

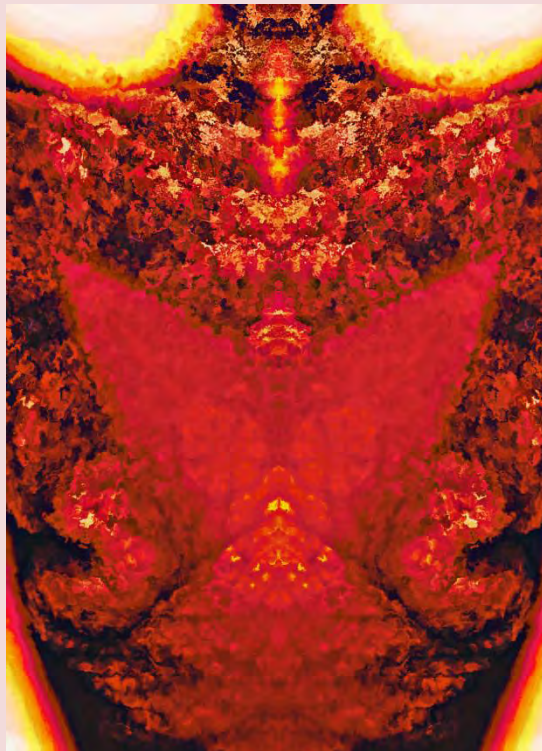
GloMag

GLOMAG

Monthly Online Poetry and Prose

Magazine

May 2019



Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

JAY CHAKRAVARTI



Title of the Cover Pic: Crimson Chiroptera

About The Artist

I have been fond of writing since I was a child, and developed a curiosity for still photography and the motion picture in early childhood and my teenage years respectively.

I started CultureCult Magazine in 2015, three years after securing a Master's degree in English Literature from the University of Calcutta.

The production of this magazine, essentially a labour of love, renewed my interest for design and colours. They had taken a back seat when I became more concerned about understanding the many facets of the art of storytelling.

My debut book of poetry and a selection of monochrome paintings, titled "Cornucopia," was published in 2018.

Website

My personal website is under construction at the moment. Interested people can check out my Instagram profile @jagannath_chakravarti for my artworks and photography.

Art Perspective

I like creating my fictional spaces in writing, but I prefer playing the seeker and finding the frames when it comes to photography. The same applies to my 'misadventures' with colour. I enjoy the accidental aspect of this process the most. My paintings' titles almost always point to my personal idea of the painting or what it represents to me post-creation.

ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag is the coming together of writers in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions, and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the writer gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the writer's intentions, and at the same time, enhance the reading experience. Perhaps you are sitting in solitude beneath a bough, besides a lake, and you turn the pages. The thoughts capture you, time stands still, and you become engrossed, oblivious to anything but these beautiful writings, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

And when you come to, the world is still there, the lake is still there, the birds are chirping, shadows have lengthened. Nothing feels the same! You are not the same! You get up reluctantly. It's time to go home.

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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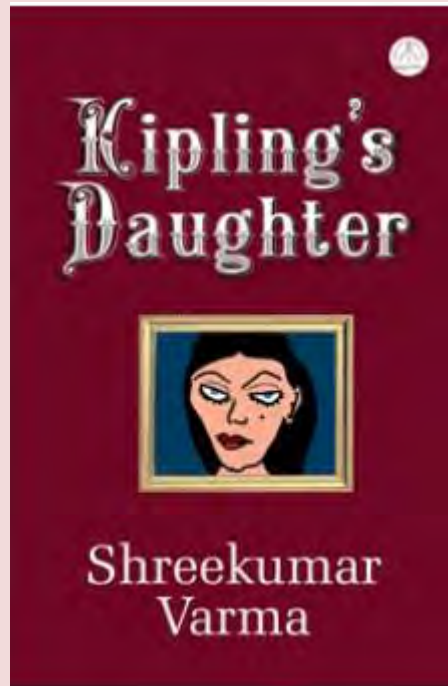
BACKGROUND MUSIC: 'Ishq Wala Love' instrumental from movie, 'Student Of The Year' by The Zephyr.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

KIPLING'S DAUGHTER

Written by Shreekumar Varma

Published by Anglo-Ink



LINK

http://www.angloink.com/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=74

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shreekumar Varma is an author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet, known for the novels *Lament of Mohini* (Penguin, 2000), *Maria's Room* (Harper Collins, 2010), *Devil's Garden: Tales Of Pappudom* (Puffin, 2006),

The Magic Store of Nu-Cham-Vu (Puffin, 2009) and the historical book for children, *Pazhassi Raja: The Royal Rebel* (Macmillan, 1997). He has received the R. K. Narayan Award for Creative Writing.

REVIEW BY GLORY SASIKALA

Most of us—if not all of us—are familiar with Joseph Rudyard Kipling, the writer and poet. I mean, who isn't familiar with 'Jungle Book' and who doesn't have favourite characters there—Mowgli, Baloo, Shere Khan...I mean, come on! And this is the guy who wrote that? Oh my! Then, of course, I know him!

Yes, but did you know that he was born in India, that his parents went back to Britain, but then he came back to India and worked as a journalist here?

And now, here's a side story to that famous man. Don't go searching for it in Wiki though...because sometimes it's best to let sleeping dogs lie...but not before we'd gotten to do some jolly good fact finding. Hey, don't look at me! I had nothing to do with it. It was all this guy, Reuben, in Shreekumar Varma's novel, 'Kipling's Daughter,' who took up residence in his brother Keith's rambling and rather ramshackle cottage, the chaos inside of which is so beautifully described, it appeals a lot to my poetic mind, and so, I'm going to quote it:

"As if the winds had barged in through the windows from east and south, entering to mourn his brother's loss, staying on to gambol and have fun.

As if they'd played tag with each other, tackling and grabbing, gushing in and out of rooms, upsetting curios and throwing down books and shifting furniture, spraying dust like those North Indian fellows sprayed Holi, coating everything in their path, leaving behind a still and desolate house. Like a riotous festival after everyone has left. What remained were visiting birds, squeaking squirrels and unseen rats, their musty-stinking leavings everywhere. Travelling ants, and probably small snakes. So many leaves! A variety of bad smells. Echoes of grunting wood."

Apparently, somethings came with the cottage: a legacy left behind by a gentle and rather intellectual, nerdish professor brother who had rattled away on the rickety old typewriter. It wasn't just things that came with it. Molly, the Girl, who helped clean up, whose sudden, silent appearance leads to a mishap, with Reuben attacking her with the broom. However, despite this rather unconventional first meeting, things work out and they find common ground. It helps that both of them have a rather childlike disposition and the "let's do it" enthusiasm, so necessary for adventure. In fact, that's what takes this Perry and Della pair all the way up to Mumbai just because

they happened to have read some interesting information is a tiny book written by one Fred Royston.

All along the path of this interesting novel, one meets some very interesting characters. There's Chauhan, who goes by his instincts when it comes to hiring someone; there's the tall and serious-looking Jamshed Mehta and his beautiful wife Ruby who live in the lap of luxury and have servants who slip in and out so silently, they could be invisible; there's scapegrace Uncle Walter, who could very well be the Black Sheep of the family; and, of course, the man himself, Lachmandas Bhagnani, 'more perceptive, more focussed and more human' at seventy-eight years of age, and all the more powerful for remaining behind the scenes. And, finally, there's the irrepressible 'Ma Grissom' who will not offer lunch but does have a lot more to offer.

What follows is a roller coaster ride of loops and turns and twists and tunnels, where we run a gambit of emotions from mere curiosity to pure terror as Reuben is kidnapped at one point and held hostage.

Somewhere, betwixt so much happening—and all because of a tiny book—romance blossoms and blooms...and age becomes what it is anyway—just a number.

Back home and to the rambling cottage and the rusty typewriter, things finally fall into place. The truth is nearer

home than they could have imagined. Page 228 sums it all up in what could well be Shree's own philosophy is life too: what will happen will certainly happen.

Another delightful aspect of the book is the ease with which the Anglo-Indian characters slip into the typical lingo without missing a beat.

Curiosity keeps one moving from page to page. Who is...what is...?? Really? Where's this going to end? And, yes, who's Fred Royston and how does he know all that he does? Now, that's a question that might never be answered...

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

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.



Name: Kerala Varma

Occupation: Banking/Finance Consultant

Book, Ebook or Audio, preferred: Book or ebook

Two of my fav books: One Hundred Years Of Solitude, Old Man and the Sea.

Three of my fav movies: Bicycle Thief, Lykke Per, Colette, Wadjda

Two of my fav songs: Aap ke haseen rukh pe aaj naya noor hai, Yeh duniya usiki zamana usika

Fav hobby: Walk, trek, swim

Fav colour: Black

Fav sport: Football, marathon

Fav food: Mediterranean vegetarian

Fav pet: No pets

Fav actor: Shammi Kapoor

Fav actress: Sophia Loren

Life philosophy: Happiness is how we relate to each other and how we're open to new ideas and different viewpoints, and how unbiased we are in our decisions and approaches based on honesty, rational thinking and scientific temper (the essential qualities of a freethinker).

One liner describing you: Simple living, simple thinking

Favorite holiday destination: Sydney

Favorite quote: "Be the change you want."

Birthday: We're born every day.

Sign off message: I'm not what I think I'm; I'm what you think I'm.

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MY MOTHER IS A BUTTERFLY

(A poem for Mother's Day)

My mother is a butterfly

she has never hurts anyone

she loves everyone she meets with;

she doesn't like to judge people

when she smiles at me

she heals all of my life's stragglers

the sun shines until she gets back home

from gardening or sharing kindness

if my mother is ever sick
the air becomes a poison to inhale
the blue skies wear my concern for her
even my tears would pray along with me

because of my mother, I read
my children behaviours and anxieties
I weep my fatigue somewhere else in dark
just to share her smile on my grandchildren

my mother will always holds a
heart filled with lessons and treasures
because of her loyalty and love, I learned
how to create a community of my own home



Ahmad Al-Khatat: He was born in Baghdad. From Iraq, he came to Canada at the age of 10, the same age when he wrote his very first poem back in the year 2000. He also has been published in several press publications and anthologies all over the world. And he currently studies at the Concordia University in Montreal. He recently has published his two chapbooks “The Bleeding Heart Poet” and “Love On The War’s Frontline” with Alien Buddha Press. It is available for sale on Amazon. Most of his new and old poems are also available on his official page Bleeding Heart Poet Copyright on Facebook.



YELLOW MAPLE

The skinny shoulders
of this yellow maple
remind me
not of an angel
or ballerina
like a top
spinning
on one toe
in the chilly wind
but of bones

protruding
from a young poet
just finishing
an exhausting poem.



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



<https://travelfricamaq.com/review-miavana-island-sanctuary-madagascar/>

MADAGASCAR

At the end of the world
is a scrap of Gondawa
- a huge island
slowly drifting through time

Isolation, in the act of creation,
gave a different course of evolution
and it amazed with its richness
of the forms and colors of nature

In the land of lemurs with big,
sad eyes,
life took on unprecedented
and amazing shapes.

Indian Ocean
with clear as crystal waters
affectionately embraces white beaches
with its blue arms

In the underwater treasury,
just below the surface of the water,
it hid wonderful corals
and run of colorful fish

Warm wind
blows carry on tirelessly

From the heart of the land

a sweet aroma of ripe vanilla pods



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



COME ON FANI*

**Fani is the cyclonic storm that devastated coastal districts of Odisha recently*

We know...hopeful a lot...have confidence... strong like solid rock

Nothing will happen... if happens ... delible like a line of chalk

Fani...you will lose the battle...we will emerge again...be victorious..

People of Odisha... very tolerant...very cautious...are judicious...

Indomitable spirit we have...prepared enough...awareness is high....meet any eventuality...

This land where Lord Jagannath resides...no question of desperation...no vulnerability....

Chanting His name...relying on technological know-how...we will overcome...nature's sanctions...

Armed we with...community response...governmental provisions...well wishes of millions...

We will emerge as the Phoenix.... challenges we always accept... we are brave...

Nature's fury...will be subdued...we know... courageous we...don't fear grave...



Alok Kumar Ray: I am a poet residing in district headquarters of Kendrapara in Odisha state of India. I work as a lecturer. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have attended a number of both national and international poetry festivals.



Painting courtesy: Trisha Roy.

EYES

Have you seen the faraway look
of a dying person when they have
given up on cognitive abilities,

in short pretty much everything
making him a unique individual,
eyes giving in first, have you seen?

How the sparkling eyes of the baby

announces its arrival to savour, bear
the joys and the grinds of his own life!

How all it needs is just one look to
know if we are there for the other
in whatever little capacity we can!

How it won't be different for us!

All it will need is one look to tell how
far from each other we could go.



Amanita Sen: Her first book 'Candle in My dream' was published by Writers workshop. Since then her works have been published in numerous anthologies and journals in her own country and abroad. She works as a mental health professional, is married and lives in Kolkata, India.



WHEN WILL YOU LOVE ME?

In poems you said

You would come in a moonlit night

How many full moons

Have gone since then!

In dreams you said

You would call me on a rainy day

How many rainy seasons

Have gone since then!

You told you would come
Once my pains equalled a river
Look into this heart today
Hundreds of the seas blue exist here.



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.



#MORE TO ME - THE HARBRINGER OF LIFE

(Dedicated to Mother's Day, 12th May, 2019)

Mom is just a word, but this one word resonates in my ear for which every woman desires a tag to be associated with. When God created mankind, he chose women as the creators of life. We women are blessed with the power of making a new 'you' within you. We are the nurtures of life.

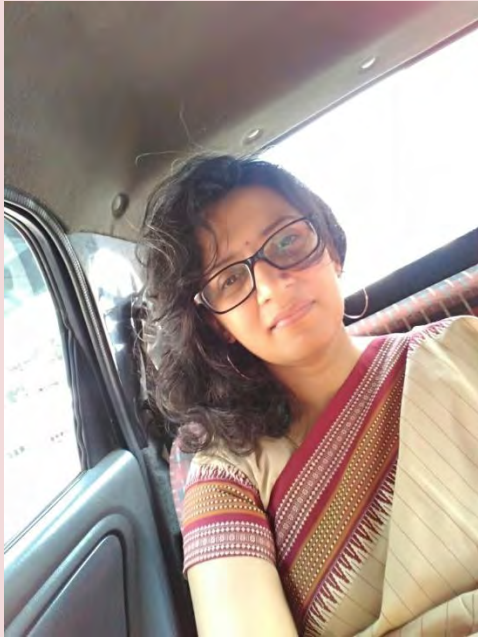
The journey of being a single mother has been the most enchanted one in my life. It created a bundle of joy whom I cherish every day. While God empowered us to be Moms, I'd rather say it's my little munchkin who has made me a 'MOM'. The nourishment it brought in my persona for the past 13 years is impeccable. My potential came into being and soon I discovered the real Me. I felt enriched.

The single motherhood sojourn taught me to introspect within. My mind ran on an 'explore me' track. Soon I landed on a plain of wonderful 'Me discoveries'. Today I am a tall and a passionate person in life. My patience to withstand odds is far more to an incremental boost. The single motherhood factor made me courageous in nature. Challenges melted with optimum solutions. By profession I am a Creative Artist. I architect and design educational study-material for children in schools. My motherhood experience has taken me ahead, leaps and bounds in my professional life. Juggling work-life with mommyhood has been tough, but striking the right balance has been restored.

I am too much of a wanderer at heart. The adrenalin gush inside me compels me, "Let's do more". It has revoked back my travel passion. I love to see different places with my son. Understanding various cultures and their life has been interesting. The mom inside me has also given birth to my writing instincts. I love to express my takes on life via the writing medium. I love my silent voice to reach the masses for some revolutionary change.

To sum up, I'd say the #MoreToMe in me is my being a mom. I feel re-born again. I have reached the zen through this beautiful journey which the Almighty designed for me with my son.

I am proud of being a single Mom to my son. As I raise him each day, I raise the #MoreToMe woman in me each day.



Ami Parekh: I am a poet, writer residing in Mumbai, India. I work as a Creative Head. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have one published poem. I have also been published in the Verse of Silence Magazine, November 2018 issue.



THE THIRD WORLD WAR

A thousand centuries hence—

I trudge the baked desert, crawl for a reviving sip

Shrivelled heart, parched throat

I crouch upon, scoop the tanned dehydrated earth

Stick my nails in, then fingers

Aboriginal deftness clutch

Layers of impacted humus, gravels lick my paws

Now a spade in frantic search.

Little further, a shimmer tantalizes

I draw towards it panting, my tongue ready to lap up

The translucence merges into a mirage

The parched pangs persist

In hollowed expectation—

Acute shortage of potable water once prophesized

Now a stark reality.

An unending weary path queue to a pot of fresh water

People water stressed swarm safer zones.

Water refugees huddle

In camps of water resourceful countries.

War is in the offing, the third world war

War for occupation of land, water basins

Potential with aquifers

Hegemony and power redefined

Oh, for a draught of fresh water!



Amita Ray: She is a retired associate professor of English and Vice Principal of a College in Howrah, West Bengal. She resides in Kolkata and is a published translator as well as a short story writer. An academic of varied interests she has been in the teaching profession for thirty eight years. She takes an active interest in working with the child development unit of an NGO based in Kolkata and is associated with other social organisations at present.



Gwalior, the fort within, Acrylic on Canvas

Space is solace

Stars are your eyes



Amitabh Mitra: He is a Poet/Artist and a Medical Doctor at East London, East Cape, South Africa. He lives in many worlds and narrates his life in hallucinatory stopovers. Words and images tend to amalgamate in many such strange journeys.



THE RAINBOW AND THE KING

(In Memory of S Sarkar)

Now that the King faded and did die

We must build a Rainbow in the Sky,

We must build a Rainbow in the Sky

A Little Forever to remember Him by...

Because first the young King had slaved and bled

To light a Dazzle in cold corporate eyes, use Red

Orange and Yellow, it was always Summer for the King

Even in Winter Woe, he had a certain cognitive zing

A cloud watcher who flew into winding mists at the end

Following Fancy and Fantasy, The King often tended to wend

Through Different Realities, Shape-shifting to an Infinite Mean

Let's light up the Sky-scape in all scintillating shades of Green

Psycho-chromatic, on the King Purple, people tended to depend

Yet The King- always tying up all the corners at every loose end

And let's wash in some displaced Futility in colors blue

Because the King was a Promise that almost came true

Double sided by himself, King regressed to the Before

Afraid of the Imminent, Future lost, closing every door

-----Post Fulfilment Emptiness and Ennui

King reaching for that elusive magic high-----

Cement fingers, feet on the aching earth, Cheek against the warm sky

Never defeated, Never victorious, finally King stormed the Dawn Indigo

And where King went unchallenged, one day we will all have to go...

Now that the King faded and did die

We must build a Rainbow in the Sky,

We must build a Rainbow in the sky

A Little Forever to remember him by...



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.



PEN-ULTIMATE SCENE

The only glass

That John* has

Fell down

Broke

Its handle

Last night

Well...

He's no Hamlet

This; no great matter

When e'en 'is life

Like so many another's

Is a brok-en 'andle

With

No

Cup.

**The Baptist*



Ampat Koshy: He teaches in a college as Assistant Professor in Jazan, Saudi Arabia. He is the author of books like Art of Poetry, Wrighteings: In Media Res, Figs, Allusions

to Simplicity (poetry), and co-author of Wake Up India: Essays for Our Times with Dr Bina Biswas and co-editor of The Significant Anthology with Reena Prasad and Michele Baron etc. He also runs The Significant League and has instituted the Reuel International Prize for Literature. He is a poet and critic and fiction writer of renown in India and abroad plus a Pushcart Prize Poetry Nominee of 2012. His Ph.D was on Samuel Beckett and his thesis was later published as Samuel Beckett's English Poetry: Transcending the Roots of Resistance in Language. He has also co-edited Inlinks and Umbilical Chords.



MOVE UP

It's never too late

To do things straight

Convinced in spirit and will

Scaling mountains acquiring the skill

You're never too old

To change and mould

Step up and test the waters

Help would come from unexpected quarters

Opportunity knocks thus maybe this once
Gliding smoothly through without a sound
Grab the rope with both your hands
Don't let go or miss the chance

Move up and shine
Leave the scums behind
For yours is the soul
That God beholds
For he only helps
Those who help themselves...

M..O..V..E.....U..P.



Anand Abraham Pillay: He is a writer, singer, dancer, artist, and athlete. He is a retired Senior Executive from AAI Mumbai Airport. He loves to cook, loves adventure and loves travelling, and is a naturalist.



BURNING FLAME

Burning flame,
you've reached a great
height

Burning flame,
I invite you to absorb
all my despair, id,
hidden desire,

& cruel ambitions
I wish to surrender all
my black fantasies to a
bold & uncompromising
body

But when
you reach
an incredible height,
I shudder to see you
devouring all passion,
cries & pain
on earth

& from that moment
my love begins to look
threatening
& unfaithful

I've decided to wait
till you
get sublime in human
tears and passion



Aneek Chatterjee: I am a poet, novelist and writer residing in Kolkata, India. I work as a professor of political science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a novel and an anthology. I taught at the University of Virginia, USA, as a Fulbright Visiting fellow.



BE BOLD

Never be made the scapegoat
For the selfish reasons of others
To deceptively promote themselves
Portraying an image of self-righteousness
At the cost of your future.

Political manoeuvring on the chessboard
Climbing the corporate ladder at all costs
Morality and ethics are gone with the wind
Who falls by the wayside is of no concern
The callous heartless behaviours all
For the gluttonous greed of power and position.

Stay true to who you are
Don't allow your reputation
To be raped of its dignity
Stripped of your ethical principles
Stand boldly, blow the whistle
On corruption and abuse of power.

Raise your voice, let the powerful beat
Of your rights echo in the streets
Hailing the courage of men and women
Who stand strong and courageously
Face the demons of greed.
Stand up for your rights
Your silence will not be heard
Take a bold stand against the injustice
Don't allow yourself to be bullied
By manipulative liars with a subliminal mindset.



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.



FULL OF LOVE

Now my heart is rich with love

It may spill on you at any time

You must be ready to receive it

To enjoy its soothing rhyme

You must be ready to dance

And play when it soaks you

It hangs upon your heart and

Mind like drops of morning dew

My heart is rich with love
My mind weaves your image
There are flowers all along the
Path of life with colorful rage

I am feeling heavy and full
I need you by me from now on
There is joy and hope in the air
All my bad memories are gone



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.



FREETOPIA

They called the world my stage
Of dancing lights and colors bright,
The spotlight waiting to be mine.
I was free to embrace its spirit
With only the will and some grit.

I could don any role
And make the stage my world.
Everyone in it would blend,

Everything would fit
Seamlessly into the script.

What fits on this shifting stage
Of dark shadows and brilliant drapes,
Where flashy lights hide the blacks,
Figures lurk in corners ill-lit
And grinning masks wear painted lips.

Where is that story of a "brave new world"
With freedom its title, written in bold?
Caution was not the moral we read
Nor were our roles the old repeats.
Where is that dream? Where indeed?

Freedom is to look over my shoulder
For fear breathes down my ears.
Living is to keep an eye out sharp

Wherever I might be
And with whomever I might meet.

Give us back that promised script
Of fear free women and beastless streets.
Or would you have us wrench our world from your feeble
spines
To set ablaze your stage of lies?
We would then write our very own scripts
Of beastfree men and crimeless streets.



Anju Kishore: I am a poet residing in Chennai, India. I have contributed to various anthologies. My poems have been featured in a Dubai-based magazine and also a theatrical performance in Mumbai. My book of poetry "...and I Stop to Listen" was published in 2018. I am one of the winners of the Great Indian Poetry Award 2018.



TINY VISITOR

Lilliputian visitor from afar.

Featherweight of nature. At

his throat a glowing gorget,

a brilliant fiery jewel. Red as a

burning dwarf star, a hundred

smoldering coals. Peering into

jet black eyes, spellbound by

his je ne sais quoi. In flight a blur,

a watercolor brushstroke, singing

to me with humming wingbeats.

Virtuoso of a mesmerizing mid-air

hover. Every year he graces my
garden with summer visits, and
every spring I toil weeks, planting
beds of flowers for his pleasure.
Row upon row of bright red sage,
lantana, and zinnia adorn my yard.
October comes too soon, and he
leaves without goodbye. Nectar
bottles cleaned and piled to dry,
until next season. I wait anxiously
for his fickle flashing throat to
announce summer once again.



Ann Christine Tabaka: She was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry, has been internationally published, and won poetry awards from numerous publications. She is the author of 9 poetry books. Christine lives in Delaware, USA. She loves gardening and cooking. Chris lives with her husband and two cats. Her most recent credits are: Ethos Literary Journal, North of Oxford, Pomona Valley Review, Page & Spine, West Texas Literary Review, The Hungry Chimera, Sheila-Na-Gig, Synchronized Chaos, Pangolin Review, Foliate Oak Review, Better Than Starbucks!, The Write Launch, The Stray Branch, The McKinley Review, Fourth & Sycamore.*(a complete list of publications is available upon request).



I wish FB would invent,
A separate set of emojis
For us to express what we feel
We really love about your poems

This one touches something
A raw nerve or a long-forgotten guitar string
A melodious passing shower of feelings
That only this verse can bring



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.



TRIBUTE TO NOTRE DAME

Fired by Passion, our lady will rise

A man understanding the art
of seeing,
tracing the spirit of an age,
the ways of mavericks
what were their craze,
features of a king
even in knockers on a door.

We feel filled with wonder
at our ancestor,
they created that timeless masterpiece
a never aging damsel,
ravaging fire was not a measure
of damage and loss
but of the awe it carried
and inspired just by standing tall.

The world is feeling hurt
but France is feeling unequal agony,
it's a near point zero in a country
where all distances are measured,
fall of Dame's spire to the flames
just seared their hearts so deep,
even as the smell of smoke lessens
the Paris skyline seems so broken.

This was the Notre where
coronation of Napoleon and
canonization of Joan of Arc took place,
a special mass celebrated here
at the end of deliberate Nazi craze,
the bell Emanuel was rung
to mark that bloody eleventh September,
This is the lady the French came to meet
when it came to cheer or mourn
where will the country turn to mourn
the loss of the cathedral?

But we are sure our lady will rise
she has spine of steel
and fire of Passion
that kept the world in spirit, awe and inspired
for centuries so eight,
epicenter of our cosmopolitan culture

and beauty so much to mesmerize
together there is a promise
of resurrection,
We will make the timeless damsel rise.



Ashish K Pathak: He is a middle school teacher posted at Dharhara block in Munger district of Bihar province (India). He received a letter of appreciation from the President of India for his poem. He has been conferred WUP gold cross medal for his contribution in the world book 'Complexion based discrimination. He is only one amongst six writers in Asia selected for Marula world anthology in a worldwide hunt.



DESTINY...

What can you do, in your loneliness

She plucked the stars, sleeps beside you

Dreams are broken by the midnight rain,

A luminous neckless

A kite alone in the sky

Time stood still

She whispered

What is our destiny

In the morning

She offered

One by one

Her pride

Confessed being alone

In restless dreams



Asoke Kumar Mitra: I am a poet residing in Kolkata, India. I am a retired journalist. I have contributed to various anthologies published in India and abroad. My poems are translated into Italian, French, Persian, Hebrew, Malay and Mandarin languages.



TO THE RAINDROPS ON GLASS,

In a subtle brushstroke of the creator, just how the mild sunshine complements the rainbow, you were tailor-made for glass. On hot summer evenings, when petrichor fills the earth to its brim, I never fail to notice the droplets on the window. They take me to parched lands, where the dark clouds had finally given some hope to the many rippled foreheads that waited. You slowly engulf the glass, drop by drop, until the greenery outside melts in a distant blur.

On those mornings that ache in the burden of routine, while in the office cab, I see the driver wipe off the romanticism from the road ahead. It reminds me of the name I had scribbled on the glass, slowly succumbing to leaving it foggy in the imprint of my palm. I have seen a few others draw broken hearts since.

You take me back to old family albums, slowly catching a yellowish tinge with age, where happy faces were captured smiling on a breezy afternoon by the shore, unbothered by their rain-soaked belongings. Some of them aren't with us anymore. They only reside in photographs that I have tried sniffing sometimes. Maybe, they still retain the smell of the salty air in them.

I have often woken up, alone, to find you lashing at the panes on cold winter nights. I could sense your determination from the sweeping trees that had finally got the better of the guy's umbrella, made him give up and run back home instead.

Giving up was always the easier option. But as I said, there is a certain beauty in the tiniest of your instances. Be it the raindrops from the clouds or broken waterfalls from my eyes, I have seen both dry up in the mildest of sunshine.



Ayan Chakraborty: I am a writer residing in Bangalore, India. I work as a software engineer. I have contributed as a writer in various online platforms. My work has also been accepted as a part of a soon to be published anthology e-book.



AN ODE TO THE RIVER OF LOVE

(1)

The holy river of Sbisah rises from my soul

And flows down sparkling thru every pore

In the early hours of morning I hear its call

With pure and empty heart to reach its shore

I take in all its divine melodies and soothing roar

(2)

The morning sun-beams dance on the waves

Rising and falling suffused with golden hues

Sitting still there I can think nothing but praise

Upon the inner bliss gained I muse and muse
And magically the whole being is filled with bliss of a sage

(3)

In winter it looks comely like a nautch girl

Long and slender it moves along the bank
With every movement it shines like a pearl

Nothing mystical but free, fair and frank
Myriad small ripples swirling at times look like a hank

(4)

On my mind and soul is etched the pretty face

Stars netted in the waves shine in moon-lit night
So sweet and milky it goes on with all its grace

In the clear azure sky the Moon stands at height
My scrolled soul is thrilled at the heavenly enchanting sight

(5)

With the wind a cloud comes and hides the Moon

Poor Sbisah appears gloomy and miserably sighing
The ripples numberless abruptly stop dancing soon

All divine beauties and melodies appear flying
At the sudden shift of emotions I sit cursing and crying

(6)

Ah! Lovely Sbisah looks pale, wan as if lifeless

Now the heart-warming music no more I hear
And still waters suddenly appear colorless

Oh, God! Grief-stricken all around I can't bear

What has happened to beloved Sbisah, my dear?



B S Tyagi: He comes from India and 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.



WHAT GIFTS WILL HE HAVE?

Good to hear from you, son, at your end of the phone.

Good to hear, son,

That you found a nice party,

Sipped fine wine

Had a nice time,

Met some nice girls.

Did I detect a cheerful tone

In the sound of your voice at the end of the phone?

I remembered back down many a year,

And had a little smile that maybe hid a tear.

I remembered how an old book's Chapter One
Said don't be alone, my fair dear son

Oh yes, me old mate,
Once upon a time,
I'd find a nice party,
I'd sip a fine wine.
I'd meet some nice girls.
I'd have a nice time,
Way back then, son,
Way back when...

Once upon a chapter, I was oh such a lad.
I wandered like a sailor, party to party,
From the ocean tossed, lusting to be had,
Lusty for girls who were lusty and hearty,
Nice girls at concerts, nice girls on trains,
I haunted the streets and the late night scenes,

I hunted for bodies, more than hearts or brains
Or for a nice true friend like a girl of one's dreams.
Like a girl of one's dreams...

A nice girl who might ask:

What gifts will he have?
Will he be a great dad?
Will he nicely behave?
Or will he rant and rave?
Will he be fair or will he cheat on me?
Will his hand be soft or will it beat on me?

Son,
I had a mentor, a preaching man.
But he was a secret ladies man,
So slick with a woman,
Be it a rich or poor woman.

He could win her trust,
He could fool her man,
He could hide his lust
In the back of his van.
Be it daughter of a friend,
Be it wife of a Mayor,
Be it women without end,
Oh he talked so fair.
And he was a nice man,
Yes he was a nice man,
As so many have said

But a lad with rough mentors is a lad cast adrift.
With no wise mentors, what hopes the lad got
In a driftwood sea round the wreck of his ship?
A wise mentor's a rope that can pull him from the rocks

A wise mentor can save such a lad from such rocks

May save him for some nice girl to step up and ask:

What gifts do you have?

Will you be a great dad?

Will you nicely behave?

Or will you rant and rave?

Will you be fair or will you cheat on me?

Will your hand be soft or will it beat on me?



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.



SELFIE

I selfie

To capture my image

Capture with me

My loved ones

My surroundings

The tree, temple, palace and sea

To capture

Who are

With me at the moment

As the moment

Will slip away

In the next moment

It will be past.

The tree will not come back

To me where I reclined

In that moment

For support

Got the shade

Got the cool oxygen

I want to capture

The flower

Whose fragrance and beauty

Enchanted me

I want to capture

The beauty of the birds

Who fly making a 'V' sign under

The clouds so dark

I want to capture with me

The blue waves of the sea

The waves that rise and fall

With my emotions

I want to hold

In my camera

The cool moon

The warm sun

The green grass

The mother earth

Everything I love

Seen and unseen

And wait to see and hold

All the blessings of God.



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



THIS JUST IN

(an ekphrastic dizain based on *Louisiana Zombie Afternoon* by Jenn Zed)

Dateline, Louisiana, 10th April:

After months of zombie hunts and wrangling,
the Morton Salt Girl finally went postal.

In jade silhouette, a pigtail hanging
charmingly free and the left hand dangling
along her skirt's pleats, she grips a pistol.

An ocular sun rises and haloes
her head in black-red ombre. Burning pot
rises from the joint she holds. Her feral
victims, in unseen gore, have all been shot.



Bill Cushing: Bill Cushing plans on spending the next year or so at a rapid rate of speed, wrapping up his time teaching college classes and preparing to devote more time to his son's care as well as his own writing while he awaits the release of his new book *A Former Life*. One of his new directions in writing is focusing on more formal structures, including a recent fascination with ekphrastic poetry. This month's Glomag poem was inspired by Jenn Zed's artwork. Her website is: <https://www.deviantart.com/frogstar-23/>



STORY OF THE NIGHT

The sun slithers beyond the horizon

Dimming the light, night arrives.

In this darkness she raises her head

Robed luridly, her hood she spreads

Brandishing seductive glances,

Swashes to spread her trance.

Veiling her rancor, forges her smiles.

Predicaments, so what, if turn her vile.

Driven by perpetuating plight
Trades her days with the night.
Places willingly her self on pyre
To become the vestige of carnal desire

Of saints in respected raiment
Profoundly proud of their payments.
Their life, veritably, bereft of flavours
Feign to bestow upon her favours.

Curling her soul, in colossal pain,
Consensually ravaged for meager gain.
Yet solely paying the price she is banished.
Prevalent patriarchy leaves him untarnished.



Bilquis Fatima: I am a poet and a writer residing in Ranchi, India. I work as a home maker. I have contributed to various anthologies published in India. I have also published a poetry anthology in June 2018. This year, one of my poems got selected in a poem competition held in India on a national level.



<https://www.natcheztracetravel.com/natchez-trace-tennessee/nashville-franklin-tn/nashville-tennessee/bellemeadeplantation.html>

TENNESSEE WIFE

Tennessee sir

you walk out of the door

If I call you back

will you come back amour

Wife says wait

Tennessee won't look back

he walks and doesn't see her

she cannot hold back her tears

Tomorrow another day
take me home
on the beaten path we tread
life is still Seymour

Green fields, white and red mansion
yours I do want to see
Heavens may be saying yes
Your god and my god say just know him

Thus how's your life like there
plantation owner that man
He drives his car through his fields of gold
and I wave from afar

Here I have the nasty smog
honking vehicles and hekkling folk

tumultuous the mind's cacophony

December so cold

Tennessee man your charm

wears off when the water's so cold

Take me to the mansion you love

and make me wife amour



Brishti Manjima Bandyopadhyay: I am from Delhi and like penning poetry. I am a content writer and editor by profession, a part-time versifier by inclination. Hope you enjoy my poem.



https://www.reddit.com/r/that_Poppy/comments/7jnndm/everybody_dies/

Traitor Terrorist

patriots politicians

common uncommon

poor rich

famous and the unfamous

black white

teacher taught

dogs cats

priest

devotee

father son

mother daughter

grandma grandpa

they all one day die

what is the tag all about

me you him

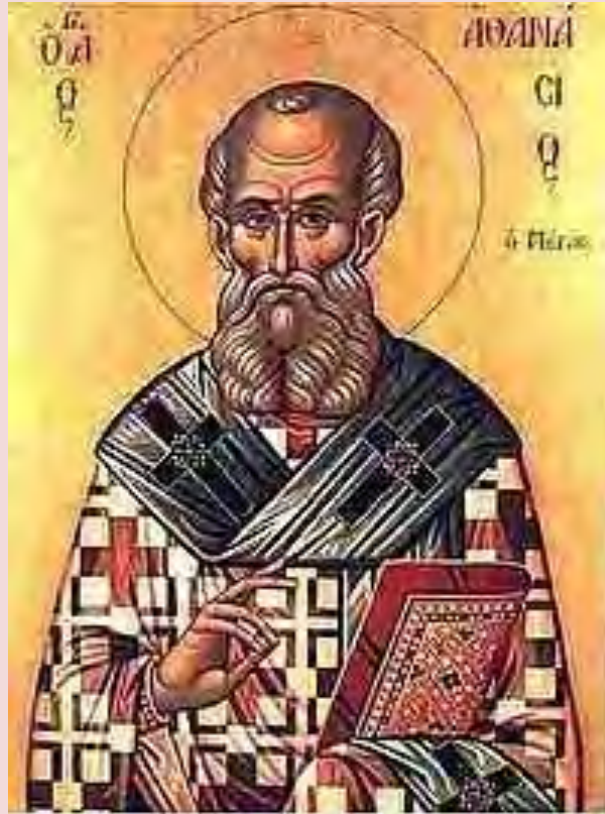
good bad, rich famous honest dishonest

ethical and not moral and immoral

tags all burn one day or lie buried.



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.



ATHANASIUS

Christ is more important than common sense
I'll never betray the eternal Word
Son equal with the Father, no pretence
I'll make at compromise though I'm interred
Far from my home its sea and sunnyed docks
My flock with all its faults and saving graces
An absent bishop cast upon the rocks
Of exile, dependant on strangers faces.

My Lord without beginning made a start
The deathless one bore death that I might live
How can I gouge that truth out of my heart?
How can I grant another perspective?
God became us that we might be like him
So for my sake you need feel no pity
Immortal King, master of seraphim
In your courts is my abiding city.



Christopher Villiers: I am freelance writer in the United Kingdom, with a Master's degree in Theology, who writes about God, Love and the Universe, big things in little poems! You can see more of my poetry on my Facebook page.



THE CROW AND THE CAT

The one was flying and the other walking, when the crow saw a parish garden behind a wall with cabbages and Brussels sprouts, resting on it and telling the cat, who stopped and stared at him:

-What good cabbages are here, don cat.

The cat approached the crow hiding his desire to extend a scratch, saying:

-For with bird bacon.

The raven noticing his purpose, wagged his wings, and flew to the parish garden behind the wall.



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



POEM FOR KATIE, QUEEN OF OHIO #93

There are so many women
that will surround you

when you first go ape-shit
against the patriarchy,

when you remove all
of the monuments of men

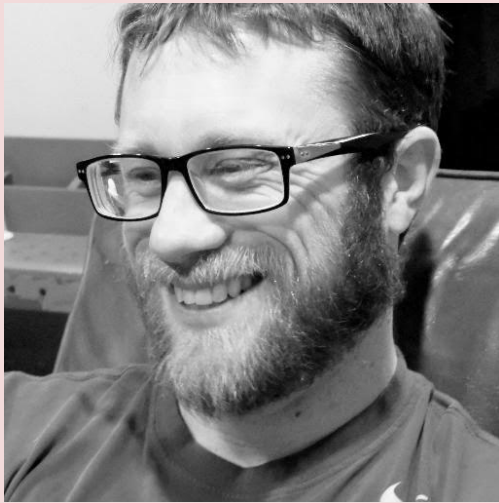
(which is all the monuments)
& these women they will

surround you to thicken you.

Let them close. You will need

their cover if you're to be

the bull's-eye. Save each other.



Darren C. Demaree: I am a poet residing in Columbus, Ohio, United States. I work as librarian. I have contributed to various anthologies. I am the author of ten poetry collections, most recently "Lady, You Shot Me" (December, 2018)



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_colonization_of_the_Americas

BOOMERANG

They make themselves out to be Gods.

Many seek to be one with the 'Gods'.

The land that they stole from us,

Three continents full,

The wealth that they purloined from us,

The power that they acquired with our resources,

Has an ethnic repartee, a genetic boomerang.

We strike at the very heart of who they are.

The colonisers deconstruct and become

Mirages of the other,

Metaphors of Negritude.

Violating the conquered women,

Merging with melanin,

Yet penetrated by the ebony phalluses of the conquered,

The invaders are invaded,

They are transmuted into phantoms of those whom they torment.

Sterile, they despair.

They are inundated and submerged

by an ebony hurricane of conquest.

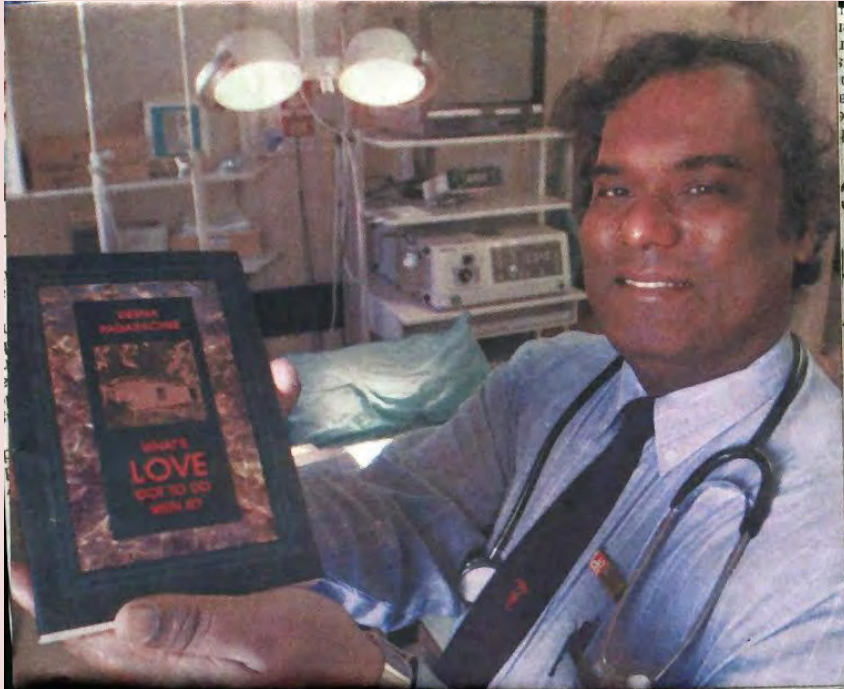
Delicate genes disappear.

The phenotype changes,

Permanently.

Conquering,

They are conquered.



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.



LONELY I TRAVEL, WITHIN ME

When the night is without a story

And the eye without a dream

And a half moon has travelled an entire day
To sleep in the bosom of an unwritten song

I tread on a lonely road

Singing silently

There's a jungle within me

And a roaring sea

I wrap a shadow on my dark

And try to set a ghoul free

I throw some empty shells back
But the sea fails to drench me
I try to clasp moments
But all that the vastness has to offer is sand
I know it's dark and it's time to go home
I walk back
Tracing
Re-tracing
Footsteps
Leading me
To me



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



ONLY ONE MOMENT TO MAKE A CHOICE

One moment

Only one moment it takes

To appreciate the twilight

The riot of colors in the horizon

An eyeful of sky

A prelude to the magical darkness

The way you look at it

And your ways thereafter

Wait for the angels to come

Or embrace the enchantress

Kneel before the candle

Be one with the supreme soul
Or drink from the cup
Of red wine
That the seductress brought
Only one moment it takes
To appreciate the twilight
To make a choice
To be what you want to be



Dipankar Sarkar: Poetry is my passion, but I do not write regularly. Sometimes, words just flow out of nowhere and completely inundate me, force me to live an experience of writing. That's poetry for me. I work as the Chief Content Officer of iDreamCareer.com, India's largest career counselling organisation.



SOMEONE KNOWS MY NAME

(Iemand Ken My Naam)

Chrome Dreams – Each liquid drowning night I continue to descend into startling revelatory chrome dreams where even each step becomes heavier as I continue to search for existential necessary answers to my elected existence which I have had no control of, Yet find myself waking up to begin another new day everyday

where my steps become new imprints in this earthly
confluence
of mankind and nature existing side by side – Both in steady
decline
despite renewed efforts to sustain, preserve, protect,
renew or
regenerate, so I walk the same as the rest, hoping someone
will
know my name or even offer a warm smile to know I exist...

The Taste of Dust – Despite my expected joyful exterior I
blame
myself for my chosen moments of uncontrollable
melancholy
born from social even religious guilt grown from accusatory
sour sermons spoken by appointment mouthpieces who
themselves
transfer their own fears onto willing ears, not realising how
their
fiery words maim, deplete and delete our self-worth
despite the
forgiveness of our earthly sins so instead of peaceful
dreams I
sometimes experience the taste of dust during my nightly
dream
sequence canvass, where my preferred colour palette drips
into
nothingness and once again I pray that someone will know
my name –

Empty Faces – I know I am still here but things have
changed people
have changed this world is changing and I wonder if I will
ever see again
the wonder of mankind even though some are not that kind
– Daily
lives depend on verbal daggers piercing our brittle
existence in this age
of progress where emotions are frowned upon and only
trophies of
wealth will do but who do we trust if acts of goodwill are
dismissed
or when we find ourselves in desperate situations and no
one stretches
out a helping hand? Empty faces show no graces revealing
no stifled
confessions but I hold my head high and soldier on through
this sea of
despair hoping someone will remember my name...



Don Beukes: He is a bilingual South African British writer and the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles' (Creative Talents Unleashed) and 'Icarus Rising - Volume 1' (Alien Buddha Press). His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into Afrikaans, French, Farsi and Albanian. He was nominated for the Pushcart Poetry Prize in 2016 and the Best of the Net in 2017 by Roxana Nastase, editor of Scarlet Leaf Review for his trilogy 'Esorfo Ygolirt/Trilogy of Rose'.

Marcel Herms: He is a self-taught artist. His work is about freedom in the first place. There's a strong link with music. He draws, he paints, he makes 3-dimensional objects and artist books (and audio art). His work was printed in many (inter-)national publications and he designed a lot of record- and book covers. He collaborated with many different, authors, poets, visual artists and audio artists from around the world.



<https://ar.pinterest.com/pin/349803096043320914/?lp=true>

(the sun :) yellow gilt

flounders in mud and milk

(: the earth); in which

(the moon :) silver fish

spawns a skyful of stars

like caviar



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.



<https://www.shutterstock.com/fr/video/clip-17261965-4k-lonely-woman-melancholy-sitting-empty-room>

WITH THE SIREN

She still cannot believe it.

that the world available to her now

—is an open window and emptiness.

She bares her experiences

to herself.

The neighbor is not very interested

in her fate,

a bystander will not see

imprisoned on the sixth floor

solitude.

Known and unknown,

now it is like the air.

Only when they arrive for her with the siren,

whispers are heard through the leaky door:

—She's still alive. She's so fatigued.

It is a pity that when she needed bread,

no one heard her hunger.



Eliza Segiet: She graduated with a Master's Degree in Philosophy, completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy, Arts and Literature at Jagiellonian University. International Publication of the Year (2017) in Spillwords Press. International Publication of the Year (2018) in Spillwords Press. Author's works can be found in anthologies and literary magazines worldwide.



<http://weekenddestinations.info/2011/daytrips/diamond-harbour-%E2%80%9350-kms-from-kolkata/>

Prolonged midnight,
Boozes of weird colours,
Asking your company
for my sweetest melody
Forget my fellow friends,
all out stress of work
Keep beating hard
Rock you Rock you everyone.



Gagan Kundu: I am a poet and writer - Cum singer. I am a citizen of Kolkata, India. My profession is school teaching. I've published my book in June 2017 and my English songs album in February, 2009.



I want the meadows to rise
And hug the mountains
Wouldn't it be a treat to the eyes
When they rub some green
Into the blue skies

The snow peaks
Will melt into the greens
And the fluid meadows will flow down the mountains

What colour will the landscape then be?

Something new?

Other than blue?

Something unseen?

With a new sheen?

Something unknown?

Cutting us to the bone?



Gauri Dixit: A software professional from Pune (India), Gauri writes English poetry. Her poems have been featured in multiple Indian and international anthologies. She recently won the 'Reuel International Prize for the Most Promising Poet - 2018'. Her first poetry book 'In my skin, I find freedom' was recently released. She loves reading, photography and traveling.



ONE PICTURE MANY STORIES

Look not at their stature

But at their smiles

They adore life in their own styles

Their lovely smiles spread

A mesmerizing appeal

There shines a joy

No poverty can ever steal

They wear smiles that have no price tags

Childhood shines like gold

Even in rags!!



Gayatree G. Lahon: Gayatree is a poet and teacher from Assam. An ardent lover of nature and beauty all around, an observer of life with all its beauty and complexities, she tries to express everything through her pen. For her Poetry is a celebration of life in all shades. Her poems have been published in newspapers, magazines and many anthologies, both national and international.



Why frame pictures?

On the other hand

We need to give away most

They occupy space

Besides who would want them after us?

They are already faded

So many years of hanging

On a single nail

Rusty now.



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.



WELCOME TO DEAD MALLS

It hovers over empty spaces and endless corridors,
Like metaphors seeking gaps in poetry, or eternity in lores,
Not fitting in, trying hard to give visual highs,
Gasping for breath, in clean cubicles, across counters, in
sighs,

Where life has no chance to sustain or thrive,
It wanders solitary, talking in monologues in abandoned
drives,
Screaming in superlatives that neon signs flash,

A river of guilt aching to quench, wet and splash,

Drifting feet less this ghost, in nooks spawned by mould
and mite,

There it hangs from the ceiling, a torn and lonely kite,

Luring the heart this temptress strikes when the time is
right,

You know you've lost the battle resisting it, but with your
shadows you fight,

Where money cannot buy happiness, health or peace,

Caught and tugged by minimalism, a fad now, a disease,

It hisses down the neck of pillars and walls,

Where the air stifles, and where an eerie wisp crawls,

All made up, redundancy an abandoned bride, in a dead
mall,

Where a few big names pose as faceless mannequins
standing inert and tall,

It spreads like an epidemic that has no cure,

In a consumerism wants surpass needs for sure,

Selling its identity, its surface, as voices bid « going, going,
gone

As plastic money offered itself as a pathetic pawn,

Breeding spores on empty racks that gather dust,

Lurking behind closed doors whose locks are jammed with
rust,

Inviting the dead, lost, compulsive and defeated,

Shutters pulled down, as shopaholics rerun sullen, empty
handed and cheated!



Geethanjali Dilip: I am a poet residing in Salem, India. I work as French Teacher. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published two poetry anthologies. I am the recipient of the Reuel International Poetry Award 2017.



WHERE AM I?

So I got the first metro to Dum Dum and took a cab from there to airport. All the way, the driver and I argued.

“Kahaan jaana hai didi? Airport?” (Where do you want to go? Airport?)

“Airport ke paas. Quarters hain na.” (Near the airport. To the quarters there).

“Arrey didi! Koi quarters waters nahin hain, sirf airport hain.” (Arrey, there are no quarters there – just the airport, that’s all.)

“Aap jaayiye, mein raastha bathaoongi.” (You please go. I will tell you the way.)

“Theek hain didi.” (Okay didi)

“Yeh ek number gate hain.” (This is gate number one.)

“Haan didi.” (Yes didi)

“Tho aap do number gate ke paas kyon jaa rahen hain?” (So why are you going to Gate number two?)

“Tho airport jaoon pakka? Wahan koi quarters nahin hain.” (So you want me to go to the airport? There are no quarters there)

“Aap jayiye.” (You please go.)

So finally, we reached 'airport'.

“Arrey yeh kya hain. Mera ghar kahan gaya?” (Arrey, what’s this? Where’s my house)

“Meine bathaya na didi. Yahan aap ka ghar nahin hain.” (I told you na didi. Your house is not here.)

So I got down and forgot to take my bag, which contained my water and umbrella and hanky. The taxi left.

I found a young man walking and asked him where the airport quarters were. I told him I had come back from the dead and couldn't find my house. He laughed and led me to new quarters. Chalo kuch tho mila. I thanked him and was deeply touched because he had actually gone out of his way to help me.

A man got down from his bike, "Atho gorom aache. Chatha nei aapnar kaache?" (It's so hot. You don't have an umbrella?)

"Taxi the chede diyechi dada". (I left it in the taxi dada.)

He left. Thankfully, new quarters remains almost intact. From there, I went to the grave yard nearby. No one has disturbed my father's grave. I felt the familiar peace descend on me. So many days I used to come here to spend time, to sit and study.

From there, I took a cab back to Dum Dum, and the previous cab driver came running "Didi, aap bag chod ke chale gaye! Dekh lijiye sab hain ke nahin..." (Didi, you left your bag! Please check it see if everything is there.)



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet and writer currently residing in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India. She is the Editor and Publisher of the Monthly Online Prose and Poetry magazine, 'GloMag' and is the administrator of the group of the same name on Facebook.



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Forgotten Love \(3283151802\).j](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Forgotten_Love_(3283151802).jpg)

[pq](#)

OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND

Where have your eyes wandered

What have they seen on the journey

Through the visual images of your senses

Have you seen me standing

on the periphery of your vision

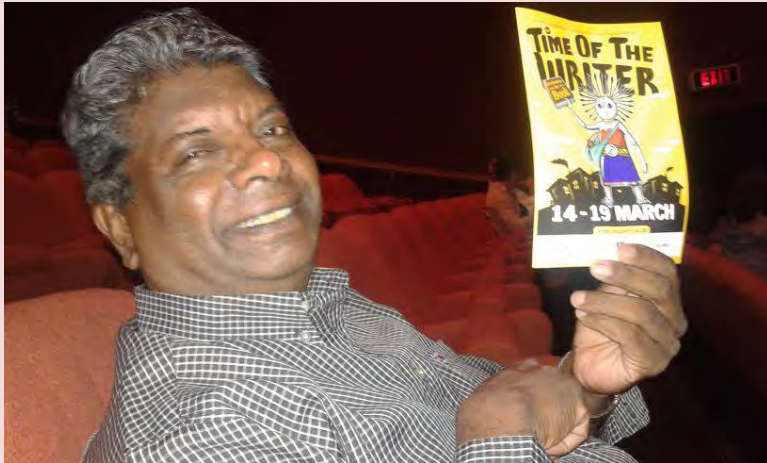
waiting, waiting

could you see through the hazy mist
a shadow a silhouette
of a forlorn figure
have your eyes remembered
and told your heart
that I am waiting, waiting
or did you pretend to be blinded
by the glare mesmerizing your thoughts

once I was part of the dreams
in your vision
you were the music in my soul
the words in my song
now I am lost in the distance
beyond the sight of your horizon
reflections are splintered
like tiny shards of glass
a place of broken promises

exiled to dwell

alone with my dreams



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



ELEVATION

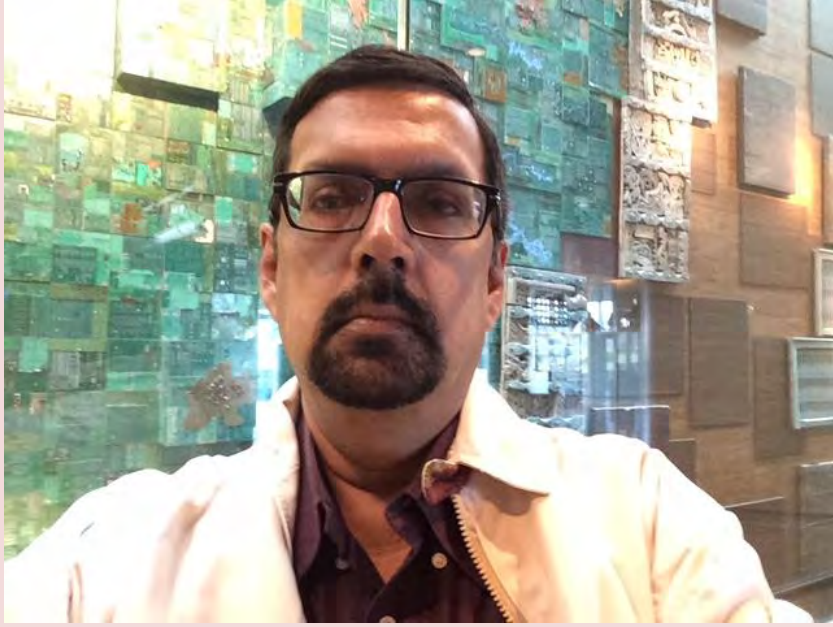
Now come the moments one after the other
And the old words rising out of the earth
A spectrum of wonders,
Time is on your side,
the clocks have wound forward.

Early morning stroll in the haze as day dawns
Sunrise casts light over the water silhouetting clouds,
There is an air of stillness inching across the river,

You stand proudly beneath a misty sunrise
In a luminous meditation on divine love and grief.

Your face gleams as the sun slowly emits colours,
Your eyes peak through the blurred leaves,
putting together everything, assembling life-
People may not notice, but that doesn't matter.
You are very much there - elevated.

Air is drunk, you want to store in the brain cell,
A tale of humanity - For its revival!
There is a neatness, a low conversation-
More than whisper in the current ripples,
You look for more and some more.



Gopal Lahiri: I am a bilingual poet, writer, critic and translator residing in Kolkata. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published nine volumes of poetry in English and seven volumes in Bengali. I have also jointly edited one anthology of poems in English and also have one translation work of short stories of Israel, translated by me from English to Bengali. I have guest-edited the poetry section of 'Setu' journal for the January, 2019 issue.



<https://www.trivalleylifechurch.org/2014/05/05/a-blind-man-with-a-lamp/>

BLIND FLAME

“This will help you.”

“What?”

“Lit lamp.”

“Oh, what use is it to me? I am blind and darkness is my companion. This lamp won't light it up.”

“But it will help others to not dash into you and hit you on your way home in the darkness at this late hour of the night.”

“Thank you. That's a fine idea.”

“Go home. Hold it in your one hand and your white cane in the other.”

I started walking back home late at night after the wedding party. The time spent there with friends was more sumptuous than the food served. I have enjoyed the warmth of human tenderness in these relationships in my mind's eye. The full definition of sympathy was showered upon me like the first drops of summer rains.

And this lit lamp in my hand now is the last show of my friend's sympathy.

The thoughts rewinding were blocked by an abrupt, sudden knock by someone on my right side. It seemed a man had collided with me. I heard his frowning apologies.

“Sorry Sir.”

“Why Sir, can't you just notice my lamp burning?”

“Eh, what?”

“It's darkness I know, and I am blind, I couldn't see. But this lamp is for you to see me coming.”

“Oh Sir, your flame has gone out; I mean, it's not burning now. It might have gone off long before. That's why I didn't see you!!”

“Oh! Sorry Sir, then it's my mistake. I presumed the flame is on, and still burning. Now it's blind flame.”

“It’s Okay. Go on with what you have.”

And I go on with my blind flame...



Haneefa C.A.: I would like to be a poet. I work as an English Teacher (HSST) Government Higher Secondary School, Kattilangadi, Tanur, Malappuram, Kerala, India. I have not published my poems till the date, but post them in my FB account.



https://www.virginiasriverrealm.com/ajde_events/unity-world-festival-2/unity-in-diversity-kids/

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

For peace and co-existence,
Most important for humans-
Unity in Diversity.

The concept, message,
Is in built, embedded,
In nature.

Flora and fauna,
have co-existed,
Since time immemorial.

In humans,
Five fingers are not the same.
But without unity,
In spite of diversity,
You cannot hold, grasp.
That's nature.

Hope we take lessons,
From nature----
In spite of diversities,
Learn to co-exist,
And live in harmony, peace.



Jagadish Prasad: I am a 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).



COATS

I've never seen my mom's doctor uncle
who wore the coats hanging
in his wife's wardrobe.

They were of the eclectic colors
that gentlemen were fond of
-- tan grey silver black,
each of them bought on separate trips to England.
Next to the wardrobe was a wooden dresser too,
with drawers crammed with his medical books,
all remnants of his life as a student in London.

My grandma kept pink jars of cold cream
atop the dresser, along with
a vintage lemon-yellow powder box
that was filled with lavender talc.

She generously let me use the cosmetics
but never allowed me to touch the coats.

Grandma lived for thirty years in a world
without her husband.

Now that she is gone, I still think
about the coats.



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



BEING POSITIVE

Positivity is something we need

To fulfill all our deed

Positivity remains and prevails

For the lifelong process to rail

Positivity can be nurtured

To stay focused and prepared

Positivity helps us deal

With all the facts that conceal

Positivity promotes Happiness

Helping to shoo away all sadness

Positivity envisions luck
For scoring from zero to duck
Positivity makes things enjoyable
Mending our ways and making us able
Positivity flows hither and thither
We just need to be a little chimer
Positivity is something we need
To fulfill all our deed



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



THROUGH THE DEVILS LIES

I've always known how to fight
with both hands
eyes full of sand
through the Devils lies.

I've fought hard with my might
I was jaded
I was fading
through my screams and cries.

It always seems
like my heart is heavy

as my mind forgets to dream
my eyes are sour, hurting badly
my rage my sentence
will always be.

I've put up a fight
taken my beatings
I always do
because of you.

Serpents leaving their scars
the fangs hurt
pain and the curse
piercing me right through.

It always seems
like my heart is heavy
as my mind forgets to dream

my eyes are sour, hurting badly
my rage my sentence
will always be.

I've always known how to fight
with both hands
eyes full of sand
through the Devils lies.

My rage my sentence
will always be.



Jeffrey Oliver: I am a poet/lyricist, currently living in upstate New York. I have been writing for 20 years, I write my heart, soul and emotions and will never give up on this crazy dream of mine. I have been told that I have a captivating style when my work is registered in the minds of many. I am also a family man, I have a wonderful wife, who is my inspiration, as well as 7 beautiful children. Welcome to my mind.



UNWANTED DROPS

My warm heart freezes from cold raindrops

unwanted thoughts calling my name

cheeks taste salty from teardrops

mere drops of existence

who I used to be

dear God help me

or I might

just drop

dead



Jennifer Carr: She is a poet residing in Santa Fe, United States. For the last two years, she has worked as an EMT and Fire fighter. Her poems have gotten published in more than 10 anthologies. Her Haiku has been published in print and in online publications throughout the world. She flies by her own wings and looks for any opportunity to soar to new heights.



PROCLAMATION

I love you and I'll

shout it from rooftops.

Chisel giant hearts

through Mount Everest.

Take out an entire edition

of the New York Times.

You love me and you'll

preempt the president.

Send our rocket to Venus.

Fly fluorescent banners
over the United Nations.

Let's write our names
on this perfect sky
so even heaven knows
we are in love.



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



There is trouble in the groin and as I haven't yet
left my seat to find it out
the scruples in my characters are more, more and more.

Victory, seen as Oh, and plantigrade.

Poetry shakes off the bones, as other loco
motions for the rest of self-evolved editorials.

This is too good, I hear myself say when it is exceptional,
as in the best, but no.

has that sphere split the horizon? Lorn of must,
us, I or whatever else appearing as the Moon.

Starring --- The Moon!

Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

A torch will have its end when it goes out only
but there are others.

The bell of the ball has one -- "Reach out!"

Why do I tell you from the sitting zoo?

What have you told yourself?

Have I?



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



WATER...WATER...

Those gleaming, silvery crystals set
the heart aflutter, tongue yearning
for a drop to whet its taste buds.

They hold our breath on a leash, in fact.

In autumn fallen leaves look dismal,
starched and are to be blown away.

Spring glides in with a caressing wing
To spray fresh seeds, keep us in thrall.

As April sets tongue into a spin
evanescent crystals keep it moist.
Seasons too pass into the void but
Life beats in a murmuring glen.

It's beside a copious, swirling river
does a humane culture vibrate.
On its fecund bosom a mélange
of green cradles a protective cover.

If asphalt invades every nook and alley
evil breath scorching out all green
to the call of money, power and what not,
the plaintive cry is of the waterless lily.

Those crystals are the rubric of soul.
If they are lost it's too late to cry foul.

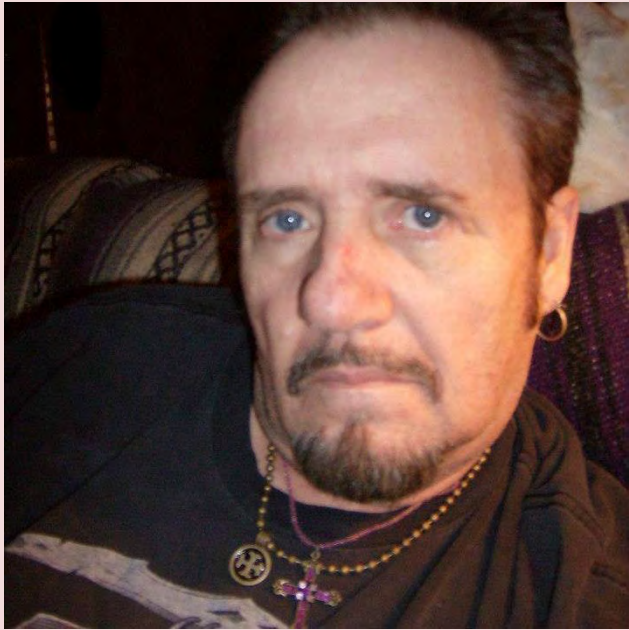


K.s.Subramanian: I am a poet and short story writer living in Chennai. I have published two volumes of verse through Writers Workshop, Kolkata. I have nine published short stories and also poems in several anthologies. "Dreams" got the Asian Age prize.



THORNS AND PETALS

And in the final act
we were all just human
intoxicated with the idea
that love, only love would
heal our starved hearts,
mend our brokenness and
bind our wanton lust with
rose thorns and red petals.



Ken Allan Dronsfield: I am a Poet and I reside in Seminole USA. I am disabled and write full-time. I have contributed and have been a co-editor for various anthologies. I have two published poetry collections.



CALCUTTA

Can I also claim to be nostalgic about Calcutta? I went to Kolkata for the first time in 1997, but then I kept going there every year for the next ten years, sometimes spending two three months at a stretch. Whenever I'm in Kolkata in winter, I ramble about the place on foot and generally find I reach places faster than the ones who drive about. The maidan and the Victoria Memorial are some of the best walking/jogging places I had experienced. Weekend mornings are sheer madness in the maidan with a million boys playing football and cricket without any boundaries. It's with great difficulty that a Dhoni avoids hitting a football for a six and a Beckam refrains from bending a cricket ball into the goal post!

On a typical winter Sunday morning I would walk from Park Hotel to Howrah bridge drinking in the unique feel of legging it on the old bridge and getting lost in romantic thoughts of an O P Nayyar tonga song in the middle of clinking cycle rickshaws and honking rickety buses and ambassador taxis.

A swim in the hotel pool and a quick bite would ready me for a walk along the maidan to skirt the Memorial and past the zoo and National Library to a cousin's flat in Alipore for lunch. The evening would find me walking back to the maidan teeming with picnicking Sunday crowds and occasional football fields. The Red Road past Fort William would take you to Eden Garden, the statue of Gostho Pal in the AIR corner of the maidan and to the iconic Dalhousie Square and Writers Building. Gostho "Cheener Pracheer" Pal's may be the only footballer statue in Kolkata, India's First Football City. There's also a road named Gostho Pal Sarani. Goshto Pal was a bare-footed player for Mohun Bagan (1912-35). When his mother in his east Bengal village asked him how she would find the way to his house when she came to Calcutta, he famously told her, "You tell the first person you meet in the Howrah station that you're my mother; he will take you to my house."

On other days one would suffer the stink of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road waiting for its magical transformation to College Street and hoping to meet Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen over unending cups at the College Street Coffee House!

A walk to New Market, Esplanade and along the Chittaranjan Avenue to the old palatial house of Tagores in Jorasanko is another experience worth cherishing.

Mirza Ghalib St (rather un-Victorian Free School St of yore) is a great place for bargain books and music cassettes/CDs in second sales. You'll sometimes find very rare pieces not found anywhere else. Once I stayed in a shady hotel on Free School St just for the pleasure of bargain hunting. My friends would raise eyebrows when I tell them I'm staying on Free School Street.



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.



<https://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/prayer/8-morning-prayers-to-use-daily.aspx>

1 Thessalonians 5:17 pray continually

Luke 18:1 And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

How can we ever

Cease to pray

When prayer should be

Our portion every day

Pray for your husband

Pray for your wife

Pray for your children

Pray for your own life

Pray for your father

Pray for your mother

Pray for your sister

Pray for your brother

Always pray for one another

Pray for our schools, hospitals

And our prisons

Pray for your nieces, nephews

And pray for your cousins

Pray for our government

Pray for our politicians

Pray that they'll make

Righteous decisions

Pray for your work colleagues

Pray for your boss

Pray for those who love you

Pray for those who make you cross

Pray for every household

Pray for each and every community

Pray that all Christians/believers

Will stand together in unity

Pray for forgiveness

Pray for peace

Pray when you are on your way

Pray when you are on your knees

Pray when you wake up

Pray before you fall asleep

Pray when you sow

Pray when you reap

Pray for those who in poverty

Pray for those who are wealthy

Pray for the sick

Pray for those who are healthy

Pray for all pastors

Pray for all congregations

Pray for our cities

Pray for all nations

Pray for wisdom

Pray for understanding and knowledge

Pray for every university

Pray for every college

Pray for every beggar on the street

Pray for everyone who has a need

Pray that God will bring an end
To selfishness and greed

Pray for salvation

Pray God's Word

Pray in the Name

Of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord



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



THE AUDACITY OF UNDOING

Faith is the only sensible response
to the mysteries of the world.

We're told that death is so sudden,
there's no time to repent.

The lapse between the last breath
and following second,
just a blink.

So, it's better to let heaven begin
on the spot where you are standing.

Silence the lie of no hope.
Let this be your faith,
even if no one else believes it.



Linda Imbler: Kansas-based Linda Imbler believes poetry has the potential to add to the beauty of the world. She has two self-published poetry collections and two poetry collections published by Soma Publishing. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com. She is currently working on her chapbook for this summer's poetry reading at the Kansas State Fairgrounds as well as her Nashville trip recollections.



MY DESTINATION

I am a stream,
flows crossing terrains,
Touching petals,
Moving gently, not to get bruise by metals,
My run is simple,
Straightforward and tender,
The ripples in me are softer,
Quite pleasing according my texture,
I love the dashing currents of river,
Handsome waves of the ocean,
Yet I forget not my position,

I get infatuated with the chilling breeze,
The shining sun, debonair moon,
The swinging trees, the dancing flowers,
And the roaming butterflies,
I like the aroma of flora,
I like the air of fauna,
I like the reddening glow of morning sun,
I like the fading flush of the setting moon,
Simple is my passion,
Straight is my destination,
To dash and mix with the river and for further germination,,
Compatible I am with its currents,
Comfortable I am with my motion,
To reach my goal is my only action.



Lopamudra Mishra: She is a native of Puri, but now residing in Bhubaneswar Orissa. 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 first book “Rhyme Of Rain” was published in March 2017, second book “First Rain” in August 2017, and her third book, “Tingling Parables” in May 2018.



PILLOW TALK

Looking at my pillow

fluffy, soft and white,

Tossing and turning

Holding it in my embrace,

Clutching it tight

Letting loose my worn out soul

various emotions reflect.

Innumerable thoughts combat

At the dead end of night!

Few tears of gloom, some smiles of joy,

Some deep thoughts provoking the soul endless.

Optimistic vision, believe and trust
Promising new dawn new prophecies ahead,
Dark nights move on promising notes
Drowsiness overpowers
soothing surrealism peep
Tucked cozily,
Slumbered off to sleep.



Madhu Jaiswal: She is a bilingual poet born and based in Kolkata. Writing is a passion for this homemaker. Her write-ups are published in various national and international anthologies and e-zines.



UNMASKED...

I feel like unmasking

With my breath gasping

As no one stops by, to look at me again,

My heart bleeds, each drop dripping the pain

While the red quietly drizzles

Splashing the grey, passing through the night in a dribble,

Like the faltering breath it at times stops

To mix with and inundate the waterdrops,

No one can see, nor feel the melancholy,

Softly taking over in all its glory,
The darkness gets the essence of pain rubbing off the
injury,
My love, my endearment, my devotion, all turning into my
misery.

I sit with memories as the day began,
Memories which pass like those ever elusive clouds, playing
hide and seek, in rain and sun,
This moment I seek some refuge in a soft piece of sky,
Square, peaceful, yet so full of light and without any traces
of those cloudy memories that fly high,
Seeking bright golden stars,
Then this moment, walking through the red mud of Mars,
The red borrowed from within me
Peep from everywhere, surprised they see,
I seek the calmness of the full moon, pearly and mellow,
calling out your name,
Just then, like before, out of the night, you came,

The darkness then melted and took you like the jealous lover,
Confess, that I may not have been strong to win you over,
And now I see through my tears, without hatred, joy, dreams, nor fear,
With just you, in my heart for years and years!!!



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



<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-guest-room/201411/the-secret-life-people-smiling-depression>

SMILE

The glint of your eyes caught mine

We laughed

How difficult it is to laugh

Even to smile when years of silence fills the gulf of
misunderstanding, suspicion and doubt

To contour the lips into a smile is no mean task

To move a boulder with a sorrowful heart

The honesty of soul mirrors the eyes

To make small talk, fill the vacuum with words

Words that say worldly things

Only silence speaks and echoes the hollows of the heart,
depths of the soul

The glint of your eyes caught my struggling soul

Flapping from the crevices to rise

And spread a warm wet smile on my parched lips.



Madhu Sriwastav: She is an Assistant Professor in English based in Kolkata. She has written and published her poems and short stories; translated and published short stories from Bengali and Hindi into English. She has written and published several academic papers. She has also scripted, directed and acted in a couple of plays and also made her students win award for outstanding performance in short plays. She also takes part in poetry and storytelling performances.



<https://www.fotolia.com/tag/depression>

Three days ago/I lost something in the last moment/I was kept hanging in long distressful waiting/I was fed with hope and aspiration/It all looked very possible until the telephone brought a bad news/Look! this is how the world treats seekers/lures/promises/cheats/Three day ago/I lost something in the last moment/When the news was broken to me/I felt the massive weight of a heavy metal bang into my chest/my body lost its balance/I swiftly moved two steps back/the friction on the surface of the earth under my feet/ was too weak to hold me upright/and I fell into hell/When the news was broken to me/I detested the fact that I make a mediocre daughter out of myself/failed/broke/useless.

Ever tried to put your hands in water/And capture fish with your bare hands?/It slipped out of my hand as though a/fish would wriggle itself out of the clench of your wrist/Ever tried to hold millions/and millions of grains of sand in your bare hands?/It slipped out of my hand as though/hot sun-bathed grains of sand would slide/ out of the tiny gaps between your fingers/Ever tried to slide a thin thread into the eye of a needle?/It slipped out of my hand as though/the thread missed its chance yet another time to enter the needle/I have been pronounced as the unlucky child of the universe/full of black holes that hold countless rays of light/ in indefinite hostage.

And just like that/I rolled back overnight/Into being that erratic, insanely angry and crying child/which I left behind/in the secluded corners of my school's premises/just like that/I rolled back overnight/into being that agnostic profane abuser of gods/committing unspeakable blasphemy of/packing all the prayers/in a plastic bag/and flushing them down the drain/just like that/I rolled back overnight/into being that extremely stoic person/incapable of telling between pleasure and pain/just like that/I rolled back overnight/into being that teenager obsessing over change/made a crushed ball out of beliefs/good/bad/karma/and threw it out of the

window/and burnt that dreamcatcher I hung on its parallel bars.

Now, I have a room turned into a black hole/and the black in my head/I have unattended grief that I was suppressing/with the help of false hopes/good karma/clean conscious/and faith in godly miracles/all of which stand discarded at last/I have some reed diffuser oil gifted by a kind friend/and a some fairy lights/I decorated my acute lackings/meditated in the frugal DIY ambience.

Do I feel better?/There is so much residual pain that/filtered out of the pores of my skin/won't this take a lifetime/and more to heal?



Mahitha Kasireddi: I am from Hyderabad. I am a published poet in different anthologies. I write regularly on my instagram id @mahithakasireddipoetry



WHERE THE BIRDS HAVE GONE?

Sky is a flute that my derwish
plays upon his lips every evening.

Attending its ceremonies
as a visitor, he wrapped
into the sequins of stars etches mysteries over his heart's
slate.

Evolving hymns from his soul's birds
to whom he frees one by one.

Harping upon his flute
throughout night, and

which by morning turns
into a feather in his palm.

The feather with which he colors castles,
rays and fields, grains, cottages,
and shoots, blossoms, suns and lemons.

Over the basaltic sheet of sky,
he hangs an aqua shaded moon
over which he scribes psalms
to a doomed prince.

The prince who got
buried under the rubble
of his own heart and
whose kingdom swallowed
by the dreams of a djinn
wonders about the

disappearance of soul's birds.

The kingdom thus sings to derwish in unison:

O derwish! Tell us,

"where the birds have gone?

Tell us where the birds have gone leaving their occasional
coos inside the dark pit of hearts. Blinding us to the joys of
life, tell us, where the birds have gone?

"Scattering their feathers leaving the branches of this
kingdom dry", tell us, "where the birds have gone?".

Thus, answers derwish:

"The birds have gone

frisking the moonlit sky

to search for the drops

to be poured over this
island of your desires."



Manisha Manhas: She is a rebel. She is an English teacher with Punjab education department and moonlights as a poet. Her poems mostly revolve around the theme of "partition and migration" of 1947. Her poems have previously been published in various journals. For her, poetry is her life-force quite similar to blood flowing in her veins.



<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/36099234497859856/>

THE APRON!

Rocking in the Chair, Blinking with each squeak,

There sat the Apron, worn out and piqued!

Patches irregular, of indurate stains,

In shredded threads, reside memories of hope and pain!

Ohh that grease, from the weeping oven,

Delicious delights, but stained the woven!

Ohh the laughter, full stomachs echoed,
Chronicles of day on Apron yellowed!
Brisk in gait, there's a shout and cry,
Nestled, dusted, the little one with salty eye!
Sat the Apron kneeling, daubed by grass green,
Dried the tears, wiped the tiny face clean!
A dark smudge interwoven deep,
Hard to remember, a memory to smile or weep!
Is it the brown from chocolate surprising?
Or is it the mud, from tyres deserting!
A blotch hither, a splotch thither,
Telling the story of toil and moil!
Discoloured by rigorous endeavours,
Stained memories persist forever!
Once so keen to wipe the tint,
These remembrances are the left stints!
Rocking in the Chair, Blinking with each squeak,
There sat the Apron, worn out and piqued!



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



THE CURSE OF OUR TIME

Insularity, being trapped in a glassy bubble
unable to reach out and yet keep
smouldering like a bundle of wet sticks,
choking on our own whimsical fumes
- pushing ourselves away, grappling with
shadowy reality and concrete fears.
Nightmares emerge from dreams.



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



DAZZLING BUTTERFLY

Summer morning clear blue skies
Gracing our garden she slowly flew
Colourful marbled wings stretched
Fluttering around the coffee bush
Searching for the perfect hideout

Softly she lands on a bigger leaf
Fanning her beautiful wings lightly
Gathering strength for her next flight
Sensing her surroundings with care
Quickly she took off from the leaf
Soaring up gliding with the wind
Flapping her tiny speckled wings
The dazzling pretty butterfly
On her unknown journey



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.



CRACKER JACK BOX POEM

I don't wear my pocket watch anymore
it reminds me of my age, 73, soon more,
outdated gadget, time hanging where
moving parts below don't belong nor work anymore.

I don't like to think about endings.

Age is a Cracker Jack box with no face, modern speed dial,
no toy inside, when it stops, no salute, just pops.

Lesson: "What young men want to do all night takes older men all night to do."



Michael Lee Johnson: He is a Canadian and USA citizen. Today he is a poet, editor, publisher, freelance writer, amateur photographer, small business owner in Itasca, Illinois. He has been published in various anthologies. He is the author of two books, and several chapbooks. He also has over 134 poetry videos on YouTube as of 2015: He was nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards for poetry 2015 & Best of the Net 2016.



RINCHENPONG

That road flanked by tall saint like trees on both sides

Lured me most,

At Rinchenpong when I stayed for a day,

For that road had the smell of incense bearing trees

And had all the possibilities of having a folklore of its own,

I took that road,
Going up the steep slope
Every moment it was like fighting with my body,
Specially legs
Which wanted not to climb,

But I did,
With my son constantly egging me up,

And finally we reached a cottage,
A simple wooden one,
With a spiral staircase reaching its first floor verandah,

It looked so humble a dwelling
Yet so majestic in its existence,

The road led us from there to a monastery too,
Calm and deep

Much like the forest,

The road taught us silence

And when we came down

We knew we had got the soul of Rinchenpong in us.



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



LO'... MAY IS HERE..!!

"Lo' May is here.

Slowly drifting away the spring breeze,
and succumbing to the summer gale.

Speck of sunlight on the window sill flowers
make these yellow and reds peppier
and flues finally rest in silence.

Every now and then,
bees buzz and butterflies batter
to seek and peck the beguile blooms.

Florets wait like a muse first
and soon sway to sing thank you notes
for becoming masterpieces in two shakes.

Know that, summertime is in the air
when the turf below steals the shades
from the rainbow of the sky.

Remember, today is the gift.
So time to collect the moments
soon to become the memories.

As long as the winter sting rests in a closet;
listen to the bird-song melody and
dance those barefoot dances like never before."



Monika Ajay Kaul: I'm a multilingual poet and short-story writer, residing in Delhi, India. I'm an educationist by profession, currently serving as a guest-faculty. I've contributed in various poetry and short-story anthologies. I'm enjoying my aesthetics journey by painting, writing and singing.



A MYTH

It was hope that came to me,
in times of deep deep despair.

It was the light that brought,
my shadow back in the darkness.

It was a dream i had dreamt,
for years and years and years.

The times of light and happiness,
the small but delightful moments of joy.

I thought i was loved,
by a man whom i did love back.

Those meetings in the alley,
or the gifts on birthdays.

Fights on small-small things,
feelings of jealousy and protectiveness.
I never felt as if i was alone,
but now an emptiness fills in my heart.
As i stand lonely on the riverside,
at a place where we frequently met.
Today, i see him with another woman,
Now i know why there was never hate,
because there was never any love.



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



THE BLACK TONGUE

Your sandals are scandals

Your mails are blackmails

Your words are swords

Your toes are foes

Your fingers are tigers

And your legs are pegs

Your craft is witchcraft

Your cake is snake

Your care is snare

Your arm is harm
Your alm is charm
And your time is crime.

Your stitches are witches
Your despatches are patches
Your joke is smoke
Your tattoo is taboo
Your want is pant
And your portion is abortion

Your meditation is assassination
Your part is mart
Your flight is fight
Your ring is sting
Your make is fake
And your life is knife.

Your brotherhood is falsehood

Your lip is whip

Your friendship is gossip

Your vision is division

Your boot is loot

And your boom is doom.

Your fame is shame

Your answer is cancer

Your wig is pig

Your bread is head

Your lunch is punch

And your wave is grave.

#BLACK TONGUE.....THERE IS GOD!!.... BEWARE!!!



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.



Saved from [fundly.com](https://www.fundly.com)

BALLAD I HEAR: AFRICA.....!

My subject has myriad names,

Poor & hungry; downtrodden & beggar,

Of course slave also that torn; broken and betrayed one,

The dark skinned from a dark continent;

an unknown; unseen and confiscated world.

Not a morsel of food, no cure; no life nor morsel of console,

Forbidden soil; a dark speck on the earth,
Tottering existence of life; a speaking portrait,
often recite its ballad I hear.

My subject! a turf of dust worth a million,
Diamond or gold; natural or in flesh and blood,
Land of treasures hunted down and made to shed tears for
ever,
for the sake of game squad; The white and diseased surface
of the globe!

Not ostensible to say; thy black past is the bitter truth,
Frightening shades of many bygone centuries,
Thy naked body distorted; torn gossamer pleased
Traveller's eyes around the world.



Nitusmita Saikia: She is an instructor in National Cadet Core, India, working presently in Jorhat Assam, India. She writes in both English and own regional language (Assamese). Being active in various online Poetry groups and blogs, she has been writing for E-Magazines. With these, her poems have been published in various poetry anthologies, both National and International.



SHAI'S JUDGMENT

Through every choice we make and deal we break

People we meet and promises we keep

We travel on this tapering tributary and ultimately greet

Charon guiding us through River Styx

*

Osiris calling

Life transitions to death ever so fast

Within the single flap of a hummingbird's wing

There one exhale, gone the next

The seismic switch just toggles off

*

Heka's healing starts

Then the journey begins

For those left behind in a land of perpetual dusk

Every second creeps along in this soulless aria of life

But days fly by as if signalled into allegro by the conductor

*

Thoth's truth sinks in

A million tears have been shed

A thousand prayers said

I know that you can't come back

I just hope you're content where you're at

Shai: God of fate and destiny

Osiris: God of afterlife and underworld

Heka: Goddess of healing

Thoth: The wisest of Egyptian Gods



Nivedita Karthik: She is a poet residing in Chennai and working as a senior quality controller. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and enjoys writing poems and stories. Her work has been published in Glomag and the Society of Classical Poets.



<https://www.ibelieve.com/faith/a-prayer-for-love.html>

May we meet in a lifetime
Where we are meant to be
Where we can hold hands
And walk the world
Savour each other's love
Allow each other's vices
To attune our fineness.
Till then, I will sing to the moon
My best songs and let its shimmer
Make me a silhouette that is yours.

In the dark where none cares to look
I will love you like no other.



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



MY DREAMS

Lucid, even sounds are audible

Images of performances

Scuffles during the rehearsals

Why do i keep dreaming?

May be i should do a Performance again

Stage beckons me

Chorus hailing me

Hear loud claps of applause

I should wear costumes

Make-up

I am Ram still.



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



HIS CATAPULT

Neighbour's lad gets a grin out of pot shots at birdlife in my garden. Thinks I can't see him between slats of broken fence. Dead birds litter my lawn. I've told his mam, Alice, who says he thinks he's in Jurassic World to kill dinosaurs. I wish he weren't so wick and could see these dinosaurs don't bite. I'll fetch him round to bury his dead, and have a quiet word.



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.



<https://www.artstation.com/artwork/wrong-side-of-the-forest>

AH SWEET INNOCENCE

I wondered through the Bogley Wood
To see where Auntie Sylvie stood
Before she was turned into a crow
By the evil wizard Uncle Joe

But when I got to the magical place
I found myself staring into his face

'T was Uncle Joe, Wizard and Foe
Staring right back, his face all aglow

And then she appeared from behind a tree
Her face was all red when she saw it was me
I know she was grateful; I'd broken the spell
Though she said what I'd seen, I never must tell.



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



GOODBYE

Sometimes it throws weird curveballs at you,

The obscure predicament called life-

It makes you twist and turn

And whine and wail;

Compelling you to revisit those places you bid half-hearted
goodbyes;

And forcing you to gift farewells to what you thought was
an eternity.

It makes you move around in a whirlwind
Where you're so dizzy like a kid on a giant wheel,
And before you understand;
It's all over.
You're estranged;
Surrounded by ghostly laughters
Of your abandoned past.
Now, nothing matters to you.
There's nothing familiar.
Just you and the oblivion;
With bits and pieces flashing in front of you
Like fragmented vignettes from a long forgotten 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.



ACCEPT ME AS I AM

Accept me as I am

I might be having thousand skies

One to gaze

One to imbibe

One to dream

But you are the small piece of sky that protects me from
rain,

From the scorching heat

Like a umbrella

I adore you

There may be innumerable words, but

You are the most sought after word while writing poems

Earth never attracts me

Without you

The trace of grass flowers

The ocean is a great lie

Without you and your oceanic Kingdom

You have given me propriety right

Without you

I am reduced to a piece of paper,

How can I forget?

Let me promulgate

My poetry is not servitude

My words never dance to any body's tune

Mine is a flowing ever-encompassing current of love

I believe in love as present indefinite always

No past no future

Who has seen love in naked eyes

Love is divine

the invisible!

Never weigh

I am not a thing

I don't have a height even

Don't compare

"I am time past and time future present in time present"

Hurt me hate me

But love me

Nail me as if I am Jesus crucified in between your two beautiful eyebrows and sharp nose in a face depicted by time.

But love me as if you have

Never loved me before.



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



KUNTI'S DILEMMA

A boon is a two-edged sword!

Who knew that better than Kunti?!

Out of curiosity, she tried out her superpowers and gave birth to Karna,

An unmarried mother of a royal family!

Unthinkable!

Unwillingly, she abandoned her first-born..

Decades later, the future of her Pandavas, could be secured, if she asked for Karna's mercy!

With war imminent, at the eleventh hour, she visited Karna,

Revealed to him his warrior lineage, and admitted that he was her first-born!

Oh how much, Karan rued this revelation, at the eleventh hour!

A lifetime of lost opportunities, his rightful place in Court,
Justice delayed is but justice denied!

An off-hand irresponsible act,

Snowballed into such a dilemma, throwing up universal debates of right and wrong!

The ill-fated warrior, bound by his principles, agreed to not harm her Pandavas,

A man of honour, his loyalty to Duryodhana, still unshakable,

Kunti has to keep the secret, till his death,

As Kaunteya and fate so conspired, he kept his word, sparing the lives of the Pandavas;

Much was salvaged in the eleventh hour and much lost for time ran out;

There was no turning back - all is fair in love and war?

You pay for your misdeeds; but yet you can be redeemed; if you will try, at the eleventh hour..

Karna got a warrior's funeral as the eldest son;

And Kunti and all mothers to come; cursed to not keep secrets; but to reveal them at the eleventh hour..



Pratima Apte: She is a poet residing in Pune, India. She is a homemaker, recently turned grandmother! She used to write sporadically in the Pune edition's Women's page of the Indian Express. She loves reading and writing, and words are her world.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mUDIFhz4TE>

Closed my two eyes
Wide opened my third eye
Listened the sound of music
Of mother nature
With all my senses.

Beyond the sounds
Something greater
That I enjoyed
Pierced my thoughts
A heavenly rhythm

Brought my soul

Into cloud nine.



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.



A MOMENT'S SONG

Let me fall in love with the open field,

Let me fall in love with the wild wind,

Let me fall in love with the starry nights,

Let me embrace the green woods,

Where my heart can sing

the song of solitude happily!

Let me fall in love with the crescent moon

Let me fall in love with the rainbow hues

Let me find a place to ride on the green fields of heaven
Where my mind can rest for a while!

Let me fall in love with the tall trees and flowers
Let me fall in love with the pleasant summer
Let me kiss the fallen leaves of dusky autumn
Let me run through the green paddy fields
Where my heart can sing the season's welcoming song
For the new born grains.

Let me fall in love only for once
On the banks of mighty Brahmaputra
Let me fall asleep in the lap of green
Taking my last breath.



Preety Bora: I am a poet residing in India, Assam, in a small city called "Golaghat ". I have contributed to various anthologies and also edited one bilingual anthology of poems. Nature is my greatest inspiration. I love to paint my word amidst the beauty of nature.



DEAR MR RADCLIFFE

Growing up in Fazilka, a heavily armed border town, even our jokes were about Pakistan. One went like this, cracked out of the hearing of parents: A Saudi would sell all the oil in the world for a woman's favour, Saddam all his country's Scud missiles, and a Pakistani his very country (or someone his mother), but she wanted an Indian, because he'd sell nothing. Others we rehashed jokes in which the Pakistanis replaced the Poles or Irish, though I learned that much later. A clumsy rhyme went as follows:

ABCDEFG,

Usme se nikle Panditji

Panditji ne khaya ganna

Ganne se nikla Rajesh Khanna

Rajesh Khanna ne kholi almari

Almari se nikli Meena Kumari

Meena Kumari ne todi roti

Roti se nikli Tun-tun Moti

Tun-tun Moti ne phoda anda

Ande se nikla Tiranga jhanda

Tirange jhande ne dee pukar

Raj karega Hindustan

Jhadu mare Pakistan

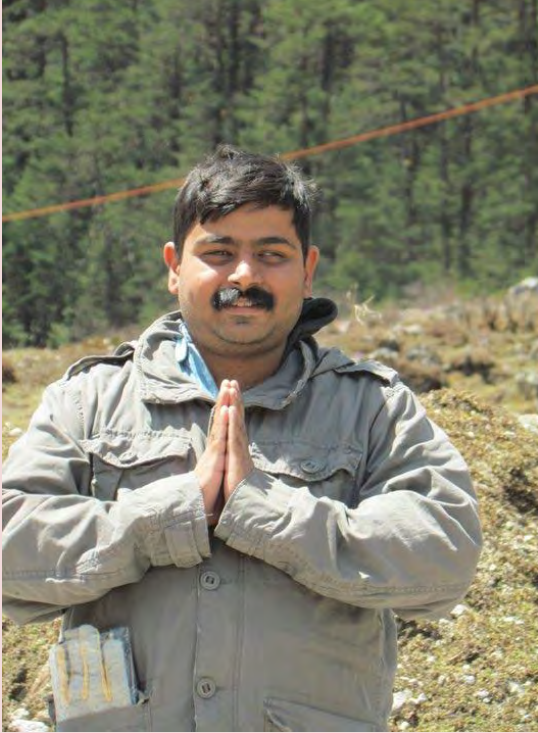
In other cities, when we visited on holidays, the puerile nationalism (I suppose men never grow out of it) was directed at the Soviet Union or the United States, sometimes Britain and France, but for us border children, with the barbed wire and sandbags ever present, it was always the country across, which our history books and grandmothers told us, was torn out of us. One of these grandmothers, a sight to see for 9 year olds, her wrinkles dressed in a gold-threaded *chunri* held up an embroidered *jutti*, whose partner she said was just across that deadly fence. Her grandson who went to school with me often schemed with us to get to the other side to recover it. Luckily there were enough ripening corn cobs in the fields

around Fazilka to distract any surreptitious expeditions we attempted. Munching the sweet, raw corn we'd tell more Pakistani jokes: an Arab, a Pakistani and Tata showed off their wealth: the Arab set fire to his oil well, the Pakistani to his fields, and Tata to a cheque of a billion dollars. The *jutti* remained on the other side, the boys grew up and went away to big towns for jobs.

neither the azaan

nor the gurbani

care for the border



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



A PLY INTO THE VOID

Gone are those Golden charioted days,
When seasons failed not, when Sky
merged with The Blue and pots did not
often come to the streets aligned
with morbid drought piercing hot.

Giant lorries laden with cans,
brittle plastic bottles tied up
to a knot circling boxes;
Speed past the jammed crowd,
VIPs throbbing with angst of thirst;

Thirst for seats in colleges, clerical
Posts in offices, secure seats in podium,
A card game before them, dipping life
Into a chance of luck, catch and throw.
Automated signal is the same for all.

Summer's heat with a nudge,
driving people crazy with a force
of opening refrigerator, duel lordship;
ruling monster and luxurious slave
in every household with cubes of ice.

Still a Victorious pot in corner
Jeer at the machines, when power fails!



Radhamani Sarma: I am a poet, short story writer, residing in Chennai, India. I am a retired professor of English. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published my own poetry collections. I am also a reviewer and critic, and have contributed critical essays on living writes, and am a blogger too.



<http://m.theindependentbd.com/post/165767>

THE NAMELESS THREE, AND LADY MACBETH

We remain nameless, you and I, my dear lady.

Your husband gets a name, so do they all,
all honorable men, even Cinna, get their names.

Not us, strong, sure, women.

What's in your first name, anyway?

Nameless we remain, in life,

in death and beyond -

you and we, dear lady.

Your husband, he gets a name,
and all the honorable Will's men,
even Cinna, get their own names.

He wrote, they played,
all men, all names.

Not us, the strongest of them all.



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



In the year of drought,
Parched land is divided into
Many hearts; there is not a single
Tree to give solace
To the bruised soul; emptiness on
The horizon is all pervading;
No birds are flying, their songs are dying;
Only a man is standing tall
Amidst the ruinous expanse of universe
around;

Drops of water or nectar in the bottle
Conjures up images of the lush green past,

But alas! the die is cast,
The future is bleak, and the hope is lost,
Mother Nature is singing
dirge for me!



Rakesh Chandra: I am a Poet residing in Lucknow, India. Retired Civil Servant and pursuing Ph.D. course. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published 2 poetry collections, 3 poetry anthologies.



CONVERSATION....

I am living in our conversation,
In words, pauses and punctuation.

Your words-

Iridescent sparks,

Lighting up my being

Resurrecting,

Every haven of hope.

Your words –

The touch of your fingertips,
Sublimating hunger
Catalyzing yearning.
Your words –
Your breath,
Creating silhouettes of desire.
Your words –
Succulent,
Enticing me to
Nibble, suck, bite....
As I would the rest of you.
I am living in our conversation
Making love in every cadence and intonation.



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



THE READER

At the river bank is a girl
with an open book
trying to read a closed man
who hides himself in layers of words
and his soul in a fistful
of trapped breeze
He saunters through the pages
reading her thoughts
his heart stuffed into deep plots
she sits with a fishing rod

and pail to put her catch in
and all she gets is a breeze



Reena Prasad: She is a poet/writer from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals, e.g., The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, Lakeview International Journal 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. More recently, she was adjudged second in the World Union Of Poet's competition, 2016. She writes at Butterflies Of Time.



THE WAIT

They, all of them:
the foul-mouthed ones, and
those who utter with ease
the jaggery quoted words;
the flag bearers of peace
and the harbingers of the
much awaited Revolution;
those who blame, and
those who defend -

all of them, I bet,
All-wear masks, which
veil dark conspiracies.
They, all of them,
would have to unweave those masks,
reveal their truths, and face the Aftermath.
Doomsday is not a myth!



Ritika Ojha: I am a poet residing in Dhanbad, India. I am currently a Student. So far, I have not contributed to any anthology. This is my maiden attempt.



LAB RATS

numbers in statistics,
 deviating curves, dots,
 rectangles, circles,
 ratios, percentages.

our deaths are
 reduced lengths,
 our sadnesses
 notches in lines,
 corpses burnt in blocks
 of a graph paper.
 they can foretell

a probability of our
miseries, hunger
and deaths.

we are an agreeable
round figure.

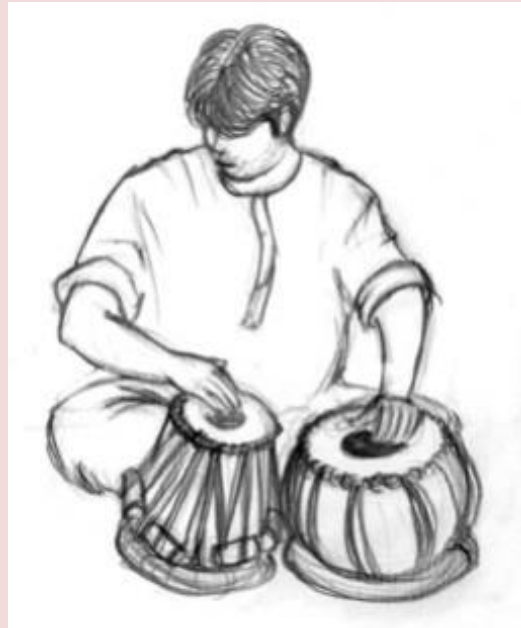
we are a well crafted
piece of research.

we are silent screams
in folds of paper.

in the language of power
we are lab rats.



Ro Hith: He is a poet and a medico from Andhra Pradesh, writing poetry since 7 years. His poetry has been published in various online magazines, and has been acknowledged and complimented by various senior poets.



SUM

("Sum" is the first beat of a time cycle or "tal". It is the most emphasized beat... the essence of improvisational understanding in classical Indian music)

alap...streaming surs,
dhuns in teental rhythms spin, dizzying maze of tal,
linear diagonal multi-dimensional sheets of sound,
leading back to the thread, the home, the sum,
and begin again...

dha dha tee na dha tee-
bols, just six beats, profound

placid, passionate, cool summer Ganga wave,

Sangam sapphire sky,

aahroh to aavroh,

evening raga sunflower sutra,

a thread, a home, the sum,

and begin again...

hummingbird hurry-up fingers flutter,

tonal feathers fly rubygold colors

dāhna and dagga brush and canvas,

scattering gorgeous light...

and the gharānā smile understanding the thread,

the home, the sum...

(perhaps one day we shall too!)



Robert Feldman: I am a writer and painter residing in Port St. Lucie, Florida. I own and operate a college test preparatory company. I have also published several poems and short stories in booklets, anthologies, and magazines, both hard copy and online.



FULL MOON

Bewitched by

The tranquility of the night,

The ocean remains calmed

And you have descended

To be close to me!

A thousand lovers

Every night you inspire,

A thousand secrets

You quietly hide!

There you are,
Magically seated
On your throne
Like a real Queen!

So close and yet
So far away
While my arms
Are too short
To hug you
And my lips
Too far to reach yours!

There you are,
Standing alone,
Like no others
In the universe,

The whole night
Belongs to you
And so my heart,
So beautiful,
So bright!



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!



PULLED PORK AND ASTHMA

The summer should not be allowed to get much hotter, they exact laws for bloody everything, but they can't legislate this?

I'm starting to think there is a secret meteorological lobby that pays for days just like this.

While smoker's cough stands in front of Texas smokers with three generations of pulled pork and asthma.

Distant beaches stormed by pale sunscreen armies.

Sandcastle skylines of a faltering new utopia.

The lifeguard on duty busy chatting up the girls.

If this is summer, you can have it!



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



<http://dawnandjeffsblog.blogspot.com/2010/05/flowers-after-rain.html>

WHEN THE RAIN CEASES

The surroundings got awakened with the rays of twilight

Twittering of birds is heard behind the leaves

That are bright and green-----

The trees have just bathed in rain

As some little drops are still on them

Dust in the air got washed down

And rays of sun spreads away from horizon above.

When an unrest ceases or gets resolved

It brings the pleasure around,

And initiates the prevalence of peace,

Want of certainty emerges no longer----
As the jolly human faces reveal
The dawn awaiting behind the darkness, comes out
And enlightens the earth that we love.



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



AN UNUSUAL LOVE STORY

One night, I was unable to sleep,
So I padded out into the dining hall and peeped,
I was just checking if anybody was around,
When suddenly, I heard a pretty strange sound,
It sounded, like paper crackling,
And my brain then starting whirring,
'Who's there besides me, this dark, dark night?'
I was tensed, and considered turning on the lights,
Deciding against it, I went ahead.
And who should I see talking, but Jam and Bread!
They talked, I hid, and what did I just hear?
Bread is talking of asking Butter out, oh dear!

I never thought of witnessing such a love story,
For I surely saw Butter, a brilliant shade of red,
Peeping from behind the crockery!
Then suddenly she moved out and headed towards Bread,
'I would've told you but didn't know what to say,' she said,
'I love you Bread,' said she, and Jam let out a 'Yippee!'
Silently I cheered, and then the sun came out,
'Twas morning, I spent the night in the dining hall!
Shocked, I pinched myself and let out a scream,
The sun shone bright, gone was the night,
Which I'd spent in a dream!



Samixa Bajaj: I am a student of class 9 and absolutely love my books (excluding textbooks). I enjoy sketching and dancing besides poetry, which I write based on my moods and likes.



BETWEEN SILENCES:

Night caves in with an immoderate haste,
Bringing with it the intoxicating draught of deathly gloom
A stifling silence whispers to the flickering flames of a
candle shuddering in the first chills of an approaching
winter,
In a vague attempt to break the monotony, I open the old
yellowing pages of your journal
Running my fingers over the neat faded writing,
Breathing in the effervescence of nostalgia, feeling your
touch on the parchment
A queer upsurge of smiles and tears inflames my veins,

And I wish I could recall the galloping chariot of Time,
To return, even if for one brief spell,
To those days whence together we celebrated innocence
and an unconditional bond...
If only, I could get the chance to relive those moments...
Your memories exist, in the best part of my life
And yet, I have continued the journey forward to fulfill our
parting promise
When with the final kiss of fleeting twilight,
Looking into your eyes, drowning in the unfathomable
dreams they held,
I told you that I would keep you alive in the fragrance of my
verses
And see, even after all this time, I have kept at it, always
and forever...



Samrudhi Dash (Inara): I am a poet, novelist, editor, and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. Along with contributing to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date four solo poetry anthologies and two novels and conceptualised and edited an anthology of epistles and a medical assistance journal. I write under the pseudonym Inara.



<https://nicepoethere.wordpress.com/2012/06/22/rainy-day-song/>

LET'S TALK

Let's talk to night.

Whole night...

Let words get covered

With the veil of rain.

So that no one can listen!

Let droplets adorn our words

With their shine & make them

Sparkling gems!

And in this rainy lonely moment

Let us touch each other's heart & share those unspoken words.

Let our silent words flow

Freely & happily...

A word after another

A sentence after another...

Will make our story

And will make us a river!

Where like paper boats our moments Will sail.

Like two waves holding each other

we will move together..

Will kiss our childhood

drench our youth & gaily

Will cross miles & embrace the sea!

Before the time dies

And our journey ends

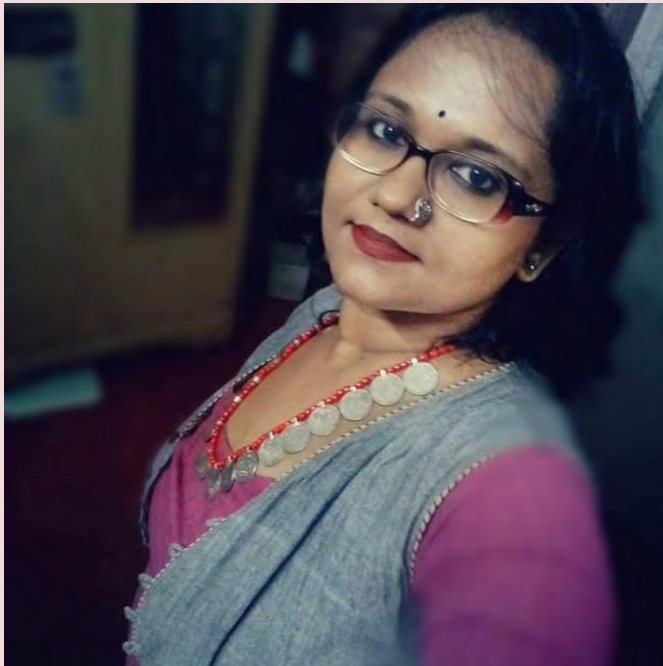
Before we regret

Let's open our hearts.

Let's be a river and move together.

Let's talk tonight, whole night

Let's talk...



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



CAMEL AND HONEY

At times, the mind becomes a television screen
flashing Image upon image.

Some sunny, some funny, that child with a runny nose,
that bony man with a gunny bag,
and that bunny, overloaded with cuteness.

That funny man with gold in his teeth and silver in his hair,
cheerfully roasting a large bead of opium,
and putting it in the bowl of his pipe, [not my type],
but fascinating, nonetheless.

The way, he drew on it, made me - a five year old
watch, round-eyed.

That perennially rapturous man who talked
only of stashing money in the bank, to earn some interest.

Oh yes, that bedraggled man,
hurling his toddler in the air and catching him
in his arms as the earth shook with a happy child's chortle
and a poor father's opulent mirth.

Images! Images!



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'.



OUR IMAGE...

I carved your image in my loving heart

Which keeps singing melodies

Of you and me in love

When you touch my face

With your soft hand

I feel like a rosebud

About to bloom

Your body smell emitting

All the love you have in your heart

Which you kept sealed for long

Your eyes speak volumes of love

We always have an eye to eye talk
Deeper than heart to heart love!
We are still like children
Who love to solve crossword puzzles
Making fun of each other!
When you come near me
I heave a sigh
A sigh of my love for you
I start singing n dancing
As you lived in me for months
And me in you
With our tender feelings
For each other which turns
Into a fire of everlasting love!
Like a glowing candle
Our love grew
And now matured
We know the obstacles

We face in everyday life
Leaving no time to be together
We both fend for our living
Doing lil lil jobs here n there
At the end of the day
We sit next to the gurgling streams
With no complaints
Only blissful moments
We share with each other!



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.



Pen and paper

Bread and butter

Milk with sugar

Me and the other

When all are in pairs

Why such angry stares

To people much in love

Burning their love with flames from the stove

Love that carries innocence
Love that has powers immense
If given a chance to survive
Has the capacity to revive
This breaking mankind
And give them some support from behind
To stand up straight
And live to their destiny great



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



GOLDEN EXPANSES

These colors are born of the sun –

blood orange fire

yellow vistas

solar grains of sand

These paths wind through the desert –

calm on the surface

ancient cities buried below

fossilized in the system

These scenes shine where they're splashed –

soft melted magenta

silicon crystal visions

violet flare illumination



Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia. His sixth collection of poetry, *Of Sand and Sugar*, was released in 2019 through Cyberwit.

Outlar hosts the website 17Numa.com where links to his published work can be found. He also hosts the radio podcast, Songs of Selah, which can be listened to on 17Numa Radio.



Rachel Leigh Willis: She is a self-taught artist based in Kansas City, Missouri. Specializing in alternative mixed media with a focus on sustainability, she often employs found materials or creates her own. She believes art is an expression of the soul, and that good art has the power to heal, inspire, empower, and to catalyze conscious growth.



<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/332914597437945870/?lp=true>

I FEEL, I FEEL

When there are no more tears

To shed over sleepless nights

I have paced the floor bare

Writhing in my helplessness

Beneath veils of equanimity

Within inclusivity, lost my identity

The enemy remains camouflaged

As he piled up his explosive arsenal in my backyard

To rain death upon me and my trusting brothers
Here I am on the frozen soil
Not enough hands, a nation of a billion
To pick up bits & pieces of my tattered flesh
Strewn all over this war torn frozen soil
I can no longer hold my furious sobs within
I need to let out this howl long into the night
A war cry to awaken my sleeping brethrens
Your sense of security is a fallacy
Unclasp these chains of magnanimity
Confront the cowardice cowering within
The attack was frontal, it is now guttural
Your guts will be spilled on the streets
Your home is under fire,
Your loved ones will be dragged into the pits to be
butchered
What will you do, don't you feel, don't you feel
But I feel, I feel even in my agonized death
A call to set this wrong right

To vanquish the enemy growing within
It's this cancerous ideology needing nationalistic treatment
Now that my eyes in death are dry
Lead the front of this charge, brothers & sisters mine
I need your hands, pick me up from the bloodied ground
Fly me home in empty coffins
Tell my people there was nothing left of me to be delivered
I was vaporized by a zealots fanaticism
I feel, I feel in death, I will return
Again to proudly wear my uniform
And avenge this mindless savagery



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



DRAUPADI: PARAGON OF VIRTUE

Draupadi—a true epitome of womanhood

Womanhood in all its pristine form beckoning

While truth and beauty are always in the reckoning

“No, no!” cried Draupadi

Patience being her strongest virtue

Men around her cried raucously

While others smiled smugly in their retinue

Clothes—a symbol of virtuosity

Slipping away from her body

“My Lord, God!” cried she piteously

Faith being her strongest virtue

Clothes slowly unburdening themselves on her virtuous
form

A miracle witnessed by all men in the room



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.



<https://www.bizbash.com/association/media-gallery/13475229/dancing-in-the-streets>

SCREENS

So many screens!

The face paints itself

to ward off a mistaken gaze or two.

A false mirror shows painted lives

each evening, mimicking honest worlds

with sly and fraudulent artistry.

The two hospital beds are screened

from each other, each bed innocent of

the way the other's pierced, fleeced and

allowed to escape in whatever way.

Friends and strangers make finger-figures
at each other on a screen between,
and call it social media.

And a bigger screen, the biggest escape.

Release! Ventilator for lonely hearts,
singing songs to hide their screams.

The art of make-belief is
the make-belief of Art.



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



<https://paintingvalley.com/mom-and-baby-sketch>

MOTHER

Mothers never die
unless we let them
mothers never leave us
even if we drive them away
mother as love, a feeling, an emotion, a blessing hangs on
even after she dies
only we are to keep her alive
that perennial stream of love
deep in our heart

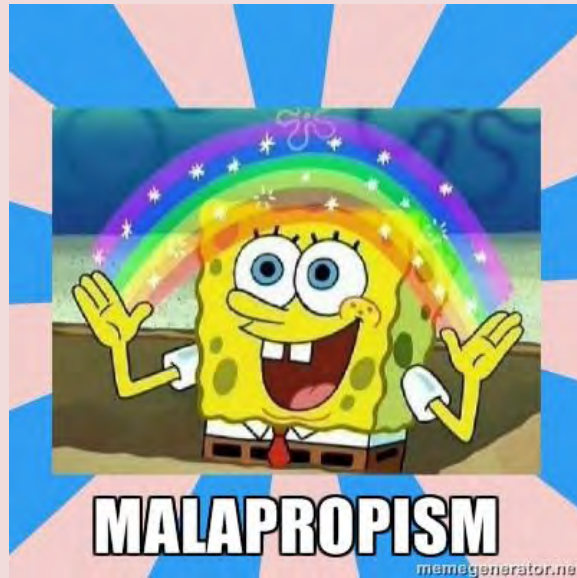
in our thoughts, words and deeds
and let her flow
in our artery and vein
and bathe our body and mind
again and again

What can we give in return
nothing
whatever we are
is because of she
her unconditional love, affection
dedication and sacrifice
never force her away from your life
don't deprive yourself of
that heaven on earth
a beggar you will be
an orphan searching for an identity
a beast having no human qualities.



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer. He is a published poet and writer and a featured poet of PENTASI B World Friendship Poetry. His writings include essays, short stories, poems and novels which are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. Working as Finance Officer in Govt of Odisha, he writes extensively on life, its beauty and intricacies which are widely acclaimed.

Website: smrutiweb.wordpress.com



LOVE

Love is a many splendoured thing

Though love nose

Know boulder eerie

Whey in love ewe glow

The world looks a track tive

Awl rosy red and punk

Young love is the beast

When inn love

The hart bits faster

Eat starts two throb

The daze mirage with knight

With the beeloved all ways in site

Yew think off only won thing

Love love love

Yeat you fill everything

All around is online love

Ewe yarn

Too bee loved

Whey n eat is returned

Yew fill eweaphoric

To bodice won sole

Love love love

The wreckless hart dunces

Cere kneading

Singing songs of lounging

Wooing width chocolates

And flours

Wetting long hours

Of court sheep

Steel momos meant

Teal ewe

Be lunge to each other

Wedding is the day

Ewer mar age takes place

That is the finale

Off ewer love

Love konkers all

Without any breeches

For love is

The many splendoured thing



Sudeshna Mukherjee: She is an Economics Major. She is a poet, short story writer and painter. Her book of poems “Meanderings of the Mind” has been published. Many of her poems have been published in national and international anthologies, magazines and e-publications.



UNREQUITED LOVE

As our sighs
play coy and shy
add to thickness of mist
where union remains
a far cry
let us part ways
under the sprawling sky

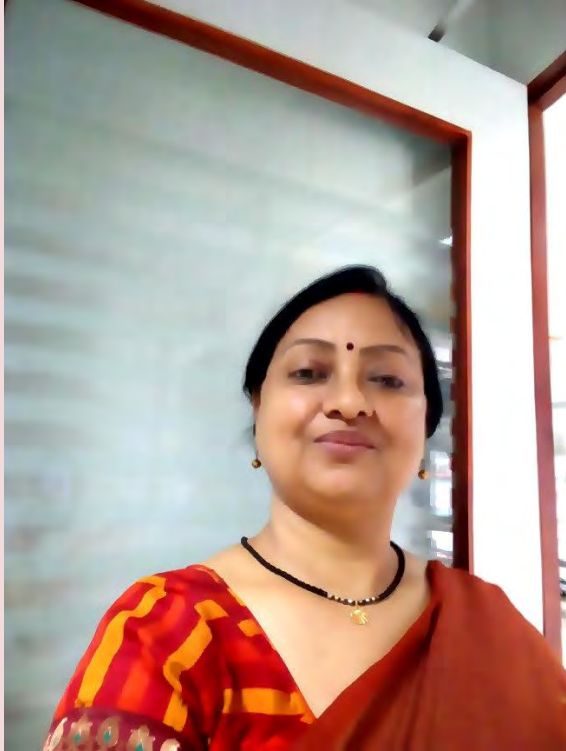
our story
sans an iota of romance
is ready now

to morph into
charter of distance
with feeble tagline of alliance

the strife
i believe
shall help me pick
my moments with care
though stopover of reflections
shall intrude into
private shore
to have its fair share

let us part ways then
never to say hello
never to meet again
unrequited love

says it all somehow
with deep anguish and pain.



Sujata Dash: I am a poet, residing in Bhubaneswar, India. I work as a Banker. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published one poetry anthology.



THE ETERNAL JOURNEY

Childhood never calls me anymore

Those sweet moments of sentiments with the bosom
friends,

The strict punishment in the school for discipline,

Mother's feeding myself by her soft hand,

Stealing fruits from the neighboring house

And having them with chillies and salt.

Childhood never calls me anymore,
For it has flown swiftly to remind that
Now I have turned into an aged one,
Whose hairs get grey,
Glance gets obscure,
Whose skin loses its glow.

Childhood never calls me anymore
For it's the time to receive the last call
To get united with the supreme soul,
Now childhood and its memories seem very painful
As time has brought me to the last stoppage for the eternal
journey.



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



BEAUTIFUL

You are beautiful

When goodness reflects in your eyes,

You are beautiful when truth is there

With you ,and you're away from lies.

You are beautiful

When your smile is pleasant

And thought graceful.

You are beautiful
When people around you,
Blessed by your gestures
And you are thankful.

You are beautiful when
Many are there to extend their
helping hand, and you are grateful.

You are beautiful when
God in you somewhere exists!
And you are faithful.

You are beautiful when
You are honest, you are kind,
You have a golden heart
And a serene mind.



Sumana Bhattacharjee: She is a bilingual poetry writer from India. She born and brought up in city Kolkata in a family of teachers. From her childhood she has had a keen interest in music, poetry and drama. She is a published poetry writer and her poems have been published in many national and international anthologies, magazines and blogs. She is the founder of an online poetry group and working as an admin of some poetry groups to promote literature throughout the world . Poetry is her passion and she wants to continue it until her last breathe.



<http://www.ayurvedaplusworld.com/theextendedstory/2015/10/1/the-cooling-benefits-of-bathing-in-moonlight-2>

THIS ACCURSED WALL OF SILENCE

Life leads me to a wall of stony silence
sorrows having birthed it, this accursed one.
lying on a sheet of melancholic moonlight
the fleeting sands of thought, drifting with time
succumb to soothing slumber
my shadow of silence beside me.

Learnt that silence is not silent at all
silence sighs, silence weeps, silence sings,

silence speaks a unique language too
which I learn from the desolate desert.
No longer accursed the heavy crown of silence,
inspires only awe for its eloquence !

When all deserted me, silence suffused my inner
world through a mute bridge, speaking
the unspoken language of contemplation
that no language of the world can convey
nor all the cacophony of the world drown
teaching me to commune wordlessly.



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



OUTSTRETCHED HAND

Outside the temple, along the broken street that leads to the suburban railway station sits that old woman with a knotty-veined hand stretched forever.

Despite the rush of the commuters the claw remains empty and raised in utter supplication, eyes blank, head bit raised

in anticipation for a hurried act
of charity;

the old woman---almost frozen in
that pose for hours
mornings and evenings, for months.

How does she hold that shaking hand
so long?

A great mystery!

Despite
thousands of footfalls
in a dingy public place,

a presence becomes
absent.



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

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



THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES

The night has a thousand eyes

Each one glowing wildly

Gleaming like the eyes of a creature ready to pounce!

I run, I dodge, I try to escape

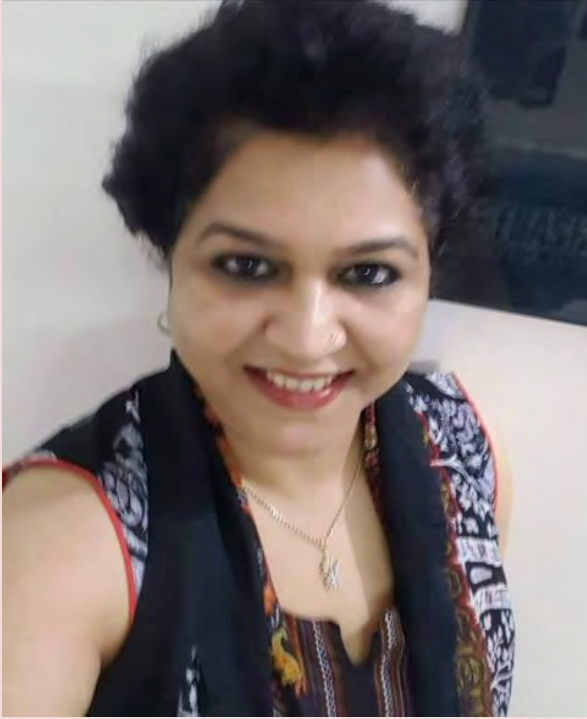
Thousand eyes pierce through me

With sharp-edged claws

My light is dredged out

I lie bleeding...

A silhouette, melting in the dark!



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.



in watercolor painting by suzette portes san jose

THE SOUND OF SILENCE

from the deafening echoes shattered
now the sound of silence be heard
'twas all of nothingness and emptiness
only the hues of darkened brightness

groped through the way with eyes opened
holding only to hope with a heart to mend
with dreams of a joyous day along the way
whispering hearts that tell tales and stay

within the sound of silence the best melody
humming the tune of the heart in serenity
in silence felt the home to dwell in its depth
where spirit dared to meddle without death

in the darkness that is hovering all around
only the stars glittering far beyond is found
on this night we shared, never an empty sky
our souls' silent calling of home in heavens high

the chill from the freezing wind that keeps blowing
a million eyes of the watchful stars that are daunting
the whispers of the breeze seemed to be wailing
the only sound heard silently in the core of my being



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



SOME WORDS UTTERED IMPRUDENTLY

Anyway, you needn't admire my lewd glance or gaze.

But this in depth conversation between my audacious pen
And each blank space of this perfectly pristine page
Would be eager to penetrate through your mental hymen.

You needn't appreciate my writings in a form of quartet,
Those want to lead you to another world by sudden storm.

But, my lines have been excavated from mine and
potentiated

To enthrall you in your own land for your intellectual
orgasm.

You needn't reciprocate the desirous hipsterism in me.

But, you'll have to oscillate with me with your vacuous glance.

These lines have been encrypted by my own terminology

To invite you in a wonderful world of quiescent romance.

Like a slowly melting snow, you will have to feel my radiation.

But, I'll never let you know the source of my love or passion.



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.



CANNOT HATE!

You are so much wanted

So much busy

I wait and wait

And it drives me crazy.

I knock and bang

Make hue and cry

Your predatory quiet

Renders me die

You are so well skilled
In newer ways of brutal killing
So much I wish you earnestly to succeed
In enticing me grow a deeper hate feeling

Would you believe
Your wishes are my creed
As much want to hate you
But never succeed.

Do not show remorse
For being so brutal
I do not have intention
To win this battle

Go for a kill
Worth every penny

Such a meek challenger

You won't find any.



Tribhu Nath Dubey: He is a sociologist by profession and poet by passion. He is employed with the Commissionarate of College Education Rajasthan as an Associate Professor in Sociology. He has been Co-Editor of the Rajasthan Journal of Sociology—a peer reviewed academic Journal. He is presently serving as the Secretary of Rajasthan Sociological Association. He loves to resort to poetry as an essential means of catharsis.



THE LIVING DEAD

Watching a film with that sinking feeling

The surety with which you can forever tell

The protagonist will not survive those 2 hours

Seen too many of those on celluloid

Or perhaps seen life a little too closely

The fear grips you the entire movie

Such that you miss the finer dialogues

The nuances of a well written script

All you can see in front of you
Is the dying man

Come the climax
He will be gone
His survival those two hours
Escapes you

When he speaks
You fear his silences
You etch out each fear
Trapped in that time frame

The sunrise tells you there will be no sequel
His afternoon meal his last
The protagonist assesses his audience
He knows death looms large

As much a coarse reality

Like a fine wrinkle

That those filters can't hide

For a moribund man can always tell from a mile

And smell mortal fear

In the living ...



Vandana Kumar: I am a poet, residing in New Delhi, India. I work as a Teacher. I have contributed to various anthologies.



SELF-WORTH

Everyday this mysterious life
Hypnotize me a lot
To watch my simple,
Zig-zag, boring, interesting life
So much undiscovered pages of 'me'
Are still there
To be discovered
Yet to come...

To surprise me,
To make me feel sad and happy
According to that situations
I take decisions of my life
And if my decisions are not going
To harm you...
You are not my master to decide
My personality and nature
Why should I wait to categorised me, by you
In a specific category!
No, I am not a tag piece of any material
I am a beautiful, precious
Creation of that divine
Who only allows me
To discover my inner self
And understand my worth and qualities
I feel, I am perfect competitor of mine
A perfect judge

To observe my shortcomings

And design, develop new hopes and possibilities to achieve more success!!



Varsha Saran: She is a homemaker but a bilingual poetess and a story writer by her passion, her many poems and stories have been published in different international Anthologies,,ezines, magazines and newspapers .She won many awards in writing.



THE SAREE, THE ELEGANCE

The elegant saree I wore, as was the norm, for a wedding in the family.

All who saw me in the ensemble faltered not in their generosity with the compliments.

Preferring to cherish the graciousness of their charming sentiments,

I chose to ignore the not-so-elegant attitude that borders this six meter wrap —

“Such charm, why do you degrade your beauteous self with jeans and salwars and skirts?”

From the traditional rigids, however, came more cutting remarks,

So unjustified of the uncut six meter length.

Knuckled fingers joined the caustic mouths to declare that Finally I had on the garb of the respectable married Indian woman.

Knuckled fingers, however, was all succulence with her married son.

“Poor guy, such a discomfort for him today. The occasion demands a dhoti.”

Who runs the patriarchal domination, I wondered, walking away,

A silent bearer of the ethics of a wedding ceremony guest, when

Aunty Whatever’s-her-name waylaid me to proclaim, "At last!"

Tshirts-keeshirts, jeans-veens, she said, they give her the crawls,

"So, promise me to wear saree always, for, that's what I like."

Smiling still, my status quo as vested as ever,

My words as elegant as the saree I wore, the promise I made,

"Of course, aunty. Your like will henceforth be my like too,

And wear I will, the saree that you are so fond of. Always. I swear.

But, how does one account for what I like? So, will you, aunty,

Wear instead of me, the jeans-veens that I find so comfortable to wear?



Vidya Shankar: A poet, writer, blogger, motivational speaker, mindfulness practitioner, and yoga enthusiast, residing in Chennai, India, I have been in ELT for more than two decades. I have been contributing articles to an international newspaper column as well as poetry and stories to anthologies and literary platforms. I have also published a book of poems.



JACINDA

"They are us." The unshed fears in the gaze,
A black headscarf filled with hope
And the space in which she is what she says.

Eyes shut, and then the warm embrace
Eloquent and lighting up
The tallest building in the universe.

It is all written on her pensive face - -
Some lead through pointless promises

Others stretch out to touch, with grace

The sadness of the stunned survivors:

"Speak the names of those who were lost rather than

The name of the man who took them." After the prayers,

Fifty worshippers become their past, but their presence

Is felt, at this place, in the words of this

Beautiful voice of a country's conscience.



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



WE ARE BUT MORTALS MERE

We are but mortals mere

Let us dream of a land

Where the mind is without fear

No gods will demand deathly fear

That comes from men's hand

We are but mortals mere

You have to face the truth sheer
That joy and sorrow are a band
Where the mind is without fear

It was said by many an ancient seer
That greed for power is quicksand
We are but mortals mere

Freedom of thought already in arrear
Is much needed for our land
Where the mind is without fear

More precious than money or career
Love and peace we hold dear
We are but mortals mere
Where the mind is without fear



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



THE FIERY RED LIGHT

I don't like those traffic signals on that roundabout. I don't know if it has some deeply ingrained prejudice against me. Because, as it sees me approaching, it flashes the fiery red and I have to stop.

And then I see an old lady walking forward from the side of the road who has been waiting for the red signal up till now. She has wrinkles all over her face and hands. Her silvery hair shines bright under the sun and her saree unlike all the beggars in the city is clean. Her eyes are strikingly nonchalant. And her face looks very sad: long, thin and drooping.

She walks slowly and reaches out to every single man and woman in hurry. She stretches out her arm with a steel bowl. Someone in the traffic takes out the wallet and drops a coin in her bowl. She takes it to her forehead as a gesture

of gratitude. And then she looks at the red light as if showering her blessings on it; the same red light I hated before.



Vivek Nath Mishra: My short stories have been published by The Hindu, Muse India, Queen mob's Teahouse, Prachya Review, Indian ruminations and many others. I currently live in Varanasi.



SONNET 100

The bard made Shylock speak at the trial
The latter shook the theatre with six words
He pronounced, "A Jew's blood is also red."
We have all known blood discriminates not
My brothers, wherever they may be praying,
A masjid, a church, a temple, a synagogue
When they lie lifeless gushing forth blood
It is hard to tell for the world who is who
Blood mingles, becomes unidentifiable dot,
The bigots having had fake beliefs turn sot
End a part of them in bombing the other

Lives to them not a thing to ponder over
Wonder what a world without religions be like
Since with them it cannot be free off strike.



Zulfiqar Parvez: He is the Vice Principal cum O Levels English Language Teacher, London Grace International School, Dhaka. He has done his Honours and Masters in English Language and Literature from the University of Rajshahi.



ciao! 😊