

GloMag

2101198

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose  
Magazine*

*January 2021*



*Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala*

## **ANN CHRISTINE TABAKA**



### **TITLE OF COVER PIC**

**Mother And Child**

### **ARTIST PROFILE AND ART PERSPECTIVE**

I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware, USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I live with my husband and 4 cats. I love gardening, cooking, swimming, and nature. I have 13 poetry books and have been published in numerous magazines and journals worldwide. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. I was the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic), and I have won poetry awards from individual publications. My bio is featured in

the “Who’s Who of Emerging Writers 2020,” published by Sweetycat Press.

I was an art major in high school and college, but soon switched gears to chemistry to obtain a more sustainable career. I had been writing poems and stories since I was 14 in 1965, but did not become serious about getting published until 2017.

Between 1978 and 1991, I painted and illustrated at nights after working in the lab all day, and raising my son. I had many gallery-shows, and I was blessed to have sold most of my work. I was lucky/smart to have had gallery slides made of most of my work. I recently had the slides made into digital images that I can now use.

My featured colored ink illustration, “Mother and Child” is 12” X 18” on illustration board. I have always been in love with art deco and clean line designs. I did a complete series of ladies playing different musical instruments in black ink on white. I mostly worked in ink, and developed an unusual style of cross-hatch illustrations worked in crow-quill pen and colored ink.

My illustration “Dance of the Fates,” a 12” X 18” colored ink illustration, was included in The Borfski Press, Issue IV, in 2017. My impressionistic watercolor painting “A Song tot

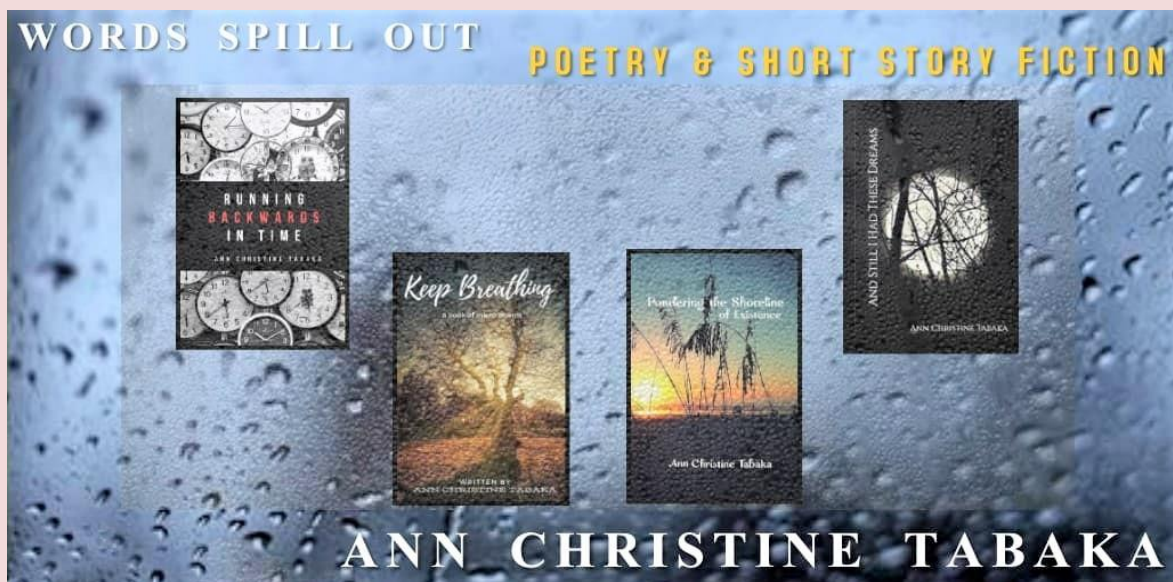
eh Twilight” was used in an issue of the Alien Buddha Press in 2017.

Now, I have moved on to poetry and short story writing. Here are just a few of the journals that have published my work: GloMag, The American Writers Review, The Scribe Magazine, The Phoenix, Burningword Literary Journal, Muddy River Poetry Review, The Silver Blade, Silver Birch Press, Pomona Valley Review, Page & Spine, West Texas Literary Review, The Hungry Chimera, Sheila-Na-Gig, Foliate Oak Review, The McKinley Review, Fourth & Sycamore.

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

## Website

<https://annchristinetabaka.com/>





## **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***

***The copyrights of the works in this book vests with the individual authors. Prior written permission is required to reproduce any part of the magazine.***

**© All rights reserved. 2021**

## CONTENT

<b>Abu Siddik</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Adnan Shafi</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Ahmad Al-Khatat</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Alan Britt</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Alicja Maria Kuberska</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Amanita Sen</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Ambika Talwar</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Aminool Islam</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Amitabh Mitra</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Amit Krishan Agnihotri</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Ampat Koshy</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Amrita Valan</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Aneek Chatterjee</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Angela Chetty</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Anil Kumar Panda (Tiku)</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Anju Kishore</b>	<b>58</b>

<b>Ann Christine Tabaka</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Antaryami Mishra</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Anurag Mathur-Vandana Kumar</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>-Vasanthi Swetha</b>	
<b>Asoke Kumar Mitra</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Barry Pittard</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Bevan Boggenpoel</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Bharati Nayak</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Bill Cushing</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Bilquis Fatima</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Bishnu Charan Parida</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Brian Mackenzie</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Brindha Vinodh</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>B.S.Tyagi</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Carl Scharwath</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Chandramohan Naidu</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Christopher Villiers</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Dale Adams</b>	<b>114</b>

<b>Daniel de Culla</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Deena Padayachee</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Don Beukes</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Duane Vorhees</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Eliza Segiet</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Ferris E Jones</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Gauri Dixit</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Gayatree G. Lahon</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>Geeta Varma</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Geethanjali Dilip</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Glory Sasikala</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Gopal Lahiri</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Guna Moran</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Imran Yousuf</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Jagadish Prasad</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Joan McNerney</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Joe Kidd</b>	<b>169</b>

<b>Kakoli Ghosh</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Kamar Sultana Sheik</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Ken Allan Dronsfield</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>Kerala Varma</b>	<b>182</b>
<b>Ketaki Mazumdar</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>K.S.Subramanian</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>Laksmisree Banerjee</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Leroy Abrahams</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Linda Imbler</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>Lopamudra Mishra</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Lubna Ahmed</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Madhu Jaiswal</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar</b>	<b>211</b>
<b>Manjula Asthana Mahanti</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Mehak Gupta Grover</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Merlyn Alexander</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Michael Lee Johnson</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Moinak Dutta</b>	<b>227</b>



<b>Nazia Islam</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>Ngozi Olivia Osuoha</b>	<b>232</b>
<b>Nivedita Karthik</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Padmini Rambhatla</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>Pankajam</b>	<b>242</b>
<b>Paramita Mukherjee Mullick</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Parasuram Ramamoorthi</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Paul Brookes</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Prabha Prakash</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>Pragya Sharma</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Prahallad Satpathy</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>Pratima Apte</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>Praveen Ranjit</b>	<b>263</b>
<b>Radhamani Sarma</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>Rajnish Mishra</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>Rakesh Chandra</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>Ravi Ranganathan</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>Reena Prasad</b>	<b>277</b>

<b>Robert Feldman</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Romeo della Valle</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>Ryan Quinn Flanagan</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>Samixa Bajaj</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>Samrudhi Dash</b>	<b>291</b>
<b>Sangeeta Gupta</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>Santosh Bakaya</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>Sara Bubber</b>	<b>301</b>
<b>Sarala Balachandran</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Scott Thomas Outlar</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Shankar N Kashyap</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Shobha Warriier</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>Shreekumar Varma</b>	<b>315</b>
<b>Sindhu Rana</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>Smruti Ranjan Mohanty</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Stefan Bohdan</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>Stephen Goetz</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Sudeshna Mukherjee</b>	<b>332</b>

<b>Sujata Dash</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Sujata Paul</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>Sumita Dutta Shoam</b>	<b>342</b>
<b>Sumitra Mishra</b>	<b>345</b>
<b>Sunil Kaushal</b>	<b>348</b>
<b>Sunil Sharma</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>Sunita Singh</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>Supatra Sen</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Suzette Portes San Jose</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Svanhild Løvli</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>Swapan Kumar Rakshit</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>Uma Agarwal Bajaj</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>VaL Smit</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Varsha Saran</b>	<b>379</b>
<b>Vidya Shankar</b>	<b>382</b>
<b>Vijay Nair</b>	<b>385</b>

<b>Vineetha Mekkoth</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>Vivek Nath Mishra</b>	<b>391</b>
<b>Zulfiqar Parvez</b>	<b>394</b>



## **MODERN SLAVES**

If you visit the street corners

Of our town at wee hour

What you see? Birds, milkmen,

Fresh breathers, hawkers, cars!

At each corner shadowy men huddle

To hoist day's freedom flags

They have no rose buds or marigolds

Or buntings in hand though.



Shovel, hammer, blade, drill, pliers  
Bamboo basket, tin, the luckiest  
Have. The rest sleepily stand, proud  
Of their corroded limbs.

Buy them at a price you offer for  
A cup of coffee at Starbucks —  
Of course you are not bound  
To buy the aged bones or tender legs.  
Buy only the rugged cheeks and let  
Your dream rest on their sturdy blades.



**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 six books. Website: [www.abusiddik.com](http://www.abusiddik.com)



## **THE GELIDITY OF THE SNOW**

The snow may mash

my body and soul

And I mind if it grows

cold enough

For then my granny

may flutter all day long

And I shall never,

What can harshen

a hearty boy like me?

On these chilly days

of winter

Near my house, trees are

coated with snow,

It is such fun to behold

the water drops whacking

earth as the indigent vigor

of the sun greets it

There's often something

I can take pleasure in,

to only pass my time away;

The dusk arrives rapidly in

the wintertime

Now my longing only is to  
observe a Jungle fowl  
Some creatures seem like allies,  
And I like to see them arrive  
I like to see with my naked eyes



**Adnan Shafi:** I am a poet, writer, columnist, translator, Ghazal writer, motivational 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'. Recently, I have been awarded Gujarat Sahitya academic .Furthermore, I am the co-author of many international anthologies.





## **WRITING A LETTER**

I will be writing a letter  
to nobody brave or I know  
I want to say I am sorry  
for the ones who hurt me before

I know that life is more  
than one locked door  
perhaps, my heart is the  
house with broken lock to protect me

yet, my enemy wins over my  
innocent moves, his words  
are sharp knives, and my answers  
are the seeds of the plants in heaven

being blind means, you are  
gifted, you just believe in the  
ones who wish you dead  
and nothing else of good in darkness



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



## **LACERATED DREAM**

From the wet spot on our mattress  
you tumbled out of my dream.

Your spine of sardines  
soaked in supple olive oil,  
spine tattooing the perimeter  
around my spine—  
oh, how you purred.

So, I entered a new dream, a dream  
with roots digging all the way  
to Hong Kong while loitering  
these icy kitchen tiles in my  
underwear this 4:43 AM.

**Alan Britt:** He has been nominated for the 2021 International Janus Pannonius Prize awarded by the Hungarian Centre of PEN International for excellence in poetry from any part of the world. Previous nominated recipients include Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Charles Bernstein and Yves Bonnefoy. Alan was interviewed at The Library of Congress for The Poet and the Poem. He has published 18 books of poetry and served as Art Agent for the late great Ultra Violet while often reading poetry at her Chelsea, New York studio. A graduate of the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University he currently teaches English/Creative Writing at Towson University.





## **AFTER THE FROST**

I wander alone in the autumn park  
and the paths lead me increasingly towards winter.  
The trees have turned their rich palette of colours  
into a mossy nudity of the twisted branches.

The air is empty without birds' chirping  
and the joyful chatter of children at play.

The traces of the swan's feathers disappeared from the pond.

Kisses of lovers hide deeply in my memory.

Winds whistles on lifeless grasses

and break the dry branches with a wailing groan,

Moisture spreads a glassy shroud onto the ground

and hibernation - a mirror image of death enters,

I notice the melancholic charm of passing away

in the eternal cycle of the seasons

I learn from the fallen leaves,

twisted like ancient scrolls, and crumbling in the gray

Footsteps sound loudly in the silence

of frozen gravel, cracking on the path.

The loud croaking of the flying crow's flock

points my thoughts in the direction of next spring.



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



## **POLITICAL MURDERS**

They are termed political murders,  
those getting killed under cover or stark  
daylight when the nation gives its mandate.

As if these killings are not death enough,  
their status lowly, almost scoffed at.

Queried with indignation, their allegiances.

The pictures of their sun-burnt bodies  
find half-eyed media attention for half a day.

I have skimmed through these news  
over the morning tea with perfect ease.

The aroma of the liquid overpowered  
the stench of the flag-stained deaths;  
every time,

except once,

when I watched  
with sweating palms, distended eyeballs.

The freshly grown stubble of this boy  
looked so like my son's.

His mother cannot disapprove of it,  
like I do.

Not anymore.

Not under the sun.



**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.



## **TENDER FORCE**

*for Amy Lowell's Frankincense and Myrrh*

Could anything – an embrace feel so full?

Trickle of moon lights horizons like tears

Wonder when in your hands you felt the pull  
dancing me in our memory's lost years.

We could've walked up mountain's curved slope  
drunk wine saps of rose-pine gathered in cup.

Breathing your fragrance that one cry of hope,  
flames danced over rich fare when we did sup.



That which we longed for eluded our grasp,  
cheek to cheek wild moonlight traveled this line  
such lines as this distance I cannot clasp.

Having left again shall we for us pine?

If soothsayers tell true, stars did change course,  
shall our love unite—glow with tender force?



**Ambika Talwar:** I am a poet/author residing in Los Angeles, USA. I work as English professor. I am published in various anthologies. I have also published a collection of poems and a poetic-spiritual travelogue. My creative expression lends dimension to my work as a spiritual-intuitive energy practitioner.





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

## **WHORE**

Arpita who used to sell her body

fell in love with Ahnaf

Extremely angry, Ahnaf ignored and scolded her

Sabrina who sold her soul,

had affairs and shared bed

with a number of boys

married Ahnaf

Ahnaf is now very happy with Sabrina.



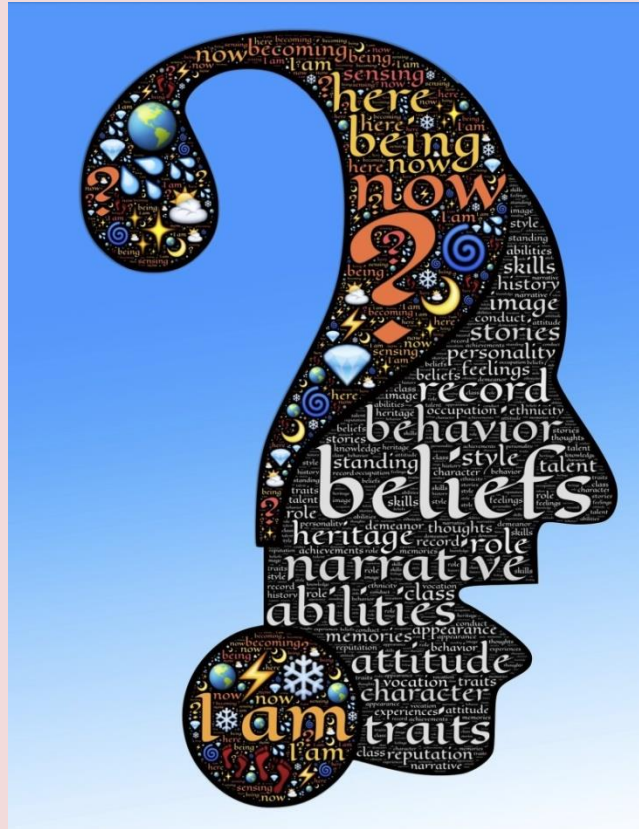
**Aminool Islam:** I am a poet residing in Bogra, Bangladesh. I work as an English language instructor. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am currently the sub-editor of a literary magazine named Neeharika.



an old railway line  
sleeps in shadows  
of jacaranda  
hues of a smile  
linger on



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



## THE DECEMBER SCHOLAR

I studied

Great philosophies

Heretical sciences

And

Differential Realities

I went through

Psychosomatic Tomes

I spun an



Exponential Equation

On its axis

But in the end

I just could not

Understand

Me...



**Amit Krishan Agnihotri:** I am a poet residing in Landquart Switzerland. I work as a County Manager. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published short stories and poems in UK and India.



## **IN THE MOMENT**

In the moment

When the Sun rose

And the ice shone

In the moment  
When the flower unfroze  
Into soft light

In the moment  
When mutability became  
Luminescence

In the moment  
When warmth unshackled  
Fragile beauty

In the moment  
When petals held  
Snow's unshed tears



In the moment

When time trembled

Into light years

In the moment

When a sunbeam melted

My numb heart

In the moment

When winter ended

Within the soul

In the moment

When frost on the flower

Turned to dew

In the moment

Hope bloomed again

I thought of you

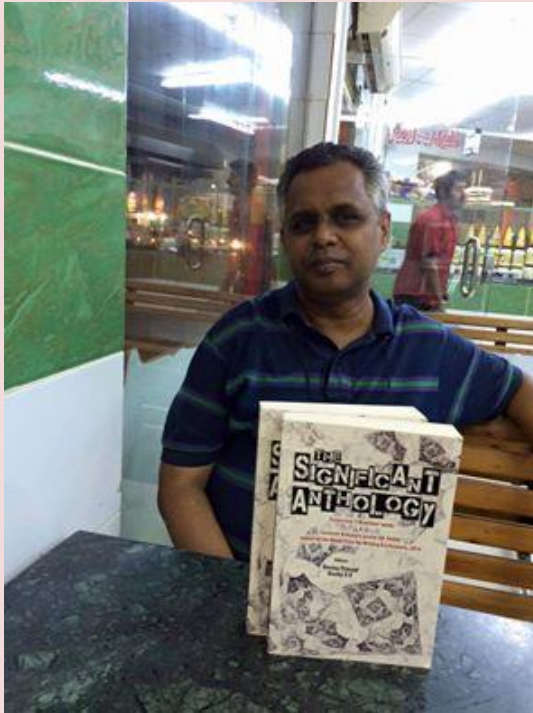


**Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia:** I am a retired civil servant but at heart a poet and teacher. I write, mostly poetry, in English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. I was awarded the NISSIM International Poetry Award (First Prize) 2019 and then the Reuel International Award (First Prize) 2020 for Non-Fiction Prose by The Significant League, a well-known Creative Writing Group on Facebook. Recently, the Destiny International Community of Poets based out of Wakefield, England, UK declared me Winner of their Poet of the Year 2020 as well as Critic of the Year 2020 recognitions.

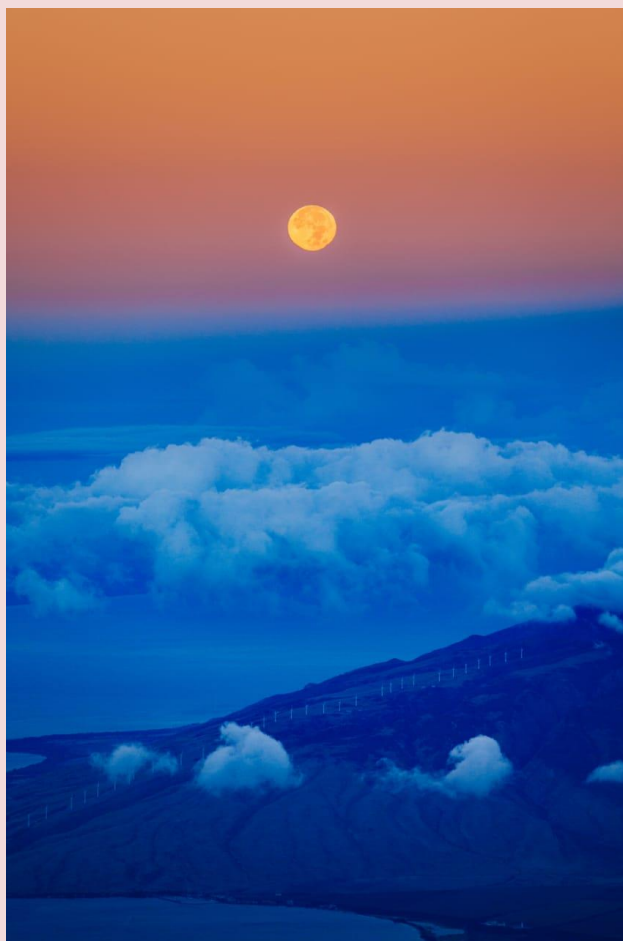


## HOPE

Hope is the white dove  
that no longer exists  
with the green olive leaves in its beak  
that has to be dreamed into being from above  
into a new country  
that too must be dreamed into being  
where she can find a resting place for her feet  
and her mate can join.



**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 Inklinks and Umbilical Chords.



## **MOTHER'S MESSAGE**

I know you are up there  
Trying yet again to show me,  
Reminding me you care.

Tiny white lamb traipsing,  
Carousels of vast empty blues

Skittishly scudding into dense banks  
Snow flocked, fleece aglow.

Leisurely lit up pink ice,  
Hurtling towards the West,  
Bless me down below, at  
Rock bottom of earthly space.

Herded by shepherd Wind  
far far away, borne aloft today  
My mortal ken.

I knew you were up there all along,  
Where else? Once again dear  
Among your own.

I know you are my path,  
We will walk together when  
Time and I are done.

Leaving earthly home, hearth  
And death, like you.

Meanwhile, sail unseen horizons  
No finer waiting room than this  
Breeze kissed, heaven caressed,  
Tear drenched sky roof bliss.

Gazebo above the world  
Your womb once bore me to.

Here I wait.

Till you come calling.



**Amrita Valan:** I am a poet residing in India. I am a stay-at-home mother of two boys. I have published in several anthologies and some online journals recently. I am teaching myself French in my spare time.





## **RACE COURSE**

This green is vast, round in shape.

In a winter evening, hazy  
unknown sky-scrappers guard it  
amid fading light.

There are some patches of brown

There are patches of emptiness  
here and there

This green will smile  
and shine again in the rain.

Horses run here in every season

with dreams on their backs  
With anger, vengeance, lust and  
excitement on their backs  
Sky-scrapers watch from the clouds.

I'm on the balcony overlooking the green  
I see horses, dreams and patches of brown  
in a fresh cup of Darjeeling tea  
Friends reciting poems in a lazy evening  
and tower 42 listening carefully  
from a distance

I'm on the horseback, empty,  
carrying my  
dreams to a lush green tea garden  
in Darjeeling, in a hazy  
winter evening.



**Aneek Chatterjee:** I am a poet and academic from Kolkata, India. I have contributed to literary magazines and poetry anthologies across the globe. I have published 14 books including three full length poetry collections and a novel. My poem has been archived at Yale University. I hold a PhD in International Relations; and I have been teaching in leading Indian and foreign universities.



## **LONGING**

I long for sunny days

When skies were blue

Walking hand in hand

Dancing to sweet melodies

I long for you across the oceans

My heart calls out to you.

Virtual hugs and kisses for now

Yearning for your loving embrace.

I long for days in nature  
When I can wade into the ocean  
Walking along the shore  
Freely running through parks  
Losing myself in thought.

I long for the day  
When every breath is free of infirmity  
And every breath brings life anew  
As every soul rejoices.

Ah! The longing  
It wraps my heart in crimson  
My soul calls out your name  
As I hold onto fervent hope  
Of the gift of life.



**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.



## **SITTING UNDER THE NIGHT SKY**

Sitting under the night sky

I watch the moon rising slowly

From behind the clouds in the east

I remember the days of our

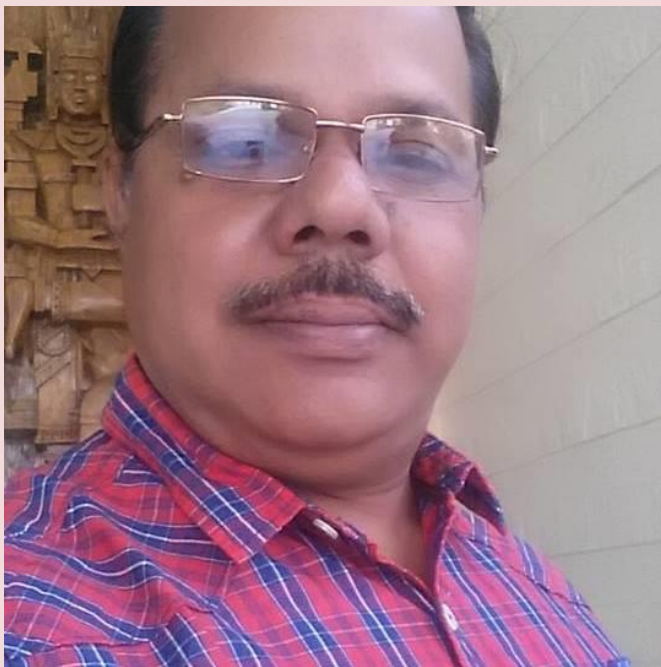
Love when you came running  
To fall in my arms in the night's mist

Siting under the night sky  
I watch the stars vanishing one  
By one below the horizon in the west  
I remember the days when  
You came to me in the garden  
And lay by my side to take some rest

Sitting under the night sky  
I watch a meteor falling down  
And burned up in the air and vanish  
I remember and feel sad  
Forgetting our love you left for  
Another world to sleep in eternal peace



Sitting under the night sky  
I hear the silence falling from  
A great height that makes me to shiver  
I watch your face behind  
The moon, smiling softly and  
Whispering, 'Our love will live forever'



**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.



## **OF HAPPY JOURNEYS AND LONG ENDINGS**

There are good stories. There are bad stories. And there are stories that turn bad when we fail to see the good in them in time.

Is every story entitled to claim a beginning of its own? Does it really seal its end with the last word?

The story of a life is determined not by its beginning or end but by the journeys within. It does not begin with a birth. It certainly does not end with a death.

Like the sea. The sea does not begin with just the birth of a river. Nor does it end where land claims its beginning. It is a part of the larger circle of droplets that rise, gather, fall and flow...only to rise again. All its leapings and crashings, everything within it that yearns for the moon and rages

shorewards is its little story. Which drop would you trace for its first roar, which grain of sand for the remains of its last sigh?

So with life. Your story does not begin where you stepped in. The stage had already been set, your role assigned and a plot set in motion. All you do is develop the story in your own unique way. What you do with it is not the story of only your own life. It carries the hopes, failures and joys of all the people whose lives you touch as you rise, fall and flow.

You only make little journeys. Every destination you reach, including your last breath, is only the beginning of a longer ending.



**Anju Kishore:** Anju Kishore's poems have been featured in numerous journals and anthologies. They have won prizes in poetry competitions as well. Her book of poems inspired by the civil war in Syria, '*...and I Stop to Listen*' earned her a glowing review in Kendriya Sahitya Akademi's English journal, *Indian Literature*. She has been part of the editorial teams of five anthologies with India Poetry Circle and Kavya-Adisakrit Publishing.



## **A PILLOW'S PLIGHT**

The pillow has suffered  
the onslaught of my restless night  
harboring within itself  
secrets of my sleepless dreams  
torments from another lifetime

Poems written on discarded paper  
scraps upon the floor  
ink smears upon the tear-stained sheets

I awake to a vision of a yesterday  
that never was

Nightlight piercing the dark  
I sit up and write once more  
too many thoughts and vague images  
wanting to escape the confines of my mind  
I am unable to sleep

Drenched with night tears  
my confidant releases  
the impression of my weary head  
I arise freeing it from its charge  
it guarded me well  
My pillow has endured another night

***\*Publish by The Paragon, August 2017***



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

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





## **FAILING TO TELL**

Failing to tell you timely, am writing this letter

Lest there be no chance to meet again hereafter

As shivers the world – order under Corona regime

Roads restricted in proactive hype

Fairs and festivals' observance nominal

Confined to shrine the celebrated deity

Banned strictly public visits usual.

Not for a day or two, nor even a fortnight full

Cold, allergy, temperature slightly more



Pushing each smiling face to quarantine centre

More of returning smiles, less of those who returned never

Displayed, discussed, forgotten slowly rather.

Seasons changing, ghoulish ghost of virus still on move

East to West, North to South – no land spared to disprove

Pale and jobless working hands, since long, have returned  
homes

Of course dwindling disparity between the rich and poor

Physician and patient, commoner and leader

Surrounding looking fresher.

Rock-solid hundred years' structure turned powdery, vanity  
dented

Every human like the high-headed cow muzzled,  
helplessness crowned

Bullet like questions piercing love and anguish, look upon

Deciding heads to get together, bring back cheers lost

The rest we love to share be held up till our happy meet  
next .



**Antaryami Mishra:** I am a bilingual poet writing both in Odia and English. I work as senior teacher in English at R.D.C. Higher Secondary School, Chilika Nuapada, Puri, Odisha. I am a published poet contributing to more than a dozen of literary anthologies of national and international repute. I have a collection of Odia poems, 'Maa Nishaada'. My poem has found place in 'Signature of Truth,' an anthology. Recently, my winning Odia poem has been translated into English under 'Translation-Twirl' of POEMarium, a vibrant literary forum.



## **VASANTHI SWETHA**

All the words in a poem  
are supremely transient,  
every word disappears  
as you read the next -  
like magic,  
like water in between your fingers,  
like time,  
but you will remember the poem,  
everything it did to you -  
sometimes like a gun shot,  
sometimes like a flower touching your toe;

you will remember the poem,  
but not necessarily the words,  
you will remember this year,  
not necessarily the days,  
whatever stands next,  
is mostly likely a poem  
one that's already written,  
or one that you'll write,  
we'll have to wait and see,  
until then  
I hope you hold on  
to your smile.

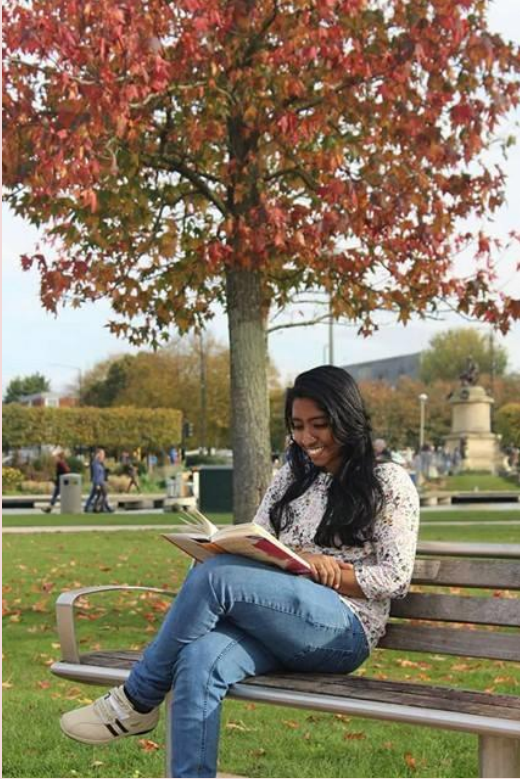
**ANURAG K. MATHUR**

The poems that you write,  
Create a transient force,  
That stays in the mind,  
Long after the words have flown  
This force settles around the brain,

And refuses to leave the head,  
Much like a bullet ricocheting  
Off the walls in a bulletproof shed

**VANDANA KUMAR**

If it was the words  
That made the poetry  
We wouldn't ever have silences  
In the movies  
Images  
Paintings often make  
For the best poetry  
Writing words is easy  
Being poetic  
A different cup of tea



**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'.





## **GYPSY WIND...**

You sing a song of liberation

Your whisper you share

At the dawn of the new year for me

Simplest truth you declare

Ever since we met

Too long this road to pass

Love is gambling, hanging around

In dreams only you come alive

Words we have not spoken

Never shared love

We walked lonely highways

We are tired strangers

Fatigued evening grows

In our loneliness

The gypsy wind carries

The sorrows and joy of years gone by...



**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.





## **YOU INSPIRE ME TO LIVE YOUNG**

The younger person said:

You inspire me to live young...

And the old man replied:

Living young is easy.

Getting there is the hard work.

His old eyes shining through smoke and dust, he said - it is:

Hard work at finding the cleanest healthiest food and drink. And the most peaceful and strengthening sorts of exercise and recreation. And the right amount of sunshine and rain, and of work and play, and of closeness and distance.

Hard work to keep a song pulsing on our lips; a spring in our step; and to extend an invisible hug from our heart even to the different and the indifferent; and towards the fixated stare of some passer-by who has a headful of ambitions or a heartful of woe or a soulful of emptiness

Hard work to generate a nod or a wink or a smile for those clammed in their shells, perhaps so lost in thought as to pass our amiable good selves by without a returning a wink or a nod or the slightest sign of a well-wish for the benefit of others

Hard work at finding the most positive company and calmest venue to eat and drink and work and play among

Hard work to learn not to yell when faced with those who believe in yelling, and to learn not to jump into the gutter with those who believe in fighting in the gutter

Hard work to kill the Buddha if the Buddha cannot be found

Hard work to find what it is that blunts and saps our minutes and hours, and to practise at what enriches and ennobles them instead

And to track down what it is that steals restful sleep and the easy ability to rise fresh from sleep, with the whole body zinging and up and ready to go

Hard to recount stories that recall us to timeless wisdom, courage and kindness irrespective of anyone's race, gender, class or creed. Hard not to adore the couch, staring transfixed at a screen instead of creating stories of our own. And not to watch sports instead of playing sports of our own

Hard to see what is wondrous and in plain sight of day when eyes have grown clouded and brain numbed by all the dazzling lights

Hard work, among all the yelling or the droning, to make songs with words and melodies that lift the heart, relax the throat and make eyes bright enough to see through the fog and dust

Other than this,

Living young is easy



**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.



## **SOLDIERS STRONG**

through it all

let's not lose hope

though life right now

feels like a downhill slope

so many obstacles

on our path

but as long as we have

that beating heart



we must grab hold of  
that little bit of courage  
and get rid of all  
the pessimistic baggage

because a fighting spirit  
will bring the change  
and when that breakthrough comes  
it might feel strange

but this great victory  
will taste so sweet  
and when all the challenges  
lies shattered at our feet

we will march on  
like soldiers strong

brave and bold

in victory song



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



## **A TUBEROSE**

I was offering you

A glass of water

You asked for

The flower

I was wearing on my hair

A small tube rose

You insisted for

Only that one

I wore

Gladly you tucked it  
On your shirt  
And went away  
Wearing my heart  
On your heart  
Did you know  
I was going with you?  
Over the years  
Is the tube rose still there?  
How many times  
Has that scene replayed  
Through the memory's window?  
Every time  
I see a tube-rose  
Or a rose  
Or any other flower  
I feel overwhelmed  
By the fragrance

As it is not you or me  
But the love  
That filled the small tube rose.



**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.



## **ECCE HOMO**

*Upon viewing "The Ascension of Christ"*

Lips partially open, Jesus begs for us.

Looking up through tears of blood,

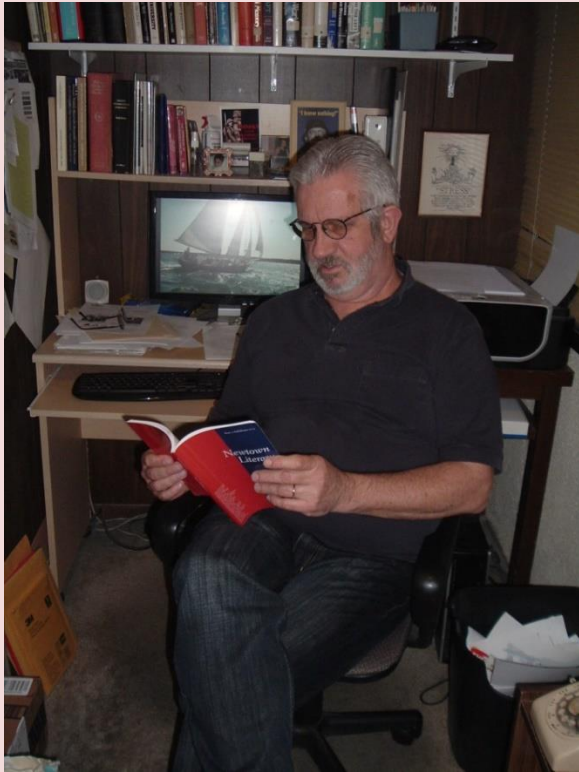
his eyes shimmer with the pain of his position

as he rests one foot on the planet

and rises, just barely, struggling up

out of this niche in the rock  
in a chamber in Cusco's  
el Convento de Santa Catalina.

Conceived and left  
by an unknown artist  
of the seventeenth century,  
Christ looks already bowed  
by the task of carrying our sins  
on sagging shoulders.  
Below him, on earth, Adam  
covers himself as he takes the fruit;  
  
there is no sign of the serpent.



**Bill Cushing:** Bill Cushing lived in various states, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico before moving to California where he now lives with his wife and their son. Returning to college after serving in the Navy and working on ships, he was called the "blue collar poet" by peers at the University of Central Florida. He earned an MFA from Goddard College. Published in numerous journals and anthologies, both online and in print, Bill is a multiple Pushcart Prizenominee. He facilitates a writing group (9 Bridges) and his book *A Former Life* was honored by the Kops-Featherling International Book Award committee; his chapbook (*Music Speaks*) was honored at the 2019 San Gabriel Valley Poetry Festival.





## **A BATTLE SECONDARY**

Several hungry mouths to feed,  
Leaking shelter to be paid for,  
Debilitating dues to be cleared  
For the land that lies mortgaged.  
For ages, weren't he and his clan battling deadly penury?  
So Corona just remains a battle secondary.

Amidst suspending drops of death, he has to step out  
Or else he and his kin, won't even get a morsel,  
And their starving cells would soon be dead,  
So leaving no place to fear and dread,

For how could Corona kill the already dead?

So Corona for him just remains a battle secondary.

He struggles in searing heat and thunderous rain,

Lest his sister is pawned to the wealthy demons lurking  
around,

While silently he feels his pride shattering,

As famished body of his wife peeps through tattered  
clothing,

From where sanitizers and masks should he bring ?

So, for him Corona just remains a battle secondary.



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



## **AT MY DESK**

I am the king at my desk,

With my pen, paper, notes, diary, drawings, and documents  
all accompanied,

My engineering mind scrambles

The earth, the sky,

Up through the stairs, balusters

To build a castle of dreams...

My desk is my safe haven,  
Where my mind is,  
Devoid of guilt and grotesques  
I rejoice my virtues and victories,  
And sometimes getting subdued,  
In pangs or penury

I love to be at my desk,  
Be it in the office or home,  
Playing with my benign thoughts,  
Brainstorming words and websites  
As winds pass by me whispering,  
I can see the serene sea silencing the sands at eventide  
I can hear the murmuring of a river, gliding over its pebbled  
path

Being at my desk, I feel proud,  
When the engineer in me turns a poet,

As machines sing songs in rhythmic measures

And emotions machine my ecstatic veins...



**Bishnu Charan Parida:** Bishnu Charan Parida is a bilingual poet from Jajpur Road of Odisha. Professionally an engineer though, he loves poetry. His poems are mainly on life, love, philosophy and nature. His poems have been published in many anthologies and magazines of national and international repute. He has been awarded in the state level Kalinga Nagar book festival, Odisha in 2015, honored in the 11th Guntur International Poetry Festival, honored as a World Featured Poet 2019 of Pentasi-B, China. He also received the 8th R.N.Tagore award from X-press Publications, Kerala.





*Pic by Mike Hurry, Inverness, Scotland, taken in Norway*

## **THE GIFTS**

all that is left

the ruins you see

a lifeless shadow

a shrinking soul

these are the gifts

you have left for me

nerves are open

exposed alive

ready to welcome incoming pain

gorging hungry greedy for pain

these are the gifts

you have left for me

left in the shadows

hiding alone

scared to go out

a shriveled wreck

these are the gifts

you have left for me



mind exposed

tender raw

sledge hammer blows they pound

cheating spiteful lies they pound

these are the gifts

you have left for me

left in the gutters

tossed aside

piece of garbage

an empty vessel

these are the gifts

you have left for me

guts exploding

bile rising

heart torn and split like a chasm

broken bleeding gaping chasm

these are the gifts

you have left for me

these are the gifts

you have lavished on me



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



## **SELF-IDENTITY**

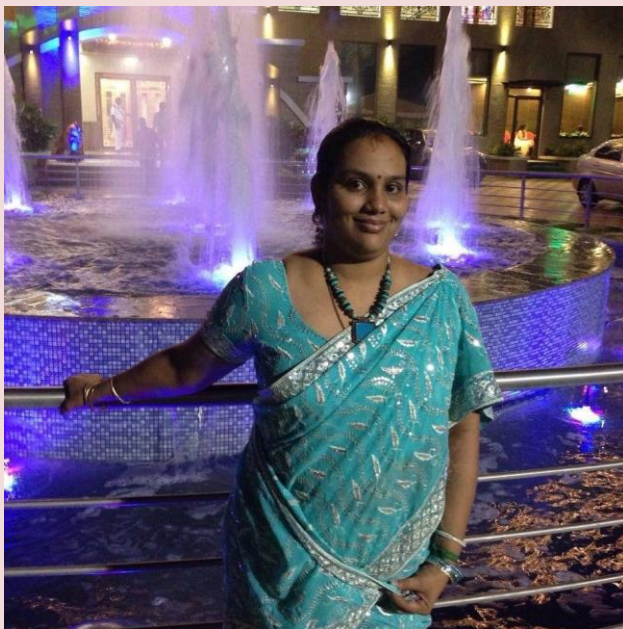
*(A Roseate Sonnet)*

Not my skin, not my shape  
not my lotus lips, not my color  
neither my brown body's landscape  
nor the red roses from my lover

shall as a legacy leave I  
but the identity of me,  
myself as a woman high  
of moral values shall it be;

of the power in my ember eyes  
of the woman in me that lies.

Respecting me for eternity  
of a woman strong as an empire  
shall be salient but my identity  
ever powerful as the fire.



**Brindha Vinodh:** She is a postgraduate in Econometrics but a writer within. Her poems have appeared in several magazines, e-zines, journals and OPAs, and she has contributed to several anthologies. She currently resides in USA with her family.



## **DEW**

(1)

It's not mere dew

But the full life

With throbbing heart

Radiating coolness and freshness

Around, leaf or grass

Let me sing it.

(2)

Sparkling is its very soul

So, it sparkles sans joy

It loves all alike

Sun-beams and wind

And meets its doom sans sorrow

Let me sing it.



**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.





## **MARGARET FULLER**

A precocious child, we are awaiting  
Your glorious resurrection as your early  
Education molded your mind yet  
Damaged your health

Transcendentalist friendships  
Climbing, you went beyond  
Supernatural, abstract experiences  
Human knowledge the quest.

Systematizing thoughts  
Seeking independence for women  
Equality, emotional and spiritual  
Fulfillment in the frontiers of society.

Feminist freedoms,  
Dazzling discussions and  
Ardent pleas speak of a  
New age Circe in your homology.

Ocean waves swallowed you  
In the rhythms of words never heard  
White cap mists spring letters  
Into the harsh winds.

The seas stole you from us

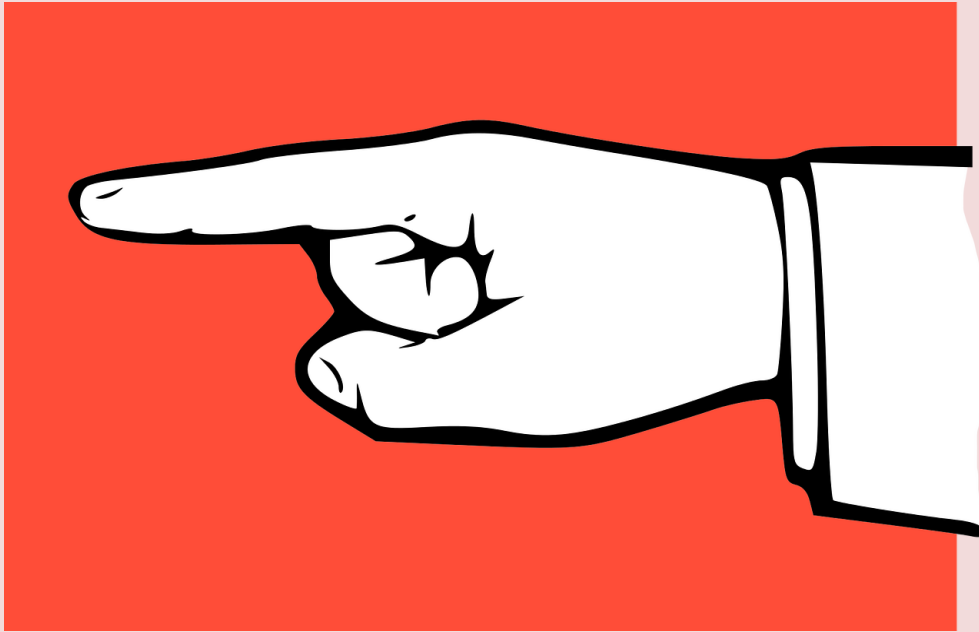
Revolution manuscript drowned

With a baby in your arms baptized in death

The shores of Elysium harkened close.



**Carl Scharwath:** He has appeared globally with 150+ journals selecting his poetry, short stories, interviews, essays, plays or art photography (His photography was featured on the cover of 6 journals.) Two poetry books 'Journey To Become Forgotten' (Kind of a Hurricane Press).and 'Abandoned' (ScarsTv) have been published. His first photography book was recently published by Praxis. Carl is the art editor for Minute Magazine, a competitive runner and 2nd degree black- belt in Taekwondo.



We accuse  
target  
point our dirty fingers  
thinking this can hide  
our failures  
slips  
blunders  
when the wind blows  
in our direction  
we are offended  
why?



**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.



## TO HUGO

There is a sweetness in a spaniel's eye

Even if it is just begging for food.

“Attention seeking” maybe, but you try

To resist his outstretched paw, don't be rude.

He is content with affection most times

Why can't we all be friendly as he is?

No preening pretensions or complex crimes

I even pardon his attempts to kiss

Exhaling doggy fumes, I learn from you  
Dear mutt an open heart, be my master  
Teach me to be loyal, brave and true  
Not a sophisticated disaster.

My species is the cruelest of them all,  
I am a spiteful calculating wretch,  
Give me your guidance that I may walk tall.  
And I shall treat you to a game of fetch!





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



## SPARROW

I looked out my window, and sitting on the sill  
was a one-legged sparrow, shaking off the morning chill  
no telling how he lost it, didn't seem to slow him down  
he balanced on his good leg, hopping all around  
then he flew up to the powerline, and braced against the  
wind  
soaking up the sunrise, with a dozen of his friends  
he held his place like all the rest, and he seemed to do ok  
I sat and watched for quite awhile, until they all flew away  
if you could talk, I wonder what you'd say  
what happened to make you walk this way

I wish you fair skies and gentle winds  
and I hope someday to see you again.

There but for the grace of god, or a simple twist of fate  
a little bit to the left or right, or a few more seconds late  
sometimes we play with fire, and hope we won't get  
burned

sometimes it comes from nowhere, to whom it may  
concern

we pick up the broken pieces, and leave the past behind  
we try to find our balance, and a little peace of mind  
we hold on a little tighter and we learn to let it go  
so the sparrow taught me, as I watched from below

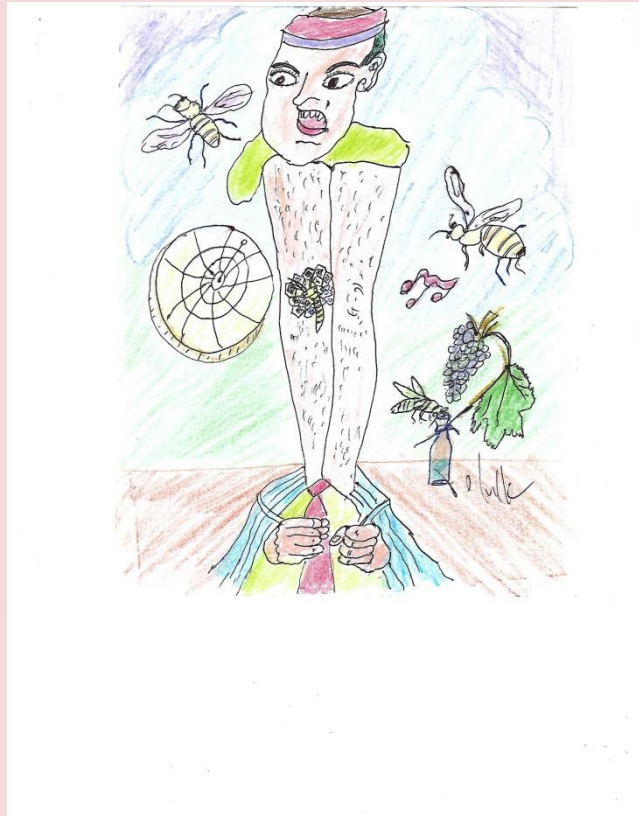
if you could talk, I wonder if you'd say

we all carry scars in our own way

I wish you fair skies and gentle winds  
and I hope someday to see you again.



**Dale Adams:** I am a poet and musician residing in Oklahoma, USA. I work in an auto dealership. I have been writing poems and composing songs since 2011. I have my own SoundCloud channel where my songs can be heard. I have converted the work of other poets into songs, and my poems have appeared in two anthologies.



## **WASP'S NEST**

Damn! I was tired of picking grapes and I lay on my stomach, on my back on some towels, falling asleep next to a vine on Rita's pergola.

Of the wasps that did not sting by getting into empty beer bottles half filled with water and sugar, and hanging from the branches, a couple of them came and made a nest just behind my left knee that was more shrunken.

They didn't bite me or even noticed. And what my wife told a friend who came to help me pick grapes:

-If he falls asleep, move him away from the vine, not the old thing, that some pigeons screwed up on him.

Waking up, I grabbed a bunch of grapes to get up. And I almost fell, making the friend laugh, who had spent my time asleep sweeping and collecting the fallen leaves.

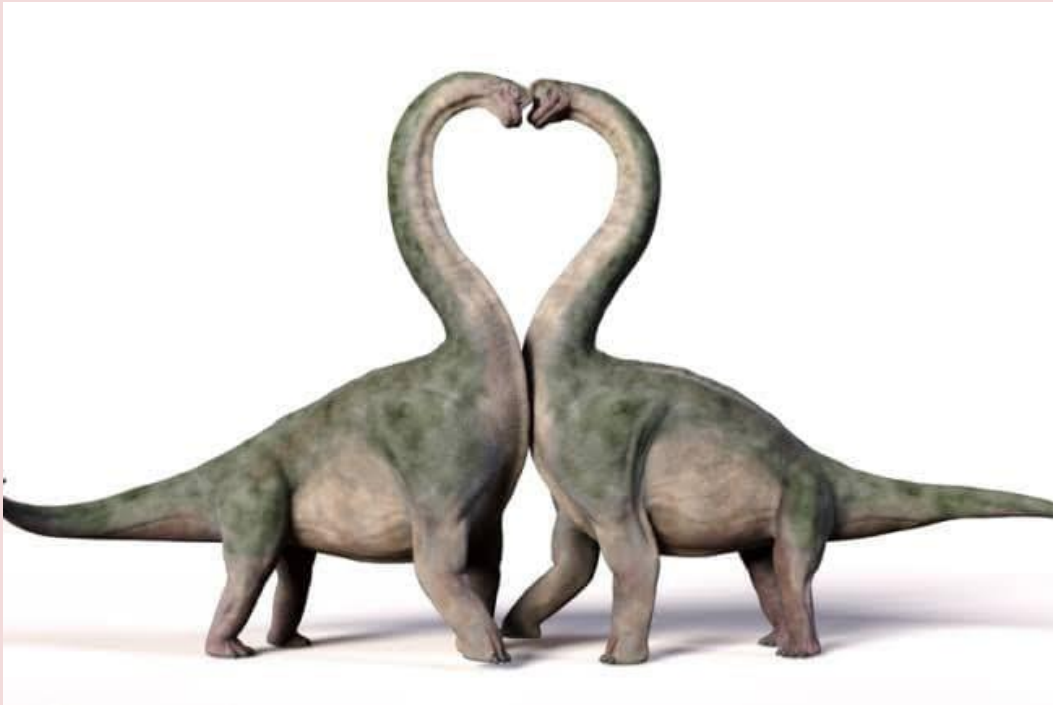
As I am not in the habit of showering, I did not notice the wasp's nest that was behind my knee, until one day when I felt a painful itch, telling my wife that it was very itchy, answering me:

-Hold on, it's not a thing.

Instinctively, I brought my hand to curl with my fingers and what was my surprise that I removed from behind my knee a small hive with a real dead wasp inside.



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



## **DINOSAURS**

Viruses have been having their way with various species for aeons.

Eminent scientists have discovered that there were Corona pandemics which raged during the age of the lumbering, clueless dinosaurs.

(Tongue in cheek)

It has now been ascertained that, after the asteroid hit planet earth, the last dinosaurs finally became extinct because they were subject to a corona viral pandemic.

The virus had been brought to the Earth by the asteroid.



The \*Dinosaur Pharmaceutical Regulatory Authority\* banned the use of the anti-viral preparation, \*Ivermectin\*, which was present in the soil at the time.

The \*Headless Dinosaur in Chief\*, the pompous ogre, Rota Abra Riece, had solemnly decreed that Ivermectin was not safe for dinosaur consumption.

It was safe only for the crocodiles.

The Chief Dinosaur Demon, Fat Far SAH, beheaded all those who tried to get the good news out about Ivermectin.

Chief Dinosaur censor, Dirty Debb Samu, imposed a TV news blackout against Ivermectin.

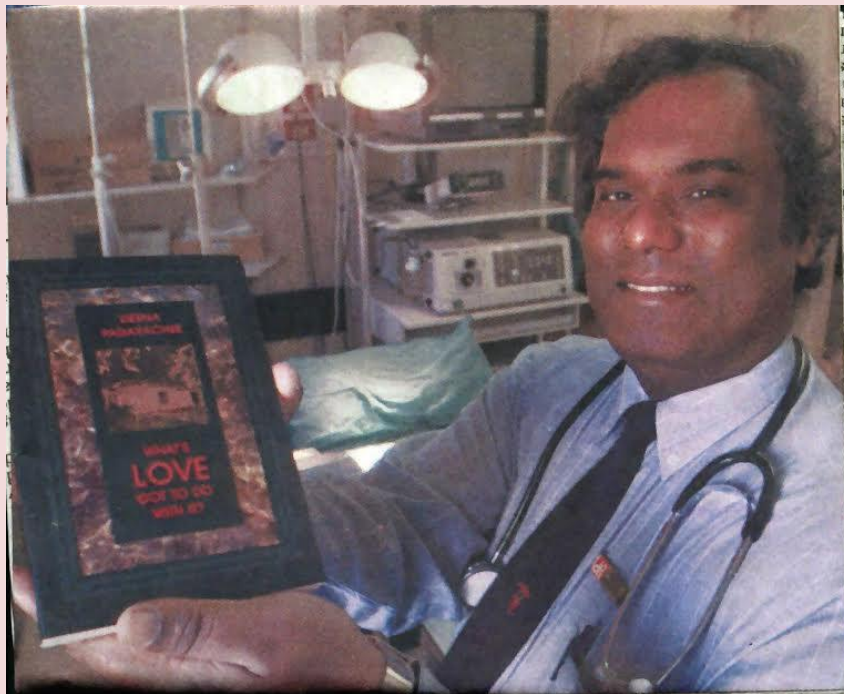
The Corona virus had a field day taking the breath and clotting the blood of the greatly exposed Healers and others and slaughtered them all.

So then the rest of the dinosaurs were set upon by the Corona virus and they all became extinct.

At a solemn ceremony Fat Far SAH, Rota Abra Riece and Debb Samu were honoured for the part that they had played in ensuring that the dinosaurs would become extinct.

They were declared to be \*Honorary Viruses\* and were decorated with Turn coats by order of the \*Supreme Viral Council.\*

We are grateful that the dinosaurs were aware that they needed to be extinct.



**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.



**ELCARO – ORACLE OF CAPE TOWN\* GĀ-AI TARAS OF  
||HUI!GAEB**

*Memories of an Oracle –Tawedes!* I heard the cautionary  
frantic drums echo across  
these coastal plains long before they came. My uninvited  
revelatory dreams revealing  
harrowing cream screams of what was still to come – The  
hum-drum of wood wrestling

against the mighty Atlantic as their vessels pushed ever  
closer to our homeland South

Africa. The table cloth over Table Mountain *Huri #oaxa*  
even hinted at a forced uninvited

colonial welcoming dagger smile dutch foreign enemy  
whilst golden sunsets lit up

rugged coastal sharp cliffs as my people herded their  
precious lifeblood to rest – My

vision blurred by frescoes of scarlet skies tainted with the  
blood of our future invasion

as the Southeaster wind announces her occasional  
cleansing, tucking at our traditional

dwellings and ominous future clouds swirl in my boegoe  
herbal tea – Revealing

foreigners crashing onto the sandy shores of our *Cape of  
Good Hope.*

*First Nation – Kakapusa!* Your elected amnesia worsens my  
nausea! We were born  
here. We lived here. We are still here! We are all *KhoiKhoi*  
born on the shores of Cape  
of Good Hope but our history choked dismissed strangled in  
an invasion chokehold –  
*Nieuwe Haarlem* shipwreck polluting our beaches erecting a  
fort of sand for a year,  
rescued by twelve ships and returned with Jan van  
Riebeeck 1652 – The original  
fort of wood built on the left bank of Salt River, now the  
central Post Office – Ôs mense  
displaced erased invaded dismissed exterminated  
murdered virre gat gevat! Renamed  
*hottentot!* We had our own unique language not *gibberish*,  
so kindly fokkof as you

continue to stifle our existence our proud culture our  
mother tongue cut off muted!

*guii guisa guim tsoum gam* – 1652 our existence disturbed  
questioned ridiculed mocked

chased away discarded but we remember when the  
Southeaster blows how you

shamed our women, sent Saartjie Baardman to Paris to be  
paraded naked like an alien

gawping recording her biological anatomy – Oh how she  
must've yearned for home...

Our herbal knowledge still survives despite our ancestral  
cries – *Boegoe* leaves for

kidney and bladder. *Knoffel* garlic for nausea. *Anyswortel*  
for *poep*, flatulence.

*Bitterwortel* for stomach pain. *Rooibos* for general health.

*Hondepisbossie* leaf juice

for stomach acid and *dassiepis* for back pain. *Gharrieson*

infusion for weak hearts.

*We are KhoiKhoi* – Original people of our homeland.

Scatterlings of the first nation!

Still colonised! *KAKAPUSA!* Your chosen amnesia deepening

our cultural nausea.

***Cultural Reference – Denver Taroga***





**Don Beukes:** He is a South African and British writer. He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles', 'Icarus Rising-Volume 1' (ABP), an ekphrastic collection and 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi' (Concrete Mist Press). His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into Afrikaans, Persian, French, Kreole (Mauritius) 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 and his second 'Cape Sounds' in 2019 (Gavin Joachims Publishing Cape Town). He is also an amateur photographer

and his debut Photographic publication appeared in Spirit Fire Review in June 2019.

**Kenneth Alexander:** He is a visual artist who uses various media on canvas, wood or chipboard. In addition, he often uses mixed media - e.g., twigs, cardboard, empty tins, etc. - to create a 3D effect. He comes from a typical South African diverse historical background which encompasses an eclectic array of cultures, beliefs, and experiences.



## **MOONS AND MY NOWS**

The aluminum moon's varicose veins are on display tonight. My shadow whispers between nows. The moon inventories my machines and my machetes. My last now, once so bright, so vital, exists as memory in mist. And when will my now come again? The moon will proudly polish the silverware and exhibit the newest prototype engine.



**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.



## **TRAMPOLINE**

*Translated by Piotr Karczewski*

Doesn't plan,  
but inanely strives towards the goal  
the death of the Earth.

Forgets that lands, seas, oceans  
are places of life.

The trampoline to their annihilation is  
the human  
once called homo sapiens,  
today....



Better to remain silent.



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



## **KARMA**

Karma befalls the mood of both  
good and bad, saint or devil.

It sees the excess,  
the thoughts, the prayers,  
the dying child, and  
the drug addicted.

It sits and waits,  
comes in the dark,  
pays in cash,  
never sleeps,  
and places pennies,  
for your thoughts.





**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.



## **SAKHI**

Waiting on the windowsill for your sakha

You even save his favorite side of the window for him

And keep his tea warm in the flask

Only to pour it down the sink

When it finally gets cold

And you blame the flask maker for the bad quality and  
pledge to throw away the cheap flask and buy a really  
expensive one

Sakhi

For once

Sit at the windowsill

On whatever side that suits you

Drink up that tea before it gets cold

Or you get too old

Expensive flasks are not a remedy for getting back people  
who have moved on



**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.



## **NOSTALGIA**

A journey in a secluded compartment of the memory train

I woke up to the silence around me

In a blissful aura I saw someone like me

Sitting in her father's lap in the front yard

A girl of seven with beautiful eyes and a divine smile

Enthusiastic about life and people around her

Her father's lap was her cosy couch

His loving words her treasure trove

She grew up to a dignified height

So many years passed...long miles crossed

Even now when she is left alone and nothing to console  
She drives back to the realm of past to get again that  
heavenly touch...



**Gayatree G. Lahon:** Gayatree is a poet and a teacher from Assam. For her, poetry is a passion where she finds peace and solace amidst the complexities of life. Being an aesthete, she finds beauty in every object of life and nature and her ink pours those elements in a subtle way. Her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies and web magazines.



Krishna,

When did you become a stone?

When you were born in a prison?

Or when many in disguise tried to kill you?

Or was it when you had to get rid of many?

You could not have,

When you played pranks

On Yashoda and others.

Or, when Radha loved you so much!

Also, not when you protected them

Or mesmerized them with your flute.



Or, was it  
When you tried to run away  
From Jarasandha's arrows  
And Sisupala's attacking words?  
Did Rukmini make you one  
With her intense love for you?  
Did the war torment you so much  
That you became a stone?  
Or was it when your entire clan perished  
In the deluge?  
Or was it, when the hunter's arrow pierced you  
And you had little choice left?  
Maybe you became one  
When crowds thronged to see you  
And you charmed them  
With your smile.  
For, only a stone can.  
A melting stone.



God in disguise.

Not an ordinary human.



**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.



## **FATED FOREST**

Resiliently I have gripped the clayey soil,  
Washed my multifarious feet in the terra of variegated foil,

I know only to embrace with my arms open coddling the  
breeze,

In frissons have I shuddered with winged bards nesting in  
neighboring trees,

Forest floods in their liberation have kissed my chipped one  
leg,

And I wondered why I couldn't like them run as I tattoos  
transfixed a peg,

And then a little bird quivered its trilling throat that I am a  
rare abode,

And that I wear seasons like blouses, storms like saris, and  
drought like a stole à la mode,

And that I am an extrovert that hides no hues,

And I adapt to changes from nature's cues,

And that I cry uninhibited, laugh and giggle like a child,

Shed my garbs unabashedly and rustle and sway like a  
pagan wild,

The little bird averted me of my being amputated soon  
sometime,

For forests are becoming *passée* and are not worth a dime,

It was then that I understood that I am a tree giving fruits,  
shade and shelter,

Fell me they will, make an idol of me, perhaps a fancy chair,  
in an alma mater,

And as hands sand and buff me to peer into my soul, lines  
and grains will appear,

Of a river that once bathed and nurtured me from a forest  
that was fated to disappear.



**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.



Someday you'll know  
what I'm trying to do—  
place this distance  
between you and me.  
So painful now  
So confusing for you

Someday...  
when I'll be gone  
and I would have taught you well  
how not to miss me.





**Glory Sasikala:** She is a writer, poet and publisher from Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is the Editor and Publisher of GloMag, the international monthly online poetry and prose magazine, and is administrator of the group of the same name on Facebook. She is the creator of 'The Chennai Ladies' series of E-books on Amazon.com. She has recently published her third novel, 'My Life My Script'.



## **DREAMER**

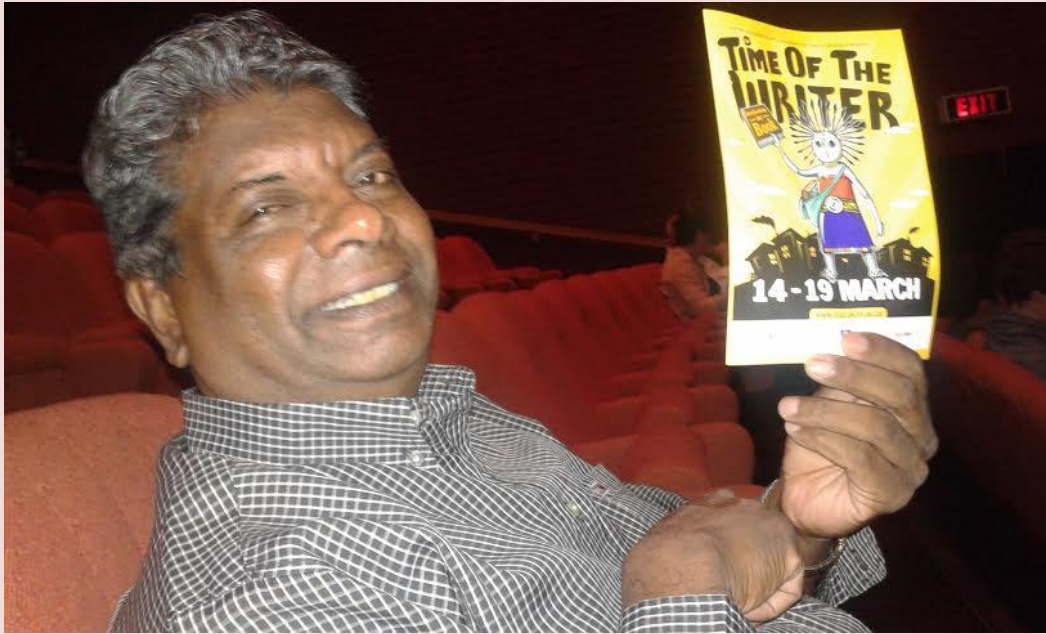
thoughts in flight  
in the quiet of the night  
like torrents of light  
from shooting stars  
wondering about you  
would you open the door



when you hear my knock  
on your window pane

to be with you  
a thousand galaxies I'll cross  
all the worlds that span this universe  
I'll fly across if I had wings

when the nights hush  
is touched by the light of day  
i see you standing alone  
across the street  
in the quaint cottage where you live  
i can't find the courage  
to cross the street and say hello  
yet in my dreams I'll cross  
a thousand worlds for you.



**Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny:** He is an Indian born, and brought up in South Africa. He has been fascinated by, and writing poetry since his early boyhood. He has performed his poetry at various forums, including the Poetry Africa Festival, the Mauritian Writers' Association, and Gloriotimes, India. He is the Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa.



## **DANCE**

*(To Lords and Ladies of the sky)*

Night is dire, night is deft  
rain in torrents,  
wets you and I,  
a tendency towards fever  
see how close, how intimate we are.

Wet footprints, wet grass, wet soil,  
our lips fill the earth's notebook.

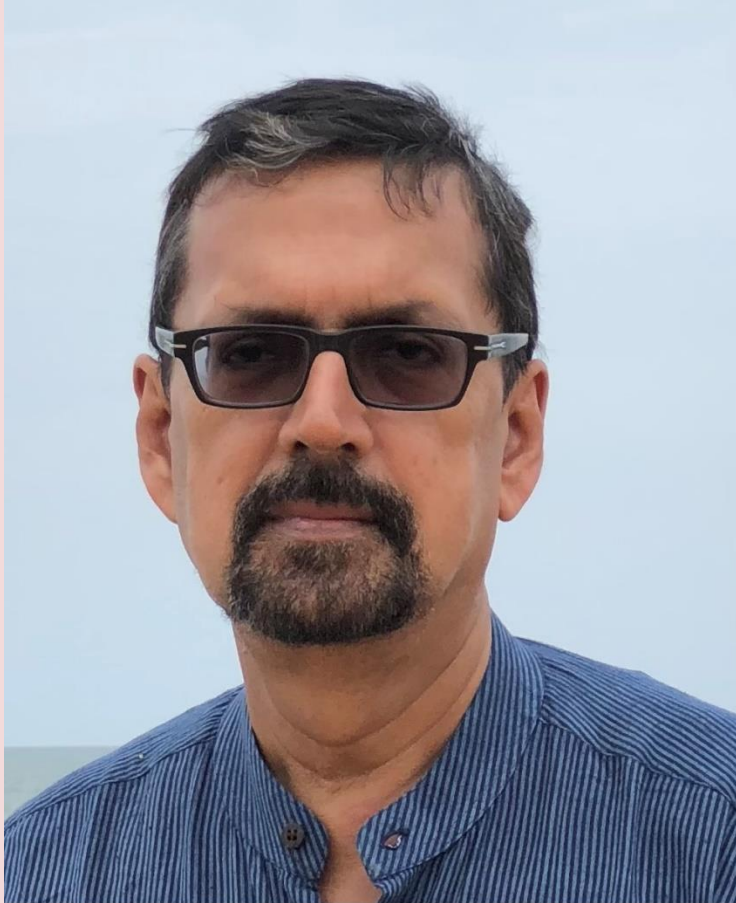
You are always a stranger, a power surge  
eyes are blurry like memories,  
we look into the mounting of dream and desire.

Before your words become sand grains  
before the wet leaves whisper love  
our hands stay in the shape of butterflies.

Will you dance with me, climb on me?  
mournful, playful, furious?

Yes, it will be like dying today, tomorrow, forever.  
the broken stars rise from the fallen comets,  
inviting millions of dead shells.

Fairy tells to tale, a string of thought whispers  
all things are born of trouble times,  
We dance, we cry, we want to die for the next birth.



**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 eight 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 also edited a book on selected songs of Tagore translated in English. I have recently edited a collection of poems titled 'Jallianwala Bagh-Poetic Attributes'.





## **FACEBOOK**

Everybody knows everyone

But nobody knows anyone

Thus

Self -advertisement is a must

The more you like other's posts

The more you get likes on your posts



Likes beget likes



**Guna Moran:** Guna Moran is an Assamese poet and critic. His poems are published in more than hundred international publications all over the world. His poems have already been translated into thirty languages of the world. He has three poetry books to his credit. He lives in Assam, India.



## **GHAZAL**

After eons I decided to write a love letter tonight,  
With the red petals will you join me my love later tonight!

Like a beautiful wife you dwell in my lonely heart,  
Your radiance shines so I want to be a writer tonight.

All roses, all flowers fall prey to your eternal beauty,  
How to capture your scent-let me know- is it winter  
tonight?

When I try to capture you in my letter, my letters fell short!  
My dots turn into a line but that line lost its center tonight.

Enough time you spent in hoarding the lost memories,  
O Love! O heart! If not a way, find in me a shelter tonight.

I doused the nib of my pen in the red blood of my heart,  
So as to write the tales and become a love master tonight.



**Imran Yousuf:** Imran Yousuf is a Poet/Writer/Columnist/Translator from Kashmir, India. Currently working as Columnist and Journalist, he has contributed his poems to various reputed magazines, journals and international anthologies. He has co-authored more than 10 anthologies and has also written a series of articles, about the great Sufi Poets of the Kashmir Valley (starting from 14th century), which were published across various newspapers and magazines and now being compiled into a book (to be launched soon). He is presently engaged in interviewing the current generation of great poets from the Kashmir valley. The articles will also be compiled and given the shape of a book soon.



## **INSPIRATION**

Inspiration can come

From any source—

External or Internal.

Anything, Anyone

Can be a trigger

for inspiration—Role models,

Nature, events, etc.

Real Inspiration gives

Fresh, creative, original ideas.

When truly inspired,

performance

Improves, accelerates,

In any field.

Inspiration should be

Positive and constructive.

To propel one into action—

Creative or otherwise—

Right Inspiration required.

When inspired one

Gets energized—

Focus, determination.

But the challenge is

Sustaining the Inspiration—

Which comes from within.



**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).





## THE POET

It is the white hour  
between deep night, soft dawn.

I have known no sleep but  
my eyes blazed back at the  
stars this night.

Walking by the river  
soft murmuring while  
long poems  
intricate exquisite

shaped themselves  
glided across my mind.

Faint indistinct...like  
a love I have known.  
Quiet passion gentle  
smooth. Cotton  
clouds in a blue sky.

Haze of hours half-forgotten  
melon moons crackerjacks.  
This is a kind of sleep  
in a way, enchanted.  
Half in out of this world.

The sun rose...  
another golden flower.



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



## **NOW!**

NOW, there are time zones where feathers float down from cloudless skies bearing the scent of birds in flight across a limitless sunlit sky. Silent and patient, they dance back and forth, on a line that has no predestination. Souls, looking up, catch them with their eyes as their colors fire rays of hope, historic and heroic, through a jungle purified by those so rooted in their terrain that they dare not move those trunks and hope chests past the limits of their unreachable dream of free association with those tiny specks on high.

NOW, those specks become spectres, those torches become torture. That glow becomes a parasite living on the living. Something washed up on a pristine shoreline from a distant and foreign origin. A substantial threat, a carrier, a

cause. And now those who would run for their lives, carrying their young like luggage across their shoulders, have no legs on which to trod, no moving parts with which to fight or build a wall. Beings made of poison, breeding contaminated hearts and minds, infiltrate these villas of decency.

NOW, across the vastness of space and time, on planets not yet discovered by a science that sits on the heads of pins, there is heard a lamentation, a cry of sorrow and desperation born in anger and agony. We dare not judge or act in haste, yet we dare not ignore or hesitate. An armada dispatched, sent forth to bring an end to suffering, a final solution delayed, now engaged, as we look up, while dancing in line, to catch the falling feather in our time.

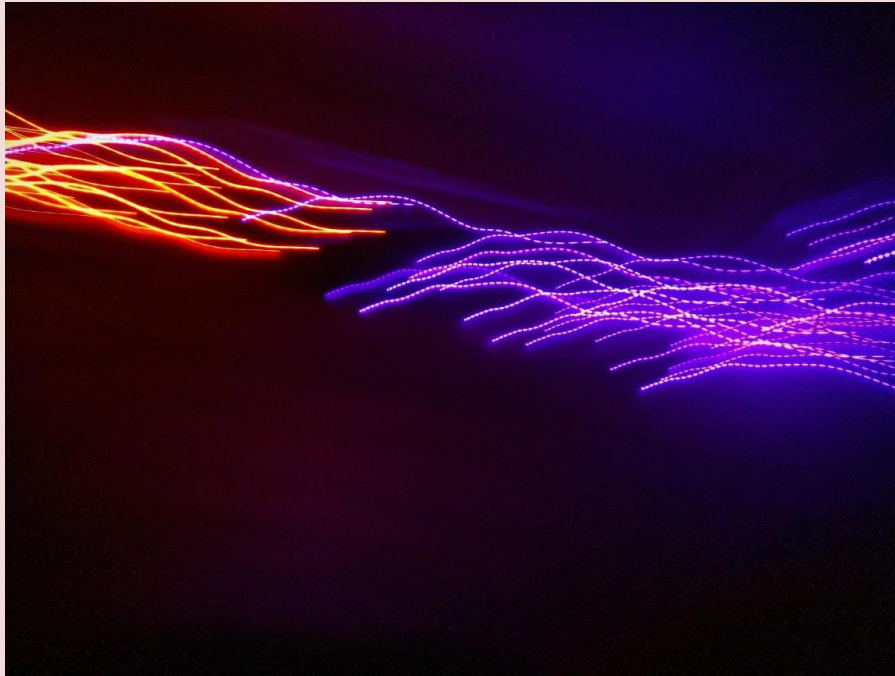


**Joe Kidd:** He is a multi-award-winning songwriter, speech writer, music/film critic, and ordained minister, inducted into Michigan Rock & Roll Hall of Fame 2017, recipient of Michigan Governor's and US House of Representatives certificates for work promoting Peace, Social Justice, Cultural Diversity. He lives in Detroit Michigan USA with partner, author/vocalist Sheila Burke. He has a CD titled *Everybody Has A Purpose* 2015, a book of poetry titled *The Invisible Waterhole* 2020. His works appear in benefit recordings, Music For Japan, and Songs For Standing Rock, many poetry journals. He was on tour throughout North America and Western Europe.

<https://www.amazon.com/Joe-Kidd/e/B089QYDXSM>

<https://joekiddandsheilaburke.com/>





## **LAST WISH**

Embellish me everyday  
With the pearls of your tears  
Plucked from  
The treasured shells of solitude

Drape me in the cloth of eternity  
Adorn with your longing  
For me lifelong,  
For which I was born.  
Each day melts down

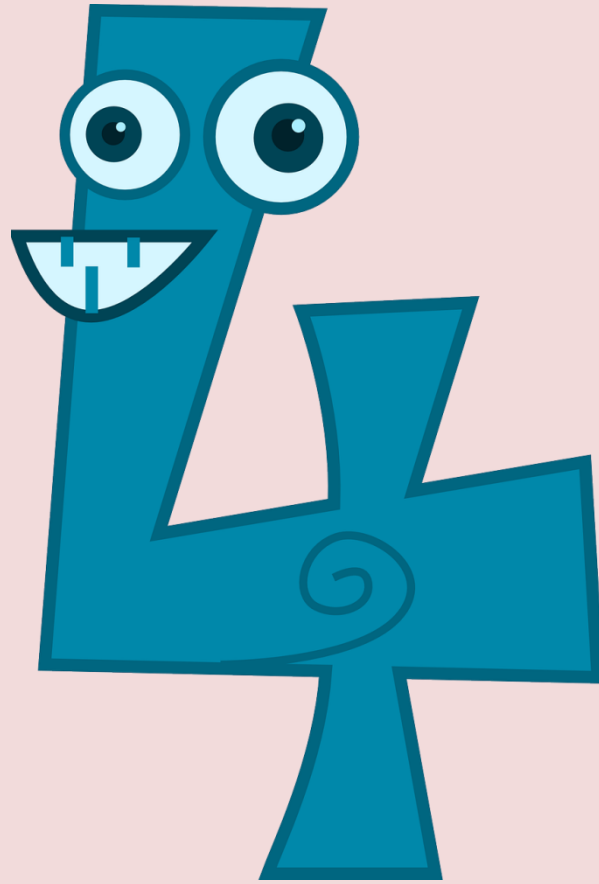


From my warm grip  
Like butter  
In an endeavour  
To live that only moment  
Which no one has known ever.

Dress me day by day  
To fade away one day  
Into your ultimate embrace...dark, stark, and stray,  
When you will  
Snatch me away  
From the rituals of  
Lifelong presence  
Into the ethereal absence  
Grey....  
To carry me to the wonderland  
Which no one can ever imagine.



**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 DIFFERENT ARITHMETIC**

One for sorrow, two for joy...

I remember counting ravens that sat

Outside our classroom window,

A different arithmetic from the compound interest

Being taught on the blackboard..

Could knowing how compound interest worked, compound my joy? I asked...

I was threatened that I would find myself

Outside the school compound...

There, I left it at that!

But I have stuck to my own arithmetic,

Two for joy... two jet black ravens. How joyfully they cawed,

For their food...so simple...no boardroom strategies...no politico-diplomatic family tactics..

Five. Bright brown pips

Inside the red apple...

Wow. Poison inside that biblical forbidden fruit.

Six. Like half a dozen.

Yes, the new-born mewlings were tough little things..

Furry little tailed-fairies...

No bright wings... I didn't mind...

Nine. Sparrows sitting at the bird stand..

Two of them cocksparrows. Dark fellas. Spirited for so small  
a bird...

And then I counted the red stars of the pomegranate...

It was no less than counting stars,

As I fell asleep, I counted

The fireflies behind my sleepy eyelids...

Somewhere I heard a raven cawing..

Yes, two for joy indeed...

Two hands that hold each other, tightly, as they fall asleep..

Two hands held up in prayer...

Two eyes, full of tears... telling, just telling...

And two parts of the same heart,

Beating a different beat.



**Kamar Sultana Sheik:** She is a poet, writing mostly on themes of spirituality, mysticism, and nature with a focus on 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.



## **SONNET 90, SPECTRE RISING**

### *Formal Shakespearean Format*

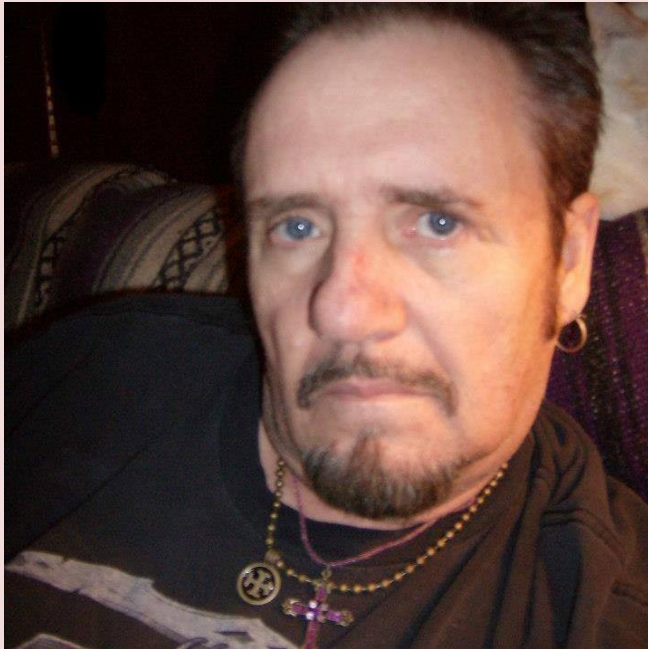
As the last dead leaf falls from a tall tree,  
spiraling into piles upon the sleigh;  
the sun drops into the furious sea;  
time for the winter and darkness to play.

In a blasphemous act of regaling  
Reach from the cold earth resting in your grave;  
To the hate and lies forever-failing.  
Recapturing the breath your mother gave.

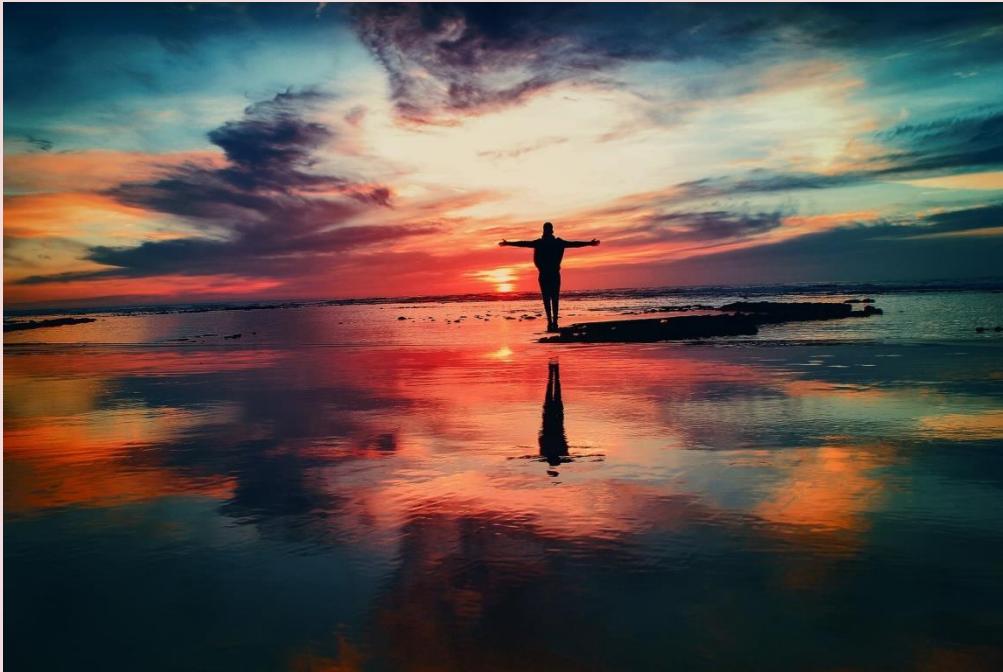


A soul contains sonnets gifted to all.  
serenades of sweet grace, beauty and love.  
Your life was born from decadence and sprawl  
admit defeat and grasp wings of a dove.

Spend time reading a weathered, gray headstone  
Float into the breeze, wandering alone.



**Ken Allan Dronsfield:** Ken Allan Dronsfield is a disabled veteran and prize winning poet from New Hampshire, now residing in Oklahoma. A proud member of the Poetry Society of New Hampshire, he has five poetry collections to date; 'The Cellaring', 'A Taint of Pity', 'Zephyr's Whisper', 'The Cellaring, Second Edition' and 'Sonnets and Scribbles'. Ken's been nominated three times for the Pushcart Prize and six times for Best of the Net. He was First Prize Winner for the 2018 and 2019, Realistic Poetry International Nature Poetry Contests. He has recently begun producing Creative Content on his YouTube channel and has had wonderful success sharing his poetry. Ken loves writing, thunderstorms, and spending time with his cats Willa and Yumpy.



## **THE HORIZON OF HOPE**

Inside the egg of my mom

Dreams I had of freedom

My shell I broke to come home

The sun I saw on the sky dome

Bright smiling and winsome

No longer I felt lonesome

My wings I spread to roam the sky

To test the borders of my liberty

Dawned on me the painful reality

The horizon of faith limits my mobility  
My freedom is a bigger egg of humility

An infinite egg never ready to break  
Its hard shell of fear and ethics fake  
Yonder, they say, is my freedom's brake  
Beyond which it is not my take

But I will break my shell of comfort  
To escape this fort of stifling support  
I won't let the world's limiting horizon  
Take away my freedom under the sun



**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.



*(Courtesy: James Wheeler: [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com))*

## **THOUGHTS**

I often hold thoughts of you, under the waning moon.

That's when precious sparkling dew, from the fragrant  
jasmine buds,

slowly drip drops!

That's when the gentle night breeze caresses the trees,

makes them sing and sigh and have flimsy wishful  
thoughts...

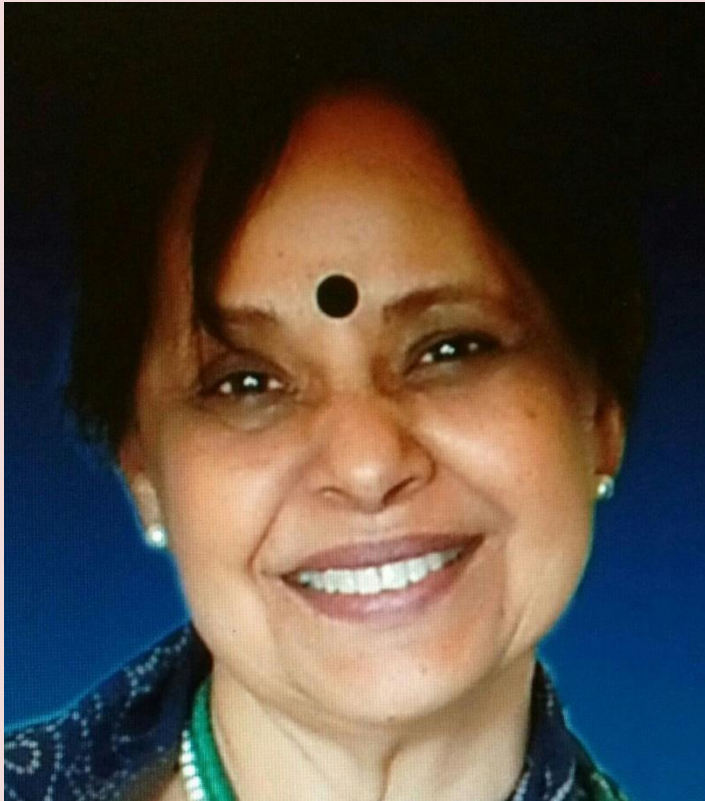
and dreams.

I surrender then to the aching unreality in me.



Love and the dance of feelings,  
are a part of this nocturnal magic.  
So often. So very often I hold thoughts of you.  
Precious, wrapped in gold tissues.  
Stored carefully in tiny gift boxes of red velvet.  
They hold, deep perceptions of my thoughts.  
Bits of romance, care, warmth, respect, loyalty,  
passion, understanding and love.  
Stored and preserved for eternity.  
In that sacred space and in that ethereal silence...  
when all else is still,  
When the moon rays, come creeping,  
under innumerable guiding sparkling stars.  
There echoes a remembrance,  
a lingering fragrant essence,  
wrapped in my lonely thoughts.





**Ketaki Mazumdar:** I am a poet, a dreamer and an author. I reside in Mumbai, India, but grew up in Kolkata. After an amazing thirty-six years of being an educationist, receiving a National Award from the then President, Dr. Abdul Kalam, I now indulge in my passion for writing poetry and authoring children's books. I have contributed my poems to many poetry sites and authored a boutique book of hundred poems, for private circulation. I continue to learn, be awed by nature's beauty and mystery, human relationships and the spirituality of life and death.



## **HEART'S BELOVED**

Little do they, wrangling in heat  
as to whether he exists or not,  
perceive that He is a motive force  
dear not to the brains but the heart.

Every moment of glory in life  
is a sign of our debt to Him;  
All deeds, awesome or humble  
spring from His grace like a stream.

Firm Columbus saw through leaping waves  
warm God beckoning to a distant shore;  
Man alighted dazed....on the Moon  
crowning fruition of a feat, so rare.

Things sundry, moving in perfect symmetry,  
betray a design of splendid art;  
All toll the truth of the motive force  
dear not to the brains but the heart.



**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.



## THE DIAMOND WORLD

Sorry Antwerp, sorry Amsterdam, sorry Jaipur,  
Sorry Renoir, sorry Rembrandt, sorry Hussain,  
You cannot help them from that peaked brilliance

Of the hill atop the gems, the diadems,  
The alien artistry, the lusty avalanche ---

Your blurred dreams, remote, luxury- ridden,  
Exclude my fellows, my friends  
In slow denudation and silent desiccation.

Even I once could not see them  
Through that gossamer Monalisa veil.

But now I have grown from  
My previous pigmy dazzle.

Crossed over from Brussels to Surat  
To mingle with the blooms and cornfields  
From Guntur to the remotest corner  
Of Bhopal, of Muzzffarpur, the tribal hutches,  
Dances in the *maadal mahua* of Palamau  
Breathed foliage and rain-scented mud.

Iraq and Syria, Bihar and Bangla

Are shreds of kites torn

Across your diamond-hard skies

Stuck in gem trees forever.

Glistening tear drops of the Kashmiri

Apple-cheek beggar woman

Inundating the ruby-sapphire chandelier

Eardrops in the lavish displays

Of Place Vendome or Zaveri Bazar

Now and forever beckoning me

To rise in revolt.





**Laksmisree Banerjee:** Prof. Dr. Laksmisree Banerjee is an established Poet, Writer, Literary Critic and Educationist. She is a Senior Fulbright Scholar & Professor (USA), Commonwealth Scholar (UK), National Scholar & Gold Medalist of Calcutta University, India, UGC Post-Doctoral Research Awardee and Founder Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University, India. She has five published Books of Poetry and several Research Books and One Hundred Twenty Academic Publications primarily on diverse areas of Poetry, Culture and Literature. Dr. Banerjee is also a Gold Medalist in Indian Classical Music and an established Radio, Stage & TV Vocalist of India, having performed globally.



## **EMMANUEL - GOD WITH US**

we are in the 1st month

of 2021

there's still

a long race to run

the finishing line of this year

is only December the 31st

i believe along the road

God will sustain our hunger and quench our thirst

there's will be thorns

along the way

just keep the faith

and continually pray

we will experience winds, rain

and sunshine

God will be our Shelter

so i trust that we'll be fine

naturally and spiritually

our bodies might ache and pain

what's impossible with Shane and Wayne

God is well able to sustain

He will raise up a standard

when the enemy comes in like a flood

always plead Jesus Christ Blood

let's go through this year  
one day at a time  
and have faith that God  
will bring an end to all types of abuse and crime

i will run this race  
with patience and endurance  
no need to rush  
i will win because I have  
Emmanuel - God with us



**Leroy Abrahams:** He lives in South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Helenvale. He currently works as a Spot Welder at a Motor Industry Firm. He is a Published Author and enjoys writing poetry. His first book entitled, 'Verse en Inspirasie' was published by Selwyn Milborrow (Milborrow Media). His second book entitled, 'Testimony in Poetry' was published by Bevan Boggenpoel, and the third book entitled, 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection,' which he wrote together with Bevan Boggenpoel, Selwyn Milborrow, and Don Beukes was published by Milborrow Media. His poetry describes himself and how God has transformed his life. He is also a member of a Master Class group of writers as well as Afrikaanse Digters.



## **DREAM CATCHER**

Call on memories  
to review the day,  
To plan, aspire to,  
Futures seen perfectly in dreams.

Draw from the mystic pool,  
elements needed for life,  
and to face the Godhead.

This never disappointing  
web of power.

Our Guardian,  
we trust you to entrap our fears,  
our advocate to hold our desires,  
our conciliator, to hear our entreaties,  
our deliverer, to secure our safety.

You use all manner of transcendental paths  
to form our thoughts  
into something we can explain.

Because of you,  
and your never ceasing watchfulness each night,  
Ojibwe Spider Mother,  
we are gifted with each new day.

Migwetch.

***\* the Ojibwe people are also known as the Chippewa.***

***Migwetch means "thank you."***





**Linda Imbler:** I am a poet residing in Wichita, Kansas, USA. I am a life-long learner who has spent the shutdown learning the location of all 197 countries around the world, and learning how to read Braille. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have seven published poetry collections and one hybrid collection of short stories and linked poetry. My newest collection, “Per Quindecim” will be published as an e-book by Soma Publishing in late January.



## **MY RELATON WITH YOU**

The day

Distinctively you clad my vision

I figure you in every rotation

You feature in my ink's motion

In a comprehensive way

In an immaculate bay

In all those prolific lines

Resurrecting the richness of our phrase

I breathe the closeness of you and

Live in a state of craze

I wait for your spring  
Melodiously my heart runs and churns stories  
When you vanish from the reign  
Ignoring my eager tapestry  
And my attempts turned vain  
Incongruously I howl  
Stupendously you manage the table  
Patiently comforting me  
With your giggles and sweet sound.



**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'.



## **FAITH**

A single gesture of love from you

I reciprocate giving you my all

The happiness you have for me

I became your laughter

The belief you have in me

I became your faith

The desire you have for me

I became your passion

The trust you have for me

I became your pride

The faith you have in me

I became your heart

The love you have for me

All of me became yours



**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.





Dear Stranger,  
I know how it feels  
When the love you have in your heart  
Gets sabotaged by the one  
Whom you wish to give it all  
How deeply you loved!!  
I do get it  
But believe me  
I have no emotions as such!  
We were acquainted and friendly since times  
Yet I address you as stranger in this note  
Just because I don't know what it is

That seeks to be honest with the heart  
Knowing the denial broke your heart  
I clearly remember the fateful day  
We were having fun with friends  
Playing truth and dare  
At your turn you chose to dare and was on your knees  
Playfully made a ring out of hay  
And asked me with twinkle in eyes  
“Will you marry me? The love of my life!”  
I was stunned by a sudden jolt  
It never occurred to me the way it was  
It pained my heart to say, “No”  
When I could see so much love in your eyes  
Wish I had it in a similar way  
But I had my ambitions at bay  
The denial took us far away  
Great bond in making was broken that day!



**Madhu Jaiswal:** She is a poet, writer, editor and a social worker based in Kolkata, India. She has got published in various national and international anthologies and is regularly featured in popular literary magazines and e-zines. As an executive editor of The Impish Lass Publishing House Mumbai, she has 5 anthologies to her credit. Madhu is a friendly, optimistic and compassionate person who believes in humanity and volunteers for the upliftment of the underprivileged and destitute. According to her, hope, belief, and perseverance are the powerful mantras that have the ability to pave our path towards success no matter what. Her writings often revolve around these keywords. She can be contacted at [madhuj2203@gmail.com](mailto:madhuj2203@gmail.com).



## **A WANDERER**

How I wish I was a forever wanderer,  
Traveller and voyageur,  
A vagabond,  
Without any home,  
Travelling with family and friends,  
On a road that has no end,  
Sitting on the wayside  
With little bundles of possession kept aside,

Women, children all together  
Watching the world as stargazers,  
Making do with the bare minimum,  
Even though surrounded by glamorous condominiums,  
Without much worry of food and sleep,  
Lying down on a strawy heap,  
Having no urges for names and brands,  
When I could manage with unkempt hair, sweaty strands,  
Explore the uncountable streets,  
Many a strangers meet,  
When no one would unnecessarily worry  
About me, no unnecessary burdens I would carry,  
When people would pass by in a hurry  
And I could gaze at them, all starry,  
Be able to dwell on the pavement,  
Look at everything not in boredom, but amazement,  
Not worry about making big loans and payments,  
Nor get affected by kings and governments,

Brave the sun and the rain,  
The harsh weather and the cruel environs,  
Keep walking the endless miles  
As the days wiled,  
Hours, minutes, seconds all turning into just a while  
Playing on my cracked, arched lips, a sweet smile.



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



## **LADY OF THE HOUSE**

Mild voices

Dark misty frosty

Twinkling of stars faded but noticeable

Tired Moon crawling, time to move

Cool smacks of moist breeze

Much enjoyable

Visibility much less yet



Sky switching colours, could guess  
Will be pink, red then golden soon  
Couldn't be seen budding flowers, but  
Fragrant fragrance, aroma, filled the ambiance  
The conversing silence of dawn, amusing  
Chirping raising, audible now  
Sound of bells, chantings from distant temples  
"Azan" too from the mosque, at the same time  
Morning bolsters different denotation for each one  
For the common housewives, morning senses  
Prepare bed tea for the dear husband  
Or mix Bournvita in hot milk for children  
The chain is a bit extended  
How can they be with Nature, relish its charm  
They can't afford these luxuries  
Being crowned as "Lady of The House"  
Can we rename the tag  
With concluded eloquence...!



**Manjula Asthana Mahanti:** I'm a bilingual, published author, translator, and editor too. I have more than six books in both languages to my credit, along with poems, articles, short stories, etc., in several national international anthologies, books, e-magazines, OPA, Glomag, etc. I am the recipient of many prestigious awards such as Bharat Ratna Atal Behari Bajpayee, laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Best Novelist, Woman of Excellence (World Survey) and Star Ambassador of World Poetry& Art (International awards). I was also honoured with the Prestigious Samman by Gujarat Sahitya Academy.



## SOUL LESS

The soulless me  
lost, aloof, unaware  
bridging the gap of  
far and near, feeling  
the mere existence  
the constant fear  
the heart with a  
gaping hole, living

the nightmares  
emotionless and  
numb, coping with  
emptiness  
hidden into the  
scars of tear

even the daylight  
haunts, pulling  
the darkness  
uncomfortably numb  
speaking without  
voice

it will keep nagging  
only if I let it,  
spinning the circles  
around myself

no more saddened  
eyes, but full circle  
letting the little  
spices, create an  
aura of surety  
and wholeness



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

(mehakgrover@amartex.com)



## **BUBBLES**

Colourful round fragile bubbles  
Floating up high towards the sky  
Sailing above the trees and bushes  
Gliding in the air slowly and gently  
On landing they pop and splash  
Pretty bubbles soaring up to  
Great heights bouncing  
Shining and reflecting  
In the bright sunlight  
Glowing with tints of colours  
Like a rainbow so pretty



They burst and disappear

Sometimes they vanish fast

With a click

Softly in the air

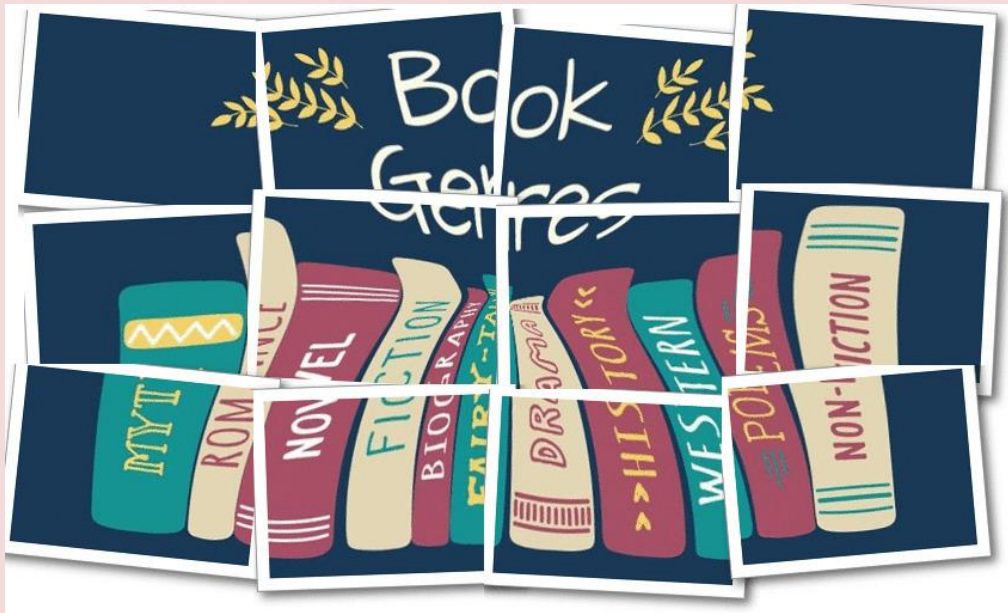
Nostalgic I stand

Recollecting my

Childhood passion



**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.



## FICTION GIRL

*(Transition)*

Drawings, then poems flip over to fiction;  
the flash girl rides this ghost of the invention.

Insecure in youth, switch girl from drawing  
to poetry, extension flight, outer fiction space,  
yours is a manner of words at work.

Mercury is a god of movement.

A new skill set, brain twister, releases 100 free plays.

Life is a version of old times, fresh starts, torn yellow pages.

I focused on you last night; I watched your head spin  
in sleep, a new playhouse of tree dreams, high shifting.

Changes are leaves; I lift your spirits to the gods of fire,  
offer you thunderbolts practice your shooting in heaven  
or hell, or toss back to earth.

Change is a choice where your energy flows.

No computer gods will help this poetic journey.

May you cry out loud on route to fairy-tale creations.

You are the chemist, the mixer girl shifting gears.

Creativity is how the gallery of galaxies cement.

Flash fiction lines cross stars.



**Michael Lee Johnson:** He lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era and 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. Mr. Johnson is published in more than 1098 new publications, and his poems have appeared in 40 countries, he edits, publishes ten poetry sites. Michael Lee Johnson 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. Two hundred seventeen poetry videos are now on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>



## **BRAHMAPUTRA**

She is same like Ganges,

At least that I thought when I saw Brahmaputra river for  
the first time,

Only on her sides those tall chimneys of brick fields were  
missing

And those towering apartments too,

Water is same everywhere,

Waves too,

Boats same,

And same are the people who throng the riverbanks in the  
evenings—



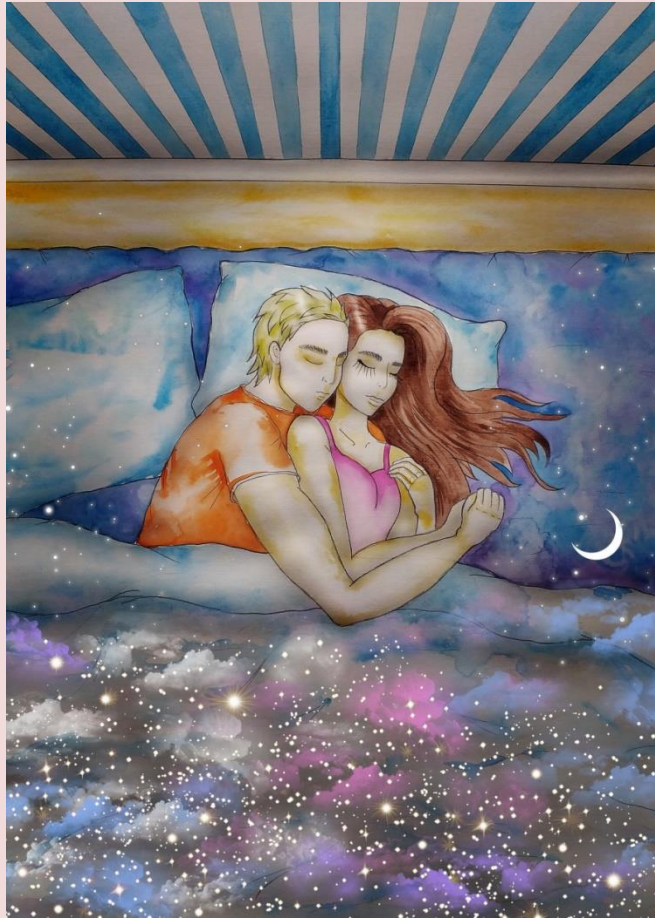
Lovers, college goers, tourists like me, poets, artists, the pious ones, pilgrims, barbers, priests and wanderers;

Brahmaputra,

She appeared to me like the Ganges.



**Moinak Dutta:** I am a poet and novelist, residing at Kolkata. I work as a teacher. I have contributed to various national and international anthologies. I have got two published fictions to my credit. My third fiction will be published soon. I have worked as editor of several anthologies.



On chilly winter nights  
You are the warmth I seek  
Even with the smoky hot  
Cup of coffee  
In my dead cold hands.  
I seek your touch to feel  
Alive again.  
Trust me, the soft comfy quilts



Fail to keep me warm,  
But the sense of knowing  
That you are there, comforts me  
And lets me sleep through the nights.  
The cold winter nights with  
Beautiful summer-dreams  
And love is just that, I know,  
That you'll never let me go  
To be alone  
On a chilly winter night.



**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.



## **I AM TIRED**

Yes, I am tired

I feel like I burn

Life is weird

In this land of no return.

I am tired, I tire

In this deep mire

Shady, muddy, misty

Nasty, thirsty, naughty

Hostile, fragile, sterile

I am tired of Nigeria.

I sink, it appears

My soul fears

My heart forbears

My spirit dares

Nigeria, full of tares.

Blood, awake the morn

Skulls chase the dawn,

Heads run the town

Nigeria is not alive.

See, I tire, I am very tired

I barely can whisper

I rarely can murmur

I seldom can fight

I hardly can fathom,  
Why leaders are vampires.

See, blood dripping  
Fountains of blood  
Day, noon, night  
Oaths, paths, tracks, routes  
Lanes, roads, lawns, and foundations  
Deep stains of overflowing blood.

Hate, incompetence, incompatibility  
Incoherence, imbalance, insanity  
Infidelity, inaccessibility, inaccuracy  
Inactivity, insatiability, insensitivity  
I tire, I am tired, very tired  
Nigeria breaks my heart.

Moody, lonely, bored, bewitched

Nigeria, a gigantic dwarf

A snail-ing marathoner

Nigeria, an iroko pin

Dying, starving, hungering.

I am tired, dumbfounded

So lost, so hopeless, so helpless

So betrayed, so pranked

Nigeria, I mourn thee

I mourn, I weep, I wail

I am tired of praying

I tire to hope

I am tired of believing

I tire to wait,

Nigeria, I am so devastated.

My pen is freezing

My muse is blank

My eyes are dark

Empty and scanty, I stagger

Dejected, rejected, I am shattered

Nigeria, has killed me!





**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.



## **PAST VS PRESENT: CHILDHOOD EDITION**

Those days spent wishing we were grown up  
just so we could wear heels and dabble in makeup

*Now we wish we were young again*

*just so we could feel the joy of knowing no pain*

Those days spent wishing the rain would go away  
just so we could spend more time at play

*Now we wish it would rain all day*

*just so we could feel less guilt about being cooped  
indoors all May*

Those days spent wishing we could come home after a long  
trip

just so we could boast that we had been on a cruise ship

*Now we wish we could go on holiday*

*just so we could be far far away*



**Nivedita Karthik:** She is a graduate in Immunology from the University of Oxford and an accomplished Bharatanatyam (Indian classical dance form) dancer. Her poems have previously appeared in Glomag, Society of Classical Poets, The Ekphrastic Review, The Epoch Times, Eskimo Pie Literary Journal, The Poet (Christmas issue), The Sequoyah Cherokee River Journal, Bamboo Hut, and Visual Verse.



## **NIGHT TIME WISH**

Let me call you one more time

It's dark everywhere,

the moon stealthily creeps by the window,

shushing everything so that it can listen to my heart

and bathes my bedroom with a soothing glow

A few errant stars twinkle knowingly down,

As if furtive calls between lovers is as ancient as them.

Listening to your voice will bring peace to my longing heart

And soothe my tumultuous emotions.

Your calm tone and loving timbre of voice

will soften the furrows on my forehead.

Help me to sleep, and dream of happy times.



**Padmini Rambhatla:** I am a poet, teacher and homemaker residing in Chennai, India. I work as a high school English teacher. I have contributed to Glomag and my children's school magazine. I have not published anything so far but in the near future, I will. I also enjoy painting in different mediums, watching movies and listening to music.



## **LET ME ENDURE MY PAINS**

I'm a butterfly

Allow me to endure my own pains  
wrapped up in contentment and joy.

From caterpillar to butterfly  
evolution is my mission, my sojourn,  
destiny set the path and destination  
to acquire the most endearing semblance  
paint me in stunning colours  
and give wings to explore the sky.

It may be painful, don't snoop  
and make my wings inactive  
The struggle is expected,  
a transition I walk alone.  
No wounds or scars  
in the journey from minion to master  
achieve my aim and endeavour  
flit from flowers to flowers  
to make their life meaningful,  
gift them ecstasy and fulfillment,  
pride of existence, power and pleasure.

Allow me to endure my own pains  
wrapped up in contentment and joy  
while you sit and scribble  
poems in amusement.





**Pankajam:** Pankajam, retired from BHEL as DM/Finance is a bilingual poet and novelist settled at Chennai, India. In addition to several poems, book reviews and articles published in national and international journals, she has twenty two books to her credit, including thirteen books of poems, a translated poetry collection in French and three fictions in English. Three books on literary criticism viz., *Femininity Poetic Endeavours*, *History of Contemporary Indian English Poetry-An Appraisal* and *Socio-Cultural Transition in Modern Indian English Writing & Translation* discuss her works in detail. She has won many awards for poems and short stories including Rock Pebbles National Literary Award 2019.





## XANADU\*

I dream a dream many a times.

A beautiful garden with flowers around.

A lotus floating pond in the midst.

Magnificent fruit laden trees.

Fragrant flowers tempting the bees.

I dream a dream many a times.

The perfume of flowers spreading.

The ground is green as green can be.

Little meadow flowers making a bed.

The apples on the trees scarlet red.

I dream a dream many a times.

In that ethereal garden of mine.

My parents with me all fit and fine.

My husband and my child toddling in her tiny shoe.

This beautiful garden with my loved ones is my Xanadu.

***\*Xanadu—an idealized place of magnificence and beauty***



**Paramita Mukherjee Mullick:** I am a poet residing in Mumbai, India. I am a scientist and educationist. I have contributed to more than 350 Indian and foreign journals. I have six published books. Some of my poems have been translated into 36 languages. I am the Founder President of the Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library Mumbai Chapter.



A world with one season

One food

One race

Same type of villas

One uniform for all men

Another uniform for women

Same type of children

Schools same

Governments alike

Politicians

Scientists

Everyone same.

Imagine everyone walks same

Makes love same way

Cooks only rice

I would run away from this world.



**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)



## **PRELUDE**

In school something in me wrote of Morko Ryanne  
Space Captain whose ship spirals

into a black hole of my parents arguments  
as if it knew something was not right.

In school something in me wrote  
of peeling white paint on worm ridden window sills



of my parents screams as I sat on the stairs  
as if it knew something was not right

The hand that propelled the pen.



**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.





Voices lower,  
Colours fade,  
Jitters die down,  
As we race with each other  
To limit ourselves within our allocated slots  
In virtual spaces.  
We smile and celebrate  
With likes and hearts  
Some true and a few fake,  
And share creamy slices without cutting the cake.  
We derive happiness

And "feel" awesome

Live, breathe and exist on the cloud

Which was once a silly childhood dream.



**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.



## **TRUST**

My trust was breached  
And support mistaken  
Heart strongly throbbed  
But I was wrong  
To unworthy bloke I belonged

Previous time spent together  
That would enliven life  
Was dumped into oblivion

And you walked away  
Strutting with pride.

Reality has dawned on me  
It has taught me well  
How to take the rough with the smooth  
So, no more frail or fragile  
But stronger than ever before.

Remember, time spares none  
The truth will out soon  
Your pride will collapse in agony  
Remorse will sweep you away  
But it will be too late.



**Pragya Sharma:** I am a poet based in Delhi, India. I'm an engineering student. I have contributed to monthly online poetry/prose magazine.



## **MORTUARY**

Sana rose, aptly you have written in your

Profile “I don't want to be just a doctor who writes, but a writer who heals” and you do scribble on the back of prescription slip.

Sana, does poetry heal the soul?

I have been living since last five days inside a matchbox where sticks are conspiring against me for an explosion!

Fans aren't moving,

feathery leaves of trees are dead

Even birds stop chirping  
wherever eyes go, only dead bodies.

I hear the wailing sound of women  
cracking glass bangles,  
They are marching ahead neither to cast vote nor to  
assemble for a mass  
prayer before any temple or church.  
Simply they want to write obituary together.

Sana, may I set fire to all Gods and demons,  
May I crucify poetry, netas and ministers  
May I crucify all those, warmongers?  
What to speak of healing the soul, poetry cannot even heal  
lives!

Sana Rose, poetry is all over,  
two linesmen were electrocuted inside the hospital  
premises while on duty.



I want to dedicate a line

“The light has gone out of my city”

Know not whether it will heal their souls.



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



## **PROMISES TO KEEP**

Wouldn't it be wonderful to die together?!

Yes! Only when we are old!

We brought children into this world,

We must do our duty by them,

Like it or not, their rights, we must respect!

I want to die a suhagan!

And leave me to fend for myself?!

No way!

You are the crowd puller, you reach out, you have support,

Unlike me the loner,

This is what bowled me over!  
You are a people person!  
I am dependent on you, woman!  
And not the other way around,  
This is unfair!  
I will only manage you and our home..  
You be the breadwinner alone,  
No, you have to be prepared for everything,  
Perish the thought!  
Nothing gonna happen to you!  
Have faith in my novenas!  
I bow before the Lord's wish,  
No tears!  
I want my girl to be always smiling,  
Let me go guilt-free,  
I know you will carry on ably...



**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.



## **MARRIAGE**

A divine game of two

Compete to be one

Live for the other

Leave never the other

Even death fails

To separate apart

Compete each other

To conquer the other

In quantity & quality

Of the amount of love

Shower upon each other

One of you fails

Both lose the game.



**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.





<https://medium.com/@skaranji/operation-freedom-struggle-c59c57fd03cc>

## **TRAFFIC ON ROAD**

Speeding vehicles, two wheelers  
and bikes some with horns rule-bound,  
mostly siren less, as if capturing some fort,  
taking some to remote village of rickshaws  
  
pulled by hard workers, carrying some  
heart hardened by money and calculation  
with scant respect for human fellow feelings  
and bargaining not knowing labor of legs;



cars and share autos plying slow  
giving and waiting for passengers,  
mutual give and take in policy and practice.  
Elsewhere mechanical life plundering peace.

In the middle of narrow road, zig zag  
and meandering, bent downward cow,  
unmindful of anger and gesture hurled  
still eating a piece of paper, who knows

some unpublished poem or published  
now torn into pieces, by housewives,  
why cattle and cow should know your  
creativity when belly pinches hard;

life's fulcrum on the move, move,  
city's risk and rig morale, a challenge

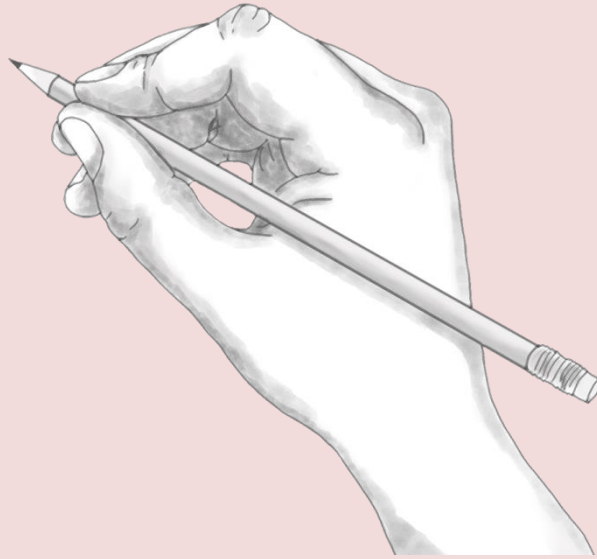
to face despite motors and mindless  
on the heels when you still wait.



**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.

[pearlrade.blogspot.in](http://pearlrade.blogspot.in)

[pearlrade.wordpress.com](http://pearlrade.wordpress.com)



## **WHEN WILL IT END?**

“When will it end?” I ask myself, and not rhetorically.

I am not well. I know this. This must end before I break down.

There’s something that’s not right, somewhere deep within.

The occasional verse tends to die the day it’s written.

For the last nine months I’ve been, no we’ve been, under siege,

I have not written poems. How can I write poems while an unknown, unheard of enemy kills people,

people like me and like you, every day, hour, minute,  
second?

How can I think of throwing a line or two against darkness  
that envelops us when I don't see what good those rays of  
light can do?

It changes, yes, writing changes things.

As I write these lines things around me have not changed.

Things within me have.

So what if I die tomorrow?

So what if there's no tomorrow for me?

The word does not die.

A spark, a seed of light, although enveloped in potent  
darkness,

needs just a gust of wind. Now I know why I must write.

It gives faith.

It gives life.



**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>



## **MASKS ARE FOREVER**

We are the cultivators toiling hard  
In our fields for better yields, but  
Animals come from the wilds often, depriving  
Us from the fruits of our unceasing labour;  
Sometimes, predators too, visit the fields, causing  
Grave injuries to our bodies or killing instantly  
Any hapless soul in brazen and reckless manner;

This is how we are wearing the masks  
In broad daylight to confuse the animals;

As though we are looking at them constantly,  
From the back of our eyes, dark and glaring;  
How long this mask trick will keep them  
Away, nobody can predict ever correctly;

Is wearing the mask so vital to survive  
In this world of ours from creatures horrible?  
Or is it a ploy to dupe others,  
Often gullible to make their lives miserable?  
Running away from reality is a human trait,  
And wearing the mask is most favoured norm!





**Rakesh Chandra:** Mr Rakesh Chandra is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his PhD 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 has also authored two books on Law.



## **SAUNTERER**

Do not feel too much  
That you are not with me.  
You are there  
as much with the woods  
as with me.  
The trees feel your presence  
And tell me to recognise  
In the breeze that blows;  
In the dews that doze lazily

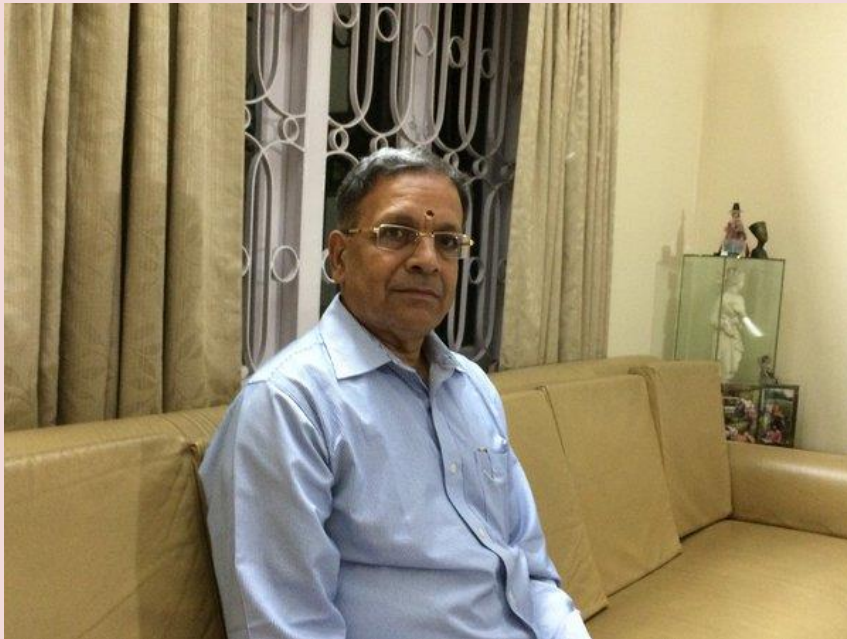
Camouflaged by smoke.

If they can, the leaves would invoke

Your reminiscences hazily in their contours

I walk on unmindful of my weariness

Goaded by your all-pervading presence!



**Ravi Ranganathan:** Ravi Ranganathan is a writer, critic and a poet from Chennai. He is also a retired banker. He has to his credit three books of poems entitled 'Lyrics of Life' and 'Blade of green grass' and 'Of Cloudless Climes'. He revels in writing his thought-provoking short poems called 'Myku'. He writes regularly for several anthologies. His awards include recognition in 'Poiesis award for excellence' of Poiesisonline, Sahitya Gaurav award by Literati Cosmos

Society, Mathura and' Master of creative Impulse 'award by Philosophyque Poetica. He contributes poems for the half-yearly Poetry book Metverse Muse. He writes regularly for the annual anthologies of Guntur Poetry festival and Amaravati Poetic Prism. He is a regular contributor for Glomag and weekly contributor for the webzine 'Literary Vibes'.



## **LIFE**

A page a day

Read

Memorised

Crumpled

Thrown away

The poem stays

Heals into a scar

So little skin

So many poems



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



## **FOR THE POETS OF NORTH BEACH**

shiny smudged fingerprints and angel infused Light  
adorned the Beach Poets,  
clutching shabby black white pages  
destined to rip out this entire BayCity-  
hobbling thru swinging Fresno Street Tavern's Green Doors  
entering salty Chesterfield malt horizons  
hundreds of miles from Kesey Oregon yogurt farms,



these Beat Poets  
persisted in escaping from stagnation,  
like convicts.

and their pyramid protection yielded Lady Day,  
cryin her milky Blue Tears,  
spilling all over Jack London cherrywood whiskey counters.

no, there could be no return to sanity for these Top  
Tobacco wanderers,  
who bravely stared down horrific beatific Dreams,  
who chose to not turn their backs from sounds of climax,  
conflict, irony,  
who continually throttled their hip skepticism  
wherever virgin blank pages spoonfused together.

meanwhile somewhere nearby,  
the Alcatraz Sea lingers along,  
stretching out toward a secluded Chinese Moon Ocean...

and as Kerouac prophesized,  
a crescent wave now swallows half the earth.

still, dauntless yet mindful,  
the Beach Poets kept on spinning,  
unwinding, directionless,  
oblivious and indifferent to wherever they landed,  
either inside or outside moldy brick basement walls,  
or above or below these clotheslined tightrope eternity  
backyards nearby.



**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'; 'Sunflowers, Sutras, Wheatfields and other ArtPoems'), make fire paintings, and play tabla. The body of my writing and paintings can be accessed at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/robertfeldman23/>



## **CLOSED DOOR**

I have closed the door  
To my past and I will  
Never turn back when  
A new door has been  
Opened and love has  
Arrived with one very  
Special lady who has  
Captured my heart!

I searched all over  
For so long that  
I almost gave up  
Till she came along  
To heal my wounds  
To erase the scars  
Making me feel so  
Loved, secured  
And strong!

A prayer answered  
A dream come true  
Dancing under the moon  
On a starry night  
Finally here you are  
To stay with me

Forever after till

The end of time!



**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!



## **ELEMENT OF SURPRISE**

I forget how many pots were cooking  
and reach my arm over the burner to grab the last,  
jumping back with many expletives  
because of this element of surprise,  
holding my arm down between my knees  
as if something sturdy will hold it all together;  
a substantial burn, instantaneously white,  
so that the eyes water with the pain  
which is terrible and lasting,  
even under cold water.





**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*.



## **DROPS OF DEW**

The dewdrop trickled down the stem

To the tip of the leaf,

What it clung fast

Neither wanting to stay,

Not wanting to go,

But gravity's hold

Cannot be denied long.

So it rolls and slides down

Into the pool where it joins  
A million other drops.

The next day, the same cycle  
Begins all over again,  
History repeats itself;  
Yet another drop drains into the  
Limpid pool, creating a hundred ripples.

The circle goes on, and on, and on;  
For that, my friend, is how life works.  
Never stopping, never-ending-  
You must learn to keep up like  
The drops rolling of the leaves, every morning, into the  
pool.



**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.



## **ON SOME DAYS**

There are days like this, spent huddled beneath the blankets

Staring at the ceiling above, with blank eyes

The tick tick of the clock literally banging inside your head

Eyes long since dry of tears

Mind empty of all thoughts

Except that stubborn question,

“Why me?”

There are days like this

When all I see is the darkness hanging upside down like an  
overgrown bat

Brown tresses bunched up in a curly mess

My orange octopus glaring reproachfully at me

And the reflection in the mirror isn't one I can even  
remotely recognize—

“I miss myself”

There are days like this

When the silence itself is loud enough to tear at my  
eardrums

When my fingers are numb in the cold

And words are frozen in my veins

When the pen and diary are listlessly pushed away to an  
unnoticed corner

And I don't even know myself anymore!

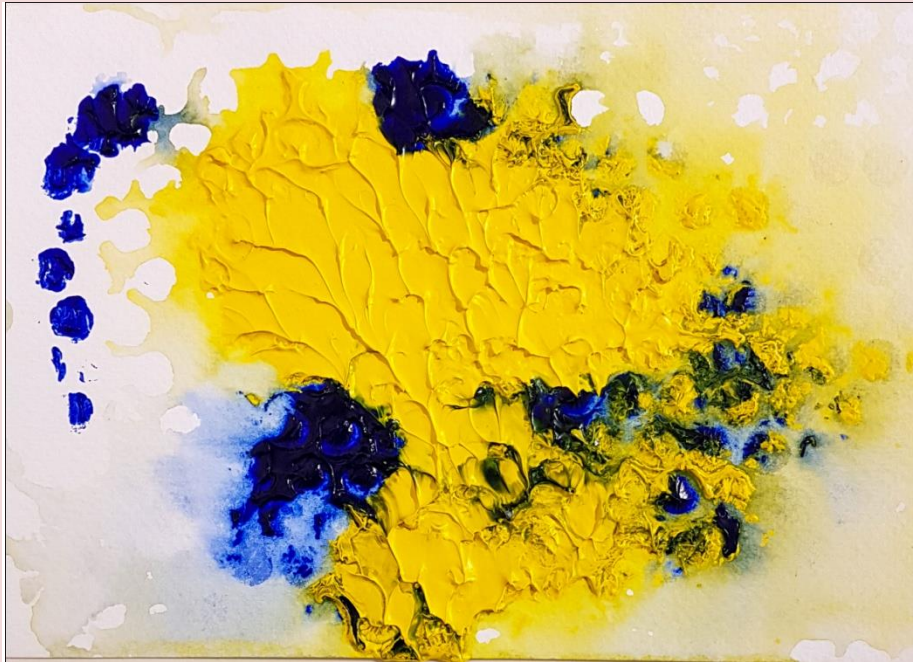
But I know, eventually I shall succumb to a fitful sleep  
Even though the insomniac in me keeps nagging me  
With bitter-sweet wisps of nostalgia  
The silver disk will come with its intoxicating charm  
And with the rotating cogs of time,  
The Golden Halo too shall parade across the Orient  
And I shall awake to a new day, another dawn  
Once more having defied the odds  
And survived through one more day...

Isn't that something to be happy about, ultimately?  
Living through today, for yet another tomorrow - day after  
day after day  
Makes me ponder, tomorrow does have some value in it...  
Perhaps...





**Samrudhi Dash:** I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. Along with contributions to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date five solo poetry anthologies and three novels and conceptualised and edited four anthologies of different genres. I write under the pseudonym “Inara”. My recently published third novel ‘Letters from A Stranger - A Life Changing Map’ has made it to the Amazon Bestseller List.



## **YOU ALLOW**

You allow

time to watch you

you put in herculean effort

to do nothing and get tired

except

let time soak in your being

trying to know you

you are a mere silent spectator

letting time to understand you

you who never had time

now sits idle, do nothing  
just allow time to sit by you  
while you drink  
your morning cup of tea  
it is not your intention to escape  
from life  
or escape from love  
but you want to be yourself  
not lost to love  
not lost to pain.  
you wish to  
just be  
you allow  
time to watch you.



**Sangeeta Gupta:** New Delhi-based Sangeeta Gupta, is a highly acclaimed bilingual poet, author, artist and film maker, and also served as a top bureaucrat, as an IRS officer, and recently retired as a chief commissioner of income tax. She has also worked as an Advisor at Lalit Kala Akademi, National Akademi of Visual Arts. She has 35 solo exhibitions of paintings, 21 published books, 11 documentary films being scripted, shot and directed to her credit. Ten of her poetry collections have been translated into various languages.



## HAZE

In a dystopian daze, masked humanity moves around in a haze,

with the relentless washing of hands, half- crazed.

A woman clad in a *ghagra choli*,

a half-asleep child hanging from her arms

sells masks by the roadside—

designer masks, flamboyant—green, pink,  
red, purple and blue, also pale, like those dreams  
which have lost their rosy tints, with no hint of a  
transfusion.

Regrets and failures knock at my head  
resounding with a cyclic remorse,  
plaguing me with myriad questions.

What has the world come to?

I shrug away the bleak thoughts and look at the woman.

Mask well in place, she looks around hopefully.

Her child is hungry, what if no one buys her masks?

Through the window of my car, I beckon the woman.

There is hope in her eyes, as she hastens towards me.

“Give me twenty masks,” I say,

handing her a hundred-rupee note.

Her eyes brighten, and hands tighten around the note,

as she chooses twenty masks.



I see her lips moving under the mask. Grateful.

Yes, I can read lips; not everything is over yet.

Can you see those full-blooded trees?

*Sshhh*—Do you not hear the robin puffing out its chest  
and singing with full-throated ease?



**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'.





Leaves turn yellow and a golden hue  
Indicating their end is due  
But when they fall and bury themselves  
Life starts once again and flourishes itself

One who is gone continues to inspire  
Through their deeds which we admire  
They sprout life into others once again  
They were people who did their duties simple and plain

The ones who live by principles will always shine  
Even the moment of death is thine  
As they continued to walk on their line  
They became eternal in time



**Sara Bubber:** I am Sara Bubber, holding a postgraduate degree in Human Development and Family Studies. Human beings and my love of stories came together and made me a storyteller! My poetry and storytelling also came together and made me a poetic storyteller! I write the story of my life through a spiritual journey and love spending my time in meditation and hosting webinars in my spiritual organisation too!



## **CAN YOU FEEL MY HEART?**

Can you see my parched lips and the tears in my eyes?

If you cannot you don't know what love is all about!

Love is enduring all pains when your partner cannot feel your emotions in his heart as he has no love left in him at all!

I have gone through hell with your tantrums many a time but kept on loving every inch of you with my innocent heart

I need you every day

I need you every moment

To embrace me close and say you love me as I am insecure without your love

See my sallow cheeks and sunken eyes without any sleep  
thinking of you and the loving ways you had

No news from you for long

My dreams are shattered and hopes died long ago!

Even then I hope against hope and I live in hope one day  
you will feel my love

and return to me with an

Apologetic heart when I will hold you close and weep for  
the lost times with loving kisses all over till you say release  
me I can't breathe and both of us fall into each other's'  
arms!



**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.





## OF TREES AND THE FOREST

Don't chase  
falling leaves  
into screaming traffic

What are you, a child  
(of God or the world)

?

There are surer suns  
and shining signs  
to rest on your head  
as crumbs and crowns

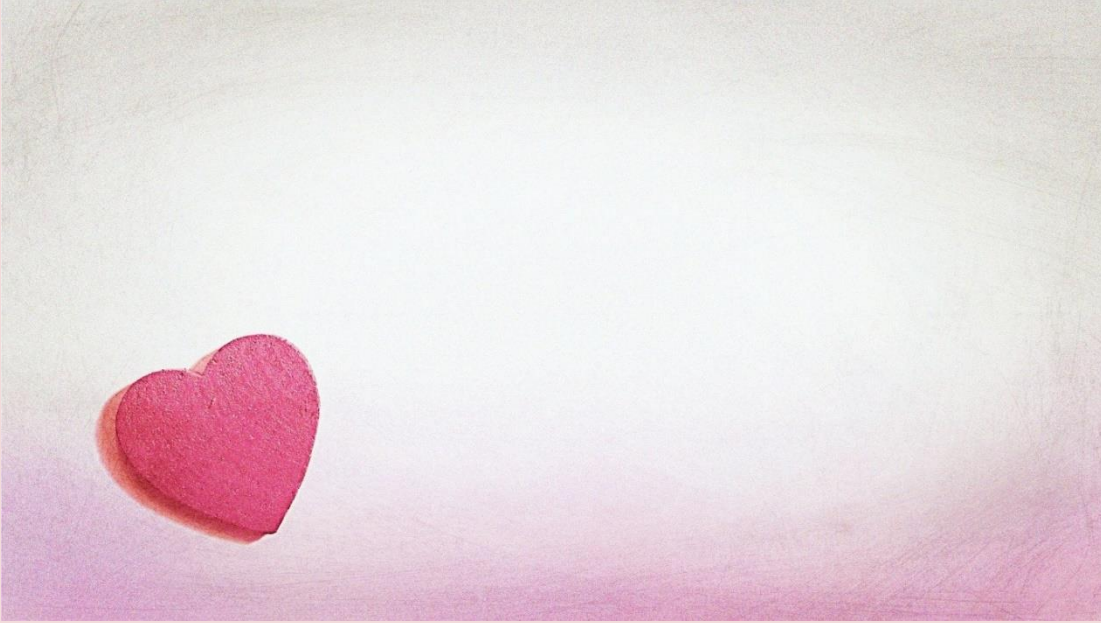
and if a frog had wings  
it wouldn't land on its ass  
every time it jumped

All the wisdom from our fathers  
still drinking from plastic bottles  
while we're walking in the rain





**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, Malayalam, 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).



## **STONY PATH OF LIFE**

Life is full of smiles, fun, laughter and love  
I am dreaming a dream; I am dreaming of love

It is not a path of flowers always we dream of  
I am dreaming a dream; I am dreaming of love

Happiness is a state of mind driven by mind alone  
I am dreaming a dream: I am dreaming of love

Life can be full of smiles if you want it to be,  
I am dreaming a dream; I am dreaming of love

Love as a factor can alter the state of your mind  
I am dreaming a dream; I am dreaming of love

Hate and jealousy can dilute and poison the mind  
I am dreaming a dream: I am dreaming of love

Hope and ambition, Kindness and love are elixirs  
I am dreaming a dream: I am dreaming of love

Love yourself; Love everyone else even more  
Kavi Shankara is dreaming, Dreaming of love.



**Shankar N Kashyap:** I am an artist - author, poet and painter residing in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. I am a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon. I have contributed to various anthologies, both National and International. I have also published 8 books so far including Medicolegal, Historical, Thriller as well as books on Poetry. I was declared “Author of the Year” on consecutive years 2017 and 2018.





## **BECKONING OF SUMMER**

The hues of summer preceding

Good luck and good fortune

Bidding farewell to a chilly winter

Misty eyed and voice shivering

Bountiful nature, flowers abounding

Blossoms, multi-hued with colours splashing

Dappled in a colourful rainbow

A beautiful scenery, in iridescent hues

Summer in all its splendour

Rays of sunlight smattering darkness

Breaking the grip of winter's icy fingers

Beauteousness all pervading

Sunlight shining through

Myriad colours of darkness

In a vast spreading halo

Of light and splendour



**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.





i try to play with words  
but soon the words take over and i am where i began  
the umbilical cord and the song of a mother's  
smile and the sky that expects but never can  
take me in her arms.



**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)



*During the Covid 19 Lockdown, when the sky was the Bluest, the air was the Cleanest and the environment the Calmest—residents from the Animal Kingdom decided to visit some urban surroundings...! One such guest visited my house too—he came in a haste, left in a haste.....and I am wondering about him even today!*

## **THE UNEXPECTED VISITOR**

A Mongoose

visited my house, yesterday!

He darted up the lemon tree, came

down, circled the garden;

Climbed up the stairs,

descended

And before long was gone!

For a few seconds,  
I stood there...  
Unsure and stunned!

Out of the Blue—  
Why this Visitor,  
And why this visit?

For long, I could not  
get an answer, and  
His coming I could not decipher....  
So I let the query be!

Later, in the evening  
I got to thank Him for  
This great and unusual experience...  
Just to hear a soft, slight whisper...

“It was all according to  
My Plan,” said He,  
“Otherwise  
What else could it be!!!!!”



**Sindhu Rana:** She hails from Jalandhar, in Punjab (India). She is a bi-lingual (English and Hindi) poet and writer. Later, she took up teaching as a profession in a convent school. She is multi-faceted and is an actor, an anchor, an announcer on Doordarshan, has been a host for radio shows (80s and 90s ), is a script writer for documentaries, a

voice-over artist, an Art of Living teacher, and a Trainer for Project Pavitra (a training programme for menstrual health and hygiene for adolescent girls). Her deepest passion still remains Reading and Writing.



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

## **SOMETHING I LOOK AT-147**

### **I AM NOT YOUR SUDAMA**

After years

You are here

I accept you

The way you are

Hope you will accept me

The way I am

Neither I can be at your level



Nor you can come down to mine  
I know you are great  
But don't know  
What to do with your greatness.  
I think you have nothing to do with my mediocrity.  
But I enjoy being mediocre  
Surrounded by mediocrities from all sides  
I respect and value my relationship with you  
Hope you also value it the same way  
Let us remain in our respective zones  
Without trespassing into other's domain  
You are neither Krishna  
Nor I am Sudama  
We differ on issues and priorities  
And the values we uphold  
I don't look at the world around  
The way you look at it  
Sorry, my friend!

Let me remain at a distance

Hope you will understand

I am happy as I am

In my small world with small people

Petty wishes and little cravings

No aspiration to touch the sky

Come near and become a part of the elusive zone

Lovingly nurtured and jealously guarded by you

Let me be in my small well

And you in your limitless sky.



**Smruti Ranjan Mohanty:** Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, is from Padmapur, Jagatsingpur, Odisha. He works as Finance Officer in Govt of Odisha. He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer whose write ups are published in newspapers and in more than two hundred national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. He is a featured poet of the PENTASI B World Friendship Poetry and Year of The Poet, U.S.A. His collection of poems and prose are published in his blogs.

Website-[smrutiweb.wordpress.com](http://smrutiweb.wordpress.com)

[smrutitanuja.blogspot.com](http://smrutitanuja.blogspot.com)



## **UNTIL THE SUN'S FIRE DIES**

Until the Sun's fire dies  
and the last star has fallen  
from cold and empty skies

until there is only dark for thee to see  
no more crescent moonlight, no more flaming sunrise  
to reflect in your beautiful Islamic eyes

until the salty oceans no longer churn  
and this planet indigo blue

refuses to turn, refuses to revolve around you

until your seven-letter name

etched in stone and tattooed on flesh and bone

is erased by time, returned to dust

until the last acid rain shower

and its cancerous rust devour

the last molecule of the Eiffel Tower

until the last butterfly and the last flower

dance their last dance together

to the ticking of this world's final hour

until the last soul

sings the last psalm, prays the last prayer,

exhales the last breath, dies the last death

until the last trace of life  
transmutes into a speck of light  
and like some celestial seed golden  
blown away on God's breath  
sows our next genesis, our next resurrection,  
our next reincarnation, our next life together

until then and infinitely beyond all that  
it's you and only you for me perpetually  
I give you and only you all of my love – eternally...



**Stefan Bohdan:** Stefan Bohdan lives in Orlando, Florida USA. He is retired from the architectural/engineering/construction world. He now spends his time writing poems and novels. His English poems have been published in multiple books, anthologies, journals, Ezines and translated into Persian (Farsi), Arabic, Urdu, Nepali, Hindi, Bengali, Estonian, French, Spanish, old Japanese, Dutch, Afrikaans, Turkish, Italian, Malayalam, Assamese, Tamil, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian and Hebrew. He is internationally published and has collaborated with poets, translators and artists from around the world. He is also the founder of Third Eye Butterfly Press.





## **AGE OF DEFIANCE**

We live in an age of defiance; we feel low.

Without love we will be conquered not letting go.

We need to think where we live is a promised land.

Never forgetting the Creator will lift us up from depression  
with his healing hands.



## **SPIRITUAL CONFLICTS**

GOD is good the devil is bad.

If you pick the wrong choice you will feel sad.



## **LIBERTY**

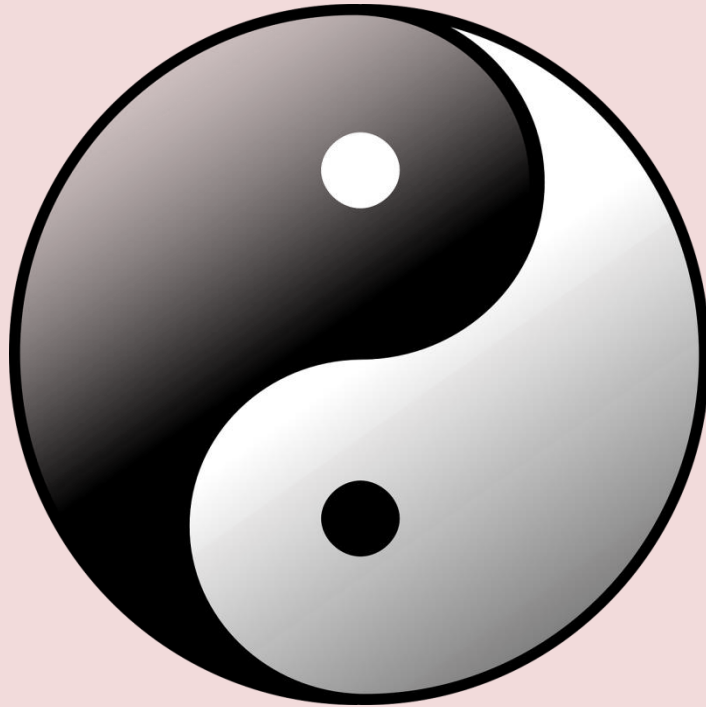
The lady who holds the torch light.

Who encourages women to fight for justice and success all they can be.

The lady is called Liberty.  
She took pioneers and extended a hand.  
To lead them to the promised land.



**Stephen Goetz:** He is a retired government worker in the United States. He has experienced writing successes in his life. His writing is not for fame. It's only for enjoyment to share.



## **LOVE JIHAD - A SATIRE**

Did you say that love the many splendoured feeling  
conquers all?

What rubbish! What gall!

If 'A' is 'A' and 'B' is 'B' how can the twain meet

Adult delinquency can be indiscreet

'A' can bond only with 'A' and let 'B' be

Otherwise we the party 'X' we'll see

The law we gnaw, the ties we saw, knots will come to  
nought let the crows merrily caw

We can't allow the chalk and board to marry so be very  
very wary

None but the same can be tied in holy matrimony

We'll heckle, we'll harass, we'll humiliate in toxic acrimony

Only we have the freedom to dictate

Love we'll investigate love we'll agitate

Consenting adults did you say?

Nay! On their vulnerability we will prey

Did you say that the dish had the temerity to run away with  
the spoon?!

Did you say that the cow jumped over the moon?!

Sue the nursery rhyme for such a humongous crime

Have them arrested a dozen a dime

Jupiter and Saturn in Celestial Great Conjunction?

No Interjection? No Exclamation? No Objection?

How preposterous! It's planetary imposition

Love is selfless and is said to be blind

Then why conversion? Now that's an age old bind

Personal freedom is for us to abuse so excuse

Caste and religion are distinct erected walls, hoodwink you  
cannot we stand tall

Personal Will? Will go for a toss as we the moral police are  
the boss

We are Know-Alls, we know what's best on an agenda we'll  
wrest

We are frustrated and we will continue to frustrate

Let it be known loud and clear

We'll lead the baying pack, we'll steer.





**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.





## **THOSE UNDILUTED BLISS**

My senses trudge along a trail nostalgic  
I am on my way to travel back in time  
and curate an ebullient ecstasy

A sojourn in my teens  
in the blissful company of kin  
to an island of endless horizon  
hugged by sea from all sides  
that offered a vast stretch of sun kissed beach  
and swelling echoes of aquamarine

the mighty waves  
pitied against white sands  
left trailing silhouettes of bubbles  
I vividly reminisce

The rapture of tall coconut trees  
swinging to the ways of wind  
nodding in affirmation  
to the on-going tryst...  
between the shore and the sea  
my gypsy soul  
recounts with predilection and glee

The long expanse above  
with rippling wavy clouds  
too had conceived a secret plan  
sprung a surprise and enthralled core  
by sprinkling celestial splendour

Today... after walking life's long miles  
I sit quietly beside sea's foamy brims  
contemplate going crazy...yet cannot  
do not know whether I fail or nature fails  
in fetching those towering grandeur and undiluted bliss!



**Sujata Dash:** Sujata Dash is a retired banker. She is passionate about poetry and music. Nature remains her first love and she is enamoured by its beauty and subtleties. She is a regular contributor to anthologies published both nationwide and worldwide. Till now, she has one published anthology of poems, 'More Than Mere' to her credit.



## **I LIKE TO TOY**

I like to toy with the words

Which provide ample pleasure,

I like to sing through my verse

That creates melodious tune in my ears.

I like to dance in my poetry

Which gives me merriment totally free.

I like to get intoxicated with her

That I need not have any drugs ever.

I like to get melted like ice

At her embrace,

I like to float like the sponz  
In the colourful canvas.  
I can produce oasis in the desert  
By composing poetry,  
Hence I like to sink in the ocean of words  
Being relaxed and tension free.



**Sujata Paul:** She is a trilingual poetess residing in Tripura. By profession, she is a teacher. She is a Founder of Creative Tripura. She has published three poetry books. She has been published in special anthologies. .She has been conferred Sahitya Academy Award, 2020 by Gujrat Sahitya

Academy in collaboration with the #MotivationalStrips, Literoma Nari Samman Award, 2020, Most Influential Women Award, 2020 by The Spirit Mania, and the Literary Excellence Award by Suryodaya Literary Foundation, 2020.





## **OWN YOUR ROAD**

Wires snaked out  
of ears to phone  
on steering bar  
of autorickshaw  
Head nodded  
imperceptibly,  
rhythmically.  
The shoulders  
in khaki shirt



were straight,

neither narrow

nor broad.

Long colourful sleeves

grew out of khaki uniform

Holding my attention

Yes, a woman drove the auto...

Drive on Woman

Own your road

For both home and beyond

Are laid with mines.

Acknowledge no limits

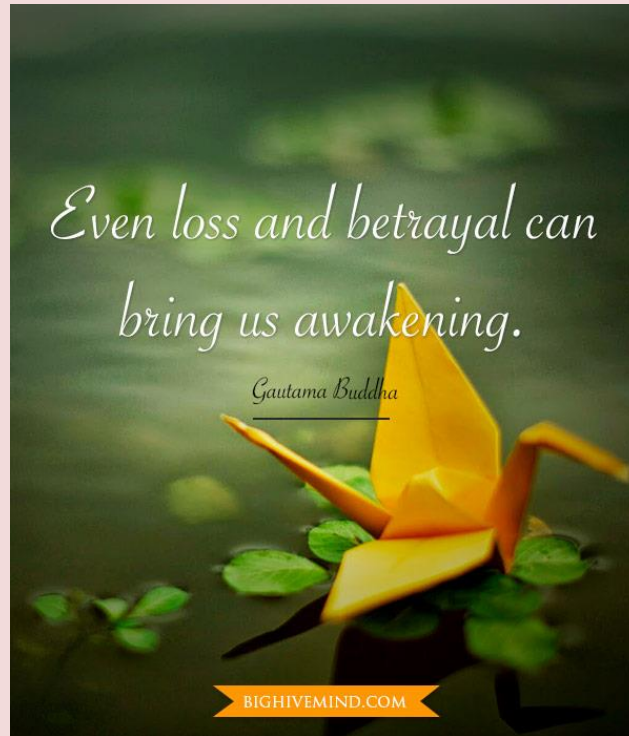
Forge on ahead

Live your Earthly moments

—Your life—your way



**Sumita Dutta Shoam:** I am a poet and author residing in Chennai, India. I work as an editor, designer and publisher. I have contributed to various online and print anthologies. I have also published a novel. My publishing house, Adisakrit, has published a number of both fiction and nonfiction books.



<https://images.app.goo.gl/2SyrV9VAdA9fDKS1A>

### **AFTER I AM NO MORE**

I hope one day after I am no more  
You will remember me when I am gone far away into the  
silent land;  
When you can no more frown at me or hold my hand!

I hope, you will recollect the memories  
Of our lives together,  
Sweet and sour,  
When I am no more  
Gone to the heaven, home of all souls,  
And could see me no more  
Nor could you stare, gaze or frown,  
Like an angry cat in desperate anger,

When I failed to compete or complete  
Or when I refused to obey or acquiesce.

I hope when I am no more  
Will you every day remember  
How I silently shuddered  
When you told me about the fixed deposits in our accounts,  
Or the new houses you have booked  
Or the number of scholars you have enrolled  
Or the trips you have planned for summer  
For I knew I will be there no more  
Either for the trips or for designing the interior.

Yet I hope you will remember  
My advice or request  
When I will be no more,  
Forever gone to the land of happy souls;  
Where there is no summer or winter  
May be then you will understand  
It is never too late to pay heed or pray.

Yet I wish  
You should forgive my mistakes and not grieve,  
Remember that I always wanted  
You to share your sunshine  
To better the world where we live  
Remember I never pushed or pulled, cursed or hated,  
Remember my smile not my tears,  
My songs not my rants,

Then you will feel the true aroma of my love  
When I will be no more,  
Near or far, here or there.



**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.



*I dedicate this poem to all innocents affected by the sick world of adults be it war, abuse of every type, neglect, sickness, poverty of love or food, dysfunctional homes or being homeless altogether. Please love and protect all those you can.*

## **INNOCENCE LOST**

A tender tendril groping for support,  
rising, yet not quite leaving the earth  
carrying images of angels above  
showering blessings as she took birth.

Innocence, trust and wonder In large round eyes  
diamonds beyond any wealth or price

Cooing, gurgling and often crying  
getting all the attention worth trying.

Slowly, very slowly everything changed  
when parents, siblings, friends and folks  
touched with ideas, orders, comments and jokes.

Some hands not good in feel  
others hurt, some downright heel.

Anger, dirty feelings and the shame  
made her feel guilty, full of blame,  
hid herself from the world around  
yet looked for support nowhere to be found

The tender tendril hardening up  
turned to thorny callous stuff.

Those round wondrous eyes now looking down,  
dark, brooding, in denial, she spoke with a frown,



the art of lying slowly poisoned her tongue  
as she started looking more old than young.

Her treasure of innocence had been plundered  
by strangers, even near ones tearing asunder  
the faith and love she was taught to give  
with nobody caring how she would live .

After all she'd heard, felt and been,  
with childhood lost, life became a nightmare  
no child should ever have seen.



**Sunil Kaushal:** I am a poet-writer residing in Pune, India. I am a retired gynecologist now working as a writer having contributed to more than 25 National and International anthologies. I have published my memoirs recently. Besides several other awards over the years, I was awarded the Literoma Women Achiever's Award, 2019. I have received the the Nissim award for 'exquisite prose' from TSL in 2020.



## **AWAKENED!**

Stray dogs bark.

A car honks

horribly—

on a dark street

dead, after a day's long

work.

Solitude

of silence

mercilessly killed

by  
the late-night sounds  
that echo as blasts.

Unnecessary orchestra  
of discord/dissonance  
heard  
every night by the one  
kept wide awake  
by such high-decibel  
noise;

the dishevelled one

like a—  
tossing,  
pacing  
muttering

insomniac,

straight

out of a deep-Dostoevskian

work in an

Indian setting

of the new millennium!



**Sunil Sharma:** Sunil Sharma, a writer-freelance-academic from Mumbai, India, has published 22 books, solo and joint. He edits Setu:

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

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



## **HOW MANY TIMES CAN A MAN TURN HIS HEAD?**

When the truth stares back

Clear as glass

It's time to act

To stand up and speak in a voice -

Unafraid

Even if it's the only one

In the sea of insanity

Let him be the voice of reason



In the winds of prejudice and discrimination

Let him be fair as morning

In the dirge of inhumanity

Let him be the balm of kindness

In the mountain of lies and rusted tongues

Let him be the mirror

Clear and unambiguous

Let him be the voice of those who have none

Let him be the hope

for those who have none

Even if he is the only one!



**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.



## **WHERE THEY MET**

A connector, a corridor

No twists no turns or bends

Joining three families seventeen lives

And overlooking the sheltered stretch

Large windows uncurtained

From where wafted occasional peals of laughter

Or sounds of music

Lives intertwined through

Cooking pots, knitting yarns

Garden blooms and chronicles of distant relatives

Squatted on the mattress

Sunshine on my shoulders

I met bizarre characters

Across star-studded seas and dreamy continents

More real than any daily encounter

Amalgamated lives

Conversations stitched beyond walls and time

In those glorious spring sunshine days

But rust inevitable

Now doors with iron locks

Windows barred

Dust and time...

Seventeen lives scattered

Smiles and sighs

Footfalls and heartbeats

Still haunt

So abounding in life



**Supatra Sen:** Dr. Supatra Sen, Associate Professor is a veteran academician, teaching and researching in the fields of Botany and Environment. Her international books, papers and reviews are chiefly in her professional field. Of late her poetries have been published in Setu, Muse India, Inkspire, Indus Woman Writing, Café Dissensus, Literary Yard, Indian Periodical, Tech-Touch Talk, Glomag, Ode to a Poetess, Bombay Duck, Story Mirror and others. She is also the founder and Chief Editor of an ISSN peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary academic journal ‘Harvest’ since 2016.



*Watercolor painting by Suzette Portes San Jose photo reference from  
Michael T. Bee (thank you)*

### **TRUEST REFLECTION...**

in the depth of the waters  
mirrored all that is, and what is  
when eyes deceive the truest  
and the depth holds the darkest  
the sorrows and fears of pain  
the tears behind the glows  
in every glance, in every smile  
as the heart mourns with the mist



in the gusty winds of the breeze  
the coldness freezes the soul within  
lost in the vastness of emptiness  
when my world is silenced in silence  
deafening my senses into nothingness  
when the giggles and whispers gone  
and left me with trembling lips  
holding me into the depth  
drifting me into the unknown  
binding me in the black waters  
until life will pass me through  
yet reflection remains unruffled  
as the stormy wind blows  
as the ripple grows  
as the water flows



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



## **LIFE IS BETTER TOGETHER**

We are constantly carrying something with us in the journey through life.

- Bags, suitcases and packages
- food and water to the table
- wood to the fireplace

We carry knowledge in our heads

- all kind of experiences are stored in our physical bodies, in our memories and minds.

We bring with us  
all kind of luggage, often unconsciously

Women carry children in their wombs  
Parents carry their offspring night and day  
crying, hungry or sick babies,  
children who are afraid of dark.

Grandparents carry grandchildren  
when parents need a break,  
or work night shifts at a hospital.

There are people who carry dark secrets in their hearts,  
Life can be very hard  
Unbearable burdens  
can lead to indefinable body pain and cognitive  
impairment.

Unfortunately we tend to judge our fellow human beings  
on basis of external factors.

Ignorant and blind to the suffering of others.

We carry dreams in our hearts

dreams of a better world.

We have the power to change the world

if we are willing to work together



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



### **AN UNWRITTEN RULE**

Yet, we search something that separates the vast space  
Into many compartments—as we want a genuine intimacy.  
Then we stop negotiating, as all of us want to undress  
Ourselves for sake of our forefathers or for the posterity.

Like candlesticks, we let ourselves burn to produce light  
Inside our small compartments or to illuminate our home.  
And forget the darkness of land beyond our myopic  
eyesight.

Though, shout to illuminate all corners under the vast  
dome.



Then come the Prophetic thoughts to overrule the minds  
Of the millions and we tune ourselves with the waves of  
sea.

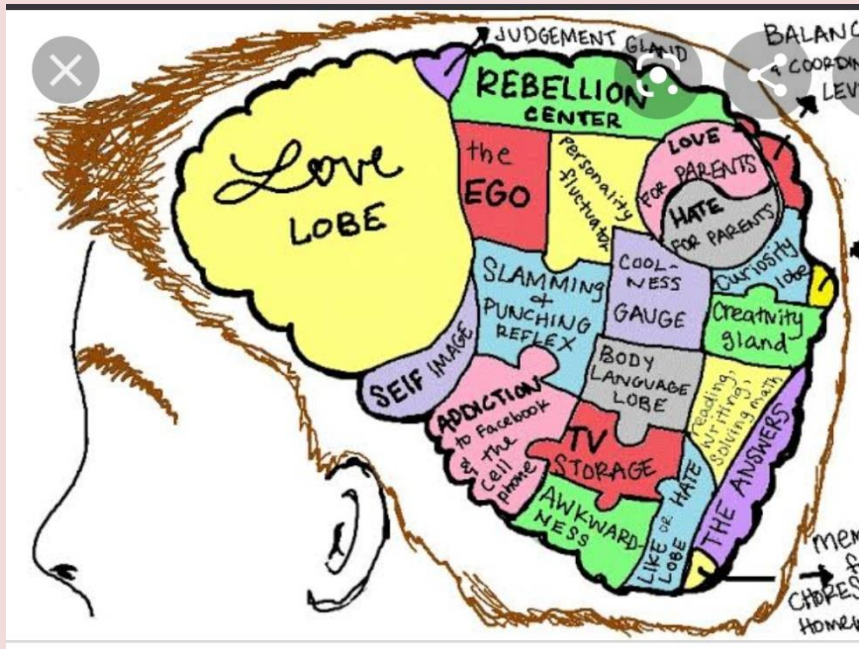
But nobody knows how to make life easiest; so the grinds  
And saw-teeth squeeze everything from life unhesitatingly.

At last, the loneliest compartment allures all with a  
whisper—

That sounds like the loudest sound to each and every ear.



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



## THE MAJESTIC TEENAGE

Moods fluctuate and tears flow,

Tempers shoot, cheeks aglow.

Squabbles abundant and irritability oozing,

Volatile temperament is the thing.

Hyper touchy and hyper sensitivity,

Hotheadedness and moodiness.

Emotions bountiful excitement aplenty,

Inconceivable Capriciousness.

Mercuriality, Save me O'Lord!

Unpredictability and mischief.

Dynamism to die for,

Fixedness beyond belief.

The moods of a teenager,

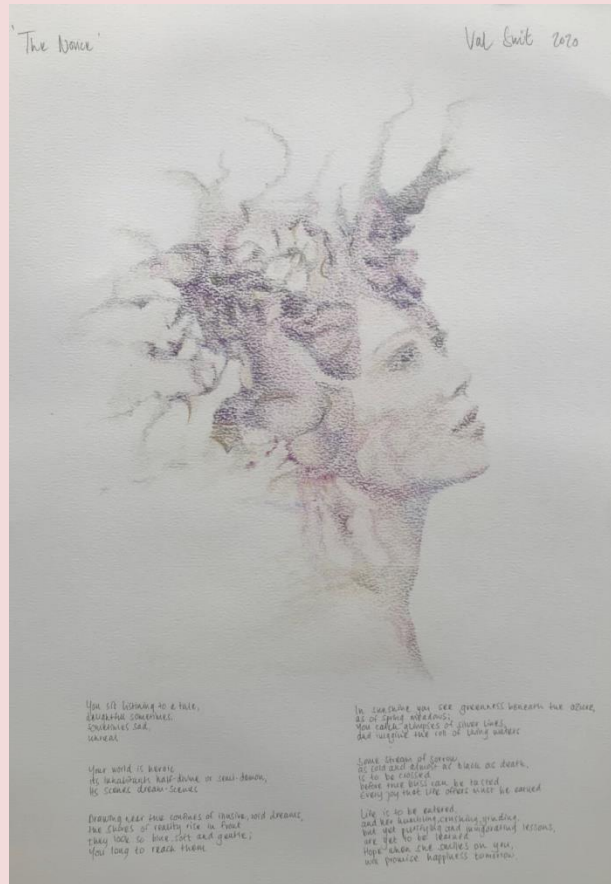
To express a few.

Are enough to make

A mom sigh 'Phew'!



**Uma Agarwal Bajaj:** I am a Company Secretary by qualification and a Homemaker by choice. Born and brought up in Kolkata, I now reside in the land of Kamakhya, Guwahati, Assam. I have contributed to a couple of anthologies and am a new member of the GloMag family.



## THE NOVICE

You sit listening to a tale,  
delightful sometimes,  
sometimes sad,  
unreal

Your world is heroic;  
its inhabitants half-divine or semi-demon;  
Its scenes dream-scenes

Drawing near the confines of illusive, void dreams,  
the shores of reality rise in front  
these shores are yet distant;  
they look so blue, soft and gentle;  
You long to reach them.

In sunshine you see greenness beneath the azure,  
as of spring meadows;  
You catch glimpses of silver lines,  
and imagine the roll of living waters

Some stream of sorrow  
as cold and almost as black as death,  
is to be crossed  
before true bliss can be tasted  
Every joy that life offers must be earned

Life is to be entered,  
and her humbling, crushing, grinding,  
but yet purifying and invigorating lessons,  
are yet to be learned  
Hope when she smiles on you,  
will promise happiness tomorrow



**VaL Smit:** VaL Smit is a South African artist and poet based in Cape Town. She writes ekphrastic poetry per artwork created and uses various media in portraying images that she feels fitting to deliver the message of the words she



pens down. She focuses on the inner turmoil experienced by our disconnectedness from nature and each other. Her work has been published in various online journals including GloMag India, The Chachalaca Review, The West Review, The Raconteur Review, Literary Garland and Valiant Scribe.



## **MIRROR**

Mirror mirror on the wall

What you see me there

I am not that at all

Sometimes simple

Sometimes glamorous

Sometimes misery

Sometimes focused

Sometimes achiever

Sometimes failure

But what you reflect

it is only that time focused

Multiple me

But you catch one side of my stature

Oh, poor you!!

Only a sudden pose or different makeup makes you fool

But people use you

For your truthful behaviour

What you see

You show without any intention.



**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.



## **APORIA**

Oh Sovereign of the skies!  
Please tell me what it takes—  
After having ruled the day  
Across vast azure fields  
Witnessing life and death,  
Empathy and apathy,  
Growth and destruction—  
To step down into oblivion  
Behind crimson curtains  
At the break of dusk

And sleep in conciliation  
With peace.

Oh illustrious blaze!  
Is it your serene calmness  
Or motherly warmth  
That makes the rays  
Of your sun love  
Permeate with determination  
The layers of invisible obstructions  
To spread upon humankind  
The essence of life?

Oh Sovereign of the skies!  
Oh illustrious blaze!  
Please do tell me what it takes.



**Vidya Shankar:** I am a widely published Indian poet, writer, English teacher, a “book” in the Human Library, and an editor with Kavya-Adisakrit (an imprint of Adisakrit Publishing House). The author of two poetry books, *The Flautist of Brindaranyam* (in collaboration with my photographer husband, Shankar Ramakrishnan), and *The Rise of Yogamaya*, I have received several literary awards and recognitions. I find meaning to my life through yoga and mandalas.





## **A PRAYER LOST IN TRANSIT**

Do you remember the wise man  
Of our kite-flying, butterfly-chasing childhood,  
The one with the unkempt beard and matted hair  
  
Who early every morning waddled to the beach  
To praise and worship his rising sun  
On one leg, two legs, sometimes four

Depending on the intensity of his latest  
Hangover? The older girls, in your teens,  
Giggled into their moist palms, whispering about

The legend of the fool in tattered robes  
Sleeping in the forest hermitage  
Hinting at forbidden fruit

You were not ripe enough to see - -  
I recollect that his smile was like sunlight  
Illuminating a beam of dust

And that his mumbled words, struggling to escape  
The bondage of sentences, sounded like  
A prayer lost in transit.



**Vijay Nair:** I retired as an Associate Professor of English and 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. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad.



<https://medium.com/@rohitgurjar009/>

I step out of the hospital  
Dusk has deepened  
The streets have started emptying  
The bakery gives me the bread and butter  
That I will carry back to my mother  
I walk past groups of men  
Some young, some not so young  
Laughing, talking groups  
I become aware  
That I am wary

Watchful

My steps quicken within me

I put on a nonchalant expression and walk past

I wonder about the thought that warns me

That wants me to run if required

I scan the faces of the girls standing on the footpath

Probably waiting for someone or some vehicle

I sense their wariness

The same as in this middle-aged woman

The men some aware, some unaware

Go on with their banter as women pass by.



**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.



He had to leave the concert in the middle of the young boy's performance. He was upset that finding a listener leaving in the middle of the performance the singer would think ill of his art. He wanted to go to him so much. He wanted to tell him that it was a mind-blowing performance and he would love to listen to him sometime again. But another thing also came to his mind, he thought what if the complete concert, the full-fledged Dhrupad was not that good as the beginning was. What if the impression that a part could leave the complete concert couldn't? Sometimes it's better to leave in between when the things are not yet finished. Sometimes the end is not as good as the beginning.



He always thought this for his writing. He always felt that the stories he wrote were good and fluent in the beginning, and they built up nicely, but as it neared the end, he rushed to finish it. It just spoiled the whole thing. He felt if only he could leave his stories unfinished. But people don't think sensible of reading an unfinished story.

But don't we all have only unfinished stories? We all leave it in the middle, in the hope that the next person would do his best to finish it but he also leaves it somewhere in between when the things are only half-done. There's no finishing line in real life. His daughter and wife left him, all of a sudden, when things were not complete. Also, he knew that he too would leave somewhere in the midst of unfinished things.



**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'. I hereby certify that I have read the guidelines, the submission is exclusive and the material is original.



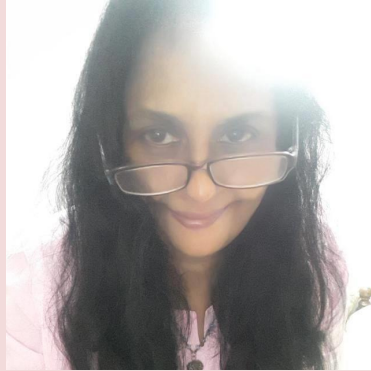
I say the most  
When I say nothing at all  
My silence for you  
Is a punishment  
I inflict despite myself  
Hurt heart, broken vows  
Are all that outlive times  
Remnants of failed communication  
Between two failed souls in love  
Words can heal, words can wound

With words my love

Love can fool around.



**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! 😊**