Selections of his poetry have been translated into Afrikaans, Albanian, Bengali, Dutch, French, Italian, Kurdish, Persian, Serbian, and Spanish. His sixth book, *Of Sand and Sugar*, was released in 2019 through Cyberwit Press. He hosts a podcast, *Songs of Selah*, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio and features interviews with contemporary poets, artists, musicians, and health advocates. More about Outlar's work can be found at [17Numa.com](http://17Numa.com).



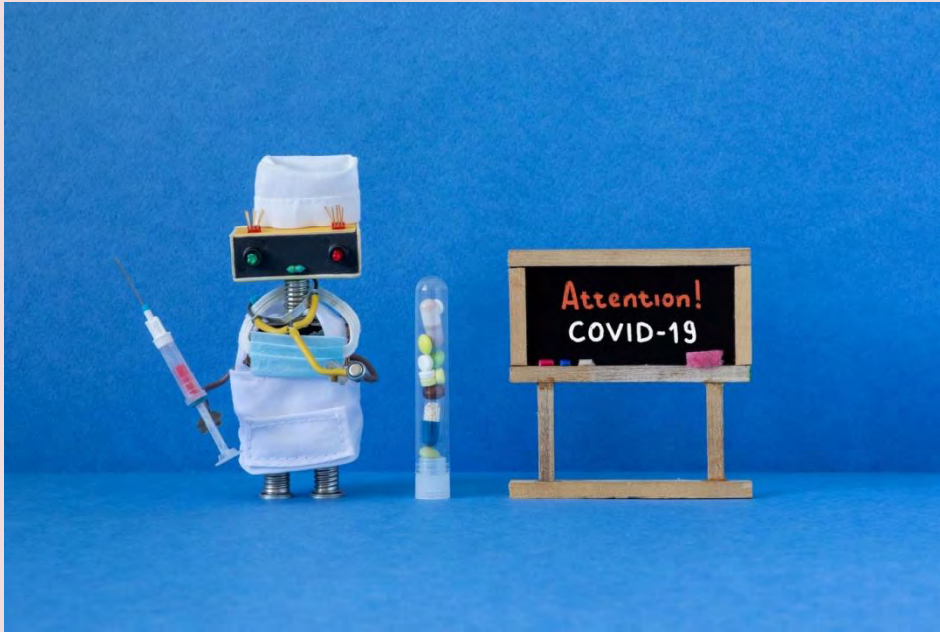
Like great mirrors  
They shimmer silver  
Like deep lakes  
Reflecting faroff moonlight  
Like great waterfalls  
They brimmeth over  
My fingertips I raise  
To wipe those unshed  
Silent pain that so closely  
Resemble mine  
Only to realize I look

Mirroring my abyss  
Through the tunnel of eyes  
Telescoping soul light  
From the other side  
You my friend though untouchable  
Sharing my dismal sorrow  
Eye to eye in my dreams  
Reaching through  
The other dimension.

***Note: I dreamt of her today, my friend who stepped over to the other side, and I woke up feeling better knowing it exists other dimension and she is there.. and she is fine and she sent me happiness.***



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



## **GIFT OF ADAPTABILITY**

Humans with a gift of adaptability

As though voluntarily

Is it a boon or bane?

Visions of mind beautifully

Interlinking the twain

In the days gone by

Surprisingly adorning

The beauteousness of a doorway

Slowly but surely a certainty

Circumstances changing  
But human nature always unfailing  
A beautiful thread  
Slowly untwining between  
The surreal and mundane



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



## **OUR STORY**

Lonely as we come awake,

Lonely as we march to die,

Absolutely full of life!

What solution do we seek,

Absolution from the sky?

Our laughter anchors with its beat,

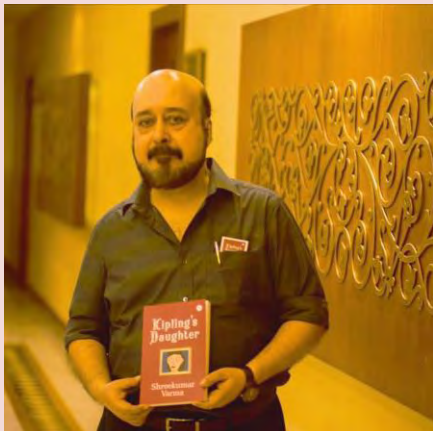
The random roll our earth has known,

And tears have cooled our days of heat.



But souls are fused in flesh and bone,  
Our lives delusions of release!

Filling hours of our days,  
Writing pages of our ways,  
What conclusion do we plan  
To a story with no plan,  
Just a nameless writer's dream.



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

[www.shreevarma.com](http://www.shreevarma.com)

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shreekumar\\_Varma](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shreekumar_Varma)



### **THINK ONCE MORE-17**

On the first of January 1963, my mother gave birth to twins myself and fear ( Hobbes) and since that eventful day, my twin brother is chasing me like a shadow and has become my constant companion in moments of joy and sorrow, plenty and poverty. Whatever I do wherever I go I always find my faithful brother behind me, guiding and misguiding me and making a hell of my life. Fear and apprehension are like blood suckling vampires which take away the juice of man's life and makes it awfully miserable. We live in fear of losing something we have and in the apprehension of not being able to have those things which we long for and cherish the most. Fear is a psychic state of mind which always keeps a man on his toes and never allows him to lead a normal life. In the midst of affluence, the fear of losing the same haunts him and in his not so good days, the

apprehension of non-being able to have the amenities of life dissuades him from further activity. In the prime of youth and pick of health he thinks about future diseases and old age and in plenty he sees adjunct poverty. It is human experience that most of our fears and apprehensions do not materialise. In most cases, fear and apprehension do not have a basis of its own. To nurture and nourish it is the worst thing that can happen to man. The greatest thing is to lead a fearless life and bravely face adverse situations as and when they come.



**Smruti Ranjan Mohanty:** Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, O.F.S, son of Raj Kishore and Shantilata Mohanty is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer. His write-ups are published in

newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies which are widely acclaimed across the world. He writes extensively on life and its intricacies. He is a featured poet of the PENTASI B World Friendship Poetry and Year of The Poet, U.S.A. His collection of poems 'A LOOK AT LIFE, SOMETHING I LOOK AT, A LOOK, THE RIVULET, THINK ONCE MORE, THE JOURNEY, AU THARE, AU EKA GAPA, SROTASWINI, JATRA, are in the press. Website: [smrutiweb.wordpress.com](http://smrutiweb.wordpress.com)



## THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

Taking a leaf out of the flowery book:-

The dandy Dandelion dangled dangerously

Trying to kiss miss Tulips

She shied away to hide in Hibiscus

needing the urge to discuss

love and life and all that jazz

In between chirped the

Forget -me -not forgetting not

she wanted from the Hibiscus to discuss

The Rhododendron droned on and on

While Periwinkle winked on  
The Rose rose to the occasion  
boldly made up in red  
The Sage nodded sagely  
While Mint minted freshness without any hint or mess  
Coriander Oleander intertwined between the geese and the  
gander being no gender bender  
Lily as usual was being silly willy nilly  
Pure and pristine Lotus looked down in serenity murmuring  
not us not us  
love is just hocus pocus so lotus focus  
Snapdragon snapped dragon like  
Like only he can  
Thyme of course had no time at all for all this balderdash  
Now Pansy had many a problem being called pansy  
Fancy calling such beauties as pansies  
Holihock hawked and peddled holier than thou like solid  
rock  
The wild flowers went wild with their many flower child

Aster was the master blaster though mostly remained  
encased in plaster

Marigold was so happy to marry bedecked in cold gold we  
are told

Aloe screamed aloe you aloe you

to all and sundry

which left many in quandary

Last bud not the least

Allow Aloe to love

Let the wallflower be the wallflower

withdrawn introverted unsocial cower

no nipping a budding romance

which is best left to chance .

PS -It is rumoured that The Venus-Fly-Trap was ensnared in  
a scandalous dalliance and was found to be in the lap of  
crap and frappe.



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





## ISOLATION

The sky looks grim

the earth wears a swollen face

silence rules the roost

not a soul one can find or trace

birds stare at each other in utter disbelief

try to arouse people from sleep

the dawn is ready to spread wings

yet, scary souls are not out of their confides

distancing has distanced much

call of the hour is as such

to control the spread

we need to be home and act brave

stay in isolation

for safety of own and others

strange it feels ... awkward it seems

yet, it is the truth

to break the chain and beat "C"

there has been promulgation of curfew.



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



## **THIS LIFE IS NOT MINE**

This is not my life

I am here for the society

Where I belong,

Whenever needed

I have to sacrifice.

I might be in the soul of tree

That needs care and protection

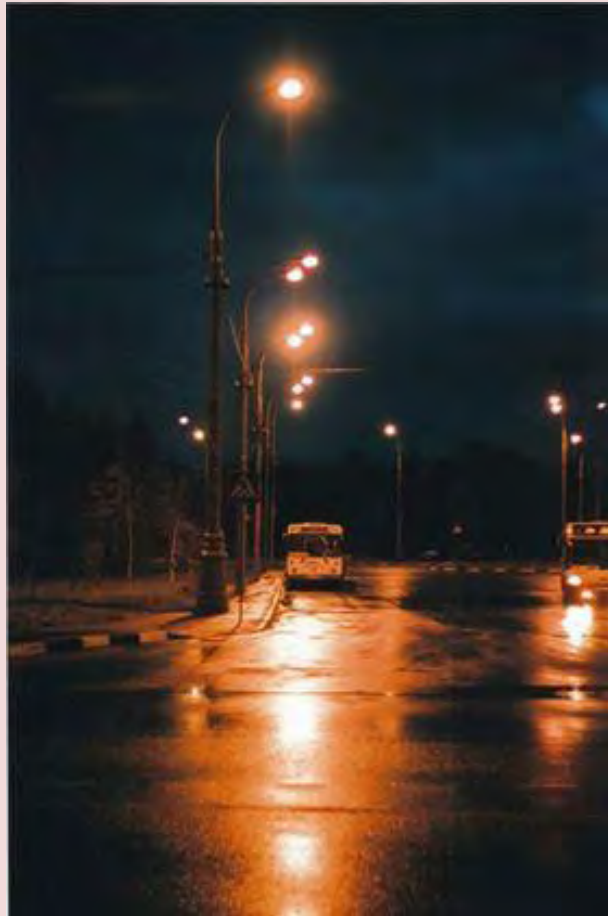
Or my life would be at stake,

I might be in the soul of river

That should be neat and clean  
Or my existence will be in danger  
If I make it polluted, so I must awake.  
I may be in the soul of bird  
That is groaning for a drop of water  
Hence you, the poor human being  
Keep yourselves alive through your benevolent  
performance or  
You and your next generation will fall in impending danger.  
Hence should prepare myself to confront any situation that  
the earth or society  
Demands from myself ever,  
For i should not only take from the society,  
It's my responsibility too to play the role of a giver.



**Sujata Paul:** She is a bilingual poetess belonging to Agartala presently. She is a teacher by profession but writing is her passion. She has published her solo poetry book 'Whisper of My Souls' and many of her poems and articles have been published in different national and international anthologies. Her second book 'Sarang', collection of poems has been published at International Conference of Multi-Disciplinary Research in Kolkata on 2nd March, 2019. Besides writing, she likes to travel and listen to music too. She wants to help the street orphans too.



## **AT THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE AND DEATH**

Lazy morning, not so busy day,  
Dusky evening ends with a hazy pray,  
Scaring faces here and there,  
Every moment we are living with an unbeknown fear.

A virus, Corona, made us so restless  
Cheerful life lost all its grace.

Some adamant people, careless

Determined to be reckless.

Captivated live, lonely streets,

Woofing of some stray dogs,

As if invoking some negative thoughts.

Social media, phone calls, television

Returning back at the same discussion.

Just a tiny virus engulfing the entire creation.

Uncertain unpredictable future,

Yet positive mind waiting

For the day better.

Counting the days, thinking

After dusk, a ray of light is obviously there.





**Sumana Bhattacharjee:** She is a bilingual poetry writer from India. She born and brought up in city Kolkata in a family of teachers. She has keen interest in music, poetry and drama and she loves every form of fine arts. She has done master degree in English Literature and Hons in Bengali literature. She is a published poet and her poems have been published more than twenty national and international anthologies, magazines and blogs. She is the founder of an online poetry group and a member of World Union Of poets. She is very passionate about poetry and she thinks poetry is the best way to express your thought.



## **BREACHED DREAMS**

Family, friends, foes

towed toe to toe

Burnt battlefields

bloat hospitals blow

Braves braving bitter

temperatures no more

Broken briars bruised

breached dreams

Of brashly unbuckling

brassieres

Tasting, sipping, risking,  
living no more.



**Sumita Dutta:** I am a poet and author residing in Chennai, India. I work as an editor and publisher. I have contributed to various online and print anthologies. I have also published a novel. My publishing house, Adisakrit, publishes fiction and nonfiction and is now ten books old.



### **THE DEADLY VIRUS**

Dancing the tarantella of Death  
Came a deadly virus from the East  
Corona its name, Wuhan its birthplace.  
Determined to defeat  
All the other evil viruses, killer bacteria,  
Wagging its sanguine mane,  
Wreaking havoc in the globe,  
It challenged  
The supreme creature of this Earth  
Man and his creative imagination  
His technology and scientific vision!

Bending their heads in shame  
In a lab tray sat the miffed micro-organisms,  
Gossiping about the scathing bite of the needle  
The soft white smooth body of the cotton wool  
And the terrifying stench of iodine, benzene and Dettol.

Laughing out mockingly at the parasites  
Thumping its chest like the Sumo fighter  
It roared like the thunder, “Do you hear me?  
Ye all viruses, bacteria, fungi and protozoa,

I am the roughest, toughest and strongest  
In the world of pathogens,  
Crown me the King!”  
Someone from the gallery shouted,  
“Don’t boast, dear cousin,  
Have you seen those factories and machines  
Those syringes and needles,  
Those bottles of liquid medicine  
And tablets on the shelves of druggists? “

Corona-19 grinned “Ha-Ha-Ha” like Ravan  
And shouted,  
“No injection, no drugs, no vaccination can defeat me  
I have seized the world, the malls, markets, roads and rails  
I have goaded men into their holes away from the streets  
I have punished them for their cruelty and greed  
I have punished them for their voracious appetite  
Consuming animals, beasts, birds, and insects  
Despite the bounties of Mother Nature  
Fruits and roots, leaves and vegetables,  
For stealing the milk and eggs, killing the fish and crab  
Their hunger is unlimited, their thirst unquenchable  
It’s time for them to reap the result of their cruelty!”

The Tuberculosis bacteria now thin and desiccated  
Peered frightfully at the octopi-an stings of Corona  
Wept in joy and descended from the throne to greet  
Corona  
“You are the monarch of our kingdom, dear grandson,  
We admit, you are the strongest infectious killer bug  
among all of us,  
We had tried our best to defeat them, those voracious  
creatures,  
But me, your sister Ebola, brothers MERS and SARS have  
retreated in fear  
Your ancestor Small pox, Chicken pox, Measles, Mumps,  
Polio  
Have been quashed by vaccination, needles and drops  
You are our only hope to fight with men  
And wipe them from this planet,  
You have to carry our banner  
And rule this dirty polluted Earth.”  
A pro-biotic pathogen sneered  
At the hapless debilitated bacteria and viruses,  
And shouted out, “No, not all of us are vicious like you,  
Trying to deform or derange the mankind, our kind host,  
Look at me, how admired I am for fighting with your clan,  
Remember, we are a superior race, we protect!”  
Another microbe cheerfully patted his thighs and boasted,  
“See I am highly prized and praised  
For killing you and the cancerous cells in men  
So I’m placed in the rich men’s shelves and fridges  
To guard against those vicious fungi and algae

The poisonous breeds, parasites and pests.”

With its jumping, hopping viral teeth  
Corona ascended the throne of pa  
Beating its breast in pride  
Declared Corona-19



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



*Inspired by a line from a poem ...."A Dream Within a Dream"-Edgar Allan Poe*

*.....'that my days have been a dream,*

'Tis true 'that my days have been a dream'  
unfulfilled. Life happened in bits and pieces  
the pulsating red flushes dilating streams  
burning flesh singeing insane passions  
smouldering desires dream and scream  
as propriety dictates embers succumb  
fistfuls of ashes fly now and then  
from eyes turning dry and numb.



A dream within a dream, silky days and inky nights  
Entwined bodies lip locked, the voyeuristic moon  
stealthily peeps feasting on indulgent delights  
as earth trembles, she turns pink shy to shine  
the stars forget to wink and twinkle  
as night sways drunk on love's heady wine.  
The last lingering kiss  
to last till we meet again, dreams fulfilled  
sweet with the taste of your honeyed lips !!!



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



## **FLIGHTS IN TIME OF CORONA**

Grounded.

The child stares out of the barred window of the house,  
mid-air,

in a vertical column of concrete-n-glass,

Malad, Mumbai, due to the COVID-19 and

its global scare. The kid

wants to move out but

cannot; the fear is

real; threat is out there. The innocent

eyes look out at the expanse blue, where

birds fly in flocks, large-n-big, describing  
circles in the vault, now fully visible!

Alone, bored, she watches the birds  
free, reclaiming the earth and sky. Rivers  
are pure, streets, quiet. Song of the koel, heard  
first time.

Late one afternoon, April bright, the kid wishes for wings  
and surprisingly, gets the fresh ones, to soar in the sky

and daily, afterwards, flies out, on tiny wings,  
over the cleaner mega city of towers;  
the sweet flights in

the heavens, sheer delight, despite  
curfew and the ongoing lockdown!



**Sunil Sharma:** He is a senior academic and author-critic-poet--freelance journalist, is from suburban Mumbai, India. He has published 22 books so far, some solo and some joint, on prose, poetry and criticism. He edits the monthly, bilingual Setu: <http://www.setumag.com/p/setu-home.html>

For more details of publications, please visit the link below:

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



## **THE BLUE BUTTERFLY**

One languorous spring day, as I sat near the window  
Looking out into the emerald lawns  
A butterfly came to me, its wings, the colour of indigo  
My heart went into a flurry  
With bated breath I looked at it  
And when it flew  
I wanted to fly too, with that blue, blue butterfly  
The wind was strong  
The sun was a raining wheel of gold  
Each flower beamed, calling out to  
That blue, blue butterfly

Suddenly the errant clouds emerged  
From their hiding place  
Painting the canvas all around  
In a dusty shade of grey  
But they could not stop  
the joyous one, she still flew  
That blue, blue butterfly  
My head was a box of files  
My body, a pile of stones  
But my heart was flying  
With that blue, blue butterfly



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





*acrylic painting on canvas by suzette portes san jose*

## **THERE IS TOMORROW**

i watched the sun going down at twilight  
the color deeming slowly out of my sight  
darkness hovering skies in a silent night  
with passing hours waiting for sunlight

.....there is tomorrow

.....bare no sorrow

i felt the wind touching my skin...so cold  
wrapping the heart and soul that i behold  
with this journey of life to tell and be told  
in riddles and puzzles in a hundredfold

..... there is tomorrow

.....to spare and borrow

eyes may fall in slumber for thousands of day  
frozen amidst the blooming sunflowers to stay  
towing the tears as the morning dewdrops lay  
on velvety soft petals under the suns colorful ray

..... there is tomorrow

..... without a hollow

awakened in a morning of fulfilling brightness  
smiles reborn without the blues of lonesomeness

dares another day to trail once more in the vastness  
the trodden and the untrodden in life's wilderness



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



## COLOURLESS

There were so many opportunities to paint my skin.

The colours were saffron, deep red and pale green.

The colours were blue, magenta or turquoise blue.

There was ample scope to become like a grotesque.

My guiding star instructed not to stay with rank grass,

He didn't permit me to paint myself with a paintbrush.

He commanded me to find out a new land of good soil—

And disappeared by saying to grow with honest toil.

Since then, I let time to consume my nights and my days.  
And to save myself from overheating due to scorching rays  
I entered into the deep of ground beneath my feet.  
It saved me from extra colour and from unbearable heat.

Now, I'm growing with colourless roots of different trees.  
Not to show my robustness; but, to be one of the filigrees.



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



## **NOTE TO GLORY**

No real poetry this time. A note. Something I have been wanting to say to Glory. What better time than the lockdown?

Often I have had discussions with dear friends who are not in our poetry circles and when they asked to show some of the stuff I had written I would send them links- of some poems from the Glomag monthly magazine, Narrow Roads, North of Oxford etc. Sometimes share some of the print anthologies I have featured in- Glomag, Harbingers Asylum or say Emerald Hues.

They ask me how I can be so ridiculously shy and not share 90 percent of this stuff on Facebook. You have to be visible and that is the rule of the game. Everyone promotes and

shares their writing- that's the way it goes on social media. Had lot of discussions with fellow magicians glomagicians Anurag Mathur and Kerala Varma on this. Working at it.

Random thoughts that I wanted to share today. The lock down has made most of us here turn to penning our thoughts.

Sex and water lilies and poems on the four season have not poured in as much as poems on the darkness all around and what to make of it. So someone has sent in poems on the lighter side- how they while away time while some talk of the fact that stay at home is a luxury. Others take to penning how they feel completely hemmed in.

A Few lines on you Glory- a dedication to you in these difficult times.

*Things changed*

*We missed the best part*

*No wandering streets in spring*

*Was one lament*

*Nature heaved a bosom of relief*

*Went about its business*

*Birdsong more audible than ever*

*Dogs were kings of the roads*

*Did you notice?*

*While we wondered*

*About how much distance*

*Was perfect*

*While we stood with prescription*

*At a druggist*

*Glory was at it*

*What she does best*

*Dawn or dusk*

*Submission posts*

*Deadline reminders*

*Forget the newspaper*

*There was unfailingly*



*Even in times of 'lockdown'*

*Our monthly Glomag on lap*



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



## **BOUNTIES OF NATURE**

When the flowers bloom  
And frozen lake glooms  
When sunny days spread  
It's heat to energise this world  
And silvery rain droplets  
Nourish this earth  
For more production,

Autumn leaves become manure  
And spring comes with green-yellow hues  
Sunny days, wintry romance  
All tells about the bounties of nature  
In life and different shades of emotions.



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



The music of his mother's ankleted feet  
Still rang in his ears  
He didn't remember much else about her  
Didn't want to.  
The picture of petite feet, of his sister's  
Adorned with anklets still flashed fresh  
In his mind's eye  
He didn't remember much else about her  
Didn't want to.  
He did remember though, his enchantment  
With the tinkling bells, and how his heart  
Would skip with unexplained ecstasy  
Whenever his sister's bejewelled feet skipped by.  
He remembered too how, with wide-eyed delight  
He had secretly possessed his sister's ornament  
And had run to the attic, his own feet to bedeck  
And how, when they found him

A thrashing he was given  
Not for stealing, but for wearing  
Something meant for a girl.

*“For your wife, sir?” asked the lady at the counter.  
He smiled. Back home, he, his own wife  
Caressingly wore the silver treasure  
Around his ankles.*

He had not meant to steal from his sister  
He had only wanted to try out being a girl.  
He did not know then  
Neither did anyone else understand  
But he did now  
Transcended as he was to non-conformation.



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



## CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS

Words practise social distancing with words

Leaving us tongue-tied: the numbers rise

In Italy and Spain, like the bloated figures

Of a petrol pump's tampered meter--

And good doctors have to decide

Like the dreaded Angel of Death

Who has a better chance to live

Or who is to die--

Unmasked, finally, we wear fresh masks

And wash our hands more vigorously

Than the Fourth Witch or the Fifth Governor:

In isolation, let us sanitise our senses

And redraw the route map of our lives--

Face to face with an enemy we cannot see

Or hear, but who is there, waiting for us to step out,

And to step in along with us.





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



Sakha,  
This house I returned to  
Is still full of daddy.  
It's been eight years since he went.  
Every cupboard, draw, I open  
There are papers,  
Yellowed papers with a sprinkling of  
Butterfly dust of memories,  
In his small handwriting,  
Neat but illegible.  
His complicated signature  
On many, which as a child

I always admired and wished  
I could sign like that.  
I so wanted to be like daddy.  
What did I love the most about him?  
His ready laugh  
Every situation had something  
Which was funny  
Which he made us see  
Making us laugh with him  
Sometimes at him  
As he joined in.  
He went too soon  
Too soon, my daddy

Once on reading a book  
About lives, past and present  
I have believed  
That I was his little sister, maybe

The one he loved and cherished for a few months

And lost to a fever when he was eight or ten

And I came back for him

To be with him

He had been a wonderful brother

And I knew he would be a great daddy.

The pain, Sakha,

Of losing someone you love so dearly

It remains

Years fly

One grows old

Yet, the ache remains.



**Vineetha Mekkoth:** She is a poet, writer, translator and editor from Calicut, Kerala. She works as Assistant State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has been translating for the Kerala Sahitya Academy since 2014 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' was published in August 2017 which is available on Amazon.



The real world disappeared,  
What left is imaginary religions-  
Still playing with lives,  
Still mocking the human sensitivity,  
False faith and blind prejudices  
My belief and your belief  
Divisions and conflicts.  
A world so derelict-  
Forgot about its real troubles  
Wrapped in some illusory hustles.  
Nobody bothers where that shoe mender vanished,

The beggar of the next street,  
The rag pickers of a proud nation,  
Every other person with sunken cheeks  
In a world full of people  
So pious and meek.  
Poverty was the biggest issue  
How easily a pandemic fixed.  
Then where's the hope and where's the light?  
Trees, flowers, birds all are alive.



**Vivek Nath Mishra:** My short stories have appeared in The Hindu, Queen mob's Teahouse, Muse India, The Criterion Journal, Cafe Dissensus, Setu, Spillwords, Literary Yard, Indian Ruminations, Prachya Review, Indus women writing, and on many other platforms. Some of my stories are forthcoming in Indian Literature, Adelaide literary magazine and The Punch Magazine. My debut book is 'Birdsongs of Love and Despair' published by Hawakal. I hereby certify that I have read the guidelines and the material is original.





### **SONNET 103**

Once I retreat into a mode of solemn silence  
You can never hear me whispering again  
The sacred silence that accompanies death  
Takes me close to the bank of famed Lethe  
Making me lose hold of all I had once loved  
The shared silence itself, the flight of dove,  
Locked fingers, hearts dying for undying love  
Become all a sigh, a trace of wiped footprints  
Silence for a heart in love is but imposed death  
Opening no secret passage leading anywhere

The realization of it all that with time love flies

The soul not at ease much though it tries

In confinement it finds true joy sought long

In chorus a long deferred melancholy song.



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





**ciao! 😊**