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VerbalART

A Global Journal Devoted to
POETS AND POETRY

GJPP

A Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

Vol.-4, Issue-1 | Apr-June - 2020

Chief Editor:

Dr VIVEKANAND JHA

Associate Editor:

Dr RAJNISH MISHRA

Review Editor:

Dr CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY

Assistant Editor:

Prof. SHASHANK NADKARNI



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POETRY

ANJANA NAIR

Madwoman

I untangle my wayward locks
Lustily courting its many lovers
Entwined in meshes of filth and earth
Filtering the smoke and dirt of the city
Flies squat around me in awe
I part with them my food and time
They come in droves
They lick my body
They warm me

People swarm my courtyard
Blocking my view
They hustle and bustle
They hop and horn
They abuse my space and peace
I rant in vain

I look through them
Far and Beyond
I see the sun, the moon and the stars
I see the open skies
I hear the music
I dance in circles
In harmony with earth,
We move round and round the sun

I party with dogs at night
We howl and whistle
We rummage the bins
That overflow with food, and what not
We drink from water holes
Strewn across the streets
I adorn my bare skin
With layers of plastics and papers

I sleep on the earth
Under the dim lit skies
The City's child
That is what I am
Born here
To be dead here

I am invisible
To the government
I don't vote
I drench in the rain
of anonymity
But I am still here
Looking at you
With eyes that glow in the dark.

ANJANA NAIR

Bitter old Man

Brown was his sheet
Not with dirt, not by choice
But by chance
Brown, the colour of the outcast
The colour of the misfit

He sat on it
Holding his equine frame upright
A solitary soldier
Wounded and still fighting

Pills went into his mouth
Red, green and yellow
No teeth to guard
Words from him knew no hurdles
They flew criss-cross
Killing a few
Maiming the rest
Striking new combats

Old stories became repetitive
Specifics were never constant
Change was his normal
Life was always in rewind
Played in loops

Fading memories were his trusted comrades
As friends fell out, family outgrew him.
He held onto his past tight
Future was not that far away
His vision was clear
A distant land that beckons, and frightens him
Time, time is all that he has left

AVDHESH JHA**The Endless *And*...**

The unending *and* seems to end somewhere
And thus the endless *and* ends with an *and*.
Although the *and* seems to end but
As a matter of fact, there is hardly any end to the *and*.

With the life, enters the *and*, and the *and* joins to previous *and*,
Each *and* adds to the life, each *and* adds to the strife of life,
Each *and* adds, Each *and* multiplies; it nurtures and nourishes
the *and*
And thus, each *and* adds to the *and* to turn it an endless *and*.

The simple and the humble *and*, the said conjunction,
With the *and* turns the simple sentence compound
Like the sentences, How if the *and* between the two hearts
Simply served to convert the two hearts one.

Adding to the *and*, Life, with the death seems to come to an end
It seems, as if, the *and* comes to an end, But life is a cycle,
Life and death, with an *and* follow each other, The cycle
thus obsoletes the end and turns the *and* an endless *and*...

AVDHESH JHA

The Blank Page

What to describe? How to describe this page?
I wonder, if I know even about my age?
Whether from top or towards bottom, Left or right,
I am lucky, I am merely a blank page.

Deep relations and gender were imprinted on birth page,
Whereas lessons of limitations were given on the family page.
Caste and customs were added by neighbourhood page,
How pity, distinction and discrimination was added in school
page.

Gender sensitivity was added on adolescence page,
Selfishness with so called maturity was added on youth page,
Jealousy in the name of competition was added on education
page,
How pity, it added to enmity on the innocence page.

With many imprints, each page added to turn to a book,
How pity! With astray addition, each page was just a rage.
Without any light, without any depth, with lot of ambiguity...
It's pity! The imprinted book until the end remained a blank
page.

AVDHESH JHA

Fascination

I know not what happened to me
But certainly, something happened to me
The nature remains the same unchanged
However, I could feel, how it has changed?

All the time, I disliked the droplets the most
But today I like the monsoon and the bough
The roads which were untrodden for me before
Turned popular and least hidden with me now.

The talks I disliked, attract me the most now
The flowers I ever cared, attract my attention now
What more I love to see myself more in mirror
And I await the phone call that has yet not come.

Lost am I, although always in group
Thoughtful am I, although for no reason
Whether in solitude or joy, if it is about you,
Today I like to think a little more.

With this more, I am fascinated and shy
What more, I started counting million stars in sky
I am fascinated, exotic and erotic with your thought
To be true, your presence makes me feel my beats.

Although away, I feel the company, I enjoy the company
I guess, I found someone, someone to stay in my heart
Someone to feel and someone to rule my heart
Rather I think, I found a heart to rule the heart.

Till now I ruled the world, my illusive world
It was an illusion and now I know the rule
Now my world has changed and now I know
If only you are in love, you love to be ruled than to rule.

BARBARA BRIGGS

My Life but an Echo

my life
but an echo
echoing out of stillness
shimmering in a sky
dotted with innumerable stars
my life
a small light
on a horizon washed with gold
I come from amidst the waves
washed ashore
unremembered
naked
to begin again to be born
and you find me
covering my nakedness
with a veil of dreams
silken iridescent is thy veil
and through its wafting fibres
I behold the sun

BARBARA BRIGGS

A Hundred Violins

when last I saw you
I heard the music of a hundred violins
ascending in the evening air
amidst the endless splashing of the rain
that filled the night with a gentle light
that seemed to bid us
weep no more
and as the years have come and gone
since that fatal day
with the onward march of time
has grown the vision of eternity
and when amidst the star-filled nights
I seek the brightness of your eyes
the tender touch of God reveals
Thy hidden light is everywhere

BISHNUPADA RAY

Writing

the sky falls into halves
days pass into nights
nights pass into days
the waxing and the waning
of my brain
write ebb and flow
on the shoreline sheet
and pin it to time
for the time being
it appears harmless
but from a later perspective
it looks so callow
that the fire wants to burn it
the air wants to blow the ashes
into the ocean
so that no memorial is held
and no pilgrimage is made
only the earth hides the pain
in some buried vault of guilt.

BISHNUPADA RAY

Mutant

a moment of dangerous living
has altered the gene and taste
my head is full of caffeine
sleep-deprivation has led me
to a world of toxins
gathered at the spine of sins
my craving for soft flesh
rounded and rhythmic tunnel
is my discovery of a worm hole
I use the thrust of soft clay
to reach to some outer space
of pitch black darkness
where the alien inside me
wiggles out like my progeny.

DESPY BOUTRIS

On Overcoming Gamophobia

Since your silence scares me, be road kill,
be oil spill, be the elevator that stalled

on its way down. Let me learn to love
the quiet; let's learn to speak without noise.

And since I despise tight spaces, locked
doors, uncertainty: lock us in a room in the dark,

or in a storm shelter – love, take me
subterranean and then *take me*, let me

take you. You know odd numbers make me
nervous, so how about I ghost the five fingers

of my left hand over all seven bones of your neck?
If I'm bonnet, be breeze and blow me

away. But take me with you. If I'm blind,
be shuddering breath, be the sound you make

when I touch your chest. If I'm oak, be Spanish
moss so we can grow together, so I can grow

rings to give you, so you can wrap yourself
around me. If I'm weed, be gardener

and uproot me. If I'm week, be-*end*
so we can spend Sunday morning in bed,

so we can bake bread. If I'm night,
be nightlight so I can find you in the dark.

If I'm crocus, be rainfall, be honeybee
and, honey, come be with me.

(first published in *Byzantium*)

DESPY BOUTRIS**April Morning with Cicadasong**

And still I'm traipsing through the fields
of wildflowers and grass and foxtails. Beyond
these fields are more fields and then more
and then the cloudless sky. Bees hovering
around coral-colored blooms, I make my way
to the river, crowned in clovers and briars,
hair more nest than hair, knees stained red
with scars. Pluck a peach from the tree rimming
someone's property and pulse it in my hand,
inhale the scent of its skin. I'm no good
at girlhood – worse yet at being good.
Above, the moon swells in blue skies
and the cicadas keep screaming.

(first published in *The Berkeley Times*)

DJ TYRER

The Herd

Heavy horned heads
Face outwards
The petals of a flower
Built of flesh and bone
Alone even such great beasts
Make for easy prey
Outmanoeuvred, wearied, worn down
Yet together they stand resolute
The strong embolden the weak
And the strong are strengthened
While the young, the sick, the old
Shelter at the flower's heart
Safe and secure
A precious treasure
Sheltered from the vicious storm

DJ TYRER

Without You

Without you, I feel so alone
Your presence is my life's warp and weft
How can I ever reconcile this
Without you I am utterly bereft
Your love is something I've never known
Something I must do without
Your presence I so sorely miss
My love for you I long to shout
But my heart demands I stay silent
Our love is clearly just not meant

DS MAOLALAI

Rainstorms in Autumn

leaves on the window
colour our light
as if life lived inside
of old teapots. rainstorms in autumn
burn brown like cold toast
forgotten while you mixed up
your coffee. on the pavement
drops prickle, landing with sharpness
and the violence of broken
umbrellas. people rush home
and the sky, foxy red,
rumbles with caution,
the incipient betrayal
of a leg
pressed against
the horizon.

DS MAOLALAI

The City Turns Over

like dropping a bowl
stew. life spills, stains everything
and mobs with ragging
seagulls.
hands in my pockets,

I walk past bars
and clusters of cigarettes
glowing like roses.
someone lights a cigarette
cupped in his hand –
he looks so stylish
that I wish I hadn't
stopped. the mind falls apart
like bricks in a collapsing building

and now I'm the city, and buildings
in collapse. I am the lights
crawled out of open
windows. the river
rolling forward, steady as the growth

of grass. I am plastic bags
being torn apart by foxes.
old chip wrappers.
bits of bottles
and the ends
of cigarettes.
I am crumbs
of drunken vomit
being snuffed at by pigeons.

EDWARD AHERN

End of Season, Provincetown

The mingled clumps of gays and straights
bustling after experiences and vistas
surged back to winter harbors.
Artists and merchants tallied the season
and retreated with the ebb of tourists.
Provincetown drained to standing water.

With the transient flood receded,
winter life was again visible,
streets thinly populated by dowdier locals
nourished by the summer leavings,
but content that for half a year
they would know everyone they met.

EDWARD AHERN

Visit to an Unmarked Grave

A while ago this friend died alone.
Maybe drunk, maybe deliberately.
No one visited him for three weeks,
so he rotted on a sofa.

We shared a secretive calling,
close friends and interests
and a serious dependency,
but not his dying.

His lived distantly enough
from my life that I doled out
help and companionship
as the occasions arose.

At the end, he'd run out of
money, health and work.
Unable to remake his life,
he brought it to a close.

His sister said good riddance
and his debtors complained,
but we few knew the man
inside the flaws and mourned.

FABIYAS M V

The Old Steps leading to my Ancestral Home

After the wedding ceremony,
she walked up the steps,
hand in hand,
with specks of shyness.

My grandma,
even her home too,
disappeared in the time bin.
Only those concrete steps
remain.
Shrubs have sealed the footprints.
A kingfisher feather
and a broken snake eggshell
lie among the dried leaves.

Has her soul been recycled
and reinstalled in some infant
somewhere?
Or does she wake up
and climb these steps
in the dream-light?
These questions bear fanciful beauty.
But what kept her serene,
even when the death rattle echoed,
is her belief
that all will be gathered again.

FABIYAS M V

Brown Dog

He's a brown dog conditioned
in chains.
He lives with a castrated desire.

His urges are groomed. To be
gentle, he
must be docile. His fangs sink

into the flesh in a red China
plate. He
sucks on a daydream. Fetters

are unfastened in the dark.
Yet he
can't chase that street bitch.

There's an ID tag attached to
his neck.
Sincerity is a strain. Even a

Norway rat scratches his sleep.
He can
lunge, snarl, yap, and is proud

of his vigour. But all are transient
illusions. His
hind legs swell horribly. A vet

diagnoses an incurable fate.
Heart-worms of
despair spread in rapidly.

Master shuts gate on his face,
not paying
any gratuity. Wisdom eyes

open in his sultry brain.
Whining is
in vain before iron bars.

He deciphers nonsensical
side of
barking. Dropping past litter

in the doghouse, he limps
away through
experience like an ascetic.

FRANCIS H POWELL

Latent

Clear a passage in the sand
Cast away all those latent cries
That lie embedded in your unconscious
Then swim away, far from the jaws that tighten
For these are terrible times we live in
Such an ugly era for a child to be born into
And hope lies strewn on the sea shore
And toxic winds batter innocent flesh
And those who are not cursed or afflicted
Wrestle with a life so desperate
As the wheels of industry grind on
A vulgar song is chanted in the distance
A ripe cheery is fresh to be picked
But nothing is ripe nor edible
In this garden of corrosion and decline.

FRANCIS H POWELL

Slabs of Bread

Mixed in with poverty
The wisdom of ages, with the mind of fools
Torment alongside ecstatic joy
Thunder compared to the silence of deep contemplation
A rugged terrain against undulating hillside
An outsider compared to an admired member of society
A complex character compared
opposed to someone simple and straight forward
Discordant harsh sounds juxtaposed
against the voice of an angel.
Heavy feet pounding the pavement
or just tip toeing as gently
as a thief in the night

FRANCIS H POWELL

The Blind Leading the Blind

If you scrape at the truth
What do you find?
The blind leading the blind
You didn't say your name
Or where you come from
But there's thunder in this tranquility
What is your testimony
What can you say in your defense?
Speak now and all will be told

GARY LANGFORD

A Poet I Know

I find a page on your son's death,
left for me in coffee clouds,
a single pen draft, no punctuation.

I encourage you to be his voice,
his presence as a rising star
in your night sky, to never age.

He appears in your next book,
burial on a 21st is in the last verse.
A tape plays him singing his own song.

You film this as a short movie,
My Son's Story, edited for an even frame,
a figure running down a ghostly driveway.

To be gathered in the 13th line.
Sales are low; you stay in bed.
Judges glow in a small shed.

I engineer you as an abandoned idea.
Don't despair, poets float in air.
Your other children hold you in care.

Ephemeron is my painting in the lounge.
You don't recognize the peach, yet smile.
A giant bird's droppings fall on the shed.

GARY LANGFORD

Old Red

*Skin opens as a soft symphony.
You wake up to talk tenderly.
Drink the year away calls Old Red.*

The ship sails out of apartments into rough seas.
We wait for the script we want, yet seldom receive.
My aunt is as testy as a thought; owl on the scowl.

I am writing her novel on recycled paper-plastic.
She smiles on page 2, as if the character isn't her,
too much optimism; comedy as light chocolates.

She sails inner city streets in unbalanced currents.
For a time she is our favourite, and bows.
Audiences shout and applaud as words rain down.

We are tuned in every breath we take.
Haven't we heard this before?
Memory-scape has its own exams; its own degrees.

Aunty Red glows; nose as bright as a button.
She's called a hero. I ask what for?
A red light, it's not your bees-wax, boy.

I don't say, witty alliteration, as that is a bullet,
and she has a cock gun in her purse.
She believes men seldom leave the trenches.

I'm the ships writer; the physicist; the philosopher.
She enjoys being partly deaf. You're fall of it all right.
Sadly, my language isn't even toilet paper.

Drink the year away, calls Old Red.
Remembered in the pub by Finch and Sparrow.
My voice is an empty glass that doesn't last.

GARY LANGFORD**Singer**

I am told to sing softly in case the world awakens.
Sanity worries my family more than poverty.
Madness runs along the ancestral river,
bikes without wheels; and second hand cars.

My lyrics grow before me in the body factory.
Owners give me out, doubt before wicket.
They step on my songs without a foot wrong.
Horror is discovering I still sing, wordless!

I come in from the cold to talk to you.
To say dreams are absurdist in ghostly residue.
Don't worry if you can't read the shopping list.
Walk through the swamp on a narrow line.

I sing to you in my musicals, *o sweetheart,*
we open each other's heart without string,
calling this the birth and feel of spring.
I cast you in the part that calls out to you.

Only I see childhood along the throat line.
Only a small doll haunts you, even at school.
It's just a doll, I say, to be disembodied.
This is your period of the God.

My musical is purged in the wilderness.
Religion replaces drugs to be a drug.
I wait out on the boundary. Books gather.
I walk along the hardboard as my shot.

GARY LANGFORD

Comedian

We have our own country and customs call-ups.
They are delivered when we least expect them.
Education is accidental, laced in its own storage box,
like hopeful children, like foreign forgetfulness.
Where you live, what you say, worry clouds grow.

Does it help to have a leading role in the play?
Careers take off from seeds of accidental promises.
You are the model of fanciful clothing.
Those around you offer cups of acquiescent succulence.
Drink each one as a favourite wine. And do not whine.

I direct you in epiphany; beyond rites of passage.
You need to sail around the world without accident,
dead fish on a rising sea; along with a psychiatric report
that portrays you as a level-headed sailor in the tests.
We're in the harbour on your return, waves of victory.

Heads, I call. Your one headlessly rolls away.
Changing heads I write you up in a storm.
Bones are displayed, breaking in tiny effigies.
Doctor Wistful says, we'll put you together.
A morning bird calls you to never be old.

My daughter and granddaughters are daffodils.
They humour me as my brain ware ages.
I can still drag words out of my dictionary.
I call them into line. They chuckle. They wheeze.
I am their comedian with buckled knees.

HOLLY DAY

My Cat

In my cat's dreams
the world is safer, softer, quieter.
no garbage trucks rumble by at 5 am.,
no mailman rattles the front door at noon.
I know this because

when I sleep with my cat
his paw pressed up against my cheek
I dream only of quiet things:
small birds by the feeder, their footprints leaving
jagged hieroglyphics in the snow
tiny rabbits chirping in the undergrowth

warm sunshine
filtered through green summer leaves.

HOLLY DAY

Saturday Walk

The loons have landed at the far end
of the lake, clumsy and noisy in the shallows.
The dog pulls at the leash, curious to see
the giant birds up close.

The water has warmed just enough
that bubbles flow beneath the ice, great patches
of dark blue can be seen through the surface. My dog

whines at my insistence that we stick close
to the shore and off the ice, unaware
of the onset of spring.

ILHEM ISSAOUI

I am an Idiot that Writes

Yet people read me
And the more they do
The more I feel less me
The more I am exposed to the mundane of their lives
And made known
Here to point at
It is only when I write that I admire me
Once what I write is written
I no longer function in the me mode
I go hide
Because I hate me

JAHNAVI GUPTA

Illusion

The whole world is an illusion
Even the time we've spent together
Sometimes I think,
About the lost nights we've both loved
When you and me shared the same cigarette
With hand in hand
And slowly let our dark sides be revealed.

You,
You were the only one who never judged me
You were the only one who never feared my dark side
You were the only one in whose arms I showered my tears
You were the one in whose eyes I saw the galaxies
And you, o my love
Were the ones whom I lost.

I had nothing else to lose
'Cause I didn't have anything.
You were my only possession
You were mine.

It's been years since I lost you
But have I really lost you?
You said that you will never leave me
Why did you lie?
No, that can't be it
Because you were the only God I ever believed in.

Thousand nights have passed since the last rain
When you held me so tight that I thought that we will be one
When I thought that we will never be apart
When at last I found a meaning to live.

You were the only glooming light on this gloomy soul.
But again,
All I have left of you now is an illusion
Where you hold me when I try to sleep every night
And long for death.

JAHNAVI GUPTA

Flowers in my Backyard

I had a garden
Blessed with the colors
Of the wondrous rainbow.

I spent hours with them
Looking and wondering –
Are they happy?
The sun shone on them
But maybe,
It did not share its happiness.

I walked one day
Past the silent river
Which reminded me of lost love.

I never came to the backyard
Because it was not decorated
And never had visitors.

Among the wild grass
Growing like a proud fighter,
Fighting with the sharp leaf blades
Grew two adjoined flowers.

I thought
That I saw marvelous lovers
Blessed by the Fairy Amoreuse.

They touched the rich walls
Of my heartless mansion
But they did not wear
The painful golden robe.

The sun shone a little on them
But, look how courageously
They fought with the darkness.

Unlike the flowers in my garden,
They were happy
Blessed by what was eternal.

That day I understood
That the big, expensive cage
Does not give the freedom
Of the unending sky.

JAMES G. PIATT

Winter Has Gone

A sudden stillness rests upon my mind, as the frailty of
the newborn season settles into the damp soil and
green mountains, re-defining time. I feel the soft touch
of the spring sun as it curves around the edge of
eternity then circles around my body;
the warmth calms my mind as winter departs.

JAMES G. PIATT

The Crystal Bell

I found a crystal bell in a musty drawer, I rang it, no sound emerged, but I was led to a place in my mind where only memories of the past existed. I gave the bell to a ghost, and when it left, silence curled around the tattered edges of my long lost memories. The noiseless vibrations floated up a flight of steps to an ancient grandfather clock that was soundlessly pealing thirteen hours into the crumbling atmosphere. I saw the ghost sitting in an old rocking chair by the clock. It smiled at me as it rang the inaudible bell again, and I understood.

JAMES G. PIATT

Rain & Tears

I woke up on a rainy morning and saw tears running down a windowsill causing sad memories to mist up the windowpanes. A lone hawk soared high in the air searching for her long lost mate. A mother was silently weeping for her son lost in the war. An old man sat in the midst of his vanishing memories, faded by time. The world spun backwards trying to escape the tarnished moments of a troubled time, and I felt the sorrow of the tears as I wiped away the mist.

JAMES G. PIATT

Summer Day

The heat of the noonday sun
Warms the earth while
Hollyhocks in full bloom
Shed their colors into the air.
An old man sits in the
Shade of a Mimosa tree
Pondering his vanishing years
As he watches the flower's
Colors pulsate in his mind.

JOSEPH HART

Empty

To write about the people
I like to say I knew –
Who did I know? Any?
Except their hearts were true.

The singular fidelity
Discovered in a cat –
Or write about myself –
Do I know even that?

Or conjure up a mindless
Phrase about a tree –
Or compare a night of slumber
To a peaceful sea –

JOSEPH HART

Madness

You discover books and think
Reality is yours
And paradise, and then you learn
The writer you liked most
Went insane or shot himself.
Paradise collapses.
It was only words and feelings.
Words somehow made big
By genius or by madness.
And words go silent.

JOSEPH HART

While Looking At Bernini

Maybe art's exhausted.
Like the dinosaurs, it's gone –
Sculptors and composers,
Painters, poets – gone.
Perhaps as things continue,
Someday further on
There'll be another Renaissance,
New Gods, another dawn.

JOSEPH HART

The Future

Hopefully to see
A resurrection of old times
When editors don't vomit
When they notice something rhymes.

And rhythm's not anathema
To poetasters hence.
And poems to be beautiful
Must at least make sense.

KEITH MOUL

Big Leaves

As principal, this tree stands staunch at the center of my land, with me resisting wind, rot; my native anchor around which I pivot on its symbolic tether, typically confident of a safe return. Seeds flutter down to expand our influence. Each year leaves cascade, always left to gather on receptive ground, imbibing its mold nourishment like grateful miners emerging into a welcoming rush of air to breathe.

Nothing lascivious works here. Thrill of power stands exposed, like a Thomas Jefferson statue, enduring however cold for a yeoman on his land, freely engaged and spreading continental dreams.

KEITH MOUL

Enticing the Blind Mind

Hard wind weakens a resistant mind
to expect trees' rings laved by tears,
to compel complete emotional bias
or collapse dwarfed in their shrieks.

Every day on our land we know truth
including baneful effects on our lives.
So we planted a wide ring of saplings,
then surveyed to build the house 100
feet to the center, awaiting patiently
a sturdy congregation of oaken trunks.

But carnage can befall, pile its victims,
to expose natural predation darkly, as
if suckered to bad bargains by the Devil.

The trail enticed us, dropped promises,
“the west,” however undefined, drew us
far beyond reason, into terrible denial.

Our creed does not admit to greed, nor
what our discipline calls serendipity,
what is labeled by some a blind mind.

Lord, my children too stoop to kiss
this ground; they rely on your mercy
to thrive, as must the standing trees.
I know your need, so I beg for them.

KEITH MOUL

Prairie Winter

Winter storms sometimes pass in benign breezes,
forced east toward the big lakes. Left behind, the
night accepts a redolent moon and salient snow light.

Will ample snow always fall in maximum moonlight?
No, such events happen only coincidentally, not cosmic
returns calculated for millions of years to entertain us.

I watched first for snow light when as a boy my older
family members counseled to be alert for spirits to pass.

O.P. SINGH**The Last Remorse**

O my life, what a great eternal sweet spree,
You always seemed to be,
But alas, deep below the grassy dust's pile-up,
Forever interned to be,
Whence you surged up,
To be ever-sprung.
In joyous frolics,
I passed each moment,
Never thought for what,
You were meant,
Ah, the mock maxims to master your mazy art,
To which so tenaciously I clung.
When I breathed my last,
None of those who loved me always,
Drenched me with their torrential tributes and tears to mourn,
Alas, I set forth bone-dry on a solitary voyage,
Into the distant inane, unknown,
Without a single dirge sung.
I take away nothing with me,
Save a huge dead dreams' cumulus,
And on my deserted grave,
I leave behind nothing but a tearless tumulus,
Ah, ceased the fling that forever I wanted to save,
And to the absolute naught was my life finally flung.
Like wood leaves,
Unknown, unseen, I wither,
Ah, for a pearly tear,
On my sepulcher,
How I ache for an evocative epitaph and a redolent nosegay on
it here,
With a parting "miss you" message to it sweetly strung.

O.P. SINGH

The Pet Pup and not so Pet Husband

My darling, what a hard luck for me and all my ilk,
Every night a mere pup sleeps on your body, beauteous and
warm,
He, wrapped in warm wool and showy silk,
Happily enjoys all your bodily charm,
After a sound sleep with you,
Like a cocooned larvae little,
In the morning he opens up his eyes and looks at me,
With a teasing twinkle.
As soon as he is up,
He laps all the full-fat milk,
In a large sterling silver cup,
And thus energised runs all over my body,
Even before I am up.
And I, the so-called boss of our household,
who got you pup, milk,
Sterling silver cup,
And his wear of wool and silk,
Have to lie lovelorn in the bed,
Cold without you and sleep all alone,
And every morning cry,
At the top of my tone,
For a mere one china cup of black tea,
Ah, not your husband but if your pet pup I could be!

RAJIV KHANDELWAL

In Rain Forests

Smelling of lavender
She sat close
Mint tea on her breath, caressing my cheeks
She sat close to me
Her hot thigh
 Pressing into mine

With tilted head
A hard-core fan's emotional attachment
She was totally engrossed
In what I was saying
 Her expressions communicating
 I was her "life-world"

With tightened throat
I was revealing
That I missed her
 Like fish missing water

A smile decorating her face
She softly started speaking:
That
I should try missing her
Like parched earth missing
 Rain drops
 In rain forests

It was her first visit
After her death

And before she could continue

The alarm went off

ROGER G. SINGER

Life in 15 Lines

Discovery of voice
A print of oneself
Black and white photos
The shape of us
Multiple shades and shadows
Memory reflections
Voices in the wall
Reappearing seasons
Reality to fiction
Mirrors mark time
Searching for the edge
Discovering the unexpected
One more length to go
Prayers answered
The other side

S. RUPSHA MITRA

Ode to the mirror

Reflecting the world in a
Glass – a sheen, inside-out
Rising like a beautiful glimpse,
A four-corned beauty,
Charting mysteries written within, inscribed down
You show what I own.
My eyes evasive, you take me to the core,
Mirror mirroring marvels of the soul.

S. RUPSHA MITRA

Moonlit Night

Moon melts in velour
Of purple-blue firmament
Mangata ripples in the lake

SANDIP SAHA

A Mermaid Loved me

I lived in a lonely island
with animals and birds
sitting at the sea shore
listening to waves' roar.

Once a mermaid appeared
wading through the waves
she was agile and anxious
stopped looking at me.

Her face was so beautiful
a spring of affection
innocent giggling
dragged my eyes towards her.

She gradually came nearer
climbed up to my lap
caressed my face
with her petal soft fingers.

Bountiful love from her heart
pierced through my chest
I could not talk to her
nor she could talk to me.

A big wave drenched us
I enjoyed her honey touch
she embraced me tight
tears rolling down her cheeks.

SANDIP SAHA

You in me

If I forget you
it is my fault
you cannot forget me
it is my thought.

If I fail in my duty
that is my inefficiency
I can never think of
any of your deficiency.

If I wander in rain hit road
without remembering where to go
you can hardly hate me
I surely think it so.

If I remain amazed in thinking
looking at the sky
do not care for anything
still you do not cry.

If I look for something
this world has never got
you will never rebuke me
because you want me to get that.

If I do such stupidity
which causes you pain
yet I look you smiling
can you never complain?

Who are you my dear
always keeping me to your heart
maybe you are in me
so you never get hurt.

SNEHASISH GHOSH

A Ray of Light

When you see your future in eclipse,
When you feel very lonely,
When there is no light for you to move forward,
When you begin to wear down,
When it feels like everything is lost,
Just believe in yourself,
And you will see a bright ray of light.

When you are in deep pain,
When you have no one by your side,
When you just feel like screaming in the open,
When you know everything is your fault,
When you feel like you are done,
Just have faith in yourself,
And you will find a bright ray of light.

When you feel completely blank from inside,
When you know no one is going to support you,
When you are left with nothing but only tears,
When you start remaining gloomy,
When you have no idea of where you are going,
Just keep only hope in life,
And you will receive a bright ray of light.

SNEHASISH GHOSH

I Wish we Had Never Met

I wish we had never met,
For the pain that you gave me
Is burning my soul,
Drowning me in doubts,
Making me struggle,
Each and every moment of my survival.

I wish we had never met,
For the sound of your voice
Is making my eyes wet,
Pushing me into loneliness,
Making it hard for me to thrive,
Each and every moment of my survival.

I wish we had never met,
For the smile of your face
Keeps on flashing in front of my eyes,
Taking my smile with it,
Making me think of you,
Each and every day of my survival.

I wish we had never met,
For the time spent with you,
Is constantly reminding me of you,
Frightening me from love,
Making me feel alone,
Each and every moment of my survival.

I wish we had never met,
For You took my heart
Breaking it into pieces,
Turning me into a stone,
Making me heartless,
Each and every moment of my survival.

I wish we had never met,
For I can love no one more than you
Taking all my love,
Making me a loveless person,
Making me beg for love,
Each and every moment of my survival.

SUMAN SINGH

A Face

A face lives there upon the wall smudged deep into
the shadows. It bears no shape, nor any likeness to

anyone I know. Yet night by night it does appear with
quite a friendly smile. What does it want from

me I ask, some substance or some talk? Or does
it want to feel the warmth of human touch when cold

the winter blows? It shivers when the wind shifts
and features spatter walls. The smile turns

over. On moonless nights it disappears to walk the
night about? Or, does it visit someplace else, where lonely

hands reach out to draw it back onto the wall, a friendly
smile, to watch and hold and take into their dreams.

SUMAN SINGH

Dance Steps

Time and time and time again
I've watched the autumn shed its leaves
to cover all the ground,
then like the leaves
I've twirled and swirled
spun round and round and round:

as I have danced and waltzed away
the leaves have grown back at my feet.
and time and time and time again
I've watched the colours green
climb back into trees.

WILLIAM C. BLOME

The East Wind III

Why is your smell atop the slight east wind
that seeps through porch screens in very early
morning, and why is the touch of your open
and outfaced palm pushing up from under the air
mattress I keep trying to pop and explode
by sinking my teeth into its silvery edges?

How many times do you want me to pretend
I'm just another stinky, unwashed ventriloquist
who now and again gives the east wind voice
to proclaim its sweet, non sequitur mandates?

Oh I certainly don't expect you to sympathize
with the blinding need for outright cannibalism
once you have the ovaries to face the hot east
wind during tomorrow's only noonday hour,
but I'd be lying like a bastard if I told you any –
thing other than this: I'm dedicated to making
you super-tender – and ultra-tasty as hell.

ARTICLE

FRANCIS H POWELL

An Evening Walk during confinement

Confinement meant many of us lived a lot in our minds. For a period where I live we were restricted to short walks not far from our house. On one such walk I began to create a poem, which reflected my thoughts at the time. Poems can be observations of what we see around us, or what we are feeling at the time, and the confinement period was a strange time.

(Exert from “an Evening Walk”)

A landscape opens out
Different shades of green
all to absorb
as branches fill out
with shouts of spring
There is almost deafening
sound of silence
just the repetitive strains
of my dog panting
as he pulls one way then another
tracking some indecipherable scent
as birds make distant calls
chattering in far off trees
messages both confusing and bold

An evening walk is a mundane every day event for me, but under lockdown it had a different significance, a connection with normality but at the same time there was the thought I might encounter another person, and in this case would have to be wary. Equally the walk was somewhat eerie, due to the lack of people. The setting is a beautiful landscape, but all seems empty and without signs of life. The poem talks of the sounds I could hear, mostly the panting of my dog and the distant sound of birds. It is a poem about a walk in which I felt lonely.

(excerpt the end of the poem)

The sky is melancholic
 with a sad message to tell
 I pass through the carpet of green
 and arrive back amongst houses
 that look as dead as sleeping giants
 Oh look up there, I spot a light on
 perhaps a parent reading a child
 a bed time story, a precious moment
 drawing a line under the day
 A parent's duties complete
 I am nearly home, more signs of life
 But as we all know we are all know
 we are shut in, and my walk was a brief
 moment of freedom

Where I live it was spring time, a period when our garden begins to thrive, indeed for many it is exciting time of year, but this year it felt different, because we were being restricted. I am lucky enough to have a garden and live not far from some wonderful walks and lockdown this proved essential, to my mental well-being.

In recent years I have mainly focussed on writing short stories and have turned to poetry from time to time. However

during the lockdown poetry seemed to offer up a wonderful outlet for expressing how I was feeling. If I read the poems I wrote during lockdown, sometime in the future they will serve like a diary, offering many memories about the time. So with poetry we can document our lives. Poetry also can be spontaneous whereas with story writing, unless the story is short, it might be written over a period of time and involve creating characters, describing settings, working out how the story will evolve and writing a strong ending. The essence of a poem can be written quickly.

With poetry, (with my work at least) each line has to be crisp and meaningful, the language and tone has to fit and a theme has to run through the poems. Sometimes the poem can have different tones within, some dark parts as well as lighter more frivolous parts. The Evening Walk. is definitely a somewhat sombre poem, but during lockdown I did write more frivolous poetry, I love the work of Dr Seuss, I have read many poems to my son. Poems can reflect the mood we are in and what is going on around us.

Particularly with poetry and sometimes with short stories I sometimes hand write them. If you wake up and have an idea for a poem, circulating in your mind, you feel obliged to write it down otherwise you might forget it or you will lose that special moment. When I finish a poem I read it out loud to see how it flows, to check if any parts make the poem falter or sound clumsy.

Confinement was a strange time but poetry offered a chance for many to express themselves. I would say to anybody, if you have any emotions you need to express, pick up a pen and write a poem.

BOOK REVIEWS

1

Review of Asha Viswas' Poetry Collection, *The Emerald Shores*

CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY

Asha Viswas is an eminent academician, a poet gifted with a versatile genius, with diversity of expressions touching upon as many themes as life itself could delineate in variety of thoughts and emotions. Her book "The Emerald Shores" under review, consists of forty poems ranging from themes of love, life, mundane chores to spirituality and cosmic vision. To her poetry is living a dream, a living reality within and beyond. She writes in Preface to this intimate collection of her poems "These poems also present a voyage-both literal and metaphoric, both within and without" (Preface, p9). On the one hand, these poems emerge from intimate lived experiences, spreading different shades of life and locales.

On the other, they reflect a persistent spiritual urge to bind individual with the universal, mundane with the cosmic reality. All these poems evoke emotional and intellectual responses from the readers. Her words create feelings among readers, and there's a rhythm in the words that punctuate pictures, snapshots into the deepest part of a person. All poems in this collection take the readers to a voyage set on a canvas with multiple colours of life, its vignettes with a wealth details recollected in tranquillity and painted with a brush of wisdom and craft.

The first poem in “The Emerald Shores” titled “So Many Regrets” presents a series of pictures with scintillating images celebrating the beauty and splendour of nature and then connecting these to her lonely heart. To her the greatest regret is to get “dislodged from the ventricles of my heart” (p11). The longing of the bird in the lonely sky and its “metamorphosed song in the noisy wind” remind her of human limitations. The little brown boys slipping in different directions symbolize her lost opportunities and joys of childhood. Here poet’s imagination takes the readers to a *deja vu* with romantic landscape. The same imagination is intensely at work in “Another Vignette” creating a world of dream fusing the ethereal with earthly objects with subtle touch of artistic collage. There is symbiotic semblance of all agents of nature; ‘moon glowing on the veins of nature’, ‘trees hovering between day and night’ ‘air full of the moaning of bees’ and spider web holding ‘a heart on a string’ (p12).

These vignettes drawn on her poetic canvas by use of colours show the heightened imagination of a painter who knows his brush and shades of colours. “The Shipwreck at

Night” analogically reveals the mystery of life with river

“The river reveals the true identity
only at night, the mystery of life
is revealed at the moment of death”(p 13)

“Silent Communication” is a touching poem celebrating the relationship between a mother and daughter swinging the mood from the romantic landscapes of earlier poems to the deep societal bond where a daughter is nursing her dying old mother. The last lines lucidly and epigrammatically achieve poetic marvel: ‘She seemed like an answer/ To the unuttered cry of my soul’. (p 15)

Asha Viswas' social concerns become more glaring in "My Curses on You". She defies, denounces and condemns the brutal act of violence and rape committed against a woman or a minor girl as monstrous. Her voice grows bolder and tone gets harsher, as she explores the anatomy of this gruesome crime perpetuated into killing. By using literary allusions of Philomela, Perseus and Medusa, the poet makes this poem more effective feministic deliberation in content and tone. She questions such men's identity in the strongest terms:

"Were you really born of a woman?
 Did you really suck your mother's milk?
 If you kill a woman to make her passive,
 If you kill a five or fifty-five-year old woman,
 Do not disrespect the womb from whence you came" (p16).

One is amazed by the biological constructs of these lines to counter the cultural hegemony of patriarchy in terms of oppressive and repressive hypothesis of gender. Undoubtedly, Asha echoes a radical feminist in this very powerful poem. I would love to comment on the language of this poem, in these words of a feminist critic, Monique Witting, "Language casts sheaves of reality upon the social body". The rebellion and reprimand expressed so vociferously seemed to have expressed in a language that unravels the diabolic drives of such persons.

Asha Viswas is not only a perceptive observer of objects in nature but she is equally aware of larger reality of life, situations and circumstances in her surroundings. "A Street Dog" is a telling account of a stray dog and cruelty inflicted on him encapsulating the message for animal love. "A Riot-torn City", "Such a Long Waiting", "That Tuesday" depict a society ridden with violence, terror and sense of insecurity threatening the very institution of society. Riots, crimes and kidnappings, terrorist activities make her painfully aware of meaninglessness of human existence. Here she sounds closer to existential philosophy's theory of absurdity. "That Tuesday" is graphic description of

terrorist attacks on schools resulting in massacre of innocent children in their class rooms. This poem evokes pathos and terror. "A Longing, Sharp As Knife" touches upon existential paradigms of alienation and barrenness. The underlying tone of this poem is gloomy:

"Slowly the house turns into an allegory of words
Without a future, without a past
Syllables, and not a trace of you
I wish the ghosts could sleep forever in peace"(p 24)

The same existential note could be discerned in "An Apparition" where city is a prison, self 'left alone, in distant, desolate crag' where the protagonist "carries own bleak inner space" (p25). The sense of loneliness looms large in "A Lonely Tree"

"The shadows of the tree
Rests in the backyard –
Loneliness – bleak and nameless,
Fear howls in the silent house" (p 29).

All these poems have images culled from different locations of India but their thematic patterns weave an ideological and philosophical thought at the centre of which lies the basic philosophy of humanism.

There is another set of poems in this collection which have been structured on pivotal themes of love, longing, faith and myths displaying richness of emotions and human sensibility. Drawn from deeper layers of lived experiences these poems are remarkably picturesque and moving. "A Dream Scape", "My Karmas Write My Destiny", "No Emotions Please", "The Dark Gulfs" and "The Cursed River" fall into this category. These poems are distinct by their choice of words, images and well chiselled verse with underlying personal tone but impersonal overtone. There is an artistic blending of masterful versification with deep layers of thoughts embedded into Indian system of

believers and faiths. These poems strikingly forge reality with myth and vice-versa.

However, the questions of environmental hazards and morality and ethics can't be ignored as moral and spiritual quests run side by side with above discussed themes. "The Enlarged Self" beautifully captures the pangs of parting of two lovers with rhyming reasons: "We were rather two isolated island/ Floating in a sea without a ground... There never was a bridge, just the void." (p 36). There is no crying, no bereavement but rather a cool admittance and acceptance of the self-diagnosed reality. "Two Hemispheres" underlines Rudyard Kipling's racial dichotomy of East and West, which is more attitudinal than physical. As the poet sums up:

"We are the two hemispheres
So opposed to each other
...
As hail and snow, both of us we know
We will not meet again" (p 37)

One can see here, the post-colonial *résistance* and rejection of Colonial motifs. "Resurrection" is ironical jibe at breaking marital bonds, and the poem makes an intrinsic emotional appeal to such couples to save the marriage institution. This collection is replete with such social, moral questions which cripple individuals and the society. As mentioned earlier "Emerald Shores" is poet's progression of a voyage from mundane reality to her cosmic vision. "Beyond Your Thoughts", the last poem in this collection serves as an epilogue by connecting the transience with intransience, matter with spirit and worldly reality with the cosmic ultimate reality. The journey, to which the poet takes the readers, culminates in a sense of arriving at, with a sense of beginning a new journey into sublimity of being and beyond.

"Beyond all physical boundaries
there lies the cosmic vastness

...
All reality is a fiction-temporary
aggregation of atoms in constant motion

...
The restless waves of creation
rise and fall on the ocean of infinity” (p52).

The book under review provides broad ranging information about social, cultural, spiritual and contextual backgrounds of the contemporary Indian realities and ethos. It offers the reader an insight into social, cultural and political contexts in which major Indian English poetry was written and read. The beauty of these poems lies in their contents of diverse nature, deftness of craft, which open up these poems for a variety of contemporary discourses. The poet is not silent but questions the law for trampling pressures and conflicts in the city life. She gets disturbed when she sees that cities, civic societies have become preying grounds for devils. Perhaps, this drives her to spiritual yearnings for peace, seeking refuge in cosmic reality. I recommend this collection of poems as a must read for all poetry loving gentry.

(The Emerald Shores, Asha Viswas, Writers Workshop, Kolkata, 2017, pp. 52, Price: RS 150/-)

2

Review of Oisín Breen's Poetry Collection, *Flowers, All Sorts in Blossom, Figs, Berries, and Fruits Forgotten*

TONY HILL

Oisín Breen's debut collection of poetry, *Flowers, All Sorts in Blossom, Figs, Berries, and Fruits Forgotten*, groups together three sequences of long-form poetry that ought certainly be heard and not merely read.

Breen is a Dublin born writer, and the spirit of his forebears, and of the literary traditions of his native city infuse his first book-length work.

Indeed, the incantatory rhythms of these poems and the propulsive alliteration hark back to an oral tradition, the poet as shaman, perhaps, as these lines illustrate:

'I cowed – Christ – for I was all too aware of you and your judgement.
Here the morning brings about only melody
Itic, etic,
A stretched heart, and the sour-face of being,
ruptures, and wholesomeness, cracked wood pining.'

Structurally, Breen's writing is modernist in terms of its rejection of traditional forms, with Joyce and Pound very much in evidence. There is certainly a Joycean awareness of words having some existence and heft quite separate their meaning, more Finnegans Wake than Ulysses:

'Adad, Anu, Adad, the father flung for whom I'd give a pretty penny,
 Divine for me then in the livers of my men of plenty,
 in the bubbling oil I keep in the basin beneath my leaking pores,
 or in the balletic pathos of the unanswering stars.'

The poet has done well not allow this delight in the sound of words and wordplay to tip over into wilful opaqueness. It's a fine creative line but one skilfully drawn and maintained throughout the three pieces.

Consider the following:

The flowers they are fallen,
 The fruit it is rotten,
 But your grave is as pretty as ever.

Each year I sing this better.
 Three lines. One song.

And how it slowly develops through multiple refrains, through:

The flowers they are fallen,
 The fruit it is rotten,
 And while the nested, fattened pigeon king, in daubs, paints
 imagist calls roccoco,
 Your grave it is as pretty as ever.

Each year I sing this better.
 Many lines. One song.

Which then culminates in:

The flowers though they have fallen,
 And your fruits though they are rotten,
 Tending, *ardently*, *wolfishly*, those notional tokens of affection,
 tokens of death's renewal and integration,
 those things which are most bitter to me,
 I find your grave is as pretty as ever.

Each year I sing this better.
 Many lines. Your song.

That said, at times some of the strongest passages do, perhaps, lose some of their vitality when contrasted with some of the most emotionally expressive. Indeed, Breen's writing is arguably best at its calmest moments.

Take, for instance, these lines from the third poem, *Her Cross Carried, Burnt*, which is itself somewhat reminiscent of those discursive sections in *The Four Quartets*:

And so, since there is no returning home,
Of the other then, consider all relations shifted.
All of that which was, is necessarily ended.
And we, through creation, break the cycle,
And throw ourselves to the mercy of the sea.

Breen's collection is a challenging work, but it is nonetheless rewarding, especially on a second and third reading.

The book comes with a CD and I would encourage any reader new to this poet's work to listen to the poetry first before turning to the text.

("Flowers, all sorts in blossom, figs, berries, and fruits forgotten", Oisín Breen, Edinburgh: Hybrid Press, 202, ISBN: 978-1-873412-04-6, Pp. 96, Price £10 + postage)

CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Anjana Nair**, post graduate in agriculture, a regular contributor of articles in the topics concerning agriculture, has quite recently ventured into the field of poetry and fiction. Writing in the initial years was mostly restricted to nonfiction and essays, The poet in her has only recently bloomed!! Stripped' is her first collection of poems published in 2020. Contemporary issues and social causes have always swayed her poetry in that direction.
2. **Avdhesh Jha**, an author, poet, teacher and observer is a strong critic with an inclination towards societal development. Presently he works with EDI of India. With ten doctoral scholars, being awarded the doctorate degree, the guide and mentor to Ph.D. aspirants, has presented several papers on different topics at national and international seminars. With multi-language understanding ability, interest in teacher training, psychology, research methodology, creativity and human values, he accredits himself to prepare, design and introduce several new subjects in the curriculum of Gujarat University in addition to be a member of curriculum framework committee of various universities and institutes of national repute. He has written about more than 200 poetries in English and Hindi. Associated with institutes of national repute, he has organised seminars and workshops and delivered talks and lectures at various seminars, workshops etc. He is awarded with CHAROTTAR GAURAV and BHARAT EXCELLENCE.

3. **Barbara Briggs** is a poet, a teacher of Transcendental Meditation and the author of *Pilgrimage on the Path of Love*, a novel of visionary fiction available on Amazon. Her work has been published in a few anthologies and many of her articles have been featured in *New Age* magazines. Her web site is: <https://barbaraannbriggs.com>
4. **Bishnupada Ray** is an Associate Professor of English at the University of North Bengal. His poems have appeared in *Indian Literature*, *New Quest*, *Makata*, *A Hudson View Poetry Digest*, *Shabdaguchha*, *VerbalArt*, *Phenomenal Literature*, *Revival* and some anthologies.
5. **Despy Boutris** is published or forthcoming in *American Poetry Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Colorado Review*, *The Adroit Journal*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Palette Poetry*, *Third Coast*, *Raleigh Review*, *Diode*, *The Indianapolis Review*, and elsewhere. Currently, she teaches at the University of Houston and serves as Assistant Poetry Editor for *Gulf Coast*.
6. **DJ Tyrer** is the person behind *Atlantean Publishing*, was placed second in the 2015 *Data Dump Award* for Genre Poetry, and has been published in issues of *Amulet*, *California Quarterly*, *Carillon*, *The Dawntreader*, *Haiku Journal*, *The Pen*, and *Tigershark*, and online at *Atlas Poetica*, *Bindweed*, *Poetry Pacific*, and *Scarlet Leaf Review*, as well as releasing several chapbooks, including the critically acclaimed *Our Story*. DJ Tyrer's website is at <https://djtyrer.blogspot.co.uk/>
7. **DS Maolalai** has been nominated seven times for Best of the Net and three times for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry has been released in two collections, "*Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden*" (Encircle Press, 2016) and "*Sad Havoc Among the Birds*" (Turas Press, 2019).

8. **Edward Ahern** resumed writing after forty odd years in foreign intelligence and international sales. He's had over two hundred fifty stories and poems published so far, and six books. Ed works the other side of writing at Bewildering Stories, where he sits on the review board and manages a posse of six review editors.
9. **Fabiyas M V** is a writer from Orumanayur village in Kerala, India. He is the author of six books of poetry. His fiction and poetry have appeared in several anthologies, magazines and journals. He has won many international accolades including Merseyside at War Poetry Award from Liverpool University; Lest We Forget Poetry Prize from Auckland War Memorial Museum; and Animal Poetry Prize 2012 from RSPCA (Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelties against Animals, UK). He was the finalist for Global Poetry Prize 2015 by the United Poets Laureate International (UPLI) in Vienna. His poems have been broadcast on All India Radio. Poetry Nook, US, has nominated him for the 2019 Pushcart Prize. He has been working as a teacher in English at Gov. Higher Secondary School, Maranchery in Kerala.
10. **Francis H Powell** is amongst other things, a poet and writer of short stories. His anthology of short stories called "Flight of Destiny" was published April 7 2015 by Savant publishing. His second book Adventures of Death, Reincarnation and Annihilation was published by Beacon Publishing in December 2019. Born in 1961, in Reading, England. He was educated at various schools, before going on to Art Schools, to do a degree in painting and an MA in printmaking. At present Francis is putting together a book of short stories, poems and illustrations for the charity Marie Curie Nurses. The book will be published winter 2020.

11. **Gary Langford** is the author of 42 books, including 16 novels and stories, 4 textbooks and 18 books of poetry. His latest book is *100 Tiny Poems*, 2020. Gary is a writer and painter in Melbourne, Australia and Christchurch, New Zealand.
12. **Holly Day's** poetry has recently appeared in *Asimov's Science Fiction*, *Grain*, and *The Tampa Review*. Her newest poetry collections are *In This Place, She Is Her Own* (Vegetarian Alcoholic Press), *A Wall to Protect Your Eyes* (Pski's Porch Publishing), *Folios of Dried Flowers and Pressed Birds* (Cyberwit.net), *Where We Went Wrong* (Clare Songbirds Publishing), *Into the Cracks* (Golden Antelope Press), and *Cross Referencing a Book of Summer* (Silver Bow Publishing), while her newest nonfiction books are *Music Theory for Dummies* and *Tattoo FAQ*.
13. **Ilhem Issaoui** is a young Tunisian researcher, poet, and translator. She has been published in many countries including the US, the UK, Canada, and India in print and online. She authored a collection of poems entitled *Fragments of a wounded soul*. She is currently in the process of getting her second poetry collection published.
14. **Jahnavi Gupta** is a fifteen year old girl who has recently taken keen interest in writing poetry. Most of them are free verse while others are about reality and truths of the world.
15. **James G. Piatt** is a pushcart and best of web nominee, and many of his poems were selected for inclusion in *The 100 Best Poems of 2016, 2015 & 2014 Anthologies*. He has published 3 collections of poetry. His fourth collection of poetry will be released this year. He earned his BS and MA from California State Polytechnic University, and his doctorate from BYU.

16. **Joseph Hart** has a BA in psychology. He has had poems published in small magazines, and was twice nominated for a Pushcart. His favourite poets are Keats and Millay.
17. **Keith Moul** has written poems and taken photos for more than 50 years, his work appearing in magazines widely. His chapbook, *The Journal*, and a full-length volume, *New and Selected Poems: Bones Molder, Words Hold* were recently accepted by Duck Lake Books. These are his ninth and tenth chap or book published.
18. **P Singh** was born in Agra in 1942. Was awarded the membership of the Royal Society of Chemistry, London, U.K. in 1979. Worked as a Professor and Head of the Department of Clothing and Textiles in the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana for about 32 years. Was National Coordinator of a research project on natural dyes, sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Government of India, involving 9 agricultural universities. Retired in 2002. He was published in various national and international journals and anthologies.
19. **Rajiv Khandelwal** is an Electrical Engineer by education and is now a business man by profession. Rajiv Khandelwal has published 4 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. 4th poetry volume titled “A Time to Forget” – published 2017. Rajiv has been awarded “Literary Creative Award” by Naji Naaman’s Foundation for Gratis Culture, of Lebanon in which the Foundation had 2371 participants in their 2018 competition, from sixty six countries and has declared/rewarded 64 prize winners. Rajiv is one of the prize winners. <http://yourproductfinder.com>

20. **Roger G. Singer** has been in private practice for 38 years in upstate New York. He has four children, Abigail, Caleb, Andrew and Philip and seven grandchildren. Dr. Singer has served on multiple committees for the American Chiropractic Association, lecturing at colleges in the United States, Canada and Australia, and has authored over fifty articles for his profession and served as a medical technician during the Vietnam era. Dr. Singer has over 950 poems published on the internet, magazines and in books and is a Pushcart Award Nominee.
21. **S. Rupsha Mitra** loves writing poetry and flash fiction. Her work has been published by literary journals and websites. She has a penchant for everything that's creative.
22. **Sandip Saha** is a chemical engineer and doctorate (PhD.) in metallurgical engineering from India. He has got three awards for his scientific work and 33 publications on his scientific research work including three patents. He is a winner of Poetry Matters Project Lit Prize-2018. He has published one collection of poems, "Quest for Freedom" available in amazon.com. He is published in the following 19 poetry journals: North Dakota Quarterly, Peregrine, Better Than Starbucks Poetry Magazine, Pif Magazine, The Cape Rock: Poetry, Las Positas Anthology-Havik, Pasadena City College Inscape Magazine, Shot Glass Journal, The Wayne Literary Review, Tiny Seed Literary Journal, felan, Oddball, Snapdragon, The Ghazal Page all USA, in VerbalArt, Phenomenal Literature, Tajmahal, The Criterion, India and in The Pangolin Review, Mauritius.
23. **Snehasish Ghosh** is a student of B. Sc 2nd Year (4th Semester) studying in DARRANG COLLEGE. He lives in Natunpara, Sonitpur, ASSAM.

24. **Suman Singh** is a former Secondary School English teacher and a freelance writer. She writes feature articles, web content, short stories and poetry. Her feature articles have appeared in “Reader’s Digest’ ‘Teacher Plus’, ‘Progressive Teacher’, ‘BR International’ (Hong Kong) ‘Children’s World’ her short stories have appeared in the ‘Times of India’ and “Eves Touch”. Suman has won a poetry prize in a contest organised by poetsindia.com. Her poetry has appeared in ‘Enchanting Verses Literary Review’, ‘Quest’, ‘Asia Writes’ (online) and in an anthology ‘Rendezvous’. Suman lives in the lake town of Nainital in Uttarakhand.
25. **William C. Blome** writes poetry and short fiction. He lives wedged between Baltimore and Washington, DC, and he is a master’s degree graduate of the Johns Hopkins University Writing Seminars. His work has seen the light of day in such fine little magazines as VerbalArt, Poetry London, PRISM International, In Between Hangovers, Bangalore Review, Roanoke Review, and The California Quarterly.
26. **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 anthologized nationally and internationally. He edited the translated version of Ramcharitmanas, Richa Publication, New Delhi, 1999.
27. **Tony Hill** is a Welsh poet and retired teacher of creative writing. He has been writing poetry on-and-off throughout his life, but since he has retired, his output has increased significantly. His debut collection is out in the autumn.

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