

ISSN 2347-632X



VerbalART

A Global Journal Devoted to
POETS AND POETRY

GJPP

A Refereed & Double Blind Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

Vol.3-No.1 | 2018

Chief Editor:

Dr. Vivekanand Jha

Associate Editor:

Dr. Rajnish Mishra

Review Editor

Dr. Chandra Shekhar Dubey



AUTHORS PRESS

Publishers of Creative & Scholarly Books

ISSN 2347-632X

VerbalArt

A Global Journal Devoted to
Poets and Poetry

A Refereed & Double Blind Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

Volume 3 ♦ Issue 1 ♦ Year - 2018

Chief Editor

Dr. Vivekanand Jha

Associate Editor

Dr. Rajnish Mishra

Review Editor

Dr. Chandra Shekhar Dubey



AUTHORSPRESS

Worldwide Circulation through Authorspress Global Network

Q-2A Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-110 016

E-mail: authorspressgroup@gmail.com

Website: www.authorspressbooks.com

VERBALART

A Global Journal Devoted to Poets and Poetry

A Refereed & Double Blind Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

(Volume 3, Issue 1, Year - 2018)

ISSN 2347-632X

Copyright © Chief Editor

Disclaimer

Verbal Art retains the right to use the accepted work in future online or print anthologies, as well as in the online archives. All other rights remain with the author. The journal will not be liable in any way for any sort of copyright infringements.

EDITORIAL

We are happy to present Vol. 3, Issue 1 of VerbalArt. The present issue features 28 works consisting 25 poems, 02 book reviews and 01 interview.

The contributors in this issue are Holly Day, K. V. Raghupathi, Avdhesh S. Jha, Gale Acuff, Sandip Saha, Dhiman Saha, Aritra Basu, Sandeep Kumar Mishra, Sukrita, JW Burns, Kristine Hovsepyan, T. Ashok Chakravarthy, Bill Cotter, Roger Singer, Fabrice Poussin, Fabrice Poussin, Gary Langford, James G. Piatt, Sue Vickers Tordoff, Munia Khan, Edward Lee, Sneha Dubey, Daniel King, Yuan Yuan (Sneha), Rajiv Khandelwa, Chandra Shekhar Dubey, Dr. Sapna Dogra and Dr. P. Raja.

Your opinions are important to us in order to serve you in the best possible manner and to the best of our abilities. Therefore, we would like to invite all the contributors and the readers to leave a few line of comments at the following link: <http://www.verbalart.in/comments.php>

We are open for submissions round the year. You can submit your creative works whenever you feel. The submission guidelines can be found at the following link: <http://verbalart.in/submission.php>

Wish your creative and poetic New Year 2019

Happy reading!

Editors

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	3
POETRY	
Holly Day	
My Places	9
K. V. Raghupathi	
The Mountain is Calling (Wisdom Poems)	10
Avdhesh S. Jha	
What is Managerial Behaviour?	12
Gale Acuff	
Handwritten Draft	14
Sandip Saha	
Drench me	15
Dhiman Saha	
The Romance of Snow	16
Aritra Basu	
Reflections	17
Sandeep Kumar Mishra	
I Painted an Ocean	19
Sukrita	
Just Before Birth	20
JW Burns	
Currency	21

Kristine Hovsepyan	
Nature – Nature	22
T. Ashok Chakravarthy	
Realisation	23
Bill Cotter	
Ode to a “Wedgie”	24
Roger Singer	
Almost Overhead	25
Fabrice Poussin	
A Bigger Man than She	26
Fabrice Poussin	
A Plea in the Desert	27
Gary Langford	
A Writer’s Poem	28
James G. Piatt	
Temperate Winds	29
Sue Vickers Tordoff	
It’s Dark in Here	30
Munia Khan	
A Simple Rhyme of Honesty	31
Edward Lee	
A Foetal Heart	33
Sneha Dubey	
I Wish	34
Daniel King	
Sonnet for Kalki	35

Yuan Yuan (Sneha)	
The Unwanted Road	36
Rajiv Khandelwal	
Mother's Mothering	37
BOOK REVIEW	
Chandra Shekhar Dubey	
Review of Poorvasha Dubey's Poetry Collection, <i>Resonance</i>	39
Dr. Sapna Dogra	
Review of Vivekanand Jha's Poetry Collection <i>Falter & Fall</i>	44
INTERVIEW	
Dr. K. V. Raghupathi – Four Decades of Journey through Writing: An Interview with Dr. P. Raja	50
CONTRIBUTORS	61

POETRY

HOLLY DAY

My Places

All my favorite places have been overrun
by kids who look at me as though I'm
some old lady who lost her way, stumbled
into their club late at night on the way
to buy last-minute groceries or some important
old lady medication

all of my regular haunts are being haunted
by children who don't understand how important
these places are to me, children
who will grow up to become boring adults
have boring jobs, live boring lives
forget why they ever came to these places
and will wonder about
strange old ladies like me.

K. V. RAGHUPATHI

The Mountain is Calling (Wisdom Poems)

I

If you just can't see what you are,
look at trees in Autumn,
leaves are falling, falling, falling.
If you just can't see what you are not
look at the flowering plants in Spring,
flowers are blooming, blooming, blooming.
If you just see neither what you are nor what you are not
look at the falling rain in the end Summer
filling, filling, filling the rivers and mountains.

II

There is nothing like *Moksha*
Shit, there is no *Moksha*
While you sit, why dance
While you walk, why run
While you run, why stand
Moksha is doing everything in nothing.

III

'Suchness' is not 'thinking'
'Thinking' is not 'Suchness'
'Suchness' is
'Thinking' is like a boiling egg
Stop it, there are no ripples in the boiling
There is water only in 'Suchness'.

IV

The bird flies, knows not wind
The fish swims, knows not water
The flower blooms, knows not light
The leaf falls, knows not root
You do everything while knowing
You know everything while doing
The moon is hanging, not in water.

AVDHESH S. JHA

What is Managerial Behaviour?

Unlearning the learned and
Learning the unlearned;
Both are the case in the course of learning;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Learning or unlearning!

To plan the unplanned and
Unplan the planned;
Both are the action of a manager;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Planning or unplan!

To Co-ordinate the uncoordinated and
Uncoordinate the coordinated;
Both are the action of a manager
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Coordinate or Uncoordinate!

To organise the unorganised and
Unorganise the organised;
Both are the action of a manager;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Organise or unorganise!

Deciding the undecided and
Undeciding the decided;
Both are the action of a manager;

What is Managerial Behaviour?
Deciding or Undeciding!

Motivating the unmotivated and
Demotivating the motivated
Both are the action of a manager;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Motivation or demotivation!

Leading the unlead and
misleading the leader
Both are the action of a manager;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Leading or misleading!

Discovering the self and
Undiscover the discovered self
Both are the action of a manager;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Discover the Self or undiscover the self!!

Perceiving the unperceived
Unperceiving the perceived
Both are the action of a manager;
What is Managerial Behaviour?
Perceiving or unperceiving!

GALE ACUFF

Handwritten Draft

This was written on the back of a page
devoted to part of another poem.
I can see those words through this thin paper
– they slouch the other way, figure fainter.
When I'm stuck on this side, can't hammer out

what comes next, or where the language will lead,
I look to them and try to remember
what they say. And sometimes I even turn
to them, flip the page over, pivot it
– wrist action – then go from where I've been, which

is really where I'd like to fare once more
but can't unless I get there new again
with different lines to follow to the end.
I hate repeating anything I write

– I can't stay in one place for very long.
When I've finished with this page I'll begin

another, also on the back of old
work. If I'm stuck again I'll squint until
I see through to myself on the other

side. *You can do this*, he tells me. *I believe
in you*. Yes, but I don't believe in *you*,
I return. Not until we meet again
and leave each other behind together.

SANDIP SAHA

Drench me

If you drench me in love
be it like sweet dream,
as a bee has fallen in the honey
cannot raise itself.

While you touch me
let it sparkle lightning
and drive me to the fulfillment
that I otherwise never get.

As you talk to me
let it reverberate as musical tune
which can mesmerise me
forgetting the remaining world.

If you give me shelter
let it be as wide as sky,
as I want to float over it
without the fear of sinking.

Let no bondage restrict me,
no verdict rule over my bliss,
narrowness of humanity may disappear
ushering in the paradise of union.

DHIMAN SAHA

The Romance of Snow

On this cold moonlit night of winter
I imagine a long held scenery in my mind
Through the broken window glass I see
Millions of small cotton like things
Dancing and swirling through the air
Landing over my tall and small garden trees

The world outside is filled with a frozen silence
Patiently I see a flag waving from the sky
Draping my yard in a carpet of pure white
With the shades of glorious moonlight hues
Gazing at these white feathers of winter wind
I hear the romantic silence of snow.

ARITRA BASU

Reflections

Every day I become your project
Every experiment, every test look,
I am that alter ego which never sees the light of the day
Beyond the four-walled “reality” that you’ve trapped me in
I’m you, just laterally inverted
What’s right to you, to me left is
What you’ve left behind, I have got it covered all right.
I am that friend you come to
When your ever changing love interests want photos
From different angles, poses, clothes...
I’m the one you aren’t ashamed of
So you strip naked in front of me
For those love interests, or at a moment of narcissism

You, to me, are God.
The light you’ve got installed atop my head
Is like a tiara I’ve always wanted.
It makes me feel like the princess I never was
But always deserved to be,
For I store more secrets than your neighbour best friend
I saw your first erection, masturbation, tears of blood.
I saw that smile after that victory with the night lights on
I came, I saw, I knew.
I never spoke, for speech wasn’t bound to be mine.
I just stood by, and I stood witness.
You try ties, dhotis, leather pants, I witness in silence
You make me bear through all your tantrums

And then, you make me lie,
When after a hard day's toil you ask
"Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who's the prettiest of them all?"

SANDEEP KUMAR MISHRA

I Painted an Ocean

I painted an ocean
But forgot the shore
There were no ships
When I took a close look,
It was my isolation
Sailing like the sea waves;
I searched alone for centuries
To add the travelers
In my voyage,
Still, singular I stand
On this mortal deck;
Need an island to anchor
When I call on a radio
It becomes silent monologue outward,
The reply comes from the resounding inside;
With every tsunami from the bosom of the core
I feel like conulariid without pearls;
Although I have vastness of Dead Sea
But no light house of life fervor

SUKRITA

Just Before Birth

A canvas
empty of colour
a body
kissed by death

A long silent wait
of the foetus
floating in
backwaters of
existence

Undefined

Before the cry
of anguish

I remain in half light,
listen to hidden songs

Strain to hear the ebb and flow
of tides and seas

In the coming darkness
I read you
as the blind read braille.

JW BURNS

Currency

The egg is semi-reserved, nudged
onto a spoon, a brown streaking incantation

on its belly,
ready to cover the world with your eyes.

If the trash could groan it would.
What you see is always you.

Wives/husbands fill the voices from backyard sheds;
usually dominated by everything save the weather.

Nights pollinating each dumb drizzle of a smile
while the screen renders glimpsable stars, a moon.

Maimed summer giving it up for winter,
never forgetting closed screams, lingering doors

afloat on terraced grass
above the giggling fire.

KRISTINE HOVSEPYAN

Nature – Nature

As if the life at different stage,
Nature breaths;
Sometimes heavily as an old man,
Sometimes too silent like the deep blue sea;
Sometimes naughtily as the youth,
Sometimes too peaceful and soft like the new born baby...

With the first ray of sun,
Nature wakes up as the most beautiful lady,
Adding the perfect elite fragrance
As if she washes her face with dew..
Like the eye it peeps through the window within,
And with the dark blue eyes keeps observing always.

The touch of the cool breeze and warm sunshine
Is the nature's live elegant presence;
Although, simple to talk
Nature is too deep to understand;
It is the comfort, warmth and freshness,
With abundant beauty, one can ever dream of.

Patient as mothers,
Nature reproduces with pain to feed..
Fair enough as the perfect teacher,
Nature can punish, Nature can reward;
With due care, it teaches how to evaluate
and appreciate what we have...

T. ASHOK CHAKRAVARTHY

Realisation

Memories drag me into past temptations
Alone, I feel totally eclipsed in isolation,
Pain penetrates deep into heart's layers
Unaware, thoughts hide in clouds of fear.

Dreams, I realise now, are mere dreams
Ever colorful and appealing by all means;
Reality is always doused with a misty view
Desires distract us with hopes, ever-new.

Youthfulness is attractive like a butterfly
A fleeting delicacy that withers in the sly;
Bridging the gap betwixt love and real life;
Is an upheaval task laced with joy and grief.

Leaves, when get dried, fall to the ground,
They impart harsh realities in every mind;
Youthful life is as precious as a cut diamond
Unless polished, it's parallel to mud and sand.

To gain something one has to lose something
But, 'realisation' is precious than anything;
It transforms any life with precise perfection
And shower petals on life's path, with elation.

BILL COTTER

Ode to a “Wedgie”

Golden eyed master of the morning,
What force compels you, there,
With the sun about to begin its yellow spilling,
To unfold your wings, scissor the sheets of rising air
And swing out over the glistening gorge and river?

Is it hunger that sends you quartering the slopes,
Readies those glistening talons,
Prepares your will for the lightning descent,
The fatal crack of the fox's skull
And your satisfied, if laboured ascent?

Or is it the simple joy of flight,
The mastery, the thrill, wings tilted up and tail squared,
Of teasing the wind
And ploughing, untroubled, those dizzying heights?

Whatever the cause,
You are the morning's master,
Free to surf the rolling sky,
Or bury your butchering, hooked bill
In the red blood carcass of a deer.

ROGER SINGER

Almost Overhead

There was a caution in the air.
A thin front of yellow yielded to
heavy black layers of a disruptive
sky crawling menacingly above.
Thunder sounded from the hands of
trauma, releasing repeated detonations.
The calm surface air quickly became an
unlikely opportunity for safety.
Nature began to carve out its design
of strength in impressive waves.

FABRICE POUSSIN

A Bigger Man than She

Standing tall beneath the rocky peaks
she towers in a world of ruthless power
devoid of noble care.

Errors in fibs lie at the feet of her prey
with a choice to hide under an eve's cave
or to burn in the heat of a certain pain.

Caught in a trap of her own making she shivers
to soon omit a vague memory and
return to her reading.

Asking for forgiveness she sleeps in peace
it seems chapters have already passed
as she smiles.

It takes a bigger man than she to grant her wish
crushed under the cruel heels of eternal aloofness
she laughs and all is well.

FABRICE POUSSIN

A Plea in the Desert

It is in an unexpected genuflection
in a desert land devoid of movement
where this wanderer has come to rest.

It may be the end of the long journey
grasping at fantasies in this fiery furnace
under a threatening oblivion of darkness.

Rusty ruby red rocks cut at his tired limbs
into what was once the robust copy of a giant
now taking bashful breaths of a life no longer his.

Covered in hesitating veins of bursting blue decay
he looks up to a gentler realm beyond the storm
his heart still already deep inside the hollow prison.

He recalls holding the vanishing flake
believing his passion could give it permanence
as if alchemist he could make ice from a flame.

One final flash of a trek to the rainy marble temple
to touch the perfect form of a godly shape
the memory of a yesterday so long entombed.

The world barren to him now, safe perhaps
for the in-print of a tear he cannot restrain
to cross millennia, a reminder of an extinct species.

His hands to the furious winds, it is his last attempt
to form, to hold, and to save within his pleading palms
the little soul who never so much has heard his sighs.

GARY LANGFORD

A Writer's Poem

This is a 21st of writer lines.
You may wish to toss it away.
Say the poem sinks in clay.

The more you publish
the more you will be asked,
don't you repeat yourself?

This is a comic line.
Today's words are cryptically brief.
Like memory, what am I saying?

We curl up in publishing cups.
Be a generous writer in flight.
Write up your landing in delight.

A salami of chopped punctuation.
A ham that claims not to act.
Yes, I have humanised food before.

As the albatross in flight,
over Jesus and 12 cyclists,
pedalling until tyre-medalling.

Call your critics tiny letters.
Open every writer's door
with your favourite metaphor.

JAMES G. PIATT

Temperate Winds

As temperate winds curled around the timeless past, I neared a rusted road and found a beautiful flower, which I had seen in one of my uncommon dreams. I was halfway into the room of lost memories with the flower in hand, when my steps lead me to my childhood where hope still existed alongside memories of the untranslatable past, and the aroma of herbs and red roses climbed with me to eternity.

Note: The poem was first published by TreeHouse.

SUE VICKERS TORDOFF

It's Dark in Here

It's dark in here, in winter's early dusk –
I can just make out the truth between the facts.
The walls are closing in, I'm empty like a husk.
The wind blows sharp between the floorboard cracks.

I'm not alone, I share the space with several faithful cats,
and mice they catch give off a smell like musk.
I'm useless, feeling lost in my diversity of hats.
It's dark in here; in winter's early dusk

there's light enough to clearly see
the difference in your lofty words and lowly acts.
Though it's taken all the strength and heart from me,
I can just make out the truth between the facts.

The pc is turned off now, the glare became too much,
and reading is so painful – I gave away my books.
I sit here, mindless, like a rabbit in a hutch.
The walls are closing in, I'm empty like a husk.

You took away my substance, you stopped my flowing pen.
My hollow roles ring cruelly while I mourn the one I lack.
I'm so empty that I'm almost blown away when
the wind blows sharp between the floorboard cracks.

In the early winter evening I willingly prepare
for the long sleep come too soon into my life.
My mind is stilled, unnaturally free of care,
and the wind blows out the final trace of light.
It's dark in here.

MUNIA KHAN**A Simple Rhyme of Honesty**

I have to endeavor instead of trying
Need to weep a lot as I stop crying
Why should I tell when I want to say
I'd rather beg when I'm forced to pray
If I can lament I need not to mourn
When you want me to disdain I will scorn
I'll achieve the power never to attain
I can hurt the wound without any pain
I shouldn't feel annoyed if I'm irritated
Misfortune favours me when I'm ill fated
I am not charged when I'm accused
And I can't be rejected when I'm refused
I am full of joy but I can't be cheerful
Being hopelessly terrified I'm not at all fearful
My body starts trembling but I'm not shaking
I pretend to feign without faking
Mending or correcting never means to repair
To show my courage why should I dare?
Perish doesn't always mean to disappear
Serenity may not always be clear
Don't want me to foretell when I can predict
I can be habituated without being an addict
To master the art I never have to learn
Without money I have several things to earn
I remember to recall but forget to call to mind
I hate to search when I need to find
I love to ask – Can I inquire?

As I always demand never to require
I can tell lies without being a liar
I can burn myself without any fire
I want to be satisfied but don't want to be pleased
Catch me if you can when I am seized
I will be so far to isolate the distance
I may appear without any appearance
A penalty must be a renounced forfeit
And dishonesty is always a faithless deceit.

EDWARD LEE

A Foetal Heart

As night folds itself
across the sky,
a strange sound fills the air,
like a dog howling backwards,
or a feline retreating out of heat,
and we lie awake
on the bare mattress,
every possibility narrowed
to this point,
as we search
for the second heart
beating inside you,

the beat that was there yesterday
but seems elusive now;

we keeping searching
and searching, refusing
to stop and admit
what our own hearts,
beating with a pain
which crowds their constricting chambers,
whisper to us,

whisper so fiercely.

SNEHA DUBEY

I Wish

I wish I could fly,
High up in the sky!
I would be flying among the birds,
And see the gazing herds!
Flying with the wings,
I would feel like a king;
Oh, I wish I could fly!
I wish I could do magic,
A magician with many tratics!
High up in the stage,
I would show my magic to all the age!
Seeing my magic everyone would be shocked,
And yet I would have many magic's overstocked;
Oh, I wish I could do magic!
I wish I could be invisible,
And nothing would be sensible!
I would do a lot of fun,
And much naughtiness under the sun!
Being invisible would save me from studies,
And I would play with all my buddies;
Oh, I wish I could be invisible!

DANIEL KING

Sonnet for Kalki

A rider of the white-horse waves, I came
To surf. My wild blond hair is matted like Shiva's
I wander continents for men to tame
And men to love. My southern eye is Vishnu's.
The Travellers have spurred me to declaim
My passion here, a *rajas* that is Brahma's.
The ring of Mars' male sign becomes glorious
With me: the Cross of Sagittarius.

For tor and *tora*, boy and royal scion,
And born from two great spiritual brothers,
I am now Heaven's arrow, tiger, lion:
I rule this world and I will rule all others;
I rule and conquer with a rod of iron.

I am the One, Kalki. Await my fire.

YUAN YUAN (SNEHA)

The Unwanted Road

Whether the sky is covered with clouds or not,
Whether or not, the birds keep singing and cheering;
I knew, for no reason, in any season, on an evening,
You will be the one, for nothing, you will leave me sobbing
And now I am suffering for the unwanted road I choose...

With same act, my mind is crying, heart is weeping
Tears failed to accompany me through my eye;
Being shattered, I wanted to shout and scream
But I couldn't make any noise nor even could I sigh
And now I am sighing for the unwanted road I choose...

In ignorance, I thought you were the only savior,
Full of feelings, I felt, you added many sweet dreams; but
Being inhumane, you left, without caring of scars you posed,
Selfish! You didn't even look remembering the gleam
And now I am repenting for the unwanted road I choose...

Sometimes back, you were my busy schedule,
But now, I found, I had much more to be a part of test;
To heal this broken heart, I try not to think of you,
I am sure, with passing time, I will prove, time is the best
Because now I am leaving the unwanted road I choose...

Now, with you, I already finished it out, for more,
I know now, we have different destinations and light;
And now I know, the journey of life will not be full of roses
Before the dawn you must cross the darkest night
And thus, now I chose, the road I should have chose...

RAJIV KHANDELWAL

Mother's Mothering

The small cobbled pathway
Of our ancestral house
Was lined with tall trees
On one side of the walkway
Where both me and the Gulmohar
Were reared from sapling stage
With love and attention

Gulmohar's scarlet flowers
Remind of swollen, stiff long fingers
Working passionately with trowel
Weeding out lawn weeds from healthy grass
Where
Greek marble sculptures
And others
That lined the garden and the drawing room
Were
Meticulously dusted and cleaned
In ways
That would put a modern maid to shame

In the kitchen
Where the dish washer
Still sloshes and whines
And the ultra violet water purifier buzzes
The emanating overpowering

Pungent rotting onion smell of asafoetida
Warm, penetrating aroma of smoky cumin
Sweet, spicy, uplifting smell of cinnamon
Still survives in senses
And jogs the recollection of the ailing octogenarian
Whipping up food for her son
Whenever the daughter in law was away
And the maids on a surprise vacation

Though my wife mothers me
My daughters nurse me
Still
Sometimes with an addict's craving
Sitting in my smart home
I hanker

For my mother's

Mothering

BOOK REVIEW

CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY

Review of Poorvasha Dubey's Poetry Collection, *Resonance*

(*Resonance*, Poorvasha Dubey, New Delhi: Education Publishing, 2018, ISBN: 9781545724095, Paperback, pp. 51 Pages, Rs 175)

Resonance is a debut book of verse by Poorvasha Dubey, a young, talented and well known corporate risk analyst. Her book of verse consists of 19 poems touching multiple themes and polyphonic voices but her all poems have been interwoven with single thread i.e. eros. Her poems beginning from page one to the last page, are replete with positive vibes and energy leaving the readers inspired and radiating with positivity. Her poems are remarkable for their meaning and message and create an impact on the readers by the power of words and scintillating imagery drawn from varied aspects of life and nature. These poems are free flowing with an internal rhyme evoking multiple emotions. They don't only captivate you with their music and rhyme scheme but keep you grappling with their thoughts and ingrained sublimity. Here is a poet who motivates you to the sanguinity of life, and prepares you for every challenge of life by fusing positive energy in you. The entire book creates an aura of positivity. The soothing serenity pervades all poems thrilling the readers with romantic sensibility, jejune and noble vision.

Now a critical and analytical review of the poems, becomes necessary because what strikes one first reading these poems, is not only the brilliant style of the poet but their steady brightness, luminosity and eloquence. The first poem titled “Adversities” is an appeal to the readers for putting up a brave face against all adversities because the poet sees like Shelley a silver lining around every dark patches of clouds. The poet creates an upbeat by creating paradoxical situations with her lyrical tone. To quote Poorvasha:

“When the light turns out and there is quietude around/ Light the lamp of hope and tap/the bell for the sound.” (*Resonance*, p1)

The next stanza of the same poem reads: “When the trusted path turns hostile, / When it brings with/it a few thorny miles./ Build your own unblemished road /Among the heap of dust.” (p 1). ‘Build your own unblemished road’ “among the heap of dust” is poet’s candid appeal to all those who have suffered from the sense of loss and yet they have not surrendered to the challenges of life. “Epitome of Fortitude” is celebration of human spirit which remains unbroken, dauntless and strong even in the face of tough times and she is a brave woman who is present in every great move of this world not as a feeble figure but embodiment of love, sacrifice and fortitude. She is a fighter, she is loving and caring, an epitome of fortitude, a real winner as the poet sums up in these lines “Though the winner is /the one whom/the embellished crown calls, /Worthy are those who arise/ vehemently despite multiple faults” (p 8). “The Tender Soul” tell the readers about the making of big hearted people, their alchemy of emotions and sublimity of thoughts and nobility of actions. The poem is an explicit expression of human frailties and acceptance of such limitations not as barriers to our onward journey but lessons for improvisation. These lines from “Wheel of Life” capture the golden words of the poet filled with inspiration “Don’t reverse the wheel into/ the unfathomable

past,/ But drive on the road /ahead to uncover where it lasts” (p10).

Poems after poems in this collection keep the bemused readers filled with words of wisdom and their magical interplay to weave a world of love, romance, joy and victory. Not a single poem leaves you stuck with dark humour or shades of sadness but they charge you, ennoble you and inspire you as you rise with them. All lines are loaded with worldly wisdom and take you along the journey called life. “Perception”, “Rejuvenation”, “Expectations-The Uncertain Path” (p17-19) and “Winsome Guardians” deserve close critical analysis as these poems emanate from lessons and life where protagonists have to lose themselves to discover the deeper meaning of life. The poet is highly sensitive to register the nuances of human perception, joys of winning and losing, jubilations and rejuvenation through a set of sparkling imagery and internal rhythm which become the rhythm of life itself. There is an invincible warrior breathing through all these poems who turn every struggle into victory and hence many of Poorvasha’s poems turn into songs of victory. These lines are affirmation of positive energy which reflect the passion for life-altering choice “Her vigour was low, / but her spirit didn’t die, / She converted her inner pain /Into bundle of joy” (p 16). To the poet expectations make our minds captive and we often fall short of meeting them, the gap between appearing and becoming fills us with a sense of hopelessness. These lines from “Expectations-the uncertain Paths” are remarkable as these fill us with their ingrained wisdom and kernels of truth: “Uncertainty is ubiquitous,/ is a parcel of fate,/ What ties us back/are anticipations that/We ourselves create./ Thus rise above vandalised hopes and imaginations,/ Look for the worth of life in/ its concrete creations(p20-21). Poorvasha navigates through the different snapshots of life with discernible pitfalls and setbacks and weave them in a lyrical pattern to sing

the song of triumph and joy. Her words dance to the tune of inner strength, integrity of purpose and sharp imagery. “If Only” is a poem of possibilities which a frail human spirit explores around loose patches, porous myths and lean hopes. This poem is replete with striking imagery taken from nature and its bountiful gifts. The poem runs with the romantic spirit and paints beautiful picture of life and nature. These lines from this poem reflect the romantic strains beautifully crafted in rhythmic flow:

“If I could feel the mellow of the/ blooming flowers
between my fingers,/ If only I could let out all those/fears that
in my mind lingers....If only I could let/the refreshing winds
bring out/ the unrestrained me/ If only I could embrace the /
bountiful and serene lanes./ If only I could let the tiny drizzles/
Obliterate all my unsettling strains” (p22-23). “A Beautiful
Mind” is assertion of the permanence of art and its intrinsic
values. It celebrates the aestheticism of all that is good and great
in human consciousness the poet draws a sharp contrasting
allusion between the transience of body and permanence of
virtues lived and practiced.

Poorvasha’s “Resonance” is remarkable for depiction of journey of life, and which sums up that the journey is the reward. This collection of poems reflects the power of mentoring, the entrepreneur as leader and reiterate that winning is a mind game. Irreverent and insightful this book of verse is powerful portrayal of a young and enterprising mind. This book is highly readable for freshness of its verse, intrinsic positive values and invincible spirit and lyrical qualities. The inspirational words uplift the readers from the low spirit, energising them with positivity and optimism. To quote from the last poem titled “Next Door” (43-44) in this collection:

“When one path is blocked/ to the greenery around. /Another
one will unfold its way to /a majestic ground...When the rains

induce hails and storms./And when your inner self / embodies
vivid forms/ There is a door which embarks/ the absence of
delusion /Behind which darkness knows /no form and grief is
an illusion....It is a door where hopes gleam,/ and aspiration
unfold,/ A door where you can attain/all that your eyes
behold” (p 44).

Resonance makes a wonderful reading with its free flowing
verse, words of wisdom and an unyielding spirit which it wields
throughout the book for the readers of all age group. Nuggets of
wisdom, vibe of positivity and serenity of felt music shine
through all pages of this collection.

DR. SAPNA DOGRA

**Review of Vivekanand Jha's Poetry
Collection *Falter & Fall***

(*Falter and Fall*, Poetry. Vivekanand Jha, Authorspress, New Delhi, 2017, Paperback, pp. 87, ISBN: 978-93-5207-517-1, Rs. 250/-)

Falter and Fall by Vivekanand Jha is an engaging and stimulating collection that comprises of fifty-one poems that revolves around no single theme but varied thoughts that go through the poet's mind in his day to day life. The poems largely deal with the poet's own experiences and reflections. Most of the poems are rooted in contemporaneity. The hallmark of his poetry is its simplicity. There is no high flown diction or flowery language. He simplifies his poetic subject which makes his poetry accessible.

As the founder and chief editor of two literary journal, it is no surprise that the process of submission for publications itself falls prey to the poetic mind of Jha. The very first poem in the collections is witty, academic, non-pretentious and out rightly honest. Worth noting here is that as an editor of two journals he could have advertised himself but he didn't, rather he assumed the position of a humble poet seeking an editor for publication of his poems. This poem will surely bring an irresistible smile on the readers. The endearing and winking humour of the poem is remarkable.

I send you to represent
in various magazines and e-zines
from my country to every region
but you fall victim to the predators
so called poetry editors.

They're prepared
 with ready witted reply:
 To the guidelines
 your submission doesn't comply.

...

Some say:
 You're committing a crime
 by composing the poem in rhyme.
 Better if our guidelines you rehearse
 as we consider poems only in free verse.

(“An Elegy to the Poem”)

An Air Force veteran, who served the Indian Air Force for twenty years, Vivekannad Jha also has to his credit numerous critical anthologies on Indian English writing that he had edited and one critical book on Jayanta Mahapatra that he has authored. The anthology under review is dedicated to the Indian Air Force and carries an interesting Epigraph that consists of two lines from the poem ‘The Stories in Poetry’ by Jayanta Mahapatra: “The world plots on / And poetry stumbles and falls”. On one hand, the discouragement, isolation and despair that a poet faces make his work challenging but on the other hand, it is only poetry that will sustain him in his future endeavour. He will falter, stumble and fall and rise again. The poem “Falter and Fall”, from which the collection takes its name, deals with a similar metafictional take on poetry. It talks about the process of poetry writing and its challenges. For me, it is the most resonant poem in this collection.

I write with ink of blood
 To honour and give
 a touch of eternity to it
 but my poems falter and fall
 in the poetry of the world.

I pluck words from
 a flowery and ornate garden
 and weave a garland of them

to adorn the world
 but they trample it
 under their feet
 like they crush the stub
 of the cigarette to prevent it
 from catching the fire.

This depth and style permeate the entire collection. A total of fifty-one poems they deal with plethora of themes: paternal wisdom, time, internet, animal slaughter, widowhood, global warning, pseudo intellectuals, hypocrisy, honour killing, love and passion, to name a few. There are also many references to Hindu mythology. The poem “Bhagwat Gita” is strikingly bright and the poem “Hanuman” that talks about Lord Hanuman as the source of life force will animates the readers with its imagery and diction.

In a world booming with social media and hyper connectivity, the poem “Connectivity” serves as an ode to internet:

We were detached, isolated,
 stranded, thirsty, withered and sick
 like a plant in a lonely, ever ending desert.
 ...
 Distance, wheresoever,
 discrimination whatsoever...
 sink into oblivion with a mere click of mouse.

I found some instances of companion poems in the collection where two poems are set together where the same theme or argument is carried further to its logical conclusion in the second poem. For instance, “A Paragon of Perseverance” and “Ashes of Al’ar”; “A Banyan Tree” and “A Vanished Tree”; “Cruelty” and “Cut-Throat” are all companion poems with a consistency of voice and tone.

Alliteration appears to be his favourite literary device and it appears in most of his poems. For instance, “dwarf daily drudgery”, “gristly, glossy, green”, “saga of science for self-

realisation”, “he filled my seemingly endless life full of failures, furies and frustrations”, “Time turns turtle on tip toes”, “doomed day to descend”, “Our hands heave, to harm and hamper, not to help and heal”, “O Hanuman! You’re in every heart and home”, “grinding the grain”, “Costumes of custom and culture”, “money monger monkey”, “Tethering under troubles, trials and tribulations”, “stigmatic taunts of foes, fellows or friends”, etc.

Jean Jacques Rousseau’s famous quote – “man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.” finds an echo in the opening lines of the poem “An Elegy to Animal”:

Born free
but, alas! Slave to the world
and everywhere in chains.

This emphasis on the precarious positions of animals in the modern world continues in the poem “Cut-Throat”. This poem is based on the concept of animal sacrifice in the name of religion practiced by many religious sects. The poem is enriched by the fact he is able to see the poignancy of the situation and simultaneously critique the hypocrisy of the society.

Even in sentencing slaughter
some say we are kind enough
as we prefer to eat
the meat of those animals
whose throats are
chopped off in one go.
Thus making their death
only momentary painful.
...
They take enjoyment
of peculiar and bizzare
song and music,
emanating from the animals
gasping for death,
and thereby relish
nibbling tallow and sucking the soup
inside the shank of wholesome

and palatable flesh and bone.

This poem is compelling with its raw poetic diction and shines in the anthology. Worth noting here is the total absence of restraint on the part of the poet. The strength of the book is the poet's candid approach to his subject matter. Who doesn't like poets who can dare to unabashedly speak their heart out? Jha is a brave writer for sure.

Most of the poems are easy to read but the poet expects his readers to critically reflect on certain themes like widowhood that appears in poems like "Flogging Dead Horse", "Stigmatic Widowhood" and "Smothering". Double standards of the society towards widows do not go down well with the poet. He is quick to comment how widowers are embraced by the society into repeated matrimony but widows find it difficult to find suitors easily in a society where gender discrimination is rampant, accepted and institutionalised.

But a widow, even though
 authentic, ascetic, and aesthetic;
 not passed even single conjugal night,
 even though married but untouched
 if struck by stigmatic widowhood,
 struggles to seek or solemnize
 even stale or left over mate for herself.
 (Stigmatic Widowhood)

As radar keeps surveillance on airborne,
 she is ogled by lecherous or vulgar eyes
 from social forum to sanctorum.
 She put up all persecutions passively
 Peeping through the orphan pane
 Like the fishes, snared into a net,
 Remain restless and stare in desperation.

(Smothering)

Jha's experience in the Indian air force peeps through the imagery of "radar" and "surveillance". The stylistic range of these poems is not very broad. Yet as the collection progresses,

he explores larger questions surrounding contemporary issues. There are number of fine poems on gender-based victimisation. The December 2012 rape and murder of Jyoti Singh Pandey in Delhi jolted the entire country. The poem “Someone Else” appears to be a response to that vicious gang-rape. Even though “Nirbhaya” or “Jyoti” are not named, the opening lines bring to mind the putrid memory of that unforgettable gang rape.

Her assaulted body,
drenched in blood
ravished like a wrecked ship,
catapulted beside the road
like dregs on the beach of the sea.

....
Her only guilt –
she was the daughter
or sister of someone else,
not of the passers-by.

The word “guilt” in the penultimate lines appears to be inappropriate. It should have been “fault” instead.

This book is for a reader who enjoys contemporary poetry and is interested in thinking about the follies and vices of the modern world. Apart from some instances of editing mistakes and typographical sloppiness, it is a fine collection.

INTERVIEW

Dr. K. V. Raghupathi – Four Decades of Journey through Writing: An Interview with Dr. P. Raja

K.V. Raghupathi: You have completed an unbroken four decades of writing in your life. Almost half of your life has been devoted to writing career. It is a remarkable achievement in one's life. You are born and brought up in French Pondicherry and you have identified yourself with it. Among the writers writing in English from Pondicherry, if one is asked to name a writer of prominence, one would suggest only your name. Raja is Pondicherry, Pondicherry is Raja. How did you begin your writing career? Have you ever thought that you wanted to become a writer in your life?

P. Raja: I plan to write a book on this subject, my dear friend Raghupathi. I will talk at length of my writing career beginning with my classmate and good friend R. Marimouthou and ending with god knows what. When we were very young, say just out of school, my friend and I used to wander on the promenade of our lovely beach in Pondicherry all the time talking and listening over a cone of *sundal* (boiled Bengal gram added with *chilies, chopped onions and coriander leaves*). He was a voracious reader who could never keep his reading to himself. He always shared them with me. He was a good narrator too. I was very much benefitted by his

reading. After re-telling me the story that delighted him, he analysed not the story but the style of the author. In fact, he was indirectly inspiring me to write and teaching me how not to write. He was the first one who showed me the right path towards the golden valley of writing.

Throughout my career as student I had excellent teachers, dedicated to their profession. I would be mistaken for an unthankful beast if I fail to register here the names of two professors under whom I had the privilege of studying English Literature. One was Professor R. Venugopalan Nair and the other Professor N. Santhalingam. Till today, both maintain excellent home libraries that are still growing. Both these gods in human form took me around the realms of gold. I began to read a book a day borrowing from their libraries that were made accessible to me. It was this reading habit that was moulding the unborn writer in me.

Years later when I was appointed Tutor in English by the Government of Pondicherry and sent to Karaikal (an enclave of Pondicherry) I had the opportunity of serving under Prof. N. Santhalingam, who was heading the department of English. He was also the editor of the college magazine. Since he valued me as his best student he assigned me to write an article for the magazine. I was trying to dodge his arrows but at one point they pinned me down. At that time I was reading the complete essays of Marti Larni, a Finnish writer. I wrote my first article 'Laugh with Larni'. Hence my first effusion appeared in Arignar Anna Government Arts College magazine (1975-76). My article immediately got reproduced in a local English monthly

Youth Age. Its editor George Moses, a retired police officer, sent me a copy along with a note to contribute regularly to his monthly. I started responding to his request. Then I branched out in the same year.

The year 1975 is the most memorable year in my life. I got a government job. I got married to my childhood sweetheart, Periyannayaki. I started writing.

K.V.R.: So you are only a forced writer? I mean, the writer in you has been thrust upon you. Can you throw light on it?

P. Raja: No writer is born with a laptop in one hand and a dictaphone in the other, to call himself a born writer. You know, the American poet Ezra Pound was called by his fans as a born poet. But a critic said of him, “He calls himself Pound but not worth a Penny”. So opinions alter and falter. Professor N. Santhalingam advised me to write. I would not have heeded to him had his been a command. But he was responsible for waking up the slumbering writer in me. Once the writer in me was put on the track there was no looking back. Koo...kukoo...the high speed rail engine moves on.

K.V.R.: If you look at your career, what is your level of satisfaction and fulfillment? Were there any challenges, difficulties and pitfalls in your career? How strong are you as a writer?

P. Raja: Life is not worth living if there are no challenges, difficulties and pitfalls. Only these things give you nerves of steel. I do not compete with others. I do not envy others. Yet a few of my colleagues in the college who liked my writings but hated me for writing well posed a threat. I broke their backbones by writing more and publishing them in enviable magazines and

journals both in India and abroad. And that put an end to their mocking and unpleasant smiles. I was able to jump over all the obstacles with a pole called confidence. I have a lot of it in my system.

K.V.R.: Your profile speaks of you as a prolific writer. You are a columnist, poet, short story writer, novelist, dramatist, essayist, biographer, local historian, folklorist, book reviewer, critic, translator and an editor. In which literary form, you think, you've excelled?

P. Raja: This question should be addressed to my critics or literary historians. Now that this arrow is shot at me, I should rush to say that writing is my passion. I love to see my creations in print. When I write I am comfortable with what I do. Awards galore came to honour the poet in me. Recognition came to the fictionist in me. My books on local history run to different impressions. Lieutenant governors during their tenure in Pondicherry manage to smell me and honour me in a fitting way for my overall achievement, an honour that is not given to any other writer here. Though I cannot claim like the British Romantic poet Lord Byron who said: "One morning I awoke to find myself famous", I can still say that all my books are read. I strongly believe in the saying "Success approaches those who are very busy". I am a real buzzing busy bee. What gives me the most satisfaction is that a good number of researchers and professors study my writings for seminar presentations and doctoral dissertations. That means I am worth the salt as a writer.

K.V.R.: Pondicherry figures prominently in your writings. What inspired you to write about Pondicherry and people around you? Where do you mostly get your ideas?

P. Raja: I can write only about the people and the place I am familiar with. Born and brought up in Pondicherry, I am a native of this divine soil. It gave me a decent job. It gave me a palatial house to live in, where seven generations of my ancestors lived. It gave me good neighbours and intimate playmates who still continue to be my good friends. The beautiful village (now where has it gone?), our village river that rushed its waters to the Bay of Bengal, our paddy fields that were our playgrounds now and again, our ponds that made us fishermen, all those tall and bushy trees that told us that we are born of monkeys and the list is very long... All of them have gone deep into my psyche. Now and then I go down memory lane for my raw material. I think I am good at adding salt or sugar to it.

K.V.R.: You worked and retired as a teacher in English in a Government college where workload is heavy, full and inescapable. How did you blend your teaching career with writing career? Which one has given you more satisfaction, teaching or writing?

P. Raja: To be a good teacher one should be a good reader. To be a good writer one should be a good reader. Without the blessed reading habit both the teacher and the writer are nothing. And I am a good reader right from my student days. You have come to my house on several occasions, my dear Raghupathi. You know my house is walled with books. I not only collect books of literary taste but also I read them. Even today, three years after my retirement, I find pleasure in spending my time in my vast study. So reading helped me to prepare for my lectures and to inspire me to write. Teaching is my wife. Writing is my lady love. Since you

are a well-known writer, you may know who gives you more satisfaction in life.

K.V.R.: You call yourself “a pure entertainer”. Your philosophy is to entertain the readers, you say. Certainly, a sense of humour pervades all your short stories and poems. But one can notice too irony behind it. Why don’t you want to be a serious writer?

P. Raja: By nature I am not a serious fellow. I know we are all puppets in the hands of the Divine. I take life as it comes, because I know it is stupid to react to Fate. When something happens to our eye, it is our hand that rushes to console the eye. But the eye knows that the hand is only a poor comforter. The suffering eye has to stomach the inconvenience. How will one know what joy is unless one is familiar with pain? Pain and suffering from a part and parcel of life only to define joy. Like every other human being I too was attacked by misfortunes. In fact, they came in battalions. But I gave them the jitters through my smile. I have learnt to wink at misfortunes. And so they shy away from me. This is the secret of life. Life itself has taught me this great lesson. No wonder that I try not to show the darker side of life to my readers. I totally disapprove of that stupid theory – “No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader”. Whatever meaning is attributed to this theory, my only question is, why should the writer bring tears to the reader’s eyes, when the reader himself is already in tears? Is it not the writer’s duty to bring cheer to the reader’s face? And this is what I am trying to do through my creative writing. “Make the reader happy”. This is my theory. Humour and irony, are Siamese twins. No writer can help in separating one from the other.

K.V.R.: Is your writing a deliberate attempt to avoid the suffering side of human life? Is there anything you are too scared to write about?

P. Raja: Yes, very much. “Know how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong”. I think it was Longfellow who said it, and he said it right. Who in this world does not suffer in one way or the other? And I sincerely believe that suffering is sent only to strengthen us. No reader needs P. Raja to tell them of suffering. It is like carrying *laddu* to Tirupathi or coconut oil to Kerala. I will never do it. If readers are interested in serious stuff they know where to go – Swami Vivekananda or Ramakrishna Paramahansa or Sri Aurobindo or Ramana Maharishi or J. Krishnamurti. To be very frank with you, I am scarred of writing about dirty politics. It is not that I plan to write about healthy politics.

K.V.R.: In most writers, one can notice an element of “effort” or “force” in their writings. But, in your case, such an element is not seen. How did you achieve this remarkable felicity in your writings?

P. Raja: As I told you earlier in this interview, I love writing. When love is sown we can definitely reap love. So writing too loves me. It returns what I give it. I believe in the wise saying “To those who give all is given”. I repeat – “Writing is my lady love”.

K.V.R.: How do you deal with writing under pressure?

P. Raja: It is said in Tamil language, that would read somewhat like this in English translation: “A needle vendor should have enough needles to sell”. I always keep many things ready – short stories, poems, essays and all that would go under creative writing. When the

demand comes I dash them off to the editors of magazines or newspapers. Assigned pieces are mostly articles and I have no other option but to write them under pressure. By pressure I mean the deadline. I will have to hurry it up, otherwise the chance may go to someone else. I rarely miss such opportunities. I remember to have worked night and day, without rest, to write 37 articles dealing with the culture and history of my native place, all for publication in a special issue of *The Hindu*, on Pondicherry. I started jumping for joy when I saw my name in 37 places of that issue. I slept peacefully after that when I was sure of a big fat cheque. I do not have the guts to say 'no' to editors who approach me with all love for my writing.

K.V.R.: What is your stature as a writer at national level?

P. Raja Any writer would like to get his effusions published without getting rejected. It is true that I collected several rejection slips in the beginning of my writing career. But now the situation has completely changed. No editor says 'no' to my writings these days. All the four major city newspapers – New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai – don't put my pieces in their queue or in their waiting list. The maximum wait may be a week or ten days. When I was in Canada last year with my second son's family, I was given an opportunity to read my poems in the Canadian Writers' Forum. I was really surprised to learn from them that many of them knew me by name. They were very happy to see me in flesh and blood. And the writers who came to hear of me for the first time hugged me and said: "Oh, you write in our language!" That speaks of my stature as a writer at international level.

K.V.R.: Most writers from the south are marginalised. They are not getting as much exposure and recognition as the writers from the north. How do you react to this observation?

P. Raja: I was General Council Member of Central Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi on the English Advisory Board from 2008 to 2012 representing Pondicherry University. Perhaps I was the first Tamil to enter the English Board of the Akademi. Sahitya Akademi has published several of my books and continue to send me assignments. Several established publishers from the North like Sterling, B.R. Publishers, D.K. Publishers and Ocean Books have gathered my writings between covers. Several anthologies of Poetry and short stories published from the North continue to include my pieces in them. National Book Trust, New Delhi will be shortly releasing my voluminous work *A Treasury of Ancient Tamil Legends*. I think I am not marginalised. I don't think you are marginalised. Publishers from the North publish your book, I know my dear Raghupathi. Yet some writers from the South feel that they are marginalised. I don't know how to account for this. Perhaps everything has to wait for its time.

K.V.R.: Can you recall any remarkable event in your life that has shaped your writings? Which writers do you think have influenced you more?

P. Raja: When I go down memory lane three great storytellers – my grandma Rajambal, my grandpa Masilamani and my mother Sagunthala – flit through my mind. When I was quite young, good enough to move about on my grandpa's shoulders or on my grandma's hip or in the crook of my mother's arms I listened to excellent stories that have not faded from my memory. What

really caught my mind was not only the story but also the way it was narrated. All the Ramayana, Mahabarata and Bagavata stories I have heard from my grandpa and all the folktales I have listened to from my grandma and all the ghost stories that my mother narrated thrilled me to the core. They rarely repeated a story to me unless I wanted to enjoy it again. How many times I had listened to the wit and wisdom of Tenali Rama and Mariyadai Raman, I have lost count. But this trio was perhaps nurturing the not yet born writer in me.

K.D. Sethna, M.P. Pandit, Maggi Lidchi Grassi and Manoj Das – all established writers from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry shaped my writing career. They were all editors of magazines who gave me enough pages to write in every issue. I have made use of their magazines as my exercise notebooks. So naturally, I came under the rule of their cane. I gratefully acknowledge their help in making me what I am today.

K.V.R.: You have won several awards and distinctions in your career as a writer. What more do you foresee? Has the writing itself given you self-satisfaction or the awards? What more do you expect in your life?

P. Raja: Awards...rewards...recognitions...distinctions! I am reminded of Falstaff's words from Shakespeare's play *Henry IV (Part one)*: "What is honour? A word...what is that word? Air. A trim reckoning." That's all. Awards and honours may pat you on the back and incur the wrath of the envious. But the common man who stops you in the fish market and goes on quoting from your poems or praising your narrative skills is the real award. I always think that I have just started writing and I have

a long way to go. This is another excuse to stay on Planet Earth for some more years.

K.V.R.: Right now, what are your ventures? What are you working on? As a writer how you look ahead?

P. Raja: Four of my books, all creative writing, are in the pipeline of publishers. I have just completed writing three novels. Several projects are on my anvil. My dream project 'Encyclopaedia Pondicherriana' in five volumes is nearing completion. I have just started writing 'A Literary History of Pondicherry' which I am sure is going to be a very voluminous work. I continue with my regular columns only to shape them into books at a later date. After my retirement, and that was three years ago, I became a professional writer.

K.V.R.: What is the hardest thing about being a writer?

P. Raja: When I am at work I skip even my dinner. I say 'no, not today' to my good friends who would like to chat with me on the promenade of the beach. I shut the door of my study on my grandchildren who very much like to make a playground of my study. I feel bad for them once my work is completed. But the joy of finishing a work is quite an experience. But the pain of seeing my friends and grandchildren go cross with me is a real painful experience.

K.V.R.: What is the question you would most like to be asked, but never have been?

P. Raja: "When are you going to stop writing?"

CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Holly Day's** poetry has recently appeared in *The Cape Rock*, *New Ohio Review*, and *Gargoyle*. Her newest poetry collections are *A Perfect Day for Semaphore* (Finishing Line Press), *In This Place, She Is Her Own* (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press), *A Wall to Protect Your Eyes* (Pski's Porch Publishing), *I'm in a Place Where Reason Went Missing* (Main Street Rag Publishing Co.), and *The Yellow Dot of a Daisy* (Alien Buddha Press).
2. **K. V. Raghupathi** is a poet, short story writer, novelist, book reviewer and critic. He has published ten books in English Verse, two novels, and two collections of short stories and edited seven critical books. His poems and short stories have appeared in various newspapers like *The Hindu*, *The Statesman*, Print and On-line journals. He is a recipient of several awards that include Michael Madhusudhan Dutt Award, Kolkata in 2001, H.D. Thoreau Fellowship, Dhvanyaloka, Mysore in 2000, the best chosen poet for 2003, Poetry Society of India, New Delhi Poetry Chain, Mumbai, Life Time Achievement Award, Chennai Poetry Circle, Chennai in 2010, Rock Pebbles National Award for Creativity, 2014, Bhubaneswar, besides the Best Yoga Research Publication Award, 2018 and Lifetime Achievement Award in Yoga (2018), New Delhi. Currently he is teaching in the department of English Studies, Central University of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvarur – 610005.
3. **Avdhesh S. Jha** is a critic, poet, editor and a teacher. He a doctorate in Education and a Post Graduate in Mathematics & Education with 13 years of teaching

experience at graduation and post-graduation level is a Faculty at EDI of India, Gandhinagar. Having command over six languages and interested in Methodology teaching, Philosophy, Psychology, Research Methodology and Statistics the author accredits to himself to prepare, design and introduce several new subjects in the curriculum of various faculties of various universities.

4. **Gale Acuff** has had poetry published in *Ascent*, *McNeese Review*, *Pennsylvania Literary Journal*, *Poem*, *Adirondack Review*, *Maryland Poetry Review*, *Florida Review*, *Slant*, *Poem*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Arkansas Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Orbis*, and many other journals. He has authored three books of poetry, all from Brick House Press: *Buffalo Nickel*, *The Weight of the World*, and *The Story of My Lives*. He has taught university English courses in the US, China, and Palestine.
5. **Sandip Saha** is a chemical engineer and PhD in metallurgical engineering. He has published one book of collection of poems, *Quest for freedom*, available at amazon.com. His poems were published in *Better Than Starbucks Poetry* magazines, *The Society of Classical Poets*, *Oddball*, *Snapdragon*, *felan*, *The Ghazal Page* all in USA and in *Taj Mahal*, *Verbal Art* in India besides *The Cape Rock: Poetry*, USA has accepted his poem for publication in the upcoming issue. He is a life member of The Poetry Society (India). His scientific research work can be seen at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/S_Saha4
6. **Dhiman Saha** is from West Bengal, India. He has been writing poems since he was 15 and his poems have been published in different anthologies and magazines like “*Sometimes Anyway*” “*International Poetry Digest*” and “*The Chaundry*”. He is at present pursuing MA in English literature.

7. **Aritra Basu**, a first year post graduate student of Jadavpur university Department of English. Under graduate degree pursued from Ramakrishna mission Residential College (Autonomous), affiliated to Calcutta University, graduated first class first from the same. Past experiences in seminars include presenting a paper: “Translated stage adaptations”, organised by Ramakrishna mission Residential College. He also presented a paper at an international conference organised by the Heritage Academy: “Passing the baton: Humanisation and contemporarisation of myths in the Indian subcontinent”. Previous publications include an article, ‘Filming Bengal’, in a book *Bengal Write Ahead* by Rupa publications.
8. **Sandeep Kumar Mishra** is a writer, poet, and lecturer in English. He is the art instructor at Kishlaya Outsider Art Academy. He has edited a collection of poems by various poets – *Pearls* (2002) and written a professional guidebook – *How to be* (2016) and a collection of poems and art – *Feel My Heart* (2016).
9. **Sukrita** is a well-known poet and critic, who held the Aruna Asaf Ali Chair at the University of Delhi till recently. Formerly, a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, she is an Honorary Fellow of the International Writing Programme, University of Iowa (USA), as also of Hong Kong Baptist University and Cambridge Seminars. She is honorary faculty at the Durrell Centre at Corfu (Greece). She has been the Guest Editor of several journals in India and abroad, including *Manoa: Crossing Over* (University of Hawaii), *Muse India* (Indian Literatures) and *Margaret Lawrence Review*.
10. **JW Burns** lives in Florida, enjoys walking, fishing and other activities appropriate to a person of advanced years. Having

once worked as a Journalist and also in the Marketing realm, he takes delight in writing short prose pieces.

11. **Kristine Hovsepyan** was born in 1992 in Armenia. She is an innovator, marketer and currently works for Armenian government. A reader by day and a writer by night, she is loathe to discuss herself, but can be persuaded to do from time to time. Being hiking lover and mountains' fun, she finds peace and inspiration in nature, with nature.
12. **T. Ashok Chakravarthy** is a poet and review writer composing poetry for the past 25 years. As of now, of the 2000 poems composed, nearly 1500 poems appeared in various magazines, journals, anthologies, newspapers, e-zines etc. in nearly 100 countries across the world. He is author of six volumes of poetry.
13. **Bill Cotter's** poems and stories have appeared in literary journals and magazines throughout Australia. He has won a number of literary awards, including the International Library of Poetry competition, the Maryborough Golden Wattle Festival poetry competition and the Melbourne Shakespeare Society's sonnet competition.
14. **Roger Singer** is a prolific and accomplished contributing poet who we have proudly published for many years. Singer has had almost 800 poems published in magazines, periodicals and online journals – 400 of which are jazz poems – and has recently self-published a Kindle edition of his book of jazz poetry called *Poetic Jazz*.
15. **Fabrice Poussin** teaches French and English at Shorter University. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in *Kestrel*, *Symposium*, *The Chimes*, and dozens of other magazines. His photography has been published in *The Front Porch Review*, the *San Pedro River Review* as well as other publications.

16. **James G. Piatt** has had poems nominated several times for pushcart and best of web awards, and many were published in the “*The 100 Best Poems Anthologies*.” He has had three collections of poetry, “*The Silent Pond*,” (2012), “*Ancient Rhythms*,” (2014), and “*Light*” (2016), over 1,120 poems, four novels, and 35 short stories, published. His fourth collection of poetry is scheduled for release this year. He earned his BS and MA from California State Polytechnic University, and his doctorate from BYU.
17. **Sue Vickers Tordoff** is a retired psychotherapist, writer and day dreamer. He lives in West Sussex, UK.
18. **Munia Khan** writes poems of different genres, short stories and articles. She is the author of three poetry collections. Her works have been translated into Japanese, Romanian, Urdu, Italian, Dutch, Croatian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Albanian, Finnish, Greek, Indonesian, Turkish, Bengali and in Irish language so far. Her poetry has been published in several anthologies, literary journals, magazines and in newspapers.
19. **Dhiman Saha** is from West Bengal, India. He has been writing poems since he was 15 and his poems have been published in different anthologies and magazines like “*Sometimes Anyway*” “*International Poetry Digest*” and “*The Chaundry*”. He is at present pursuing MA in English literature.
20. **Edward Lee**'s poetry, short stories, non-fiction and photography have been published in magazines in Ireland, England and America, including *The Stinging Fly*, *Skylight 47*, *Acumen* and *Smiths Knoll*. His debut poetry collection “*Playing Poohsticks on Ha’ Penny Bridge*” was published in 2010. He is currently working towards a second collection. He also makes musical noise under the names *Ayahuasca*

Collective, Lewis Milne, Orson Carroll, Blinded Architect, Lego Figures Fighting, and Pale Blond Boy. His Facebook page can be found at www.facebook.com/edwardleewriter

21. **Sneha Dubey** is 13 years old. She is living in Darjeeling. Her nickname is Drama Selfie Queen. She loves poetry writing. She studies at Notre Dame Academy.
22. **Daniel King** is a Western Australian writer. *Amethysts and Emeralds*, his first collection of poetry, was published by Interactive Press in May. His collection of short stories, *Memento Mori*, also published by IP, won the IP Picks competition in 2010. His other published books are the novels *Datura Highway* and *Vexil Excelsior* (under his birthname, David King). His hobbies include surfing, following the latest developments in space exploration, and listening to the music of Mike Oldfield.
23. **Yuan Yuan** (Hindi Name: Sneha; English Name - Aniston), the author of this poem from *The Mainland China*, is a passionate art lover with love for language and nature. Having the base of arts education, the author loves to express the feelings in foreign languages. Having written several poems in Chinese, the author initiated to write in English and Hindi.
24. **Rajiv Khandelwal** obtained his bachelors' degree in Electrical Engineering from Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences (BITS), Mesra, Ranchi. Co-produced a documentary film titled "Visit India, Discover Agra" in 1986. Have published three volumes of Poetry – "Conch Shells and Cowries" – published in 1998, "Love is a Lot of Work" and "A Monument to Pigeons" both published in 2013. Was invited by the Sikkim Akademi on the occasion of the 7th World Poetry Day on 21st March 2006 to read one of his poems.

25. **Chandra Shekhar Dubey** is a poet, translator, researcher and teacher. He is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Shaheed Bhagat Singh College (E), University of Delhi. He has published books, poems, reviews, short stories and research papers. He published three books of his poems. His poems have been widely anthologised nationally and internationally. He translated poems, short stories and theological works from Hindi to English. He is associated with many literary bodies and journals as advisory member, fellow member and editor.
26. **Sapna Dogra** completed her B.A and M.A. in English Literature from University of Delhi. She holds a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University. Her research interests include Folklore Studies, Translation Studies, Indian English Writing, Hindi Literature and Popular Literature. She can be reached at sapnardm@gmail.com.
27. **P. Raja** writes in his chosen language, English, and also in his mother tongue, Tamil. More than 3000 of his works – poems, short stories, interviews, articles, book reviews, plays, skits, features and novellas – have seen the light through newspapers and magazines that number to 300 in both India and elsewhere. He has written and published over thirty books in his writing career spanning over four decades that include six poetry collections, four short story collections, one full-length play, five one-act plays, three folk tale collections, two books on history of Pondicherry besides six translated works from Tamil to English, three books on biography, one autobiography and four edited volumes.

GJPP



AUTHORS PRESS

Publishers of Creative & Scholarly Books



VerbalART

A Global Journal Devoted to
POETS AND POETRY

A Refereed & Double Blind Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

ISSN 2347-632X

Vol.3-No.1 | 2018

Statement of ownership and other particulars about GJPP

Place of Publication	:	Q-2A, Hauz Khas Enclave, Annexe Block, First Floor, New Delhi - 110 016 India
Periodicity of Publication	:	Bi-annual
Printed by	:	Authorspress
Published by	:	Authorspress
Chief Editor	:	Dr. Vivekanand Jha
Nationality	:	Indian
Managing Editor	:	Mr. Sudarshan Kcherry
Address	:	Authorspress, Q-2A, Hauz Khas Enclave, Annexe Block, First Floor, New Delhi - 110 016 (India)
Website	:	www.verbalart.in www.authorspressbooks.com
Email	:	editor@phenomenalliterature.com editor@verbalart.in

Queries regarding subscriptions and any financial matters should be addressed to
authorspressgroup@gmail.com