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VerbalART

A Global Journal Devoted to  
POETS AND POETRY

A Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

Vol.- 6, Issue - 2  
Oct - Dec 2022

*Chief Editor:*

**Dr VIVEKANAND JHA**

*Associate Editor:*

**Dr RAJNISH MISHRA**

*Review Editor:*

**Dr CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY**

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**Prof. SHASHANK NADKARNI**



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**VERBALART**

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## POETRY

ANNA BANASIAK

### The Art of Flying

Sunrise  
stops the essence of existence  
ducks immersed in silence  
fly free like flames  
they dive  
stagger sacred circles  
my soul spreads its wings  
flying between two worlds  
happy upon a moment  
brightened by a light  
approaches infinity



## **ANNA BANASIAK**

### **Pause**

I drift off  
to the dream room  
dad sways slightly in a rocking chair  
with a cup of espresso  
free from hustle and worries  
I open the casket with imagination  
music seeps from the radio  
dog stretches lazily  
we all grab happy  
the last moment  
of this summer

**ARNO BOHLMELJER**

**Is resistance a tender surrender?**

For the beautiful funeral  
of a fairly young friend,  
I was unwell and afraid.  
I just went for his sake.

The send-off was intense.  
The field caught a breeze;  
it blew through me fiercely.

I genuinely feared to be dead-ill.  
But life itself said: "Not your time."

What would have happened at a wedding?

**ARNO BOHLMELJER**

**Ignoring a Mountain Storm**

What can remain of paradise:  
the early hour before a climb,  
a wild, steep and broad brook,  
the bridge or boards missing.

A billion flowers are mown,  
the snow is killing the eye.  
The wind is no friend,  
there's nothing to drink.

But a doe is venturing close.  
What's around when dying from thirst?  
Crossing a hiding cleft, I can glide; then gulp the snow.  
The whiteness looks pure alright. Or should I wait

for a layer to melt – of the soul?

**AVDHESH JHA****Art of Nature**

So simple but so elegant,  
So live, talking and speaking,  
enchanted and mind blowing,  
magnificent and full of splendour...  
The only truth;  
The search to keep on searching;  
The abstract, the poetry of earth,  
The song of the morn and dawn,  
The only art that describes the art of nature;  
The gorge, as if nature dressed beautifully,  
Sky as if eyes, moon as if beauty,  
lotus as if the glorious face,  
enchanted charm as if the smile,  
breeze as if the touch,  
birds as if expression of joy and  
flowers as if for sweetness and naughtiness,  
the earth and ocean as if body full with richness  
along with the jewels to explore;  
the high mountains as if the thoughts,  
The natural live artifact,  
full of wits and sense of humour,  
The beauty in extreme, whether with or within,  
The only beauty beyond borders,  
Expanding unto the horizon  
Understanding as if essence of life,

Beautiful and dutiful,  
Loving, caring and soothing;  
The serene and ONLY ART OF NATURE;  
Nonetheless, its only YOU...

**BEN NARDOLILLI**

**The Fountains of the Great Deep**

The rain dots the sidewalk  
spell out a message across the pavement

Through them one reads a rumor:  
up behind the clouds, a storm is coming

Better to get a warning this way,  
where the evidence compiles in the open

Instead of a rude poke released  
by overeager thunder in the distance

## **BEN NARDOLILLI**

### **Open Water**

Deep sea divers are diving ever deeper  
Down into the depths and reaching ever darker veins

Are they being compressed?  
Are they running out of oxygen and eyesight?

Yes, and yes, until now, thanks to the magic of poetry  
I have saved them, and the divers are here

Again, they have swam and sunk so low now  
They can be seen emerging from the clouds,

Their goggles, tanks, and fins all intact,  
As if the atmosphere seems to be pinching them off

One scuba body at a time, the rubbery explorers  
Looking like astronauts for a brief moment

Until hitting the ground because they are not ready  
To deal with anything green or brown

Or hard, just the blue of the water and the sky,  
So far, my poetry cannot manage to make divers fly

## DANIEL THOMAS MORAN

### Paris

At six a.m.  
Eiffel's Tower is dark,

The garlic of  
last night's escargot  
still lies on my tongue.

It should  
never rain in Paris,  
yet it is raining,

The morning's  
image drips in  
the dim lights.

From this  
high window on  
the seventeenth floor,  
all is anticipation.

The dark boulevards  
of this City of Light,  
whose names I will  
never come to know,

Reach out for the  
promises of a rising day.



## **DANIEL THOMAS MORAN**

### **Not a Poem about Heartbreak**

I never intend to be  
a poet of heartbreak,  
although I have earned  
my own portion of it.

In some respects, life  
is a litany of heartbreaks,  
each of which determines  
to loiter in the daylight,  
and in the darkness.

They are the rhythmic  
breaths of someone  
who sleeps beside us,  
who knows our reflection  
better than we know our self.

I also hope to never write  
of the umpteen heartbreaks  
of the weary, worried world,  
the white noise of life,  
a rumbling of thunder in  
an unimaginable distance.

I prefer to be the poet  
of rain and of rivers, of  
sunlight silently sliding

from rocks and from roofs,  
shimmering in sunlight,  
sustaining all that is green.  
The poet who tastes  
a subtle sound and must  
imagine its source.

Let me also be the poet  
who is grateful for  
the labors of each day,  
the wisdom in failure.  
Just as with heartbreak,  
arriving in the air and on foot,  
along the winding libretto  
of all our many lives,

If we allow it,  
It all simply appears  
and then it disappears.

## **E. MARTIN PEDERSEN**

### **Flower Garden**

Our new house has a yard  
that's uncommon here  
we decided to grow flowers  
to colorize our year.

We planted bulbs and bushes  
some grew some did not  
in February when it's cold  
to have flowers when it gets hot.

A photo of our first rose  
beautiful and warm  
if we fill our eyes with roses  
would that do any harm?

One of us will die  
in our house, our lover  
it will be so sad  
to go on without the other.

We look up to the mountains  
or out across the sea  
the garden's worth the effort  
to feel alive, to be.

So, I wish for everybody  
for both friends and foes  
an enchanting flower garden  
to wonder at how it grows.

## **FRANK WILLIAM FINNEY**

### **A Prelude to Lethe**

A dreamer winks a bloodshot eye.  
A lawyer writes a love song.

The burning flat. The nimble frat.  
A lover with a grocery list.

Long nights perched  
on Back Bay stairs.

Traffic inching  
towards the common.

A waning moon. The faded maps.  
A bagel hole for breakfast.

The darkling sky.  
The cold, wet sand.

The whinging of oarlocks.  
Fading

stars.

## **GARY BECK**

### **Endurance**

Many years ago  
when our imam was young,  
full of fire in the faith,  
the godless Russians came,  
invading the mosque,  
searching for Mujahadeen  
the imam tried to stop them  
from defiling the holy place.  
They hit him with gun butts,  
knocked him down, kicked him,  
but he knew they were coming  
and sent our men away  
so they could fight another day.

Our imam is old now,  
but still full of fire in the faith,  
so when the Americans came  
searching for our holy warriors  
he tried to stop them  
from defiling a holy place.  
They pushed him aside,  
but he knew they were coming  
and sent our men away  
so they could fight another day.

**GERARD SARNAT**

**Second Arrow Buddhism**

Pale or not so pale faces,  
no big difference,

pain's inevitable  
but suffering more optional.

Lifted up then cast down,  
our human race's

never won or done  
– ending that fabrication

of cravings even beyond  
five basic senses

when there aren't  
enough real hungry ghosts

come/go like Michelangelo  
with deathlessness –

good night rage rage  
against dying of the light

into cosmic oneness.

## **JAMES G. PIATT**

### **My Lost Love**

The tall candles were throwing flickering pieces of light on the windows of the old house when I heard her voice whispering to me in a dream's song. I saw a faint image of her face echoing in the candles' flames, as raindrops tinted tinted the windows with a mist. I had thought that the many years would have erased a sense of her soft touch, and faded her visions that had encompassed my being for so long, allowing me to begin again after the hollow years, but it was not to be so. The cruel clown in my mind, with his gaping painted mouth and his kohl eyes leering at me, caused me to ponder on all the fading memories of our togetherness, and then I wept.

.

**JAMES G. PIATT****Limited Time**

I have traveled in the gentle flow of life, finding comfort in the softness of autumn leaves clinging to sycamore trees beside peaceful ponds, a quiet place where bullfrogs sang in throaty voices. I have dreamed in the softness of thoughts where aging was nonexistent, and tiny birds sang melodious songs all day long with no fear of dying.

But, I now live in the ephemeral rusting hours of dwindling time, where bones become brittle, steps become laborious, and hair fades into ash, a place where sleep is often illusionary. I find the ginger colored sunrise hopeful but the gray sunset painful, being an omen of something fading, dipping into the final moments of my limited time.



**JAMES WM. CHICHETTO**

**The Romanov Family, 1917**

Why did they rise so early?  
Why dress and pack for parting?  
Maybe the Czar knew better.  
His life was full of praying.

Perhaps he thought they'd escape.  
Perhaps his hunch was right.  
Or perhaps his hope was premature  
With fortune and luck that night.

But the children were shot with their parents  
From a Kremlin room Lenin had ordered it.  
Revenge in his heart for her brother hanged  
Had made such vengeance fit.

**JAMES WM. CHICHETTO**

**Black Birds from Heaven**

Just the earth and I. We walk –  
Just dirt and the clouds and trees.  
I place a leaf on a rock.  
The sun bleaches it into history.  
No music, please. No song.  
My mouth is closed and strong.

Off, off into the night,  
The Good Night with dry leaves  
That mark the end of day.  
No music, please. No song  
To scratch a note in the dust  
To sweeten tongues I've wronged.

My soul has shed her leaves  
Like a forest. I am bare at last.  
The Psalms have stranger words for this.  
The sun hides behind my back.  
I've harnessed my tongue from deceit.  
The birds fly by so black.

## JEVIN LEE ALBUQUERQUE

### Spider-rat

Spider-awake-sleep

Odd hours

Mice-rat-rage

Cheese phobia

Snap

Back

Snap

Fur sandwich

Web-sticky-bed

Slept

Arachno-rats-mice

Scene

Night seen

Bed

Walls

Crisis-room-climb

Dreams

(Oh, wonderful dreams)

**JEVIN LEE ALBUQUERQUE**

**Oregon**

Moon  
On my shoulder

Beastie-badland

F  
E  
A  
T  
H  
E  
R  
S

Owl dog  
Hungry

## JOAN MCNERNEY

### Tonight

Chimes tap against our  
windowpane. This evening  
becomes starry sapphire  
as sea gulls rise in  
flight over rooftops.  
Winds wrapping around  
trees tossing leaves.

The court yard is full of  
aromas from dinnertime.  
Shadows growing longer  
each minute. Lights go  
on and I wait for you.

## **JOAN MCNERNEY**

### **Lost**

Wrapped in ashen clouds  
pale shrouds of sadness.

My head bent recounting  
all the days of my life.

Alone in this blur. Wanting only  
to fill this empty haze of hours.

What remains only minute after  
minute of more and more loss.

Who stole my sparkling sky  
leaving only memories?

**JOHN GREY**

**A Snake Sheds**

A snake slithers through  
twigs and leaves  
in search of something hard  
to rub against,  
to scrape off  
its weary outer layer.

But the predator  
is now a prey animal  
as, high in the trees,  
a barred owl  
watches and listens.

The reptile grinds against  
rock and tree trunk.  
Three months' worth of keratin  
slides away.

Eight accented hoots  
descend to the forest floor,  
end in an oo-aw at ground level.

The owl could plunge at  
any moment,  
pierce and grasp its victim  
with sharp talons.

But the snake continues  
these chafing ablutions.  
The unwanted skin splits.  
It's nudged out by the new.

Better to be a dead snake  
than an old one.



**JOHN GREY**

**The Sky Is Not Falling**

There things I'd rather do  
than sit by the kitchen window,  
staring out at the falling snow.  
But it is what I'm doing,  
here in Providence,  
in the winter of 2018.

When you consider  
the way some people suffer  
in other parts of the world,  
it's not a bad way  
to seek a little peace,  
even if it is dishonest.

But there's nothing  
in my job description  
that says,  
feed the starving,  
resolve conflicts.

But there is a line that reads,  
if in doubt,  
do nothing.

So I'm doing nothing.  
Flakes slip down my window.  
Everyone is different  
though I'm not out to prove that.

It doesn't even matter to me  
if there's no one out there  
reading this.

People have their own problems.  
So do I.  
Watching snow fall is not one of them.

## LARAINÉ KENTRIDGE LASDON

### Wing of a Hawk

The signal  
to leave is called out urgently.  
Blue jays spin, whistle, and gurgle.  
Heralds of the gray days of winter.

We climb Hawk Ridge Observatory hill.  
The rough benches, wooden table, a simple tabernacle.  
It's a late summer day,  
tinged with the soft reds of Fall.  
The lake swells, delicate white froth  
hushes and bubbles caressing the shore.

Our guide lifts something curious  
out of a dusty old box.  
In her arms is a single great wing.  
With gentle gesture she invites us in.  
Birdsong relaying migration routes  
form a choir as we silently approach.

This was a killing wing.  
Ruthless in its resolute trajectory of the dive,  
grasp of bloodied vole to nourish  
his brood, squawking from their cliff-edge nest.  
Each feather feels strong, indestructible,  
yet, this hawk was found with wings outstretched,  
a span of six feet end-to-end,  
neck broken on the golden sand.

I stroke the black and grey feathers.  
Thin-ribbed architecture smooth, cool,  
the skeletal structure rustling, lifting,  
lifting as if it might suddenly take off.

The corpse-wing caught the next gust of wind  
carrying the hawk-spirit on thermal spirals.  
High in the pale of blue sky a hawk wheels and cries,  
casting a shadow onto the very spot her mate died.

Mourned by his love. Majestic in death.  
I learned about life, that day at Hawk Ridge.

## **MICHAEL LEE JOHNSON**

### **Crypt in the Sky (V2)**

Order me up,  
no one knows  
where this crypt in the sky  
like a condo on the 5th floor  
suite don't sell me out  
over the years;  
please don't bury me beneath  
this ground, don't let me decay  
inside my time pine casket.  
Don't let me burn to cremate  
skull last to turn to ashes.  
Treasure me high where no one goes,  
no arms reach, stretch.  
Building for the Centuries  
then just let it fall.  
These few precious dry bones  
preserved for you, sealed in the cloud  
no relocation is necessary,  
no flowers need to be planted,  
no dusting off that dust each year,  
no sinners can reach this high.  
Jesus' heaven, Jesus' sky.

Note: Dedicated to the passing of beloved Katie Balaskas.

**NGO BINH ANH KHOA****Fear**

When I was still a wide-eyed child,  
I used to fear so many things  
That in the veil of darkness dwell:  
The vengeful ghosts, the ravenous ghouls,  
The fiends that torture sin-stained souls,  
The fabled ox-head and horse-face,  
The hungry spirits in the night,  
And many more, and countless more  
I learned of through tales, films, and books,  
But when I grew up, I found out  
Those creatures, scary as they are,  
Pale when compared against the monsters that  
Exist in corners hardly touched by light –  
The ones that haunt and dwell within  
The treacherous and well-hidden heart of man,  
Where chasms and abysses prove  
Unfathomably vast and wide.  
Even seabeds can still be reached,  
The heart of man, however, can't.  
No naked eyes discern them thoroughly,  
And no mortal can truly scale its depths.

## PHILIP HAMMIAL

### Zeke

Good thing Vlad  
can't see, can't watch ugly me  
strip-searched by the AFP. Better thing: Viv  
took off with that god she tried to jam  
down my throat. She ever comes knocking  
it's right in the kisser. Best thing is  
I forgot to factor in Ezekiel. Ezekiel in  
it's a codger-burn, a smouldering (the Hindenburg)  
on Tiananmen Square, a premium economy dousing  
for the top ten duck-walkers, a hyper, scaled-down-to-fit  
Easter nudge, an exemption for the drought-master's  
daggy downtown throw, a run for the money  
up Peabody Lane, a dainty dish to set before  
an apostle it doesn't matter which one, a half-  
pennyworth of Haitian hullabaloo & don't forget  
the pink ribbon, a sogo shosha CEO whose take  
on Tom Thumb tokenism is ergodic, a sting  
in a nutshell, a nattering reconstructionist  
trafficking in goose step alphabets, a rant  
ranked last, a knuckle-duster fame that spreads  
like dude ranch gossip, a ramshackle supersymmetry  
with knobs, a knockabout with a Hittite twist, a  
Lazarist who gets up on the wrong side, a Nibelung  
aficionado with an I've-been-decanted-too-often  
complex, a Martinet with a dirty mouth here  
comes Mary with a bar of soap, a Philomel  
impersonator it's actually me, Philip the Goode, a saag  
lover worth his weight in spinach, a save-the-best-for-last  
Latter-day Ezekiel who of this nonsense has had a gutful.

## **POOJA SHARMA**

### **What does it mean?**

From a past you doubt  
was ever present,  
Pop memories so vivid  
images so effervescent –

A ballooning skirt  
A face full of wind  
A cranking swing  
Strong legs horsing

A blue window  
In a tiny lane  
A drawing book  
And a card game

A trunk full of dolls  
Pretty ones and not  
A grumpy old purse with  
trinkets in stages of rot

A plate full of dal-rice  
A bowl full of curd  
fingers dipped in pickle  
slurping up the trickle

The trees far away  
Swaying in the breeze



Their tops can tell  
The seasons with ease

You never can say  
What the images mean –  
bright like confetti  
like the clouds free

So you draw them to  
the world of words  
Drop them in the bog of verse  
Bring them fore  
Where everything means  
More

**PRAKASH JOSHI****All Sham**

Every Chief Minister displays  
His State's prosperity & progress  
by giving self-glorifying ads  
and Newspapers gain by their fads.  
If progress and prosperity swings  
why then poverty stays on its wings?  
Unemployment does its dance  
and crime ratios enhance.  
Infants molested, young girls killed!!  
How does progress fit its bill?  
Every religion, in the same tone, says  
God saves all and the sinners flayed.  
Why then the Hen of Humanity lays  
the eggs of hatred and genocides  
that make the Ukrainians the Afgans hide  
themselves from the Taliban and Putin?  
Philanthropy Vs. Power has become a routine.  
In all democracies people have more to die  
Though desires to live ask why!!  
How much Hinduism draws from the Gita  
When, everyday, women suffer much more than Sita??

## **KATTA RAJAMOULY**

### **All for Oneness**

All may look diverse but for oneness,  
Entity the sign for its wholeness.  
Garland is one with variety flowers,  
Stream is one with all showers,  
All leaves in one offer cool shade,  
With all grass green, carpet is laid.  
Diversity in faces  
But the race is one for all races  
Not just for unity  
But for beauty in diversity  
For life, varied blood-groups function  
With veins and arteries in the mission  
Hemispheres are two  
North and south to form globe in true  
Like hands left and right  
Work together in might  
The sun shoots its rays to all  
The sky is the limit as thrall  
For all rays for light and warmth  
For every heart to throb  
The tree is one with diverse parts  
Nation is one but lives in all hearts  
Land is one all to it with pull powers  
Ocean is one welcoming to it all rivers  
They mind no walls in glow and flow  
To learn lessons for man to grow.

**RAJIV KHANDELWAL**

**Expectations of a Poetry Editor**

If you have something to say  
That shows evidence  
That you are living in the 21st century  
Are aware of the world around you  
Can stay focused on the subject  
Can say it well  
Knowing instinctively  
Which words inextricably interlink  
Have a way with words  
Use the language of the street  
The well-structured tale  
Thriftily written  
Is not too academic  
Can be read to your young children  
And to your old mother  
You can probably  
Meet the expectations  
Of our poetry journal

**RENÉ VAN DER KLOOSTER**

**A Quiet Tongue**

you are mute  
you are playing the mute  
because I talk and talk and talk  
you say

you say nothing  
pronouncing a language  
with your lineaments

which I can do too, you know  
I tell you  
I will

and I warn you  
it will not look pretty

but instantly  
you laugh out loud  
of course  
without a sound  
of course  
just a weird  
distortion of your  
forehead

until I cry out:  
you will be the death of me!

which makes your eyes  
twinkle

## RITIKSHA SHARMA

### Mr. J's Tears

Processual contemplation precedes a cerebral accident  
For a human condition, cracks widening, faces blurred  
It is always in a marketplace of vanity, its fair, its fine  
That we were haggling over tickets, murder-like,  
crossing the line  
Like a murder of crows malfunctioning.

Our children had learnt how to throw popcorn  
From the front row, brat-like; they were  
all but socialised *Its all for the show honey*,  
we are the circus we were waiting on. We are  
the drama we were paying for.

Batting at the clown's eye, some evidence of a rip,  
Shoulders shaking, a silent verse bodied  
“ha ha ha” the joker said, wearing a smile-wide, when  
the popcorn popped on his face. Then  
pulled himself inside out, reaching on his own,  
into his eyes. Pulling the flesh, ousting it, leaving it  
incumbent; He roared devil like, like Lucifer  
had blown his vocal cords accidentally  
Like the pain had *frankensteined* him  
Appraised his form from abrasions  
Grudgingly adorned in a watery sea  
Into the tears off a clown, onto us.

They flowed, roasted honey-like, falling on our tongues,  
dripping over our mouths, on our lips, onto our hands  
Transmigration of the sordid kind  
Reborn commodity, a pack of zombie-ichor:  
the acid which makes you disintegrate, something  
that glistened in his eyes.

We cried, he cried, and erasure evaded evanescence  
For we had craved the spectacle of sorrow. We had  
held our breathes, our chests, for a single twinkling rainbow,  
refracting from his eyes. We had rendered it,  
an exhibit for entertainment: our object of amusement.

So, a social history of privilege-seekers wrote itself, scholar-like  
Like a post-apocalyptic survival script, life came full circle  
We re-integrated with each other – into nothingness.  
Our bitterness tastes sweet now  
as we flow down Mr. J's cheeks, honey-like  
Like his tears of retribution.

**S L PEERAN****Lament of a flickering Candle**

For ages, I was adored, yearned  
By humanity as a must to dispel darkness.  
I was given a pride of place  
In palaces, places of worship, homes.  
Made me stand in crystalline chandeliers.

By rich and mighty, poor and wretched'  
Sans me night life would be darkness.  
'Darkness cannot eat away darkness'.  
But my light would glow to illumine  
Every place where people dwelled,  
For I carried brightness in night.

I reigned from antiquity for I carried light.  
Till Michael Faraday, Benjamin Franklin  
Thomas Alva Edison, Nikola Tesla found ways  
To end my innings, my glory and my fame.

I accept my destiny, all that comes from Him  
Returns to Him ultimately, joys turns to sorrows.  
Now my position is nothing, no more I am needed.  
But on the birthday cake I stand for a while  
To delight young and old for joyous moments.



Yet I command a deep respect among worshippers.  
Priests, Bishops who light me to pay homage to great  
Souls who enlighten the hearts of all seekers of peace,  
Truth, beauty and observe restrain and silence.

I appeal to humanity not to shun me, disgrace me.  
Though I am dethroned, yet I still reign in silence.

## **SCOTT THOMAS OUTLAR**

### **Burns Hot for Evolution**

When the walls cave in  
the laughter begins  
in earnest  
(mad, perhaps; but smiling, at least)

When the drugs fade out  
the blood comes clean  
after awhile  
(depressed at first, but quickly fading)

When the old guard dies  
the sex burns hot  
for new future  
(cuddle up with evolution)

When the plague breaks loose  
the fever comes  
with a black wave  
(washing over, lay your head down, God licks cancer)

When the New Age births  
the stars all shift  
in the cycle  
(rain pours down, tide rises up, flood is coming)

## SCOTT THOMAS OUTLAR

### Chameleon

If you desire flames, I will scorch this world to ash  
If you seek entropy, I will fade away and disappear  
If you are suffocating, I will be emergency resuscitation  
If you need an ear to bend, I will lean in closer  
If you lust for a lover, I will rip open my heart  
If you are low down and out, I will be a high entering veins  
If you are sad, I will be a cackling jester  
If you are ecstatic, I will dance beside you  
If you are starving, I will be a blooming garden of fruit  
If you are thirsty, I will be a vineyard of wine  
If you are tired, I will be energy incarnate  
If you are weak, I will drain my strength into you  
If you are bleeding, I will be the bandage  
If you are lonely, I will be an old friend returned  
If you are confused, I will be clarity through the storm  
If you are filthy, I will be a flood to wash over  
If you are freezing, I will be a fiery sun  
If you are hot, I will be the winter cometh  
If you are lost, I will be the rescue mission  
If you lose focus, I will be a gentle guide  
If you cannot go any further, I will carry you to the finish line  
If you seek rebirth, I will enter your soul  
If you long for death, I will arrive as black cancer  
I am the chameleon

## BOOK REVIEW

### 1

## *Dwelling with Denial:* A Collection of Undeniable Poems

DR. MANOJ K PATHAK

*(Dwelling with Denial | Poems | Rajiv Khandelwal | The Poetry Society of India, Gurugram, 2020 | ISBN: 978-93-89213-19-5 | Page: 154 | INR: 320 | \$ 29)*

Indian English Poetry has marked a significant departure not only in terms of the matter but also in the manner of expression, which certainly involves both the choice of language and the flow of the rhythm. Indian English Poets have adjusted and attuned their poetic craftsmanship to the temper of the new age becoming the representative of the contemporary times. The poets have lifted themselves from an exclusive to an extensive range of creative experience. Indian English Poetry is now no more conservative but cosmopolitan in essence. It confronts the new shape of things and acquires a new view of human destiny. Rajiv Khandelwal is one such poet who is regularly being published and here is an attempt to delve into the world of his fifth collection of undeniable poems, *Dwelling with Denial*.

In his seventy five poems in this collection, Rajiv Khandelwal as a poet has created a plethora of new images required for the current age which has adversely changed in

comparison to the preceding ages. He has portrayed the real picture of the happenings of the society at large and has captured the finer sensibilities with great poetic craftsmanship. He has taken the art of poetry seriously and it holds the reader to travel with the thematic flow of his poems. He is neither found to be a supporter of mere imitations nor wanton angularity, neither frantic incoherence nor fabricated obscurity. Thus, his words live or sing themselves out. He seems to be engaged with poetry with consecrated endeavour and exact discipline. He is prepared to take his vocation seriously. Rajiv's poetry is not divorced from contemporary problems and reality. K. N. Daruwalla commented on Indian English Poetry that:

What Indian Poetry needed was someone whose writing approximated to the demand of the present day world, who could bring into play a modern sensibility in confronting the confusion, bewilderment and disillusion of the times, someone who could transfer poetry from its bucolic habitat to an urban one, dump archaisms and the monotonous, jangling rhyme schemes of the earlier poets and adopt a form which could adequately display the subtle modulations of pace and the strength and sinews of free verse.

Rajiv Khandelwal makes his poetry remarkable for fecundity, experimentation and vivid presentation of contemporary reality and consciousness. The poet initiates the collection with a 'Petition' to God 'requesting a stay order/on the cancer gnawing away' his 'vitals'. He finds the petition rejected and he wishes his dear one to be close to him, establishing the importance of relationship enveloped with faith and joy that revitalize at any point of time. He utters:

Bring faith and joy  
As I wait  
Hot, wet and not weary  
To give you pleasures  
Beyond measures

Come before the glass hour sands drop down

In a simple and majestic tone the poet presents his experiences and emotions. He connects to the reader through his thematic variety and subtle modulation of pace. The poem 'Misery' is worth-reading to find it right:

I will not  
Parade  
Glorify  
Flaunt  
The image-logged bare bones  
For the benefit of oglers

But keep the pin-up memory  
The pleasure-scapes  
Pickled

Distant, yet reachable  
Unattainable, yet available  
Luxuriating  
In the poignant beauty  
Of spiced bleeding pores  
Iced  
To total happiness.

Rajiv Khandelwal is much concerned with the unprivileged lot of the society. There are several poems in the collection dedicated to the plight of the down trodden or the marginals. He puts his feelings for them in these words:

We the poorest of the poor  
With chronic and dire economic needs  
Are the debt-bonded-laborers  
Living with insecurity and incomes crunched.  
...  
Vulnerable  
Voiceless  
Denied of human rights  
We live a life of callous bondage  
Without pipe dreams of deliverance.

The poet does not pass things unnoticed and he is observant of the life of common folk. He exhibits his observational acumen and portrayal skill with nice verbal

formations which are both evocative and suggestive. In the title poem 'Dwelling with Denial' he points out at economic injustice, social inequalities, exploitation and pitiable plight of the marginalized lot. He lends voice to their cause saying:

Generations have carried  
In supervised submissive silence

The burden of economic echoes  
Taken in lieu  
Of social obligations  
Generated for occasions  
Like weddings  
Births  
Medical bills  
Deaths  
Religious meals.

...  
Bias and rejection  
Have corroborated  
To assure, we  
The doubly disadvantaged  
Be destined to dwell with denial.

Poet Khandelwal at many times describes the phenomena of events and his experiences graphically. His English language produces audio-visual images which obviously brings forth the poet's command over language and the montage technique. He has added a new dimension to the theme of love exploring with robust tenderness the intricacies of human relationships. In the poem 'Love-A Fatigue' he ends as such:

She caresses hair  
And leaves

Leaving me  
Camped alone

With the feel  
Of her balmy breath on my nape  
The comforting soft moist peck on cheek.

'The Visitation' is a marvelous poem that reflects the poet's contemplation. He suggests the evolution of poetry here in a majestic and philosophical manner. He says:

When words  
Swirling in shadows

Seethe with helpless abandon  
Dip coated in pain  
...  
Then and only then  
The thunderously pounding poetry  
Spins away into misty cosmos.

The poet has devoted ten poems in this collection to explore the process, mood, technique, constituents and claims of a good poem and poet. This exhibits his passion towards the art of poetry and his love for creative writings. He draws the reader to the inner world of his own making.

Khandelwal is a prolific poet with commendable capacity to mould the language like clay to suit his intent of expression. His vocabulary is of words in use which reflects contemporaneity. His words become concepts and symbols which are indicators of his maturity as a poet. This volume of poems exhibits Khandelwal's qualities of clarity, lucidity, coherence and evocativeness. Prof. Sanjukta Dasgupta in the Preface to the book has rightly observed that the volume 'impresses without purposely trying to impress'.

Rajiv Khandelwal's *Dwelling with Denial* evinces his greater poetic skills and perfection both in terms of poetic vision and craftsmanship. He is sensible to contemporary reality and exposes the social disparities and utter apathy to public welfare as well. He explores the uncertainties of life and celebrates love and relationships. Khandelwal as a poet is precise, lucid and pointed. The *Dwelling with Denial* has proved the poet's admirable poetic skills through which he communicates at ease



without lapsing into incoherence and meaninglessness. It is notable that Rajiv Khandelwal's poetry would take significant space in the arena of Indian English Poetry with great comprehensiveness.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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3. **Avdhesh Jha**, an author, poet, teacher and observer, is professor and principal, Waymade College of Education and Dean, Faculty of Education, CVM University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat. He is doctorate in Education and Post Graduate in Mathematics & Education, with 20 years of rich and varied experience in Education industry. He has guided, mentored and supervised numerous research scholars. He is founder and chief editor of 'Voice of Research' – a journal in social science, humanities and technology. He has got nine books published on various subjects, through reputed national and international publishers in Hindi, Gujarati and English. He has so far published about 27 research papers and research articles with national and international journals. He has presented about 25 papers at international, national and state level conference/seminars. He has delivered more than 20 lectures abroad as an invited guest, and more than 70 lectures at international, national, state level conferences,

seminars, workshops etc. He is awarded with CHAROTTAR GAURAV, BHARAT EXCELLENCE.

4. **Ben Nardolilli** currently an MFA candidate at Long Island University. His work has appeared in Perigee Magazine, Red Fez, Danse Macabre, The 22 Magazine, Quail Bell Magazine, Elimae, The Northampton Review, Local Train Magazine, The Minetta Review, and Yes Poetry. He blogs at [mirrorsponge.blogspot.com](http://mirrorsponge.blogspot.com) and is trying to publish his novels.
5. **Daniel Thomas Moran**, born in New York City in 1957, is the author of fourteen collections of poetry. “In the Kingdom of Autumn”, was published by Salmon Poetry in Ireland in 2020, who also published his previous collection, “A Shed for Wood” in 2014. His “Looking for the Uncertain Past was published by Poetry Salzburg in 2005. He has had some four hundred poems published in close to twenty different countries. In 2005, he was appointed Poet Laureate by The Legislature of Suffolk County, New York. His collected papers are being archived by The Dept. of Special Collections at Stony Brook University. He is a retired Clinical Assistant Professor from Boston University’s School of Dental Medicine, where he delivered the Commencement Address in 2011. He is Arts Editor for The Humanist magazine in Washington, DC. He and his wife Karen live in Webster, New Hampshire.
6. **E. Martin Pedersen**, originally from San Francisco, has lived for over forty years in eastern Sicily, where he taught English at the local university. His poetry appeared most recently in Avatar Review, Canyon Voices, Slab, SurVision, and Helix Literary Magazine, among others. Martin is an alumnus of the Community of Writers. He has published two collections of haiku, *Bitter Pills* and *Smart Pills*, and a chapbook, *Exile’s Choice*, from Kelsay Books. A full collection, *Method & Madness*, is forthcoming from Odyssey Press. Martin’s poem,

“Gull Eggs,” was nominated by Flapper Press for the Best of the Net Award 2023.

7. **Frank William Finney** is the author of *The Folding of the Wings* (Finishing Line Press, 2022). He is a retired lecturer who taught Literature at Thammasat University in Thailand from 1995 until 2020. Some of his recent work can be found in *Briefly Write*, *Capsule Stories*, *Fresh Words*, and elsewhere.
8. **Gary Beck** has spent most of his adult life as a theater director and worked as an art dealer when he couldn't earn a living in the theater. He has also been a tennis pro, a ditch digger and a salvage diver. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines and his published books include 36 poetry collections, 14 novels, 4 short story collections, 1 collection of essays and 7 books of plays. Gary lives in New York City.
9. **Gerard Sarnat** has been nominated for the pending 2022 Science Fiction Poetry Association Dwarf Star Award, won San Francisco Poetry's 2020 Contest, the Poetry in the Arts First Place Award plus the Dorfman Prize, and has been nominated for handfults of 2021 and previous Pushcarts plus Best of the Net Awards. He is a Harvard College and Medical School-trained physician who's built and staffed clinics for the marginalized as well as a Stanford professor and healthcare CEO. Currently he is devoting energy/resources to deal with climate justice, and serves on Climate Action Now's board. Gerry's been married since 1969 with progeny consisting of four collections (*Homeless Chronicles: From Abraham To Burning Man*, *Disputes*, *17s*, *Melting the Ice King*) plus three kids/ six grandsons – and is looking forward to potential future granddaughters.

10. **James G. Piatt** is a twice Best of Net nominee and four times Pushcart nominee. He has had five poetry books, *The Silent Pond*, *Ancient Rhythms*, *LIGHT*, *Solace Between the Lines*, and *Serenity*, over 1750 poems, five novels, and thirty-five short stories published in scores of national and international magazines, anthologies and books, He earned his doctorate from BYU, and his BS and MA from California State Polytechnic University, SLO. He lives in Santa Ynez, California, USA, with his wife Sandy and a pup named Scout.
11. **James Wm. Chichetto** is a priest-scholar and professor of Communications at Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts, USA. He has been published over 300 times and is the author of 9 books of poetry. The publication of his work has been aided by NEA and NEH grants as well as by other academic and literary stipends.
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23. **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>

24. **René van der Klooster** is multifaceted. Besides an author of prose, poetry and plays (in Dutch and English), he practices visual arts, including drawing, painting and sculpting, moreover, formerly he worked as an architect and in that capacity he is designing lamps. The writing and the arts originate from a vast dream world, a certain grip on the subconsciousness and mystical experiences. His recently published book *Bimetal1* is a collage of literature and visual arts. Contact: [renevanderklooster@kpnmail.nl](mailto:renevanderklooster@kpnmail.nl) Visit: [rvdkartanddesign.com](http://rvdkartanddesign.com)
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26. **S L Peeran** (b 1950) has completed Seventeen volumes of poems in English besides works in prose, short stories and books on Sufism and Sufi Wisdom. Peeran’s works have been favorably reviewed by many Poet Critics. He has won Literary Prize 2017 of ‘Naji Naaman’ of Lebanon besides many in India. His work is well received and reviewed in



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