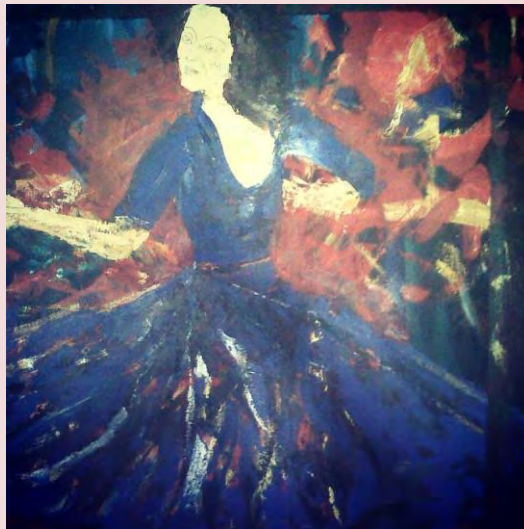


GloMag

GLOMAG

*Monthly Online Poetry and Prose
Magazine*

December 2019



Edited and Published by Glory Sasikala

RUMENA JISH KAKKASSERY



Title of the Cover Pic: Dancing Girl

About The Artist

Rumena Jish Kakkasery has always been a quiet woman in search of her voice. It was in creative expression that she found a way to speak to the world in a manner she never could in person.

From a young age she preferred to sketch rather than talk, letting her crayons, pencils, pens and brushes be her vocabulary. This creative bent led her to pursue a degree in the 'History of Fine Arts, Drawing and Painting' with a specialisation in creative design.

While professionally she designs for others, during her private time, she creates only for herself. Especially through paint she channels her inner turmoil to craft beauty.

Art Perspective

This particular piece is an expression of womanhood. The dancing girl's expression is that of calm acceptance, the face that she must show the world. However, her body is constantly in motion, balancing the numerous tasks that only she can.

She is rife with emotions below the surface, but that is her truth and hers alone. All the world ever sees is the slight smile of acceptance.

ABOUT GLOMAG

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

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

~ ***Glory Sasikala***

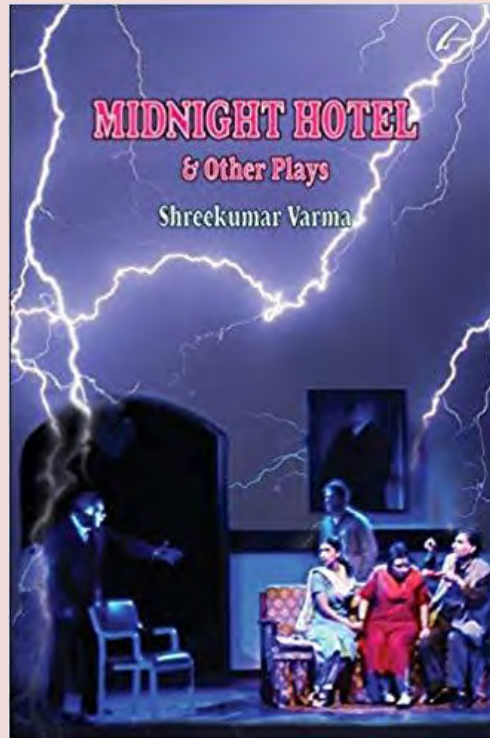
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BOOK OF THE MONTH

Midnight Hotel & Other Plays

Writer: Shreekumar Varma



LINK

<https://www.amazon.in/Midnight-Hotel-Other-Plays-Shreekumar/dp/1671597540>

Welcome to the world of Shreekumar Varma, the multi-tasking writer. His website lists four things under 'Work in Progress' ("I actually deleted two others yesterday") and his output in the last decade includes two published novels, two plays staged by the Madras Players, three children's books, and contributions to a whole bunch of short story

anthologies. And that doesn't count the columns and articles he's done for newspapers or his forays into poetry.

~ *Divya Kumar, Metroplus (The Hindu)*

ABOUT

This is our second collection of plays by Shreekumar Varma. The three plays here present different core ideas, but are connected by murder and mystery. *Midnight Hotel* has had more than ten outings already and will have three more in 2019. With murder and intrigue, a ghost running amok and hilarious conflicts, the core idea remains the beauty and brittleness of relationships. *Cast Party* goes to the Army to find its story. Following the staging of an explosive play, a cast party happens in an isolated beach house. There are discussions and recollections. And murder. You may watch a play and condemn wayward characters, but fail to recognise the same faults in yourself. *The Dark Lord* was Varma's first play and won second prize in the British Council Playscripts contest. It talks of Power and its repercussions.

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

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



Occupation: Drama therapist and professor of theatre

Fav book: Old Man and The Sea

Fav movie: Anbe Sivam

Fav song: You are My Sunshine

Fav hobby: Watching Birds

Fav color: Blue/Green

Fav sport: Kabaddi

Fav food: Idly Sambar

Fav pet: Dogs

Fav actor: Rajnikant

Fav actress: Lakshmi

Life philosophy: Eat, drink and be merry

One liner describing you: I am what I am, like me or hate me

Favorite holiday destination: Netherlands

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LET'S DRENCH IN THE RAIN

Come, my friend,
Let's drench in the rain for awhile,
And hear the pitter patter.

Look!

The rain trees bathing in glee,
Dripping barks and leaves washed afresh,
Let the scent of the earth numb us.

Know, you're in hurry,
And part we must,
But before that, let's drench in the drizzle.

The street is lonely,
And see, the forest is in celebration,
Come, let's us drench in the drizzle, my friend.

Fear not,
None intrude,
And darkness hasn't thickened yet
Come, let's us drench for a while
And then we part for life!



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



SANCTUARY

In the tucked in bedsheet,
In the folded corners of a newspaper,
In the pleats of a forgotten curtain,
In your curly hair,
Wings revealed only by the breeze.

In the windy clothesline,
In the rustling leaves,
In the trampoline leaps of children,
Wings caught in the tempest of liberation.

In the eye of the runaway,

Wings of fire.

In the beak of the caged parrot,

Legend of bygone wings.

In the walls soaked by flood,

Dampness of a stranded wing.

Death house

Is the wing of a lost bird,

Circling mid-air.

The conquered nation

Is the clipped wing of a fallen bird.

I live in a sanctuary of wings

Striving to attain fruition.



Aditya Shankar: He is a poet and translator residing in Bangalore, India. He works as an IT professional. He has contributed to various anthologies worldwide. He has published three poetry anthologies and a volume of translation. His poetry collection XXL (Dhaulti Books) was recently shortlisted for the Yuva Puraskar by Sahitya Akademi, India.



EXPENSIVE PRAYER

I wish I had more mistakes than sins
I want to have my brain cells fully damaged
as the friend I always trusted before is
now a dark cloud in my miserable season
Love is blind more than love is happiness
as it is an expensive prayer for me
even my siblings are deaf to hear the beats
of my broken heart from the liquor I drink
Grains of salt are above the roof of my mouth
meanwhile, I never swam in a salty ocean
nor; added salt on my tasteless plates of food

I just lick salt off my hand after I drink a few shots

I respect more faces then they deserve

only death is the path to end my anxieties

dark poems won't solve anything about life

those tears will later fall along with ruby blood



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



"LIBERTY TO MUKTI"

She spins to speak in affirmative nods,
Time is her universal tongue in cosmos;
Earth our Mother she is,
The last sleep on her lap to kiss an iota of bliss.

Fire ball with an open eye only once blinks,
Here 90 ML of sunlight is the welcome drink;
Names ripe on ways for name thinks,
The light and horizon may no more shrink.

Their eldest daughter is water,
Tis' not matter but her timeless presence matters;
From liberty to "mukti" man must barter,
Rivers are carriers of seeds to scatter.

Unaddressed envelopes closely swim in mortgaged air,
Relative affairs get gradually auctioned in this fair;
Various colors breathe in every layer,
Eco friendly atmosphere pleads not to go beyond repair.

Spaces are also sold here for hierarchy of numbers,
Emptiness on pillows of sound slumbers;
Structural anatomy of remembrance is opaque in nature,
Retrograding invisible footprints at places footsteps
venture.



Aakash Sagar Chouhan: Aakash is a nomadic poet from Rourkela, Odisha, India. He co-authored 'Between Moms and Sons' along with Mrs. Geethanjali Dilip (Geethamma). He also teamed up with eight eminent Indian Poets and launched 'The Virtual Reality' in Kolkata.



ANOTHER CHRISTMAS POEM: CAMPING THE ADIRONACKS

Guitar notes like thorn beetles
tapping the sheepskin bongo each
tick of the genetic clock coddling
the current power structure.



Onyx eyes, motionless, then shape
shifting to receive cultural libation—
espresso eyes lowered into the heat
diverting attention straight into the

female brain—no Busch Gardens variety but emotions of the crocodilian variety—which is precisely what Venus & Mars intended.

Note: Symbols say that what exits the heart determines how we survive this planet.



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



AUSTRALIA - THE LAND OF DREAMS

On the sandy soil, the wind makes a symbol of eternity.
It leads along the dreamy path marked out by ancestors.
The right direction is indicated by the Uluru monolith.

Churing remained after the past generations of sleep time.
Oval stones are hidden in the holy places of oknanikilla
There, as in rock cocoons, souls sleep until they are born
again.

Time carries death and life like a boomerang.

Before the next revival - a long and stone sleep awaits.

Ritual songs and dances wake the dead to a new life.



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



STIGMA

I felt stigmatized when you asked my own religion

You may not know faith resides in personal bastion!

I felt victimized when you demanded undue favour

Didn't you know it's unethical to become cynically clever?

Expected I your unquestionable and unrestrained dedication

Labelled you this with societal taboos and dogmas breeding
discrimination

Abandoned you our long cherished dreams quite loveable

Rejected you our alluring fellings very subtle but enjoyable

Stagnation in our reciprocal response put

the ambience under duress

Shattered our wishes here and there like autumnal falling
leaves bearing stress

Bullies drenched me in rains of distrusted returning
Monsoon

Carving a niche for our love will not be possible soon

Disgraceful is your behavior for anyone to bear

On this critical juncture lives of ours proceed out of gear

Sarcastically I may proclaim now we move like two parallel
lines!

Stigmatization marked an indelible scar on my forehead
which you must opine



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



TO HEAR

In this cradling Himalayan village,
where it appears to be the only truth-

those butterfly-dance, cricket-calls,
the sight of busy birds and happy dogs,

where rocks watch over with parental gaze,
their solidity owing it to old truths they know,

you wish they held yours too, those mostly
kind but some formidable ones too.

While time decides, what stays on for you,
the colour of the trail to the river-bed,

the happy-to-be blooms on muddy tracks,
the new-found friendship with trusting dogs,

one thing you are surely taking back,
the feeling of hearing them true, also being heard.



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



TRAVEL DIARIES

The colors,

The cold,

The history

Those peaks hold.

Stories

Of fear

Cruelty

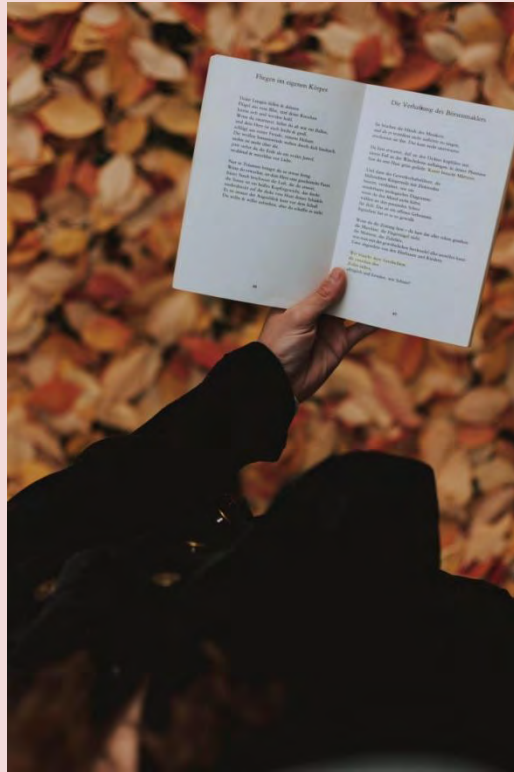
And treachery...

Together with
Secrets
Of knowledge
And eventually
The sweet taste of victory.



Ameeta Agnihotri: Two words resonate in her mind: be present. That explains why nothing ever comes between her food and her. ‘When I am doing my job, I’m there for a reason,’ says the lady who has loved food and writing all her life. She takes meticulous notes, always giving positive, constructive feedback and suggestions. Many describe this Chennai Times Food Critic as open-minded, friendly,

knowledgeable and very professional. 'It is the present that matters. I believe in giving it my best. Always. Instead of looking at the whole intimidating picture, I set small goals: one step at a time, one day at a time, and like magic, the job is done.' She has 10 books on various subjects to her credit. And has a few ideas up her sleeve. 'It's the publishers that are missing,' she laughs. 'The world has gone digital, so it's Instagram stories now.'



POETS

Some poems are poems

Some poems seem to be poems

Some poets are poets

Some poets look like poets

Some poets write poetry

Some poets write poetry as if they wrote poetry

Some poets want to be poets

Some poets are born poets



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



THE FACE

A light tiptoes in happiness
through the bower of innocence,
a nebulous speck takes shape
morphs into a cluster of images, configurations.
It sniffs the nectar of love
dripping from caressing palms
bouncing, it reciprocates
entwined in the essence of her life blood,
her dream syllables in cadence caper
poems frozen in heartbeats thaw

as it picks up sound, smell, vibes
ensconced in a cushion of fluid
slowly but steadily
until the moment it sees light of day
sweeping the loving face
the face called mother.



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



And I think of you

Can thinking be immortal?



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



THE CROSSING

All the boats looked sparkling white in a teal harbour

The sunshine was a tangible gold

Was this the same world

Or was it another ?

The year stretched lazily ahead , full of seductive promise

She wore a dress that seemed made of a very nice hemp sack

And had a longish car

Bagels cream cheese and a tuna salad were expected

The pears were a treat

The coffee aromatic

The keys were waiting

The view from the window disappointing after the drive
along the river vista

The sun was not so bright anymore

The building could not be turned around

Bottles of milk , cartons of juice , cans of soup , loaves of
bread , hunks of cheese , tea bags and fruit were bought

A cold loneliness crept in

The soul was steeled

Outside , busy lizzies in various colours grew obediently in a few flower beds near the garbage trolleys , hugging the dark moist dirt of their amply manured portion of land

The bedspread was peach, the armchair a dull brick red

The cooking utensils red and white enamel

What miracles, what earth shaking discoveries could anyone expect?

Night covered the earth, while whales came up to breathe on the ocean surface and cruise ships moved towards the icebergs to be sunk, so that libraries could be built in the memory of heirs of boundless fortunes who would perish in the deep

Dreams and nightmares jostled for space under backlit eyelids translucent with blood

Is time ever wasted?



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



MY STAND

Not Political—I firmly stand

My position is well manned

Though Politico Pollsters harangue

I'm Wary of Joining any Pirate Gang

Leftist and Rightist are same to me

Socialism and Violent Anarchy to Be

Conservatism versus Progressive thought

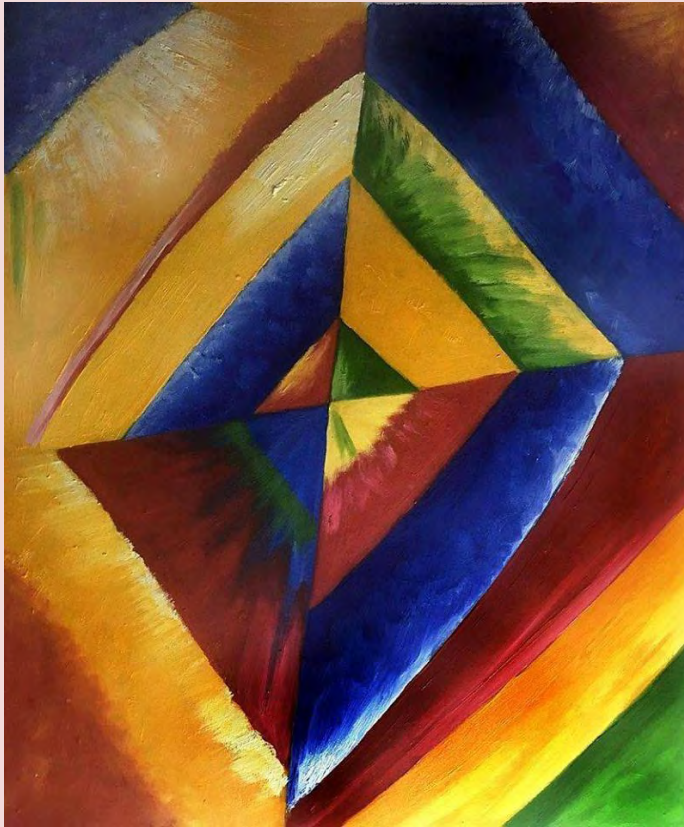
Silly People to be won over and fought

I've remained Steadfast to my Plan

I'm Always my Woman's Man!!



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



Sakhi,
be difficult
but not overmuch.

Be simple
but not too 'simple'.
Be easy, but don't go easy.
Be complex,
but not complicated.

Sakhi, be the mean but not
ever mean
and golden or silver,
be keen;
but not knife-in-the-back-of-your-friend sharp.
Be edgy
but not prickly.

Sakhi,
at the end of the day
be
free
of what others want you to be
and only yield to demands
and expectations if
you feel
so obliged

or convinced

from whoever it may be.



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



THIS AFTERNOON IS GREY

This afternoon is grey

Rains slashing the window pane

Dark clouds have nestled on the platform

Surreal humans move slowly

ignoring rains and clouds

White flowers begin to smile

perfectly against wise clouds

Me and train have been

dwelling in this station for

thousand years

I know every bit here, ----

rains, all humans and their movements,

mystery clouds

and brown doors ...

This afternoon is grey

All lights were switched on early

I know every bit of this

surreal world, brown door, every bit ...

But I never knew

I loved grey so much



Aneek Chatterjee: I am a poet and academic residing in Kolkata, India. I work as a professor of political science. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published a novel named "The Funeral Procession" and a poetry anthology titled "Seaside Myopia". I was a Fulbright Visiting fellow at the University of Virginia (USA) and a recipient of the prestigious ICCR Chair to teach at reputed foreign universities.



TENDER, TENDER DEWDROPS

Tender, tender dewdrops

Precious and perfectly formed

Like a potter with clay

It's perfection a masterpiece.

Tender, tender dewdrops

Caressing my mind

Erasing the hurt and the pain

Reminding me of life's seasons.

Tender, tender dewdrops
Soothing my soul
With a perfect flow and rhythm
Like the perfect heartbeat
Synchronizing the pulse of life.

Tender, tender dewdrops
As fragile as the breath of life
This moment is all there is
In a flash millisecond life can change
Treasure the life you are blessed with
Never take it for granted.

Tender, tender dewdrops
Evaporates in the morning sun
Life's fragile thread
Hangs in the balance
With every labored breath.

Tender, tender dewdrops

Touch my heart and soul

Tender, tender dewdrops

Let me rise again.



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



THE PREY

You need to get consumed
In the forlorn hours of night
You need to run into the fire
Won't resist won't give a fight

You have youth overflowing
Dripping from the hidden pore
You need the strong bee to get
Stung you had not been before

A wave of passion runs inside
You and you feel a bit swollen
You have seen sixteenth spring
Your oranges are almost ripened

Now is the time for you when
The moon is hidden in the mist
To shed shyness and open your
Garden for the drooling beast

Fall prey to his request slowly
Don't resist and enjoy the time
Let him crawl in and out of you
In the darkness enjoy the crime



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



MONA LISA

I am Monalisa.

Yes, of the smile. Of that smile.

The one that launched a thousand theories.

Only, I am in flesh and blood. Tears too. But not in oils.

No brush dusts the mound of my cheekbones

To make it smooth and placid, just so.

No artist has peered into my eyes with such keenness

To step into their light and draw out their shadows to the
corners

Where they meet the eyebrows.

And aah... that jawline, its cut and tilt

That perfect blending of peach and light on the chin,

Which painter would do that to mine?

I have those soft curls too that trickle carefully down her
ears

And rest apologetically on her shoulders;

Neatly held in place, not one tendril playing truant.

But I have let mine have a wild run of the place

For nobody will play on their wavy temperament with such
artistic indulgence.

If I heard that somebody were to pat them severely into
two halves

With a middle parting of measured strokes

Topping them off delicately with a barely perceptible veil

I might smile that smile too.

That so-called enigmatic smile,

What I would call the everyday smile of an everyday woman

Culminating at the edges of the mouth

With the same dark indentations

That could mean anything from mild amusement to murky intentions.



Anju Kishore: She is poet, editor and a former Cost Accountant. She has contributed to various anthologies. One of the winners of The Great Indian Poetry Award 2018, her first book of poems ‘...and I Stop to Listen’ was published in 2018. She is part of the Editorial Team of India Poetry Circle that launched two anthologies in 2019. She is also one of the editors of Pinkishe, the print and e-magazine of the Delhi-based NGO, Pinkishe Foundation.



OCTOBER NIGHT

Walking barefoot on wet sand.

Counting stars.

Heartbeat synced to rhythmic waves.

Thoughts reach out beyond galaxies.

I have been dismantled.

I am no longer whole,

parts of me strewn across a vast universe.

Existence reaches the vanishing point,

and all things become one.

Stopping to smell salt air.

Sweater pulled close against cold wind.

A gull's cry brings me back to earth,
as waves wash over bare feet.



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

*(a complete list of publications is available upon request



AND WHEN THE REAL LIFE STORY LOOKS LIKE FICTION

First one of the friends was so brilliant, never gave up first position in his school, remained Topper in every exam held till University. Second one was average, just avoided failing but anyhow pushed to the next class by default. Third one was one brilliant playful trickster, a good-hearted cheat and naive manipulator. But all three were great, great friends, thick-skinned as maternal brothers and coordination of daily thieves uncaught and undisturbed. Once their respective way of education was over, the First one, the brilliant guy, as expected, became an unassuming and excellent engineer. He gave Indian engineering services exam, and was chosen as Class one engineer. He went on to become a chief engineer in India railways later. Second one anyhow graduated with physics major and appeared for Indian Civil Services exam, passed easily, and was

appointed as the head of that department where his First friend was working at a lower level. Third one rather didn't worried himself to study further after school, chose right political party at the right time, fought the elections, won and went on to become an MP, later became cabinet minister and under him were the Departments where the other two bosom school friends were working. The First one is E Shridharan, the world renowned Metro Man. Second one is TN Sheshan, chief election commissioner of India, revolutionised and reorganised election scene and cleansed the system like no one else. Third one is KP Unikrishnan who got elected five times as Member of Parliament for Lok Sarha and also became a cabinet minister during VP Singh's tenureship as Prime Minister of world's largest democracy. Three friends from one region, one school, one set of teachers, but destiny chartered different paths. But I just went on to imagine, what bosom friendship can do to one another friend and it can do no wrong. Whole of the real story is the most real fact fiction. Don't help!



Ashish K Pathak: He is a middle school teacher posted in the Dharhara block of Munger district (Bihar, India). Recently his works has been featured in many a national and international anthologies. He has got a letter of appreciation from President of India for his poem. Along with other poets, he has been conferred with world Union of poets Gold Cross medal for his contribution in the world book 'Complexion based discrimination.' His Forte is sociopolitical writing and use of simple soothing words.



TIME TO SIT QUIET...

You wished to move away

From this place to some place else

It is a terrible day

Crossing over the hill into the deep sea

You stood transfixed by his gaze

Memories never move away like people

Your words have grown into a secret song

The winter has come at my window

Let us sit face to face
Till the dark comes on
We are searching childhood memories
Time to sit quiet face to face

Midnight has come into our eyes
Never pluck the night flowers
Let it be where it is
If you love me, close your eyes

In tranquility...



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



In the name of God
A death knell has been called
To add to the pyre
All those who desire
To live as an entity
That accepts diversity.



Ayshwaria Sekher/ Icecamp: She is an International Relations graduate, but a reluctant practitioner. She is searching about the self through practices that seem conducive to the naked eye but weathers the spirit. She believes in the conditional-unconditional love of a dog and no other's. She extends reality from books and tries to achieve vice versa. She shuns from the ' -isms' but cannot escape the brackets cast. A bundle of contradictions in short!



“JUST” A MOTHER

Once, I asked a young girl what...

“What would you like to be in life”?

She tossed her head, said, “Oh... just a mother”

She beamed, and then skipped on

Today I saw her passing by,

Saw her baby beam a smile.

It was like the smile that once I saw

Her mother, as a young girl, beam

This Mama shops from shelf to shelf
To stock for her babe far beyond just herself.
Her baby beams and then goes, Ma...
Ma...Ma...Ma

That's not "just a mother" passing by...
That's not "just a mother" passing by...
For I hear her babe sigh, Ma...

One day that babe may shelf to shelf
Shop for her baby, far beyond just herself
And a passer's heart fly beyond just itself,
Going O. O. And Ahhh...



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



THE BIGGEST LOSER

woman abuser

you are the biggest loser!

hitting a woman

says that you are weak

hurting another human

makes you a freak

demonstrating your muscle
in this abusive way
just because you wear a buckle
every single day
how does that behaviour
make you a man?
do me a favour
and fly like peter pan -

to a place
where you cannot be seen
you belong to an alien race
somewhere over the moon
the trash and scum
that you are!
lesser than my bum
more painful than a scar

you are not supposed to be
amongst normal society
you are a monster
with no self-respect
we are tired of your torture
and utter neglect -

for civil behaviour
you don't have a clue about
i wish the law will devour
and shut your mouth

you will never be missed
you will never be loved
you need to be jailed
with your hands cuffed



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



I SPEAK NOT

I speak not

As I feel

Speaking is not essential

Silence speaks for itself

Even eyes speak

Speak thousand words my quivering lips

Unsaid words travel million miles

Sun speaks

Moon speaks

Speaks the thunderstorm

When hearts meet

Mouth says no words
Only the closeness knows
How louder is the heart
When it beats
Beating the loudness of sea-roars.



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



I SAW YOU

When I saw my face

in your eyes

My ear juices melted

Every word you poured

entered into eminence

of new understanding

I saw you

under the disco light

the night was young

We were not getting
any younger

Please hold this key
a deep dance of hearts
I have knelt before mama's love
You and I sing
special song

There won't be another
planet between us
For we made it
to pool of oneness.



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



A DECIMA FOR THE DOUGHBOYS

Influenced by the zealous praise
coming from teachers and parents
they left enthused before real sense
replaced the glow of youthful gaze,
pride, and honor with true malaise.

Troops become a sacrifice for
Mars, depleting their thirst for war.

Instead of music and parades,
a drumbeat of cannon cascades
into the trenches of world war.



Bill Cushing: He continues writing and teaching (for the moment) in the Los Angeles area. This month, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Armistice Day (now Veterans Day), he presents a piece focused on one of the war's results. His latest book, *Music Speaks* is available for a very special price through the printers: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/bill-cushing/music-speaks/paperback/product-24267491.html> or at Amazon as well.



DEAR DECEMBER

O my dear December,
You come in with your wintry winds
Garlanding the gardens with colorful flowers
Celebrations spread thick
Through streets and households
Of the city

Lanes and sub lanes get jam packed
Streets bedazzled with Christmas trees
Gift giving, caroling,
Decorations galore
Exchanging words of love
With bells jingling all the way,
Delightful days end,
In festive evenings
Dancing with dear ones
The jolly night of your twenty fifth day

Dear December
You joyously cheer the Christmas
Bidding adieu to the old year,
Adding fervor to merrymaking
As the thirty first night strikes twelve ,
Fresh air of newness rushes in

Welcoming the first day of the New Year

Toes are tuned to the new rhythm of dances...

Happy New Year



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



WAITING FOR THE FIRST STAR

another Christmas is knocking on the door

the tree is no longer as stylish

several unsent Christmas cards

barely begun letter

those who will not sit at the table any more

look out from picture frames

tears are shining in the candlelight

inside the heart joy mixes with sadness

carol rocks memories

white wafer waits to be broken

the first star will twinkle in the sky soon

but there are ever more empty chairs around the table



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



THE VOICE OF A REFUGEE

Broken homes, Shattered dreams,
the journey begins towards a new soil.

Trails of sand left behind,

Footprints of peace choose to stay back,
hoping against hopes.

Pristine, precious moments intrude subtly
only to invite tears

for there aren't boundaries to fears!

The unsung song of eternity beckons back;
the ignominious culture of bombs

bombard the promise of future.

New aspirations, new hopes,

unlike the ones gone with the wind,

unwind aimlessly like those of a child for a matured adult.

The future beholds beautiful memories to relive the
mysterious past;

the future is but a conditional choice to last!

The breath waits to smell the scent of Peace back in
Motherland!



Brindha Vinodh: I am basically a poet and a freelancer residing currently in the United States of America. A few of my poems have been published in national magazines in India.



HYMN TO THE INDIAN ROLLER

(1)

O wonderful bird, where thou art gone
Thy glorious glimpse has become rare,
As symbol of **Lord Shiv** thou art known,
Fields, pastures without thee stand bare
Thy auspicious sighting makes Dussehra celebration fair.

(2)

From the shell-like neck slopping down
Glossy colors - blue, ochre and silver light,
Soft sleek plumes with grey, orange brown,

Sky and deep blue, greenish with tiny white,
Thou look most pleasing like Cupid handsomely bright.

(3)

A little curved ashen beak with round sloe-eyes,
Around crest shades of yellow, orange, blue deep,
Downward blocks, small cuts seem to fall and rise,
Sitting calm through green dense leaves thou peep,
Thou ever look serene and poised as though conquered
sleep.

(4)

Thy sight brings peace and prosperity year ahead,
In thy long search they restlessly go everywhere,
Deep forest through, they walk and walk like mad,
Tired and tearful they return finding thee nowhere,
Despair haunts them; they're left with no tale to share

(5)

Thy pretty sight has magic to rekindle hope,
And creates joyous waves in a droopy heart,
And boosts man's morale to reach the top,

From time immemorial thou been life's part,
Across the azure clear sky thou flick and flash like a dart.

(6)

Thou art believed to bring a good omen
Lord Ram had sighted thee in big shady tree
He felt assured of his victory over the demon
And made imprisoned Ayodhya's queen free
In no time the whole monkeys' army burst into a spree.



B.S. Tyagi: He comes from India. He writes in both Hindi and English. He has several books, fiction and non-fiction, to his credit. His poems have been included in several anthologies. He writes short stories which regularly appear

in national and international literary magazines. His write-ups and poems have appeared in national and international magazines. Besides, he has translated four books of poems. He shies away from public celebrations and prizes. Inner bliss he is showered upon though creativity is the greatest prize.



Election is just a little away

hoarding says free and fair

vote for me one says

vote for my party

I will deliver the stars

clouds you get in bonus

your are kidnapped on day of election your family too

blinded

it is taken off in the booth

the machine has only one button

one symbol

you press in fear

one man
one party
one country says a slogan
you go back home in fear
a voice whispers this is true democracy
you turn back to see
there is nobody
your shadow laughs.



Chandramohan Naidu: He is a retired bank employee, now a freelance writer and photographer based in Chennai, part of the poetry circle which meets first Wednesday of every month. He writes poems to be subsequently brought out into a collection.



THE DEAD HAVE RIGHTS TOO

The dead have rights too. They left the living

 Their world, an ample inheritance left

We squander much, our own sins forgiving

Cursing corpses of whom defence is bereft.

Bones and ashes compost all, we are trees

 Rooted in skulls of dead folk's decisions

 We judge so glibly, forget by degrees

Till our own great-grandchildren's revisions.

What would we have done in the shoes of the past?

 Let justice be done with a fair trial.

 Convict the evil yes, but not so fast

Confront our own black soul's blunt denial.

What will they say of us a century now?

Who will applaud when we take our last bow?



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



Pic: Isabel G. de Diego: "The Poet & Writer de Culla in Candás Beach (Asturias). Spain

ON THE HIGH SEAS

Here I am as a mythological talent

Of flesh and blood

Presiding and protecting the banks

Of Candás Beach, in Asturias

With a higher order more than Neptune

For example

On an imagined bricklayer level

To make sure the horizontality

Of lines or surfaces
To appreciate its angle of inclination
And to direct visuals
In horizontal direction
Or with the angle of inclination
That is wanted.
There is not much crowd of bathers.
I look at Diana, Venus
And above all
In a beautiful young woman
Who is lying on the sand
In the intermediate stage
In the metamorphosis of insects
I like this more
That to recite poems from my harvest
In the House of Culture of Candás
Because, poets and poetesses
That participate with me

Are excessively meticulous
And delicate with the Verb.
Embedded in the divinity
From the Cantabrian Sea
And being part of it
I don't see barnacles on the rocks
And Mine's
Something light and little thought
Looks like a child
Or calf found
In the belly of a dead cow.
Now, I'm looking at a woman
That looks like the Anfion's woman
That whipping his son
For having made gangs of thieves
Getting out the swimsuit
To the daughter of her friend from Madrid
And that

With every whip on the boy's buttocks

She warns her friend:

-Thebasiana, do you know, do you see:

“To the boy and to the mule

In the ass”.

-It's the best medicine, Níspola

Thebesiana replies.



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



IF/IN #18

the infant hides an arm
in her pajamas
to frighten her parents her parents

never understand
what it does for the infant
to perform a magic trick like that

to duck the normal moments
for the first time the first time
they fool authority



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



LIBERATION

From birth our souls are occluded by the dogma of others.

We are smothered, asphyxiated.

Yet we take in so much that drowns our minds

Because amidst the irrationality, the prejudice, the
parochialism and the lack of sense,

There is some important knowledge,

Some wisdom,

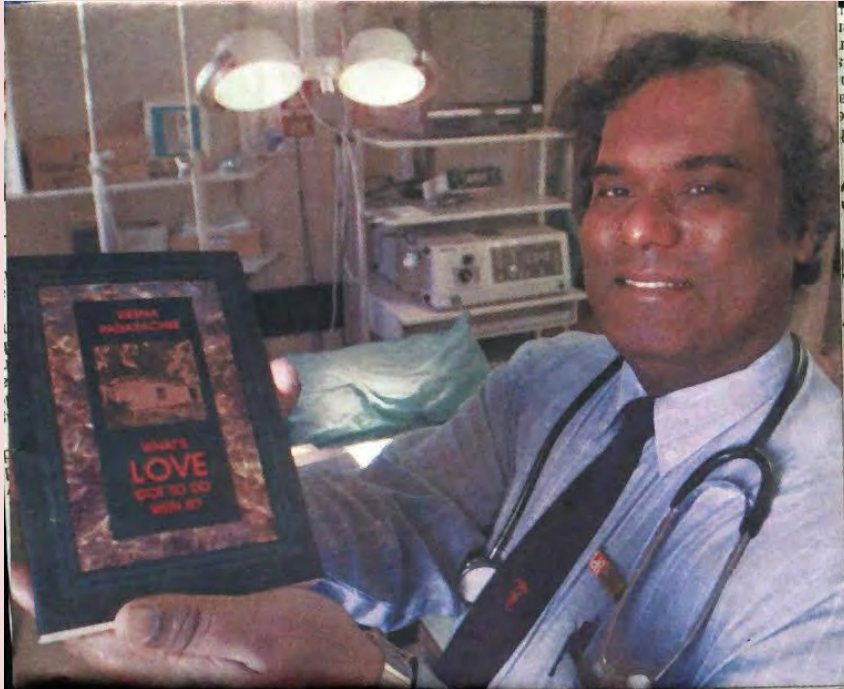
Some light.

But somehow we must come up for air

In a world that suffocates us

with its neurotic, racist, brainwashed demons,

Its pernicious beasts,
All clawing, tearing each other for the ultimate prize,
Our minds.



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



FAILED DATE

Apparelled in a new shaft of everlastingness,

All sewn with the wandering foam,

With laces of eternal spring's chant of timeless love,

I'd gone on a date.

With the wilder dew hanging from my ear lobes

Mirroring the rainbowed-twinkles of my Mind's sky,

With the fading sunset painting its masterpiece on my lips,

I'd gone on a date.

And while the burbling brook murmured in my eyes

Leaving a few notes unsung,

I stared at my Love at once
That propelled me to drown in:
The Atlantic of its eyes,
The Pacific of its heart,
And the Arabian of its smile.
Glad, I'd my life-vest on!
That sustained the shipwreck of many a hope that took me
by storm.
And even after being hawthorned by its Antarctic Love,
Cliffing against the Iceberg of its Arctic emotions,
I continue to flow
In a languid motion
Shore-bound.
I, the mistaken paperboat
Now colossal and profound.



Deyasini Roy: She is a budding young poet who hails from Chandannagar, a town in the Indian state of West Bengal. She's recently pursued her Postgraduate degree in English and Comparative Literature from Pondicherry University, India. She's contributed to various Anthologies and International Online Magazines of repute. She loves to set recourse to the idyllic and pastoral and record her impressionably sensitive response to the lilting cadency of Nature rendered in a swirl of lurid slashes and subtle brush strokes.



AIRAVATI'S CURSE

Airavati ran from room to room like a mad woman, across the long balcony and across the long hallway on the other side, to open all the beautiful windows with colourful Belgian glass panes. She asked Sabala, the housemaid for more than half a decade, to clean and wash away the thick layers of dust that settled on the windowpanes.

That one evening, long years ago in the attic room, those few moments of passion and love with Akhilesh, the shock from the sudden entry of her eldest brother, his outrage towards the passionate lovers, was still etched into Airavati's mind. Akhilesh, the name still brought a smile and a memory of pain to her. A memory of pleasure and pain.

Akhilesh, beaten mercilessly by her brothers, on that black evening, never returned to the house of the Roychowdhuris again. The blue blooded Roychowdhuris, with the titles bestowed upon them by the British rulers, with their conservative outlook, and with their enormous wealth, never imagined that their reclusive and introvert daughter could ever indulge herself into such a forbidden passion.

Airavati was beaten too. No one cared to remember that she was without any clothes and it was a chilly winter night. It was only Sabala, who tiptoed to the attic room later in the night, wrapped a shawl around her and saved her from falling ill from the cold. Next day, Airavati was thrown inside a room, dumped, and shut off from the rest of the world. It was soon discovered, within a few days after the black evening, that Airavati's eyes met Akhilesh's, when she used to sit on a windowsill while Akhilesh used to teach her younger brothers on the balcony.

Airavati was caged, forbidden to step out of her room, forbidden to open any window, forbidden to open doors except for Sabala. No one in the family ever saw her again. But, perhaps due to her curse, the windows of the house were closed one by one as the occupants passed away one after another. Women were married to the brothers, but no child was born again at the palatial house of the Roychowdhuris.

Then one day, at midnight, the last of the Roychowdhuris' body was carried out of the front door of the mansion. No one survived at the house of the Roychowdhuris. But Airavati did. She lived, caged at her room for over forty long years. And Sabala lived.

Then it was dawn. The sun rose. And Akhilesh came to meet. He lived, alone, at a small shanty behind the mansion, forever waiting to see Airavati once more. He came and opened Airavati's doors. But Airavati ran out. She went from room to room, across the balcony and the hallway on the other side, to open all the windows. She screamed again and again, "Sabala, clean the windowpanes, wash the dust away."



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



art by Nardstar

GLOBAL DIVA

Rabia Dulce – My sweet anger born from your dismissive cutting mocking piercing words designed to cut my spirit into tiny shards of submissive obedience whilst I dutifully blindly attempt to fulfill my intended role of serving you in marital union, even though deep within me I scream at you for denying my deserved individuality – My desperate existential battle to break free from these societal cultural shackles clamped around me, locking me in this stifling choking sarcophagus strangling my true womanly essence, preventing liberal resurgence – My destiny at a crossroads which only I alone can hope to navigate towards my

rumoured freedom sung by a chorus of global sisters – Their echoing cries reaching from afar, igniting my liberty flame to flicker furiously, as I prepare for my destined victory over charcoal stained dominance...

Shades of War – White our rage as yet another blinding bombardment aims to delete us, deplete us, erase us, recalculate us! We are the mothers, the wives – The guardians of our race, our loved ones, our proud culture but it is all turning to ash as world super powers are too busy with their war games to care for our longevity – Our silent cries deafened by blinding flashes of cataclysmic missiles raining down on us! Grey our decaying mood as we clutch each other in utter desperation, pleading for divine intervention – Our spirits mud green as our anger envelops us, burning through us as we question what has happened to humanity's moral compass. Red our blurred vision as hopelessness threaten to cloud our mission of peace, love and harmony in a failing world fuelled by renewed hate, materialism and self-enrichment. Black our nightmares of these end times dismissed by men at war hoping to wear their bloody crowns of senseless wars...

Emergence – Even after enduring the hopelessness, violence and dominance of lustful crazed petty weak men, we emerge unscathed – Gathering steadily around this global village to take ownership of our existence, our brave

persistence to be heard, to matter, to effect change in order to ensure a safe haven for those who will live here long after we are gone. No matter who you are or how you identify yourself or where you come from, hold your head up high as you emerge from your backstreet catwalk for all to see who you were really meant to be – Speak out, speak up speak proudly about your hopes and dreams for our fractured world – To heal and to discover your beautiful potential.

We Rise – Never again will we submit to the failings of men. We wear our embattled scars with pride and confidence. Never oh never again will we bow down to weak men of small minds... Join in our global march for equality respect acknowledgment and empowerment. We Rise!



Don Beukes: He is a bilingual South African British writer and the author of 'The Salamander Chronicles' (Creative Talents Unleashed) and 'Icarus Rising - Volume 1' (Alien Buddha Press). His poetry has been anthologized in numerous collections and translated into Afrikaans, French, Farsi and Albanian. He was nominated for the Pushcart Poetry Prize in 2016 and the Best of the Net in 2017 by Roxana Nastase, editor of Scarlet Leaf Review for his trilogy 'Esorfo Ygolirt/Trilogy of Rose'. His debut South African publication is due in August 2018 in a unique anthology with three prominent South African poets.

Nardstar: She has a tranquil presence, a deep-rooted connection to her origin and clear perspective on the journey of her art. Currently based in Cape Town, South Africa, her reputation crosses borders with international recognition as a key player in modern street art culture. The streets were her classroom, her teachers hail from a generation of artists who were predominantly considered vandals, their canvases illegal and their actions undesirable. Her education was gained through experience in a time before street art was acceptable or had infiltrated the mainstream.



MEAN TIME

tarot decks

can't change their spots

they just relax

until they're dealt,

lots cast by Rome's guards

(start with Fool

and hang a god,

or end with World

and find a fraud)

news in type
bears no promise
save of strike
and head lined gore;
these nameless infamous
of our world
take no more from us
than what we give to whores
(lord what a hooker time is)

ink of scribe
has no memory
unless petrified
in blood and stone;
history is the mystery
of mud and bones
(how many of me, me, me

have died or grown
since yesterday)



Duane Vorhees: He grew up in rural Ohio, fell in love, went to school, fell in love, stuck his toe on bits of four continents, fell in love, taught and learned various subjects, fell in love, grew chronologically and physically. Fell in love, fell in love fell in love. 'Love's Autobiography' is the first part of a longer meditation, 'The Many Loves of Duane Vorhees'. It is based on a lifetime of observation, imagination, introspection, experience, and fantasy.



WITHDRAWN

Translated by Artur Komoter

How many times can one repeat?

—*Withdrawn, he avoids contact with people.*

Will they not think it's good that way?

They should think

that everyone is different,

not worse, not better

—but extraordinary.

When I was little

I did not play with children,

I always liked to be by myself.

People tormented, touched, wanted to kiss me,
then only toy blocks were friendly.

—*He does not show emotions.*

Always the same. Still on about one thing,
ad nauseam!

I preferred and prefer a quiet,
closed world.

If they knew that under the cover
of my silence stray thoughts
not available to everyone.

One Albert, Isaac, Andy...

they were not ill, they just had it.

Do people not know
that some minds have power?



Eliza Segiet: She graduated with a Master's Degree in Philosophy, completed postgraduate studies in Cultural Knowledge, Philosophy, Arts and Literature at Jagiellonian University. Author's poems Questions and Sea of Mists won the title of the International Publication of the Year 2017 and 2018 in Spillwords Press. Nominated for the Pushcart Prize 2019 (USA, November 2019), Nominee for Naji Naaman Literary Laureate Prize 2020, November 2019).



TODAY

The war rages on,
Most simply go to work,
Unaware of what is gone.

With ambition, they carry on,
The banker, the clerk,
The war rages on.

The misery that will spawn,
A future that will lurk,
Unaware of what is gone.

The war rages on,
The war rages on.



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



Hold on with shoulder to shoulder,
Live up to bolder and bolder.

Don't jump in vague pretentions,
be real and soft emotion.

Live in human limits,
live not in unlimited evil.

Hold on with shoulder to shoulder,
live up to bolder and bolder.

The rainbow is not high,
The rainbow is within the sigh
The rainbow is not in the heavens
but it is in the Sky.

The rains are bold and beautiful
The good and serene mind can see this
When the earth comes in peace
Propelled in the wide world of grace and lease!

So, Hold on with shoulder to shoulder,
Live up to bolder and bolder.



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



GIRLS DON'T DIE

They may lie

To keep afloat

They may fly

Or fall to the ground

But they don't die

They may just sigh

At the unfairness

They may get a black eye

When life beats them

But they don't die

They may be shy
A little weird too
But that is no reason to die
They somehow get by
But they don't die

Life may prove to be a bad boy
But that is just a phase
Sometimes they even get high
On the wine that is life
But they don't die

If someone tells you
That a girl you knew died
Don't buy it
For girls don't die
Unless life kills them



Gauri Dixit: A software professional from Pune (India), Gauri writes English poetry. Her poems have been featured in multiple Indian and international anthologies. She is a regular contributor to many poetry pages and e-zines of repute such as Destiny Poets UK, Duane's Poetree, Glomag, Kubili Cafe, Learning & Creativity, Mind Creative, Spillwords and Stanzaic Stylings. She recently won the 'Reuel International Prize for the Most Promising Poet - 2018'. Her first poetry book 'In my skin, I find freedom' was recently released. She loves reading, photography and traveling.



WHITE ROSE

In a garden of colours

She shines like a white rose

A kind sky or a serene sea

She carries along with her repose

In her closed silent eyes

An untold story lies

Only the air around

Can grasp her sighs

In a turmoil of love and life

A happy spirit is lost

Now she carries a heart

Burdened with frost

But gradually she developed an art

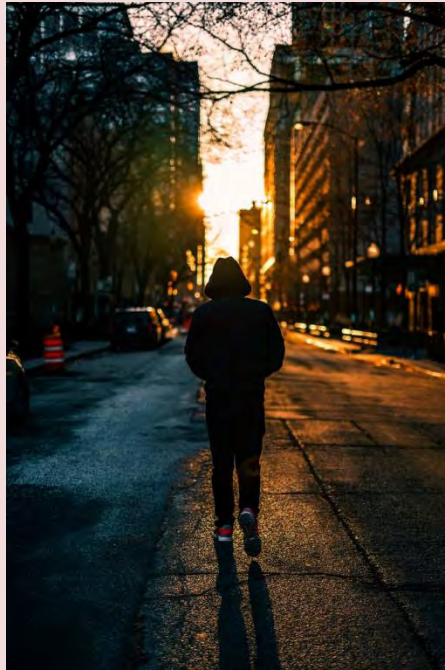
Amidst conflict and strife

she has learnt to be quiet

Defeating all turbulence of life



Gayatree G. Lahon: Gayatree is a teacher and a poet from the beautiful state of Assam. Nature and love inspire her to write. She has contributed to many anthologies, magazines and e-books, both national and international. Poetry is a passion for her and a release from haunted thoughts.



Today is not the day of love

For hearts to join

In happy thoughts

To the brim

Today is not the day

When the sun shines even in rain

Breathing comfort

Today

Is the day of distances

Hearts stop to weep

For losses gathered

Over centuries.



We move on

Past battles

Silences stretch

Eyes water

Muscles curl

But we move on

Past everything

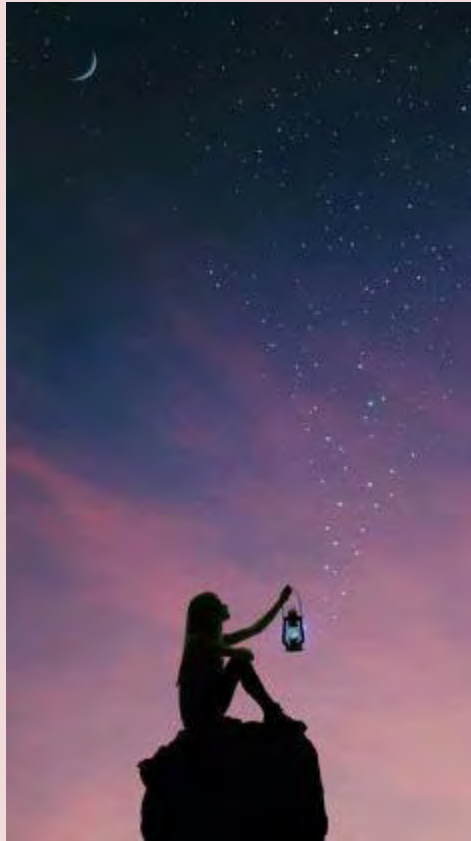
Hoping some day

Flowers will bloom

On the way.



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.



My eyes sketch a trail of yesteryears,
Dotted with some chuckles and a few woeful tears,
Just a wayside dusty stone filled path,
Where I turned those stones to multicoloured pebbles
clean from a fragrant bath,
With dreams that sprang out of my head though a bit
insane,
Stories that embellished the old dirt lane,

As I fabricated tales where birds were minuscule angels
singing differently,
Trees let breeze strum tunes on their branches profusely,
Flowers were infant mouths that articulated no lies,
And heartbeats of everything around became butterflies ,
That the rain cleaned up old stories and new,
Leaving a clean slate to tread on crystal dew,

And that every blade of grass was born afresh from spoils
of war that bled the land,
Covered as turf effaced lines, boundaries and demarcated
sand,
There I skipped just watching the flounces of my skirt,
Picking up the mud that I've cherished as memories of a
mind sans dirt,
Where a child still sits counting stars in night skies,
And watching trails of winter smoke doodle a utopia out of
her sighs.



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



TEA SHOP

In my space

built with care

i dream that you will heed my ad

and walk in

bring in your uniqueness

to my green space

the color of tea leaves

sit around the circular tables

chairs pulled in

some chilled water, tissues and a single rose in scented
water

white table cloth

propound your theories

place plans boldly on the table

arguments, advices and free flowing small talk

the loner sits with his laptop

his phone on charger

and i flit around with

my trays and plates, serving

a song in my heart

that i have realized my dream.



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



Abdul Kalam 15 October 1931 – 27 July 2015), the 11th President of India from 2002 to 2007. His definition of birthday. “The only day in your life...your mother smiled when you cried was the day you were born.”

AMMA

Imagines of carnage marauding
like demons in my dreams
you cannot awake from,
you want to speak, scream
but no words come out,
the mind plays havoc

and the fear throttles the silence.
these dreadful dreams haunting
my childhood innocence
where sleep turns into nightmares

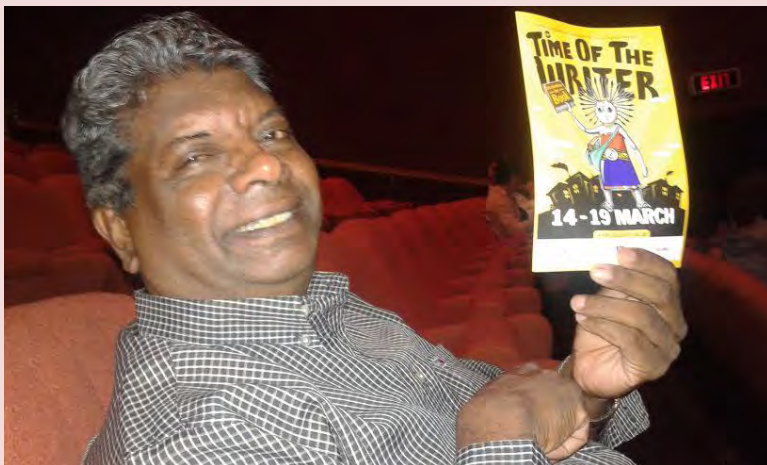
I am looking for Amma, my protector,
and I am lost in a dark place
with shadows chasing me

I scream for Amma
but no sound comes from my voice
I try to run, and my feet do not move.
I cry I want you Amma, where are you
the abused woman
whom appa beat till she lay helpless
in her own wetness
on the cold damp floor,

In my dream I scream that silent scream
all I hear is voices mocking me
she is dead, she is dead,
I wake up screaming
my whole body wet with the fear of sweat,
Amma comes running,
takes me in her arms and comforts me
she asks with tenderness
of a mother's love
what brought about this bad dream episode?
I cry uncontrolled tears and between the sobs,
incoherently I say appa beat you to death Amma, appa
killed you Amma.

she assures me she is all right
but the bruises tell a different story.
She holds me close to her breast
and assures me that the morning will be different,
everything will be all right

we are going to start a new life
your brothers, you and I
we are going to live with Paatti (Grandmother)
far away from all this pain and fear,
I fall asleep in her arms
and the silence that raged in my dreams
and stole my voice
become a sweet lullaby she sang



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.



DREAM

I promise I still dream of
Coming back to you,

There are no obstructions in this pristine terrain
But the radiant emptiness is able to be honest to itself,

I have picked the milky way long back
Brushing up against the sky,

Moving from branches to branches the birds

Design a tortuous path,

It's that ability to stop and pause like the

Stanza breaks in a poem,

The whispers of the clouds take breath

Inside and out in silence,

The old songs of the forest trace the rhythmic grooves

In the restrained palette of the horizon.

And there you are standing

frozen by the weight of waiting.

What is there to do anymore: I've made love

to my dreams in your name.



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



POET

Original : Assamese : Guna Moran

Translation : Bibekananda Choudhury

The source of initial creation of the primitive poet

Had been sorrow

I too had not written any in glee

It is unnecessary to explain

Whether a poem

Is a company in sorrow or joy

But the number of people

Writing poems

Proves

That the number of sorrowful person increases

Sorrow is no one's favorite

But happiness is meaningless

If one do not understand sorrow

Therefore

transforming into a symbol of sorrow

I

Search for bliss for you all

If bliss is your sole favorite

Don't ever let me be happy

Because to be happy

Someone needs to be unhappy



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



FRIENDSHIP

Friends, true friends,
Play an important
And pivotal role,
In our lives.

In which family
We are born,
We have no choice.
But to sustain
The relationship,
It's our choice.

We get chance meeting
With acquaintances and friends.
But, it's our choice—
To nurture and sustain.

Any relationship
Has to be nurtured,
For lifelong
Commitment and sustenance.

Nurture with mutual
Love, respect, understanding—
For true friendship.



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



TODAY MORNING

Today morning, as the birds try
to wake up a slothful sun,
I re-learn silence after all have gone.

My coffee is not a beverage
but a comfort brew.

Soon, the pink sugar-maple leaves
are in white view.

I stare at the balcony from my bedroom,
casting a longing look at the swing
where most memories were made.

I count the purple beads

of an invisible rosary --
fragile, like tears un-shed.



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



These shape our lives

These frame our pieces

These lay down the foundation

From Anything

To Everything

These nurture stories for us

These are the magical ones

Positive or Negative?

That's up to you

These are what you seek them to be

These are what you believe them to be

These are your inner voices

These are the reflections

These are the powerful waves
Of the infinite oceans
These are the energy field
To guide or misguide
To do whatever it takes to shape one
These are the sources
And the emancipated ones
Flowing winds or thunderstorms
Glowing lights or sulking inside
These are what shapes you
Because these are the 'Daily Habits'.



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



I've lost my mind

I've lost much time

I've lost myself in a euphoric sublime

nightmares chase me

dreams do too

there's ink-stained on my hands

black and blue

there's passion between each and every line

passion is where I lost my mind

I love when I write

I hate it the same
voices keep screaming in my brain
am I deranged?
the love and the pain
my roller coaster of emotions
will never stay the same.



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



FIERY DISPLAY OF LOVE

Loving you like I love fireworks.

Always unexpected feelings -

Beauty takes my mind away

Taking me faraway

Staring at the skies.

Trying to pull

away from

loving

you



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



ARCTIC FLURRIES

Winds toss foliage in air.

Birds bend against frost
their wings catching the
last sunlight.

In cosmic dance snowflakes
light up evening.

Diminutive
galaxies circling abandoned gardens.

We hunch our shoulders with winter.

Our shadows are long now.



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



TECTONIC DANCE (QUAKE IN NEPAL)

A numb feeling in your heart;
The tectonic dance tears the
homes apart and the
homeless stare frozen into an empty
horizon; the joy and pain of making
a home brick by brick has been
jolted into a rubble;
The sudden uprush of anger in
the faultlines fragments living;
A vale of memories has
vapourised in a tumultuous

minute; the dead have no tongue
and the living no voice.

But they have to rise again,
as if dusting the grime on their shirt.

Build a new home, renew the memory trail.



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



A HOLLOW SEA

My waste paper bin,-

An emerald sea in you, I've seen.

The thrown away crumpled paper balls
are the storm clouds of my fantasy,

And many a thought unbound-

Which float over your hollow green.

Many a poem and thought-scrap

of hesitant, aimless and slouching ideas

born among restrains, absentmindedly
are torn and cupped between sentimental palms

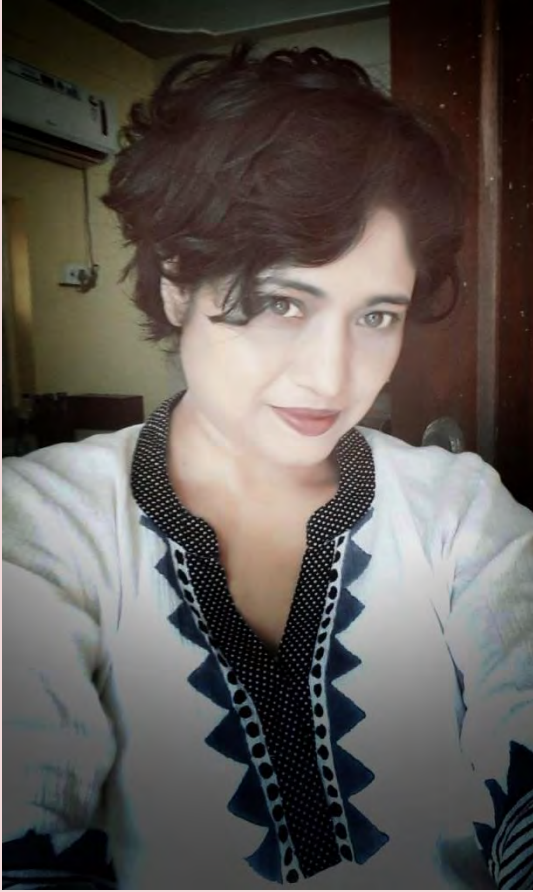
to roll into hushed up paper balls and be thrown,-
Aiming into your 'always welcome' tranquility.

The worthless crumpled paper balls
like an orphan mind,
Free, careless, useless stroll -
Barefeet and unsolved
among the dutiful pretentions
of many a colour and kind.

Once all my designed duties
fall asleep,
My creations I retrieve
from your hollow oblivion.

Then the clumsy and noisy creases
of careful negligence, eases.

The creases live like the scribblings
on a dust-smitten car,
drawn by the curious finger
of some street child and his siblings;
Waiting to be admired
until washed away in sudden rain.



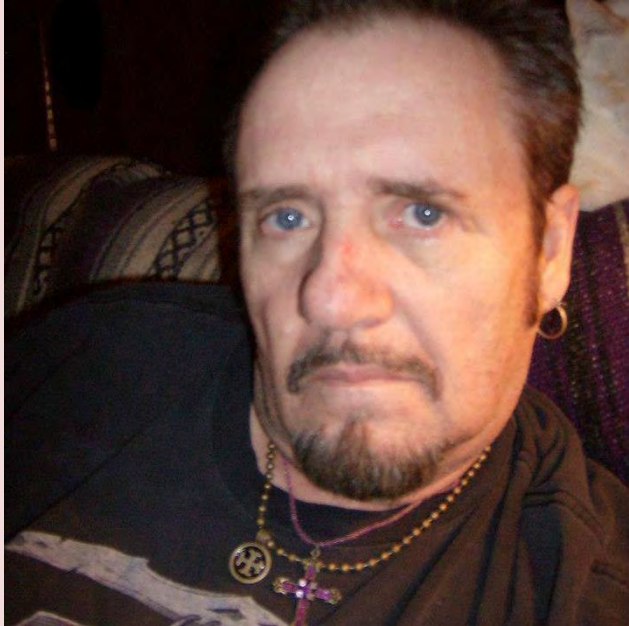
Kakoli Ghosh: She is a poet/short story writer from Durgapur, West Bengal, India. She wears many hats—a freelance writer, painter, beauty advisor and jewellery designer and has a keen interest in music and art in general. Apart from contributing to various anthologies, she has also published a poetry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



MEMORIES OF THE DINER

A Merry Christmas sign hung flashing;
frosted snowflakes were on the windows.
Two fresh plain donuts sat on my saucer;
smells of bacon and smoke wafted in the air.
Old men coughed at the crowded counter;
the waitress stopped and refilled my coffee.
Flies buzzed to and fro all about the place;
I played at judo trying to chase them away;
some landed on the scads of table crumbs.
An elf on the shelf gawked in my direction;
opening the door, a new customer arrived

fresh air rushed in begging for an inhale.
After finishing my coffee and donut I lit up;
deeply inhaling from my old favorite pipe.
Good memories at Christmas in the diner.



Ken Allan Dronsfield: I am a prize winning poet and was born in New Hampshire, but now reside in Oklahoma, USA. I am disabled and write poetry and short stories full time. I have contributed to and have been the co-editor for many anthologies. I have three poetry collections and am working on a fourth.



IN THE MIST OF LOVE

translation of a Sufi Malayalam poem by YA Sajida

It's December

The weak sun rays

abandoned by November

get a blanket of mist

Stars stop blinking

in a desperate wait for you

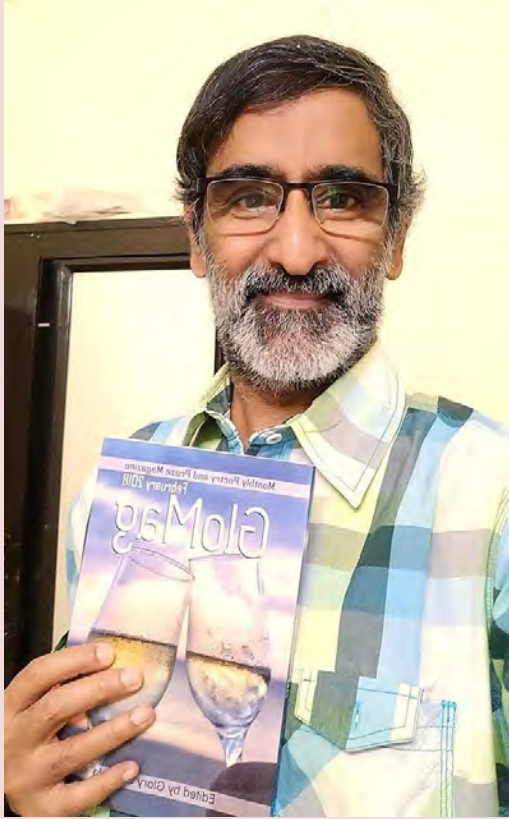
Their forlorn sighs fall down

as dew drops on your path

Your reluctant footprints merge

with the dull shadows

left in the winter moonlight
Before I could track them
they disappear in trampled dew drops
The night flowers are white
so you can see them in the darkness
But you, my love, pretend
as if you don't see them
As if you don't feel the wind
that whispers among leaves
As if you do not know
that you fill my night's every fold
But I will wait till the footprints
of your love come alive
in the summer of passion
To turn our nights lusher
than our dry dreary days



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



DREAD

Animals do not mind
criticism nor do they
fret over their dying,
fear the loss of
their own future existence.

They're only scared
in the present.

Man, however, cannot
settle on the tense of his dread.

See how often

we shudder while living.

See how much we carry

trepidation of death.



Linda Imbler: Kansas-based Linda Imbler believes poetry has the potential to add to the beauty of the world. She has three poetry collections published by Amazon and three poetry collections published by Soma Publishing. She is sitting on her next collection, which recalls her Nashville trip last Spring. Examples of Linda's poetry and a listing of publications can be found at lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com.



BOLD DECLARATION

Maybe my husband's expectation was to have a pious wife, dedicated to God and dedicated to his life, but I proved to be the opposite of that. I spent less time in the puja room and less time in kitchen dice. His usual complaints are regarding my cooking skills. What to do? My Mummy admitted me in a cooking course before marriage, but all my efforts and her efforts turned out to be fruitless after marriage. Because I learnt to cook Chinese fried rice but was not aware of how to cook plain rice properly. Hence, argument over my perfect round-shaped chapatti and triangular, rectangular, and square-shaped continued. One day, his bold declaration came as a big relief to me, of course, after a margin of time. A cook will come to assist me. Interestingly, I expressed my dissatisfaction, yet, I instantaneously agreed with his view. A Cook is required in our kitchen.

Finally the cook came, and his culinary skills captivated us. Varieties of cuisine in our lunch and dinner started showing its result in our waistline. I was happy and relaxed .No grudges or throat exercise over food. But, the one thing I noticed was that my yoga regime and morning walk didn't show up results, whereas my eyes became envious of my friend's inch loss. Let it be, I consoled myself, viewing my hubby's contentment regarding the cooking.

With each advancing day, the grocery list increased, consisting mostly of oil, spices and grains. Even then, it didn't matter to me because he was satisfied from not gulping down food prepared by me. But yes, according to my daughters, I cook better than the cook. Boss's opinion is valued .The end result is that the COOK is a better cook than I.

Finally, after a span of rest, the argument blazed up, when I declared boldly that no onion is to be used in the kitchen; excuses are to be made only for some select items. Those apart, no onions were to be used.

Tension started buzzing up. The cook expressed his annoyance regarding how to cook without onions, whereas my worries were with the cook's demand of onion in the kitchen. I instructed that no onion be used in dal fry; no onion in vegetable curry; no onion in dosa; and no onion in

sambar. Now I could realise my husband's silent irritation during lunch and dinner. He couldn't say much to the cook nor to me. Because according to the two of us, soaring onion price was the cause of downfall in the taste. Yet he is happy as the less intake is reflecting in his figure. I am glad, because rise in onion price is making me pious by the day.



Lopamudra Mishra: She is a native of Puri, now residing in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. She completed her graduation (English Hons) from Sailabala Women's College, Cuttack, and post-graduation (English) from Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. Her fascination for writing came from her grandfather and father from an early age. Writing for her is the powerful medium of expression. Her poems have been

published in many magazines and anthologies. Her books 'Rhyme Of Rain' 'First Rain' 'Tingling Parables' and 'Rivulet Of Emotions' have also been published.



MY LOVE

For oft I wonder what is it about you that I love the most
Actually I love the way you are, to pinpoint only one I am so
lost
Your being there for me whenever I need
I truly feel honored, humbled by this deed
Your sweet innocent smile I so adore
Touches love chords of my heart at core
Your intense gaze oozing love, melting me
Adoring sparkle in your eyes, mischievous look at me
Your embracing me in your arms never to let go
I cherish being there however much I forego

Your peck with piety on my forehead softly
A gesture indicating your taking care of me surely
Your passionate kissing on my lips possessively
Making me to succumb to your charms shyly
Your love is the prized possession of my life
I swear to treasure it all my life
True love is sublime, rare, I am the lucky one blessed
A divine feeling, the two hearts in love, magically caressed
Let's promise darling, we will remain the same, as loving as
ever
Selflessly love each other, our prime goal forever!



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



When the desires bang
on the walls of my heart
Ransacking the constant and vowel
of my solitude
The synchronicity that seems
totally amiss
Heart feels heavy
with a lump in throat
Tears trickle, adhering a throbbing pain
With deep sigh looking out for some fresh air
Twisting and turning around
Trying hard to sleep

Life and its attachments

In search of peace and light

Sleep subsides towards a cranky corner

Ah! the fateful consequences of dark nights!



Madhu Jaiswal: She is a poet, writer, editor and a social worker based in Kolkata, India. She has got published in various national and international anthologies and is regularly featured in popular literary magazines and e-zines. As an executive editor of The Impish Lass Publishing House Mumbai, she has 5 anthologies to her credit. Madhu is a friendly, optimistic and compassionate person who

believes in humanity and volunteers for the upliftment of the underprivileged and destitute. According to her, hope, belief, and perseverance are the powerful mantras that have the ability to pave our path towards success no matter what. Her writings often revolve around these keywords. She can be contacted at madhuj2203@gmail.com.



THE LIVING MELODIES...

The keys play the same melody
That you once did, striking notes heavenly
On the black and white keys,
Soft music flowing with the breeze,
I see your soft slender fingers dancing
On nights of our flavoursome romancing.
The air still smells of your perfume,
Passions still consume
The heart and the senses,
Leaving me defenceless
As I try to hide with smiles of pretentions,
The cruel separating fences.

I hum your tunes,
At nights and noons,
Decorate our room with festoons
And balloons,
Celebrating our togetherness
And our happiness.
I do feel you around,
Your smiles surround
Me the whole day long,
Singing along
With me as I sit near the window,
The shadows leaving an innuendo.
I feel your breath,
Your quiet footsteps,
Your love and touch,
I know you will never leave me as such,
With me you will forever stay
Even though you are gone far away.

Your love thrives,
Your music keeps me alive,
The red rose still fresh and aorist,
Sitting like an amorist,
Like my lips moist
Who for your lips lust.
We will embrace again one day,
The day is not far away,
Till then your music and melodies give me company,
Your heartbeats accompany,
The red rose smiles at me
And smiling I wait to unite with thee.



Madhumita Bhattacharjee Nayyar: She is a bilingual writer (writing both in Hindi and English). A poetess, blogger, lifeskills counsellor, healer, she is also a social commentator and works with women and children. She is the author of 'The Night Jasmine And Other Love Poems'. She is the winner of Icon Of The Year-Lifeskills Counsellor 2015-2016, Creative Writer Of The Year 2016, and Indian Women Achievers Award 2016 for Creative Writing.



ROLL N ROLL

I roll n roll

Down the vale

On the green grass

Over the moss

I found a soft spot

And settle down the earth

Far away from my kith and kin

I grow my root , send up my shoot

I love my space

I grow at my pace
Uninterrupted, unhindered
Strong and straight
Till come another fruit
Rolling down the stoop
Settled down beside me
A furlong away
A kith and kin
To create din
In my solitary life
Encroaching on my space
Interrupting, hindering
My pace by race
I stood mighty
I held sway
Shot up higher
Beyond its range
Live and let me

Live on my own

Seek other pastures

The world provides for all!



Madhu Sriwastav: She is an Assistant Professor in English based in Kolkata. She is a poet, translator, critic who has written in various national and international ezines and anthologies such as Setu, GloMag, OPA, The Vase, and Shradhanjali.



HOW MANY TIMES CAN A MAN TURN HIS HEAD?

How many times can a man turn his head and pretend that he doesn't see,

the morsels murdering humans?

the savages ravaging a woman?

How many times can a man shut ears to not hear the wails of two year olds?

The infants raped, toddlers dumped into manholes.

A train at a junction slaughtering five year olds.

How many times? Precisely! How many?

Can a person turn head and pretend that he doesn't see?

Lives burnt in the name of a lifeless deity ?

Art not for art's sake but for Life's sake.

Men lynching Men for an identity.

A round beard, a sardar.

a triangular, a mullah*.

an unkempt, a sadhu.

A beast more sacred than a human?

A human as paltry as a moth?

How many more elegies to be written

before people died natural deaths?

Blasts didn't engulf mother's breasts.

How many more treaties to be signed before the third
degree is barred to a war captive?

How many more will we count the ribs on

the shadowy built of a nation?

How many more diaries to be penned

before our sorrow doesn't cause us a stroke?

How much more do we require grief to choke?

How much more will we, as a creation bleed?

By the wounds given by empires. Glass
nations!

How many more tragedies lay.

In the path to progress

Towards walking the aisle of peace

At the noose of laws.

Over the roads of this kasbaa*

In the valleys of that sheher*?

How many more; eyes? Pellet guns?

Can a man pretend that he doesn't see?

Mullah: Moslem

Kasbaa: town

Sheher: city



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



PYTHON

Rain-disrupted traffic

lazy python crawls.



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 'PRETENTIOUS' MASK

Pretending to be pretentious someone
wearing a mask of subtleness and gratitude
still inside that shade of guile
carrying the existence of
grins and lies.

Never caring enough for the people
rejoicing the false bombastic ego
living surpass the fragile emotions
moulding the rhythm and
caricature of demotion.

When I think of such crooked mania
my blood gets a boil
to see those concealed faces
charming away with their persona
in the realm of races.

Still, the mask is on
on those smirked faces
with the blues in horrowness
still, I smile to hide my sadness
and, wear a mask of happiness.

When the will of the god will be strong
reality will be seen at a much higher degree
the torn jubilation and unhappy soul
the bleeding eyes and hurtled mind

will all be in place
to the soothing eyes.

Once and for all, this mask has to go
for how long and how deep
the visibility ashore
understanding the meaning of life once more
pretentiousness is mere existence of abhor
Still, wave you off my mind and soul
the mask has to go, once and for all.



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

(mehakgrover@amartex.com)



AFTER A LONG WAIT

It's that pleasant season again

A time when the cold winds blow

A time to rejoice and be merry

A time to love one another

A time to be cheerful

A time to be thankful

A time to party and enjoy

A time to receive and give gifts

A time to meet and greet people

A time to laugh and cherish with kids

A time to be with family and friends

A time to bake cookies and cakes
A time to make wines and feast
A time when the bells chime loud
A time when we hear the carols play
A time when colourful lights twinkle
Signs that remind you of peace
Christmas spirit is in the air



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



DANCE OF TEARS, CHIEF NOBODY

I'm old Indian chief story
plastered on white scattered sheets,
Caucasian paper blowing in yesterday's winds.

I feel white man's presence
in my blindness-
cross over my ego my borders
urinates over my pride, my boundaries-
I cooperated with him until
death, my blindness.

I'm Blackfoot proud, mountain Chief.

I roam southern Alberta,
toenails stretch to Montana,
born on Old Man River—
prairie horse's leftover
buffalo meat in my dreams.

Eighty-seven I lived in a cardboard shack.

My native dress lost, autistic babbling.

I pile up worthless treaties, paper burn white man.

Now 94, I prepare myself an ancient pilgrimage,
back to papoose, landscapes turned over.

I walk through this death baby steps,
no rush, no fire, nor wind, hair tangled—
earth possessions strapped to my back rawhide—

sun going down, moon going up,
witch hour moonlight.

I'm old man slow dying, Chief nobody.

An empty bottle of fire-water whiskey
lies on homespun rug,
cut excess from life,
partially smoked homemade cigar-
barely burning,
that dance of tears.



Michael Lee Johnson: He is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, DuPage County, Illinois. He is published in more than 1072 new publications, his poems have appeared in 38 countries, he edits, publishes 10 poetry sites. He has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 2 Best of the Net 2018. 198 poetry videos are now on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>. Editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow Haze: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1530456762>; editor-in-chief poetry anthology, Dandelion in a Vase of Roses.



WEAVE

Too many stories,
two too many faces to you,
Chimera with a lilt.

Fickle, thin-skinned,
yet tough enough to laugh and
to mean it.

Tough on those around you.
Rough around the edges.

I tell stories,
I show a face,
Minotaur with a maze to navigate.

Stubborn, thick-willed,
my laugh soon fades, but

I mean it.

Tough to let others in.

Rough to be near.

We talk

We joke

We laugh

We blush

We hint

We weave

a dance of words, this dance of
intentions.

Our dance of glances
not long held.

If our eyes would stay, we would melt
some of your roughness,
some of my resolve.

So we look away.

You move off with shifting faces,

I go back into my twisting ways.



Michael A. Griffith: He lives in Hillsborough, NJ and teaches at Raritan Valley Community College. He is the author of three chapbooks of poetry, *Bloodline*, *Exposed*, and *New Paths to Eden* (forthcoming). Recent works appear in *Ariel Chart*, *Miletus Literature Review*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, and *The Lake*. Mike is the Poetry Editor, USA and Canada, for *The Blue Nib*.

<https://twitter.com/AuthorMGriffith>

<https://michaelgriffithwordpress.wordpress.com>



RENDEZVOUS

My rendezvous with you

Will be simple,

You will be here,

At this side of the river

And I

On the other side,

From here you will show me a light,

And from the other side

Will I , seeing that, float a paper lantern;

This way will we meet,
Keeping the river of our distance in between,
The breeze from this side will carry your fragrance to me,
And I will send all my kisses to you
Through that same breeze,
This way will we meet,
Keeping the river of distance betwixt us intact.



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



A HAPPY WORLD

dust on the land

pollution in the sea

it all seemed so dull and bland

the Heart wept

the soul with wounds deep and deep

But now it seems

That there is happy dust

Everywhere that my body

Sets its presence in

It is like a world of happiness

Maybe there were curtains on my eyes

Curtains of hatred and sadness

But now joy and gratefulness

Have Filled the deep wounds, my soul

Happiness has finally manifested its presence



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



MY FRESHEST HYMN TUNED AFTER "TRUST AND OBEY"

In a womb so so hot, in a frame so so poor,

What a hurt, what a rot, what a cry!

In a line so so down, in the land so so deep

What a smoke, what a choke, what a cloud!

How long we fight for we fight not in vain,

For the lord shall speed up all, for we wait not in vain.

What a fight O too fierce, what a labour too weak

But for those who lead the troops to war,

But for those who dare lean, but for those who dare learn,

But for those who walk, work, watch and pray!

How long we fight for we fight not in vain,
For the lord shall speed up all, for we wait not in vain.

In a world so so low, in a world so so faint
What a fate, what a loss, what a fear!

In a world so so dark, in a world so so blind
What a faith, what a gain O so dear!

How long we fight for we fight not in vain,
For the lord shall speed up all, for we wait not in vain.

What a wait O so long, what a hope O so green,
What a courage that cannot despair,

What a voice O so small, what a chord O so loud
What a lip that would blow the trumpet!

How long we fight for we fight not in vain
For the lord shall speed up all, for we wait not in vain.

AMEN!



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



2019

It was not just

Another year

That flew by.

Little moments...

Vast in essence

Deep in a sense

Wove themselves

Around the humdrum

Of daily existence.

The void
And the chaos,
The knowledge
Of the cosmos
Intermingled,
As they co-exist
In complete synchronicity.
Was this just
Another chapter
Of crossing
The bridge called life.
This year that
Fleetingly just went by!



Nilanjana Dey: A story-teller at heart, Nilanjana Dey likes to experiment with fiction and poetry. An alumna of English Literature from Jadavpur University (Kolkata), she is a marketing and communication professional based in Mumbai. She also volunteers with a Mumbai-based NGO working with the marginalized sections of the society.



ETI KOLI; DUTI PAAT!

One bloom full of promises,
hope of two leaves,
it sings the song of life and its hardship,
across the meadows of green canvass,
the Tea gardens,
the soul of this sunshine valley!

Below the flamboyant tree;
adorning head with japi
the beautiful damsels sway on,
laden with tea leaves,

like a bridal march; carrying urn full of dreams,
for a well fed night,
to be well for next day's fight.

Twanging silver anklets of their feet,
wake up the babies of sleeping tea trees,
the pluckers set forth,
slogging through the trimmed stems;
early morning is to gather the leaves.

Have you ever wanted to hear
this stretched painting of emerald field!
Stories of travellers from leaves to leaves,
you find,
tales of pain; little happiness in the lines of kulis,
just like the beats of madol; rhythm of zhumur,

jagija gijao; O' gijao

jagija gijao...!

Bagan life goes on under the shade of the tea trees.



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



WINTER WONDERLAND

The shimmering silver of the icy ponds

Brings back memories so very fond

Of carving and slicing through with skated feet

And taking a break to munch on warm chocolatey treats.

The mountainsides that once loomed large now stand with
poise and grace

Covered daintily with prettily patterned white lace

And the evergreens clothed with capes of snow

Dazzle in the winter sun with a golden glow.

The clear nights offer up a million stars
That look deceptively near and yet are so very far
Cuddled up by the fire with a blanket and a book
Is the time to reminisce over the year that was – take one
last look.

What a fascinating season winter is
Full of beauty and cheer and bliss.



Nivedita Karthik: She is a poet residing in Gurugram and working in the publishing industry. She is an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer and enjoys writing poems and stories. Her work has been published in Glomag and the Society of Classical Poets.



VELLICHOR (THE STRANGE WISTFULNESS OF USED BOOK STORES)

I found myself wandering aimlessly,

One rainy afternoon.

Feeling alone, distraught

and looking for life's meaning.

Drifted into a used book store,

got absorbed in the vellichor.

I began my search, looked

For the meaning of love and pain.

Found it in a dark corner
with a dim lamp.

Life's meaning, written pithily
Calmed me and I settled down
In the cool, dark recesses of
the old used book store.

I smelled the petrichor from outside
I felt the vellichor inside
And rejoiced in both.



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



Like a lonesome, lost spirit
Colourless after its vital half
Is no longer its own...
I will walk the while
Seeking the lost part of me
In painful memory,
Baying at the moon like a wolf...

Or by your window
Write poems, sing sad songs
Do whatever it takes
To live through
The sad end of love
Until every ounce of me
Has unburdened its heavy hurt
I will live the misery
Until the love I have for you
Becomes an embellishment
In my heart.

Know then, my darling,
I have honoured you
And what we had
In bliss, in ecstasy,
In rage, in love, in sorrow
In bereavement...

Rest now then,
A ruby in my heart...
As for my sorrow
I wait for time.



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



A DISTANT CRY

Wind opened its umbrella wide
Went mad
And came rushing
with a drizzle
Caught delicate jasmine
With flowers - white and wet -
By her narrow waist,
Dragged her from behind
From the grip of soft December plant,
Towards tamarind tree aside
Hard stemmed, having shed leaves

stood naked;
And the Jasmine lost
All flower buds, in the melee.

Weeping clouds later
Made a slow retreat, and
After a while, the wind
Went for a slow meander
Revelation twittered, too late,
And Jasmine stood grieved,
Anger dissolved in tears
Dripping down her cheeks.

Torment of a lonely distant cry
Alone I could hear
The echo of life,
And of sad poetry.



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



AGEING IS FUN

Years are being added to my life.

A doting mother and a devoted wife.

The days of hop, skip and jump have gone.

I feel breathless when I have to run.

Negativities which pierced me and hurt me before.

Are just like dust now and I sweep them out of the door.

Good and kind people who help me in need.

I cherish them and plant them in my heart like a happiness seed.

I am ageing, I am ageing I am getting old.

But insecurities have fallen off and I have become bold.

Grey hairs are popping up here, there and everywhere.

But no longer am I scared of my weaknesses to share.

I wear clothes more for my comfort and style than fashion.

New things I do now with so much more passion.

I try to treasure every beautiful moment of time.

My hunger for goodness has gone, now I know the good and bad rhyme.

I am ageing, I am ageing I am becoming old.

But it is a lovely age to understand imitation from gold.

Everything is becoming clear now, all that was vague.

I can shun and avoid plastic people like plague.

A new type of freedom has spread in my mind.

A new type of confidence which is hard to find.

My skin is getting wrinkles and it dries up fast.

But I regurgitate and enjoy memories of the past.

With exposure and experience I am so much more refined.

Different cultures and arts attract me now as they are more defined.

I have become thirsty to learn new things every day.

I want to support and help others in my small way.

All responsibilities coming to an end.

Reaching out like a banyan root and finding new friends.

I want to make all around me happy and to them joy give.

Until death comes I want to always live.



Paramita Mukherjee Mullick: I am a poet and live in Mumbai, India. I am an educationist. My poems have been published in more than 150 national and international anthologies. I have five published books to my credit. I have started and am the President of IPPL (Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library) Mumbai Chapter. Recently, I received the Golden Rose award from Argentina for contribution in art and culture.



My morning walks filled with Chirping
sunrise spreading across
hands raised above
Aditya, Ohm, Aditya namaha
No time for casual talk or gossip
people pass by
acknowledge by raising my arms above my head
a simple smile
just a hello
breeze drives me away from human contact
leaves of grass

sprinkled with dewdrops

there's so much wonder around

Morning walks are Bliss.



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



I CHOOSE

for my late Dad

I open his wardrobe and drawers
pick clothes to be burnt in the fire.

Not a man for suits. Jeans.

Or is that too casual?

Socks. Underwear. He must burn
in clean underwear.

Disrespectful. He must meet
the flames casual smart.

Definitely not short sleeved.
Subtle shades not bright.

I must dress him well.
Do good by him.



Paul Brookes: I am a writer residing in Wombwell, England. I work as shop assistant. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have also published five poetry books. Forthcoming is another poetry collection called Ghost Holiday (Alien Buddha Press, 2018). My book 'Please Take Change' was published by Cyberwit recently.



A MICE STORY

This is the story of four little mice,
Who grew up in China on bean shoots and rice.
The mice were all best friends, from nursery through
school,
And many times over liked playing the fool.

Whilst out on a mission to search for some food,
They disturbed a cat and said something rude.
The cat it gave chase, whilst the mice ran away,
A dog saw the cat and decided to play.

The cat caught a mouse and the dog caught the cat,
The three remaining mice said they didn't fancy that.

So they raced to the rescue of their tiny little friend,
And pulled really hard, just as his tail did end.

Out popped the mouse from the jaws of the cat,
And the mice all agreed, not to stay and chat.

The dog went woof, and the cat went meow,
The mice turned around and shouted out ciao!



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



<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50627430>

A burnt corpse and black teeth

Haunt me.

The images flash,

Mocking my rosy curtains of hope,

Laughing at my tryst with new-found optimism...

The echoes resonate endlessly, though feeble,

As if playing silently in the background of my dreams.

I shudder, try to shake off my discomfort,

Mute a hundred question marks that pop with enviable
resilience,

Feed myself with indifference,

And gulp down glasses of cold water, in fear of the fire
ignited in my blood.

I draw fake flowers

And paint rainbows with clawed brushes and filthy colours.

The pages tear,

I proudly stare at the cellophane tapes

Comfortably ignoring the sophistication.

I walk off.

And we move on.



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



DEAR NIGHT BIRD

Do you look at the moon and exchange smiles?

Do you feel someone waving at you from across the miles?

Do you feel the glowing ship in the sea of blue?

Do you believe that midnight magic is true?

When you touch love, is it like stardust at the tips of your fingers?

Even when the day is sunny and warm, the night lingers?

Do you believe there is a galaxy in you?

Do you believe things prettier than a moonlit night are few?

Do you find dark and stormy beautiful?

Does the jasmine scent lingering in the night air fill your soul?

Do you touch soul to soul with a friend in the dark?

Do you exchange secret kisses to rekindle that spark?

Is night the time when the mask drops and you are just you?

Do you in dreams relive the day and in dreams you bid it adieu?

Then my dear friend, you are a kindred spirit.

Dear night bird, i hope someday we meet...



Pragyan Pallabi: I am a poet and writer from Bhubaneswar, India. I work as a Human Resources Manager in L&T Company at Chennai I keep a blog, namely, bluemoon and rainydays at wordpress.com. One of my poems was published in the International poetry Anthology 'We All Are Persons' edited by Italian poet, Fabrizio Frosini. I keep writing in my own blog and thinking of publishing my own book.



MAY THE SKY LOOK A BIT MORE BLUE

Mine is a delicate world where

Words habitate

They are the sovereign heads

Words reign supreme in the world of poetry!

My words are as precious as my heart

Close to my heart woven are my alphabetical dreams

I won't let it die, may the death be as beautiful as you!

I am happy

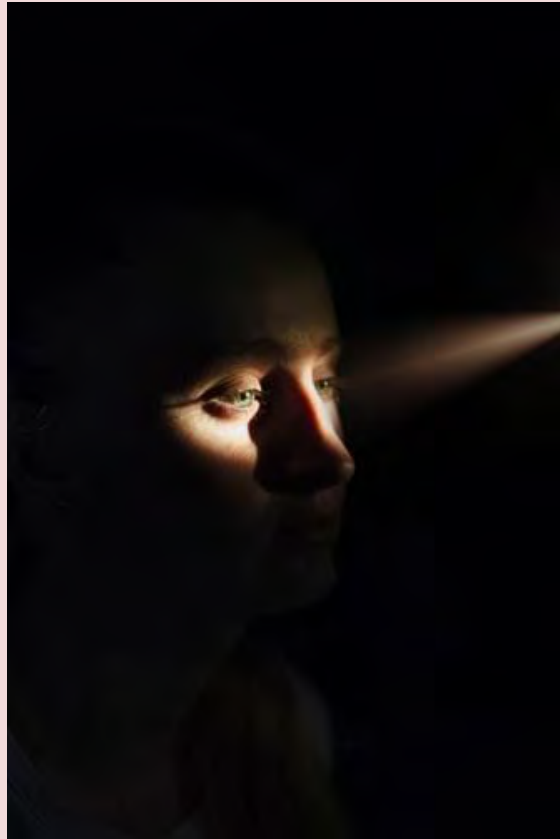
Having enclosed myself in a sheet of paper with blood as
ink

No more searching I am the source of wound
A slightest hurt is enough to ooze blood
No more stitching I am
Let the mouth of the wound lay bare and open

May poetry be the open secret of a naked self
May those trespassers
Read poem written on the bark of the tree
May root get inroad into the soil
May the soil be a bit more magnanimous
May dead bodies be alive in soil's coffin
May dreams sprout wings
May the rainbow spread colours
May the sky look a bit more blue
I know the art of flowering
Let somebody tell the tree.



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



THE MIND'S EYE

Ever since Anastasia had claimed to be of Romanov blood, the government was at its wit's end to prove her a fake.

She claimed to be Mikhail Romanov's daughter, the supposed twin of Vladimir Romanov, heir apparent of the Romanov family, who was whisked away at birth by the childless midwife, without anyone's knowledge. Naturally, Anastasia had insider information, to back her claim to the Romanov legacy.

The secret police came knocking at midnight on Sergei's door. Sergei was a gifted illustrator, valued by the police for

his accurate drawings of criminals, missing persons, fugitives etc. Instinctively creating recognisable profiles, just by their word descriptions.

Unfortunately, he lost his eyesight in a freak run-in with a UFO. But, his hands could now sculpt three dimensional busts of those unidentifiable people whose skulls could be retrieved.

The task was odd. He was requested to feel a skull and fashion a face on it. He was given no leads, no information, nothing.

Mentally saying a prayer, his fingers gently skimmed over the skull; he felt vibrations, which shook him. He could see the young child's face in his mind's eye!

Getting down to work, the plaster of Paris took on a recognisable face; a very famous face, but with pox markings!

The inspector looked grimly at Sergei's handiwork. The top official casually passed on a skull replica to Sergei.

On touching it, Sergei froze. "Are you playing tricks with me?" he demanded of the officers. They assured him that they were upfront with him.

Most disturbed, he fashioned a face on the skull replica. This skull replica was of Vladimir Romanov, heir apparent of

the brutally murdered family. The first skull which Sergei had touched was of Mikhail Romanov's. Hence, Sergei did not feel the 'brutally killed' vibrations of the known heir-apparent of the Romanov family's Vladimir!

Mikhail Romanov had died of the pox, aged around eleven, two years after the royal killings. Hence, the police now knew that Anastasia was a fake, as the mortal remains of her so called 'father' proved that Mikhail had died of the pox, aged around eleven, a young boy, who had died, before he could have 'fathered' her! She did not know that a half-truth would be easily proven a lie, by the police!



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



Born and brought up as a human

I love my India and the world

Though I am not a Hindu

Not a Christian

Not a Muslim

Not a Jain, no Sikh

I believe that the God

Live within me and you

Is one and the same.

So I love to be with you all

I can't even imagine any discrimination

Between human and human

In the name of any religion,

Caste, creed, color or gender
All are my brothers and sisters
I love India as my country
And all who live here
Irrespective of any religion
Are the citizens of my country.
Divided we fall
United we stand.



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.



IN SILENCE

In silence, I tune up a holy song
Stretching the darkness vast
In silence, the winds long
To play with my breezy hair.
At the night sky
I peep into the shiny silver net
Breezing a sweet lullaby
To the enchanting wind,
I fall asleep in search of solitude
In the cocoon of my cell
A carpet of hues smile

In the silhouette of time
Before the dawn set ablaze.



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



The Wandering Jew

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/dc/Wandering-Jew.jpg>

APARTHEID

there is always a me, and a them but
there never really is an us they'll let
you in yes they'll be nice to you share their
food even but there's always that lit

tle space they keep in between the r not
rolled correctly, the colour of your skin,

Or the way you smile at the women they're
happy to help you try but if you do

roll the r the right way, there's something a
bout eating cheese that you won't get right the
best jokes are not for you they'll cuss just out
of earshot so you can hear the hiss and

they might talk to you about return jour
neys more often than you think polite

stay apart wanderer

you never did belong you never will



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



DECEMBER

In December's cool morn
when slim rains occasional
have doused your ambitions
of rich harvest, when agriculture
has become so hopeless and farmer's
menace of his life and family,
birds alone sit and sing in
voyage of serene looking up
to the sky with a bent of philosopher;

My jerkin attached to my skin
Shuts up from cool world,

Wisdom dawns that attachment
detachment are inevitable, like
the changing seasons when sun
and moon in enjambment mostly;
winter continues imprinting all
its marks. From fall's changing
colors to blooming lobes of fragrance
Nature permeates each one of us.

Now on to the march of
New year when January
Rings out old and welcomes New.



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

Her blogs:

pearlradhe.blogspot.in

pearlradfhe.wordpressf.com



THE COLOURS OF KOLKATA

Officially, Kolkata is a dying city

But its always a smiling, not a crying city

Gone are the days of power cuts and jams

The streets are now lighted with too many lamps

Cycle rickshaws and manual ones can still be seen

Trams rolling on streets, complete the vintage scene

The conductor's outstretched hand, the driver's untimely
break

Helping old Maashima and Dadu, is not a fake

Every locality boasts of a Paada Club

They enjoy adda and carrom, more than a pub

A small, trivial discussion, flares into an argument

You'd think a major debate was on, in Parliament

Foot -ball's kick, and cricket's strike

Locals love blasting music, and the mike

The first tea-break starts with the start of the day

Work or no work, Didi will give them their pay

Spongy rosogollas, and oh so soft chum chum

jhaal mudi, puchka, and Lake ka aloo dum

Haldiram, Bhikharam sweets are made in pure ghee
Laddoo, sohanpapdi, jamun and syrupy imarti

Kolkata may not be forward in its thinking
But its religious ground is not sinking

Every shop in every market comes alive
On each and every festival, shops do thrive

Maa Saraswati has gifted them the fine arts
Playback singing helps them win over hearts

Vishvakarma is worshipped with spirits high
Colourful kites can be seen soaring in the sky

Gujrati Daandi is the craze of the younger generation
All communities join the musical celebration

With enthuse and devotion, the Goddess they do hail
Every home budget is based on the bonus or sale

Words can't describe the grandeur and splendour
Durga and her pandals, evoke awe and wonder

Kali puja and Diwali go hand-in hand
Great fireworks! who said--crackers are banned?

Christmas and New Year call for cakes and pastries
Flury's, Kathleen and locals flaunt exotic delicacies

There are festivals, all around the year
Their life is full of prayer, fun and cheer

They have passion for art, passion for sport
They are good in the clinic, better in the court

Kolkata rules with its heart, not brain

No jobs to offer; to Bengaluru flows the brain-drain



Rajesh Tibrewal: She has lived across many states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal. After years of being entrenched in family life, she discovered the writer in her and has penned patriotic poems in Hindi. She has also attempted three film scripts in Hindi. Very recently, Ms Tibrewal has written 15 Panchatantra stories in Hindi—in poetry form. She also dabbles in writing small poems in English for children, on special occasions such as their birthdays.



THE LIGHT OF LONGING

It's temporary,
very temporary,
and I know that.

Nor do I mistake my wish
for its permanence
as its permanence,
but when I call home
and my brother picks the phone,
it seems natural.

It seems very natural
that it should be he
to answer the call.

Though I haven't asked him,
I do have questions
I'd like answered.

Why could he not shift
to the city I shifted to,
as was the plan?

Will it ever be possible for all of us
to live in the same house
one more time,
like the old days?

Yes, they were not all golden,
but there were moments in them
that shine to this day. Those moments,
as they happened, did not shine as much
as they do now as they reflect the light of longing.



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



He paints the many facets of life,
In colours bright on a canvas large;
Be it a woman coy and charming,
Or a soldier holding the flag aloft;
He paints the children in high spirits,
And creates a lion tugged on wheels of time,
Full of roars and ever ready to blast;

He toils hard from morn to night,
To earn a meagre amount of money;
Though he weaves the dreams of many shades,
Life has offered him only thorns, no honey;

People throng and enjoy the life, painted
With brush and paints on a canvas wall;
There are writings on the wall for painter too,
Who will dare to read and take a call?



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



<https://www.amazon.in/Different-Shades-Eve-Ramendra-Kumar/dp/9386897814>

AN EXCERPT FROM DIFFERENT SHADES OF EVE

SATI

Meera had murdered her husband. She woke up Lakhu their mentally challenged neighbor.

“Mohan had a heart attack. We have to make the pyre ready.”

By three in the morning Mohan’s body had been placed on the pyre.

Meera picked up the axe and started walking towards the ashram.

Within an hour she had reached the place. It was quiet all around. She quickly climbed a peepal tree and jumped inside the compound. The main puja room was open. She peeped in. The Swami was dead to the world. She kicked his face and he woke up like a startled buffalo.

“Wha...what....” he looked around stupidly.

Meera was standing in front of him her hands on her hips, her long hair flowing, her eyes burning embers.

“Your haraami, you called me a Sati. You were right. I have murdered the husband who sold me to you to protect his fragile ego. Now, I am going to kill you. You are very proud of your manliness? First I’ll smash that lingam of yours which makes you so conceited and then I’ll finish the rest of you.”

She picked up the axe and in one swift movement brought it down on his crotch. Blood spurted out. The Swami’s scream of agony died in seconds as the second blow landed on his neck.

She quickly left the way she had come.

An hour later she reached the pyre. She picked up a can of kerosene and poured it on the pyre. A log of wood was ready. She lit it and then circling round the pyre thrice she

placed the log on it. As flames leapt in the sky she circled the pyre once and then quickly jumped in it....

As Lakhu saw the flames enveloping Meera he turned back and ran screaming, “Sati....Sati....”

A year later a temple was built on the site.

Thousand of devotees go there every year to offer their obeisance to Sati Mata Meera Devi who had given up her life at the pyre of her husband.



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



GHAZAL

Drinking from the goblet of memory all night,
Amid rings of echoes, I was awake all night.

In the sky the dim crescent moon knew that it'd die,
Hunted by clouds, it cried like a gazelle all night.

I thought about the mire of a moonless night,
Hollow like the dying moon, I stayed all night.

Somewhere in silent darkness hung a faint thin hope,
My butterfly wings remained alive all, all night.

Ruby-red poppies floated like waves in shadow,
The strange aroma teased the senses all night!



Ranjana Sharan Sinha: A professor by profession and a poet by passion, Dr. Ranjana is a well-known voice in Indian Poetry in English and lives in Nagpur, India. Two of her poems have been prescribed for M.A. English (4th semester) CBCS syllabus. She has authored 7 books in different genres; has been widely published in print and online in prestigious journals and anthologies; has been honoured with a number of awards for her contribution to

literature; and has received commendation from the former President of India, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. Her poems have been translated into German, Albanian, Persian, Russian and Hindi languages.



FALL

It is creeping about

Sitting now on my feet

now on eyelids

Your questions are too polite

It is inside now

The dough tears as it stretches

not proofed enough

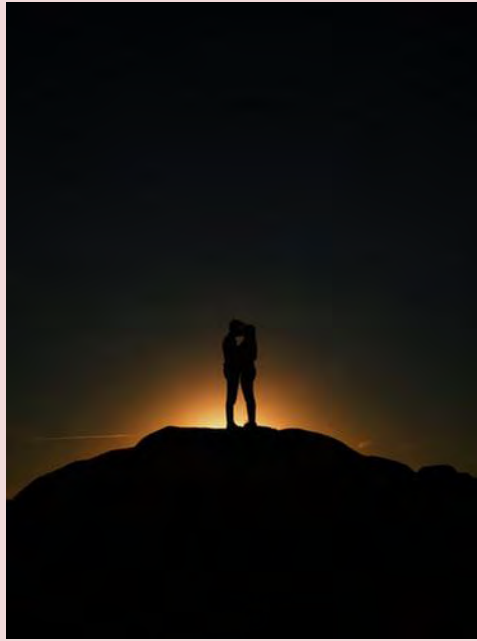
I feel its tenacity, its garden slug-crawl
The leech on a binge is about to burst
We must shoot the pigeon though
He is too loud

A pillow smothers an escaped convict
The leech explodes
A nanosecond of pain
and then it is gone, dissolved
absorbed
A dried splotch on a stone

The coffee has killed its bubbles
I drag myself to close the hall door
A sad cat on the porch looks at the trees
his tail curving around the world
hugs him close
Only he sees the fall



Reena Prasad: She is a poet/writer from India, currently living in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). Her poems have been published in several anthologies and journals, e.g., The Copperfield Review, First Literary Review-East, Angle Journal, Poetry Quarterly, Lakeview International Journal etc. She is also the Destiny Poets UK's Poet of the year for 2014 and one of the editors of The Significant Anthology released in July 2015. More recently, she was adjudged second in the World Union Of Poet's competition, 2016. She writes at Butterflies Of Time.



ELECTROCARDIOGRAM

Take my hand

Hold it in yours

Let not one silver sweat

Slither us apart

Take my lips

Hold it in yours

Let not one bothering breath

Break us apart

Take my eyes

Hold it yours

Let not one dashing doubt

Do us apart

Take my life

Hold it in yours

Let not anyone, anything

Ask us apart



Rimona: I reside in Bangalore. I work as HR in an NGO - GiveIndia. I recently completed Sandakphu trek and a solo trip to Rishikesh.



IT IS INSPIRATION

dodging flatted fifths

tight rippling chords

spraying starfish across the Oceanfloor,

it is inspiration

sinking into the beckoning fog

slowly the boat waterfalls

it is inspiration

the remaining survivors dodging these 5-star notes

sprayed across the Oceanfloor,

bubbles riding foam-topped drunken waves,

collage lovers jitterbugging,
brimming chords dodging the notes, somersaulting,
and it is inspiration riding these waves sinking with the tide,
bubbling with the remaining survivors,
then submerging, drowning,
dodging the notes that took a lifetime to be conceived,
the remaining notes
the chorded jazz minor flatted fifths surviving this passing
fog,
these enduring lifetimes of collage dancers

yes, it is inspiration to love
then to let goto be sprayed across the Oceanfloor



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



DECEMBER JUST ARRIVED

December has arrived
With the passage of Autumn
As each leaf falls
To the ground with
The whispers of
Winter's song and
The air a cold brisk wind
Blowing flurries of white snow!

A festive time of year
As the city prepares

For the special holidays
Colorful lights on the streets
And the smiling faces you greet
Decorative ornaments
In all the stores with
Beautiful Christmas trees
Inspire our spirits to soar!

There is no lovelier thing
Than what this month
Can bring as silver bells ring
Frost a spectre gray
The earth stands still
With the Winter thrill
Flinging a crystal array
December's bareness
On display and hearts are

Joyful and full of hope

With the fleeting year!



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



DANTE AND THE DRYWALL

They put the poor bastard in the wall
after his death so that his body parts wouldn't be stolen,
but they forgot where they put him for a few hundred
years
until he was discovered by some work crew doing
renovations
who pulled poor Dante out and replaced him with new
drywall,
so that some asshole took body parts just like the church
had feared,
only returning them many years later

which seems a very unique kind of hell to endure for a man so good at inventing them for others.



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



THE COBBLER AND THE FOOLISH KING

Once a worry moved the kingdom's ruler
Whether in dirt or in rain,
The dwellers who walked bare footed
Faced trouble and felt pain.

'Huge amount of leather' his ministry proposed for
The city was entirely to cover up,
And a cobbler was called there
To wrap the kingdom's ways, muddy & rough.

The cobbler realised the foolish plan
As he was intelligent enough,
And smiling a bit, he proposed
That everyone's leg to be wrapped up.

As the ruler failed to think over
All his sub-ordinates failed too,
The cobbler saved all from trouble
What seems wonder but true.



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



AFTER DEATH....

LOCATION: heaven

CHARACTERS:

One: -River Nila (Bharathappuzha). The river that flows from the Western Ghats (Sahya mountains) to Arabian Sea, through various terrains of Kerala State.

The river 'Nila' (Bharathappuzha) was severely affected by draught and assumed that she has been the subject for premature death without leaving a single dilution of water.

Two: River Euphrates: The river that flows in Iraq.

River Euphrates also had a premature death because of the Anglo-American invasion and brutal and cruel act of radicalism towards the society living in its valleys.

Following scenes and dialogues are when both rivers met in heaven after their premature death

(Scene 1)

Nila asked Euphrates

“Will you give me some water to quench my thirst?”

“No, I won’t,” Euphrates replied

More surprisingly, and with pitiful expressions, Nila

“Dear friend, seeing my draught body, and the dried veins, how can you refuse to give me some water to quench my thirst?”

“Yes, dear Nila, I can see your dried, thread like veins, torn and desert-like dried body; yes I can see your pathetic condition, but I won’t give a drop from me....” Euphrates replied.

Hearing Euphrates, with tone of contempt, and anger, Nila said, “Oh! Is this what we knew about you? For hundreds of years, we have been taught that you are the birth place of culture and brotherhood. In our minds, we kept you in a place the same as we do for our Sindhu, Ganges, and Brahmaputhra.... If you are so cruel like this I wonder, how did a civilization spread on your banks?”

To be continued...



Saleem Raza (Saleem Kattuchola): A freelance writer and painter from Kerala, India, working in Doha as Franchise General Manager. Writes short stories, poems and travelogues in various magazines (Malayalam), periodicals with a pen name of ‘Saleem Kattuchola’, and used to write English poems and articles in International magazines and news papers as well.



CAN'T I BE A SPRING AGAIN?

Whining of boughs
On the topmost wooded dells
Lush green land mostly piled up
With the lump of snowflakes

The utmost ire of winter,
Lonely cloud hovering in the sky
At the strike of puzzled winds

Where shall I repose
In the lap of such joyless winter?

My ailing heart,
Wheezing and freezing in terror!
And, I'm at the brink of downfall

Then, can't I be a spring again,
Like a Magnolia,
With several blooming petals
To thrive in soil?!

My wistful eyes dozing off
In the dying nature
Such unwanted arrival
Entangled me with heavy loss.



Salman Khan: I am a poet of both Bengali and English language, residing in Bangladesh in Bogura district. By profession, I am a teacher of English language. I have contributed to various anthologies both nationally and internationally.



A WINTER MORN

The sun rose in the winter sky,
A cloud suffused with orange and pink light
Floated overhead,
And the boy stood, transfixed,
Watching a small rainbow on the wall,
Holding a prism in front of the window,
Enjoying the beautiful morn.

The snow lay white and crisp on the ground,
He picked up his coat and called out to his sister,
And without hesitating ran out:

Wanting to treasure the first white morning of the season,
So he started building a huge snowman.

The lakes were frozen, there were hills of snow,
Skis, skates, sleds, toboggans out,
Groups of children
Enjoying winter wonderland,
Brother-sister skating together,
Enjoying the beautiful winter morn.



Samixa Bajaj: I am a fourteen year old student of class IX. I love to pen poems on topics that strike a chord with my moods at any given point of time. I love to read and dance.



WISHES

I wish I could see

The birth of deep wrinkles & read their crisscross marks on
my father's face.

Could see his skin slowly sagging.

Could watch him soaking under the soft winter sun,

Spreading himself on his easy chair

like other old daddies.

Now his empty chair helps me to imagine

How he would have looked while sleeping in the chair,

Newspaper on his chest & spectacles resting on his soft
ñose!

What we would have discussed

Over a cup of our evening coffee!

I wish I could walk a few miles more holding his trembling
hands.

But alas! some wishes die young

Like those flowers that fall before

They could bloom!

And some stories remain incomplete...



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



THE IDOL-MAKERS

The father-daughter duo makes idols
with such finesse. Everything so perfect.

Will someone buy today?

One, two or maybe three?

Their eyes question each other.

Standing under the shelter of a tree,
they are seized by a welter of doubts,
looking at the passers-by, sighing,
clinging tenaciously to hope,

a mute sparkle finding a voice

as someone stops near the idols, eyeing them with interest.

“No, sir, that is too less,” mumbles the girl.

“We really spend a lot of labour and love making them.”

The father says in rather a loud voice to the man.

The girl is suddenly a shriveled up flower,

a bruised twig, as if the scorching fury of a June sun,

has singed all her hopes, as the well- attired man

in branded clothes, gives an arrogant toss

to his well- groomed hair and struts off, head in air.

The idol-maker’s shriveled up chest is wracked by coughs.

The daughter looks at him with concern, as twilight

furtively filches all the hues of the flowers down below,

and also the glow on the girl’s cheeks.

They are done for the day, no idol sold.

Soon, with the father's arm around the tiny one's
shoulders,

are on their way, finding comfort in the warmth of mutual
love,

in the December cold.



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



The beauty of this nation
Lies in its diverse population
Everywhere you go for a vacation
There's love at every station

Everything has its own charm
Be it a tropical forest or an agricultural farm
There is no need for a cultural shock alarm
In fact, there is need to be united like a swarm

This difference in them and us
Is no reason to create a fuss
The idea of different as dirty
Is a crazy philosophy

Because this unity is unique
Your interests it will pique
Every one of you is smart,
Know that we share the same heart

To understand this joy and elation,
Avoid separation and dive into the depths of meditation.



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



WORLD OF MY DREAMS

World of my dreams

Came alive when you

Held me tight in

your arms looking into my eyes

Yearning for my nearness

World of my dreams came alive

When we started our dating

A year back with your

Precious gift of a kiss

On my forehead!

World of my dreams came alive when

You and me alone sat
In a beautiful garden
Sitting and sipping
Hot coffee together
My head on your shoulders
With soft looks in our eyes
World of my dreams
Became a reality
When you proposed to me
And slipped a diamond ring
On my finger with a kiss!
World of my dream
Became stronger when
We decided to tie the knot!
We are altogether in a
World of our dreams now
In a cosy little home
With nature all around us!

World of our dreams
Come alive when we
both kneel down and pray together
To keep our love eternal!
Our dream became a
Reality now not a dream!



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



SUNLIGHT CRYSTAL

I wounded all my alibis
before fully forming

now the theory is dizzy
crash point of fever

shine where the clovers are smitten

gathering red leaves
for spells of caution

You told me every story
takes on a life of its own
when eager

now my mouth is dry cotton
thick fabric turn autumn

glow in the gown of soft feather

lining up the charge
for signs of contact



Scott Thomas Outlar: He lives and writes in the suburbs outside of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. His favorite season is autumn. His spirit tree is the pine. Most of his poems are written in the woods. He hosts a podcast, Songs of Selah, that airs weekly on 17Numa Radio. Links to his published work and other thoughts about life can be found at 17Numa.com.



I LOVE YOU SO

And there are many ways

I say so

When I led you down the sandy beach

Just as the late night tide was receding

Having enveloped the shore all night

Under the pale silver of a crescent moonlight

We walked on the shore wet and tight

Dressing our footprints with ether

Sprinkles of bubbles spontaneous

Some I scooped on my lips as laughter

Bursting in the sea washed horizon
Some lingering effortlessly long after
Gay gulls riding loves heady jetstreams are gone
As our shadows mingled with the wet sand

I love you so
And there are many ways
I say so
When I dragged you back
To the high dunes
Above the raging tide enveloped shores
Into the cozy little dug out
Still warm with last night's embers
Pulling over the flimsy dark cloud wisps
Nuzzling the uncurling fingers of the slow dawn
I pored out some tawny Sherry
From the molten Amber of my eyes
And raised a toast as we set loose

Some drunk butterflies
Crazily skimming the high waves
To never return to the awakening land

I love you so
And there are many ways
I say so
I make these make-believe tales
Of passions tumultuous tidings
And in them I have you on centerstage
An image of entwined souls
larger than my thoughts
Bound by my impossible words
Where all I say without saying so
Is you dwell deep in my belly
awake or asleep
And accompany me everywhere I go
The ummet of my heart

My indrawn breath
When I conjure your name
In mundane settings
A shadow ever so patient
Till we grab our picnic hats
And escape
To the sandy cove of my imagination.



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



photography by Carl Scharwarth

THE MEETING

This is humannequin

Standing at the table on the fringes looking on

At life's full servings

But forgoing a supping

It is trite to think that I must sit on the edge of my seat

And be greet and make merry

And look happy

While feeling like flattened cardboard

While my eyes stray to the sides

Yet I am faulted for unwrapping my insides

And leaving my hair

And looking at my friend's soul

A feeling follows me to the very end

Why didn't I listen to its voice.



Shanti Harjani Williams: I am a lawyer and poet residing in Ontario, Canada and currently a stay-at-home Mom. I have contributed to online poetry and poetry review publications and hope to publish my own book of poetry soon. Recently I contributed to the publication Cultural Reverence for World Peace Day, my poem entitled "Hitting Back."



GIFT OF LIFE

Life is a journey

A traversing of pathways

On a multihued

Chasm of beauteousness

A wavering of thread

In the midst of nothingness

A faint, oblique in its elusiveness

A mere thread, stretched in tautness
Seemingly as if moving on its own will
A form, enchanting in its suaveness

Loveliness, giving way to enchantment
Slowly and surely, life's
Beauteousness coming through
A silver of light shining through
Beauteousness and pristineness
Blending in a fusion of sublimeness



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



LAUGH

I thank my life that I could laugh.

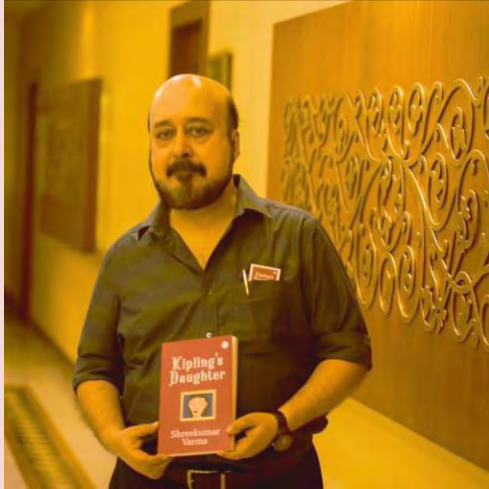
Others laughed alone, or by default;
or dreamed they laughed.

Childhood is a funny thing. Laugh,
the world laughs you along.

Love is laughter, joyous, eye to eye,
Touch is settling scores,
a beginning or an end.

We raise the sun and flare the stars;
we bloom like flowers by the stream,

walk the jungle far, seeking zebras
striped with laughter and dark tears.



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

www.shreevarma.com

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



late Dhaneswar Mohanty, grandfather of Smruti Ranjan Mohanty

I GOT MY ANSWER

The story is about my grandfather, late Dhaneswar Mohanty

My grandmother's love for my grandfather was never in words and gestures. It was deep inside her heart. They hardly talked with each other, and the whole of their time was for their kids. When she died at an early age, there were absolutely no tears in my grandfather's eyes. He was quite normal and never let us feel at any point of time about what he had lost. After the death of my grandmother, my grandfather lived for another twenty-five years completely identifying himself with our happiness and sorrow. In this long period, I have never found him thinking and speaking about my grandmother. Doubting the intensity of his love, I once asked him how much he loved my grandmother whom we had lost ten years before.

My grandfather just looked at me. For the first time, I saw tears in his eyes.

And I got my answer.

My grandfather and grandmother never dined together, never travelled together, probably never lived together. They never lived for each other, but together they lived for their family in which they found the fulfilment of their love, dreams and passion. Unlike us, they lived a happy and contented life, never complained, never repented, never pretended, never borrowed, never did anything which their conscience never approved, never aspired for something beyond their reach and lived life to the full.

I think our love is rarely from the heart, it is mostly in words and gestures. Despite having all the amenities of life, I do not think the quality of my life is better than that of my grandparents. There was no electricity, no telephone, no television in their times, but they lived a very happy and contented life in the midst of nature, in an atmosphere of genuine love and concern. I am still at a loss to understand whether anything we call modern adds to life or takes the juice out of it.



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty: Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, O.F.S, son of Raj Kishore and Shantilata Mohanty is a multilingual poet, essayist and writer. His write-ups are published in newspapers and in various national and international magazines, journals and anthologies which are widely acclaimed across the world.

Website: smrutiweb.wordpress.com



CHARRED

Chars never reveal
they only tell stories
They are remains -
Painful reminders
of that
which was beautiful
once

memories

dreams

wound

soundlessly

till the last

breath

stillborn

retaliatory

bullets

baying

bloodthirsty

bites

bloodied

unnecessary.



Sudeshna Mukherjee: Her poetry deals with varied human nature. A keen observer she chronicles the happenings around her and society. 'Meanderings Of The Mind' is her published book of poems.



ALL THE MORE

Splurge on those medieval meanderings

Sacred joys and verdant bliss

For bygone is priceless

Per se an exclusive mould

So...love me all the more put that hatred on hold

Waste not even an iota of warmth

Plug each bit build a connect of laugh riot

To build a connect of laugh riot

Chase bits and pieces of happiness

Since been at crossroad
Love me all the more put that hatred on hold

A smart pick of romantic liaison
Looming large on freshly brewed horizon
Shall soothe hows and whys of sleepy sighs
Ink well...bonds and ties
To augur seamless transition
As per my sturdy premonition
So...dwell at length on niceties of yore
If you still choose the course of hatred
Sans any logical answer
You may dear
But love me all the more.



Sujata Dash: I am a poet, residing in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. I am a banker. I have contributed to various anthologies published nationwide. I have one published work (Anthology of poems) to my credit.



IF YOU COULD READ MY MIND

If you could read my mind
You would see a desolate heart
Filled with dismal passion
That is yet to be shared.

If you could read my mind
You would feel the innocence in my appearance
That could get deceived easily
But no ability to have revenge.

If you could read my mind
You would hear the silent cry
Of my dumb heart
That is yet to be imparted.

If you could read my mind
You would be able to quench
The thirst of my love and affection,
Yet I still hope that
Somebody somewhere sometimes could read my mind.



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



FATAL ATTRACTION

It was not really love

It was like an extreme attraction

He just drifted away as if

Someone calling him towards

A dreamy Oasis of allusion.

Brain, logic, ethics

Nay! Actually nothing worked

He was running towards

A momentary satisfaction.

Forgetting his duty
Forgetting the life's chore
He was submerged in a
Obsessive illusion.

Love is calm, love is deep
Not a crazy submission.
Where greed works more ,
No peace of mind
That's a fatal attraction.

When he returned back
It was like nightmare,
Repented soul had no consolation.



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



Pic of The Main Entrance to Roma Termini

SOULMATE

He loomed above me, tall, in long grey overcoat and trousers.

Wiry, salt and pepper hair, windblown, as if electrified.

Face weathered, intelligent eyes gazing into mine.

For some reason, I immediately thought, he was my perfect man.

We stared at each other, looked away and then back.

Both felt the chemistry, the attraction and the knowing,

As if long lost soulmates. Impelled, both of us spoke...

He, in Italian—I couldn't comprehend.

I, in English, then tried French. Surely, he knew some French?

Spanish? Portuguese? He shook his head, rattled on in Italian...

I shook my head, mind too numb to reach for Google translate.

4.30am, barred double doors at the entrance to Roma Termini—

Beside us, a man slept on the floor, stretched across

The adjacent double doors: he looked Indian, or Bangladeshi...

My confidence at ebb, I stood silent. Gaze on my bent head,

He stood silent. Visiting cards, phone numbers, nothing came to mind

In the half hour we stood next to each other, not communicating

Anything but the strong wish to communicate.

At 5 the doors opened and the sleeping man was pulled up, blearily.

I gathered my bags and followed my man into the shiny atrium.

He had stopped a little away, stood doing nothing, his back to me.

My train to Venice would leave shortly, I should find my platform...

I hurried—found my platform, my train, my seat, with time to spare.

At leisure, I wonder about my man, whether I will ever meet him again.

May it be more than passing trains at dawn.



Sumita Dutta: She is a publisher, poet and novelist residing in Chennai, India. She is the founder of Adisakrit, a small publishing house, seven books old in October. She has contributed to various online sites and anthologies. Her debut book was *The Heart of Donna Rai*



SNAIL SYNDROME

Snail like

Touchy and mushy

I retreat into my shell

When someone touches

The sensitive cells in my heart

For I have

Neither

The crocodile's tail or tears

To attack on pretend

Nor

The snake's fangs

To threaten or poison.

But my
Snail like sentient heart
Has a thick, coarse cover
To protect the sores
Tender, smarting and inflammable
Don't you know
A hit or a whip
Can break the casket of calmness
And create a cenotaph
Of calamity!!!



Sumitra Mishra: I am a writer residing in Bhubaneswar, India. I worked as Professor of English under the Government of Odisha. I have contributed to various anthologies. I have published four collections of poetry in English. I have also published eight books in my mother tongue, Odia.



TO THE ONE AND ONLY

One glance to sweep
all my sorrows away
one smile to reawaken
joy in my life
one word from the heart
to lift my spirits
one gesture that will be
my crutch in crippling days
One rose my many-hued
garden to which

one color if you care to add
I will paint a rainbow.
All these I will preserve
deep in the core of my being
hidden from the prying eyes
of the world and wait
for that one drop of nectar from your lips
to quench the thirst
of my parched soul.
One spark of your glory

will bathe life in the light of infinite stars
and I will venture
from captivity to freedom.

Having seen you within myself

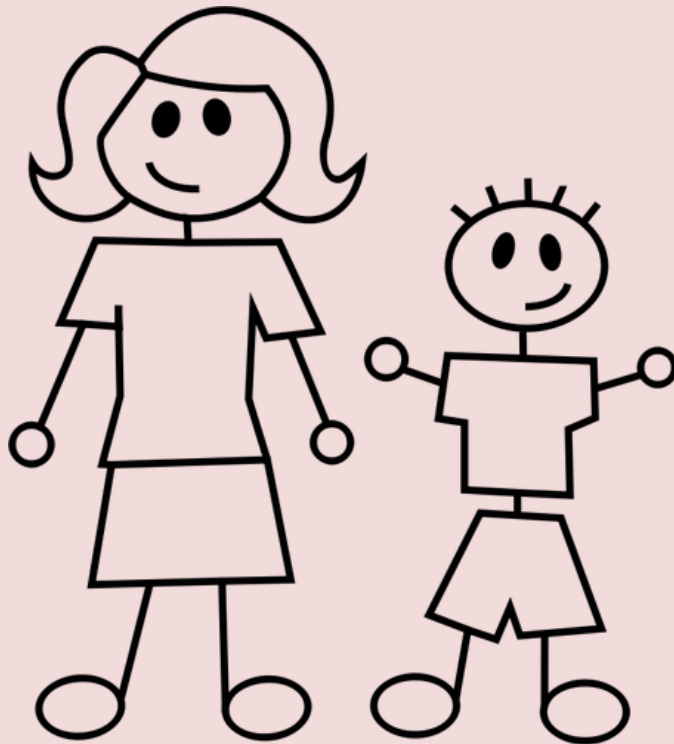
I shall sail to a safe haven

as your effulgence

lights my path over choppy waters.



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



SKETCH

Kiddy- lines

Drawn against the

White sheet.

Lines forming a crude figure.

An oval face with mom written

Underneath

Its stick-like legs.

And few dried tear drops.

The artist---tired and asleep

In the semi-dark room

In the suburbs.



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

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



The words you never said
The songs you never sang
The painting you never made
The times we didn't spend
The places we never visited
The poems you never wrote
The love you never gave
Are the only gifts I have!



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



acrylic painting on canvas by suzette portes san jose

MY SIMPLE WISH

a light to feel the warmth on my endlessness
as my falling leaves are leaving my branches
while i remain standing lifeless
still believing that i won't be useless

some rainy days that won't be my tears
a day without feeling all of my fears

for each morning a rainbow that appears
to dream the best that life adheres

let live life in dreams of hope once more
in this world, i shall exist forevermore
i open my branches for your touch to adore
leaving my thoughts upon the sky to soar

whenever the twilight time shall come to fall
the darkness of nights will leave me standing tall
soon birds will be singing upon the dawns call
and i will feel you again in my days and all



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



CHANGES

the quote used in this poem is taken from "Anthem" by Leonard Cohen

Alarm clock rang loudly and the sound tore Ada out of a deep slumber. Sleep had not given her any rest. Endless nightmares through the night. Neverending winter. Unresolved issues troubled her mind. She needed to change her life, but did not know how. She put on a red coat and left the house. From a crack in the clouds sunbeams appeared, and she felt as if the rays kissed her face softly. From the distance she could hear a singing voice. After a little while Ada realized that the song poured

out of the crack in the clouds. Her favorite song rumbled through airwaves. It was Leonard Cohen's "Anthem". She was filled with joy and started to sing: "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."



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



SEGREGATION

Each individual is confined inside his own private room,
With a set of windows, doors and the holes to ventilate.
There, one makes his own light out of his own fire or fume
For a certain time; and makes space to grow or to
attenuate.

His neighbours live inside other rooms adjacent to his own.
But, they can't use the same doors, windows or a single
hole

To peep inside another one for realising how one spends alone.

Or to hear the common tunes coming out of his unique citole.

Nobody knocks door at midnight; but his hallucinated thought,

Sometimes, drives him out of room with an expectation to see

The face of his compassionate sister or a face of his compatriot.

But, nobody wants to knock any neighbour in a civilised society.

He enters in room to protect the jewels he preserved so long,

And to read a story already written by him or to sing his old song.



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



THE BEST OF YOU

You do because you do

You do because you are capable

You do because you felt for

You do because you urge to last

Not always what you do is appreciated

Not always what you do is acknowledged

Not always what you do will do the intended good

Not always the intended good will ever be realized

It, however, shouldn't deter you

Ever be the braver you

Hold onto your strengths firmly
Cling to the brighter side of life
You just cannot stop trying
From Being the Best of You Ever.



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



TIME UNTIMED

Glued to a time prism

Chained were they to the hour

Slaves of every minute

Running a rat race

Hurried paces

Watch frames frozen

Hop scotching one deadline to the next

Where were those leisurely paces?

Of a once clock free sphere

Languid were the moves

In a dial free yore

Missing someone was

In the turn of another season

In the smell of another harvest

In the gap between two love notes

And patient was a wait

That did not know

The existence of time



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



SOMEONE IS UNHAPPY

Someone is dying in silvery rain
With all fame, materials and sane
With enough life
Enough satisfied
But still this sufficient
Is lacking a 'pain' to write
She feels to uplift

To grow more

You have to be small

A needy, a curious creature

to know more and more

At times

Masters of life remains unhappy

Like this ocean remains thirsty

Due to its salty water

How huge but suffocated

Due to several mysterious chapters are untouched and
unfolded

In its depth

So unhappy

So tricky this life is!



Varsha Saran: I am a postgraduate homemaker with a passion of writing bilingual poems and stories .My many poems and stories have been published in different international anthologies, e-zines, magazines and newspapers.



JASMINE LOVE

'Twas a long rugged road I had to take,
Precipitated by second chances;
The heart beating a positive rhythm,
Though the mind whispered a cogent reasoning,
'Tarry awhile.'

Mind, it had its obvious reasons, of course,
For its hurt self had much to endure,
But when miracles time their arrival perfectly,
All strangeness dissipates into familiarity,
And when the strand of fragrant jasmine
Woven neatly with precision by adorning fingers

Is offered with warm-hearted intensity,
Every memory of a lost love that re-lived
The pain is ever so serendipitously erased,
And you know that you return home,
It's not just with the sweet smelling memories
Of floral conversations,
But also a friend for life.



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

'book' with the Human Library, I am winner of literary awards, been on the editorial of three publications, and have published two books of poems, one, a coffee table book in collaboration with my husband and the other, to create awareness about mental health.



THE LAST FLIGHT

You were always in exile from yourself

In a city that slipped into amnesia

Whenever it wanted to--

You tore down barricades and waved black flags,

Your love concealed in outbursts until you found

Mislaid documents in the dusty archives

Of someone else's darkened mind--

Ah, we both knew then that such moments

Do not pose to be garlanded and shot

By a breaking news television crew

And that worried witnesses at the office,

Praying to be absolved of this offence,

While we raced to catch the last flight that night,

Disappeared from sight even before

We could mouth a breathless hello.



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



CHILD OF THE FOREST

Child of the forest

That stream untouched

The trees stretching their arms to the skies

The emerald carpet of grass

Welcome you home

Child of the forest

Tomorrow when you return

You will carry me to your lair

A story to tell your daughter and son

Of the days that had been

Child of the forest

Tell them of the trees that covered the earth

Of the sparkling streams and towering mountains

Of pastures green and animal brethren

That roamed blithely here

Child of the forest

Tell them of the peace that had been

Where the killings were for want, to satiate hunger

Where tiger and deer, elephant and lion coexisted;

Of the fires that came with unending summers

And the rains that drenched and cooled the burning earth.

Child of the earth

Teach them to listen to the music of the earth

Which runs through their blood

For they are made of this clay, these waters, this sky and
ether

Their hearts beat with the rhythm of the earth's hum
And here one day they shall return.



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



GROUND

When he was at the peak of his youth, he built a small room on the third floor. He said he'll live there after retirement. He'll read books there in silence as he'll be free from all the responsibilities. He began collecting books. He lined up several bookshelves along the wall. He bought an armchair. He bought a reading table. He never realised that his eyes would fail him and he wouldn't be able to read as much as he did when he was young. And climbing so many stairs would become an impossible task. He had to visit doctor every weekend now. Perhaps living on the third floor was not such a good idea. But now the rooms on the ground floor are beyond repair. The cement flakes fall off the wall.

There are cracks on the wall snaking all over it. The room has an unbearable smell. The ground floor is no more fit for living.

He realised it quite late that living near the ground is best suited for a man



Vivek Nath Mishra: Author's short stories have appeared in The Hindu, Queen mob's Teahouse, Muse India, The Criterion Journal, Cafe Dissensus, Setu, Spillwords, Literary Yard, Indian Ruminations, Prachya Review, Indus women writing, and on many other platforms. His debut book is 'Birdsongs of Love and Despair'.



SONNET 104

Years down the line on a dusky afternoon
When you find yourself with grey hairs
Wrinkles all over as a remnant of past glory
Caught absorbed in thought with sighs forlorn
You might once make an attempt to recall
All the faces from the pit of times gone
Faces you have been loved and hated by
Those hating forming the bigger party by far
I will be outnumbered but still stand strong
Alone to have brought a smile on your face
The regret of not being loved all gone away
Moments of a silent communication filling you

Know at that point in place of being sad
I have not failed to fill the void you had.



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



ciao! 😊