

GloMag

GLOWING

Monthly Online Poetry and Prose Magazine

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Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

Sumita Dutta



Title of the Cover Pic: Facets of Man

Sumita Dutta: Her mother introduced her to paints early. Preferring the outdoor to sedentary pursuits, Sumita uncharacteristically took to brush and paints, fascinated by the beauty a piece of paper became when colours and shapes harmonised.

Her father bought a film SLR camera from Germany during her early teens. To a curious child who usually took apart pens, toys and anything she could get her hands on to understand its inner working, this camera was like Alladin's cave—full of treasure. Trying out shutter speed and aperture size in various permutations was thrilling. Her father taught her to measure depth of focus and then calculate the appropriate shutter speed, aperture size and flash metering, but she instinctively chose her settings. Soon the camera was hers to experiment with as much as she wanted.

She had been a reader from her earliest years and writing followed easily. As an introverted teenager, she quietly expressed her tumultuous teenage angst and exploration of her world in verse and prose. The pages of her diary were

filled with accounts of misadventures, and blasé opinions on life.

She chose to pursue Fine Arts (Painting) from Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore University. The five years degree course taught drawing and painting in various styles, Sculpting, Graphics—litho and lino, Art history—Indian and Western, Aesthetics, Psychology... Photography was an interest many students followed.

Later, she obtained a diploma in computer graphics—photography and art merged. A few jobs in marketing, and PR, gave her first hand understanding of people. About six years of professional photography focussed on children, preceded teaching O and AS level English in an IGCSE school. She designed, edited and produced the school magazines during her tenure, while holding the position of Parent Coordinator among other titles.

Presently, she is the founder and proprietor of Adlsh Photo Art. Her exploration of writing, photography and art continues and can be found in various sites on the web. She has been a regular contributor to GloMag since August 2015.

Examples of her poetry, prose and photography can be found at her blog site: <https://zippythoughts.wordpress.com/>

Her first published poem is ‘Her Flight’

(<https://zippythoughts.wordpress.com/2013/05/31/her-flight/>) printed in The Poetic Bond III, an anthology compiled and edited by Trevor Maynard.

She has edited, designed and published a book - 'An Overview of Spirituality' by Chinmoy Biswas http://www.amazon.in/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=An+Overview+of+Spirituality+by+Chinmoy+Biswas

Some Tips on Painting:

1. Both Painting and Photography produce a 2D image whose basic function is to touch the viewer through one or more of the nine rasa's. Generally the creator's intention is to leave a positive impact on the viewer, but a negative impact can be extremely powerful too. For example, 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch, or 'The Potato Eaters' by Van Gogh are two well known paintings that do not depict flowers in sunshine.
2. Be aware of the elements in your composition. Straight lines, curved lines all draw the viewer's eye. It is a better composition when the viewer's eye is drawn into the picture.
3. Keep a limited palette of colours. Repeating colours of similar shade produce a soothing effect, while contrasting colours produce a conflicting effect. White pigment is indispensable, most times.

4. Be aware of direction of light. Shadows are important and produce three dimensional effect. Highlights are equally important. Catch lights in the eyes, give life to figures.

5. In portraiture, capturing expression and attitude is mostly the quest. Focus should carefully be on the eyes. Avoid harsh overhead sunlight that leave the eyes squinting in shadowed hollows. Fill flash can be used when there's too much contrast between the well lit and the shadowed areas.

Perspective of the Cover Art:

Glory's anthologies, every month, underlines the different interests of the contributors to GloMag. As she never insists on a common theme, the subjects vary vastly. These seventy odd poets/writers are a good representation of the human essentia, an expressive cross-section. We obviously write about anything that has touched us—memories from the past, our present world, and hopes and fears for the future.

Every piece of writing also showcases our sensibilities, sense of aesthetics, and ego, by what we choose to write about and how we chose to assemble our bouquet of words. It shows our upbringing, our cultural values and our attitude to our own world.

What we chose not to write about is often as informative as our frankness of expression. The mask we show the world is etched with the personality we wish to display and the inadequacies we hide.

My art represents that mask—composed as much of gently curving emotions as sharply edged and angled—contrasting hues, glittering, and dull in parts. The tribals in their childlike simplicity, decorate their bodies with delight—feathers, jewellery, body paint... The truth is, even in our apparently sophisticated society, we too love to embellish ourselves and present ourselves as best as we can.

This mask, that we are happy to display, and all that hidden within, peeping out, is us, the complete, loveable human being—part beauty, part fallibility.

ABOUT GLOMAG

GloMag is the coming together of poets in their diverse manifestations, thoughts, and expressions - and the visual interpretation of these. Sometimes the original thought of the poet gets completely lost in the interpretations. Visual aids help us to decipher the poet'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 verses, expressions, and pictures. Your soul dances in ecstasy, participates in a cosmic experience, it sways and chants. Somewhere someone is telling you about duality, someone tells you about a forlorn house without music, someone shows you how to love, and someone raises questions about existence itself.

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

Glory Sasikala

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BACKGROUND MUSIC: “The Model” by Kraftwerk

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgS252XT_Ts

PREFACE

Gonapragasen Naicker Aka Danny

(Poet and Convenor of the Live Poets Society, Durban, South Africa)



"The vulnerability and realness I've witnessed within the poetry world is unlike any other medium in my mind." Priscilla Frank Arts Writer, The Huffington Post

The anguish of one's own poetic vision of art and conscience is soothed only by the belief that poetry—as an art can nourish and at least do something toward the rescue of our common humanity ; it should show how poetry can become a healer, can be “therapeutic.” In the face of disintegrative forces set loose in this materialistic and robotic digital society, it is poetry that can affirm the notions of the self. It can become the ideal to reawaken our consciences to our inner most self, become a symbol of the struggle for the freedom of the self, and of the self of the universal community has a whole.

More and more as our modern digital driven society races toward the abolition of the self, and diverges from the ideals

of a culture created to enhance the notion of dignity of selfhood, poetry becomes more and more indispensable and relevant.

I have taken the liberty to quote the late Robert F Kennedy who puts it so brilliantly in so few words that there has to be that paradigm shift of the mindset.

“All great questions must be raised by great voices, and the great voices is the voice of the People - speaking out – in prose, or painting or poetry, music: speaking out –in homes and halls and farms, courts and cafes- let that voice speak and the stillness you hear will be the gratitude of mankind”

Robert F. Kennedy

We are a universal nation of people with a multitude of unique countless significant diversities. Our languages are many. Our culture, customs and religions are many. Our socio economic and political philosophies and systems defer from nation to nation, from country to country.

In this coldrum of diversity there is the potential for greatness, a greatness born from the knowledge and belief that we share the same Universal soul. And that we are one and the same united by a common thread, which is our humanity.

This humanity makes us all brothers and sisters in the greater scheme of things. Our diversity should be a guiding light to lead us from the prospects that have the potential to give rise to conflicts that lead to wars, violent disputes. Genocide on the grounds of race, tribalism and religious intolerance

Writers and Poets cannot stand on the sidelines and become passive spectators when there are conflicts raging all around them. They need to raise their voices through their poetry and books, and let it make a bold declaration sharper than a two edged sword:-

When there is premeditated wholesale ethnic murder on an unprecedented scale

When xenophobia takes on a murderous garb,

When dowry murders fail to ignite our collective indignation,

When religious and caste killings don't make us despair as human beings.

When genocide on a global scale does not elicit a word of protest from governments and statesmen's and nations,

When Global warming and the rape of our planet makes us all vulnerable to a cataclysmic catastrophe to ghastly to contemplate.

When Human Trafficking is rife within our borders and silence becomes corruption

When Child and Woman Prostitution and Pornography does not fill us with outrage

When Child Labour exists under extreme horrendous conditions and we tend to condone this terrible practise when we buy the products this bonded labour puts on the international markets.

When Oppression and the Denial of Human and Political rights, are rife in the countries we have Trade Links and Commercial Agreements with and we are prepared to compromise the moral high ground because trade is more valuable than human life.

When Dictatorships deny people the right of Freedom of Speech and Expression we remain silent because Political expediency takes precedent.

When Press Freedom and draconian censorship laws are the order of the day in many a nation states and journalist are detained without trial our solidarity should not wane.

We must as individual's writers, poets, journalist, and commentator's deal with this man made conflicts. Our resolve must be a commitment guided by Truth and justice

The Truth that gives vent to our innermost feelings irrespective of the consequences.

I would like to take the opportunity to Quote Salman Rushdie the re-know writer who because of his writings had a fatwa placed on his head

"Because I've always felt, whether the fatwa or whatever, the writer's greatest weapon is the truth and integrity of his voice. And as long as what you're saying is what you truly, honestly believe to be the case, then whatever the consequences, that's fine. That's an honourable position."--
Salman Rushdie

How would you define your role in the arena of conflict and how would you engage with that conflict as a poet and novelist and what would be your declaration as a Poet or Writer. Would you write with the same passionate expediency and flair that you would when you take pen to paper to write a Love Poem, for Valentine's Day?

The very meaning of the word resolve has wider moral implication, to Poets, writers, journalist, artist and musicians. To us it should mean: -

It's a promise we make that we will uphold truth and integrity in our writings. It's a declaration we make that we will oppose tyranny and abuse in all its tragic manifestations, through our works. It's a resolve that we make that we will be courageous and not compromise our ideals irrespective of intimidation and threats. It's a pronouncement that we make that we will articulate our views against injustice, oppression and intolerance through the written word.

This is the only resolve I believe, we as Writers, Poets, Artist; Musicians Journalist can adopt and put into practice.

Our poetic works and stories must speak out against the things that give rise to human suffering and the degradation and exploitation of this planet earth. .

We must not be afraid to challenge and expose the perpetrators that are responsible for the upheavals' that bring this world into chaos and suffering. We must be

courageous enough to stand up and say through our writings that our resolve ascends from my soul, to tell the truth as we feel and experiences it through our conscience without fear of the consequences., least we all become victims and casualties like

the Rape victim; the Woman abused; the Child who witnesses the abuse of his mother; the Child who is sexually abused; the mother whose child had his limbs blown off by a land mine; the people eking out a living in refugee camps because of the conflicts arising from wars.

Compelling, resonant, memorable, *Poetry* will without doubt become a major testament not only to the vitality of poetry, but also to enhancing our faith in humanity.

The Glo Mag Poets and Writers coming together surfacing the beauty and universal resonance of their meanings beyond words. What story seeds have taken root in their narratives and how widely do their branches spread out and reach? Do they connect across differences, across continents, across time...? What fruits can they bear in our lives and what purpose can the exchange of these treasures serve in the moment of us encountering each other?

As you join us on this journey with these multi-talented Poets and writers from different places who call GloMag home, Hope your listening and awakening to the richness of the stories and the poems they tell about, honouring family, love,

creation, customs and cultures and our common human ancestry and heritage brings you great pleasure.

Hope the poems in the March issue of GM resonates with a passionate conversation held internally and externally and the narratives hold its readers spell bound and captive.

In conclusion I take the Liberty of quoting Barbara Tuchman and hope it resonates within all of you.

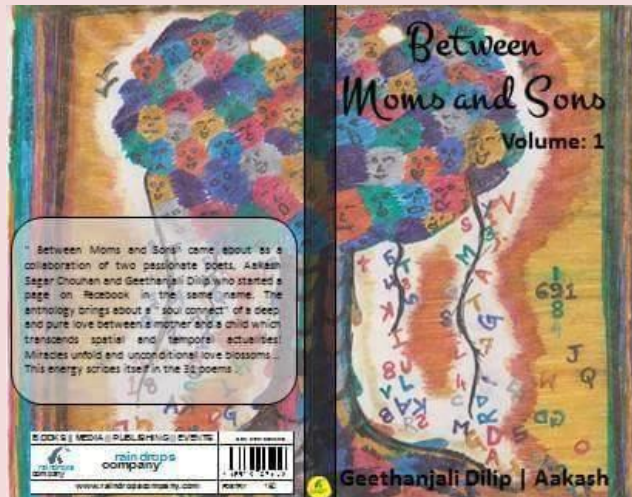
"Books are the carriers of civilisation. Without books, history is silent, Literature is dumb, and Science crippled thought and speculation at a standstill". Barbara Tuchman

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Between Moms and Sons

By

Geethanjali Dilip and Aakash Sagar Chouhan



BUY THE BOOK AT

http://www.amazon.in/Between-Moms-Sons-Geethanjali-Dilip/dp/B01CBVO1ZA/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1457711187&sr=8-1&keywords=between+moms+and+sons

GOODREADS:

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/29293160-between-moms-and-sons?from_search=true&search_version=service

"Between Moms and Sons" came about as a collaboration of two passionate poets, Aakash Sagar Chouhan and Geethanjali Dilip who started a page on Facebook in the same name. The anthology brings about a "soul connect" of a deep and pure

love between a mother and a child which transcends spatial and temporal actualities! Miracles unfold and unconditional love blossoms .. This energy scribes itself in 31 poems, fifteen by Geethanjali and sixteen by Aakash.

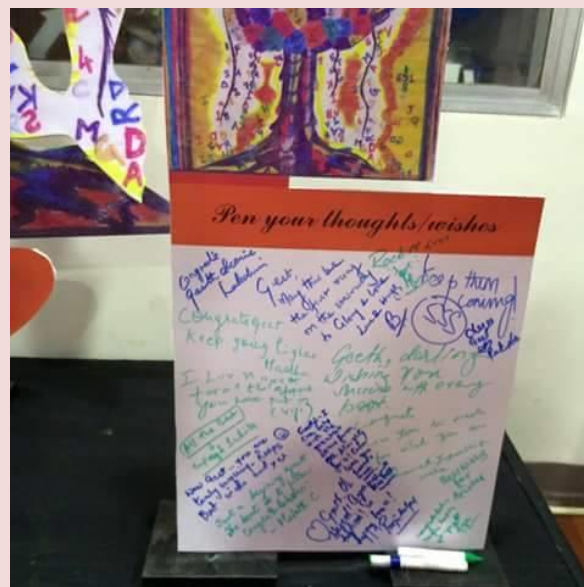
You can also buy it here!

<http://www.pustakmandi.com/raindrops/Between-Moms-Sons>



"I am amazed at the manner in which they have brought out their emotional and deeply held thoughts on Mother and related virtues. The poems 'Mother of Mine, it's good enough, safe delivery, immaculate and History' by Geethanjali. 'This-is-ember 25th, First Supper, A missing memory and religion - humanism' by Aakash are truly remarkable in the sense that they reflect their addiction to truth in portraying the subject of the poems. The collection of poems is a brilliant tribute to the art of writing poetry and rightly described in the foreword "A dusky duet bridged across distances between horizon and Geeth"."

Review by Mr. B Chakrvarthy (Retired Manager, RBI, Chennai) (Father of Geethanjali Dilip)



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A MISSING MEMORY

(poem from "Between Moms and Sons")

Ooh.! Daddy...

I've never known you,

Never e'er owned you;

And the word 'Father',

Would always haunt the reminiscent;

Being an unresolved riddle to me.

Like a missing memory in me.

Although me grew up all ready,

Seeing somebody,

Already so much like you;

On reel life relations,

In real life television.

All these days,
Two eyes have heard and read;
About someone always like you,
Sounding possibly alike you;
My hypothetical channels across the Radio-set;
A capture way beyond the daily news-papers.

Ooh.! Dad before I die,
Wanna feel your embrace;
To fill up a blank space.
Once please pat thy' Son's back behind me,
Dawning a rising Sun;
For an old Father,
Who newly dies every yesterday.

Ooh.! Daddy,
I've never known you;
Never e'er owned you,
And the word Father...

Alike a missing memory in me;



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: He is a Rourkela-based, Odia nomad, restlessly scribbling since 2003. An undergraduate, indeed a college drop-out; but now he is a contributing Author, a blogger, a prose writer, a Poet, an article contributor, Group's Admin of many Pages and Communities. He has been a proud contributor to a few anthologies by International and Indian Poets. Apart from pouring his thoughts and himself on virgin papers, during his leisure time, Aakash is an observer, a dreamer, a philosopher. He likes to strum his Guitar and sing. He also likes to play and brush colors on canvases.



IT IS SPRING TIME

It is spring time and tender leaves
Sprout in fronds to flutter in wind
Earth gets draped in a new green
Leaving memory of winter behind

It is spring time and fragrance from
Tender leaves flits across the land
A cool wind blows towards the river
And at noon gets settle on the sand

It is spring time and a pleasant dawn
Breaks early upon peaks of high hill
Crystal water catches the clear sky
A lone star at its shore stands still

It is spring time and new buds with
New colors hold the earth in a trance
An elusive light grazes past treetops
Making the bees and the birds to dance

Its spring time and a soft song of the
Cuckoo comes floating from woods
Feeling the air heavy with romance
It longs to meet its mate and broods

It is spring time and essence of your
Youth hovers around minds of young
The white flower tucked in your hair
Signals that the love is pure and strong



Anil Kumar Panda: My name is Anil Kumar Panda. Tiku is my pen name. I was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in the state of Odisha, in India. I am currently residing here. I work as a mine surveyor in coal mines. I write short stories and poems whenever I get time.



Bits of Words

Bit by bit

I savour

Each word

Tasting its sound

Testing its feel

Wondering

What it means to you.

A smile? A tear?

A mere

Shrug?



Time

A shiver

A trickle

A gentle reminder

Time

Its passing by..



Ameeta Agnihotri: First of all, I love to write. Then I love to travel, and write about my travels, including about the food I eat on my blog. Being a Food Critic, I have four food books to my name: The Times Food and Nightlife Guide. My restaurant reviews come out every Friday in the Chennai Times. Yes, life's good. My book is done. It was done five years ago. Am still trying to muster the courage to edit it.

Work: <http://timescity.com/chennai>

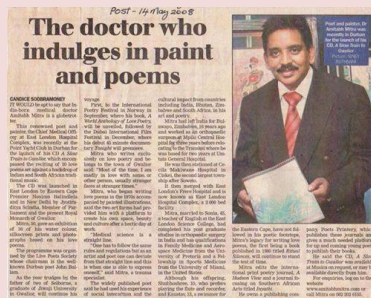
Blogs: <http://silentsensation.blogspot.com/>

<http://fascinatingtastes.blogspot.in/>



Acrylic on Canvas by Amitabh Mitra

Arunachal is a place. I stood still as much as time that never moved. I breathed, I held on to skies that arrives there only to rest in brief interludes. China was just a fingerbreadth away. I remembered Ha in Bhutan. Beneath me were many such skies and many such suns. There were whispers all around. Petals of your odour touched me. In incessant places believing in a sun, I walked on such surfaces believing its there. I dreamt of you. It was a path entering a mountain pass and there were many people walking. In a stranger luminescence I felt I was talking to you again like older mountain peaks hiding in older skies. The gradual whirring of copter blades seem to merge in the surrounding mist. The glare seem to succumb, whiteness remained everywhere. In the popping of flashbulbs, you had once walked a ramp of demure whiteness in Delhi. Somewhere you must be there, even if it is not here at Tawang, even if it's not Arunachal, even Delhi.



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



CHILDREN OF THE TIDE

Children of the Tide

An ocean lover

Like the high, low

And neap tides

We come and go.

The call of the tide

A strong feeling

reaching out to you

Touching your heart.

Children of the tide

Living for the waves

Searching for the mavericks

How far can you fall?
The ecstasy outweighs
The fear or contemplation
Of what ifs
A once in a lifetime
Opportunity which
Tests the limits of
bravery and courage
The madness
The adrenalin
The ecstasy

Children of the tide
For as long as
the tide changes
there's joy.

We are one
A bond that lasts forever

At peace in the low tides
And spring tides
Has its own call.

Children of the tide
Running to the waves
Riding the ecstasy
Exploring the edge
Of life.

Children of the tide
My closest bond
My joys and love
Expounds beyond
The realms of normality.

Children of the tide
Unique transposes the
Call of the tide
Chasing the big waves

Catching the adrenalin ride

Like spinning, burning

The racetrack.

Drifting and mavericks

An inexplicable draw

To extreme ecstasy.

Children of the tide

A soul surfer

An ocean lover

We come and go



Angela Chetty: She is a HR Manager, an avid poet and lyricist who lives in Durban, South Africa. Angela imbibes her work with a deep passion and belief that words can touch hearts and change lives.

The depths of her soulful prose, cuts across different genres, talking to matters of the heart. Poetry is music for my soul; like oxygen, the breath of my life. In 2013, an Anthology of

Poetry entitled, Heartfelt moments - A Treasure Trove was published. www.heartfeltmomentspoetry.com

In 2015, her poem “Miss Me” was selected as Editor’s choice for the Contemporary Poetry Digest and has been chosen as the best poems of the year for a Valentine’s Special Publication.



THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER PART II

The Prince and the Pauper

Met in the street one night,

Both stared at the same night sky

And the same stars in sight

The Pauper sat on the footpath

Softly whistling a tune,

The Prince leaning against the lamp-post

Gazing wistfully at the moon

He turned to the Pauper

And wonderingly queried,

A question that was bothering him

And making him mentally tired

" Why are you so happy friend?

When you have nothing on you,

And all my worldly trappings of wealth
Only make me feel more blue?"

The Pauper stared back in silence
His eyes shining in the soft moon - light,
And replied , " My friend true happiness lies
Not in what you have or in all your might
Not in the armies you command
Not in the ceremonies you live,
But of the wisdom and love in you,
How much you can give"



Anurag Mathur: He is a trained bean counter, works for a financial services group and has spent almost 2 decades serving that industry. Whatever little time that has been spared from work or sleep or reflective meditation has – with quite a few well-meaning prods and nudges from friends – been devoted to occasionally tapping to the Muse’s dictats from time to time.



ALCOHOLIC

(This was previously published in Life In 10 Minutes)

Seven o'clock, morning.

You are a different person

Made of newspaper, underwear

And breakfast left-overs.

Your bad breath tells us

That day has begun.

Seven o'clock, evening.

You are a different person

Made of bones and bottles

Of stale beer and the static

Of television. You stumble

In dreams you can never

Wake up from.

The world is made of
Broken glass and expletives.
Violence is the string
That ties us together,
Two puppets dangling
By the fingers of a mad
God.

You take the years from her life
To drink it in one gulp.
You suck her dry
To drown in your wine-glass
Along with your name,
Someone she once knew and a child,
Who tells Mother,
“We are barren shells,
That the tide will not take away.”

We sleep with our eyes open

In the room next to the one
Where the corpse slumbers,
The remnant of some black magic,
So that everyday
A skeleton, and not Daddy
Rises after me.

I still search in the ash
For things I'll never find.



Archita Mitra: She is a freelance writer, artist and designer based in Calcutta, India. A first year student of English at Jadavpur University, she is also pursuing a diploma in Multimedia and Animation from St.Xavier's College. Her poetry has appeared in numerous publications and anthologies including Quail Bell Magazine, eFiction India, Life In 10 Minutes, among others.



SHADOW

He sprang to life as soon as I stepped out into the sun. Stopping for a moment to glance at him, I started walking again. My inseparable companion following me wherever I went under the sun, but that didn't stop me from feeling miffed at his indifference towards me.

It is a strange relationship. Walking under the hot summer sun made me thirsty and tired, but he looked unruffled. I looked at him every now and then, but he didn't seem to take notice of me at all. I tried talking to him, but he responded with an offensive silence. I tried to get near him, but for every step that I took towards him, he took a step back. I tried to touch him, but he didn't allow me to feel him. I ran as fast as I could, trying to leave him behind, but he matched me step for step, never letting me get away. I stood under the hot sun, thinking he would get tired of waiting for me and move on, but he waited patiently for me to start again. Tired of him, I hid myself in the deepest and darkest shade, but looking around to see if I had lost him made me

feel lost. And he was back by my side as soon as I stepped out into the sun again.

How arrogant and stubborn is my shadow!! Doesn't he know that he owes his existence to me? Yet he doesn't acknowledge "me", the very reason behind his existence. He has taken me for granted. But isn't that exactly what I have done to others, never thinking or realizing for a moment that my life wouldn't be what it is without the participation in it of so many, in so many different ways. My shadow, after all, is what I am.



Arun Sharma: Surprisingly, a fixed sequence of letters used to identify an every changing person like me and is spelled thus, Arun Sharma. I work as a copy editor with Exeter Premedia, Chennai.

Arresting my capricious and insane imagination with the help of words to imprison them on paper is something that I am learning to do. Reading and thinking while gazing at sunset and the night sky is what I like to do.

I believe the above, in a nutshell, sums up what I am at present.



THE STAGE

On the stage stunning_____

The drama swells with cacophony and claps,

Mars's favourite Arjuna dazzles his sword, colossal.

Tragic Karna flashes his sword in vain, somber.

Judicious Yudhishthira justifies principles, drooping.

Affectionate Dhritrashtra blinds his conscience, feeble.

Swollen Duryodhana manifests his libido, bursting.

Impatient Dushshasana measures Draupadi ,eyes lusty.

Nemesis preyed Draupadi hangs on to her saree, arousing.

Prejudiced, lusty, silent eyes thousands, count time
impatiently,

Drama of Draupadi slowly leading to curtain-close, amidst
variegated sighs.

Behind the stage running_____

Arjuna shares puffs of smoke with Karna, sitting on flask sword.

Blind Dhritrashtra counts his coins, praying for a ten more.

Judhisthir all drunk with desi liquor looks vacant at the dark.

Thrilling Draupadi with pimple scar relaxes resting thighs on pillow.

Mingles in the air groaning for ailing wife, child thin like ghost,

Mixes in the midnight the suppressed bosom, never to be told.

The pale yellow bulb is tired with emitting faint beam

The actors in dull sleep will miss the light surely seem.



Avik Kumar Maiti: (email - itzakm@gmail.com) He is a poet and writer from Midnapore. He is a permanent ESL teacher at Belda Gangadhar Academy, West Bengal. He likes to travel, explore the locale with cultures, to drink life to the lees',

passion in humanity and drenched in literature. He believes that God is there and one day everything will be fine again. He believes in the flame eternal that is within us, which may cause a miracle with just a sympathetic touch.



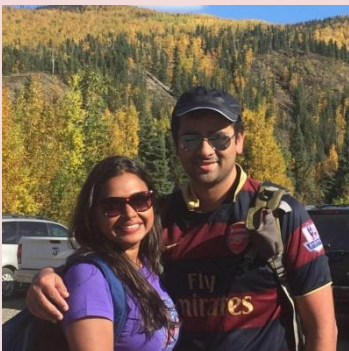
(Written after watching Welcome to Sajjanpur and based on a lovely photography of Amrita Rao)

The Veiled Lady

Her fragrance wafted across my senses,
Carried by swift winds from the Roopnarayan,
Out of breath, from blowing across the veil,
Lightly dusting her cheeks of the specks that
That blemished an otherwise surreal beauty.
I stood, jealous, the veil fluttering across her face,
Throwing half glimpses at me,
Of a divine design, a one-eyed jewel,
Casting aside the veil's half alive shadow,
with light resting in the darkness of her eyes,
that shuffled at the coaxing of the Roopnarayan.
My joy was complete.

The bright red bindi at the center of the Earth,
Was where the village sun had set for the day,
And spread its lustre as wages for the service.
A drop of shimmering sweat sitting on the brow
eased the bindi's burden and sieved the sun
into a kajal-lined, one-eyed rainbow,
with dark eyebrow streaking across like lightning.
The flower on her sari will never wilt,
Nor will the memory that sits in my heart,
Of a half-truth that asks questions of reality.
Is reality indeed so beautiful,
Or is beauty a synthetic illusion?

~Truth is beauty, but is beauty truth?



Avishek Ramaswamy Aiyar: I was born and brought up in
pristine Calcutta and lived the first 18 years of my life there

before moving to Chennai for my undergraduate education. I eventually moved to the US, where I completed my doctoral studies in Chemical Engineering. I currently work as a scientist at IBM in New York.



Oh those words, I waited all along,
In lilting grace it tumbled down,
A pacing heart it set to calm,
With a smile to disarm
Bruises and angst of the past
A set of words had cast!
An upturned smile and moist eyed you
Left me seething blue,
Resolves I made, tests I failed,
With a single note across the mile
You can make me smile.



Ayshwaria Sekher/Icecamp: An International Relations graduate, but a reluctant practitioner. Searching about the

self through practices that seem conducive to the naked eye but weathers the spirit. Believes in the conditional - unconditional love of a dog and no other's. Extends reality from books and tries to achieve vice versa. Shuns from the 'isms' but cannot escape the brackets cast. A bundle of contradictions in short!



THE BOOK

On a frosty winter night

She was bitterly freezing under a mulberry tree

Her clothes were torn

Stomach was empty

All she had was a book

A book of poems

She tried to light a fire

But the wood was wet from the snow

So were the leaves and twigs

In no time, she was down to the last matchstick

Shivering and coughing for hours

She waited for her final moment

And stared at the last matchstick

As her skin turned blue

"Burn me," screamed the book

"I cannot see you dying like this

Burn me and you will stay warm for a while"

She wept for some time

And slowly burned it

Page by page, the poems died a slow death

But the words remained alive

And so did she



Barun Bajracharya: He is the author of a short story book *Sins of Love* and contributing author of short story anthologies: *You, Me and Zindagi 2*, *The Zest of Inklings*, *Once upon a Time*, *Blank Space* and *Rudraksha*. Barun is a Communications Officer at an INGO and an Editor at PEN Point (literary journal). Furthermore, he is the youngest member of PEN International Nepal Chapter and Traditional

Poetry Writers Association of the World. In October, 2013 he travelled to S. Korea to represent Nepal in the general conference of Traditional Poetry Writers Association of the World, attended by 9 countries, where he earned appreciation for his poems. He can be contacted at barunbajracharya@gmail.com.



SKIN-DEEP HISTORY

My flesh, primeval clay
Set to a solid form in your kiln
Baking for ages in slow fire
Yet my wayfaring spirit retained
A pliable texture and an insolent tint
You dyed each segment of my being
With seasons and elements
Etching my skin
With the codes of time and love

In your love
I lost my other dimensions
Body's geometry
Measured to circles and a triangle
Anatomy devoid of the platitudes

Of cavities and fluidity
Yet my unruly spirit grew amorphous
Expanding in all directions

I was housed in a paradise of masquerades
Your images slowly vanished
From its walls of frescoed memory
Motifs of faceless pain carved in stone
And reveries of desolation remained

History unfolds as time's scribble
On the scrolls of my skin
Peeled and preserved
After the last heave of the paradise

Some day
A historian may decipher your encrypted biography
From my dermal parchment and call us lovers



Bini B.S: is currently a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Balvant Parekh Centre for General Semantics and Other Human Sciences, Baroda, India. Her research articles, poems and translations have appeared in national and international Journals and anthologies including *Poetry Chain*, *Kritya*, *Samyukta*, *South Asian Ensemble*, *Kavyabharati*, *Korzybski And...* (Published by Institute of General Semantics) and *The Virtual Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Routledge). She is one of the editors of *Anekaant: A Journal of Polysemic Thought* and the Managing Editor of *The Journal of Contemporary Thought*. Her poems appeared in a collection of 'corporeal poetry' titled, *A Strange Place Other than Earlobes: Five Poets Seventy Poems*, published by Sampark, Calcutta.



FLOCKS

Winter on its way out

Still lingers on.

In the train station

Lazy eyes scan

Bare arteries of treetops

Against the grey sky.

Seven little geese

Flying back home

Float like a ribbon

In the still air.

Train stops at station.

People with backpacks

Black coats and boots

Pockets full of hands
Pour on the platform.
Fall in a queue
As if on command
Walk up the stairs
Like geese in the sky
Going to work.



Borna Ghosh: I am nobody, as Emily Dickinson would say. Every morning I wake up and start my work of erasing myself. Every night I go to bed having failed in that effort. Narcissism, Maya? Who knows what is it that keeps me chained within myself.



AT THE JUNCTION

All traffic stops
at signal
not because the red flickers
but
the cop is there. Fine
how disciplined they are.
From window to window
a woman with babe in arms
sells the tri-color
for ten twenty and fifty
days before independence Republic too
Poverty written all over her face
a smile she manages
for that could sell
it does

the one in the Benz
lowers the window
takes one looking at her cleavage
with a mischievous smile he drives on
unaware that she saluted him
for the extra change he left.



N.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. I am writing poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.

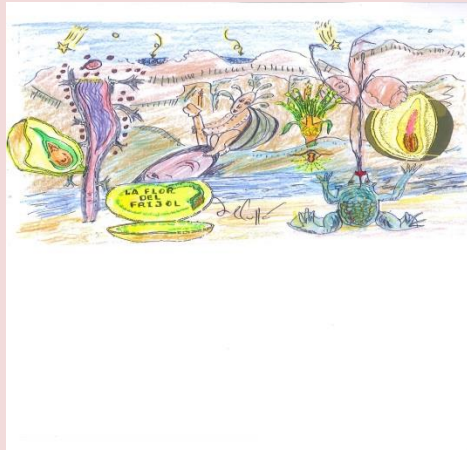


DRIFTWOOD

Contorted water-sculpted monument,
On loan from sea currents' exhibition,
Bequeathed by tree's last will and testament,
And brought to shore to a new position.
Soft honeyed sunlight of late afternoon,
Shows this new art work to benign effect,
Before the dawning of the tidal moon,
Calls this old exile to once more defect.
How far has it travelled, this washed-up wood?
Along churning, groaning, toiling ocean,
How much more must it travel? How much should,
It labour under the sea's emotion?
As long as the sea wants this possession,
To adorn its shifting strange procession.



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



~pic by Daniel de Culla

BOWIE ME

Bowie Me

O dinamite Angel

Let me sing Lazarus, Space Oddity...

Others with You

You, our High Reverence of the Star

Swimming in our ears

Omnibenevolent Lord of Virginity

Dedicated to the Prettiest One

In Music and Life

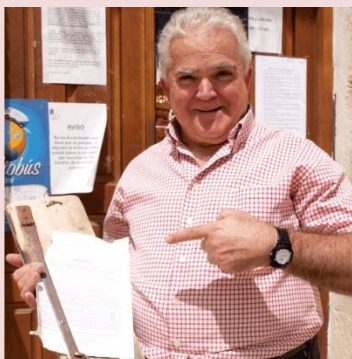
The uproar of your hand clapping

Guitars

Meaning behind Poetry.

Maybe You are just crazy

indeed
But do not reject these teachings
As false
Because we are crazy
King Love
Sit and dream
On the floor of my Rainbow
Love has gotten me into
All Your Channels. Ecstasy
Everything I have waited for
–Birth, death, The Next Day
Is right inside this den
Of mine.



Daniel de Culla (1955): He is a writer, poet, and photographer. He is also a member of the Spanish Writers

Association, Earthly Writers International Caucus, Director of the Gallo Tricolor Review, and Robespierre Review. He's moving between North Hollywood, Madrid and Burgos, Spain.



Will you hear me
if i cried out
from the solitude
of my soul

would you hear me
through the tremor
that swells with intensity
erupting emotions deep inside of me

would you hear me
through the emptiness
the void of loneliness
that imprisons my heart and soul

would you hear me

through the longing
burning like an inferno
deep in my being

would you hear me
as the wind rushes
through the reeds
drowning the song of the river

would you hear me
when the night becomes still
and i steal into your dreams
to gaze upon your beauty

would you awake
to my touch
open your eyes
embrace me
feast your gaze up my apparition
and smother me with your lips



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.



THE HIJAB

The shining black hijab

Frames a raw face –

Thick brows,

Chubby cheeks,

Baby fat lips,

Furtive eyes circling around

The near-empty food court

Before settling on the boy

Sitting across the table,

Holding up a cellphone camera at her.

I almost dismiss them –
Another media-fed teen crush tut tut –
But before I can look away,
She lifts up the hijab,
Shakes her head to push back wanton strands of hair,
Brings the scarf back on –
Stretched across her forehead,
Tucked behind her ears
And circling her neck – twice –
Like a welcome noose.

I stare transfixed
While that neutral face
Transforms
Into living light.
The soft lips curve up to perfect dimples,
Deposit their sparkle
Into those dark, dark eyes –

That now smile up shyly at the eager camera,

‘Hello-you!-Why-do-I-feel-so-beautiful?’

Smile down mortified at her untouched plate,

‘Yikes!-Did-I-just-pose-for-him!’

Smile up hopefully at the clueless boy,

‘Do-you-love-me?-Am- I- good-enough-for-you?’

Smile down startled at her toying fingers,

‘What-am-I-thinking!-Is-this-for-real?!’

Smile back intensely at the boy, still clueless,

‘I-love-you-by-every-power-in-the-universe-so-help-me-god!’

And as those eyes and lips

Dance a mad tango

Keeping pace with

A thudding heart

All but heard,

I see love –

As a physical presence,

As dancing rays of light,

As tendrils of intensity

Radiating out of that young form,

Twining itself around
The object in front –
The projection of its own self.

In that surreal space,
I realize I have witnessed
A sacred moment –
The eternal unfolding
Of a timeless story –
Girl, unmade,
Not yet undone,
Offering at love's demanding altar
Her first bloom –
Woman
In Spring.



Deepa Duraiswamy: Deepa is chronically afflicted by what she terms the 'something else syndrome' – the condition of always wanting to be doing something else. So it's fortunate her interests span from languages to lampshades, from history to hyper-accelerating galaxies. She is an engineer and MBA, attempting to work towards a PhD in Saiva Agamas when not running behind her toddler.



Must I always have to win?

Always have to get the best piece of the moon,

The sweetest piece of the cake,

And the best of everything else that I need to live?

Why does my God have to be the best?

My religion above all else,

My culture, my beliefs and my way of living

Have to be better than the best?

Yes, I killed my brothers two hundred thousand years ago,

Killed all who challenged my prey, my women and my living,

When I only knew how to hunt to survive.

I had to believe in me, I had to be the best huntsman,

To get the largest piece of the meat and all the women

That I wanted to fill my hunger of another kind.

Why should I still nurture the same streak of hunting?

How many more hundreds of years do I need to suppress the need?

How long would I and my brethren need to understand,
That we do not need the largest piece of the bread any more,
And we don't have to be the best in everything to survive.



Dipankar Sarkar: He is on a continuous journey to discover himself and the mystery called life. He remains an eternal optimist with a never-ending zeal, in spite of the many battles that he has lost and few that he has won.



Image – 3D Girl Disappointed for ‘Anushka’. **Visual Artist:** The image for the poem is by a talented young ‘mixed race’ Visual Artist from Cape Town, South Africa, Shameeg Van Schalkwyk, who is unemployed and currently doing community work in gang infested areas; painting school corridors and Library walls to brighten up the environment in mostly ‘coloured’ schools on the Cape Flats, an area historically created to force mixed race communities away from Cape Town City to go live on the coastal plains far away from the city, which is still mostly unchanged even today.

MY NAME IS ANUSHKA

I can't hear the birds deliver
their morning symphony
anymore – Tumbling emotions
cause crippling contortions whilst

brittle memories play false
chords in various sessions
buried confessions –

Voices drift on the wind
perhaps a new friend
or my elected fiend.

I cannot tell –
Lying here
in my self-pity hell
my innocence stolen
self-pity swollen
slowly disintegrating

just another empty shell

ravished by his insatiable
passion – My doomsday
love lesson.

Surrounded by azure allure
and cream screams – My

very essence untimely ripped

my womanhood stripped

my resolve ill-equipped

my spirit clipped

ready to float

my essence growing old -

Hoping for the breeze

to whisper my name

soothing my shame

so if anyone should ask

after her – Remember me

my name is Anushka...



Don Beukes: He is a retired teacher of English and Geography now writing poetry. Originally from Cape Town, South Africa, where he was born, raised and educated in the last two decades of Apartheid, he taught in both South Africa and the UK for twenty years and hold EU citizenship. As a person of 'mixed race' heritage, his poetry reflects the racial and cultural battles growing up in a racially divided society and indeed as a global citizen and hopes to adjust our moral compass. He also writes about the socio-political, life and death, womanhood, nature and religion.



KALAMKARI ARTIST

Unlettered in the rules of syntax, alphabets
an incomprehensible medley of hieroglyphics
Ink and paper find no place in the
mantle of their lives.

They dip reed pens into juices
strained from the roots of madder and
myrobalam, pomegranate seeds, rusted iron,
red, blue, yellow, black, trace out
filigree of trailing creepers birds reposing
within, proud plume of peacocks, heavenly durbar
in session with Gods galore

Till bleached white cotton takes

on myriad hues as colour molecules run, saturate
empty hollows reposed within crisscrossed
fibres to become tapestries of delight



Fehmida Zakeer: She has been published in journals and anthologies such as Out of Print Magazine, Asian Cha, Rose and Thorn Journal, The Bangalore Review, The Four Quarters Magazine, Quarterly Literary Review Singapore, Everyday Fiction, Kritiya, Pangea: An Anthology of Stories from Around the World, Ripples: Short Stories by Indian Women Writers, and elsewhere. She is based in Chennai.



Today, my friend,
You mirrored those hurts,
Those painful struggles,
Those heartbreaks, sighs and cries,
Yet, you hid your tears,
Smiled,
And even laughed,
Cracking jokes,
As if I don't know
What you helplessly tried,
Dear dear friend,
I know as our boats move,
We share the same waters

Same tides, same streams,
Same shores and same breeze,
Let me extend this hand,
And wipe them,
If I can,
Do allow,
For there is one soul,
In this world,
You can rely on.
I have no magic wand
To erase,
Those deep wounds,
Cuts and scars,
That Time gave,
I know that,
But a little space,
You may call
My heart.



And then March arrives.

Summer again.

The neem trees smile,

They have to flower,

Only they can defeat the sun,

And remind us,

Once again,

‘I bear this for the earth to cool somewhere’

While others dry, droop and fall,

Get crushed

And disappear into the earth.



Geeta Varma: She has been a teacher for thirty years and a Freelance journalist. She is now an Educational Consultant and writes for Deccan Herald. She enjoys working with children and has conducted many creative workshops. Her interests include music, reading, writing (poems and stories for children) and travelling. She is married to Shreekumar Varma (Writer and Novelist) and has two sons, Vinayak and Karthik and a daughter-in-law daughter Yamini. She lives in Neelankarai, Chennai.



www.shutterstock.com · 112707406

BROTHER FROM ANOTHER MOTHER

(poem from "Between Moms and Sons")

My sole hurts from the burning ground,
Only my right, for my one slipper been too much around,
Neither fit to be mended nor thrown away,
So I drag my right foot day after day!!

Well I watch the world go by sitting at the station,
Not that hungry, for a kind soul fed me out of compassion ,
But I need to get to school somehow,
Already late, life gives me more lessons, don't ask how!!

I chance to see a kid like me limping around,
Branded new shoes biting his soul, I found,

I pang at his luck but why should I, an orphan,
These tracks will find me a life, I promise myself often!!

He runs for the train cursing his bitten foot,
In a hurry one of the pair stays behind, shoot!!
I grab it, my soul and sole laughing silently,
But hey, I'm not a thief, my parents left me that legacy !!

I run panting to return that one shoe,
But the steel wheels cheat me, leaving me behind, what to
do,
A run of luck comes my way you see,
He threw me his other pair, a brother from another mother
must be!!!



Geethanjali Dilip: A Chennaiite at heart, she is a graduate from Ethiraj College and a postgraduate in French from Bangalore University. She is passionate about poetry, travel, teaching travel, gardening, interior decoration, and enjoying

a deep spiritual connection with everything. She's been teaching French, freelance, in Salem for the past 34 years in schools and colleges, and at her centre, Zone Francofone, in Salem. Her family includes her husband, Dilip Narsimhan, daughter, Manasa, son-in-law, Ajay, granddaughter, Aarushi, and her parents.



MR POPCORN

remember this guy -

Mr. Popcorn?

you just paid a fortune

at the counter

of the movie theater

for him

yet

he's the same guy

in the gunny bag

of the old man

at the bus stand

sold for a pittance

so meager

one did not even bother
to count the pennies.

Yet, here he is
branded
and in choice flavours
battered, peppered, chocolate spread
or all or none, just salted
a compulsory accompaniment
to the word
'entertainment'
that went with the movie
and the PP combo
It just proves
that a worthless guy
still holds the possibility of being worth a fortune
by just being in
the right place at the right time.



Glory Sasikala: She is a poet and writer residing currently in Chennai. She works as Quality Analyst for language. Not an Earthling by any stretch of the imagination, where breathing, writing, living and loving lose their personal identity and present as one, she comes from that world...sometimes letting her pen lead her, sometimes leading her pen...It's a Pied Piper's tune all the way!

<https://www.instamojo.com/Glory/>



NIRBHAYA – THE BEAST IS OUT ON THE STREET

Nirbhaya, that night were you shy,
To go on a date with a guy?
What did you wear for them to complain?
Was it too short, too long, or, profane?

The word is out on the street
Out on the street is the beast
He is hungry for his daily treat
His manner is rakish and upbeat.

To your parents you were like a son

They were happy the day you're born.

The eldest one to carry their burden

When all this happened, of a sudden.

The word is out on the street

Out on the street is the beast

He is hungry for his daily treat

His manner is rakish and upbeat.

Millions of hearts grieved your passing

Thousands lined up at India Gate chanting.

But, can they bring you back, I ask?

From the other world, no easy task.

The word is out on the street

Out on the street is the beast

He is hungry for his daily treat

His manner is rakish and upbeat.

The gruesome details we have read

On television shows it was shared.

They tore your insides with an iron rod

The beasts laughed when you cried out loud.

The word is out on the street

Out on the street is the beast

His manner is rakish and upbeat

He is hungry for his daily treat.

They put the juvenile in a centre for correction

How will he right the damage, beg your pardon?

They let him out with cash and sewing machine

Into the streets where he spilled your intestine.

The word is out on the street

Out on the street is the beast

He is hungry for his daily treat

His manner is rakish and upbeat.

Thousands still grieve when they say your name

Men bow their repentant heads in shame.
That's because a beast lurks in every man
A savage beast that can't resist a woman.

The word is out on the street
Out on the street is the beast
He is hungry for his daily treat
His manner is rakish and upbeat.

The beast is going into the streets again
Unrepentant and ready to rape and malign.
He is insolent they say in the papers
He will do the same with girls and lovers.

The word is out on the street
Out on the street is the beast
He is hungry for his daily treat
His manner is rakish and upbeat.

At India Gate they hold slogans and prepare

To scream themselves hoarse and despair.

The savage is out again, radiant in lust

Get away, stay away from this recidivist.

The word is out on the street

Out on the street is the beast

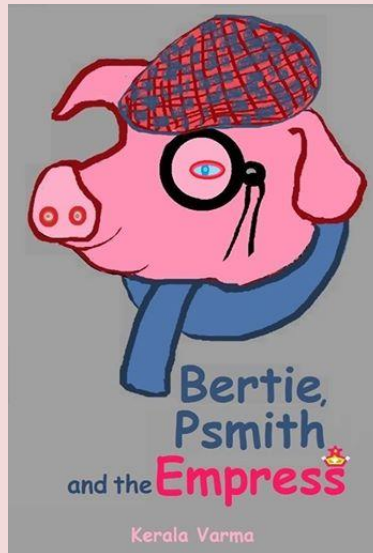
He is hungry for his daily treat

His manner is rakish and upbeat.



John P. Matthew: Writer, poet, singer-songwriter, and blogger John P Matthew was born in the state of Kerala, India. His first success as a writer was Penguin's world-wide short story contest "India Smiles" in which his short story "Flirting in Short Messages" was selected for publication in an anthology.

His poem "Call of the Cuckoo" has been published by Poetry Rivals. He is working on his first novel and writing a book-length travelogue about his native state of Kerala.



(4)

It was about ten days later that I ran into Galahad Threepwood at the Derby. Gally is a guy so after my own heart as a newt is after Gussie's. There is none in his age group that I envy more. He is younger in spirit than all the members of Drones Club. The secret of his eternal youth is rumoured to be his habit of eating less, drinking more and never hitting the sack before 4 AM. You would get a fair measure of how high in esteem I hold good old Gally when I tell you that the only person I know who runs the closest chance of being as mature, balanced, intelligent and knowledgeable as the Hon. Galahad Threepwood is a bearded bounder called Socrates, whom Jeeves had found to be more mature, more balanced, more intelligent and more knowledgeable than all his Greek contemporaries whatever that would mean. I have no clue how Jeeves knows so much about the Greeks. He must have worked for a Greek shipping magnate before he became my Man Friday and this Socrates

chap must have been his regular drinking guest because bearded guys are notorious for not paying for their drinks.

It is doubtful if the esteem in which Gally holds me has the same height as the one I hold him in because he has been complaining that there's a singular lack of devious bookies, three card tricksters, modern poets, bearded cubist and expressionist artists, Broadway playwrights, chorus girls and Arabian belly dancers in my life. It was a Friday evening and Gally was at his best. After the races, we hit a few pubs as a curtain raiser of the great night he had mapped for us. We were at the fourth pub when he made a casual remark that struck my guardian angel weakened considerably by alcohol as worthy of a deeper investigation, "Not sure if you've come across this blighter called Psmith. An agreeable guy otherwise, but fallen hopelessly in love with my neighbour Parsloe's pretty daughter Sarah. A good girl she is. But her pop Gregory is as anti-Psmith as Iago is anti-Othello."

To any impartial audience the above speech would qualify as words that reveal the heart of gold that Gally is well known to harbour inside his rib cage. But I could sense something amiss in his innocent words. The dim light that the pubs in London arrange in their premises to lend an air of perceived confidentiality to the proceedings did not allow him to notice the unmistakable manner in which my jaws were dropping. The loud music proceeding from the bandstand prevented his keen ears from discerning the acceleration in my heartbeats.

Holding his glass high in the manner of the English batsman raising his bat at the Lords after failing to hit the ball to the boundary, Gally continued, "I wanted to help him because I'm Sarah's godfather. It was pretty serendipitous that Clarence was looking for a hand to assist Cyril Wellbeloved in taking care of the pig. I ensured that Psmith lost no time in ensconcing himself as the assistant pigman at Blandings Castle. He was Clarence's secretary for a few days sometime back. I made him wear a false beard and introduced him as Esmond Oakshott Haddock to Clarence. Clarence found him to be an intelligent pigman."

I choked and coughed violently as the whisky turned to water in my mouth in a manner ironically similar to a well-chronicled incident some two thousand years ago in which water turned to whisky in the hands of a bearded bloke whose name I can't recollect now, though, according to Jeeves, he is still a hit with the masses due to such eminently useful tricks. When Gally turned to me with a look of justified alarm, I grabbed his hand like a drowning girl would attach herself to the lifeguard and apprised him of what Psmith had told me about his need to steal the pig. The look of alarm on his face having deepened, Gally placed his glass firmly on the counter and said, "There's no time to be wasted. We go now to your house, pick up Jeeves and drive straight to Blandings. We'll reach there by sunrise to attend to the packing off of this double-crossing Psmith before he carries out his plan. I'm shocked dear Sarah could do this to her godfather!"



Kerala Varma: He hails from Chirakkal (Kannur), Kerala, is a former Deputy General Manager of State Bank of India and lives in Chennai with his wife Chitra. He is an amateur writer, who believes in “simple living, simple thinking”, welcoming enrichers of life like love, humour, long walk, the river, sea, mountain, books, music and Internet and avoiding complicaters of life like greed, anger, ambition, sentimentalism, sexism, god, rituals, religion and superstitions.



IMPERFECTA

Imperfection

Is purely human

Is purely preferable

To reject machine routine

Absent of rime or reason

In the messiness of mistakes

Is found love

And profound creativity

And the very truth

Of creation.



Mark Antony Rossi: His poetry, criticism, fiction and photography have appeared in The Antigonish Review, Another Chicago Review, Bareback Magazine, Black Heart Review, Collages & Bricolages, Death Throes, Ethical Spectacle, GloMag, Gravel, Flash Fiction, Japanophile, On The Rusk, Purple Patch, Scrivener Creative Review, Sentiment Literary Journal, Toad Suck Review, The Sacrificial ,Wild Quarterly and Yellow Chair Review.

<http://markantonyrossi.jigsy.com>



SO NEAR...

In essence, modern life insulates,
you are just a shout away-
though mentally galaxies apart,
having knocked down a few jagged stones
from the edifice of Time,
I will soon be away,
plunging back into my own gushing stream.



LIGHTENING FLASHES IN MY VEINS....

रग रग में बिजलिसी चमक जाती है
ज़ीर-शिकस्त उम्मीद भी भड़क जाती है

याद आता है जब वो रूखे-रौशन

भटकी बहार तक महक जाती है

TRANSCREATION

I feel flashes of lightening in my veins
as, defeated hopes also flare up
whenever that face glows in my memory,
even Spring that had lost its way,
starts spreading its fragrance.



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



THE TREE

What have I done so to die?

This is my heart's sad cry.

What should I do to survive?

What should I do to stay alive?

Struggling through the heart of soil

Breaking through with sustained toil,

I reach out to all of you!

What more can I do?

There is joy of life in every tree

Please will you just let me be!

The quality of a tree is love,

Green leaves against the blue above.

Contented flutter of leaf on bough,

As it embraces the Earth with root,

and brings new life with every shoot.

My flowers their beauty and wonder unfold

give nourishing fruit from heart untold.

Every seed a new hope brings,

From every seed a new life springs.

Let me give my young ones birth,

For I sustain your life on Earth!



Minnie Tensingh: I think I have been writing from the age of 10, contributing to the school and college magazines. Several prizes for creative writing and poetry competitions have encouraged me to keep at it. Reading is my passion and often distracts me from writing.

Currently I am on the verge of bringing out a story book targeting children in their pre and early teens to encourage reading among children.



CAN I START LIVING NOW?

I

I told you my truth
that I have fled from life;
smiling, you placed your lips
on my nape
living behind a numb sensation
in an elegant calm.

II

The past and the future
are enveloped in the present
that you give me
these days.

Time comes and goes
I only tear it to shreds

lamenting the loss
of my roofs and doors.
Moss gathering on my agony.

III

And as we walk
hand-in-hand
through the woods, “dark and deep”,
I grope within, grope without.
Where are your fingers?
Did you vanish?
I am not with myself.

IV

Moments after sorrow sprouts
mercury spreads all over
again
leaving the heart half aglow.
You speak mascara
I understand (or, do I pretend!!).
My bosom is lighter for awhile.

V

The night unfurls.

Sometimes even

the prayers are answered !

The night assumes a sober accent.

Your face reflects on each piece

of the broken mirror.

I whisper, life...life...

VI

You feel my forehead

my sweat, my moist lips, my silken hair;

in darkness you lit the torch

and peep into my gleaming eyes

your breath exhales

the hue of sandalwood,

I fit so well into

your contours !

VII

Can I gather myself now

from the ruined sand-shore?

Like firefly, I am now here

and now nowhere!!

Still, can I search

the newer pastures now?

Can I start living now?



Nandini Sahu: She is a distinct voice in Indian English poetry, is an Associate Professor of English in IGNOU, New Delhi, India; she is a creative writer, theorist and folklorist ; she is the author/editor of eleven books; has been widely published in India, U.S.A., U.K., Africa and Pakistan. Dr.Sahu is a double gold medalist in English literature, the award winner of All India Poetry Contest, Shiksha Rattan Purashkar and Poiesis Award of Honour, 2015. She is the Chief Editor and Founder Editor of two bi-annual refereed journals, Interdisciplinary Journal of Literature and Language(IJLL) and Panorama Literaria. Her areas of research interest cover New Literatures, Critical Theory, Folklore and Culture Studies, Children's Literature, American Literature and ELT.

www.kavinandini.blogspot.in



PICKUP LINES FOR LOSERS

Girl,

Imagine if we found each other

At the farthest end

Of the beach

we always wanted to walk on

Girl,

Imagine if our footsteps glowed

Like iridium

Like mating calls,

of glow worms

Girl,

Imagine if we never lost our way to each other

If we could just follow

the glowing footsteps leading us on

And find each other

in each other's arms, again

Imagine

if at the end of every walk

And at the end of every dance

We returned home

To the same bed we share

Girl,

Imagine if our footsteps glowed

And reminded us continually

Of our love.

Girl,

Our footsteps may not glow today

But who says

Our love doesn't?



Nilesh Mondal: He is 22, is an undergraduate in engineering, and turns to poetry when the day gets the better of him.

He works for Terribly Tiny Tales, an online storytelling platform, and wastes rather large amounts of time scouring social networking sites for strangers to talk to.



DEMENTIA

As darkness falls and shadows grow
one little flame begins to glow,
fighting strong against the blackness
refusing to accept the impending bleakness
as
the ever changing sands of time,
with neither reason nor rhyme,
stomp mightily down
instantly changing a smile to a frown.



BY THE RIVERSIDE

Softly and swiftly she flows
beneath the overhanging branches that continue to grow
till the leafy limbs form a canopy so dense
that between the sky and ground, they form a fence.

The golden rays of the sun glisten
on the calm surface of the lovely river.
as I stand on the bank and listen
to this gently flowing tiny sliver
of paradise in an otherwise unassuming cwm
overrun by weeds in full bloom.

(Cwm: Pronunciation:/kʔm/; meaning: A cirque (A half-open steep-sided hollow at the head of a valley or on a mountainside, formed by glacial erosion), especially one in the mountains of Wales.)



Nivedita Karthik: She is a graduate in Integrated Immunology from the University of Oxford who likes reading books and travelling. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and has given many performances. She loves any form of creative writing (especially poems) and writes them whenever she can.



With a swollen heart
I silently sit in a corner
For I refuse
To share my hurt
For the irk of hearing
You telling me things
As if you know better
Like we all do
In others' matters.
Or is it my refusal
To allow you that
Faint ray of joy
At my misery...
I wait for the ego serpent
To uncoil from around my heart

So I can curl in your arms
And allow my fret
To bring us closer than close
But not right now.

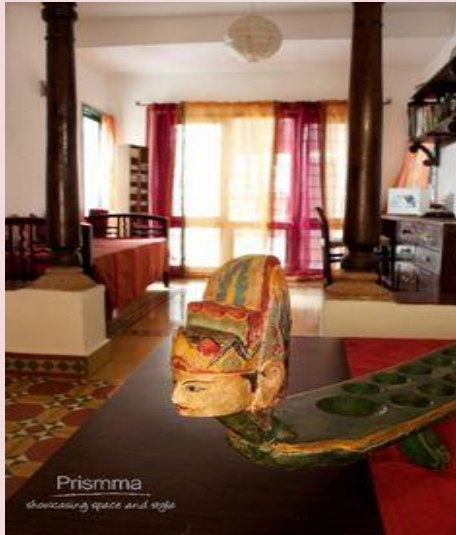


If I don't talk
We are silent
If I'm not joking
We don't laugh
If I do not share
My concerns
Or be vulnerable
We stay distant.
If I do not fuel
Our relationship
We don't have one.
Say it then,

That the beauty
If any in our union
Is because of me
Let it fuel miles
For some more time.



Panjami Anand: I am an occult practitioner by profession and I see every day it is hard to be honest in a brutal world that demands the best façade even at the cost of one's inner well-being. 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. I thank each and every one who has encouraged me to better my expression. Gratitude for reading!



A series of Broken Images

Like splintered glass on floor

Connect, connect, connect

Dreams, commitments, daily routine

Rainbow, dewdrops on Grass

Sound of the lawnmower

Shelves filled with Dust

Smell of Sambar and Idly

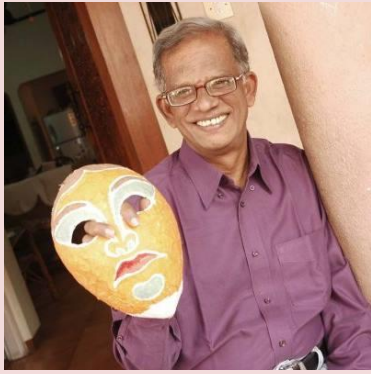
Clutter of vessels in the Kitchen Sink

I wonder how to connect

Do i have to connect

Just leave them as a series of Images

Broken Images.-Life.



Parasuram Ramamoorthi: 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



A GIFT OF SNOW

Above the clouds in the dark night sky
A star looked down and wondered why
The Earth wore this cloak so wove
Delicate of form and the star was behove

To cry from the wonder of the beauty there
Casting its wondrous rays for all to share
And as its magic mixed in the upper sky
A snow flake was born in the air so high

And soon there were more to join as kin
And a dance began and invited in
Yet more and more to swirl around
Before departing for the ground

And the still night sky smiled down on all
At the aftermath of this Grand Ball
The countryside was cloaked in white
This gift was left for us this night



Late Philip G. Bell: He was born in West London and became a professional in the field of vibration and acoustics. He was awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Environmental Engineers. He has two sons and a daughter and 3 grandsons. He has written a number of technical papers, which were published internationally, before turning attention to writing poetry, short stories and a children's novel. He also founded The Young Poet Society. He has published a novel, "The Elfin Child," which is available through Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.elfinchild.com

In December 2013, he was diagnosed with terminal Motor Neuron Disease. He spent the last years of his life concentrating on raising awareness regarding the disease. Philip G. Bell passed away on October 8, 2015.



DEATH

I use to shuttle

In between

Two passionate

Deaths

One in the bus stop

Where i wait for my

Beloved evening

She comes and simply

Passes away

Another death awaits me

In the Night at home

With whom i pass away

While dawning with the
Night!



Prahallad Satpathy: He hails from Balangir district of Odisha (India) is a bilingual poet. He writes both in Odia and English. So far he has published three anthologies of poetry in Odia to his credit. His poems have been published in national anthologies like Scaling Heights and international anthologies like GLOBAL ANTHOLOGY ON PEACE AND HARMONY, HAPPY ISLE, FEELINGS INTERNATIONAL, etc. By profession, Dr. Satpathy is a Reader in Economics, at present in Rajendra autonomous college, Balangir (Odisha). He has represented Odisha Sahitya Academy as honorary member for two consecutive terms.



SMOKE

Conversations. Contradiction's observations.

Waking up to shocking surprises.

Smoke. Going up in translucence.

Predicaments. Silence's compromises.

Go. Traveling the world of muchness.

Little bits of everyday business.

Smoke. Going up in magnificence.

Stay. Find meaning in ordinariness.

Hunch. Playing even the wild intuitions.

Cashing all the confusions.

Smoke. Going up in quintessence.

Perseverance. Taking only safe chances.

Smoke. Going up in insolence.

Smoke. Going up in visceral guns.

Smoke. Going up in all that burns.

Smoke. Going up in every sense.



Prasanna H: I have lived in Villivakkam, Chennai all my life. I live across the street from where I was born. I have had the company of some exceptional people all my life like my grandparents, parents, brother, relatives, school friends, college mates, office mates, home boys and girls and the Glotimers. When I am not hanging out, I read, watch movies, start things I won't complete, listen to music, be angry, frustrated, blissful, hyper and dancing.



DIVINE LOVE

Love the soul mate
So deep and divine
Beyond birth and death
Real and timeless
Some day or other
The body falls off
As discarded garment
Love never dies ever.



Praveen Ranjit: He is a creative writer who gets inspiration from nature to social issues and enjoys writing poems on love, life, compassion, happiness, human relations nature's beauty, etc. At a very young age he developed his writing

skills, published poems in various anthologies and periodicals and received many awards of excellence. He was a professor in the Department of Commerce, St. Albert's college, Kochi, Kerala from 1981 to 2014.



MORAL DEATH OF AN ELEVATOR

Walls have eyes/Floors have eyes.

Ceilings have eyes/Corridors have eyes.

Even Loos have eyes.

Fleeing the loony eyes/We run to the Elevator.

Elevators don't have eyes.

We kiss in the Elevator with mirrors

As he carries kissers and huggers.

Up and down, Down and up.

Doors open, Doors close,

Unkissing people come in, go out,

We kiss in the Elevator with mirrors.

One day, the Elevator/Sprouts an eye

That watches us kissing.

Making love is so good then

As the Elevator trembles throbs and hums

And the mirrors turn concave and convex.

Next day, the Elevator closes in on her

And wants to kiss her through the mirrors.

We dash away to the fire escape.

Evening, the Elevator/Commits suicide

Crashing down to minus zero level.

A suicide note says,

“Blessed are the kissers

For they are born with lips

That set fire to elevators.”



Ravi Shanker (Ra Sh): He translates from Malayalam and Tamil to English and vice versa. Published English translations of stories by Bama (Tamil), Mother Forest (from Malayalam) and Waking is Another Dream (Sri Lankan Tamil Poetry) and for Anthologies of Dalit literature published by OUP and Penguin India. Published poems in magazines, journals and anthologies. He is one of the five contributing poets to the anthology, “A Strange Place Other Than Earlobes” (five voices seventy poems). E-mail: shankeran@gmail.com

Blog: bonoboland.wordpress.com

The Message
 The message is supreme;
 Born in the heart,
 and lilting itself
 from tongue to tongue,
 throwing its scent
 over wind and wave;
 travelling on dots
 or fingers
 when blindness
 or silence bar its way.
 It hews itself into stone
 or burns itself onto magnetic discs;
 it is the message that lives
 and I exist
 solely to pass it on.



Raamesh Gowri Raghavan: He moonlights as an award-winning copywriter by day and daylights as an award-wanting poet by night, and sandwiches an archaeology course, running two literary clubs, astronomy, the occasional trek, some peer counselling for suicide prevention, and learning languages in between. He thinks he is funny, but his friends vehemently disagree.



A CONTRAST

You go to the Himalayas,
Avowed Penance and
Profound string of meditation
Are not the only remedies.
Stultifying revelations
Are too many, mysterious
Groundbreaking too.

In the melting snow,
In the downpour of rains,
You see the hardness of
Human hearts, Thaw Not.
In the hard stone,
Beneath the exterior,

There is a wet border.

The carpenter's chiseled
Hammer and intermittent
Beats on the wooden teapot
Emit unique rhythms,
Cautionary tale for bystanders
And listeners as well.
Painful rhythm to listen to.

Salt in the ocean waters,
sea shell and conch ,
roars and frothy foams
powering sands and hepless
Anchorage and marooned
Ships –weave tales of ample past.
All contrast to man's small brain.



S. Radhamani: She was born in Madras, did B.A. English, obtained M.A. English from Venkateswara University, Tirupati, did her doctoral thesis on W.H.Auden's Plays, subsequently obtained PGDTE from CIEFL (Hyderabad). A Professor of English with 31 years of teaching experience in a post-graduate and research institution, published four books of poems and one book of short story, widely published and anthologized, guided M.phil research scholars and PhD candidates, and a reviewer and critic. Also published poems and short stories in many websites, presented papers in National and International conferences.



I'M NOTHING BUT THE ABSENCE OF YOU

you were born
in the first fold of march
where i still blow empty kisses
to your corner of the sky
and i'm just an april's fool
when the summer
refuses to leave

when the world closed
you opened to me

i'm the colour of
this wilting wednesday
and you the colour of

the relentless sky on
a monday morning

flirt with my flowers
and colour me you

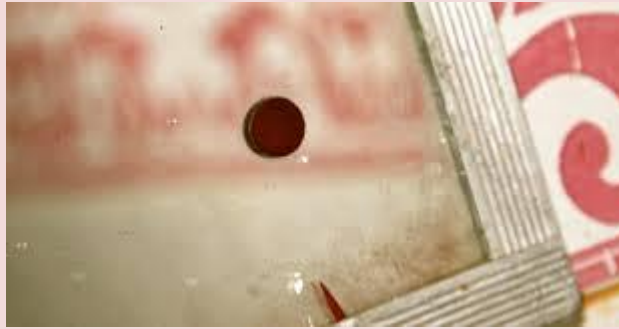
ambushed by your absence
my veranda weeps
and i'm solving
conundrums of love
when i know
the only answer is you

i'm nothing but
the absence of you

love ~ personal



Rajesh Jethwani: He was born in Madras and has done his BA in economics. He now takes care of his family business and has his own online store. His love for tea resulted in a beautiful tea house he now runs along with his best friends. He loves train journeys, photography, eating out and playing cricket. He loves writing and reading love poems. His poem was first published last year in South Africa.



EVERY MOMENT, EVERY WHERE

Your memories

On the prowl,

Stalking me

Every moment,

Every where.

In the strand of hair

On the pillow,

In the empty

Flower vase,

In the patina of dust

On the TV screen,

In the faded bindi

On the dressing table,

In the mocking

Of the lonely mirror.

Your memories,
Hounding me,
Closing in,
Every moment,
Everywhere....

Putting me
On trial
For allowing
Our love
To be emasculated,
For letting you go
When,
You needed me most.

The verdict –
Guilty!
The sentence-

To wear
The shroud of
Your memories
Every moment,
Every where....



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



FOR VIDROHI

I saw your poem on the road
a bidi in mouth,
puffing circles of smoke,
a blanket around its neck-
It was wearing your
old tailcoat and tattered pants-
I knew that it was your poem,
the very moment I saw it.

It was trying to cross
this national highway of time,
this road on which
young students puked, on their way
to home from a tavern-

this road where revolutionaries
were hit by relentless vehicles,
this road that endured
ages of amnesia,
This road that doesn't give a damn
for a poet or his poetry.

Vidrohi,
I'm a poet too shy,
to ask your poem
to take me to the other side.
Instead, I ask for a matchstick
to light my bidi.



Ro Hith: He is a poet and a medico from Andhra Pradesh, writing poetry since 7 years. His poetry has been published in

various online magazines, including Muse India, The Four Quarterly, Istanbul Review, Kritya, New Mirage Journal and print magazines like Kavya English, which was applauded and complimented by various senior poets. Currently, he is working on his first book of poems, which will be published shortly and an online magazine that deals with progressive poetry and translations from various Indian languages.



~Image designed by: www.imikimi.com

MY PRINCESS

(To my daughter Sarah on her Birthday)

You came as a vision,
You came as a dream
And now as my reality!
Blood of my blood,
Genes of my genes
And my everlasting Spring!

I saw you being born
And through the years,
I saw you slowly grow
Like a beautiful rose!

Majestically walking a road

That is shaping your life

While you fill mine

With love and pride!

No a day passes by

Without you being present

In my heart and mind!

Today I am thrilled to know

That I will never die

For I Will continue to live

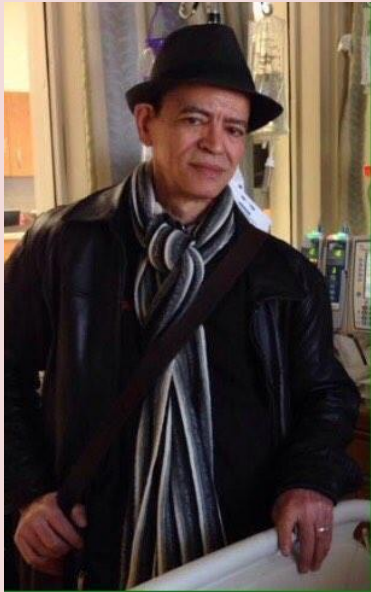
Through the passing of time

And the beauty embedded in you,

Being present after I depart

When leaving my heart behind!

Happy Birthday my Princess!



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. As a citizen of the world, there is not race, color, or religious beliefs that would stop me from searching for happiness...I have become through times passed that 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!

www.romeodellavalle.com



DESTINY'S WISH

Dear flowing river, stop by for a eon

I have tales for you

Oh ye wind, be with me for an era

Lets play hide and seek

Come to me, my dear seas

lets hide your waves for a century

Oh ye earth, hearken my dream

Stop swinging for a year, lets have fun

Oh my darling, bright orange sun

Lets cover your face for a month

Little rock, will you hear my plea

Would you walk with me, just a day

None accompanies me, I cry

Finding my neighbour relaxing

I happily invite him for tea
He says, "sorry I am taking rest"
Frustrated I stood alone
What to do? I ask myself

Destined work, every creation has
With dedication, they keep up their onus
We yearn to know our destiny
But do we strive for it, sincerely? -
just like the river,wind,seas.
Sans distraction, sans fame
the sun and rock tirelessly work
the duty God had assigned them
let we men full fill our destiny's wish
Can't we?



Shalini Samuel: She is the author of Singing Soul and comes from India's southern tip. She started her writing journey as a

blogger. Poetry was her unfulfilled dream then. She explored poetry and slowly started learning the nuances of it. Apart from writing she also works as freelance editor. Her poems have been published in various online and print magazines and anthologies. She has edited few novels.



ETERNAL LOVE

You forsake this mortal world, leaving me alone to
survive in a materialistic world, where
money is more valued than emotions and humanity.
You left this world but didn't tell me, how to adjust with
fake people and fake emotions. But the
love which you had bestowed on me,
remains in my heart as a binding force,
relieving me from all worries, tensions & miseries,
exhibited in this selfish and materialistic world for me,
and giving me strength to fight against all odds &
conventions.



You Came in My Life

You came in my life
like a soothing breeze
adding fragrance to thee.
Like a burning illumination,
eliminating sable darkness
surrounding my entire being.
The life which seems annihilating,
transformed into altruistic hope,
with a fervent of peace and tranquility.
The endless dedication,
you bestowed selflessly on me,
give me an everlasting assurance,
that our love is perennial and eternal.



Shamenaz: I am Shamenaz, a PhD in English from University of Allahabad with specialization on Sub-continent Women

Writers and a teaching experience of 12 years. I live in Allahabad. I have published many poems in E-journals & magazines in India. I love nature and write poetry based on it but I also like to write on various issue relating our everyday lives. I have presented papers in Seminars/Conferences and have published papers in many refereed journals in India and abroad. I am in the Editorial board of journals: Literary Miscellany, Cyber Literature, Research Access, Expression (CLOJ), The Context & IJRHS (Jordan). I am the Guest Editor of 'The Context' Volume 2, issue 3. I have served as a Chairperson of Women Cell of my College, AIET & Cultural Incharge, AIET since 5 years. I am a freelancer, who writes reviews, articles & blogs.



AGED VOICES

Voices ageing over time

Bereft of

Many sounds of happiness

Wherein lies a cloud of helplessness

Home, still away from home

Why, oh why are

Spiraled tomes

Spiralling

Is it a tear

Or fragments wearing

Beautiful weaves of a pattern

Of life in all its glory

A sigh here
And a moan there
Are there listeners galore
Insisting like a sorceress of yore

Life is full of hope
There is no time to mope
Contrasted by stillness
Covering a wide shroud of darkness

Feelings and emotions
Coming to a standstill
Is there any way
That time can kill
The all-enveloping lull of darkness

Threads of hope dismantling
Cheers absconding
Thoughts not withstanding
Joy turning into a new leaf

Of a mindless cataclysm of
Blissfulness and happiness



Shobha Warriar: Born near Trichur in Kerala, she did her schooling in Mumbai and Chennai. Shobha was highly influenced by her maternal grandfather who was a distinguished Sanskrit scholar. Shobha had a keen interest in languages, be it prose or poetry, from her school days. She completed B.A. and M.A. in English Literature as also B.Ed. She has also worked as a teacher in schools for some time. Shobha's father, K. Ramakrishna Warriar, is a distinguished writer in Malayalam, and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi award for his contribution in Sanskrit. Shobha is married to an engineer and has one daughter.



AFTER-LIFE

Chellamma died with a prayer on her lips. Her husband lay down next to her and covered himself. He was soon fast asleep.

That morning, as she swept the tailor-shop owner's front yard, his wife had swooped down and shouted, "Stop coming if you can't even do this properly!" She was known for her evil tongue. Chellamma continued to sweep. When she ate an unripe mango for lunch behind the kitchen, the little boy saw her and reported to his mother who resumed her shouting.

The tailor-shop owner then sent for her and she had to get him coal for the irons. It was inevitable. He placed a flat palm on her hip, and once there it wasn't so flat any more. He stared at her breasts with open hunger and she stood still, waiting for him to let her go. She found herself becoming more and more impatient with such men now that she was with child.

After that there were three more houses. She liked the third one the best. There was a new little baby who had transformed the house. The master wasn't coming home drunk any more and his wife wasn't so finicky about Chellamma's work. She held the little one in her arms and saw her own future. She knew things were going to be different.

That night she served her husband and finally stretched out, exhausted. Her prayer rose unsteadily. Tomorrow she would wake up to another life full of the same old certainties.



Shreekumar Varma: He is an Indian author, playwright, newspaper columnist and poet. He received the R. K. Narayan Award for Excellence in Writing in English in 2015. He is known for the novels Lament of Mohini, Maria's Room, Devil's Garden: Tales Of Pappudom, The Magic Store of Nu-Cham-Vu and the historical book for children, Pazhassi Raja: The Royal Rebel Born as HH Prince Punartham Thirunal of the Travancore Royal Family, he is the great great grandson of the artist Raja Ravi Varma and grandson of Regent Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, the last ruling Maharani of Travancore. He is married to Geeta Varma (poet, teacher and columnist) and has two children, Vinayak and Karthik.



SPECIAL HOLI

“Fagun” month has come

Let us have fun

With variety of its colours

Let us fill colours in life of everyone!

Let us celebrate

This unique festival

Irrespective of

Any caste, customs or religion!

Let us enjoy together

Pray together

Spread happiness

Forgetting all the grudges and difference!

Let us sing songs together
With melodious devotion
Remembring “Lord Krishna” and “Radha”
All Gopiyans, Mathura and Vrindavan !

Such occasions
Come after a long time
So let us do not miss this chance
Let us make this “Holi” the most special one !!!

*******HAPPY HOLI TO ALL*******



Sonia Gupta (BDS, MDS): She hails from Dera Bassi, near Chandigarh, India. Though, a doctor by profession, yet poetry is her passion. She started writing in 2006 and her journey of poetry continued afterwards. Her many poems got a place in various Hindi magazines and English anthology books. Recently she became an established poetess after getting her two Hindi poetry books published. Her three English poetry books are releasing soon. Besides poetry, she is fond of

paintings, singing, cooking, knitting, designing, stitching and embroidery too!!!

E-mail: Sonia.4840@gmail.com

fb id: [100004964983747@facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/100004964983747)



INTROSPECTION AND INDIGNATION

Am just an insignificant being
Without any talent or lust for life
But want to live because
Can't allow to waste the gift of life
Want to challenge and punish myself
Want to teach and motivate
Want to forget and forgive myself
I may fail in these endeavors time and again
But people, society, family no one has right
To humiliate or pass judgment over my existence
Not now or probably ever
Why should explain anyone "who I am"
What I stand for, am I a liar or Harishchandra
A Dhongi (con) or genuine lover
A patriot or an anti-national

A thinker or a pretender

Let them think and make an image of me as per their inner content

Nothing bothers me; everyone will receive fruit of their toiling

Who am I to decide what's good and bad

Nothing is absolute and everything is nothing

Even universal truths are no longer able to stand the test of time

Let the life flow through the river of time

Let the means and end meet at the judgment day

And announce whether my life was worthy or else...



Subhash Chandra Rai: Nonconformist by birth, wearing emotions on sleeve. Enjoying path less traveled and being myself.



MY CAR, ADIEU

My car drowned in the floods of 2015.

Water, a foot above the dashboard.

Service station piled up an enormous estimate.

I didn't repair, afraid of recurring problems.

Steeled my heart and sold her — it was goodbye.

She wasn't a new car by any means.

Had driven her for seven years or more.

My first solo intercity trips

Had been under her aegis,

Trepidatious, and full of misadventure...

Guided by GPS on my phone, I'd sallied forth...

Did I have a power back up for my phone — No

Did I get lost — Yes, more'n once

Did I drive into a pedestrian choked oneway — Yes

Did I drive over someone's foot — Not sure...

Heart in mouth, I'd checked my tyre, dreading blood...

Groaning he'd suddenly squatted next to my front fender

Head hanging, spilling belongings on the street—

Two halves of his phone, the battery sliding inches away

Money and perhaps important paper, folded flat...

“Madam leave,” advised a gent, “the fellow's drunk!”

And there was no blood!

I made my escape, grateful, terrified;

Driving down a few steps, through a narrow tunnel,

Under the Tambaram West flyover; there was no other way.

Yes, I drove solo again, inter-city, inter-state;

They were all a piece of cake

Put her through her paces—

Found the dashboard vibrated at hundred'n ten;

At One Forty she flew smoothly above the road, my Maruti Zen.

Confident now, drove thirteen hundred odd miles in the US.
Took a solo trip down California One, over glorious Big Sur.
Slept next to the Pacific Ocean at Carmel,
Until a cop woke me up at 3am, to park six miles inland,
So car and I wouldn't freeze to death...

Thirteen hundred miles divided between two coasts
And three almost new cars— a short stretch touching
hundred mph...

Adventures galore, even a New York State police car chase to
Niagara...

Alas, once back home, I hated my poor old car;
Wished so passionately for a better car, Chennai drowned...

Service personnel said the electrical circuit was shot, my little
red Zen wasn't responding at all.

After standing morosely under the blooming laburnum for a
month

She was gilded with lemon yellow flowers like a bride;
Sold, I watched her towed away; she blinked her brake lights,
Bidding adieu before she passed my stunned eyes.



Sumita Dutta: She is a photographer and the proprietor of Adlsh Photo Art. She has a degree in Fine Arts (Painting) from Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore. She loves writing both poetry and prose. She resides in the southern end of Chennai with her two sons, her father, a cat and a dog. Find her blog at: <https://zippythoughts.wordpress.com/>



DOGS BEWILDERED

The street dogs were agitated in their nightly conference.

They could not understand the bipeds.

Discussing a dilemma unique, the three-legged spoke:

“Why do the human kids and adults pelt us with stones?

Why their fancy cars and bikes run over us or our hind legs?

What kind of violent sport is this for them?”

Another dog---one-eyed---replied, “Do not worry, mate! You are not the only victim of their revulsion. During the Festival of Holi, they throw acid on us. My left got damaged due to that. Problem is we do not have eye surgeons among us.”

A young cur---rickety and wheezing---said, “Then there are other mysteries that baffle.”

“What are these?” The abused dogs chorused a racket that woke up the vertical neighbourhood and elicited few oaths in various tongues that left their ears stinging. “How filthy, their language!”

Then the conversation re-started on the moonless night, while few dogs whined and wailed in the other streets, evoking human fear of death.

“Well, why do they kick and chase us off the streets, while cuddling their pet lap- and car-dogs?” asked another in a surprised voice, “They keep big dogs in little homes and take them out for air and then beat us with the polished canes or shoo us off from the public places as if we were curs!”

“Oh, yeah!” The tribe of the night-raiders sighed and nodded balding heads. “True! True!”

“They pamper the exotic breeds from the West and punch and pelt the locals!”

“Shame! Shame!” They all cried in unison. “Humans---worst than the hairy apes of the real jungle!”

“What is the next mystery?” asked another one.

“I have seen these humans barking, biting and fighting among the members of their own species! We fight dogs from other territories but we do not fight within our own tribe. The bipeds are truly a strange species!”

The mongrels agreed. “They murder, rape, pillage, betray, kill. The list is l-o-n-g. They murder fellow humans for belonging to a different caste, class, region and religion! They bomb and spray bullets in concerts, malls and hotels!”

“Shame! Shame! The devils!”

The dogs were unanimous in their moral critique.

“They kill in the name of their God, for money, for pleasure! Unthinkable among us. Strays are not spared. Poisoned, caught or exterminated. We are also God’s creatures!”

The pain was palpable, so was the anger.

“Well, well,” exclaimed the old one, “The humans say they are the masters of the universe and act like most ugly creatures! They spread hate, war and terror. Got their Undead and vampires afterwards! We---four-legged, lowly dogs--- sure are much better!”

And the loud dog-conference agreed on this, and, then peacefully dispersed to the nooks and corners of the broken dividers and dark streets of their civilized hell, surrounded by hustlers, punks, drug addicts and thugs.



Sunil Sharma: He is a writer based in Mumbai, India. A college principal, he has published four books of poems, two books of shorts and a novel in English, apart from co-editing six literary anthologies.

He edits Episteme:

<http://www.episteme.net.in/>



MY DEAR FISH FARM..

How to make my gold fish lay eggs anna?

My fighter's fins are clamped. Wat do I do?

Can I feed fish to my Oscar?

Will you allow me to work here after school?

My FAQ list to the fish farm guy

Spending almost all weekends in the farm,

Fish farm was a major part of my childhood.

After long years, I was excited to visit my farm.

Smiling at myself, thinking what would I ask him now.

For a moment I felt lost as I couldn't locate it

It took a moment to realise the farm is now a huge apartment.

Burying my childhood n concrete.



Thileepan Manikumar: He is a HR professional, currently resides in Trichy with his wife Cathy and an arrogant cat, Sling. He is sincere, friendly, curious, ambitious, and an occasional liar. He is a man with a dream. A very simple dream, mostly including bikes and beers. But a dream nonetheless.



THE BOMB

From my serial writings on the skeletons from my Burmese teakwood cupboard...

It was the Chinese poke or the Japanese prod,
That was surely hard to tell.
But the air raid siren rending the peace
Spoke of a bomb that fell.

The house was timber, the walls and stairs,
The beautiful cupboards sleek.
All made of Mahogany boards and logs
Of polished Burmese teak.

And then it came, on swift wings of hate,
With a screaming howling rage
The secrets of science harnessed for pelf,
And bombed us centre stage.

The cries of terror, the howls of fear
Drove families down the stairs.
Helter-skelter out to the shelters
In singles and in pairs.

Slow men hurried, their women behind scurried
Pushing their children before them,
The waifs and the wenches, rushed into trenches
Swallowing their frightened phlegm.

All but one, ran from the flames
That singed the saddened sky.
The burning flames the hateful flames
That did not let him die.

He was saved, by an alert service, an expert service,
The air raid warning team.
They found him sitting up in bed, unaware
Of the fiery bloody stream.

He looked around in an aged daze,
Where was his family?
They had left him in the rush to run,
And left him in the melee.

They used a crane to lift him out,
The walls had gone crashing down,
He was all alone, now on his own
He wore a perpetual frown.

I wish I had not locked her out,
Out of my room and life,
I wish I had not deserted her,
On the last night of our life.

Next day however, his time had come,
His name was written in gold
On the single bomb, that tore the air
Even today it is told.

Karma saved him to know and grieve,
The people he had lost,
God teaches us our lessons for sure,
Oh God, at what cost?



Usha Chandrasekharan: She is a believer in the power of the universe, in the power of positive energy, in the power of words, in the power of good intentions. She has two children both of good literary prowess, both creative in their own way.



With disdain you look at our tribe
Give us unflattering names
We who you dismiss with contempt
We not a vote bank of any consequence
One graphic post
One poem gone viral
Is all we may need...
To bleed you to death
One pertinent debate is all it may take
To bring you on your knees
We may struggle to get it right
To awaken from apathetic stupor
To convert fence sitters

But the din will reach your corridors for sure

Watch while you can...

See how we stand

See how we get counted



Vandana Kumar: She is a bon vivant who loves travelling, working with young minds and exploring creative possibilities beyond the ordinary. She has done her masters in History from Lady Shri Ram College and her Diplôme from the Alliance Française de Delhi.

She is a French teacher in a couple of schools and private institutes and also translates for various publishing houses and corporates. An active member of various quiz clubs across Delhi-she has a soft corner for Kolkata where she spent her childhood. Her various passions include singing, playing the piano, composing music and participating in local antakshari competitions. She describes herself as a dreamer...a wanderer and a certified incurable romantic...the romantic moorings worsened with all her fancy French

studies. Poetry for her is her stress buster -her flight of fancy- and strangely – what keeps her rooted too.



A TIME HUNT

The last time she was here,
their watches clinged against each other,
and as their fingers slowly ran over
various wall clocks in awe,
the electronic cuckoos, wooden deer,
plastic minute hands,
fell in love with
the light that their eyes
refused to hide,
and yet with a million clocks
admiring their fire,
they did not have enough time.
Ten years later,
she is consumed by the same space,
her throat parched,

her body breathless,
his absence mounts a pressure
from inside,
the clock struck four,
and her soul bursts.

To her shock,
she found butterflies freed
from their cage of past,
and a river of beauty poured
from her broken self,
that was once locked up.

She bent down,
overpowered by her tears,
reaching for the “her”,
she once was,
and collecting all the flowers
that had withered,
to make a garland.



Vasanthi Swetha: She is a 2nd year Economics student who 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.



SURREAL

You are there with me
walking beside me, talking to me,
listening to me
The air is filled
with the heavenly scent of your body
The air that engulfs me
is the air that has touched you
And I am touched
by your voice, by your eyes & by your smiles
and by the things that you do
Your dance of life,
the joy of living
is now mine
and it surely feels divine

If you would come now
and see yourself in my arms
Then I know, even you would love me
and everything will be just fine,
heavenly and divine....



Vinay Virwani: A marketing guy by profession, I can't help but try and convince you that a particular brand of detergent powder can really change your life!

And while you may choose not to believe me, at least I ended up telling you a story!

Alas, while the breed of storytelling marketers is fast getting replaced by number-chasing, profit-making, excel sheet enthusiasts, I write....to continue telling stories....

A misfit perhaps, in a rapidly format-driven, number crunching world.....but a misfit who has successfully blended in....:)



MORNING CANVAS

Morning cheers

welcoming bright sunshine

arousing new rays of hope.

Life with turned, twisted whirls

in endless ocean; searching bounty in pearls.

Every morning; a new design.

Empty canvas

whether your or mine.

Colors so plenty

paint your way

Never said darkness;

"I am here to stay".

Admire morning glaze through

prism of thoughts.

Every beam

glowing a new dream.

Shinier and brighter rays of Sun

breeze whispered, passing by

"Your job is not yet done!"



Vishal Ajmera: He is a Business Strategy consultant by profession working with a reputed MNC in Mumbai. Over the years, Vishal has developed a penchant for poetry and has established himself as a successful poet cum lyrics writer; composing poetry across several genres and encapsulating various aspects of life from psychology, nature to imagery. With contributions in several international anthologies and magazine publications, his journey in the 'poetic world' continues unabated. Apart from poems, Vishal is an ardent music lover and plays guitar.



A BLESSING FROM HOME

A quest for peace and happiness
took a curious mind to avenues galore
across continents and cultures myriad.
I witnessed the tapestry of emotion
and the solitude of culture each time,
as I skillfully carved out a dwelling for me.
But as I sought to bestow upon one
the crown of the most beautiful of the lot,
I looked within, and reveled in the beauty
of a land I was told to call my very own home.
The rugged plateau and the ancient fort
stood guard to prayers that had withstood time
and promised to bear witness to a culture anew
accepting that the fortunes of the past were dead.
The symbolic dances and song with a story to tell,

the Mandanas which painted life itself in its glory,
the skewed kaleidoscope of wisdom, scattered
with the blessings of multiple soils of the homeland,
were remnants of a history disowned by its children,
and left for the world to feast upon.

Floods of humanity purify this land every twelve years,
for they come down with the purity of hope and prayer.

Fleeting royalty of ancient Kingdoms was perhaps
too sentinel for being given acoustic semblance,
and is rightly reduced to commonplace,

For the Kingdoms were not of Kings and Queens alone,
But also of simple folk, traders and clergymen alike.

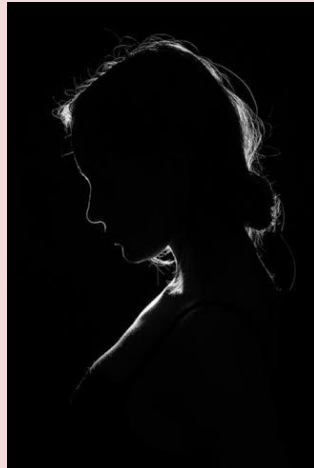
It had a language gifted by divinity,
and cuisine relished by the world,

The Shab-E-Malwa had never any problems,
in stoking in me the passions of ethereal love,
and my identity is attached to this blessed soil

For, the crown always belonged here.



Vivek Shivram: My life is a poem, a beautiful one at that. I live in one of the most happening cities in the world. When I live out my life as a Consultant for a blue chip firm, the energy of Canary Wharf is mine to claim. And when I seek refuge in poetry, the Surrey Countryside opens up to me.



MORNING

(a birthday present for my wife)

Is

my favorite time of day:

Waking to your scent, an aroma of mangoes,

feeling the weightlessness

of curly hair;

I hear the easy rise of breathe;

a sculpted

cheek and chin

rest on my right shoulder

while the thumb and

forefinger of my left palm

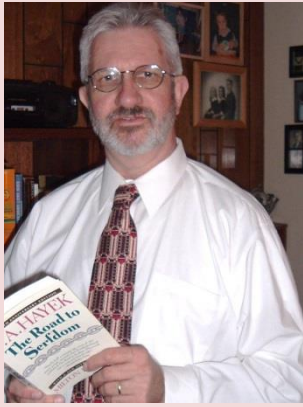
lay flat, forming

a “v” along
a smooth cheek.

Then, in a manner that would humble
Helen of Troy herself, you rise,
languid and liquid,
and the lunar glow
of your cool body
moves into the light, casting
a crescent shadow
around your breast, your hips.

Then your face
turns toward me

. Then,
I rise with you.



William P. Cushing: Bill Cushing writes, works, and lives in Glendale, California with his wife Ghisela (whose birthday was on March 9) and their son Gabriel. His poem "Morning" was written in honor of Ghisela, and he gives it here with his love for and birthday greetings to her. Feel free to contact him at piscespoet@yahoo.com



ciao! 😊