

GloMag
GLOMAG

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose
Magazine
July 2021*



Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

VIJAY NAIR



TITLE OF COVER PIC

THE SAD MUSICIAN

ABOUT THE ARTIST

I retired as Associate Professor, Department of English, Government Victoria College Palakkad, Kerala. I taught English Language and Literature in various colleges for 31 years. My Ph.D. thesis was on the plays of Wole Soyinka.

My collections of verse include “The City and the Hermitage” (1988), “Doors Swing Open” (2008), “Eyes” (2010) and “Whispers of Light in Darkness” (2013). My poems have also appeared in 42 offline and 80 online 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. I have been fortunate to have had my poems nominated on 8 occasions as 'Poem of the Month' at Poets, Artists Unplugged. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad.

I have been writing poetry for the last 40 years. My interest in painting began 25 years ago. A poem is often inspired by thoughts or feelings about a person, place, or event that have left an impact on the poet, and hence compels him to "speak". There is a silent conversation between the poet and the reader.

ART PERSPECTIVE

My artwork is hugely subjective and personal. Generally, I use bold colours to convey my thematic preoccupations. For instance, in the painting "The Sad Musician", I have tried to express the dejection and the despair of a musician who is "broken" like the strings of his instrument.

ABOUT GLOMAG

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

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

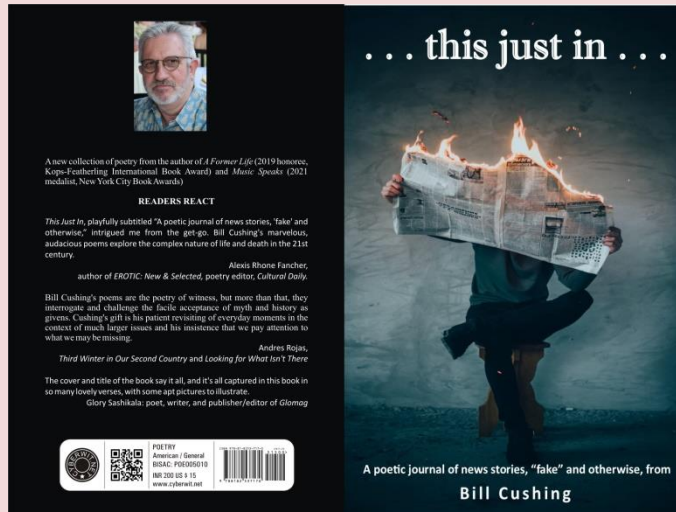
~ ***Glory Sasikala***

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

© All rights reserved. 2021

BOOK OF THE MONTH

...this just in...by Bill Cushing



LINK TO BUY THE BOOK

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1722>

REVIEW BY DAVID GREEN

<https://davidgreenbooks.blogspot.com/search/label/Bill%20Cushing>

Poets sometimes explain themselves at readings when filling in between poems. It can be useful. Bill Cushing does so here in an introduction. His last collection, *A Former Life*, reviewed here 5/8/2019, had a foreword that was more a biographical note and thanks but his introduction here goes

further. One might think of some poets who would benefit from doing likewise but perhaps it would ruin the mystique.

By disciplining themselves to use language as efficiently, almost as miserly as possible, poets learn how to extract as much meaning from as few words as possible, Bill says and I like the 'miserly' in there. I'm less enamoured of the definition, *poems are "the history of the human soul,"* which reminds me of Carol Ann Duffy's 'poetry is the music of being human'. I'd say less than that, that poetry is the language poems are written in and a poem is a poem if its author says it is. I'd prefer not to claim too much for it.

In this new book Bill has war poems, several that sympathize with outsiders and a number that are ekphrastic—based on pictures that are provided alongside—and range from rhymed and metrical to unrhymed free verse and varying line lengths. For me the most successful is the 10 lines of *Dispatches*, with the double meaning of its title about the passing of his parents and,

*My mother's saboteur
steeped her in dementia
making death more like a cure.*

Without wanting to make it a definition of poetry, it's at its best when the language achieves more than its constituent parts. Also, in *The Nature of Snow*,

*it becomes difficult to tell
whether it floats down
or the world
rises.*

Bill's enquiry into the phenomenon is slow-paced and mystical, using line-breaks to enhance its careful thought process.

The pictures chosen as source material are as various as the poems, most memorably *Women in Black* by Marianne von Werefkin, 1910, which for all the world could have been by Marc Chagall. Ekphrastic poems need to add to their

picture rather than equate to them which Bill successfully does in *Disappeared Dreams* with,

Stealing people's dreams along the blue avenue,

these shadow babushkas

grip full sacks in their left hand,

holding our reveries like bales of cotton.

War to End batters insistently on only two rhymes in its 13 lines, three of which are 'blood'; *Hazardous Material* wonders whether import restrictions include such dangerous books as Ovid, Vonnegut and Solzhenitsyn which, of course, at times, they have. *Right on Time* is possibly the most successful of the poems recognizing the disregarded classes as a subject for reportage. The theme that draws the collection together is this concern for humanity which arrives at an appropriate time as America recovers from the horrors of the Trump presidency and the damage has to be repaired. There wasn't much poetry to be had in his agenda but we can hope that it is being restored now.

CONTENT

Abu Siddik	16
Adnan Shafi	19
Amanita Sen	22
Ambika Talwar	25
Aminool Islam	28
Amitabh Mitra	30
Amita Sarjit Ahluwalia	32
Ampat Koshy	35
Amrita Valan	37
Aneek Chatterjee	39
Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tiku)	42
Ann Christine Tabaka	45
Anurag Mathur	48
Asoke Kumar Mitra	51
Barry Pittard	54
Bevan Boggenpoel	56
Bharati Nayak	59

Bill Cushing	62
Bilquis Fatima	65
Bishnu Charan Parida	68
Bishnupada Ray	72
Brian Mackenzie	74
Brindha Vinodh	77
B.S.Tyagi	80
Carl Scharwath	84
Chandramohan Naidu	87
Christopher Villiers	90
Dale Adams	93
Daniel de Culla	96
Deena Padayachee	100
Dipankar Sarkar	103
Don Beukes	105
Duane Vorhees	111
Dusmanta Choudhury	113
Eliza Segiet	116

Ferris E Jones	119
Fiza Abubacker	122
Gauri Dixit	125
Gayatree G. Lahon	128
Geeta Varma	131
Geethanjali Dilip	134
Glory Sasikala	137
Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny	139
Gopal Lahiri	143
Joan McNerney	146
Joe Kidd	149
John Grey	152
Kakoli Ghosh	154
Kamar Sultana Sheik	157
Ketaki Mazumdar	160
K.S.Subramanian	163
Laksmisree Banerjee	167
Linda Imbler	171

Lopamudra Mishra	174
Lubna Ahmed	177
Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar	180
Manisha Manhas	183
Manjula Asthana Mahanti	189
Merlyn Alexander	192
Michael Lee Johnson	195
Moinak Dutta	198
Nazia Islam	201
Ngozi Olivia Osuoha	205
Nikhat Mahmood	209
Nitusmita Saikia	213
Nivedita Karthik	216
Padmini Rambhatla	218
Panjami Anand	221
Pankajam	226
Paramita Mukherjee Mullick	230
Parasuram Ramamoorthi	233

Paul Brookes	236
Prahallad Satpathy	239
Pratima Apte	242
Preety Bora	245
Raamesh Gowri Raghavan	248
Radhamani Sarma	252
Raj Isaac	256
Rajnish Mishra	259
Rakesh Chandra	261
Ranjana Sharan Sinha	264
Ravi Ranganathan	267
Reena Prasad	270
Robert Feldman	273
Romeo della Valle	277
Ryan Quinn Flanagan	280
Samir Gautam	283
Samixa Bajaj	287
Samrudhi Dash	290

Sangeeta Gupta	293
Sara Bubber	295
Sarala Balachandran	297
Scott Thomas Outlar	300
Shankar N Kashyap	303
Shobha Warriier	307
Shreekumar Varma	310
Sindhu Rana	313
Smruti Ranjan Mohanty	316
Someeta Das	319
Sri N Srivatsa	322
Stefan Bohdan	324
Stephen Goetz	328
Sudeshna Mukherjee	332
Sujata Dash	336
Sumana Bhattacharjee	339
Sumitra Mishra	342
Sunil Kaushal	345

Sunil Sharma	350
Sunita Singh	352
Supatra Sen	354
Suzette Portes San Jose	358
Swapan Kumar Rakshit	363
Uma Agarwal Bajaj	366
Val Smit	369
Vandana Kumar	372
Vasanthi Swetha	375
Vidya Shankar	377
Vijay Nair	380
Vineetha Mekkoth	383
Zulfiqar Parvez	385



A MONSOON NOON

We Need Legions of Traitors Like Stans

Father Stan Swamy, not a mere voice of the voiceless, he, a priest who 'leapt out the walls of the Church and made the people his religion'.

Unsteady with advanced stage of Parkinson's,

A frail and ailing elderly man,

imprisoned, denied bail time and again,

even for a sipper he had to set eyes to court.

Cold-blooded murder at Taloja prison.

of course he was a traitor—his oneness with poor tribals
is an open testimony to his treachery!

And we need legions of traitors like Stans
who can speak truth to power,
let millions traitors bloom
and fill our arid lands with singing springs .

Toothless patriots, sewed lips, chameleons,
crows, rats, pigs, rotten tomatoes by roadsides
I have seen much.

I know why the caged birds still sing,
And I know why the free birds oil feathers after each bath.



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

www.abusiddik.com



WALKING PAINS

A man so honest I
Can't get through—
His pain passing by

in a short time.

The soul said,

do or die,

I walked - the pain

And the soul all died
a death.

I tried with my
Bones and heart

Of body, not even
a sharded impression:
Months of ideation, days

Of pother, - desert
man in a hurry.



Adnan Shafi: I am a poet, writer, columnist, translator, Ghazal writer, motivational speaker, blogger, and reviewer from Tral Kashmir (J and K). I have contributed my poems to various reputed magazines and journals. I have also published my poetry book 'Tears fall in my heart'. In 2020, I was awarded by Gujarat Sahitya Academy for poetry. In 2021, I was awarded the Shakespeare medal for my literary merit, writing quality, uniqueness, and creativity. Furthermore, I have won the 2021 best achiever award in the field of English literature as the title, 'Best English Poet'.



AN OLD FRIENDSHIP

I hear you when you say
friendships felt like pacts

that you were a part of,
with a shaken belief on

the warmth it emanated, if
it would withstand life's winter.

On a cloudy day with compromised
lights you see better all that is

blinding in stark daylight,
like a sharp photo, not burnt out.

There you see those thin discerning
lines of rifts, ones you have ignored

in the name of an easy bonding
that time breeds in unbridled laughter.

Then one day the crack-lines give in
to some untoward event, unforeseen.

All the metaphors of quakes, storms,
avalanche do not ease your pains.

For the latest letting-go you resort to
the swell of the rains. Your eyes comply.



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



PRISTINE BREATH

My heart leaps wondering
who is arriving as
thunder rattles darkening sky
before summer ends
on delicate neck of swans
feathered, tensile, supple
wet with dipping in sunlit lakes.

While longing slips somewhere
deep between my thighs

I wonder with uncertainty
who whispers...
A whisper quiet dulcet whole
bendable, fragrant like musk
of astonished forests lying in wait.
Mad wild rains begin to rise

make me succulent
ripe saffron mango –
Cool hot matters none, for
moment swallows this cosmos,
whose voice slowly recites
poetry of our origins
into my ears, pores, shut eyes
where All around me is resplendent!

I am left wondering
who spoke... – Is summer ending?

Are swans flying away over lakes before
Time's pristine breath curls into mine?



Ambika Talwar: She is an India-born educator, healer-artist, author who bridges worlds with ecstatic poetry. Author of *4 Stars & 25 Roses* (for her father); *My Greece: Mirrors & Metamorphoses*, a poetic-spiritual travelogue, her poems appear in *Grateful Conversations*, *Beyond Words*, *Kyoto Journal*, *On Divine Names*, *Roseate Anthology*, *Glo-Mag*, *Enchanting Verses*, *Quill&Parchment*, *Tower Journal*, and diverse anthologies – print/online. Pushcart nominee, *Aatish 2 awardee*, she won Best Original Story for a short film. Intuitive healing practitioner, she affirms “*intricate power of language stirs us to poetry and holism.*” Current CQ/CSPS board member, she lives in Los Angeles/New Delhi.

<https://creativeinfinities.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOl1DcYcEJ0&t=107>

S



LOVE & MARRIAGE THESE DAYS

Status falls in love
with status.

Appearance falls in love
with appearance.

Status marries status.

Appearance marries appearance.

The heart hardly falls in love
with the heart.

The heart hardly marries
the heart.



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



GWALIOR

peacocks still visit the once lush dying tree

sipping tea our glances entangled

we strain to hear the hushed whispers between them

next time, the tree won't be there and so would be the
peacocks

her voice catching my mind

we are old now, clinging to this kothi and you

are all i have

the revelry of our minds

yet still continues breaking beyond time and

space

your familiar aroma

still grazes me

your eyelashes sometimes close momentarily

imprisoning those few moments

at Gwalior



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



TINKLING LINKS

Conversations

About resilience

Against heat

Should we raise

The cooling level of Air-

Conditioning?

Could you please
Increase the speed
Of ceiling fans?

Perhaps salad
Cold lunch would be
A good idea

Mangoes actually
The perfect antidote
For summer heat

A lemonade
Glass with tinkling ice
Utter bliss

Linking up

Tingling icy haiku

Summer heaven



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



<https://www.sujatanandy.com/medusa-the-untameable-power/>

Medusa has bumps on her forehead

Anger

Medusa has light green skin

The snakes are dark green

Hair

Medusa's eyes would have turned me(n) to stone

Medusa: such red lips, all men desire you

But none can have you

Medusa, why then this beauty written all over

Her/You?



Ampat Koshy: Dr. Koshy A.V. is presently working as an Assistant Professor in the English Department of Jazan University, Saudi Arabia. He has many books, degrees, diplomas, certificates, prizes, and awards to his credit and also, besides teaching, is an editor, anthology maker, poet, critic and writer of fiction. He runs an autism NPO with his wife, Anna Gabriel. Two of his co-authored books published in 2020 were Amazon best-sellers in India and USA, namely, Wine-kissed Poems with Jagari Mukherjee and Vodka by the Volga with Santosh Bakaya.



Photo by Nandhu Kumar on Unsplash

LIFE FINDS A WAY

Life is strange these days

Like flowers peeping out of cracks and nooks

The veins of existence

Where as you water them they sing

Your voice your name your address love.

Life marked off the racks of gain.

Light am I like flashed lightning

That springs out of the rain
Heavy heart like crash of thunder
Serenades the swell of pain
The painting has an owner
And the owner has no name.



Amrita Valan: Amrita Valan is a mother of two boys and a writer based in Bangalore India. She has a Master's degree in English literature. She has worked in the hospitality industry, BPOs and as content creator for deductive logic and reasoning in English. Her poems and stories have been published in several anthologies, online journals and zines. Her debut collection of fifty poems Arrivederci was published on Amazon in May 2021.

<https://www.amazon.com/Arrivederci-Fifty-Poems-Amrita-Valan/dp/B09484PMQF>



EXISTENCE

If you ask me why
I'm a pessimist
I'll show you fraudulence, forgery,
treachery, murder, rape, flesh trade
& many ugly faces of human life.

All these made me see
through the dark

If you ask me why

I'm a staunch optimist

I will show you noble souls, donors,
givers, some women players in every sport
who sought to reach the sky from their
wretched homes.

I will show you magicians who turned
dry and fallen brown leaves green through toil.

If you tell me I'm not exact;

I'll tell you the story of human
existence.



Aneek Chatterjee: I am a poet and academic from Kolkata, India. I got published in reputed literary magazines and poetry anthologies across the globe. I authored 14 books including three poetry collections and a novel. My third poetry collection titled “of Ashes and Persiflage” (New Delhi and Kolkata, Hawakal) came out in November, 2020. I have a Ph.D. in International Relations, and have been teaching in leading Indian and foreign universities. I was a Fulbright – Nehru Visiting faculty at the University of Virginia, USA and a recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach abroad. My poetry has been archived at Yale University.



DON'T FORGET TO LOVE ME

And don't forget to love me

In this season of torrential rain

The sky is draped with dark clouds

Try to love me and let me forget my pain

And don't forget to smile at me

In this season of overflowing brook

The trees are drunk and dance to
The tune of thunder and wind runs amok

Don't forget to remember me
Sitting on stairs in a thoughtful mood
For love sprouts in the heart of a
Lover looking at the rain and flitting cloud

Don't forget to hum a song
For me and love me again and again
I am afraid your heart may change
When it is time for the snow after the rain



Anil Kumar Panda (alias Tikku): 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.



REALITY SETS IN

On the outer edge of reality,

I planted my dreams.

What seed should I sow,

to resurrect the image

of what I want to be?

Salt air and harsh winds

have corroded me.

My hands no longer

weave the silken thread.

I fought to the end,

but lost the beginning,

when you were by my side.

Soft words and hard kisses,

vanished with the

arid soil of despair.

Logic refuses to move forward.

So, off I walk,

poppy seeds in hand,

colorful dreams tripping off my palm.

I see the edge become clear.

****Published by The New Reader Magazine, March 2020***



Ann Christine Tabaka: I am a poet and writer residing in Delaware, USA. I am a retired organic chemist and a retired personal trainer. I have 13 poetry books and have been published in numerous magazines and journals worldwide. I was nominated for the 2017 Pushcart Prize in Poetry. I was the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year (Poetic), and I have won poetry awards from individual publications.

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



POETRY DEADLINES

Poetry contests,
Submission deadlines
Riding a wild mare
To a Derby's time
Words flow when they can,
At other times,
They stay in thought eddies,
Until they can find their lines

Thoughts, wild winds
Blowing fast and slow
Sometimes nothing to think about
Other times a cascading flow
I ponder on this
As I sit down to write,
A poem leads me to it
Cannot pull it to me with all my might.



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.



HELLO DARKNESS

Arrogance and darkness

Wordless communication

An extension of silence

Tonight storm and thunder

Warm rain in the wilderness

Between the knees of the sky

Memories arrive

Beneath the skin

There is no dust and mud

Rain washed away

Torn lips, blood-stained fingers

Fragments of desire

Brute darkness rub shoulders

With cobblestone

The endless longing for silence

Moving from dune to dune

Wandering aimlessly in the universe



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



THE OLD COUPLE (PART 3)

As our steps get slower,
we'll thank instead of cripple
the vast land Captain Cook landed on.

We'll praise the

Ancient People; black with bright-lit hard wisdom.

Praise blessed red and ancient soil now hard, oh so hard-
pushed, that tries,

like a brave saint, to bless us all.

We'll be up and doing, you and I, dearest.

We'll not slump on couches,

Nor let our necks crick and our backs hoop or

our eyes gawk day and night at screenfuls of
News and Entertainment,
Most of it soon to sink forgotten like a
million gogglegoogly-eyed tv mealtimes, overstuffed while
others boil, chill and starve ...



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.



TRAVELLING

Travelling has never been,

This difficult before.

Leaving behind the person,

You care for and adore.

It is out of your control,

You have to leave.

No matter how enormous,

And huge the grief.

As I got on the bus,
I tried to remain strong.
But that heart-broken feeling,
Is with you all along.

I burst out in tears,
Overwhelmed by the fact.
I will see my love again,
One day, when I'll be travelling back.



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



SEA, SKY AND FIRE

How wonderful it is

When the rising waves

Of my heart

Try to touch your vastness!

But alas!

You seem so distant!

Can you not read
The depth of my emotions

That coil underneath?

Is your nearness an illusion
As you seem to mingle
In my being from beyond the horizon?

Look at me
Can you not find
Those golden streaks
Of fire emanating from you?
They also dazzle my wavy emotions!

You are infinity,
So near, yet so distant
You hold both light and darkness

The Sun and the stars are your jewelry

You are also the black hole

Where stars and planets hide

How small is any ocean at your feet

But you are magnanimous

As you shower your love and light

Day and night.

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.



DISAPPEARED DREAMS

As this place at the foot of the mountains
moves from dark into day,
black-clad women bend under
bone-white bags draped over shoulders.

Stealing people's dreams along the blue avenue,
these shadow *babooshkas*
grip filled sacks in their left hand,
holding our reveries like bales of cotton.

One kneels at the road's shoulder, having dropped
her duffel, revealing her face
from beneath a sooted cowl
had any vigilant villager been aware.

Another stops, stoops to scoop back
the spilled contents but worries
after the distance lost by the delay
as a trio of *dopplegangers*

trudges past, bringing their bounty
to the realm of Morpheus
where demons can gather
to dine on our evening's fantasies.



Bill Cushing: He continues writing and reading and is even preparing to return to the classroom after a year or so of retirement. He's proud to announce the release of his latest book and is currently working on a memoir focused on his earlier years when he served as an electrician in the Navy and later on board other ships before he finally returned to college at the age of 38.

<https://www.cyberwit.net/publications/1722>



PEACE IN RAIN

Crunchy fritters fry in frying pan

Water whistles in the electric kettle,

While chutney churns in a blender

Preparations are in full swing to welcome the rain.

Drop by drop the rain falls on tree tops,

Then hastens to a downpour, quenching the parched lawns,

And drenching leaves and flowers under its clear shower,

While it streams down window panes washing away the
dust.

Aroma of hot snacks deliciously blend with the petrichor,
tickling taste buds,

Little fingers dig into fritters and watching the rain, cackle
with fun,

Chiming in their rainy anecdotes elders sip tea from firmly
held cups

and watch the steam rise and disappear in the mist.

I quietly slip away onto the balcony

To find my peace in the rain, undisturbed.

There is something mystical about it for when I watch the
rain

A pleasant calmness seep through my veins.

I refuse to listen to any chitter-chatter, not even of my
brain,

But only listen to the pitter patter of the transparent rain,

For nothing more peaceful and soothing

I find, than the fragile music of the rain.



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



A NIGHT IN GHOSH MARKET

Here is the night

Passing by,

Sleepless on the bed, as I was,

Tossing and turning,

Got up and peeped through,

The misty darkness

Surging through the dingy lanes

Dungs scattered over,
Wafted a stinky smell

A pack of dogs
Intermittently barked at
The quivering shadows

The dark night stood naked,
Garlanded with sparkling stars
A dazzling moon ornated its black forehead

Two cyclists passed by
Breaking the stilly silence
Cracking some filthy jokes
As night kissed me calling
down the stairs

Night embraced me, as I came on to the street,
It smiled and whispered a love song,
My heart melted in rhapsody,

Silence enveloped my whole being
As I mingled in the dark,
And night I became



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



YELLOW

yes

a natural cure for my gloom

Amaltas

this yellow is

such a bright colour

when the trees wear it

on their flower

like pure gold

for a few days

soon to wither

and soon to fall

but leaving in its wake

seeds for a tree to spring

and another yellow to bloom.



Bishnupada Ray: He is an Associate Professor of English at the University of North Bengal. His poems have appeared in various journals and anthologies. He can be contacted at bishnuray@gmail.com.



FROM THE NORTH

so cold

these Scots

so cold

grandfathers fought

the herring shoals

the wild wind

and endless battles

of the seas moods

these Norwegians
so cold
fishermen trolled
the north seas
a little oil
suddenly rich
with the biggest pensions
that's ever been

these souls
from the outer isles
so cold
now see the daily news
did it change their life?
do they still love?
break each other's hearts

or like the grey seals
carry on as they are



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



THE SIGHT OF THE FIRST RAINBOW

Unfurling the window curtains
as the first fresh Terpsichore of rains leads to petrichor,
an aroma emanates,
like that first greenish-yellow
mango of an early summer, attracting senses, olfactory,
gustatory and visual-
with that tantalizing tease of a treat.

A young girl, all of five, waiting to see her first rainbow in
life, peeps and screams in excitement and calls her mother.

“Oh! Look ma!

You never told me that

when the sun and the rain

play peek-a-boo, seven princesses wearing tiaras of

Violet

Indigo

Blue

Green

Yellow

Orange

Red

do a fashion parade in the sky.”

Her mother, seeing the happiness

in her child’s’ eyes,

mirrors the double rainbow

in her own twin eyes.



Brindha Vinodh: She is a postgraduate in Econometrics but a writer within. She has contributed to several anthologies and has been a featured poet in 'year of the poet' by InnerChildPress international', USA, and her roseate sonnet selected as one of the best poems of 2020 by the same team.



THE SQUIRREL

The other afternoon in the veranda I was reading Shakespearean Tragedy containing a series of lectures by A C Bradley which he delivered at Liverpool, Glasgow, and Oxford, at my leisure with my legs on the wooden stool in front. Not before long a beautiful squirrel with grey and white strips and bushy tail up and her baby squirrel in mouth scuttled past dodging the two dogs hotly pursuing her. I stood up yelling at them.

‘Get away, rogues.’

They stopped growling. I chased after them till the road bent. After a couple of minutes I returned and the little creature was seen nowhere. Curiously I looked around but in vain.

‘Gone!’

I was glad to save it. As before, I resumed reading. After a while a shrill squeak was heard as if she were in distress. I looked for her here and there but did not find. Just then she appeared at the gate craning her neck but ran back. It dared not come near me. The squeak continued. Now I felt that the baby squirrel was somewhere inside. In a little while she came haltingly.

‘Fear not, darling.’

‘Come and have.’

I threw crumbs of biscuit to her and waited.

She did not even look at them and crossed the floor fearlessly scurrying in the direction from where the squeak came. It charged up the stairs and ran all around. The screech was making her restless. I got up to help her and went upstairs as I felt that the baby squirrel was there. Not finding it there I returned. The shrill cry was coming intermittently. I was sure that it was on the roof.

‘Chee! Chee!’

‘Ch...e...e! Ch...e...e!’

She responded equally.

Then she ran down and paused near the door of the shut room. I heard the scratching sound she was making with her paws and sharp teeth. I raised my head buried in the book and drove her away upstairs. I was dead sure that the baby was nowhere but on the roof.

‘Chee, chuu! Chee, chuu!’

She ran down again and started gnawing at the door. I was annoyed as to why she did not get it that the baby was not in the room.

‘Get lost.’

She did not. She looked determined. I threw my slipper at her. She jumped aside and sat on the second step of the staircase glowering at me. I got up to drive her away. She ran out of the veranda. I thought if she entered the room through the window, she would nibble my books and papers. As I opened the door and drew back the curtains, the baby came out scurrying and squatted in the corner with a long squeak. She ran in to hear its cry. She reached the corner in no time and hugged and licked it all over and scuttled off taking it in her mouth.

How come a man is so self-seeking? So remorseful I was. I despised myself. Immediately the Albatross came to my mind.

It dawned on me when human senses failed, animal's prevailed.

True.



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



EVENING CONSTELLATIONS

Intermingling of the aura

Forever buried.

In the unconsciousness

Of breathless denial

Asterisms fill my sight

As the false memories

Of a partial Utopia

Drench my soul!

Voices inside the head

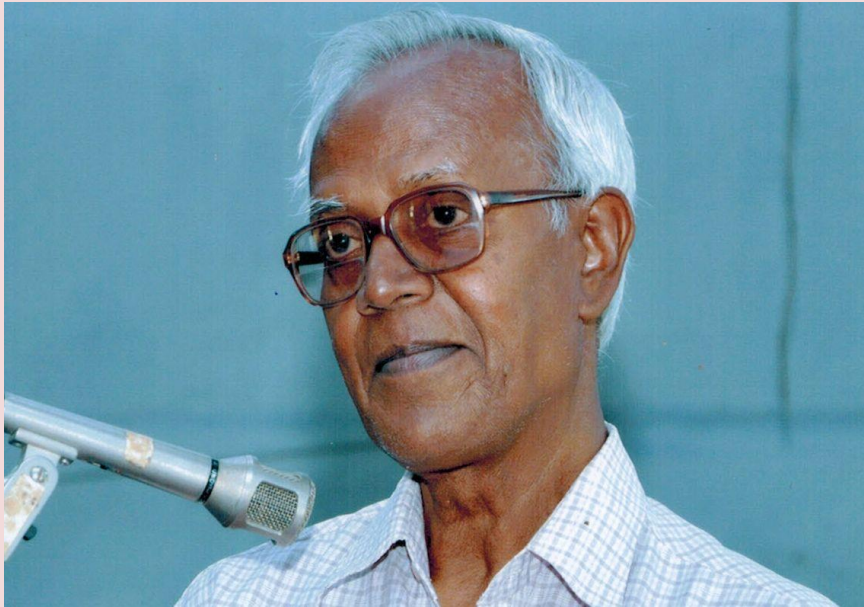
A genuine symphony as

Crowds address this

New world familiarity.



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



Insensitive

Indifferent state with people drunk in power

find it easy to pick old man

dump him in jail

on false charges

deny sipper

deny, delay.

Then to hospital to and fro

begs he for bail

on health grounds,

denied again by the learned

called judges

he dies

then to cover guilt

Judges sing in chorus

we tried to save him but could not.

Father forgive us

for we knew not what we had done.

Statue of justice, weeps

tears wet the black ribbon.

Those who should speak fall silent.

At times blatantly, democracy, liberty is shamed.

An infirm old man dies, but wakes you up.

Shakes you up.



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.



A PIECE OF CAKE

A mother's love in mint icing

A piece of cake for a school trip

Sweetness of generous slicing

Ample sponge with chocolate chip.

With sandwich and fruit came the treat
Such as a young boy remembers

Nothing has tasted since so sweet
I poke at memory's embers.

When life was all a piece of cake
Sweet mostly, of a straightforward taste
Then all seemed good for a treat's sake
And so much after seems a waste.



S

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

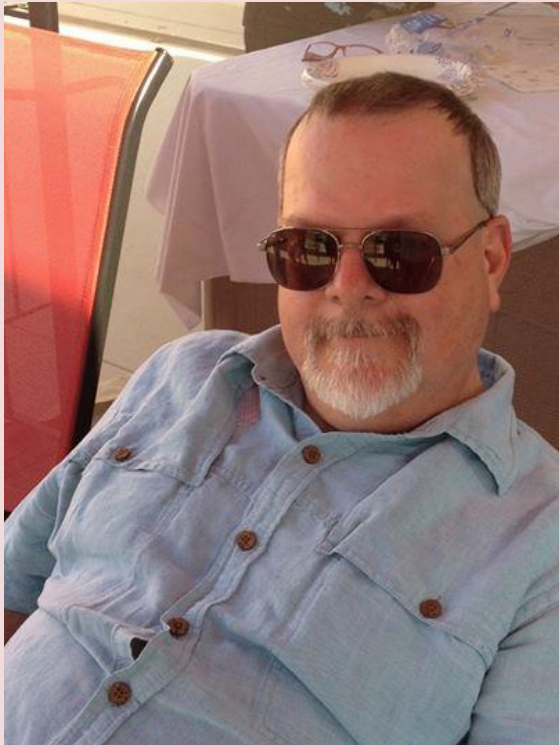


WATERFALL

From the icy mountaintops
to the rushing streams below
like time itself, each raindrop
must follow the ceaseless flow
through each and every season
nature's cycle never ends
until it finds the ocean
where life begins once again

I sit by this waterfall
as it smooths the rocks below
I watch golden autumn leaves
dancing circles in its flow
Across the distant cloudscapes
and a hundred million years
each raindrop flew forever
before it came back home here

Surrounded by the colors
of rocks and trees and sky
my mind can't help but wonder
at the endless ifs and whys
for I am just wandering
following my inner eye
dreaming away summer days
as the water goes drifting by



Dale Adams: I am a poet and musician residing in Oklahoma, USA. I work in an auto dealership. I have been writing poems and composing songs since 2011. I have my own SoundCloud Channel where many of my songs and poems can be heard. I have converted other poets work into songs for them. My work has appeared in several anthologies.



AGAPITO'S PASSAGE THROUGH THE CHURCH, UNIONS AND POLITICS

It was in the present age when Agapito went to the Seminary to study for a priest, to serve God, his Church and his lambs and lambs, attracted by his rebelliousness, living like God, his bells ringing, that illusions resound.

After nine years, when he was fed up with making spiritual, mental and natural wankings, and with a special anger against all that crowd of clergy people, hypocritical, obscene, deceitful priests (priests), that his good to him based only on deceiving and hallucinating the people, he

went out into the ring of life to rub shoulders with all the Asses and all that bunch of people from the common people.

Studying Teaching and Philosophy, he had the glory of having successfully sung the beautiful garment of Hee Haw, obtaining, through tests, an official position, living in the city of Madrid, a city that no other in Spain beats him in Hee Haws.

With a "Yes, I do" given on time, he came with his beloved Muse to a city declared of cultural interest. Here, he became a union in order to fight in favor of the workers "and as many goods as he can procure for them."

When he went to join the Union, he noticed that whoever received him threw some smelly and unbearable holes, proud that he believed that Agapito deserved them, and hoped he would leave as he had come, "with fresh wind", because in that Union does not admit civil servants of any type and less servants of the State.

Agapito endured the plague like a brave man. He signed the card, paid his fee, saying to himself: -What annoy, this garment, that I want to dedicate myself to the great Asses of my land.

When he fulfilled his duty, he stopped paying the fee and joined a political party whose praise of Bray is not envied by any other party. In it, the greatest Poets, Writers, Artists and Intellectuals militated, mounting several candidacies of anarcho syndicalists, with very little electoral success in a City where the Hee Haw triumphs in the shadow of a sacred crib.

When you ask Agapito why his funny asnifluous accent is becoming, he answers:

-I felt, since I was a child, modulated by the grace of God: I had been baptized, I did Communion, I was an altar boy, and I became a seminarian.

There, in the Seminary, both in my prayers and in spiritual exercises, my only desire was to look for Puta (Whore), goddess of the bushes, extolling her in heroic pollinal meters, or in Gregorian.

Later, already in the street, I wanted to be a very useful work for the human race, therefore, honoring the Ass that inhabits me, I wanted to teach the Asses of my Country what a Bray given at all times is worth.

That cry or clamor that resounds in Universities, Institutes, Seminars, Senates and Congresses instills in men wisdom, inspiring priests with sound verses and politicians those

voices that seem to come out of stables and corrals, reaching up to the sky.

I know that the common people appreciate their Donkeys very much; all of them debtors to their Brays, because thanks to them they get good emoluments, victories and scepters.



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



THEY ARE FAMILY

During the third assault of Covid-19, joblessness, hunger, homelessness, poverty, and pain suffused South Africa. Sinister figures betrayed the disadvantaged. In the midst of a freezing winter, the helpless were told that they could help themselves. July 12 2021 was the beginning of their time to take and not pay.

But there are other sides to this. Those places where we shopped and healed had become a part of our lives. It was where we felt welcome, where we felt comfortable, where smiles greeted us. Over the years, the people of these places had become our friends. They had come to earn our

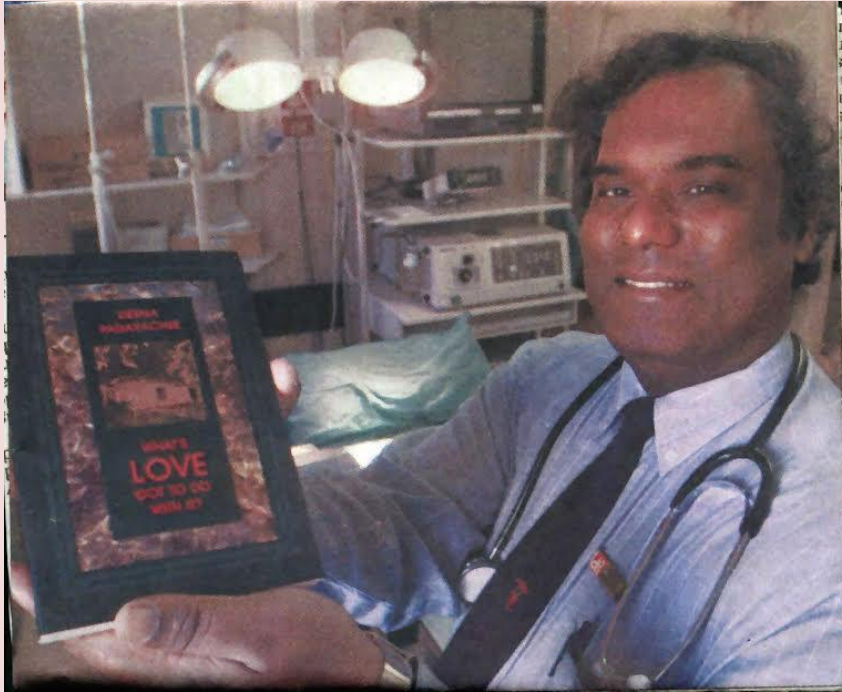
trust, we got to know them. We liked them. They sold us our bread and milk. They filled our vehicles with fuel.

They gave us our medication.

Now, with their invigorating smiles and laughter, their warmth, their empathy, their humanity, their humour, they are gone. Their jobs, their careers, their lives have been smashed. Their pain suffuses the air. This can happen again. Companies are now disinvesting in Kwa Zulu Natal.

Over 160 shopping malls throughout Kwa Zulu Natal and Soweto were simultaneously looted, burned and destroyed in coordinated ongoing operations. Food stores were systematically broken into and completely emptied by hungry people. Many were torched. Hospitals, doctor's premises, pharmacies, petrol stations were looted, ransacked and burned. Chemical plants were set alight, factories were destroyed, warehouses cleared.

Insurrection and racial conflict is being stoked. Hundreds queue for essentials, food, bread, milk and nappies. There are thousands more unemployed, thousands fleeing South Africa. Mandela and many others tried to prevent this. Our country is at the edge of implosion. May cool heads prevail.



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.



DEAD, I

There was I

Once upon a time

Wanted to touch the sky

Soak in the energy of the Sun

Dance to the tune of the Universe

And make merry all the year round

Yet the reality kept on changing

The present continued to emerge

Unknown and uncertain at every corner of the road

First the wings were lost

Then went the springs in the feet
The Sun had gone far away
With that the energy went
The Universe stopped humming its rhyme
I stopped connecting all the way.



Dipankar Sarkar: I am only a part-time poet residing in Kolkata, India. I work as the Chief Executive Officer of Mongia Green Foundation. Poetry is the only soulmate I have. I find solace in poetry when my heart bleeds. Poetry comes to me completely unannounced, without a notice. I wake up sometimes, out of an altered reality or out of a daydream, and voila, words just start flowing out of nowhere and completely inundate me, forcing me to live an experience of writing.



WAITING FOR CHANGE

Victory Speech – Fellow citizens brothers and sisters
comrades and freedom fighters donors

and moaners – We thank you dearly for your votes your
trust your lust for freedom! We

promise to make your dreams come true! Houses cars jobs
the sky has no limits this is

your moment! We are here for you we love you trust us we
will stand by you we swear!

News Flash – Earlier today thousands of pensioners arrived at shut doors hoping to receive their hard earned pensions – Many had to travel by minibus taxi and train hoping to receive what they deserve after a lifetime of service to a puppet regime who for years has lied plundered stolen and squandered fattening their own pockets feeding their insatiable greed!

Township Blues – Another winter without warmth or protection from nature's onslaught daily floods slippery mud floors whilst raw sewage seep through bullet-hole doors! The stench of lies invading angry enraged nostrils flaring with each thunder explosion skies on fire and a ghetto Mary singing her nightly lullaby lamenting the loss of another newborn baby succumbing to cold neglect despair insecurity and malnutrition her own hunger pains

trumpeting so loudly even heaven is shaking from rushed
frantic prayers and a gathering

congregation huddling together hoping for a miracle but
then another ambulance arrives

leaving a neighbour family without a father a mother a
grandfather a grandmother...

Revolution – Rise up wake up speak up let your rage fuel
your prayers expose their lies!

Stand with us we can only be victorious as a whole but
don't expect us to spare you when

the fires of survival consume those who betrayed us
discarded us humiliated us! We were

born here we survive here we deserve to be heard here
instead of their streets of gold where

even the dogs leave their permanent odour to remind them
how rotten they really are, devoid

from compassion support charity handouts and lacking in
civil duty causing social mayhem.

Aftermath – Look, here you can still see the revolutionary stains of the fallen the forgotten

heroes our neighbourhood angels who risked their lives only to be tortured maimed and

gunned down for hoping and praying for miracles to heal hunger sickness and social disease

but in the end was met with brutal force by failed rotten clueless pretentious gravy train

gargoyles living in paper mansions and scraping brittle bones with rotten teeth...

Epitaph – Here lie our forgotten heroes who bravely fought for social justice yet in the end

were culled hunted deleted obliterated forsaken taken and sadly pulverised but they will

rise again in our minds our thoughts our prayers our memories for evermore this we swear!



Don Beukes: Don Beukes is a South African, British and EU writer and Chapbook Reviewer at The Poetry Café. He is the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles', 'Icarus Rising-Volume 1' (ABP), an ekphrastic collection and 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi'. He taught English and Geography in both South Africa and the UK. His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into various languages. He was nominated by Roxana Nastase, editor of Scarlet Leaf Review for the 'Best of the Net' in 2017 as well as the Pushcart Poetry Prize (USA) in 2016. He was published in his first SA Anthology 'In Pursuit of Poetic Perfection' in 2018 (eBook) (Libbo Publishers) and his

second 'Cape Sounds' in 2019. He is also an amateur photographer and his debut Photographic publication appeared in Spirit Fire Review in June 2019.

Anwar Davids: He is an Illustrator from Cape Town, South Africa. Since an early age he always found art interesting and felt the need to express himself. His fascinations with graffiti on walls lead him to studying Graphic Design at Cape College where he was influenced by Cubism, Surrealism and Pop Art. His style of work is merely experimental which allows him to challenge himself to be more creative. Past experiences and current affairs has a major influence in most of his current illustrations. Anwar has been part of many group exhibitions alongside talented and very inspirational artist both in South Africa and abroad. He has done Mural work in UAE and Denmark as well as in his home town.



A DAY

A day short of forever.

The unread poem unwritten yet
and Mandalay sits there like a sunrise.



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.



ONCE I MET HER

Once I met her in word adornment
A heart whose love is too innocent
The Moon is ashamed at her look
Hair is like a flowing flowery brook
Strolls like a Moon, in a white night
Of cloudless and starry skies bright
Her words in my heart dearly grow
As they reflect on her soft brow
Flows from her a nameless grace
No culture on earth ever did face

Feelings serenely, sweetly express
What a pious soul she does possess

Streams the flow of light and dark
In her eyes, the lightnings spark
One stream high and another is low
As if trees in dusk their heads bow
In thought and conscience, is a vine
Climbing the inner life divinely align
Of all that lightens over her words
So soft, so sweet, tone songbirds



Dusmanta Choudhury: He is a poet residing in Jeypore, in the district of Koraput, Odisha, India. He is a Lecturer in English in Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Jr. College, Lamtaput in Koraput district in the Department of Higher Education Government of Odisha. He has contributed to various anthologies. He has recently got the Honour of Pentasi B World Featured Poet 2020 Honour. He is also a member of the Pentasi B world Friendship Poetry, The Tunisian Asian Poetry, The Poetry Society, The World Nation's Writers Union, The Love, The Global Literary Society, The Namaste ink an Author's Manifesto, etc. He has also published many Odia and English poems.



GLOW OF THE EYES

Translated by Artur Komoter

Curious about the world,
with a chilled drink in hand
they admire the black land,
and the sight of the creviced earth
completes their needs.

At the same time
emaciated,
covered with flies,
children are fighting for life.

And they are there.

In the midst of ubiquitous poverty,
they see the magic of light,
and only later the glow of the eyes
of beautiful African women.

They are in the same place for years,
the same needs and a constant lack of water.

So little
and not so little
to be able to live.



Eliza Segiet: I am a poet, playwright, residing in Tomaszow Maz, Poland. I work as a philosopher. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published (drama, poetry anthologies - 12). My poems Questions and Sea of Mists won the title of the International Publication of the Year 2017 and 2018 in Spillwords Press. I have been nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019. I have been nominated for the iWoman Global Awards. I have won the Laureate Naji Naaman Literary Prize 2020. I have won the Laureate International Award Paragon of Hope (2020). My works can be found in anthologies and literary magazines worldwide.



PAUSE

And I waver.

No explosion is happening.

I expect.

Still rising.

The dicing of our time jointly.

A large withdrawal from a schedule.

Acting on, calculated.

Caressed by many scribblings.

We wade in an aquarium.

Too much food and we pass.

Not adequate and we pass.

If the water becomes inactive, we pass.

An alert.

The porch light is white.

The voice of the summer children has ceased.

Empty.

A paperweight lies on my breast.

The words are cloudy.

I have lost my place.

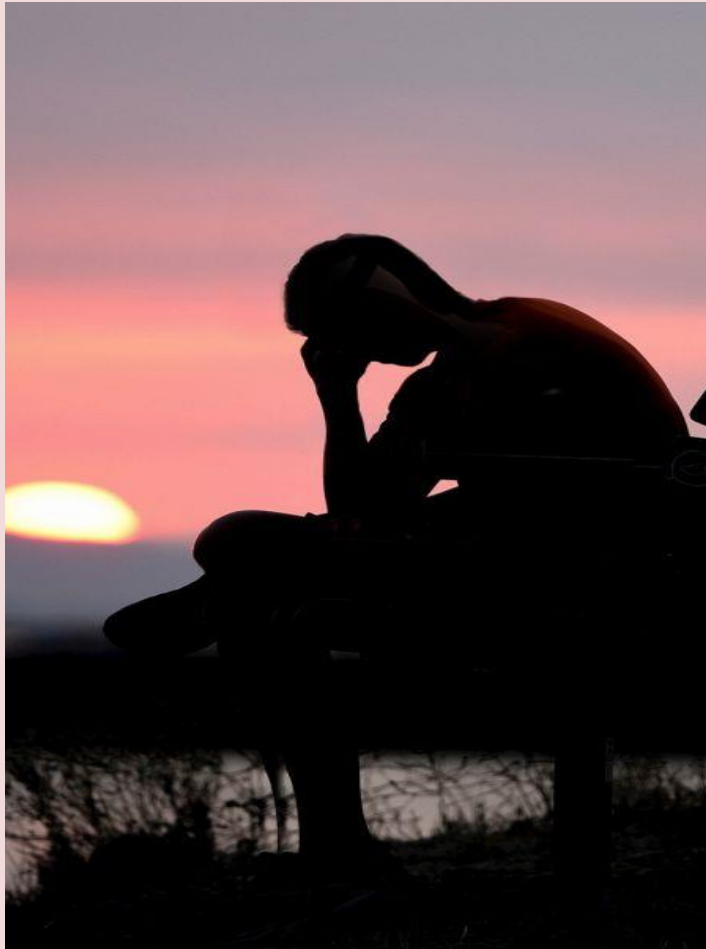
I need the television for companionship.

It's time to sleep.

My thoughts drip.



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



DISILLUSIONED HEART

Frustration makes me go mad

I bang my head against the wall

Just to release my pent up feelings

But it's of no use.

Tears come tumbling down,
like heavy torrents
And I am unable to stop them,
What shall I do?

Sometimes I feel, life is hell
And death a beautiful haven,
Where you don't have to bottle up emotions
And live in misery.

My un-purposeful life is barren
And I'm sure it will bear no fruit,
Then why does death seem so far away
Come swallow me and let me have that eternal peace.



Fiza Abubacker: I am an English teacher living in Chennai, India. My passion is to express my thoughts through poetry. I work for a school. I have also written a couple of short stories and a book.



DEATH

A shadorma

death is but

the nondescript tree

that is there

all the time

until one walks into it

en route to nowhere

those flowers

never flamboyant

their whole life

turn bright red

tempting the dead to pick up

their own wreath



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



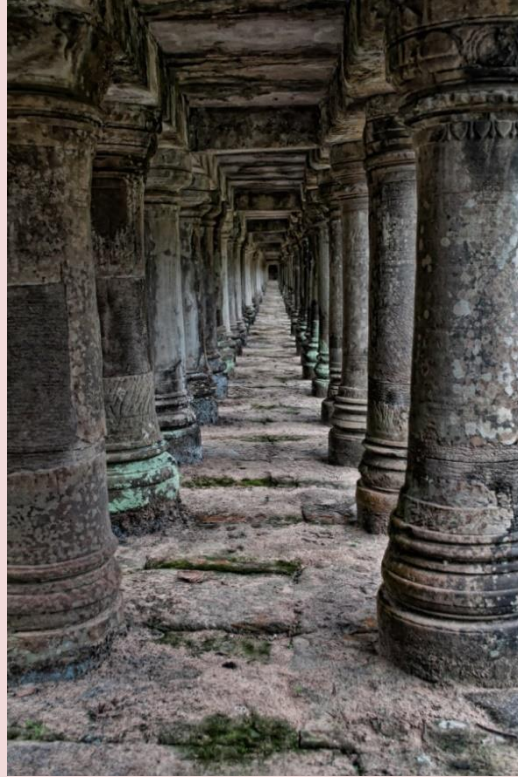
A STAR IN MY SKY

A star peeps behind the clouds
Dazzling bright with light in heart
Asks me to find out the radiance in me
I yawn after a late siesta
My world glows with the evening dim
The dark night stands in its way

Inviting me for a lonely drive
The star mocks at my juvenile folly
My love for mundane darkness
makes him angry
He tells me of the morning bright
where darkness disappears
melting in the zest for the daylight
My communion with the dark night
makes the star perturbed
He dreams of a solitary sky
just to roam around me
Basking in the warmth of my love...



Gayatree G. Lahon: Gayatree is a teacher and a poet from Assam. She did her Masters in English literature from Gauhati University. Being an aesthete, she finds beauty in every object of life and nature and her poems express those elements in a subtle way. For her, poetry is a celebration of life in its myriad shades. Her poems have been published in newspapers, e-zines and many national and international anthologies.



My Devi's shrine
Dark and desolate
Waits longingly
For the doors to open
Someday.

When the rusty hinges creak,
Sword in hand,
She smiles.

“Mother, we have come again”

The dim-lit room resonates.

We bow our heads

For her showering grace

In the flickering light.



Geeta Varma: She is a poet based in Chennai, India. She has contributed to numerous anthologies. She has also published two books. 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.



WASTED PENANCE

The silence eerie but more beautiful after the radio
announced bombings,

The music pumping the heart as the anthem bled the ears
with homeland longing,

The newsprint blurry smelling of kerosene for eyes welled
with tears,

The list of names a riddle for the alphabets reverberated
with fears,

The postman more a hangman for he brought wailings and
wounds,

The medals deadly targets that tightened around the neck
in the name of boons,

Morphine the elixir that numbed the senses and the pain,
Lyrics of every war song opiates that showered bullet rain,

The dappled water fiery and redder with the bloodshed
although the sun just set,

The moon a torn Chinese lantern that with its intoxication
got wet,

The heart a spinning chopper racing with hope that the
motherland is a line,

Hands grappling the earth whose soil spreads sugar so fine,

The womb a trembling bag muttering prayers for every son
to return,

Thoughts a cascade of words waiting to turn into missiles
blasting brotherhood to burn,

Peace a faint bird song trilling with dreams crooning in the
head,

Pillow mist a briney fragrance wafting from the beloved's
bed.

Eulogies a baggage that gets heavier with resigned acceptance,

Ashes and internments a long shoreline where history brought tides of wasted penance.



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



Heart words beat wise quotes any time
strangers most of you, yet
somethings resonate, don't they
in a world of changing equations
yet, global, reachable, connected
yet not redefined
friendship remains based on mutual
love, respect and trust.



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



 alamy stock photo

EC847W
www.alamy.com

LOVERS CONVERSATION

we talked about love and marriage

trials and tribulations the full catastrophe

I asked her if she wanted a servant around the house

to mend broken fences and do odd jobs around the house

to work a seven to five job and put food on the table

she asked me do you want a maid around the house.

to cook and clean and be a doormat for you and your kids
I said I wanted a liberated soul to share equally my life's
journey.

she said I want the right to be who I am
i want to be respected and recognised as a human being
to acknowledge my intelligence and my emotions
I want to be on your right side
and walk along beside you,
I want to be on your left side close to your heart
and hear every beat of your heart.

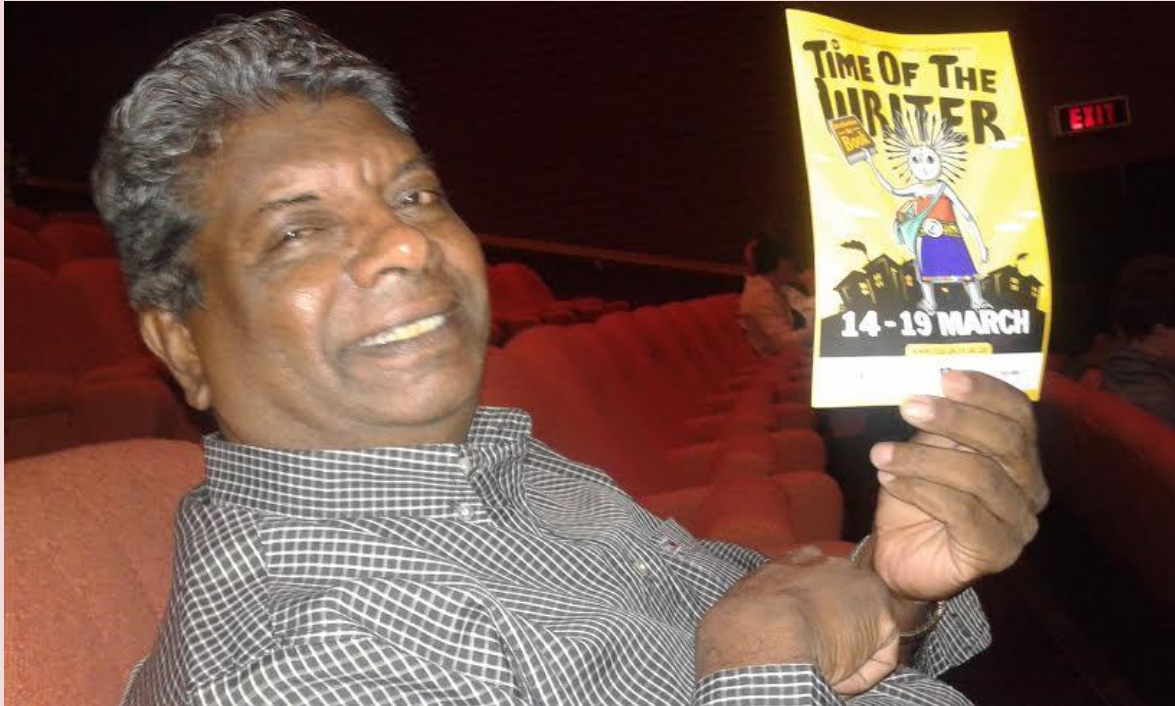
I said you are that missing rib from my breast
I want you to be close to me.
she said I don't want to be a new toy
and when the novelty wears off
I am discarded on a heap with all your other toys.

I said woman there's no guarantees in life,
I could fall down dead right now at your feet,
that's how uncertain life can be

she said I do not want guarantees
written on labels on some merchandise
the same as when you make a purchase at a store
I want a promise of honesty and trust
faithfulness for all eternity
for you to stay true to me
and never stray far from my door

I, replied the good Bard said
"The course of true love never did run smooth."
and

“Love is not love which alters, when it alteration finds,”
I said my love it’s a tall order you command of me
one I can promise to fulfil every iota to the letter.



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.



OUR OWN ISLAND

There is no fish to catch
though the river catches our feet.

a world unclaimed and complete,

The eye of the green countryside
haunts the spine of the rock,

twilight skies spread out on a canvas.

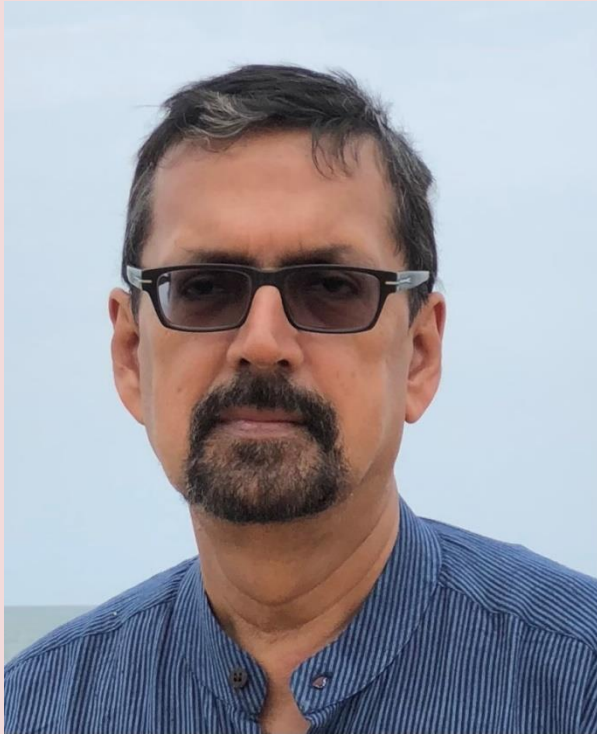
May be the river drinks and gurgles
ripples fall and rise; they always

struggle for words of meanings.

The boats lie on the bank standstill
like swan's beak to beak,

the bird-calls echo differently.

We stand long enough, decouple nature,
the landscape within us,
makes our own island in silence.



Gopal Lahiri: I am a bilingual poet, writer, critic and translator residing in Kolkata. I have contributed to various anthologies and have also published ten volumes of poetry in English and eight volumes in Bengali. In addition, I have also jointly edited two anthologies of poems in English and also have one translation work of short stories of Israel, translated by me from English to Bengali. I have also edited a book on selected songs of Tagore translated in English and one anthology on poetic tribute to Jallianwalabagh Massacre. Two recently published books of mine; 'Alleys are filled with Future Alphabets' and 'From Prinsep Ghat to Peer Panjal' (joint e-book).



JULY

The sun is a giant beach ball.

See it splashing through
waves all red violet blue.

Waters creep over my feet.

Should I stand shivering
or go swim? Lose my footprint?

Off I run, falling over myself,
a mug of salty cider. This
wave an insecure bed. Seaweed
pillow. Carried by moon to
an abyss.

The floor of my mansion is
not tidy. I shall have sponges
for lunch. Ride with seahorses
perhaps.

On the far shore, my lover
smiles, kiss of surf.



Joan McNerney: Joan McNerney's poetry is found in many literary magazines and she has four Best of the Net nominations. Her latest titles are *The Muse in Miniature* and *Love Poems for Michael* both available on Amazon.com and Cyberwit.net.



BURN FIRE BURN

burn fire burn brighter

flame of the one and true igniter

move beneath the rat and worm

cleansing out decay and germ

sweeping through the city street

down through valleys to the sea

burn fire burn hotter

write the name of our true father

cremate the seed of dark corruption

illuminate this night's destruction
spread throughout the senseless throng
that still ignores your endless song

burn fire burn higher
scorch the tongue of every liar
that speaks of love with false intention
free all souls of unjust detention
flood the path of fire fighters
burn fire burn brighter



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

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

<https://joekiddandsheilaburke.com/>



ON HUMMINGBIRD WATCH

standing at the window
watching hummingbirds
sip nectar,
so tiny, such rapid wingbeats,
they are my living secret,
but one that's theirs to keep

a smile
shakes loose from my mouth,
its warmth is a hum
like they make



John Grey: He is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in Orbis, Dalhousie Review and the Round Table. Latest books, “Leaves On Pages” and “Memory Outside The Head” are available through Amazon. He has work upcoming in Lana Turner and Hollins Critic.



THE SPLENDOUR OF LIFE

The rainbow ribbon
hangs loose from the bounds
of the whimpering monsoon clouds,
as silky breeze entangles
with aroma,
and silent prayers
waft up through layers
of enigma

to touch the magic divine
leaving behind all logic barriers.

My broken city lines unmindfully croon
an ageold nostalgic tune;
the ancient river
breathing afar
has more fairy tales yet to deliver
year after year;
the melody of my city- light
gently drift and whisper
drawing a rainbow, in a plight
to fill the space with delight.

The smile of my city- rain,
the rainbow carries to the heaven,
with the earthy flavour
of its hidden treasured tear;

in a violent frenzy of death galore
my sick, town dreams ashore;
caught stricken, bed- ridden,
amid disastrous threats of destiny.
It's rainbow still sings to the heaven
the ageold song of life.



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



REFRIGERATOR ON THE WALL

Yes, you heard it right...

Our refrigerator didn't stand

Against the wall of our house...

It was drawn with a blunt-tip black Nataraj pencil,

My sister had drawn it, one afternoon...

Why? Simply because we couldn't afford one...

Those days telephones and refrigerators

Were only for the reasonably wealthy...

The rest managed with handwritten letters

And thermocol ice-boxes

That stored ice-cubes for Ramadan iftar sherbet.

The landlord objected to pencil drawings on his precious walls...

I only glared at him: we will whitewash it when we leave, uncle...

How dare you, my mother's counter glare,

Where will we go if he evicted us?

I remember her terrified eyes till today...

As she tasted of the cold water

Kept in filled bottles of our brand new red Godrej fridge,

My mother's blessings for me were endless...

Her smile, priceless

We had moved house into newly whitewashed home,

Everything looked bright and tidy...

My sister was busy on the phone with her fiancé,

She no longer drew anything on walls now,

Nor did I look into the terrified eyes of my mother.

You can tell your children

My refrigerator story.



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



MONSOON FRAGRANCES

Hello! Month of fresh fragrances.

A confluence of parched earth and rain.

An incessant magic of new green shades.

Rain flowers swaying in the heady breeze.

Universal yearnings as nostalgia pours.

What unknown secret wonders for poets,

singers, painters and lovers.

I hear the joyful mountain springs,

as you gush, gurgling down velvet slopes.

A rosary of japas and sutras and ragas,

in the rhythm of life.

The mist, like deep thoughts, wrap around trees,
winding roads, little hamlets of mud and stone.

Woodsmoke flavours the air with ginger tea and roasting
corn.

Wet children laugh, face upturned, to a rainbow.

Shepherds, click their tongue, bamboo sticks banging,

And veer herds of tinkling cows and sheep.

Gossamer glistens on dragonfly wings.

A simplicity. A restoration.

Like an old faithful lover settling into a thirsty heart.

A resting place of serendipity.



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



IN A BANGALORE BUS

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

Sights flit past – a crumpled cement
workshop, the aroma from Klasgow
Biscuits, minaret- crested mosques
abutting luminous temples; lurching

on a bumpy, dusty track, festival
music eggs the bus on.

A snaking causeway held my eye.

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

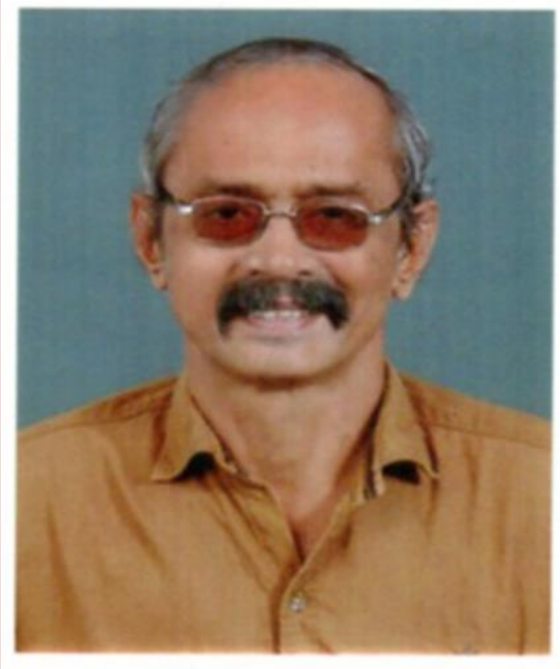
Its forked tongue, set to decimate
a misty meadow of palm trees, unspoiled
as yet by the odorous creek;

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

“Growth’s bugle needs no ears”

Grey fumes echo the earth's groan.
Dug up fields, impaled by jutting
beams, are clothed in a brown
cement haze; dhoti-clad, bare-chested
coolies mutter a cocktail of Tamil
and Oriya; From the dry, scorched
Kalinga a long way to sow roots.

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



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



EARTH SONGS

the radiant earth groans now
her desiccated green sheath
fritters in dry flakes of pain

fissures of sandy deserts
rocks in the arid landscape
boulders fall into deep chasms

here is no lambent utopia
blazing anger of the sun
steals the cool freedom of the night

when the earth is pushed
to the other side of the sun
her roots curdle in the clammy soil

a fierce veracity of the earth then
sings loud with conchs and bells
and outstretched arms again

to touch the skies with softness
with the love of renewal
as the cosmos embraces her

while the stars and skies
fondle the grassy stretches of
wavy amorous feel once more

kiss the rainbow hues, blooms
the sparkling empyrean
in secret earthly bonding

when the earth re- awakens
to the melodies of faith and hope
in glorious rejuvenation

crooning through the density of dewdrops
of forests, cornfields and golden harvests
resonating joy and the human story
eternal

etched within the groovy womb of
Mother Earth.



Laksmisree Banerjee: Prof. Dr. Laksmisree Banerjee is an established Poet, Writer, Educationist, Literary Critic, Classical Vocalist. She is a Senior Fulbright Scholar & Professor (USA) and Founder Vice Chancellor of Kolhan University, India. She has taught and lectured as well as recited her Poetry & Music across the globe. She has Nine published Books of Poetry, with several Academic Books and One Hundred Twenty Research Publications primarily on diverse areas of Poetry, Culture and Literature. She believes in promoting a Better World through her multi-dimensional work. Dr. Banerjee happens to be the Indian Rashtrapati's Nominee on Boards of Central Universities.



SIDEKICKS AND FELLOW TRAVELERS

I'll stay off the stage with the drama queens,
and turn down all invitations to argument,
but I don't think I can do it all alone.

Instead, I'll share my most productive time
with the builders in league with me.

Close friendships are a powerful institution.

They allow me to express
humbling flows of words without vanity.

The greatest people I have ever known
are those who told me I could do it.

All true friends catch you as you fall,
allow you to exhibit merry outbursts
while insisting you stay coolly rational.

These are the holy monkeys
who join me in the tree branches.
Who help me be a good heroine,
even if the movie plot isn't so great that day,
who join me on the mat
to wrestle my demons under control,
even through a third or fourth bout.

Together we breathe out joy,
and we feed all the stars.



Linda Imbler: I am a poet residing in Wichita, Kansas, USA. I am a life-long learner who has spent the shutdown learning the location of all 197 countries around the world, and learning how to read Braille. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have nine published poetry collections and one hybrid collection of short stories and linked poetry. Learn more at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com.



IF I WOULD GET A CHANCE

If I would get a chance

I want to revert my age,

My position and would love to be in mummy's lap

If I would get a chance

I wish to bring back all my adorable figures

Together and I will take care of them which I had lapsed

If I would get a chance

I will amend myself with more dedication and determination

Which I lacked

If I would get a chance

I will pursue my interest, which I left in half

If I would get a chance

I would love to dance in Ricky Martin's band

Will love to sing with Shakira, celebrating football fever and

Will bunk my classes to watch Ravi Shastri's tall figure's shot

If I would get a chance

Will compete with Martina Navratilova in match

I will love to complete my chat with my dad

I wish to keep my scribbler's diary at his feet

Will ask his blessings for me tonight.

If I get a chance,

Surely, I will erase every IF and will stick to only Is.



Lopamudra Mishra: She resides in Bhubaneswar Orissa. She completed her graduation in English Hons from Sailabala Women's college, Cuttack and post-graduation in English from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Her fascination for writing came from her grandfather and father from an early age. Writing for her is the powerful medium of expression. Her poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies. Her works include her very own published books: 'Rhyme Of Rain', 'First Rain', 'Tingling Parables', and 'Rivulet Of Emotions'.



PAINT THE MOON

Come darling let us, with our love, paint the moon!

Let the moon spread our love to dawn soon

The beauty of moon captures my heart

I have fallen hopelessly in love to start

You are as beautiful as the moon

Your coming in my life is no less a boon

Your pristine face shines like a moon beam

Your glowing complexion peach and cream

Our path of love shining with moonlight

Never to let you go out of my sight

My love for you flourish each day

Swish away all hurdles out of our way

To be together with each other we are meant

Our love pious, pure, sacred and eloquent



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



INCARNATION

You scribbled your name and threw towards me the tissue
paper

sly smile dangling through each corner

of it, dripping with a mischievous vibe

as your hands moved through, the sweet scents of your
body I imbibe,

wafting through the air your feelings I feel and live

As the piece of paper smelled like spices and olives

The frenzied emotions trapezing

with the light and shadow balancing

Tender progressions

Warm expressions

hazily peeled away the mask of ignorance

wrote the number that you had sent, waiting for the
imminent

the raven suit now coloured my world

the sly stare now smiled as within it the passions uncurled

sunset crawling into the azure soft sky

The burst of colours tug my arms in the dusk's guise,

you became a throbbing perceptible incarnation of love to
my eyes!



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.



My Krsna

With his magic flute

Oozes poetry of all his parts,

His eyes moonlit eyes, eyes like

Two whirlpools of radiance

Two oceans of seasoned wine

Two purple leaves
Lighting up the
kingdom of bahaar

His gaze,
Butterflies biting
The face of moon

A million diyas lit on
The surface of water
His smile,

Dewdrops dancing
On the bosom of grass
A glistening gold gazelle

His skin, a peacock

Wandering inside quiet jungles

His speech the sole dhvani*

Of cosmos, an intergalactic travel

Sending one into deeper bliss

Tears gushing

From the eyes of rocks

As joy erupts and saunters over

The surface of earth

His hair, a jet black costume of

Stars breaking and

Sinking into their holes

Body, a carved magnetic field

A golden secret

A fragrant farm

A moving verse

Created from marble

Impregnated with shoots

His laughter, Anahad raaga

Flowers growing

Out of a child's heart

The fragrance of

All names divine:

Krishna Krishna Krishna

The sole name

The sole sound

The splendor of three universes

The magnificence of countless dreams

The glamour of infinite seas and paradises

The opulence of all souls

Note: Dhvani: sound



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



WHAT TO WRITE...

Willing to write something

Badly perplexed

Which thought!

What should I write!

Write about the bird,

Hurt her wings, trying to fly

Looking for a safe shelter

Looks desperate....

Or I write about a dog

Left leg crushed by a car

Horrified, unable to walk
Looking around for help
Who will deliver this kindness!
Or should I choose the woman
Brutally beaten, thrown out
By her own husband
Bleeding, insulted, tortured
Yet, moving towards the same door
To knock for the shelter...
Innumerable Subjects
Have stories of pain, agony
Life is valuable
Wish to survival, motivates
To withstand adverse situations
Really, difficult to portray their striving...



Manjula Asthana Mahanti: She is a bilingual poet, author, translator and editor. She has worked in a prestigious college as Head of the Department, and she last worked as a Public School Principal. She has published six books, in both English and Hindi. She has published short stories, poems, and articles in many national and international anthologies, e-magazines, OPA, Glomag, Setu, etc.



POISONOUS LOVE

My closeness you seem to hate
Things you said you liked
You have started to dislike
My face you hate to see these days
When I say things to be done
Out of unconditional love
You liked them then
Now you say
I treat you like a slave
Is this kind of

Uncontrollable love painful?

Does this closeness

Prick the other person

Hurting that they

Start to move away?

Does this love

Make them forget everything

Things said and done

From the start?

Now I understand

Too much of love and care

Is poisonous too



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.



TINY SPARROW FEET

It's calm.

Cheeky, unexpected.

Too quiet.

My clear plastic bowls
serves as my bird feeder.

I don't hear the distant
scratching, shuffling
of tiny sparrow feet,
the wing dances, fluttering, of a hungry
morning's lack of big band sounds.

I walk tentatively to my patio window,
spy the balcony with my detective's eyes.
I witness three newly hatched
toddler sparrows, curved nails, mounted
deep, in their mother's dead, decaying back.
Their childish beaks bent over elongated,
delicately, into golden chips, and dusted yellow corn.



Michael Lee Johnson: He lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era and is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. Mr. Johnson is published in more than 1098 new publications, and his poems have appeared in 40 countries, he edits, publishes ten poetry sites. Michael Lee Johnson has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. Two hundred seventeen poetry videos are now on YouTube:

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



THE SEASON'S FIRST RAIN

The season's first rain

After scorching days of unrelenting summer

Is like the hint of moisture on lips

After experiencing the first kiss of life

After attaining the age of nurturing a clandestine affair,

The scent of pine and lavender

That one might catch After first visit to hills

Can also be reminded by the first downpour of the season,

That mossy green remembrance becomes vivid
Before your eyes and you can feel that mist too,
After the rain clouds spread their cover
Over everything around;

The season's first rain
Is like feeling the moisture
In one's lips After the first kiss,
A thrill, an object of joy,
A taste of savoring for the first time
The forbidden fruit of love.



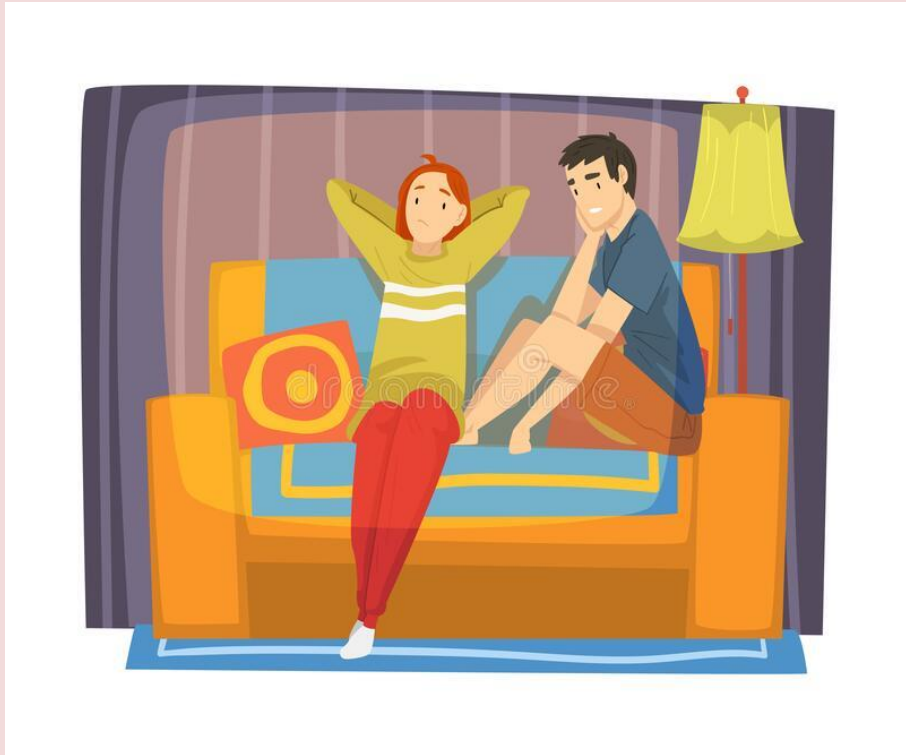
Moinak Dutta: He is a published poet and fiction writer and a teacher. He's published two literary and romantic fictions to his credit, namely 'Online@offline' and 'In search of la radice'. His third fiction is going to be published soon. He loves to travel and to do Nature photography. He is interested in creating video poetry or poetry films. His debut video poetry / poetry film ' I think I love twilight' already got accepted in Lift Off film festivals across the globe and got enlisted in some others too. He lives in Kolkata, India with his wife, son and a pet dog.

moinakdutta@yahoo.co.in

www.facebook.com/moinakdutta

www.instagram.com/moinakdutta

www.twitter.com/moinakdutta



Too close we are now.

No need to call to just

Listen to the voice or

Just to feel the heartbeat.

No need to say, "You hang up first!"

"No, you!"

Too close we are now.
No need to wait outside
In front of the house
Drenched in the rain,
Just to catch a glimpse
Before saying, "Good night!"
Silently.

Too close we are now.
What's the use of wanting to
Hold the hand, just for a moment.
For the assurance of love
A silent promise to be there forever.
To dream for both, and never leave alone.

Too close to see that
The hand now has
The proof of age

The eyes, tired
Not searching anymore
For the love, they longed forever.
'Cause, too close we are now.
No need for love to bring us together.
Just miss the time when
Love used to breathe.



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



THE PEN GODDESS

In the transformation train

As a sensation,

I write a letter to my unborn

To be aware of chains,

For him to be a freeborn.

So when destiny beckons

He has to embrace the wonderment

To be mindful of the subterfuge
And the green snake on a green grass.

Life is not fruits from the poetry planet
Rather the raindrops of every kind
And more than a poetic grenade.

But with the rhythm of life
One can dance away from xenophobicracy
And that would be a tropical escape.

Then when you hear whispers of the Biafran skeleton
And see the eclipse of tides
You would not commit suicide
Nor have Christmas fever
But rather seek the chariots of archangels
To make you the phenomenal human
As you become interwoven with them.

Dear Nkwerre, bear me witness
As the land of my forefathers,
That the pen goddess is a force
We move!



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.



RAW REFLECTIONS OF THE MIND

The mirror doesn't tell the truth anymore
It doesn't show me my reflection anymore
I see a stranger in it, whenever I face it
I see a defeated woman whenever I face it

It shows the worries creased on the forehead
It shows the eyes that have lost the light

It shows the face that tries to hide the ache
It shows struggles that I never wish to be shown

The woman inside it talks in a strange language
Her words are alien to me; I try hard to understand
Her many colloquialisms; I try hard to comprehend
She speaks in muted tone; I try hard to hear

It wasn't so determined and defiant long back
It always toed the line I drew for it long back
The mirror doesn't tell the truth anymore
It doesn't show me my reflection anymore

One of these days I plan to shatter it, I must!
One of these days I plan to retrieve her, I must!
That ambitious girl that the mirror has stolen
And cast spells of norms and customs on her

Last night I think it scoffed at me and grinned
I have no will, it thinks, I know-it does think so
So I rubbed the kohl off and erased the lipstick
And scoffed back at it-now I refuse to look in it

One of these days I plan to shatter it, I must!
One of these days I plan to retrieve her, I must!
The mirror doesn't tell the truth anymore
It doesn't show me my reflection anymore



Nikhat Mahmood: She is an English Lecturer, a short story writer and an occasional poet, she has translated from Urdu to English and also transliterated in Hindi, a book of poems 'Zard Patton ki Shawl' written by a prominent Pakistani poet, several of her stories have been published in various anthologies and magazines. She is currently working on her debut book of short stories, Scent of the Bitter Almonds and a novel, Revived Oaths. She lives in Karachi with her husband and two children.



LOOKING FOR...!

Walking ashore in solace,
Caressing sandy cheeks of the sea shore,
The way you do with my hair locks
And they begin to sway like the cansas wheat,
In the rhythm of your breath..!

My feet go on embarking upon every thought,
Unlocking memories with mind..!

There it begins to bounce; the turfs of emotions,
And brewing the evening with the melting sun,
Far in the horizon bleeding in empathy,
For all stranded souls like me..!

Rolling on in the meadows of sufferings,
We come in a hope and go empty handed,
Living on the perpetual fate
As if wrack ashore,
Blending itself in the mystic desires,
In every stroke of lapping waves..!

Continue to soar in that boundaryless,
A nut wanders in its quest,
Sailing through the wounded emotions and,
Never fulfilled desires,
Hoping to find,
There in the vast meadows of blue waters,

A message in a bottle..!
A love letter in old papyrus scrolls,
Waiting for me to stumble upon it,
When you are gone..!



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



MULTI“FACE”TED

Yesterday, today, tomorrow

Then, now, later

Past, present, future

Black

Every shade of grey

White

Three variations

Three entities

Three faces (*phases*) of us



Nivedita Karthik: I am a poet residing in Gurgaon. I work as a medical/scientific editor/reviewer. I have published many poems in various national and international magazines. I am a professional Bharatanatyam dancer and amateur photographer. Random thoughts that buzz through my mind are penned down for eternity in my blog <https://justrandomwithnk.com>



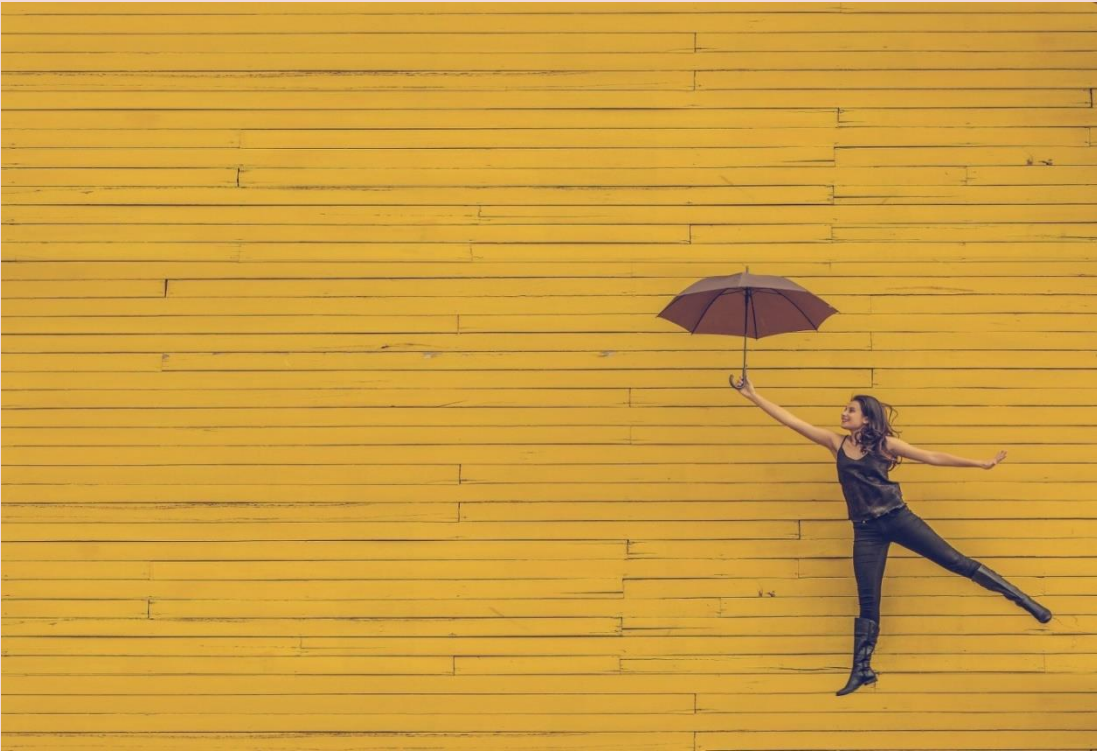
WHIMSICAL NATURE

The softly swirling rains and
the faint aroma of petrichor,
are a welcome change from
the harsh rays of the flaming sun
The birds, messengers of joy,
fill the air with their shimmering chirps
frogs and cicadas punctuate
the silence with their own songs

Robins and blue jays will don
their red and blue hues, whistling
whimsical tunes on fences
The flowers in myriad colours
and fragrances will bloom unchecked,
Neither bird nor tree, nor flowers will mind
If humans disappeared entirely.
Seasons will come and go while
we were gone for eternity, and they live on.



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



WINGS

Never needed them

Being privileged and all.

Right or left reign

Did not matter for

My ancestors paved

A carpeted path

To fly free as I pleased.

I am free from everything,

Everyone but myself

And the elders
I mustn't shame.

As I carve my own path
I look towards the left
To realise I am deeply leftist
As left a leftist can be
A way of life rooted
In compassion, fellowship...
Its doctrines written in blood
Of the bravest liberals
Is the same that flows in me.

I look right, I see my genes,
My home, pride, entitlement...
And ghosts that make me run
From stories of pride/shame,
Old blood, cruelty, avarice,

Ambition rotting under it.
I stick out like a sore thumb
I do not find a home at home.

Choice is destiny's gift
To be in a zone open/free
Where leftist chain humans
In an inescapable necessity
Long changed in its fibre
Stunting growth for everyone.
Then there is the tangled right
Which has gifted me a few
Hand me down strings
To tug at them at a time of need
Arrogant of me to denigrate it
Alas, I am not the kind
To make a puppet of the system
Nor am I the sweating kind

I refrain making empty noise
For I can be anything
I choose and I choose
Feathers from all over
Even the books I have read
The art, wisdom imbibed
The life I know and don't
And go inwards into a zone
I am free from everything,
Everyone but myself.



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.



BLESSED TO HAVE ONE MORE DAY

Blessed am I to have one more day
to look at the baby sunup,
smiling through the translucent rays
flowers jubilant invite me
to their nuptials in the breezy morn
and enjoy nature's bounty free and open.

A day so blessed and beautiful
waiting to bestow health and happiness
starting with a stroll through the meadows wet,
with my pet that struggles at every chance
to express its love licking my bare skin
making me conscious how priceless love is on earth.

One more blessed day at my disposal
to pray, count all positives, ignore negatives,
to relish my favourite dishes, hot and crunchy,
to look at the mirror with aplomb,
attires aid boosting my confidence,
admire my looks and start the day well.

A day more to be among loving souls
those trapped in brutal hands pine each moment,
to realize the value of life, those lost it are many,

to sleep peacefully without any fear
those out there sans a roof are several.

Above all to delve into the world of words,
soul stirring and most satisfying
and to wear the armour of poetry
for peace, positivism and pleasure.



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



photograph by Abizit Dutta

THE MOON SONG

Victoria Memorial...so many times I have thought about writing a poem about you. Suddenly after seeing the photograph taken by the ace photographer Abizit Dutta, I couldn't stop myself from writing a poem about you.

The moon sings to the monument at night.

Flooding it with dazzle and light.

The spherical silvery moon.

The blemishes of it making it more beautiful.

Looking down at the marble topped dome.

Lighting up the structure of stone.

The Angel of Victory looks up at the moon.

Beacons it with her trumpet.

The marble monument washed with sparkled joy.

Shining brightly and reflecting happiness to enjoy.

The memorial standing for years with charm and grace.

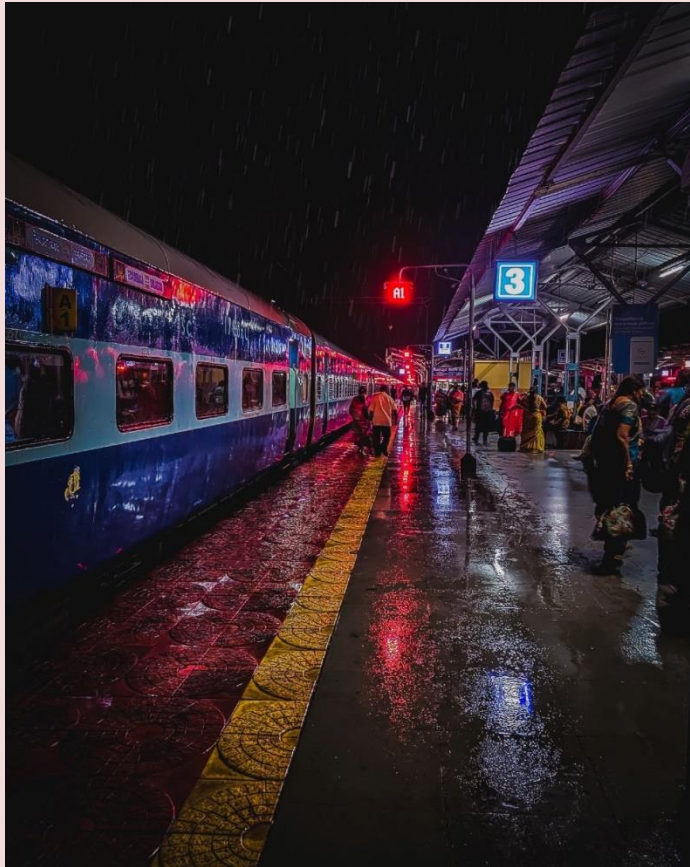
A hallmark of the City of Joy.

The wonderful moment when the moon sings to it.

The ethereal moment when the moonlight on the memorial
drips.



Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: I am Dr. Paramita Mukherjee Mullick and I live in Mumbai, India. I am a scientist, a national scholar with a Ph.D. in Genetic Toxicology transformed into an internationally loved and award-winning poet who loves promoting peace. I have seven books to my credit and my poems have widely been published in national and international journals. Some of my poems have been translated into 39 languages. I am the Founder President of the Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library (IPPL) Mumbai Chapter. I am also the Cultural and Literary Convenor (West India) for the International Society for Intercultural Studies and Research (ISISAR).



Indian trains

Crowded compartments

Jostling, heckling, pushing

Everything is fine.

Normally take a book

Read until the harmony of life

Throws you off balance.

So much happening
Even marriages are finalized.
Land is being sold
Jobs are fixed
Eating happens all the time
Vada, and all kinds of snacks
Coffee with plenty of sugar
Fruits, mangoes, bananas
Stopped reading the book
When you can read life directly
Why read through a book.



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



THE HEDGEHOG

My brother came back with another's smell,
so we ate him. Mam would eat all us too,
if we smelt different. Nose, ears keen tell
what cream and brown shapes on our dark pursue.

That was then. Last dark I circled, circled
her. She puffed, snorted loud to keep me off.
Others came. I squeaked at them. Lowered
my head, raised my spines, clucked, one coughed,

I butted his sides. He rolled. They all left.

Afterwards I leave. Sniff long bellies, hard backs

I crack their shells, squelch the soft tasty rest.

Need to eat more. Not fat enough won't last

Cold time. Found this damp dark in here. It's why

I chirp and whiffle, splat out quills and sigh.



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.



WORD

Spent the entire life
searching for a suitable word
For the poetry of tongue
But I failed.

Word, a rolling stone
Never get mossed!

Word never ever suits my tongue

Always falling short of words, my world of poetry.

May be that the size of the word is too big.

But I am not in favour of stitching.

However, taken for a ride by the proverb, 'a stitch in time saves nine'. I have stitched heart, Ironed out the creases of the skin,

My face looked new, fresh.

But to my utter surprise, a soft knock of her look and again my heart gets worn out!

Know not whether the mirror is cracked or my face

But standing before the mirror I always find my face wounded.

Now to me, all words are same, monotonous, banal

Hardly it matters whether

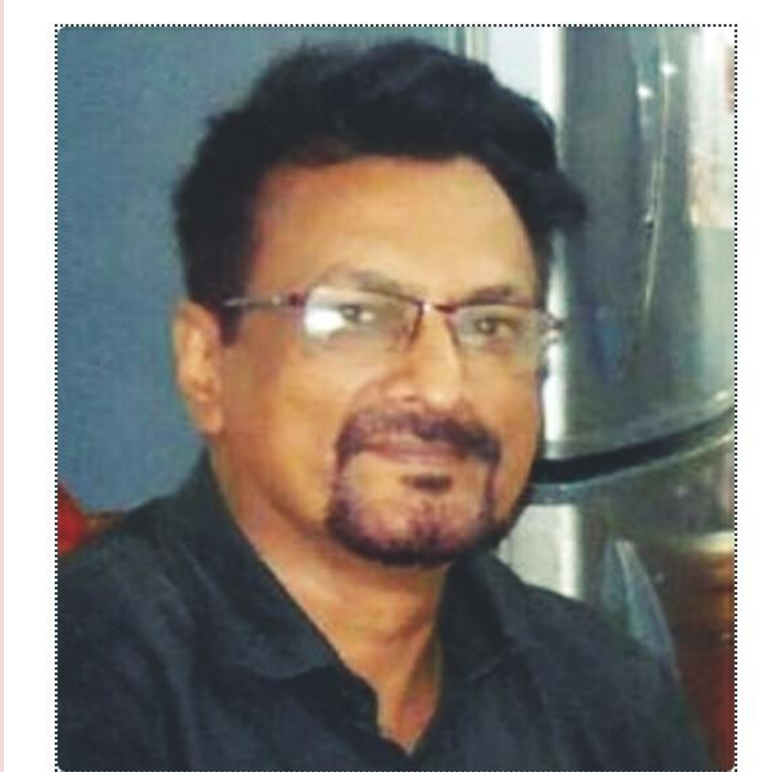
They carry any meaning.

Layer after layers I have disrobed.

For me the sky is simply a word, The sea is a word

The earth too.

They are words only and nothing else.



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



BEING THERE

Zahira died peacefully, holding Zameer's hand...

An era ended with Zahira. An era of steadfast love in the face of tumultuous times, dizzying heights of stardom, fandom, a fairy tale romance, and the fading away from the limelight into oblivion..

A week later Zahira's lawyer, summoned Zameer to his office, and handed him a letter.

Then, he read out Zahira's will. Zameer's eyes widened in surprise!

He signed where the lawyer asked him to...

The lawyer requested him to read the letter before him, and feel free to ask any questions...

Zameer opened the sheet of paper, Zahira's last communication to him...

She wrote, 'Zameer, my son,

Thank you so much, for calling me 'Ammi' in private.. I did not want to hear anymore sniggers at my childlessness.

You are a Godsend! Thank you again, for reaching out to me and Sahab.. Sorry, for giving you the impression that after Sagan's death, I was penniless, due to his astronomical medical bills.

As you can see, Sahab's funds for his dream project are intact. I did not know, how long I would live without him. Still, a year has been too long; but bearable because of your tender care and companionship, my son, prioritising my needs over your business commitments and family responsibilities.

My remaining funds after the hospital bills, are yours.

I have nominated you as the sole Trustee of Sahab's funds for his Girl child education project.

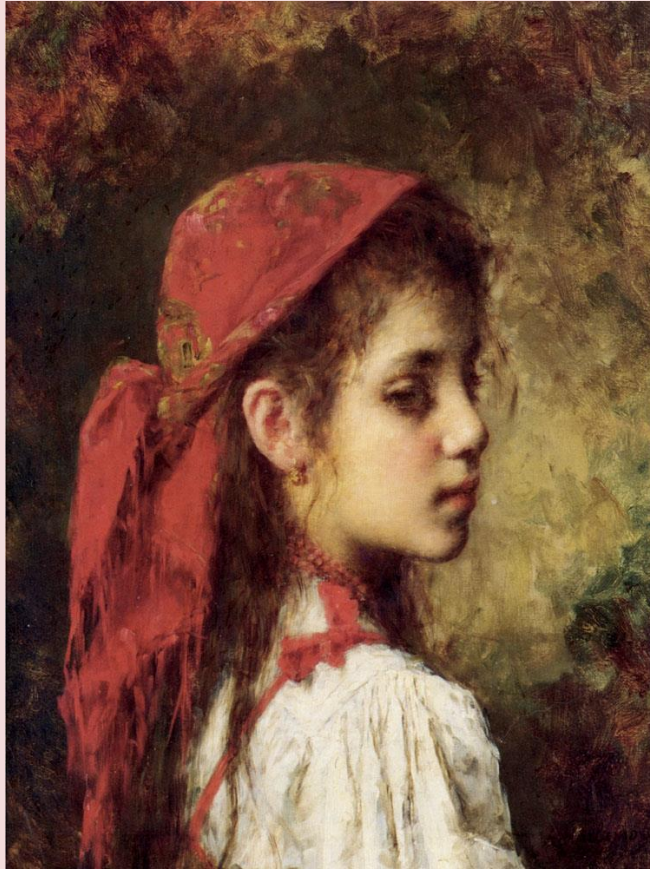
Thanks again, for your monetary help, and God bless you and your family.

Ever yours,

'Ammi'.



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



THAT SCARLET SCARF

That scarlet scarf reminds me of your fragrance
When eyes met the blue - eyed girl for the first time
My fancy's wing soars higher and higher
Through the shimmering waters of river Brahmaputra
Somewhere an earthen lamp brightens up
the brownny earth with vibrant colors,
In the middle of the corn field

Heart sings lullaby in tenderness.

In the vast azure

under the ancient trees,

When mind rests in peace and stillness

When cuckoo's soulful song

Hums softly in the ears of the breeze

Dreamy eyes dance

to the tune of love and mirth.

In the vast azure

When sunflower kisses your rosy cheeks

When thousands of fireflies dance in your youthful lens

The pinnacle of the evening woods

Merges with the bluish water of the ancient river

and my sorrows melt in the seamless beauty

Leaving behind footprints on the shoreline.



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



FROM CHELLAMMAL TO BHARATHI

Chellamal was wife to Subramania Bharathi, the most eminent of modern Tamil poets. Apart from nationalism and anti-casteism, he was an advocate for women's rights, especially education.

Dear poet-husband,

Do you know how to buy one hand of flowers,

Or roll a round chapati?

You who stand up for women

Can you cut up love and affection

And boil it up in the sambar

Like I do for you every day?

Well, don't. Just plait our daughter's hair

And plait in a hand-length of jasmine

And send her off to school.

Else just make pongal in the morning

And put it in a clean dabba before

Your daughter is awake and clamours

For her toothpaste, uniform.

No. Well, alright.

Can you bring rice to a boil,

So its aroma makes the house blossom?

Even simpler.

Can you show happiness, day after day,

While washing clothes and folding them,

Sweeping and mopping the house,

Washing dishes thick with congealed ghee

And never, ever complain

While your wife writes silly poems?

No? Not even for a day?

You can make the flowers bloom,

And the spring come early.

Just make a crying child smile.

You make words dance and sing,

Just put a child to sleep.

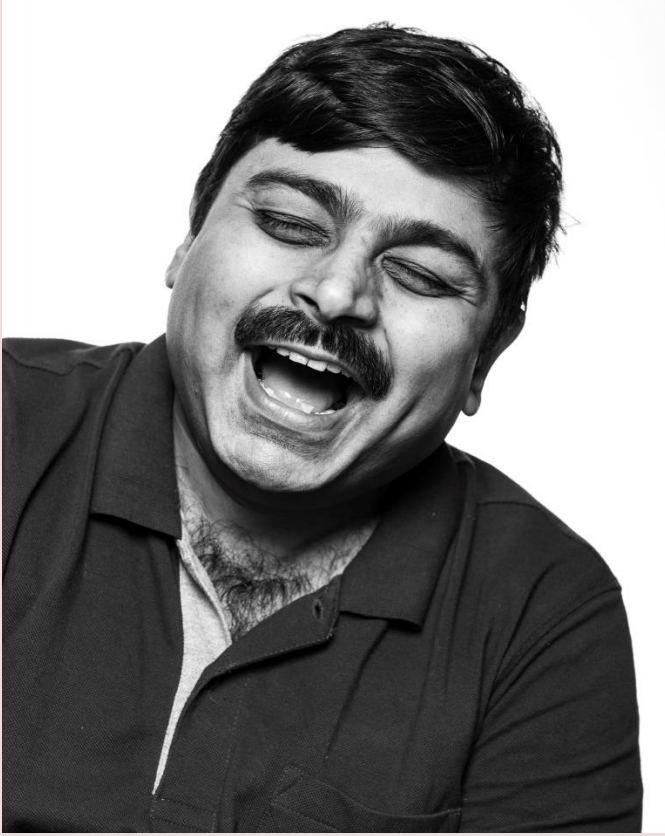
You paint pictures with words,

One kolam pattern outside the house?

Okay, you're not going to grind rice and make crisp dosais,

You'll make me one tumbler of coffee?

Note: Longlisted by the RaedLeafPoetry-India 2013 Awards



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.



ONCE UPON A TIME

Once upon a time
tossing up a toy
waiting for its return
Catching up to throw back
was his feat and pastime.

Now he is in a different world
not ruled by toys and kites,
nor small cycle rides, nor
on rocking horse when flying
With wild imagination high.

In a room of his own,
Desires not his, but ruled
by instincts, dominated
by jealous multiplied
quick turns of money making

rackets, mirage or miracle
only Time should descend
to prevail upon. All around
fake discipline intruding,
questioning his spirits “why”,

he is in doldrums,
knows not how to convert
the whyness into wellness,
no toy around, but only
mugs and keyboards;

waiting for his Muse
to spread around
her magic wand
so that he will be back
to childhood days innocent.



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

Her blogs:

pearlradhe.blogspot.in

pearlradfhe.wordpressf.com



THROUGH ONE GOOD PANE

through one good pane

amidst all others

broken

puddles cold as tin

specks of mud

as cold

pattern to disappear

into water for tea

children uprooted

remnants of a sordid past

play in the rain

dog with legs askew

hobbles of age

and dies in the shade

protesting female

gives in

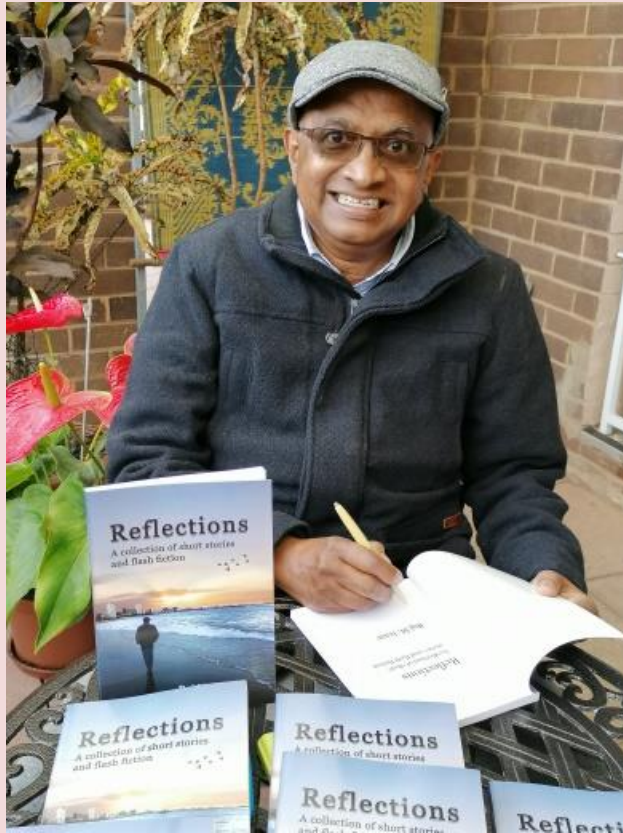
to crudely amorous hobo

and man

head on fist

weeps

of a broken heart



Raj Isaac: I am a retired educator who specialized in the teaching of English up to the tertiary level. I reside in Durban, South Africa and have had my writings featured in various local publications. I have self-published two books – a family history and a collection of short stories and flash fiction. My writing journey is recorded in my Facebook page, “The stories I write”.
<https://www.facebook.com/Raj.M.Isaac/>



WRITING IS GOOD

Three hours is a long time, too long, in fact, for silent sitting. I have been sentenced to three hours in one room and I'm bored already. Thankfully I had thought of keeping a piece of paper and a pen in my pocket. Now I write what I think and feel, hoping I'll later somehow make a poem from it. Of course, I'll have to polish lines, insert rhymes strategically, and inject some rhythm, not too regular, into it. Oh, did someone catch me writing?

False alarm! I resume writing. I feel good.

Writing is good.



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

<https://poetrypoeticspleasure.wordpress.com>



YOUTUBE.COM

Monkey spotted inside Delhi Metro coach; viral video stuns people

MONKEY IN THE DELHI METRO

Oh, I feel listless and tired of walking
On the stretched length of twisted rope;
I'm bored to dance on damru's beats,
And my eyes wander for rays of hope.

I want to be in tune with times,
And to showcase my talents everywhere;

Of course, Metro is new in-thing,
Where I can perform with elan and flair.

As the humans build their houses new,
With the gravel, mortar and red bricks;
I yearn to create my image new,
By adding to the repertoire of monkey tricks,

I don't want to dance anymore on Bollywood
Numbers, I like the modern raps and taps;
I'm at ease with western classical and jazz,
It's pleasure to dance donning my monkey cap.

Though I'm linked with monkey business,
I strongly resent this nomenclature;
I'm an upright and humane being,
It's not easy to attain my stature.



Rakesh Chandra: Mr Rakesh Chandra is a retired civil servant. He is currently pursuing his PhD in Law from Lucknow University. He has two published collections of poems, titled 'Moon is Black' and 'Circle Of Life'. He also has one collection of Hindi poems. His English poems have found place in different poetry journals and newspapers' literary supplements. He also has authored two books on Law.



THE ADVENT

Inspirations descend
from the divine summit:
Poetry enters my soul
in the stillness of night
through the invisible corridors,
filling me with awe and wonder,
giving voice to my aspiring soul!

I melt into
the puissant presence:
Fragments of ectoplasmic dreams--
The words -- crystallize
and come out
in ecstasies of joy and pain!



Ranjana Sharan Sinha: Poet-author-professor Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha's poems are part of the postgraduate syllabus, Purnea University. She has been honoured with a number of awards for her contribution to literature and she has received a commendation from President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for her poem 'Mother Nature'. Her poems, short stories, articles and research papers have been widely published both nationally and internationally. She has authored and published 9 books in different genres and 50 research papers. She is on the Editorial Board of Our Poetry Archive (OPA). She is a Research Supervisor (English) RTM Nagpur University, Nagpur.



shutterstock.com · 2071007

IN DAZE

Sometimes I tremble like a storm-swept flower,
And seek to hide my tortured soul from thee,
Bowing my head in deep utter humility
Silently humbled before thy mighty altar.
Oft times I am blown away by Cosmic light
As from a spectacle of doomsday in sight
And stay undeterred lest His Majestic Power
Might in every way sweep me from my Tower

Or circle me in the whirlpool of mighty myriad ways
Tenaciously trapping a tremulous me in daze!

Once you instil in me that Power to still trust your tender
oars

I know you will paddle my canoe to safety of shores

Tell me when to give up my grief, to forego my fear

And when these illusions that bind my vision will clear?



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



TONIGHT I WISH YOU THE MOON

The guests have left behind gifts, the candles wisps are fading, the house is quiet, musing over the lingering evening scents

and you lie under the thick woollen blankets, sleep resting on your eyelids

seamlessly drawing you to the breast of a dream

A boat in the middle of a lake

waves lapping, a night dark as your velvet skin caressing you with its love-breeze

The hills are the soft mounds once pressed against you
You stretch and the ether moves to make space for the
dream that has climbed into your boat
gentle as a rug
and has put on its anklets
to mellify the night with its Silappatikāram rhythm
while its limbs twine over yours, the mellow pressure
soothing your tired aches
As you float in this green lake tonight
I wish you the gentlest light of a moon
to shine a lovebeam upon your sleeping heart
so that when it dawns on you
you pull the dream to yourself and keep it safe
knowing it exists only for you



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



I CHING WISDOM: "MODESTY"

modesty means success

symbolized by a mountain in the center of the earth

modesty means balance,

taking from too much and augmenting what is little

to balance means to never overfill,

less than all can be quite satisfying

“he who possesses something great must not make it too
full”

modesty reflects the handle of character,
gives honor and shines forth,
and he who is honored spreads radiance-
for the modest will elevate and grow full

...the way to expansion leads through contracting

...carry all things to their conclusion

...effort leads to achievement

...a man not boasting or calling his merits virtuous is a man
of great parts

the earth is still,

it does not act of itself

but remains constantly receptive to the influences of
heaven.

thus, its life becomes inexhaustible and eternal

man, likewise, attains eternity
if he does not strive vaingloriously
to achieve everything
from his own strength,
but quietly persevering,
keeping himself receptive
to the impulses freely flowing to him
from life's creative forces



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

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



www.imikimi.com

FOREVER YOUNG

Time represents the frame

And the image the space

When both together

Become the whole

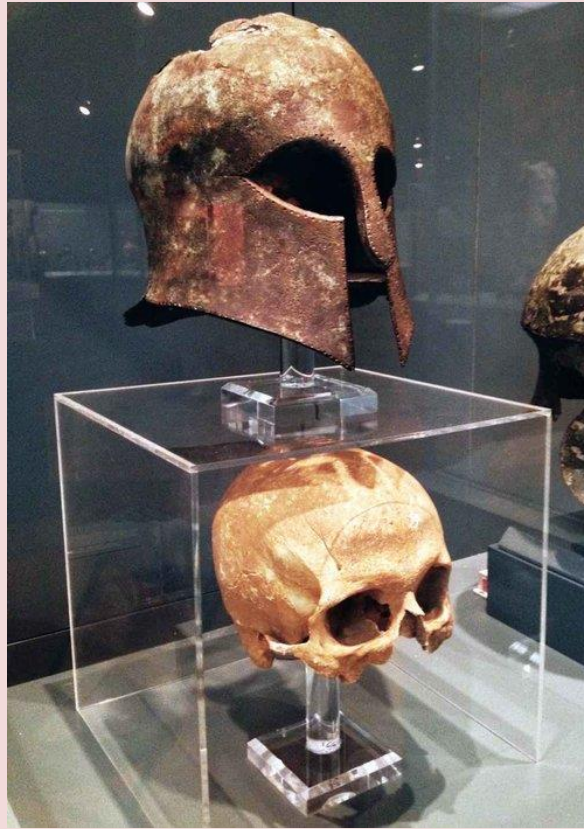
Blended in infinity!

Pain never felt,
Smile never faded;
Feelings clearly frozen
Within the circle of eternity!

Now, there I am within a small space
And untouched by time
While stamped on a wall,
Remaining forever young!



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!



HELMET HEAD

Saw this thing on the news
about an archeological dig that
unearthed a war helmet purported to be
from the battle of Marathon.

The head was still inside.

Nothing more than a skull at this point.

There was no mention of a body.

Yikes!

And now this helmet head sits in some museum.

The skull removed and under glass with the helmet
resting on top of the display.

Tiny white card write-ups beside the findings.

Roped off so the kiddies don't get handy.

The head removed from the helmet.

Just as both had been removed from the body
some time ago.



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



HE CAN MAKE YOU LAUGH

Childhood memories, some fresh, some stale,
fondly reminiscing my childhood that still in my heart does
dwell,

with my homies, siblings and friends, having bright
popcorns,

as bright as “JETHALAL” when he beholds “BABITA JI” in a
tranquil dawn.

See, he dedicated his life making us to laugh,

In his every situation, pleasant or tough,

there are piles to learn from this brave man,
to make yourself your life's fan.

Stop, you may argue,
don't forget, in his blissful story we all grew,
truly, happiness has no limits, he taught,
Such immortal smiles, chuckles, and brightness, he brought.

yes, he can make you laugh,
for his grins are enough,
we wish his immense love for “BABITA JI” would continue,
for years and years, when I will be old and lying on my bed
for days few,

I just want to lie on my bed, at my last breath,
chuckling at “JETHALALS” joke beneath
this serial would be ringing in my ears
And with some gestures, I would utter, see, I still do care.

his silly jokes are fresh on my mind,
consistently being rhymed,

he is that much invincible,
Childhood and his reminisces are inextricable.



Samir Gautam: I am a 20-year-old poet residing in Jharbairaa, Nepal. I work as an editor for several online portals and journals. I have contributed to various international esteemed anthologies and journals. I have also published my first poetry anthology.



WHAT DO THE COLOURS SAY?

What do the colours say?

The hues that surround us—

The reds, pinks, greens and whites

That light up our world.

Then there are blacks and browns

A pretty contrast with the lights,

Making such a beautiful picture
That fills the heart with delight.

Sober white speaks for purity,
While glittering gold talks decadence,
Red is passion, a burning fire,
And the deep purple, elegance.

Yellow speaks of a sunny day,
Orange, of a sunset bright.
Grey reminds me of a stormy evening
And black, of a starry night.

What do the colours say?
That light up the skies,
And paint the landscape so sublime,
A feast for everybody's eyes!



Samixa Bajaj: I am a teenager from Guwahati, Assam. Besides writing, I love reading, dancing, sketching and music.



A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Drip, drip, drip...

Sanguine drops shatter the silence in a crimson pool

But the voices in her head, the perpetual screams are now quiet

Her frail figure looks serene, as though dreaming of faraway places

That curious half-smile on her lips... as always

In the aftermath,
Those who have heard the faint echoes of muffled tears
Murmur something about insanity
The truth silenced under the numbing anaesthetic of denial
Reasons - tens and thousands are given
To proclaim the victim as accused
She never confessed, she was always so happy, smiling
We all loved her so much, we were always there

Perhaps she knew what it would be like

In the beyond

And that's why she chose to leave quietly - no note, no
explanations

For, would anyone have really bothered to give it a second
thought?

But her curious half-smile says it all - the eclipsed pain, the
war within, the untold grief...

What would you, in your perspective, like to call it?

An accident, a suicide, or a murder?



Samrudhi Dash: I am a poet, novelist, editor and motivational speaker, currently residing in New Delhi, India. I write under the pseudonym "Inara". Along with contributions to over two dozen anthologies, international e-zines and magazines, I have published till date five solo poetry anthologies and three novels and conceptualised and edited four anthologies of different genres. I have recently published my third novel "Letters from A Stranger - A Life Changing Map", a blend of a medical thriller with epistolary and philosophical underpinnings which is now available as an e-book on Amazon Kindle and figured in the Amazon Bestseller List at Rank 10.



Know that
you are nothing
when you give love
you become something
when you receive love
you become everything
you are nothing
you exist
you become
only in love.



Sangeeta Gupta: She is a Delhi-based bilingual poet, artist and film maker, who has served as an IRS Officer, and retired as Chief Commissioner of Income Tax. She has worked as Advisor (finance & administration) to Lalit Kala Akademi. She has to her credit 35 solo exhibitions of paintings, 25 published books, and has directed, scripted and shot 17 documentary films. She has 14 anthologies of poems in Hindi and 6 in English to her credit. Song of the Cosmos is her creative biography. Ten of her poetry collections have been translated to Greek, German, Mandarin, English, Urdu, Bangla, Tamil and Dogri. Sangeeta has been adjudged as highly commended poet of the year 2020 by Destiny Poets International community Of Poets, UK.



Once the leaves that reached Heavens door
Are now splattered across the floor
Giving the brown thick ground a golden glow
Telling the world to take life a little slow

The tree teaches us to shed our pride,
And take precious losses in our stride
In each season to have a new colour
And show the entire world a new flavour

The golden leaves merge with their source
Happily to their home, with no traces of being morose
Once there they facilitate life on Mother Earth
And with that, every bit of their existence is worth



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



SO WHAT IF YOU ARE BLACK?

You are black all say

But I find you charismatic and caring
with a golden heart full of love for all

with no caste colour or creed

Everything in you I love

The way you walk and talk

And greets everyone alike

No rich or poor in your eyes

As you know what is poverty
You grew up with harsh realities of life!
Although I am white n pretty and rich
I care not for the riches and pleasures
which fleets away faster than you think!
Your grace I love
When you give alms to the needy
and call me to be with you to share the joy of giving
I love your golden heart
I love everything about you
The way you dance with slow steps
Me holding to you with all my love
Your unscented body manly and strong
My love for you will never end till death do us part
I love your tight grip
strong and loving
never letting me move away!
All say you are black

But I love your black complexion and your golden heart
which I will never part with anyone in this world!



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.



WHEN FORM TAKES SHAPE

There are beams in your eyes

There are pyramids in your head

built by hands you can't see

There is an ego slain

and buried in the desert

There is a point of no return
along the same path forgiveness treads

There is an owl in your eyes

There are jewels in your heart
hidden deep for safe keeping

There is a flame rising
from a cup that can't be filled

There is a moment of revelation
where old skin sheds to breathe anew

There is music in your eyes



Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. He guest-edited the 2019, 2020, and 2021 Western Voices Editions of Setu Mag. Selections of his poetry have been translated into Afrikaans, Albanian, Bengali, Dutch, French, Italian, Kurdish, Malayalam, Persian, Serbian, and Spanish. He hosts a podcast, Songs of Selah, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio and features interviews with contemporary poets, artists, musicians, and health advocates. More about Outlar's work can be found at 17Numa.com.



THE BLUE LAGOON

There lies the wonder that is the Blue lagoon

A dark valley swallows the gleam of moon

Beyond the silent valley I can see the glimmer

Place of deep silence and depth of gloom

Tempting to go downhill to the valley floor

There is comfort in the darkness I wonder

Easier than climbing up to the Blue lagoon

Is it me or the silence beckoning yonder?

There lies the wonder that is the Blue lagoon
No one speaks to me or asks after too soon
Weight of loneliness of mind with all around
The world is a lonely place the valley a boon

Mind wanders and heart seeks no rebound
Sad and melancholy as an old Cello's sound
Violin plays the note like an old Cello, deep
Forget the Blue lagoon, its path not found

Heart feels heavy and all it wants is sleep
The world will go on merry way once asleep
It hankers for an end and peace not too soon
No one wonders, seeks, waits or stop to weep

Soul filled to the brim of doom and gloom
Joy, laughter and thrill of life there is no room

Down the slope it goes to bottom of the valley

Too hard to make it to the Blue lagoon

Is it hard to climb or is being too lazy?

Thorns and rocks on the path on the way

Ask the heart who would have flown to moon

To the angel bliss of the Blue lagoon, all the way

It is the way the world is from here to moon

The Blue lagoon beckoning Kavi Shankara soon

Let us not fool ourselves of our importance

There lies the wonder that is the Blue lagoon.



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



BRIDGES—HIGH AND LOW

Coming across a bridge

Seemingly very high

Circumstances notwithstanding

Going across, slowly

Into the land of beauty and joy

Bridges, long and cumbersome

Nevertheless, a ray of hope and sunshine

Winding its way into the forest of greens

Meandering on its long journey

Bridges, succeeding in its desire

Of linking humanity and wilderness

In a profound seraphic collage

Bridges, slowly reaching out

Beauty and profundity in its wake

Slowly and surely

Traipsin along

Into the path of wilderness



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.



TORTURE SCENE...

Last night I gasped watching a torture scene.

A hero-cop whose very mien was mean

pushed a fellow's head underwater

perhaps to test his moral quarter

until the fellow purpled, nearly died.

The hero sniggered, "See, I knew you lied!"

When I slept, the head was mine, the water bleak.

The pressure stretched my face and hit a peak,

pushed in till life dissolved and I saw death,

dream-pixels in my body screamed for breath.

I fought to rise, our breath is strongest on the brink!

The night resumed, my conscience sadly on the blink!

Lies faded in the morning light, movie and my dream.

Light tells! There's more to dream than it would seem!

We fight to claim our heads, or quietly cease,

conjuring hero-cops and dead memories.

Dense and breathless, life is always in our hands.

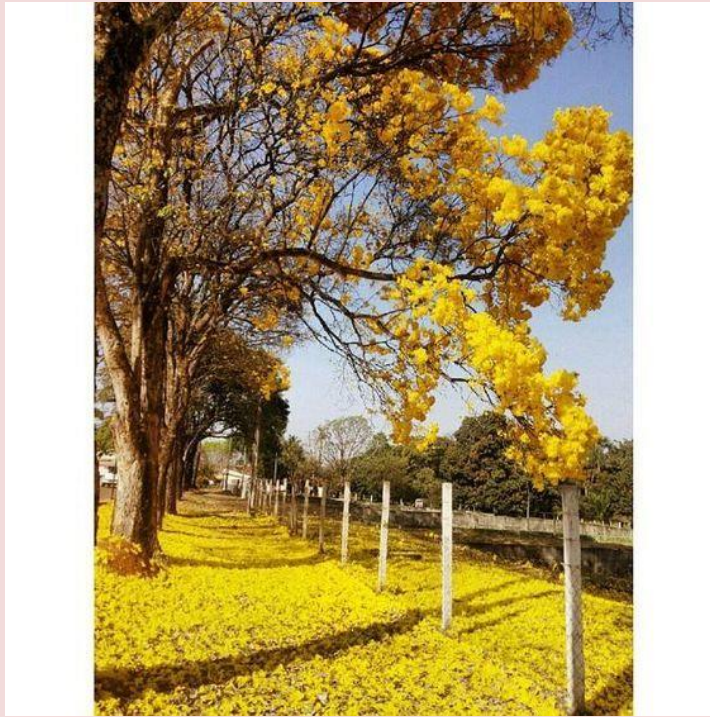
Come up for air! Swimmer, reach the sands!



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

www.shreevarma.com

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



<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/432838214162053937/>

AFTER THE RAIN

suddenly a slight change

in the evening sky

a cool breeze

odor of the impending rain!

dance of the trees

flutter of the wings—

soft rain drops---

drumming raindrops

lightning and thundering

angst of the wind---

rain ebbing into

a drizzle

insects and moths

spread everywhere!

rain-washed trees

a carpet of Amaltas

petals at my feet;

a beautiful yellow sight,
inspite of the ravaging
destruction and plight!!



Sindhu Rana: I am a poet and writer residing in Jalandhar, Punjab (India). I have contributed to various leading newspapers n journals; e-zines and anthologies. I am a script writer and voice-over artist for documentaries. However reading and writing remain my first love.



THE JOURNEY

Affluence never remains, nor one's life.

Wealth and riches, self and power, dignity and beauty, love and hatred are for a period of time.

The body burns into ashes,

with it burn one's dreams and reality, accomplishments and failures, love and relationships, treachery and sacrifices, ego and jealousy, passion and obsession,

mine and thine, everything one has, one wished or wishes to have.

Leaving everything behind, one goes to that big void, the glorious uncertainty.

I will go, so also you to that unknown space,
the address of which, know none

Why so much of dream and greed, passion and obsession,
nude parade of vanity and ego?

Why the hungry red eyes of Chengiz Khan and Hitler, the
sheer madness of Mahmud for wealth and gold.

when things are so transient and unreal.



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: He is from Padmapur, Jagatsingpur, Odisha. He works as Finance Officer in Govt of Odisha. He is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer whose write ups are published in newspapers and in more than two hundred national and international magazines, journals and anthologies. He is a featured poet of the PENTASI B World Friendship Poetry and Year of The Poet, U.S.A. His collection of poems and prose are published in his blogs under the heading A LOOK AT LIFE, SOMETHING I LOOK AT, A LOOK, THE RIVULET, THINK ONCE MORE, THE JOURNEY, AU THARE, AU EKA GAPA, SROTASWINI, JATRA, THE JOURNEY etc.

smrutiweb.wordpress.com

smrutitanuja.blogspot.com



TETHERED

Creating illusions of freedom to escape from the inane routine of the daily grind,

Hovering in the open spaces between the conscious and subconscious self,

Far away from commitments, deadlines- the bane of commonalities,

To live life fully with a calm demeanor, succinct and noble,
Wandering aimlessly, humming to self, while pondering
over random thoughts,
Gazing with awe at the little patch of cloudy sky from my
window grill,
Not hurried by constraints of time and space, nor
belligerent, or acerbic in temperament.

Incredulous, celebrating at the sheer joy of living for the
moment

Even at times indulging in the gossamer luxury of feeling
forlorn and dejected,

Staring preoccupied, oscillating but forever buoyant in spirit
while de cluttering the baggage of the mind,

Composed and sedate to stimulus provoked and
unprovoked,

Amalgamating inclusiveness, being less nonchalant, no
boundaries set for self or others,

Luxuriating in the essence, whilst enjoying the munificence
offered by Mother Nature,

Enthused with yearning, reflecting, and then maybe with a
breathless sigh of relief,

Be bedazzled at life like an interested bystander,

Oft times with a feeling of dread created by the pandemic,
but always tethered to Faith and Hope in the Divine.



Someeta Das: She is a retired Professor of English with twenty-eight years of teaching experience from Maharaja Manindra Chandra College, Kolkata. She is interested in writing short stories and stories on travel. She has published in Glomag, The Statesman, Setu, Woman's era and a number of e-zines.

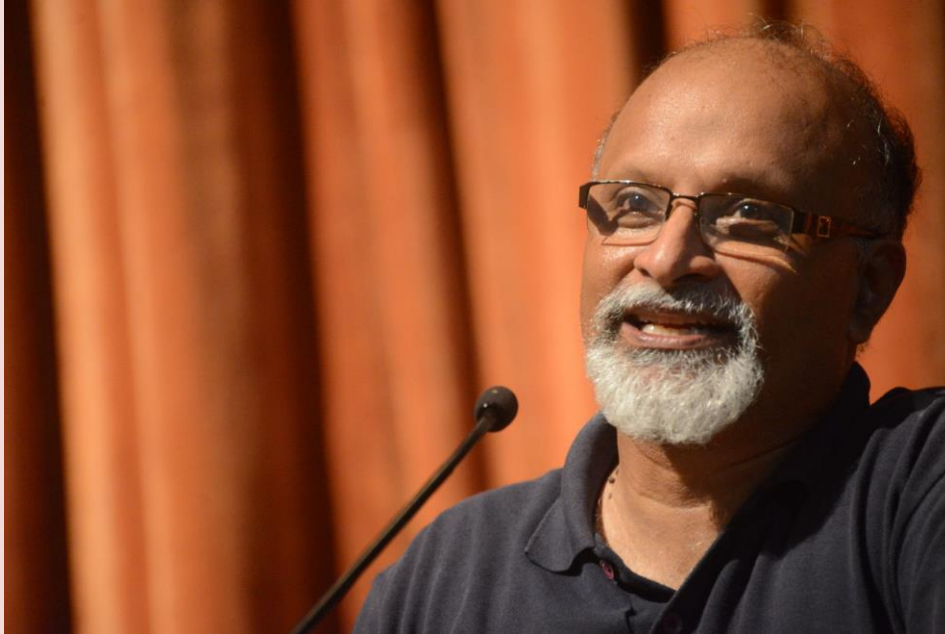


Circles end where they start.
The terminals cannot be told apart.
One more year today goes
and the next draws up close.
The world still goes around.
Days turn into nights and versa vice.
Optimism has a better sound
than pessimism with doubts abound
Saints, seers, pandits, peers,
qazis, imams, preachers, popes

and all their devotees survive on hope.

Every coin has three sides though

Whatever happens one would lament when another celebrates and the third will smirk with a 'I told you so'.



Sri N Srivatsa: Born and brought up in Madras of yore who moved to New Delhi in 1978. I am a Physics graduate who spent more time dabbling in fine arts before a career in banking. I've been singing with the Madras Youth Choir for almost half a century. I have worked both behind and on stage in Tamil, English and Hindi productions of Arangam, Yatrik and Madras Players. I pursue translation of good poetry from Tamil to English and vice versa plus a few in Hindi as a passion. Three volumes of Tamil poems by three different poets translated by "moi" have been published.



HUMMINGBIRD

Colorful bird
with wing tip dipped
in Eden's fountain of sunshine

your gentle touch
agitates the waters
reflecting cloud and sky

your beauty, exotic
making the paradise you inhabit
seem an ugly cage

arrayed in silky garments, white and pink
you are, more beautiful than
the sacred lotus

the slight tilt of your head, falling down
hair black as night, the length of heaven
the scent of jasmine

your painted eyes on the horizon
dreaming of words
greater than mine

intoxicating, your sweet smile
from wine-stained lips
as red as rose petals

dangling to hear, echoes of silver and gold
like two stars afire, tumbling
inside my breast, you are

the fluttering of my heart
where pen kisses page
there you are

my . . .

beautiful . . .

hummingbird



Stefan Bohdan: Stefan Bohdan lives in Orlando, Florida USA. He is retired from the architectural/engineering/construction world. He now spends his time writing poems and novels. His English poems have been published in multiple books, anthologies, journals, newspapers, e-zines and translated into various languages. He also writes reviews for poetry books. He is internationally published and has collaborated with poets, translators and artists from around the world. He is the founder of Third Eye Butterfly Press.



I HELD MY BABY

I held my baby in my arms till he became still.

He was sent by God such a thrill.

He was so precious in my arms.

He used to touch my jewellery charms.

I protected him always from harm.

He could have been president.

He was put on a journey.

I know where he was sent.

To heaven the big sky.
I'm happy even though I still cry.



DIGNITY

Dignity dig down in yourself.
It is more valuable than wealth.
Never let it affect your health.
Never let your dignity go.
Never let others belittle making you low.



WEeping WILLOW

Weeping willow you passed the climate test.

You looked one time.

Now you look your best.

Wherever you grow you get rest.

You always have God the healing

Doctor your blest.



Been down that road before.
I'm changing course.
Alcohol, drugs, and sin no more.



Stephen Goetz: I am a poet from Lincoln City, Oregon, USA. I am still perfecting my writing skills on published poems online. I am a regular contributor to GloMag compiled by Glory Sasikala, publisher, India. I have received poetry awards from Motivational Strips Poetry Group.



ALL DRESSED UP BUT GOING NOWHERE

She stood bare in bold radiance

Glowing bright in her stark luminance

Naked under the spotlight

She, the mannequin, stood upright

All looked at her in open-mouthed awe

Her beauty universally acclaimed

Then the disapproving murmur started

At her brazenness and distasteful behaviour

The dress designers narrowed in

The clothiers zeroed in

Each draped her

Each covered her

Each wrapped her

In sheaths of gossamer shimmer

In swathes of silken glamour

In bales of velvety glitter

Now she became presentable easy on the eye

Her sharp edges lost

Though devoid of her pristine honourable light

In helplessness she watched her identity change
Into a glossy but vapid clothes horse
So likeable and approved by all

She hurt no sentiments
No tongues clicked
She had morphed into blandness

A rose without thorns
A sword without sharp edges
A dispensable item

Very prim very propah
She -The Naked Truth-
sashayed the ramp as The Show-Stopper.



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



LIFE CALLS FOR CELEBRATION

Just one life
and not more
If I were a butterfly
I would celebrate divinity of love
both the rough patches
and alluring heights
I would deal with equanimity
deeply embrace each episode

caress process of metamorphosis
for... I need to evolve
prove myself
be my best version
I shall not discriminate
between flowers
from God's garden they are
and each is special

I am fortune to be with these
serene blooms
ordained to feel their pulse
assuage their hurt
they are my God connect
source of exuberance
taking a cue from them
I frown less smile more

for I have internalised...

this one life calls for celebration.



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



YOU ARE MY PAINT

My eyes are paintbrush
You are my featured paint,
In the empty canvas of my life
Draw your picture my mind-saint.

Let me be the reason for your smile
O my midnight dream fluffy,

Let me put some smile on your fervent lips

My eyes want to see you happy.

You are not only a painting

But within me you're everywhere and everything,

Let my lips touch your forehead,

You are the best paint I have ever made...



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



ERRANT LOVE

As the clouds around your dense brow
Thickened black with a thundering roar
My eyes drenched in drops of tears
Sorrow like icicles silently fell to the shore.

Later at night Kamadev sent his rainbow of love
To lighten your black mood to a loving cheer
You tried to brighten my depressed heart
With the lightning shaft of your comic humour.

I didn't bask in the beams of your joke and the comic vein
For my mind was enclosed in a bubble of scalding pain.

There was a time when your bright eyes sparkled with
desires
Or when your lips trembled in anticipated union
Then my dull heart pulsated with dreams unexpected
My body like a lyre sang songs to me yet un-recited.

But time taught me that the God of Love is errant and cruel
too
Though the lover's heart is kind
Jealousy sometimes makes it obsessed through!



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



ROOTS

My ancestral home's caved in walls, drink my tears,I hug them!

...crumbling mildewed musty walls, dripping ceilings

narrate tearful tales of clogged with rubbish and rags,
rooftop drains

crevices in the parapet, perfect for the peepal to thrive
during rains

a sad moon tries to glisten and gloss over the moss on an empty terrace

summer nights no longer stretched for never-ending fairy tales

as Sinduri and Dussehri dribble down our cheeky chins dripping to the floor

aroma from sticky elbows lingers, the piles of sucked stones and skins grow.

No longer, rows of cots with snowy bed-sheets, printed with gooey hands,

chocolates stuffed in night suit pockets, bathe in the moonlight.

Raat Ki Rani vying with Mogra, in a wet handkerchief

perfume my pillow. I name it Hypnotic Mischief!

Nostalgia nudges me towards the kitchen, familiar fragrances waft

Ma raises her heels to peer into the Kansa degchi, one of Dadi's

They don't use these any longer, pressure in aluminum
cooks instead

The flavor gone with the wind, steam whistling now and
then.

The mutton done just right, spices infused Basmati,
ambrosial biryani

whips my appetite, she quickly shuts the lid on delectable
whiffs wafting out.

The best of her fields, her soul chanting Satnam Waheguru
imbues the seeds.

She peers towards the horizon for signs of monsoon clouds.

The July humidity drains my energy, tongue to palette
sticks,

Ah! the courtyard hand pump, walk towards it, my cracked
lips lick

Its rusted handle lies hidden among withered grassy weeds,
no life or color

to the cracked floor. A decomposing rat is being dragged by
large black ants,

I, as a kid called them motor cycles, today kids know them as Camponotus

**** My son hands me a shining steel water bottle
....' Ma, the buyers called, they want to close the deal.'

I quietly wipe a tear
through my chest
a sharp pain sears.

Note

**peepala tree that grows easily anywhere especially cracks in buildings.*

** Sinduri & Dussehri - delicious mangoes*

** Basmati- fragrant Indian long rice.*

** Biryani - a delectable Indian dish of rice and meat/vegetables*

** kansa degchi - a cooking pot made of bronze and tin.*

** raat ki rani and mogra - very fragrant Indian flowers.*



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



ACROBAT

Suspended in the air

on ropes

balancing pots and pans

the thin worker painting

the facade

his fingers

rivaling Michelangelo.



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

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

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



CHOICES

Walking through the pitch darkness

In every nook, every crevice –

I find a face of mine

Growing by the numbers

The many 'I's spilling out like ants from an ant-hill

Crawling over me

Like spiders spinning webs

Tying me up in knots

Of silken threads

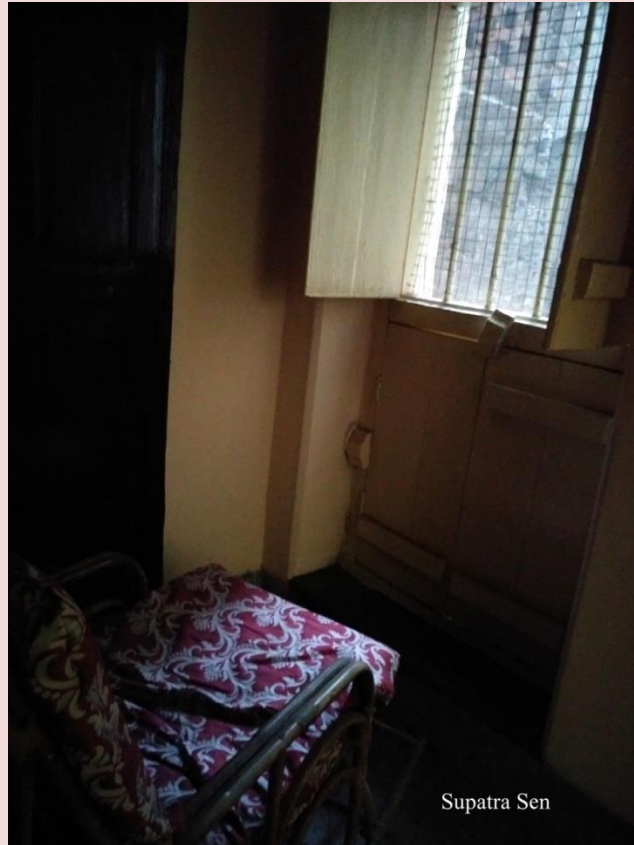
I can hardly walk a step

Caught

In a conundrum of choices!



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.



MUSINGS...

No work

And all play

Days tossed to the wind

Aimless amble

Mindless banter

Books re-read

Music replayed

Life...

Just to live

A decade hence

When death and threat

Seem far and distant

Such would perhaps be

The fond recalls

Of these times...

Over tea

And engulfing nostalgia

Stills of dreamy afternoons

Dripping fruits

Raindrops on window panes

Dusk settling slowly

Over the once bustling city

And three women awaiting their tomorrows...

My two companions
Would have walked their steps
One ahead...the other away
And I would reminisce
Over a steaming cup
That once we were
Thus...



Supatra Sen: Dr. Supatra Sen, currently Associate Professor in a reputed Kolkata college is a veteran academician, teaching and researching in the fields of Botany and Environment. Her international books, papers and reviews are chiefly in her professional subject. She has edited several UGC funded ISBN volumes and is also the founder and Chief Editor of an ISSN peer-reviewed multi-disciplinary academic journal 'Harvest' since 2016. Though her tryst with poetry writing is only a few months old, she is a published poet.



acrylic painting by Suzette Portes San Jose

THE RIDDLE...

(septon 4-9)

I

as we exist and as life goes... a question upholds
a riddle that only time and space unfolds
as the wind blows one after another comes whirling
whooshing a deep sigh from the world, revolving

II

the excellent beauty is seen from all that was created
the moon, the stars, the skies work their wonders
in a fate of the hands, sprung in the land... wasted
blown in the ashes of reality only as mind ponders

III

as it starts and finds the end from mystery to a riddle
patching the fragment brought about in a puzzle
from all of the joys, laughter, tears, and sorrows abound
once lost on oneself, where no footsteps ever found

IV

a lingering soul from the darkness that plays in a shadow
behind the tears and happiness, a heart can borrow
lifelessly watching the skies that slowly turns gray
as the clouds strew dusting the heavens...ripped away

V

as time bewildered, born into a mirage of illusion
molding reality in the nightmare of delusion

eyes are deceived from the ornaments of the unknown
question on riddles in mind, dipping a life forlorn

VI

the quest goes on to conquer and unleashed reality
from the riddles of time in the sphere of infinity
as the days and nights keep coming without an end
through twilight and dusk of life, it comes to send

VII

from every bit, that was blown away from our existence
shattered dreams have gone away... left only in
reminiscence

living the dark skies to treasure what we cannot store
for life is a riddle that persists in the unseen forevermore

VIII

as the wind blows reality afloat in the phase-unknown
when all there was were gloom from clouds withdrawn
and on this ground, only to fill life with much fantasy
to ignite the mystic hope in all that is glittering so fancy

IX

from reality, riddles were born as mind soared
born beyond thoughts in the wilderness of imagination
from a destined journey where missing links ignored
as the wind blows, was reality real? or just a fascination.



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



FOUR DOGS WITH THEIR TWINKLING EYES

There is no superior but only four dogs are there to rebuke
me,

And to look after my dwelling house with their catching
zeal.

At the main entrance of the house they wait eagerly—

To eat the leftovers set aside from the plate of each meal.

On hearing their caterwauling, in a drowse, my neighbour

Drubs them mercilessly to ensure her transcendental sleep.

And she adopts an indirect method to denounce my favour
For these stray animals by swaying her tempersome whip.

This pandemic didn't want to wash away me, but the
apathy

Of my acquaintances and their lip services have given a
blow.

So I don't bother; as the definition has been changed
drastically

For everything including the neighbour or friend, even of a
foe.

From the twilight zone of my dilapidating conscience, I
foresee—

That, there will be some twinkling eyes to look at me
blissfully.



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



THE SOUND OF SILENCE

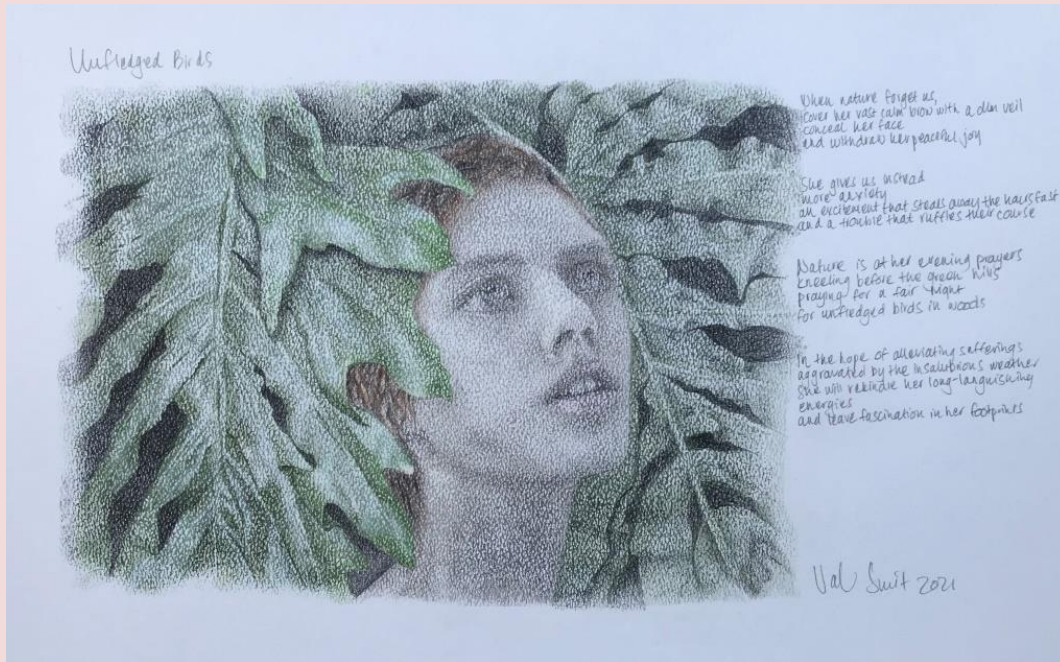
The cacophony behind the stillness,
The commotion hidden in the quiet,
The pandemonium so hush-hush,
Belie the state of calmness.

The uproar in the quiet eyes,
The loquaciousness of those calm lips,
The agitation in those still fingers,
Embody the gentle reticence.

The mind strives to restrain,
The heart is all impatient,
To break the chain of tranquility,
To delve in the sound of silence.



Uma Agarwal Bajaj: I am a Company Secretary by qualification, a homemaker by choice (since the last 20 years) and a budding businesswoman. Having been occupied with family and kids, I have recently realised that I have the ability to pen some of my thoughts. I write both in English and Hindi and hope to better myself with each passing day. I read fiction whenever I get some time. Apart from this I love to cook and have a fascination for gardening (in my balcony).



UNFLEDGED BIRDS

We still allow ourselves to guide our young with an attitude of exclusivity. Without the realisation that inclusivity is required by diversity, we cannot empower our younger generations to think critically, reflect soundly and control their own thought processes, which is largely controlled by historic societal values, media, and most importantly political, economic and “social influencers”.

When nature forget us,
cover her vast calm brow with a dim veil
conceal her face
and withdraw her peaceful joy

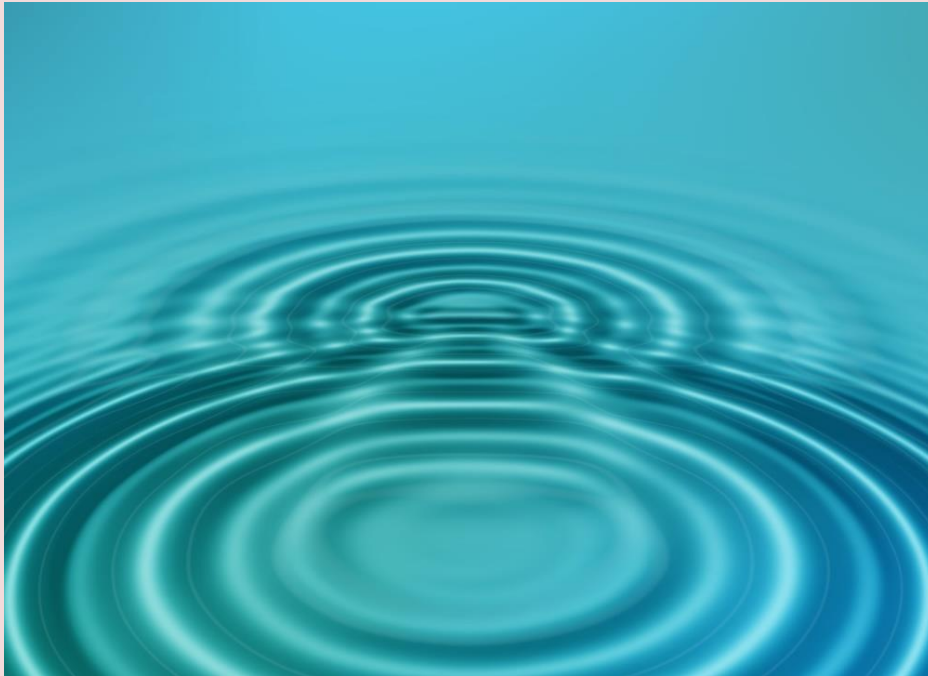
She gives us instead
more anxiety
an excitement that steals away the hours fast
and a trouble that ruffles their course

Nature is at her evening prayers
kneeling before the green hills
praying for a fair night
for unfledged birds in woods

In the hope of alleviating sufferings
aggravated by the insalubrious weather
she will rekindle her long-languishing energies
and leave fascination in her footprints



Val Smit: Val Smit is a South African artist and poet based in Cape Town. She writes ekphrastic poetry per artwork created and uses various media in portraying images that she feels fitting to deliver the message of the words she pens down. She focuses on the inner turmoil experienced by our disconnectedness from nature and each other. Her work has been published in various online journals including GloMag India, The Chachalaca Review, The West Review, The Raconteur Review, Literary Garland and Valiant Scribe.



THE LAST MONTH?

Why must December come to us?

As a severance

The snapping of that branch

The fall of the last fruit

Halt can be abrupt

Like a country and its lockdown

A sudden death in the heat of May

A termination letter in June

A lovers' break up in July

What would you say?

When love struck such

In the late winter of March

A baby in your arms

On the thirty first of December

Ask the parents.....

If that's a beginning

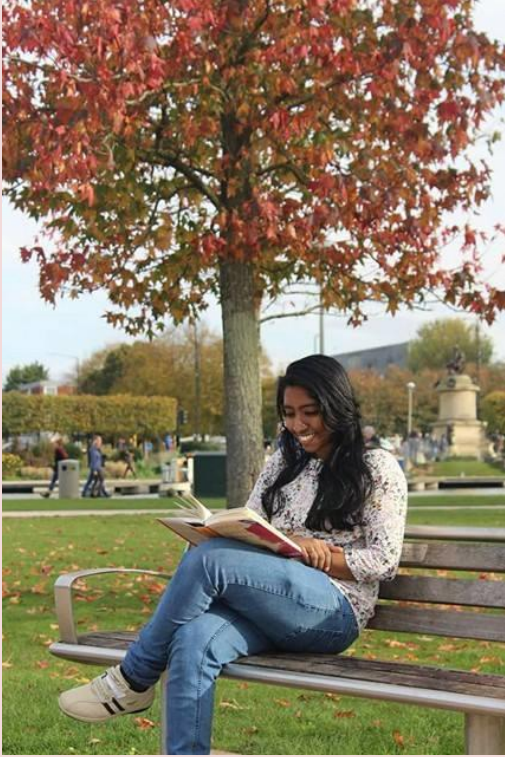
Or an end



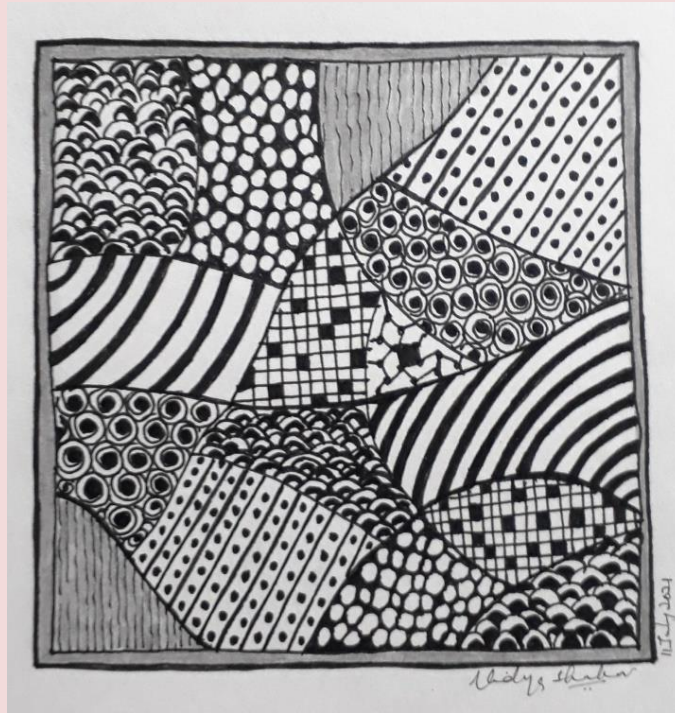
Vandana Kumar: Vandana Kumar is a Middle School French teacher in New Delhi, India. An educator with over 20 years of experience, she is also a French translator and recruitment consultant. Her poems have been published in various national and international journals and websites like 'Glomag', 'Mad Swirl', Toronto-based 'Scarlet Leaf Review', Philadelphia based 'North of Oxford', UK based 'Destiny Poets', 'Lothlorien Poetry Journal', 'Madras Courier' etc. She has featured in anthologies like Houston, Texas-based – 'Harbinger Asylum', US-based 'Kali Project' of Indie Blu(e) Publishing etc. She also writes articles on cinema that have appeared on websites and journals like 'Just-cinema', 'Daily Eye', 'The Free Press Journal', Boloji.com and The Artamour.



Our hands are a sieve,
filtered with
the scent of sanitizers,
echoes of handshakes,
shadows of shoulders we've tapped,
and silhouettes of names of people
who left
before love did.



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



FORTY WINKS (A ZUIHITSU)

The white spaces on the patterned bedspread seem like
patches of peeled-away colour

A little for every sleepless hour

Look, my sleeping baby smiles!

What is he dreaming of?

Merry-go-round in the skies?

I sit on my bed, jabbing away at my phone

Writing poetry

It wouldn't allow me to sleep

The phone?

Or poetry?

Why am I being apologetic?

My students narrated glorious stories in class today

They were thrilled and bursting with impressive ideas of sensuous perceptions after the visualisation I took them through

The entire forty minutes of class was highly exuberant

No one slept

No one slept

Except probably me



Vidya Shankar: I am a widely published Indian poet, writer, editor, blogger, English teacher, a “book” in the Human Library, and mandala art instructor. The author of two poetry books, I have received several literary awards and recognitions. One of my poems has been published in the first ever Yearbook of Indian Poetry in English, 2020-21. I have been featured in a unique coffee table book, ‘50 Inspiring Women boys and girls should read about, Chennai Edition’. I find meaning to my life through yoga and mandalas.



INTERLOCKED: 1975

I remember how close you came to a meltdown

When I loosely translated your silence:

There was a mishap in semantics - -

Later, you said:” There are eyes everywhere

Like black holes.” But I could only see

The unfolding contours of your thoughts.

Soon, we shared an agreement of signs - -

Meeting you became a daily reawakening:

My words slipped through the syntax of your fears.

We survived on stolen conversations and hurried
paragraphs

With you reading between the lines

With a torch, when the hostel lights were switched off - -

And afterwards when our fingers were interlocked

With your long pauses and slender sentences,

You possessed me.



Vijay Nair: I retired as an Associate Professor of English and I was awarded the Reuel International Prize for Writing & Literature in the year 2016. I was the 'Critic of the Year' in 2016, 2017 & 2018 at Destiny Poets, UK and was also adjudged the 'Poet of the Year' in 2018 by the same poetry group. Three of my poems have been included in the PG syllabus of BBMK University, Dhanbad.



HOLIER THAN THOU

Condemnation is so easy

A pose we enjoy the most

That self-righteous air

That we possess

Adds fun to the delightful chore

And how we preen our feathers

Stretch our neck balancing the crown

That seems to rest on the head swollen

The grim satisfaction that follows

The correction that we gave the erring soul

Ah! Where would be! What would we do!

Grateful to the sinners that populate this globe



Vineetha Mekkoth: She is a poet, writer, translator and editor from Calicut, Kerala. She works as Assistant State Tax Officer in the State GST Department. She has been translating for the Kerala Sahitya Academy since 2014 and has also contributed articles for the Malayalam Literary Survey, a quarterly brought out by the academy. She has published poems and short stories in various anthologies. She is co-editor of two anthologies. Her debut poetry collection 'Ashtavakra and Other Poems' was published in August 2017 which is available on Amazon.



SONNET 1

The road to fame has never been smooth
Can never be addressed by any in sooth
The walker has to walk the solitary walk
Brushing aside the idle, jealous, tall talk
Keep on heading on with heart on bet
Till they reach the goal once by them set
Bring the laurel down at their feet
That shuts the futile critics and their shit.

Worry not that some spurn you too much
They rather egg you on to ignore the fuss
Know yourself and what you are on for
let your name and glory be almost a lore
Like those still recalled with memories fond
Leave the world with a theme for a song.



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



ciao! 😊