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# GJPP

# VerbalART

A Global Journal Devoted to  
POETS AND POETRY

A Peer-Reviewed Print Journal

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**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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**VERBALART**

*A Global Journal Devoted to Poets and Poetry*

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## POETRY

AFTAB YUSUF SHAIKH

### Seven Lives

All truth and no lies, seven lives,  
I offer for this price, seven lives,  
Again you ask until when will this love last,  
haven't I already told you twice? Seven lives.  
Until when will this last, I ask my bride,  
she whispers as she shies, "Seven lives."  
I look as the cat mocks me and says,  
Ah! Human! You think, so nice! Seven lives!  
Aftab you die but once, etch it on stones,  
no dying again, none dies. Seven lives!



**ANDREW SCOTT**

## **The Storyteller**

Come on in, take a seat.  
Let this storyteller tell you a story  
that may be the truth or a lie.

With the wave of the words  
your mind will see the visions  
of what is being presented to you  
or where your imagination takes you.

This storyteller may take you  
to liberating, changing historical times  
or make you face pain that is within you.  
Maybe either is a fantasy or reality.

You will focus on this storyteller's expression  
to see if there is magic to be revealed,  
not the whole performance for tricks.

The real reality is in the words.  
That is where the illusion is stored.

So please come on in,  
watch this storyteller play  
what maybe the complicated truth  
or the straight naked lie.

**AVDHESH JHA**

## **Success**

With different size, shape, colour, bloom and fragrance,  
Each flower differs towards its perception of success;  
Having individual differences, difference in development,  
Background and motivation of each human and organism,  
Different is perception of success, following behaviourism,  
As much as, like solution, comprising of solvent and solute,  
How if people knew, Success is relative and not absolute!

**BEVERLY MATHERNE**

## **Haiku Poems**

### **Poem 1**

before sunrise  
Big Dipper  
pours out night

### **Poem 2**

American Birch  
fall bronze  
torch of the forest

### **Poem 3**

come down to us  
from the high Artic  
Snowy Owl

### **Poem 4**

Dalmation Rose  
flash of emerald sips  
speeds on

**CLEBER PACHECO**

**Identity**

I'm from nowhere  
And I know no castles and caves,  
My journey is sand and snow storm  
And belies any anthropological study.  
My digital prints  
Only marks on the water  
Flowing fast  
Towards the vapors.  
My footprints are dissolved  
While touching the ground  
Sprouting of fossils and larvae,  
In gardens of uncertainty.  
My eyes were sculpted  
With grass, glass and clouds  
Peering into chasms, constellations  
Through the unforeseen.  
I am from everywhere  
And I'm not looking for shelter.  
I accept rain, storm, thunder  
Because I learned  
To explore deserts, forests  
Having my heart as a compass.

**DAN RAPHAEL**

## **A Semblance of Breath**

when the sky fell off the wall  
the wall turned around showing  
two breasts and a sparkling belt

as the breasts unfold the belt radiates  
like confined fireworks unable to bring  
the intended message to legible

i lookup into a penciled-in city  
around the corner of permanent shadow  
coming into focus as charred meat  
crumbling like the end of an impatient cigarette  
an emergency mascara, thread dissolving into ink

my hands are half an hour late  
but the floor's already gone  
with flea debris i-told-you-so

intent can be firm or nothing else to do,  
more than one upto look to, above the queue  
of clouds, a hundred dollars of incentive  
illuminating my unpolished scalp

walls never come first and need doors, doors need  
something's desire to go through, ceilings wish  
they were roofs, roofs give rain a percentage of  
all they breathe, isolated atoms of various skies

**DANIEL P. STOKES****Glitz**

Sol, the sire of life,  
makes butter run.  
We're on the terrace.  
Shaded. Breakfast.  
Fruit and pastries. Coffee  
creamed with Baileys.  
Decadent. The street  
beneath, still sleepy,  
muses why last night  
we stopped mid-road to gawp  
a moonless heavens  
splotched down its middle  
with a billion melded suns.

A primal call to confront infinity?  
Elements intuiting whence they came?  
Or inculcation that the distant,  
vast and barely comprehended  
demands our awe?

It could, of course, be glitz –  
the straining flame before us on the table,  
oil oozing iridescence after rain,  
a dusty shaft of sunlight through a crevice –  
that lures the eye and later  
we take home and,  
granting our perceptions import,  
flesh with meaning.

**DAVID HARRISON HORTON**

**A Song of Candy Corn**

The red horse that confronts  
the yellow distance  
ends the journey  
of every movie.

The credits roll in an ant scrawl  
not seen since the second  
invasion  
or maybe the third.

Your heart is a locked box today.  
I pawned mine a while ago.

The evening stroll will be filled  
with dust, always dust,  
and the wide hipped women  
will be statues.

**DRAGICA OHASHI**

## **Paris Olympics 2024**

Athletes are packing their bags  
Looking forward to the Olympics  
Pianists took musical notes to memory  
The married couple brought a key to open the padlock on the  
bridge  
Model new hairstyle for the show  
An art student is excitedly waiting at the door of the Louvre  
To see the famous Mona Lisa smile  
The Eiffel Tower is the dream of every young architect  
And the Versailles palace of interior designers  
Montmartre village prepares croissants and champagne for  
tourists  
There is no bigger city for painters and museums  
Notre Dame shines in the new facade  
Paris is the global center this year  
Phryges mascots with a flag await guests  
Ritz wakes up quietly  
It opens a bouquet of hope  
While Paris sleeps  
The Mediterranean keeps it in its arms  
Like a small child, he cradles Paris in a cradle  
Lullaby melody for mermaids and nymphs  
It carries all the way to the Triumphal Arch  
Heroes as pillars of the ages  
In the foundations of genes, they never disappear.



**FABIYAS M V**

## **The Human Sacrifice**

Even the hyenas are not so ruthless.  
The three perpetrators are powered  
by the prospect of prosperity  
through human sacrifice.  
One of them is a poet!  
Haikus in his mind are  
like roses decorating a slaughterhouse.  
A lady vendor has been trapped  
in the snare of their monetary promise.  
They mute their prey with a rag.  
Her legs and arms are fastened.  
A machete wounds her vagina:  
they collect blood in a pan.  
Her breasts are scooped out.  
This sorcery is  
a monster with sadistic stripes.  
The female flesh is kept in the freezer:  
for the human kebab?  
The dark, cannibalistic thoughts thrive  
in their psychic wilderness.  
As her agony stays in the air,  
how can we walk forward?

**GARY BECK**

## **Motives**

War is rarely righteous  
most caused by greed,  
the lust for power,  
economic expansion,  
many other reasons,  
few are noble.

Only innocent countries  
that defend themselves  
against foreign invasion  
may have honest cause.

Rebels invariably  
want to replace  
the current system  
to gain the benefits  
of wealth and privilege.

Patriotic wars  
to defend the homeland  
from foreign aggression  
must be admired  
for the resultant sacrifices  
from the call to duty.

**GEMA BOCARDO**

**Blessed**

If grow is...  
muddy innocence,  
betray the values,  
give up the ideals,  
mute the love,  
hit the warm lips,  
collect enemies:

Let me sleep inside  
my mother's womb  
naked and blessed!

**GERMAIN DROOGENBROODT**

## **Artificial Intelligence**

Rivers overflow their banks  
houses are demolished  
cars swept away  
by the raging waters:  
man has disrupted nature.

In vain  
wisdom's warning words

Would a chip, implanted in the brain,  
offer more wisdom or even more blindness  
and indoctrination?

**HOLLY PAYNE-STRANGE**

**Books like puzzles**

I like books that lie flat.  
I like books that lie flat so I can rest them on his chest  
And run my hands up his side  
Between turns of the page.

I learned this in Washington DC,  
In between jaunts to museums  
And steak dinners out.

I like books that fit on my bookshelf  
The one that's annoyingly short.  
Usually that's the odd balls like poetry,  
Or some self-published soul that didn't get it quite right.

It lets me find new things,  
Like sea glass in pebbles  
Or leaves in flowerbeds.

I like books I doubt I'll find again  
Rescued from some second hand store,  
Or plucked from the dusty shelves  
Of a cobweb library.

Like stepping into an ancient, ruined city  
Some half-forgotten Rome,  
Claimed again by an adventuring hero.

I like books that fit into the cracks and crevices of life,  
That fill a need  
And sing like puzzle pieces  
Snapped into place.

**ISILDA NUNES**

## **The Son of the War**

You know mother, yesterday I heard you crying.  
I was scared, Mom.  
I realised that your tears did not augur a good thing.  
Dad hasn't stroked my head in days,  
Nor you sing Nina Nana.  
I feel cold, Mama! I feel night!  
I can't sleep.  
I hear, continuously, thunders that shatter my soul.  
Sirens that pierce my body.  
Bullets that assassinate my future.  
I sink in the anxiety that floods your womb in convulsions.  
Your heart seems to explode.  
Your body seems to expel me.  
I try to hold on to the cord that coils around my foot.  
In vain. It slips away.  
Mother, I'm afraid!  
Afraid of living in Humanity.  
Afraid of dying and killing.  
Don't you love me anymore, Mother?

**JAMES CROAL JACKSON**

## **To Forget Only This**

I have procured enough condensation  
to call myself a cloud, floating miles  
above this life in an attempt to forgo  
its trivialities, the terrestrial specks  
traveling on two legs across the green  
frown of landscape. To forget only  
this past week, not a whole history,  
requires wings I do not have. Still,  
in an attempt at forgiveness, you  
call down to me from the tallest  
mountain imaginable, where  
pressure curls its tendrils around  
my lungs, and my best is spitting  
rain. I am nowhere now – I have  
always been a dissolution of  
a dream, a lofty thing that  
leaves my mouth and  
goes to where I want  
to reach.



**JAMES G. PIATT**

## **Omissions & Commissions**

In the valley of my deepest sorrows,  
I opened my mind to daily wounds,  
And my weary mind, tight with sorrow,  
Echoed each hour of the day like the  
Waxing and waning of the raucous tide.

When you asked me to wash my  
Hands in lonely repentance, and  
To relate what ascended to the surface;  
I told you I smelled roses emitting  
Sweet aromas into the atmosphere.

You nodded with a promise of  
Redemption and a smile that  
Colored the tip of my smoldering  
Ashes of anguish. I then held,  
Your hand and the ashes vanished.

**JAYANTI KRISHNAN**

**See you soon**

Loved ones going away leaves an emptiness in one's life

One is lost and burrowed in one's own thought and existence

Cherishing and remembering good times filled with emotion,  
tenderness and love

Searching for some solace, assurance and peace

Living with a hope that someday, universe will open doors for  
you to see them soon to hold and embrace.

**JAYDEEP SARANGI**

## **On Our First Meeting**

We are characters on the canvas.  
Images turn around to show their full face.  
Some wear a smug smile, others scornful...  
They never look us in the eye, deep.

This untrained eyes search for  
the stars during a lonely night  
Hands of care sitting near the wardrobe  
singing all stories that hearts stitch.

We never counted moments,  
We discovered eyes of each other  
whom we wished to see  
slowly blinking in Time's mist.

Someone watching us would write a note  
on our first meeting near the airport gate  
holding the map, mapping the spaces.  
All were true, and continue to run.

The delayed Sun makes the day new.

**JEVIN LEE ALBUQUERQUE**

**Ghost Train**

Whistle-blown-picnic  
riverside sipping  
*rosé*

Voice, river, the sun  
eyes  
blanketed down

Last night,  
afternoon  
whistle-tease

Backs, moans  
Witch's nest  
we, birds, for dinner

**JOAN MCNERNEY**

## **Nightscape**

Fog horns sound though  
air soaked in blackness.  
All evening long listening  
to hiss of trucks, cars.

Shadows brush across walls  
as trees trace their branches.  
Gathering and waving  
together then swaying apart.

While I sleep, stars glide  
through heaven making  
their appointed rounds in  
ancient sacred procession.

Dreams as smooth as rose  
petals spill into my mind  
growing wild patches in  
this dark garden of night.

JOHN RC POTTER

## Quicksand

All things being equal  
yet they never are that way;  
and the smell of dust still lingers  
as the sun dies at the end of the day.

We are lovers in an age  
without much love:  
living, loving, dying,  
over and over again.  
We ask: *why be hurt?*  
No one has the answer:  
    we cannot seem to escape  
    this emotional landscape.

Is a lover's legacy  
just passion and pain?  
We seem to be  
knee deep  
in this doubt and deceit  
as we slowly sink into this  
quicksand.  
I say to you:  
*not now, perhaps never, maybe later*  
as you then reach down to me  
with your open hand  
just out of...  
...reach.

**JOHN SWEET**

## **A Remembered Lie**

pale blue skies of  
lost afternoons,  
of silences uncomplicated by sorrow

the hours laid out with no shape,  
no meaning,  
but at least i had them

i was in love with  
a lesser god

it was the last day  
of my father's life

we were all so  
sick with joy

**K.V. RAGHUPATHI**

## **Woods as Wounds**

Here stood primaeval woods once at ease  
warm, graceful, and tender  
in my childhood, I remember  
with towering, ascending, murmuring trees  
with glossy leaves as garments green, distinct  
shining and swinging in light and rain  
with their branches and bosoms resting now and then on the  
ground  
with birds nesting in the wedges  
with their voices sweet and sanguine;

whispering, the wind glided through the lustrous leaves  
I held a calm communion  
with banyan, peepal, neem, and mango trees  
and of course, many marvels, soft and fair  
with the bond thicker than with my community  
their whispers and melodies  
that dissolved my frets, fears, and fixities.

I visited and stayed quite often  
to savour their beauty and charity;  
happy as though I were in paradise,  
the whole woods were one vast orchestra  
with so many instruments with so many strings  
to produce symphonies to celebrate the presence....



In spring, the woods were fragrant, fresh, and fair  
cool and calm winds through the blossoms and leaves swept  
shined in deep colours  
a deep solitude I felt amidst a multitude;  
whenever my soul grew sick  
and gathered balm from a sweet walk.

Summer gone with shadows like glory on  
from the scorching sun,  
the mountains unfolded with the fall of leaves  
in their wide sweep, the plain landscape loomed large round  
I roamed in the woods that were crowned in splendours  
the upland with a glow,  
where the gay company of trees looked down  
on the ground smelling multitudes.  
Summer rain rushing through the woods  
pelting the leaves and drenching the ground.  
I was not lonely but bright in the company of  
birds and the leaves strewn along the winding way.

Those jocund days  
I lost in the name of development.  
Now like wounds in my consciousness stayed.  
Who butchered the trusting, innocent woods that I frequented  
once  
to feed the plunderer's fire greed that flew like chips?  
Now you would never know there stood woods  
before human greed entered through the woods;  
the grand children would shoo away  
there stood woods before human greed penetrated.

They built human houses as tombs upon the trees  
that now let me pay my homage:  
May the trees that existed once  
grow elsewhere in abundance and shelter the birds  
and creepy-crawlies.

**KAPARDELI EFTICHIA**

## **Forgotten City**

Unborn words hang in the air  
intangible shapeless hands show the icy red dawn  
and the forgotten city in the land ready to give birth  
New petite flowers, proud and fragrant, they tilt sweetly  
their head high in the warm rays of the Sun  
these to be born again to a new life in a new city

**KARLA LINN MERRIFIELD**

**Gestalt: Like It Is 12/26**

hoopla much ado  
commercialism cynicism  
greed holiday  
faith death

If I can mourn the myriad  
myths of this drear season,  
I will complete the poetic form,  
caroling.

**KEITH INMAN**

## **Leaving**

A soldier waits around  
late for leave in a foreign town

as solid air weighs him down  
like leaves on the brown ground

so little here without her now –  
loath to leave a drowned clown

**KEN CATHERS**

**No trees were harmed**

no trees were harmed  
to make this poem

it lives in a few  
measured breaths

stray words  
wrapped in music.

a small blight  
does more damage.

no animals were tested  
twisted in pain

at worst they endured  
a late night recital  
some tedious haiku.

this poem grows green  
is hormone free  
untouched by pesticides

all the words refurbished  
recycled

still smooth enough  
to use again.

even the pages leave  
a light carbon footprint

can be torn up  
become paper planes, boats

an origami writer  
in an empty room

the creases perfect  
painful

a memory of trees  
folded inside

LISA LAHEY

## Date with Destiny

a moon-saturated night shone the truth  
on the ground's sins as it crumbled  
and sank inward into a void  
swallowing everything in its path,  
animals, insects, stonework designs  
holding aged tales of folklore.

They fell to the other side of the earth,  
somewhere in China, eating rice from bowls  
with wooden chopsticks, bowing respect  
to the elderly.

Her hand pushed upward through the sweetest  
succulent grass,  
her fingers grasped at air she hadn't breathed  
in a millennium.

Mesmerized I took her hand in mine,  
it held a million years of misery and promise.  
I kissed every vein, every blood-filled vessel  
when she stood before me in a form-hugging web  
as gossamer as spider silk,  
her radiant eyes,  
faded emeralds dipped in moon rays,  
her hair tumbling in tangled ocean waves  
to her feet.

I am old, came a whisper  
older than the earth itself.



She promised deliverance  
not away from the earth but  
deep into its depths.  
We danced her dance macabre, circling one another,  
weeping, and rejoicing at our union.  
Her name was Eternity  
I gave her mine.

I begged her forgiveness; unworthy,  
forever unworthy.  
Her cool hands frosted my face  
she whispered a kiss on my lips, *all is forgiven*.  
She enveloped me in the soil of infinitude  
as I clung to her in mournful gratitude.  
The ethereal journey left lonely footsteps behind,  
then nothingness.

**MATTHEW JAMES FRIDAY**

**Pine Eagle**

I saw you, white wave constellation  
rising above the Deschutes river,  
chasing out a crow from your current.

I sat by a Milk Way of ruined rocks  
and the upturned ocean of the sky,  
and you spilled upstream, rapid

and uneven, as if debating ownership  
with the river, orbiting pine trees to  
prove to Odin that you can see all.

**MICHAEL LEE JOHNSON**

## **Four Leaf Clover (V5)**

I found your life smiling  
inside a four-leaf clover.  
Here you hibernate in sin.  
You were dancing in the orange fields of the sun.  
You lock into your history, your past, withdrawal,  
Taste honeycomb, then cow salt lick.  
All your life, you have danced in your soft shoes.  
Find free lottery tickets in the pockets of poor men and strangers.  
Numbers rhyme like winners, but they are just losers.  
Positive numbers tug like gray blankets, poor horses coming in  
1st.  
Private angry walls; desperate is the night.  
You control intellect, josser men.  
You take them in, push them out,  
Circle them with silliness.  
Everything turns indigo blue in grief.  
I hear your voice, fragmented words in thunder.  
An actress buried in degrees of lousy weather and blindness.  
I leave you alone, wander the prairie path by myself.  
Pray for wildflowers, the simple types. No one cares.  
Purple colors, false colors, hibiscus on guard,  
Lilacs are freedom seekers, now no howls in death.  
You are the cookie crumble of my dreams.  
Three marriages in the past.  
I hear you knocking my walls down, heaven stars creating  
dreams.  
Once beautiful in the rainbow sun, my face, even snow  
Now cast in banners, blank, fire, and flames.  
I cycle a self-absorbed nest of words.

**MITHIL JHA**

## **31st December - Midnight Rendezvous**

With each date, the year was dying  
And with its each weak last breathe,  
The dying year witnessed the date  
Drowned with the overwhelming joy ...  
Be it the joy of the passing of the year  
Or the earmarking of the new breathe ...  
Dates are the name and days are same,  
Pity is understanding that dates are live!

**MOHAN D**

## **Keeper of Secrets**

Through Childhood games and secrets shared,  
In every moment, you've always loved;  
We share laughter and tears,  
Growing together through the years;

Through ups and downs, we stand strong,  
In your presence, I always belong;  
You've taught me lessons, Big and small,  
Supported me, through it all.

Through support and get rid, they'll always be nearby,  
A sister's love, perennially sincere;  
In laughter and tears, they stand side by side,  
Their love, a bond that will never divide.

You've nurtured me with unconditional care,  
In your arms, a bond that's beyond compare.

NELS HANSON

## **Brief Passenger**

Disguised in air some goddess steps  
from bending gangway to our deck's  
first board as compass needle swings  
leeward, silver dividers fold closed by  
a sextant craving no farther latitude,  
snowy plovers fill crosstrees, 30 oxen  
stir below. Lookout from crow's nest  
aims his glass upward to cry land ahoy,  
not a sail or rower we glide a moonlit  
path, at starboard white shores, vast  
meadows of asphodel, night's Pole Star  
a flower's, halo's center. Sea and sky  
single azure an instant she smiles with  
a figurehead's blue eyes, the glorious  
voyage poets remember, then warmer  
perfumed breath wafts toward that isle  
and she's gone, crew wakes to cast off,  
unfurl the full mainmast. Breeze, familiar  
westerly, bells a starched canvas, again  
spinning backward into place the great  
oaken wheel steers by dead reckoning  
as we speed for a haven called Zanzibar.

**PAULETTE CALASIBETTA**

## **Evolution**

when the days grow lean  
and the nights grow long  
where narrow vision  
widens in the solitude

tethered in meditation.  
cocooned like a chrysalis  
evolving, developing wings,  
emerging

possibilities conceived  
within the womb  
waiting to be birthed  
in the heart of a poem.

**PAWEŁ MARKIEWICZ**

## **The Quire of the Sheep**

We are calling for your soul  
for a benevolent autumnal source  
May the hoary times arrive  
full of sunny gloom endlessly dream!

with a fancy  
coming from tender sea  
we are conjuring you dreamer  
your mythical pearls

Come propitious birdies  
from Olympus-mountlet!

Recite my songs  
about the mellow dawn  
about brave honest hoplite-like treasure!



**RAM KRISHNA SINGH**

## **Love Hides: A Haiku Sequence**

sex excels:  
a host of sins  
love hides

she says she's single  
and ready to mingle –  
just moments away

thrice she clicks  
her heels together:  
secret code

her hair up  
transparent front and back:  
birthday cake

midnight moon  
senses aroused –  
lift the veil

love in folds of sleep  
forgotten memories:  
washed up melody

her disheveled hair  
delight in disorder –  
bittersweet flings

taking selfie  
with her new mobile:  
breast-feeding

past lover  
time to clean up house:  
cold moon

stars celebrate  
the body's wet music  
sublime sensation

sunflowers ring:  
teenagers ChatGPT  
Sapphic know-how

how innocent  
the children of night –  
sleep and death

clad in white  
peaks behind peaks –  
Everest within

**RICHARD MARVIN TIBERIUS GROVE**

## **What are we but Memories**

What are we but rivulets of memories?  
Moments remembered or forgotten  
the way we wish to remember.  
Gushing, twisting, meandering,  
torturously bending around  
rocks and other hard places.  
Flowing over,  
Through, around the inconvenient.  
Do we remember the boulders  
more than the soft shoals  
where we rested, warm and calm?  
Flowing moments strung together,  
sad and joy filled moments, scars  
received and inflicted moments  
of doubt. Poignant elations of  
victories, defeats  
large and small. What are we  
but memories, true or false,  
changed or transformative. What  
are we but the memories  
that are the truth for this  
convenient moment.

**ROGER G. SINGER**

**Night Walks**

darkness releases  
islands of people  
from the uncommon  
speaking fountains  
of words

as voices twitch  
and eyes search  
corner spaces  
of the  
occupied and  
reserved  
asking, listening  
while exchanging  
beautiful ideas

**SALONI KAUL**

## **Syllables Blessed**

A long long wail that stretches sound expressively  
 From solid earth to distant arching sky,  
 With piercing resonance and trill-like whirr,  
 Rends all the air and ether like lightning reversed  
 Setting the seven seas reverberating with its roll  
 And shakes the gods and snugly ensconced powers that be  
 Out totally of their smug self-satisfaction enthroned seating.

Words couldn't possibly have effectively exerted greater power,  
 Generated stronger pressure that strained the senses,  
 Than this voiced entreaty and resounding mournful outcry,  
 Too torn for tears, too pained for formulated speech,  
 That droned on resolute in its redundancy sonorously,  
 And chimed blatantly booming with its muted  
 Echo stunning all heeding ears well beyond that vicinity.

In that one solid stolid outpouring,  
 Loud sang a thousand threnody-like dirges,  
 Welled-up sad songs and lamentations of the heart,  
 Like forlorn clanging of goat-bells in the mountains  
 Pointedly from the subtly-muted crux of pity,  
 A locked-up volume of distorted syllables  
 In slowest rhythmic succession.

Lines in metrically aligned symmetry sincere,  
 Perhaps those very ultimate stirrings of mankind!  
 Sincere yet giving them the ultimatum,  
 The last straw on the verge of variance protest!  
 Urging them, someone, to do something.

**SCOTT THOMAS OUTLAR**

## **The Strands That Tie Together**

Ancestral DNA  
and genetic coding  
express themselves  
in mysterious ways

such as  
finding my Dad's papers  
from when he was a teenager  
and observing how the doodles  
of stars and shapes  
he placed in the margins  
were the same types of designs  
I would draw on loose leaf pages  
while in school

A bridge spanning back  
between our minds  
and the way patterns  
manifest down the line  
seems marvelous to me  
in this moment of remembrance

**SHALINI MISRA**

## **The Conflict and The Resolution**

Between you and me, "Is Nation First...Always First!"  
They guard the Country, they guard the Nation.  
We live freely because of them.  
We sleep peacefully because of them.

They grow up in a family like other ordinary people.  
But, when they become special, they never realize.  
When they look up, they see-  
The shining stars and the vast sky.

They sacrifice everything: their dreams, their homes,  
And focus only on one thing: *Their Country*.  
They leave behind everything, just everything-  
When the duty calls and this is what makes them special.

They prefer stars on shoulders to stars in the sky.  
They fight; they win and sometimes die on a strange land.  
And if they come back, they have conflicting thoughts-  
Whether they performed their duty well...

Have they justified the purpose...the mission?  
They give up everything: their smiles, their happiness,  
Their comfort, their dreams to protect us,  
To protect their countrymen.

If they don't come back, their families-  
Don't shed tears, but honor a soldier's sacrifice.

Their ultimate sacrifice doesn't go waste.  
As they live in the heart of every human-being.

They march on the frontiers and face the fate-  
With a strong will power, their faith never wavers.  
They bite the bullet on the border,  
We hear the boots on the ground, the victory bells.

They stand at no man's land,  
They challenge enemy in their trenches.  
Time can never fade their glory-  
Who glorify the Country and the Nation.

They deserve a life after death.  
A life who's turned silent, but -  
Speaks volumes about sacrifices made-  
To give us a beautiful life.

They are not dead and gone, they are -  
Everywhere, they are resting in the native soil;  
They are smiling in an infant's face.  
They are eternal.

*There comes a time when the conflict ends-  
And a resolution found...Nation First.*

*"Patriotism is in their blood.  
They serve and they sacrifice.  
They are the Nation's Pride".*



**TAPAN KUMAR PRADHAN**

## **Of Butterflies and Bees**

A butterfly will not know  
real joy does not lie in the flower  
but within its own proboscis – it depends merely  
on how true and how profound you dig in  
with your sacred instrument of seeking pleasure.

Flit not from flower to flower like a foolish butterfly  
choose one flower, your own flower, from the garden of life  
and dig deep with your proboscis, sucking out the elixir

one flower, one bee  
that is how your love should be  
for your woman  
you need only one – and one only

if a woman cannot quench your thirst  
neither will two, nor four, nor a thousand ever will  
as all flowers are in essence the same, so are all women  
same breasts, same crests, same hips, same lips, same  
sepals, petals, pistils, styles, stamens - same everything  
rushing from flower to flower you achieve nothing  
neither are you satisfied, nor is your flower,  
which waits sadly for the next butterfly  
as you await madly your own next.

Man, you need not wander, need not blunder  
everything you ever wanted in this world  
is already there in your woman -  
her eyes are your sun and moon, her hairs your pleasure garden

her lips the sweet fruits of your wish fulfilling tree  
her laughter the milky way where your stars are born  
and her navel the black hole that devours all your pain.

Devotee! the slopes of her breasts are your lofty Himalayas  
the cool milk flowing from her heights is your Yamuna  
warm juice oozing out of her depths is the Ganga  
Oh, man, unite the two, relish the two  
and see the ever beatific smile  
of Goddess Saraswati beckon you.

Do not get deceived by her external forms  
sometimes she wears a dark skin, sometimes a white  
sometimes she sings a sweet song, sometimes a rant, a moan  
Ah, man, love her, feel her, smell her, taste her, own her  
listen to her subtle music  
and see the secrets of universe slowly unfold

within the lotus of your own heart.

**VANISRI P**

## **When Day Becomes Night**

When Day becomes night  
They meet Again, they have always been  
She is grateful for the enigmatic Universe  
Where the darkness exits to make light truly-count;

They are always just there – breathing,  
incandescently glowing and in ways that  
humans can't understand: listening

They never ask questions  
Nor she ever has to prove herself  
She can go on for hours, they never mind.

They are each other's companion  
When her crushed old soul dipped in sin  
When the destiny taking bites of her  
They are her magic potions.

They mend her heart in ways  
No one ever did  
When the turmoil inside her  
She hung in there, like under the  
Spell of the Universal babies.

The dawn only heals her  
But the dusk feels her darkness  
Completes her when no one does.

It is not the moon  
It was them – The Lonely stars.

**VERNON FRAZER**

## **Prowling the Meat Market**

decade cardigans handicap  
a special karmic exhaustion  
lower slow bullhorn thermals

to grab at any thriller vixen

raw dissuasion a door bell  
the beverage a prime logistic  
to assist the patio bromide

every freckle slim and lowered  
boring their blowtorch theory  
more radiant than any gaslight

visceral broadcasts a reasoning

umbrage the foregone occlusion  
whispers temper a robot texture  
lifts a lotion reasoning diamond

sedan ride roadhouse relations  
hardened sealant red arrival surge  
reaction loosens the close glance

demagogues hugged their neckties

**VITASTA RAINA**

**Untitled**

Part of me exists only in theory,  
A phrase or a metaphor,  
Written on a piece of paper  
in a diary or a notebook from school.  
Part of me has never seen the physical world,  
never spoken a word that could be heard,  
part of me is mute and limbless,  
a part of me is only a poem.

**WILLIAM DORESKI**

## **The Latest Erotic Impulse**

The latest erotic impulse  
lies flattened in the avenue  
where green line trains rumple  
along and rats browse windblown  
trash between the polished rails.

I felt this impulse without  
the slightest hint of stimulus.  
But in my twenties, I studied  
Herbert, Donne, and Milton  
in a classroom overlooking

this spot. The building has gone.  
replaced by a vivid confection  
of competing anodized panels.  
Maybe those flashy colors  
triggered my primal sensation.

But why should I want to lie down  
with the rats while green line cars  
trundle past without touching  
the flesh that seems so desperate  
it would risk anything for love?

**YEŞİM AĞAOĞLU**

**Your umbrella the vulture**

your umbrella stands by the door  
black as black  
perched there like a kahlibis bird of yore  
you had given it me  
during a sudden rain shower  
you dont really know anything do you  
the dead dont get wet  
you wont understand that  
they also say  
that the one who walks away weeps too  
hahaha  
your umbrella has taken wing  
a great big vulture  
i'm frightened  
its eyes are on me

**YUAN CHANGMING**

## **Alternative Longevity**

Just as Wang Lun, the richest guy in the world's  
Greatest dynasty has outlived his name in history  
Since he bribed Li Po with tons of rare & valuable  
Goods over a thousand years ago, thus inspiring  
The great high Tang poet to mention his gifts  
In an immortal line

So you are the only Chinese  
Woman who's found your way into foreign poetry  
Much "Like a love letter into its envelop," without  
Even making an empty promise.

You don't speak  
A single English word, nor have you ever  
Bothered to read any stanzas in our mother tongue  
But now you're in full display in a museum of love  
I've built with the words of the imperial language



## ESSAY

### 1

## *Shiva Purana* and Glimpses of Ancient Wisdom

P C K PREM

Study of literature whether contemporary or ancient gives glimpses of age, its socio-economic, political, religious, philosophic and historical aspects and thus, it is a compound approach to life and existence. Vision, knowledge and wisdom of the ancients attract and teach true art of life and do not hide imperfections and negativity. Subjects of perennial interest – creation, preservation and dissolution form the fundamental substance when they tell through various discourses, tales and legends about creation, destruction, and growth of life in between. They speak of different ages, Solar and lunar dynasties, lineage of rulers with microscopic particulars. Sage *Vyasa* taught and transmitted ancient wisdom to his devotee *Lomaharshana*, who passed on the sacred knowledge verbally to holy men at *Naimisha* forests and later, these wise sages while interpreting the wisdom made additions and alterations and hence, the figure of *puranas* increased and so it is difficult to tell the exact number of *Puranas* with conviction and correctness.

One can easily say that *Puranas* are in truth, encyclopedic in scope and import where one finds essence of life and existence in totality, and where social, economic, political, religious, psychosomatic, and philosophic dimensions become obvious. A judiciously meditative and reflective intellect goes further than

the borders of transitory life and wishes to concentrate on life beyond as glimpses of mysteries open up. Treatment of multifaceted subject is heterogeneous, exciting and stimulating for an inquisitive intellect. It teaches art of living in entirety with emphasis on truth and righteousness.

To confine the vastness of *Puranas* to a definition is fraught with dangers of imperfection, immaturity and meager perception of the subject matter. *Mahapuranas* and *Up-puranas* are the two classes. Sage *Vyasa* wrote *Puranas* perhaps to convey the essence of the *Vedas*. *Puranas* are tales of kings, sages, celestial and semi-celestial beings, gods and goddesses, *daityas*, human beings – mortals and immortals, and so speak of time and life. These contain the inner world and the worlds beyond, man is still trying to fathom with eagerness. He wishes to know the depth and immensity of what exists next, and tries to comprehend the mind and heart and the immeasurable and manifold dimensions relating to philosophic, psychological, mystical and spiritual yearnings. Objective is to teach man the art of life based on truth and uprightness in simple language and approach and correlate ordinary man's *karmas* and desires with the life of created beings wielding super powers with proclivities toward truth and falsehood, piety and injustice, triumph of truth over prejudice and evil. *Puranas* act as a mirror to men to see truth and glorify life with faith, devotion and truthful *karmas*. It is a path to freedom from internal and external bondages.

Immensely vast in scope and treatment, scholars put *puranas* in three categories – *Vaishnava Puranas*, *Brahma Puranas* and *Shaiva Puranas* and these contain profound elucidation of *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* and *Tamasic gunas* of humankind respectively. Therefore, they speak about the Trinity – *Vishnu* symbolizes *Sattvic* virtues, *Brahma* tells of *Rajasic* and *Shiva* speaks about *Tamasic* nature and tendencies of created beings, which determine destiny.

*Shivapurana* speaks about the glory, splendor, and rituals before prayer and worship, idealistic and philosophical principles of *Shaivism*. Through teachings, religious disquisitions, laws of *dharma*, *karmas* and virtues, it gradually reveals different aspects of life contained in various *samhitas* (segments) as they portray sermons and expositions of grandeur, enormity of mysticism and divinity of created beings – mortals or immortals.

Besides the story of creation and birth of *Brahma*, it tells about the coming up of *Lingam*, creation of universe, emergence of *Rudra*, *daiitya Taraka*, *Kamadeva* and lord's anger whom *Rati* saves, *Parvati's tapa*, birth of *Ganesha* and *Kartikeya*. One learns about the images of *Shiva* as *lingams*, various *tirthas* and emergence of *Jyotirlingams* and *tirthas*, *Shiva-ratri* fast, significance of ashes – *bhasma*, *Shilada's* son *Nandi*, *yagya* of *Daksa* and its devastating consequences, tales of *asuras* namely: *Andhaka*, *Hirayanakasipu*, *Hirayanaksa*, and of monk *Upamanyu*. Five incarnations of *Shiva*, description of eight *murities* of *Shiva* and image of *Ardhanarishwara* and understanding the essence of *Shiva-tattva* that are for the benefit of humankind find right delineation. It talks about forty-two incarnations before one knows about *Nandi*. In the course of even casual look at the holy book, one learns about nature of hells to which sinners ultimately go and suffer for the consequences of *karmas*.

*Purana* narrates godly characteristics, manifestations, exploits, origin of phallic image – installing and worship of *lingams* – the images of lord *Shiva* at various places and the legends associated with *lingams*.

To look into the origin of *puranas* is the not the subject. However, it is good to penetrate into the essence and meaning of *purana's* teaching, religious anxiety, man's future, role of celestial beings and man's acts and devotee's zeal to seek merger with the Absolute – the Supreme lord. Meditation on the lord *Shiva* may

seem easy but initial preparation for proper prayer and worship requires fulfillment of certain rituals.

The legends in the *Purana* convey the essence of ancient wisdom and the eternal message to contemporary man. I feel obliged to many scholars, who worked hard on ancient *Vedic* Sanskrit and rendered the scripture in a language of their age and so the unique practice of translating and trans-creating or turning it into simple language ancient vision and wisdom continued for generations. Translation etc. or interpretation however, scholarly and correct may be, cannot come near the essence, spirit, style and nuances of the original text. I agree that I worked with the limitations... even if I rendered *Shivapurana* as I understood, in simple technique and language.

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Many ages before, *Brahma's manas putra* sage *Narada*, wanted to know about *Shiva*. Nothing existed in the beginning of creation not even the cosmos, the universe. *Brahma* begins to narrate the tale of creation and tells that only *He* (the divine essence) existed but water was everywhere. *Brahma* was bereft of any property regarding the extent, range, temperature – hot or cold, a man understands in ordinary language, and further, he was without the beginning or the end and therefore, defied thoughts of limits. *Vishnu* manifested 'the self' in the great form and relaxed on the water. When he slept, a lotus flower (*padma*) of many petals took birth from the navel. *Padam's* stem dazzled as if it were a cluster of a thousand glittering suns and from the core of the lotus, *Brahma* took birth, wandered around, and witnessed a vast and unfathomable ocean.

Many Questions – 'Who am I? How and from where did I come? What am I to do? Whose son am I? Who gave birth to me?' cropped up in the mind of *Brahma*. He wanted to find conceivable answers, and so, he looked deep into the lotus and

wished to find its centre. Out of inquisitiveness, he travelled along *padam's* stem and continued to travel for another hundred years but failed to find *Padam's* centre and roots, and therefore, after a thought, he returned to the place of birth but failed to find the entity, the little cell from where he had emerged.

*Brahma* was exhausted and therefore, thought it better to take a break. A voice suddenly woke him up but he was lost in deep *tapasya* – meditation and intense *tapa* for twelve years. After austere *tapa*, *Vishnu* with four arms appeared before *Brahma*. *Vishnu's* hands held a *sankha* (conch shell), a *chakra* (a discus), a *gada* (mace) and a *padma* (lotus flower). *Brahma* was surprised to see the man he did not know.

Engaged in a serious dialogue, *Brahma* and *Vishnu* noticed a luminously elegant *lingam* (*Shiva's* image) appearing before the lord. It had no beginning or end. *Vishnu* requested *Brahma* to stop arguing, when they observed materialization of the third unknown being. *Linga's* identity raises questions 'who is he and why did he come and from where?' They looked at each other and seemed extremely astonished.

*Vishnu* told *Brahma* to transform into the figure of a swan (a bird *hamsa*) and fly high even as *Vishnu* changes into the form of boar (*varaha*) and went down into the depths of water. They went with the intent to investigate and find out the farthest points of both sides of *linga*. *Brahma* was now a white swan and flew high into the sky. *Vishnu* as a white boar went down to know the truth of an unknown being *linga*. The search continued for four thousand years but they failed to locate the limits – the end of *linga*. After the journey in search of *linga's* limits, they returned to the place from where they had begun. It was time to pray and so spent another hundred years in prayers.

After the long prayer, they heard the sound of 'om' and soon, an amazing being turned up with five faces and ten arms.

It was *Mahadeva – Shiva*. *Vishnu* was a bit happy and said, “It is because of the fight we had that you arrived on the scene. It is good I say.”

*Shiva* said gently, “We are ‘One’ with ‘One Entity’ and here, we are in three components. *Brahma* is the creator. *Vishnu* is the preserver and I am the destroyer. Another being would take birth from this body and he would be *Rudra*. *Rudra* and I are ‘One’. Let *Brahma* create now” and he disappeared. After *Shiva* left, *Brahma* and *Vishnu* abandoned forms of ‘the swan’ and ‘the boar’.

*Vishnu* created a huge egg (*anda*) in the vast limitless deep-sea and entered the egg, and in the meantime, *Brahma* began to pray. He gained immense power through *tapa* and meditation and created many holy men and sages. Thereafter, the process of creation began. *Brahma*, after initial aura of mystery, decided to create male and female components for an innovative process – a sacred creative act through the union of male and female constituents. The Supreme lord assigned the sacrosanct function to *Prajapati Daksa*, who encountered many problems in the beginning but later, surmounted all impediments and fulfilled a divine duty.

*Purana* is a vital treatise on *karma*, *bhakti* – devotion, wisdom and knowledge, the three qualities of – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and the elucidation of *gunas* – the qualities through tales make the *purana* interesting and contemporary as always and emphasizes the path of *dharma*.

Truth and virtue fill life with happiness but violence and malice cause sufferings. An anguished man seeks refuge at the feet of the god or goddess. He tries to understand the nature of acts (*karmas*) and therefore, tentatively prays and worships to get rid of bodily and mental afflictions. He explores nature of *karmas* and learns that every act originates from the quality of three

*gunas-sattva, rajas and tamas*. The conduct and nature of man depends upon the impact of *gunas*. When he turns to religious texts, he knows the true meaning of *sattva, rajas and tamas*. Various holy books urge men to live truthfully and honestly – a life of *dharma*. Virtuous *karma* is *dharma* (a life of truth and righteousness) of man, for *karma* with a righteous motive serves man and humankind.

*Karmas* are precursors to human relations, love, passion, anxieties, thirst, uncertainties, jealousy, hatred, greed and attachment, and carry the longings for reward. Social obligations presuppose certainty and thus, liberation from worldly joys or sufferings becomes difficult. However, *karmas* if understood correctly, guide a man to freedom from earthly shackles. 'Pleasant and enjoyable' *karmas-preyas* (pleasant) do not create obstacles, for such *karmas* cause attachment to transient material joys, and bring pain, grief and sorrow. Virtuous and humanistic thoughts originating from acts enrich man with inner ecstasy and bliss and at this moment, *karmas* are bereft of the thoughts of recompense. Impassiveness to fruit of *karmas* brings inner peace and proves enlightening to man and society and so, *karmas* attain unique characteristic – *shreyas* (good). To perform duties rightly, is the real *dharma* of man irrespective of the status he holds in the social, economic or political hierarchy, otherwise ubiquitous putrefaction stares.

Faith in *Shiva*, the Supreme not only eliminates sufferings from the life of a man but also grants deliverance. *Purana* consists of six sub-sections (*samhitas*) with more than two hundred and fifty chapters. One learns about the birth of *Brahma* from the navel of *Vishnu*, *Linga*, *Rudra* and then, it speaks of the process of creation, through *prajapati Daksa*. It tells about the *tapa* and penance of *Parvati* and *Shiva*, of the birth of *Uma* and the lord of love, of legendary *yajnas*, of *Ganesha* and the interaction with other gods and celestial beings, of incarnations

and various *daityas* and of elimination of iniquity, violence, untruth and unrighteousness and establishment of laws of *dharma*.

In the light of the above one observes that righteous acts determine destiny of man from the social, economic, psychological, philosophic, political and religious aspects. *Karmas* are integral to the essence of *dharma*, integrity, truth and uprightness and evaluate man's acts. Man's development not only relates to material growth but also growth of inner man. Tales contained in the *Purana* explain and expound the quintessence of inherent message. Continuity in narrative remains uninterrupted whereas the sacred radiance of texts and subtexts of various inbuilt legends, sages' anxieties about life and existence on earth and beyond, spreads philosophic and spiritual light and so each facet of *purana* enlightens, dispels doubts and darkness, and brings light.

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If man serves humankind, performs worldly *karmas* honestly and pursues path of truth and honesty, it definitely leads to salvation. Atonement absolves a man from the affects of *karmas* if he abandons wickedness and imprudence and loves virtues and *dharma*. If a man maintains sanctity of acts and words, life turns meaningful. Human beings possess tremendous power to live as they wish. A life of limpidness, truth and self-respect values devotion and truth and an elevated and godly life, offers real connotation and delight. A man listens to the scriptural teaching and hears religious men but ignores the real substance.

Delusory potency of the lord is unfathomable and teaches lessons to 'ego and arrogance' filled created beings. A man if understands 'the self' only then, he comprehends the essence of *Param-brahma Paramatma*, the Supreme *Brahma*, who bestows supreme ecstasy – true *ananda* and is *nirguna* – beyond virtues,



and *nirbikara* – beyond the limitations of belief and three *gunas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. He is Supreme Trinity – *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*, the origin of all lords and gods.

Devotion in right spirit is the ultimate path to deliverance one learns. Created beings, the three worlds, regions and directions function under an unambiguous plan the lord emphasizes. Without any illusion and delusion, Supreme *Brahma*, explains the secret outline and design of creation and the divine sanction. For any sacred mission, a man if devoted and genuine attains the highest objective.

If a devoted man genuinely understands heavenly objective of gods behind the creation and life's mystery, he really makes life evocative. Incarnation carries a purpose the lord tells. To abandon 'the self' in devotion purifies 'the inner self' and here, a man loves man and humanity – the message of the Supreme.

Elegance, nobility and virtues, truth and *dharma* lead a man to fulfillment and ultimate deliverance. If a man of pure heart thinks rationally, he goes near the divine and invisible power. *Dharma*, righteous conduct and concentration on the *tattva* – essence of life and existence beautify life. *Tapa* helps a created being to attain goal. Not only created beings but also the gods of heavens and celestial souls consider *Shiva* as the origin and source of creation and delusory potency, who bestows power on Trinity – *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*. Life of *daityas* devoted to gods teaches eternal lessons to humankind. Love, devotion and intense *bhakti* offer essence of life. World is not real and so, a man lives in delusion and illusion. Impiety survives if hatred, violence and sins thrive and so invite miseries and death.

One ought to respect privacy and supremacy of one's region and grant it to others, and nobody should ever think of infringement, tells *Shiva Purana*. It further tells that if a man adheres to the path of truth and righteousness, and spends life

without prejudice or feelings of injustice for anyone, he makes man and society happy. Man ought to be genuine in what he does. Virtuous *Karmas* bring joy and prosperity, the tales highlight quite often.

If one has faith in one's *karma* born of virtuous qualities, one is surely free from sufferings, for evil *karmas* cause sufferings. A man if knows his limitations and understands delusory powers of the great god that even *Brahma* does not know it is good. Faith in the invisible frees from sufferings and delusory living, and therefore, for a man, who seeks refuge in *gunas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, salvation on apt understanding is certain.

The world witnesses an eternal struggle between the good and the evil, in the images of gods and the demons and there is no let up. Evil forces look virtuous in the beginning but soon return to original nature and enjoy pleasures. It increases hunger for more, and consequently, revulsion, hostility, brutality, ego and conceit overwhelm. Death is unavoidable, howsoever, strong and mighty a man is. Many undergo *tapa* and penance for years and seek immortality from the Supreme but face death. If one goes beyond the borders of wisdom and intellect of the creator, he commits a momentous blunder, for the creator assigns each one fixed time, *karma*, space and location. Even in intensity of *bhakti*, a man fails to go beyond what the creator designs.

Wickedness enjoys short life. *Asuras* symbolize insatiability and violence, transgression and brutality whereas gods are harbingers of peace and harmony and evince interest in *bhakti* and *tapa*. Gods want happiness of created beings and never disturb the flow of system and so, promote goodwill, *tapa*, *bhakti*, wellbeing and prosperity. Whoever works against the dictates of Supreme gets retribution and lives in oblivion. Supreme lord

wants eternal continuity of humanity and guides to deliverance if a man lives righteously.

Lord creates a world where birth, death and rebirth are inevitable. He specifies role of power, self, pleasures of the senses and material prosperity. For the growth of population, he defines the role of females. The lord seeks consent of Supreme *Brahma* the *Pitahamaha*, undergoes *tapa* and pleases *Mahadeva*, who appears in an amazing figure of *ardhmarishawara* – a figure of a man and a woman in equal proportion.

If *Shiva* undergoes *tapa* for a long period, goddess *Shiva* also undertakes austere *tapa* for many ages. One understands the sacred function of creation and procreation, a function within the borders of morality and *dharma*. For the pleasure and benefit, wellbeing and happiness of the devotees, the Supreme Lord wanders on earth and the three worlds in various guises. He not only purges the three worlds from sins and iniquity but also establishes the rule of *dharma*. To achieve the objective, even gods and goddesses experience distress and grief. If a man works hard with devotion and faith, he attains objective of life he ought to understand. Contemporary man whatever may be the status, grade and stage in life ought to learn to live with a spirit of tolerance, patience, truth, righteousness, honesty and integrity, which are conducive to peace and harmony.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

1

### **Baudelaire's Influence on the Poetry of W. B. Yeats**

**DR. VINAY KUMAR SINGH**

#### **Abstract**

Baudelaire profoundly influenced W.B. Yeats, shaping his poetic sensibilities and thematic concerns. Yeats, deeply immersed in Symbolism, resonated with Baudelaire's exploration of urban life and existential themes. Their parallel themes include grappling with modernity's complexities and portraying the urban landscape's fleeting pleasures and profound despair. Baudelaire's innovative use of symbolism greatly impacted Yeats, who embraced it as a tool for conveying abstract ideas and emotions. This aesthetic, emphasizing suggestion over explicit description, enriched Yeats's verses with layers of meaning. Additionally, Baudelaire's exploration of beauty, desire, and the transitory nature of existence left a lasting impression on Yeats, who sought to reconcile the ephemeral with the eternal. Baudelaire's influence on Yeats surpasses mere stylistic emulation, penetrating the essence of Yeats's poetic vision and infusing his work with profound depth and symbolism.

**Keywords:** Baudelaire, W.B. Yeats, symbolism, urban life, existential themes, modernity, pleasures, despair, beauty, transitory nature

## I

Baudelaire's profound influence on W.B. Yeats, the eminent Irish poet, is undeniable, shaping Yeats's poetic sensibilities and thematic preoccupations. Yeats, deeply immersed in the Symbolist movement, found in Baudelaire's works a kindred spirit whose exploration of urban life, decadence, and the enigmatic nature of existence resonated deeply with his own artistic vision.

"Yeats saw" Baudelaire as the archetype of 'the sensuous man,' as are presentative (with Beardsley and Dowson) of Phase Thirteen of the moon, 'the only phase where entire sensuality is possible.'" (Clements, 221). One of the most evident manifestations of Baudelaire's influence on Yeats lies in the thematic parallelism between their works. Both poets grappled with the complexities of modernity, delving into the contradictions and alienation inherent in contemporary society. Baudelaire's portrayal of the modern urban landscape, with its fleeting pleasures and profound despair, provided Yeats with a template for his own exploration of the human condition amidst the flux of modernity.

Thematic parallelism between the works of W.B. Yeats and Charles Baudelaire emerges from a profound exploration of human existence, the complexities of the soul, and a fascination with the supernatural. Despite belonging to different eras and cultural backgrounds, both poets delve into the depths of the human psyche, navigating themes of love, despair, beauty, and the transient nature of life.

One of the striking parallels between Yeats and Baudelaire lies in their exploration of the concept of beauty. Baudelaire, in his seminal work "Les Fleurs du Mal," introduces the notion of beauty as both enchanting and fleeting. He portrays beauty as a source of both ecstasy and torment, often intertwined with

decadence and decay. Similarly, Yeats, in “The Wild Swans at Coole,” grapples with the ephemeral nature of beauty and its transformative power:

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,  
And now my heart is sore.  
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,  
The first time on this shore,  
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,  
Trode with a lighter tread. (Yeats, 131)

Both poets challenge conventional notions of beauty, presenting it as a force that transcends the physical realm and evokes a profound sense of longing and disillusionment.

Furthermore, both Yeats and Baudelaire exhibit a fascination with the supernatural and the mystical. Baudelaire's exploration of the macabre and the surreal in poems like “The Death of Lovers” mirrors Yeats's preoccupation with the occult and the esoteric in works such as “The Second Coming” and *A Vision*. Both poets draw inspiration from folklore, mythology, and the occult, weaving elements of mysticism and symbolism into their poetry to explore the mysteries of existence and the human condition.

Love and longing are recurring motifs in the works of both poets, depicted with a sense of passion and melancholy. Baudelaire's portrayal of love as a tumultuous and often destructive force is echoed in Yeats's verses, where love is depicted as a source of both ecstasy and anguish. Both poets explore the complexities of romantic relationships, portraying love as a transformative experience fraught with longing, desire, and disillusionment.

Moreover, both Yeats and Baudelaire grapple with the passage of time and the inevitability of mortality. Baudelaire's preoccupation with the transience of life is evident in his depiction of fleeting moments of beauty and the inevitability of

death. Similarly, Yeats contemplates the passage of time and the cycle of life and death in poems like “Easter 1916” and “Under Ben Bulbin,” where he reflects on his own mortality and the legacy he will leave behind. The thematic parallelism between the works of W.B. Yeats and Charles Baudelaire transcends temporal and cultural boundaries, uniting two poets who share a profound exploration of the human condition. Through their poetry, both Yeats and Baudelaire delve into the complexities of existence, grappling with themes of beauty, love, mortality, and the supernatural. Their works continue to resonate with readers, inviting them to contemplate the mysteries of life and the enduring power of art to illuminate the human experience.

Baudelaire’s innovative use of symbolism as a means of expressing deeper truths greatly impacted Yeats’s poetic technique. Yeats, inspired by Baudelaire’s symbolist approach, embraced symbolism as a potent tool for conveying abstract ideas and emotions in his own poetry. The symbolist aesthetic, characterized by its emphasis on suggestion and evocation rather than explicit description, found fertile ground in Yeats’s imaginative universe, enriching his verses with layers of meaning and ambiguity.

The influence of Charles Baudelaire’s symbolist approach on the poetry of W.B. Yeats is profound and multifaceted, shaping Yeats’s poetic style, themes, and techniques. Baudelaire, a prominent figure of the French symbolist movement, revolutionized poetry by exploring the depths of the human psyche and infusing his work with complex symbols and imagery. Yeats, an Irish poet deeply interested in mysticism, mythology, and symbolism, found in Baudelaire’s approach a kindred spirit and a source of inspiration that deeply impacted his own poetic endeavours.

One of the most significant aspects of Baudelaire’s influence on Yeats lies in the use of symbolism. Baudelaire

believed in the power of symbols to convey deeper truths and evoke profound emotions. His poetry often features rich and enigmatic symbols that serve as conduits to explore the hidden aspects of existence. Yeats, similarly, embraced symbolism as a means of expressing the ineffable and the transcendent. In poems like “The Second Coming” or “The Tower,” Yeats employs symbols such as the falcon or the gyre to delve into themes of historical cycles, cosmic order, and spiritual transformation, echoing Baudelaire’s use of symbols to probe the complexities of the human condition.

Baudelaire’s exploration of the darker aspects of human experience greatly influenced Yeats’s poetic vision. Baudelaire’s poetry often delves into themes of decadence, alienation, and existential angst, presenting a world haunted by ennui and disillusionment. This bleak yet poignant portrayal of existence resonated deeply with Yeats, who himself grappled with questions of identity, mortality, and the nature of reality. In poems like “The Circus Animals ‘Desertion’” or “Easter 1916,” Yeats confronts the disintegration of traditional values and the chaos of modernity, echoing Baudelaire’s critique of a society adrift in spiritual malaise.

Furthermore, Baudelaire’s emphasis on the role of the poet as a visionary and a seer left a lasting impression on Yeats’s conception of the poet’s vocation. Baudelaire saw the poet as a privileged interpreter of the world, endowed with the ability to discern the hidden patterns underlying reality. This notion of the poet as a prophet or a mystic deeply resonated with Yeats, who saw himself as a seeker of esoteric truths and a channel for the forces of the unconscious. In poems like “The Song of Wandering Aengus” or “Sailing to Byzantium,” Yeats assumes the mantle of the visionary poet, weaving together myth and mysticism to articulate his vision of a higher, more transcendent reality.



In addition to these thematic and philosophical influences, Baudelaire's innovations in poetic form and technique also left a mark on Yeats's poetry. Baudelaire's experiments with free verse, unconventional rhyme schemes, and vivid sensory imagery expanded the possibilities of poetic expression, freeing it from the constraints of traditional forms. Yeats, who was always eager to push the boundaries of poetic form, drew inspiration from Baudelaire's formal innovations, incorporating elements of free verse and unconventional imagery into his own work.

The effect of Baudelaire's symbolist approach on Yeats's poetry is profound and far-reaching, shaping not only the themes and imagery of his work but also his conception of the poet's role and the possibilities of poetic form. Baudelaire's emphasis on symbolism, his exploration of the darker aspects of human experience, and his vision of the poet as a visionary seer all find echoes in Yeats's poetry, enriching it with depth, complexity, and a sense of mystical resonance.

## II

The poetry of Charles Baudelaire and W.B. Yeats delves deep into the intricate fabric of existence, weaving together themes of transience, impermanence, and the fleeting nature of life. Through their masterful use of language and imagery, both poets explore the ephemeral quality of human experience, confronting the reader with the stark reality of mortality and the passage of time.

Baudelaire, a leading figure of the French Symbolist movement, is renowned for his exploration of the darker aspects of life and the human psyche. In his seminal work, *Les Fleurs du mal* (The Flowers of Evil), Baudelaire presents a vivid portrayal of the transitory nature of existence through his evocative verses. The motif of fleeting moments and the relentless march of time

permeate his poetry, creating a sense of urgency and melancholy.

One of Baudelaire's most famous poems, "L' Horloge" (The Clock), serves as a poignant meditation on the passage of time and the inevitability of death. He personifies time as a malevolent force, relentlessly ticking away the moments of life until they fade into oblivion. The imagery of the clock's pendulum swinging back and forth evokes a sense of inevitability, highlighting the futility of trying to resist the passage of time.

Similarly, Yeats, a towering figure of Irish literature, grapples with the theme of transience in his poetry, albeit through a different lens. His work often explores the cyclical nature of existence, where life and death are intertwined in an eternal dance. In poems such as "The Wild Swans at Coole" and "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats reflects on the impermanence of youth and beauty, juxtaposing the fleeting moments of earthly existence with the timeless realm of art and immortality.

In "The Wild Swans at Coole," Yeats describes the melancholy beauty of the swans as they glide across the lake, their presence a fleeting reminder of the passing seasons and the inevitability of change. The image of the swans embodying both grace and mortality serves as a powerful metaphor for the transitory nature of life itself, where moments of beauty are ephemeral and fleeting.

Moreover, Yeats's fascination with mysticism and the occult adds another layer of complexity to his exploration of existence. In poems like "The Second Coming," he grapples with the chaos and uncertainty of the modern world, confronting the reader with the unsettling notion of an impending apocalypse. Through his vivid imagery and prophetic language, Yeats captures the sense of disorientation and existential dread

that pervades the human experience, reminding us of the fragile nature of our existence.

The poetry of Baudelaire and Yeats offers a profound meditation on the transitory nature of existence. Through their evocative verses and poignant imagery, both poets confront the reader with the stark reality of mortality and the relentless march of time. Whether through Baudelaire's exploration of the darker aspects of human experience or Yeats's fascination with the cyclical nature of life, their poetry serves as a timeless reminder of the fleeting beauty and fragility of our existence.

The urban landscape has long served as a canvas for poets to explore themes of modernity, alienation, and the human condition. In the works of Charles Baudelaire and W.B. Yeats, two towering figures in poetry from different eras and cultural backgrounds, the portrayal of urban images reveals unique perspectives on the complexities of city life. Baudelaire, a French poet of the 19th century, and Yeats, an Irish poet of the early 20th century, both delve into the urban environment, albeit in vastly different ways, reflecting their respective cultural contexts and personal sensibilities.

Charles Baudelaire, often regarded as the pioneer of modern urban poetry, was deeply influenced by the tumultuous changes brought about by industrialization and urbanization in 19th century Paris. In his seminal work *Les Fleurs du mal* (The Flowers of Evil), Baudelaire presents a vivid and often dark portrayal of the cityscape, capturing the contradictions and complexities of urban life. His poems are infused with a sense of disillusionment and ennui, as well as a fascination with the decadent and the grotesque.

One of Baudelaire's most famous urban poems is "The Swan." In this poem, the city is depicted as a place of decay and corruption, where the purity of nature is tainted by human vice

and depravity. The image of the swan, a symbol of grace and beauty, becomes a poignant metaphor for the poet's longing for transcendence amidst the squalor of urban existence and like Baudelaire's use of rich, sensory language and vivid imagery, creates a hauntingly evocative portrait of the city, inviting the reader to confront its darker aspects. Its "polyvalency" makes it especially potent and it's powerful as "it rises up from the deepest recesses of the collective unconscious" (Smith, 56). Barbara Wright has pointed out that the poet writes about vice in human nature in the opening poem of his *Les Fleurs du mal*, "Au lecteur", as "the insidious corruption, cowardice, stupidity and self-seeking hypocrisy of the world are related to all human beings" (31).

In contrast, W.B. Yeats, writing in early 20th century Ireland, presents a more ambivalent view of the urban landscape. While Yeats was deeply influenced by the cultural and political upheavals of his time, including the struggle for Irish independence, his portrayal of the city reflects a complex interplay of tradition and modernity. In poems such as "Sailing to Byzantium" and "The Tower," Yeats explores themes of artistic transcendence and spiritual renewal in the face of urban decay and disillusionment.

In "Sailing to Byzantium," Yeats imagines a journey to a mythical city where art and beauty reign supreme, far removed from the chaos and decay of the modern world. The city becomes a symbol of artistic and spiritual renewal, a sanctuary where the poet can escape the ravages of time and mortality. Yet, even as Yeats celebrates the transcendent power of art, there is a sense of melancholy and longing for a lost sense of belonging and connection to the natural world. Then, he soars on the wings of imagination above and beyond the ephemeral world:

Once out of nature I shall never take  
My bodily form from any natural thing,  
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling (Yeats, 194)

Overall, while both Baudelaire and Yeats explore the urban landscape in their poetry, their perspectives and approaches are markedly different. Baudelaire's portrayal is often bleak and despairing, reflecting the alienation and disillusionment of 19th century urban life, while Yeats's vision is more ambivalent, combining elements of nostalgia and longing with a desire for spiritual and artistic transcendence. Despite these differences, both poets offer profound insights into the complexities of the human experience in the modern cityscape, reminding us of the enduring power of poetry to illuminate the hidden depths of urban life. In essence, Baudelaire's influence on Yeats extends beyond mere stylistic emulation, permeating the very essence of Yeats's poetic vision and enriching his oeuvre with a profound depth of meaning and symbolism.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### 1

## Review of Ravi Ranganathan's Poetry Collection, "As the Languid Hours Pass By"

CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY

("As the Languid Hours Pass By" Ravi Ranganathan, New Delhi: Authorspress, 2024, ISBN 978-93-6095-866-4, pp 87, Rs. 295.)

"As the languid hours pass by," a collection of poems by Ravi Ranganathan, presents a contemplative and introspective journey through the intricacies of human emotions and experiences. The collection is marked by its evocative language, vivid imagery, and a profound sense of time's transient nature.

Ravi Ranganathan is deeply inspired by Rabindra Nath Tagore and one can see this imprint throughout this collection on themes, words and tones. Tagorian ecstasy, harmony, solitude and internal music flow through all his verses. There is mystic experience and spiritualism that run through the threads of these poems, sometimes evocatively, sometimes silently.

Ranganathan's poetry navigates various themes, including love, loss, nature, and the passage of time. His ability to weave these themes seamlessly into his verses makes each poem resonate deeply with the reader.

The serenity of soul, joy of bliss and equanimity of mind with controlled emotions naturally flow through these poems connecting the readers. Nature in its beauty, benediction and

magnanimity brings these poems closer to Wordsworthian philosophy. Ranganathan never drifts from his solitary musings on love, life, nature and his persistent longings for his quest for these.

"A Summer's Farewell Tale", "I know Winter's Whispers", "Stay Winter, Stay", "Does the Drizzle Know" and "Effluence" paint nature with different colours infusing into it the spirit of mystic joy and bliss. Aesthetically evocative, emotionally rich and visually appealing, these poems have been beautifully woven into natural imagery of water, fire, clouds, hills, rivers and foliage. He contemplates pauses and speaks softly. "Does the Drizzle Know" is such a poem where poet's contemplation meets his imagination exploring the different actions of the Drizzle "cleanse obscure pebbles", "to provoke a deeply dazzling lightning", "Or create ripples in receding lakes" and the most rhetorical question in the last line "Of what use a drizzle if not preluded / To a thunderous rain unsubdued?" (p 40).

The poet deftly uses concrete and abstract images, tangible and intangible objects to add a sound to his words, a color to his visuals and meaning to his feelings and thoughts. In "Effluence" the poet moves from outer world to his internal contemplative world, to get answer to many mystical riddles "rejoice in the reverie" (p 41).

"You end up  
Seeing deep inward  
A heavenly hill, a cosmic cloud  
A spiral space and a limpid Light" (41).

"From Pause to Prayer" (48) is poet's contemplative move from a clattered mind to seek solace in the power of prayer. The poet interchangeably uses the word pause for summer and prayer figuratively with winter. These imply the two stages of his life i.e. Youth and Old age: 'I realise now that all the pause was my summer/ Where teasing trees grew all over the mind / Now winter has come with its bareness and wind/ Surely my halo where I am awakened from slumber'. (48)

The poet moves logically to his conclusive remarks "And my winter is prayer, its every word". "Is Destiny A Strain Divine?" delves deep into philosophical realms dispelling the delusion and seeking the truth. The poem resonates with the Advaita philosophy of maya (Braham satyam, jagat mithya). The veil of unreality and 'whales of delusion' and transitory nature of worldly pleasures trouble the good soul of the poet. To him death is the ultimate reality "Our bodies fall off in a few days/ Like the withered leaves" (51).

Through a series of metaphors the poet explores the impermanence of life believing firmly in the infinity that nullifies the trivialities of life. He upholds the supremacy of the divinity over the delusionary drama of life. Another poem titled "Prana's Omnipresence" he celebrates the ancient wisdom enunciated in the Vedas and Upanishads to practice the pran vayu by evoking the sacred incantations. He calls it a life energy that controls and supports life. (p 55)

It is not only the spiritual, mystical and metaphysical musings that the poet engages with but he also interrogates the social and peripheral issues. His poetry titled "She" (Dedicated to Women) explores a woman as an epitome of human existence. To him she is 'root', 'fruit', she is 'rife', 'life', she is 'essence', 'cause', 'beauty's and "She is the Shakti/ The Mukti/ She is the Woman"(p 63).

There are many poems in this collection which evoke the serenity of the soul but in the same breath these poem connect with the mundane and the real, concrete and the abstract to weave a world of mysticism. He doesn't argue but interpret; he leaves the readers to wade through these poems, to pick the jewels for themselves. "Sirrow", "Sufferance", "Wavelength", "Confessions" (p. 68 to 78) creates a world where personal and impersonal, private and public spaces mingle with each other to create a world of harmony. The poet's command of language is evident in his meticulous choice of words, which paints a vivid picture of both the tangible and the abstract.

One of the significant aspects of this collection is its accessibility. While the poems are rich in metaphor and



layered meanings, they remain appealing to the readers. Ranganathan strikes a balance between complexity and clarity, ensuring that readers can engage with his work on multiple levels. "After You Left Me" (78) is a nostalgic poem is a marvellous example of expression of depth of feelings in the simple words: "Muted mornings", "Unspoken Words", "Haggard Walk", "Blabbered talk" (79).

The collection's pace is deliberate, reflecting the languid hours it references. This measured tempo allows readers to fully immerse themselves in each poem, savoring the emotions and reflections that unfold. The recurring motif of time serves as a reminder of life's fleeting moments, encouraging readers to pause and appreciate the beauty in everyday experiences.

"As the Languid Hours Pass By" is a compelling collection that invites readers to reflect on their own lives and emotions. Ravi Ranganathan's thought provoking poems offer a serene yet profound exploration of the human condition, making it a pleasant read for anyone seeking both solace and inspiration through the art of verse. I recommend this collection to readers of all age groups. It bemused me, why not you?

## INTERVIEW

### 1

## Dialogues with K. V. Raghupathi: A Self-taught Yogi and Poet Interactions (Part – I)

DR. P. RAJA

**Raja:** What provokes a poem?

**Raghupathi:** When composing a poem, the greatest place to start is with your own emotions and sentiments, not the sentiments and emotions of others. Someone else's feelings and emotions are not yours to fit into. Your poem won't be original or compelling if it uses such stolen sentiments and feelings. Consider a question you have about the world. Why must the world be in this state? Or the unusual event you can remember from your past, your run-in with an idea, or something else. Anything that has deeply affected you and is stored in your subconscious could be the cause. You can always find resources in your subconscious to help you write a poem. When you create a poem about something that is very important to you, it has the most meaning. Sometimes, you don't need much inspiration to get your creativity flowing. Just one word can be enough to spark an idea and start writing.

**Raja:** Do you think your poetry is a fair impression of the way you see life?

**Raghupathi:** No. It is the other way around. You cannot produce poetry if your perception reflects what you observe in the outside world or if the outside world agrees with your perception. It certainly isn't poetry. You are able to create poetry because there is a discrepancy between your perceptions and the outside world.

Poetry is a form of expression. Writing it enables us to express our thoughts and feelings on a subject because we disagree with it, whereas reading it inspires us to relate to and make sense of our experiences. It makes a haven for your ideas and feelings. Additionally, poetry fosters an enigmatic, dynamic type of communication. This can happen only when there is a discrepancy between you see and what you have. The open spaces between lines on a page are not empty. They are filled with resonance, like the echoes after the ringing of a bell. Due to its multisensory nature, poetry stirs up feelings. While similes and metaphors can incorporate many senses, imagery appeals to our sense of sight, rhythm, and meter. Additionally, since readers anticipate an emotional reaction from poetry, using poetic devices effectively might arouse feelings.

**Raja:** After all most people are unhappy. Do you think your poems are meant to make them happy?

**Raghupathi:** It is difficult to respond. Our thoughts, feelings, and emotions are unique to each person; thus, we cannot generalise them. Thus, everything is dependent on the reader's emotions. Your poem

will unquestionably have an impact if your feelings, thoughts, and emotions can elicit similar feelings, thoughts, and emotions. If not, it will continue to be dead wood. Therefore, this element determines how happy the reader is.

**Raja:** Do your poems talk about what life has to offer?

**Raghupathi:** Yes, indeed. My entire body of published poetry speaks to the possibilities that exist in life. Let's be honest. Life can be challenging and perplexing at times. The knowledge of poetry can be helpful in such circumstances. Poetry has a way of making us feel understood; it may give us a sense of power and hope and serve as a reminder of the value of life. There will undoubtedly be something that speaks to how you are feeling.

Poetry can open our eyes to fresh, unexpected perspectives on the world. It can give us a new perspective on the world around us and help us communicate things that we might otherwise find difficult to put into words.

Poetry can also aid us in better understanding our emotions and motivations by examining our emotions and experiences. We can learn more about our viewpoint on the world and life by examining the numerous imagery and metaphors employed in a poem. As a result, poetry can be a very useful tool for fostering both individual and global understanding.

**Raja:** Did writing come easily for you?

**Raghupathi:** Yes, of course. An urge to write is an essential component of writing. You cannot write if there is no impulse. This desire is an innate trait. This urge – which you may describe as an inspiration

– is a provocative act. This urge appears when you are acutely aware of what is going on around you. You cannot answer with a pen if you are not deeply sensitive. It is referred to as writing when the need manifests itself in writing. You then develop into an artist in a more general way.

Poetry must happen naturally, as John Keats says, “if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all.” It is an effortless action. The next step after getting a draft is to edit your poem. It’s okay to wait before revising after writing; in fact, it’s preferable. Take a break for yourself. Then, revisit the poem with a critical eye in a day or two. When I say that, I mean that you should reread the poem and make note of any places where you could strengthen a word, tighten your rhythm, make your imagery more vivid, or even remove words or stanzas that weren’t contributing to the poem. When you do this, you might recognise that the poem would work better in a different format or that it would be stronger whether it rhymed or not.

**Raja:** Can you remember when you started writing? You can elaborate on what triggered the occasion.

**Raghupathi:** Never once did I have the urge to write down an idea. I abhorred it. Like other students, I had philistine beliefs and objectives while I was a student. I had been socialising with these goals for a while. I was doomed when they failed to materialise. I dropped to a zero and was forced into a life-altering corner. I had nothing to do, and these events turned me into a wanderer. As a

result, I roamed aimlessly through life like a bhikshu. This marked the start of my life's new direction. But these events occurred and helped to mould me into a writer. I developed extreme sensitivity to my environment. The desire to write grew stronger. A writer was thus born inside of me. But this author was a poet, not a novelist. I started out composing poetry. I never imagined I'd end up being a poet. But it took place. That's it. I stayed with the poet who was born there, and we remained together and lived long until the present.

**Raja:** Can you tell me the way you write a poem?

**Raghupathi:** I scribble lines whenever I have a strong urge. I used to write about this in my diary or on paper earlier. Computer technology is available today. I, therefore, sit at the computer and immediately type the lines and words. The initial draft, sometimes known as the raw draft, is this. I won't read it again right away. I return to the poem after a few days and start to refine its phrasing. It is more crucial. In the end, the expressiveness gives a poem life. What good is it to carelessly express your emotions if you can't articulate them in accurate words? I revise and edit without affecting the feelings or thoughts.

You can edit your poem more successfully by reading it aloud since you can hear the rhythm of the poem and can identify any places where the rhythm is off right away. This can help you rearrange words or even restructure the poem from scratch.

**Raja:** Have you ever shown your poems to anyone before publishing?

**Raghupathi:** No. Never have I done that. I believe that the best critic is the poet himself. You can play two roles in this situation: the poet and the critic and the reader. To criticise, an outsider must first possess good poetic sensibility. Finding readers who are so sensitive is challenging. I don't share my poems with anyone as a result.

**Raja:** How did you get your first work, *Desert Blooms* published with the Writers Workshop in Kolkata? I think it was published in 1987. But you claimed somewhere in our casual talk that you had written it in 1985. Why did it take long to publish. Did you show it to any professor? You were young at that time. Can you speak about it?

**Raghupathi:** It's true that when I was young, I penned a lengthy poem with about 1,600 lines. I didn't receive any formal training in poem composition. You should be aware that neither smartphones nor laptops existed then. I read this lengthy poem aloud to myself multiple times to polish the phrasing. I did not show the draft to any professors. You are aware that these esteemed university professors have preconceived notions about creativity. They typically used negative comments to demoralise others. I chose not to display the initial draft of my book for this straightforward reason. I sent a postcard to Professor Lal in Kolkata to get in touch with him directly. I received a reply from him asking me to send the manuscript. I sent him the manuscript as a result. Three months later, I received a favourable response from him. He was thrilled with the long poem's lyrical tone and gladly

agreed to have it published under the Writers Workshop imprint. He was my first external reader. The news was much exciting and it made me happy.

**Raja:** How many times do you edit your poems?

**Raghupathi:** Many times, till I get fully satisfied with the language. There is no end to perfection. It is an idea. It is limitless. Yet we try to achieve the “near perfection.”

**Raja:** Do you feel pleased when you have written one?

**Raghupathi:** Yes, of course. I was very excited when I got the first book in my hands. You know, having a book in hand without being a scholar. Certainly, it was exciting.

**Raja:** Does a poem get completed slowly or rapidly?

**Raghupathi:** Rapidly written poems suffer from various disabilities, chiefly the weak language. Slowly completed poems speak about the wisdom of the expression. Mature poets write slowly and immature poets write rapidly.

I realise that every poet has a different method. According to me, it depends on various factors such as constraint of time, circumstances, environment, and the psychological makeup of the poet.

Some excellent, experienced poets are able to create an outline and then develop from it. Others who take an intuitive approach can need weeks or months.

Many consider Robert Frost, a brilliant poet, to have carried his scribbled drafts for months or perhaps years in his pockets. He also advised that



after a poem appears to be finished, it should be stored in a drawer for two months before being reviewed to determine whether it still needs development.

It takes whatsoever long it takes for you to feel that it is finished. The most important thing is to work as little as possible each day.

**Raja:** Somebody said, “Novels are about other people and poems are about the writer himself”. Whoever has said it said it right, I think. Do you disagree?

**Raghupathi:** I would concur with the statement. A novel features numerous characters. A poem, however, is about the poet’s experiences and life. There is less room for many characters in it. Compared to a novel, which is more objective, a poem is more subjective.

**Raja:** Do you like reading criticism of your works?

**Raghupathi:** Yes. Certainly. I enjoy reading reviews of my work. The reality in which we live does not consist entirely of absolutes. We live in a relativistic world. Every aspect of life is interconnected. Absoluteness is unlike anything other. Remember that every coin has two faces.

**Raja:** What is it you are preserving in your poems? Experience or the beauty of life?

**Raghupathi:** Both. The ugly side of life is also beautiful. A one-sided experience is not possible. It is both beautiful and ugly. Life includes both components that can be found in my poems. Both are honoured equally by the poet.

**Raja:** Modern poetry is simply an agglomeration of words; do you agree with such an idea?

**Raghupathi:** It was Robert Frost who said, “Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.” In the end, a poem is merely a collection of words. Without words, a poem is nothing. The beating heart of a poem is its words. As Ezra Pound has said, “Words are electrified cones, charged with the power of tradition, of centuries of race consciousness, of agreement, of association... And the good writer chooses his words for their “meaning” but meaning comes up with roots, with associations... you can hardly say “incarnadine” without one or more of your auditors thinking of a particular line of verse. Dante called words buttered and shaggy because of different noises they make.” (ABC of Reading. New York: New Directions. 1957. 37) But poetry must convey the poet’s deepest emotions. This is possible only through words. The goal of a poem will be lost if words are used merely for their own sake. Words must be powerful, appropriate, and suited for the situation. The lexicon of the poem presents itself as the natural beginning place for an examination of the linguistic components of poetry because a poem is an item formed of words. Poetry’s diction is very important because it is a very condensed and concentrated method of expression. T.S. Eliot calls the act of writing poetry an “intolerable wrestle with words and meanings.”

Words strain

Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension slip, slide, perish,

Decay with imprecision, will not stay in one  
place,  
Will not stay still. (Four Quartets)

**Raja:** When your first book of poems, *Desert Blooms*, appeared, did you feel you were going to be an important poet?

**Raghupathi:** When my first book, *Desert Blooms*, was published, many referred to me as a poet. I must, however, admit that I have never identified as a poet. The straightforward explanation is that I've never wanted to be a poet. To me, being a significant poet is heresy. I'll make others envious of me.

## CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Aftab Yusuf Shaikh** has been writing from the age of eight and teaching from eighteen. His poetry has been published in various journals and esteemed anthologies like “The Dance of the Peacock” and “Before There is Nowhere to Stand”. For his first novel *The Library Girl* (2017) he was adjudged Ne8x Author of the Year 2019. His children’s book *Letters to Ammi* (2019) was shortlisted for Neev Book Award. He published two volumes of poetry *Tehzeeb Talkies* (2019), *Mominpura* (2021) and *Ansari’s Daughter* (2023). His second novel *Waiting for Father* is forthcoming.
2. **Andrew Scott** is a native of Fredericton, NB. During his time as an active poet, Andrew Scott has taken the time to speak in front of classrooms, judge poetry competitions, and have over 200 hundred writings published worldwide in such publications as *The Art of Being Human*, *Battered Shadows* and *The Broken Ones*. Andrew Scott has published multiple poetry books, *Snake with A Flower*, *The Phoenix Has Risen*, *The Path*, *The Storm Is Coming*, *Whispers of the Calm*, *Searching* and *Letter To You*, a novella, *Redemption Avenue* and a two books of photography, *Through My Eyes* and *Walk Through Time*. *The Road Unknown* is Andrew Scott’s newest collection of poetry and prose.
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. Vidyannagar, 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. **Beverly Matherne**, the current Poet Laureate of Michigan's Upper Peninsula (in The United States), is the author of seven books of poetry. Her latest title, *Love Potions, Teas, Incantations*, is from Harvard Square Press, 2023. She is professor emerita of English at Northern Michigan University, where she served as director of the Master of Fine Arts program in English and poetry editor of *Passages North* literary magazine. Her work has received four Pushcart Prize nominations and seven first-place prizes, including the Hackney Literary Award for Poetry.
5. **Cleber Pacheco** is a Brazilian writer. He has several books published: novels, short story, poetry, literary criticism. His poetry and short stories are featured in US, India, Canada, Portugal.
6. **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.
7. **Dan Raphael's** newest books are "In the Wordshed" (Last Word Press, '22) and "Maps Menus Emanations" (Cyberwit, '21.) Most Wednesdays Dan writes and records a current events poem for The KBOO Evening News]
8. **Daniel P. Stokes** has published poetry widely in literary magazines in Ireland, Britain, the U.S.A. and Canada, and has won several poetry prizes. He has written three stage plays which have been professionally produced in Dublin, London and at the Edinburgh Festival.

9. **David Harrison Horton** is a Beijing-based writer, artist, editor and curator. He is author of *Maze Poems* (Arteidolia) and the chapbooks *Pete Hoffman Days* (Pinball) and *BeiHai* (Nanjing Poetry). His chap *Model Answers* is forthcoming from CCCP Chapbooks. He edits the poetry zine SAGINAW. davidharrisonhorton.com
10. **Dr Roger G. Singer**, Poet Laureate Emeritus, Connecticut Coalition of Poets Laureate.
11. **Dr. P. Raja**, a former professor of English and a renowned bilingual writer from Pondicherry, has recently conducted a seven-part series of online dialogues with K. V. Raghupathi, the Tirupati-based creative writer and self-taught yogi, about his poetry, philosophy, and yogic life. The present one makes up the first part.
12. **Dr. Vinay Kumar Singh**, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Foreign Languages MUST, Lakshmanagarh, Sikar, Rajasthan.
13. **Dragica Ohashi** (Female, born 22. 10. 1967. Skradin, Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia). Even in elementary school, she was awarded for her literary works and participated as a reciter. Dragica Ohashi poetry, works and illustrations have appeared in numerous publications and media in Japan and worldwide.
14. **Fabiyas M V** is a writer from Orumanayur village in Kerala, India. He is the author of several poetry books. He was the finalist for Global Poetry Prize 2015 by the United Poets Laureate International (UPLI) in Vienna. All India Radio broadcast his poems. He has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize by Poetry Nook and The Literary Hatchet. He is a teacher in English.
15. **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 40 poetry collections, 16 novels, 4 short story collections, 2 collection of essays and 8 books of plays. Gary lives in New York City.

16. **Gema Bocardo**. Madrid. Spain. Lawyer, writer, editor and oral narrator. She has performed in more than a hundred literary events, including her participation as a representative of Spain in the international festivals “The Trireme of Ionian Poetry” (Albania), “Ditët e Naimit” (Macedonia) or “Let’s meet on the South” (Albania). Some of her tales, microstories and poems have been translated into Macedonian, Italian, English, Bosnian and Albanian, published in Collective Anthologies. She has also published more than 90 stories under a pseudonym.
17. **Germain Droogenbroodt** is an internationally appreciated poet. He wrote short stories and literary reviews, but mainly poetry, so far 17 poetry books, published in 30 countries. He is also translator, publisher, and promoter of modern international poetry and translated – he speaks six languages – more than thirty collections of German, Italian, Spanish, Latin American, English and French poetry, including anthologies of Bertolt Brecht, Mahmud Darwish, Reiner Kunze, Miguel Hernández, José Ángel Valente, Francisco Brines and also rendered Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Persian and Korean poetry into Dutch.
18. **Holly Payne-Strange** is a novelist, poet and podcaster. Her writing has been described as “genuinely captivating” by LA Weekly and “profound and sincerely engaging” by USA Today. She was also a writer for Fireside Mystery Theater, which The New York Times called “One of the top ten podcasts to bring drama into your home’. Her next novel, All of Us Alone, will be a recommended read for Women Writers, Women’s Books. Her poetry has been published by various groups including Door Is A Jar magazine, In Parenthesis, Dipity Magazine, and will soon be featured in Academy Heart, among others.
19. **Isilda Nunes** is a Portuguese award-winning writer and artist. Recently she won among other recognitions, the Intercontinental World Poetry Prize “Kairat Dusseinov

Parman”, the World Prize “Cesar Vallejo 2020” for Literary Excellence, the “Grito de Mujer Lisbon 2021 Award”, the “Aguila de Oro” for Literary and Artistic Excellence, “Escudo del Plata, “Especial Lusofonia”, “Latinoamericano à la Difusion Educativa, Literária e Cultural 2021 Award” and “I Premi Lido Dell’ Anima Mihai Eminescu 2022” She is co-author of about fifty national and international anthologies and solo books of poetry and prose, such as novels, short stories and manuals.

20. **James Croal Jackson** is a Filipino-American poet who works in film production. His latest chapbooks are *Count Seeds With Me* (Ethel Zine & Micro-Press, 2022) and *Our Past Leaves* (Kelsay Books, 2021). Recent poems are in *Stirring*, *Vilas Avenue*, and *Star 82 Review*. He edits *The Mantle Poetry* from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. (jamescroaljackson.com)
21. **James G. Piatt** is a twice Best of Net nominee and four-time Pushcart nominee. He is the author of five poetry books, *The Silent Pond*, *Ancient Rhythms*, *LIGHT*, *Solace Between the Lines*, and *Serenity*. He earned his doctorate from BYU, and his BS and MA from California State Polytechnic University, SLO.
22. **Jayanti Krishnan** resides in Gurugram, Delhi NCR. She recently started penning down a few poems.
23. **Jaydeep Sarangi** is an Indian poet, poetry activist and scholar on postcolonial studies and Indian Writings with forty one books anchored in Kolkata/Jhargram, Sarangi is currently the President of Guild of Indian English Writers, Editors and Critics (GIEWEC) and Vice President, EC, Intercultural Poetry and Performance Library, Kolkata. Living with poets and poetry, Sarangi is principal of New Alipore College, Kolkata. Sarangi is a State-level mentor of NAAC, West Bengal. He may be reached at: jaydeepsarangi1@gmail.com, Web: jaydeepsarangi.in
24. **Jevin Lee Albuquerque** grew up in California, on the local pier in Santa Cruz, fishing for striped bass. He evolved into a fly fisherman, obsessed with trout and steelhead. In a former life, he was a professional soccer player. He has a degree in



Latin American Studies from UCLA. His work has appeared in numerous literary journals, including Catamaran Literary Reader, Confrontation Magazine, and Universal Oneness – Poetry Anthology (Authorspress, New Delhi, India, 2020).

25. **Joan McNerney's** poetry is published worldwide in over thirty-five countries in numerous literary magazines. Four Best of the Net nominations have been awarded to her. *The Muse in Miniature*, *Love Poems for Michael*, and *At Work* are available on Amazon.com. A new title *Light & Shadows* has recently been released.
26. **John RC Potter** is an international educator from Canada, living in Istanbul. He has experienced a revolution (Indonesia), air strikes (Israel), earthquakes (Turkey), boredom (UAE), and blinding snow blizzards (Canada), the last being the subject of his story, "Snowbound in the House of God" (Memoirist, May 2023). His poems, stories, essays, and reviews have been published in a range of magazines and journals, most recently in Blank Spaces, ("In Search of Alice Munro", June 2023), Literary Yard ("She Got What She Deserved", June 2023), Freedom Fiction ("The Mystery of the Dead-as-a-Doornail Author", July 2023), The Serulian ("The Memory Box", September 2023) & The Montreal Review ("Letter from Istanbul", November 2023). His story, "Ruth's World" (Fiction on the Web, March 2023) has recently been nominated for the prestigious Pushcart Prize. The author's gay-themed children's picture book, *The First Adventures of Walli and Magoo* will be published in the autumn of 2024.
27. **John Sweet** sends greetings from the rural wastelands of upstate NY. He is a firm believer in writing as catharsis, and in compassionate nihilism which, as luck would have it, has all the best bands. His published collections include NO ONE STARVES IN A NATION OF CORPSES (2020 Analog Submission Press) and THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY THIS IS GOING TO END (Cyberwit, 2023).

28. **K.V. Raghupathi** is a former academic, born in 1957 in a Telugu-speaking family in Andhra Pradesh (India). He holds a Ph.D. in English Literature and writes in English. Poet, novelist, short story writer, and critic, he has published over thirty books. His first passion is poetry. Began writing seriously in the early 1980s. Since then, he has published thirteen poetry collections, two novels, and two short story collections. He has also edited eight critical works and six books on Yoga spanning over four decades of journey through writing. His two novels are *The Invalid* (2012) and *The Disappointed* (2014); his short fiction includes *The Untouchable Piglet* (2015) and *A Gay and a Straight Woman* (2017). He is a recipient of several awards for his creativity at the national level. He lives in Tirupati, AP and he can be reached at Email: drkvraghupathi9@gmail.com
29. **Kapardeli Eftichia** writes poetry, stories, short stories, haiku and essays bilingually in Greek and English. He has a degree as an art conservator 2021. She studied journalism from A.K.E.M. and achieved many awards in national competitions. She is a renowned anthologist and has many national and international anthologies to her credit.
30. **Karla Linn Merrifield**, a nine-time Pushcart-Prize nominee and National Park Artist-in-Residence, has had 1000+ poems appear in dozens of journals and anthologies. She has 15 books to her credit. Following her 2018 *Psyche's Scroll* (Poetry Box Select) is the 2019 full-length book *Athabaskan Fractal: Poems of the Far North* from Cirque Press. Her newest poetry collection is *My Body the Guitar*, inspired by famous guitarists and their guitars, and published in January 2022 by Before Your Quiet Eyes Publications Holograph Series. Her *Godwit: Poems of Canada* (Foot Hills Publishing) received the Eiseman Award for Poetry. She is a frequent contributor to *The Songs of Eretz Poetry Review*, and assistant editor and poetry book reviewer emerita for *The Centrifugal Eye*. Web site: <https://www.karalinnmerrifield.org/>;
31. **Keith Inman** has been active in the writing community for thirty-five years. He's judged contests for small Presses, a University, Public Libraries, and a few writing

organizations, set up readings, helped organize a poetry anthology for twenty years (seven at the helm), did committee work for a writing organization, mentored for the League of Cdn Poets, and, helps run a writing group (Iowa style) that is still running thirty years on. Keith has published seven books of poetry.

32. **Ken Cathers** has been published in numerous periodicals, anthologies and has just released his eighth book of poetry, entitled *Home Town with Impsired Press of England*. He has also recently published a chapbook entitled “Kiefer” with broke press and another chapbook, entitled “Legoland Noir” from Block Party Press in Toronto. His work has appeared in publications in Canada, the United States, Australia, England, Hong Kong, Ireland and Africa. Most recently it has appeared in numerous periodicals including *Zoetic Press*, *Wool Gathering Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *The Orchard* and the wild word.
33. **Lisa Lahey** is an Associate Acquisitions Editor for *After Dinner Conversation Magazine*. Her short stories and poems have been published in *34<sup>th</sup> Parallel Magazine*, *Spaceports and Spidersilk*, *Ariel Chart*, *Altered Reality Magazine*, *Why Vandalism? Suddenly*, and *Without Warning*, *Five on the Fifth*, and she will be published in upcoming issues of *Epater Magazine*, *Patreon Magazine*, *Viva Poetica*, *Bindweed Anthologies*, and *Spadina Literary Review*.
34. **Matthew James Friday** is a British born writer and teacher. He has had many poems published in US and international journals. His first chapbook ‘*The Residents*’ is due to be published by *Finishing Line Press* in summer 2024. He has published numerous micro-chapbooks with the *Origami Poems Project*. Poems are forthcoming in *The Potomac Review*, *Weber - The Contemporary West Review* and *The Amsterdam Quarterly (NL)*. Matthew is a *Pushcart Prize* nominated poet. Visit his website at <http://matthewfriday.weebly.com>
35. **Michael Lee Johnson** lived ten years in Canada during the Vietnam era. Today he is a poet in the greater Chicagoland area, IL. He has 300 YouTube poetry videos. Michael Lee

Johnson is an internationally published poet in 45 countries, a song lyricist, has several published poetry books, has been nominated for 7 Pushcart Prize awards, and 6 Best of the Net nominations. He is editor-in-chief of 3 poetry anthologies, all available on Amazon, and has several poetry books and chapbooks. He has over 453 published poems. Michael is the administrator of 6 Facebook Poetry groups. Member Illinois State Poetry Society: <http://www.illinoispoets.org/>.

36. **Mithil Jha** is a young writer with a strong inclination towards language and literature. He is currently pursuing his education at Acadia University, Wolf Vile, Nova Scotia, Canada. He has a great passion for lore and learning and is immensely motivated with the write-ups of the classical and dynamic writers, the traditional and contemporary situations, issues and environment.
37. **Nels Hanson's** fiction received the James D. Phelan Award from the San Francisco Foundation and his poetry the Prospero Prize from the Sharkpack Review.
38. **Mohan D**, who is doing his B.A. English Literature at Loyola College of Arts and Science, Mettala, Tamil Nadu. He is an enthusiastic writer.
39. **P C K Prem** (P C Katoch of Garh-Malkher, Palampur, Himachal, a Former Academician, Civil Servant and Member Himachal Public Service Commission, Shimla) an author of over sixty books is a poet, novelist, short story writer, trans-creator and a critic in English and Hindi from Himachal, India. He has published eleven volumes of poetry along with Collected Poems besides six books on criticism, four books on ancient literature, two on folk tales, six novels and four collections of short fiction. In Hindi, he has authored twenty novels, nine books on short fiction and a collection of poems besides more than hundred and fifty critical articles, reviews and critiques published in various national and international journals and anthologies.

40. **Paulette Calasibetta** is a retired commercial interior designer. She has been writing poetry for seven years. When not writing, you can find her cooking or puttering in her garden.
41. **Paweł Markiewicz** was born 1983 in Siemiatycze in Poland. He is poet who lives in Bielsk Podlaski and writes tender poems, haikus as well as long poems. Paweł has published his poetry in many magazines. He writes in English and German.
42. **Ram Krishna Singh** is a renowned, widely published, anthologized, and translated poet with over 25 poetry collections to his credit.
43. **Richard Marvin Tiberius Grove, Tai** - Poet Laureate of Brighton, Ontario, Canada.
44. **Saloni Kaul**, author and poet, first published at the age of ten, has stayed in print since on five continents, including nineteen states of the USA. As critic and columnist, Saloni has all of forty-six years of being published. Saloni Kaul's first volume, a fifty poem collection was published in the USA in 2009.
45. **Scott Thomas Outlar** originally hails from Atlanta, Georgia. He now resides and writes in Frederick, Maryland. His work has been nominated multiple times for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. He guest-edited the Hope Anthology of Poetry from CultureCult Press as well as the 2019-2023 Western Voices editions of Setu Mag. Selections of his poetry have been translated and published in 15 languages. He has been a weekly contributor at Dissident Voice for the past ten years. More about Outlar's work can be found at [17Numa.com](http://17Numa.com).
46. **Shalini Misra** received her Postgraduate Degree (Master of Arts) and the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Lucknow University. She has participated in various National and International (in India and abroad as well) Conferences / Seminars/Workshops and presented total 13 Research Papers. Her 9 research papers have been published in journals and books of high repute. Her first collection of

poems “*Communion with the Self*” was published recently. She has contributed two units for the MA (English) Programme of Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani. She has extensive (more than twenty years) teaching experience. Presently, she is serving as PGT English at Sainik School Ghorakhal, Nainital, UK.

47. **Tapan Kumar Pradhan** is an Indian poet, writer and translator from Odisha. He is best known for his poem collection “Kalahandi” which was awarded second place in Sahitya Akademi’s Golden Jubilee Indian Literature Translation Prize for Poetry in 2007.
48. **Vanisri P**, who is doing her B.A. English Literature at Loyola College of Arts and Science, Mettala, Tamil Nadu. She is a fascinate writer. She participated in several writing competitions.
49. **Vernon Frazer**’s most recent poetry collection is *Memo from Alamut*.
50. **Vitasta Raina** is an author, architect and illustrator based in Mumbai. She is the author of a dystopian novella *Writer’s Block* (International Authors 2011) and a collection of Poetry, *Someday Dream* (Sahitya Akademi, 2014). Her short-stories and poetry have been featured in *Indian Literature* (Sahitya Akademi), *Emanations* (International Authors), *Suvarnarekha: An Anthology of Indian Women Poets Writing in English* and *The Dance of the Peacock*. Her illustration in watercolours, oils and acrylics have been used in several anthologies and have been featured on book covers. She won the Tata Literature Live Mystory contest 2019 for her poem “Madness is Euphoria”. She is currently pursuing her PhD from IIT Bombay.
51. **William Doreski** lives in Peterborough, New Hampshire. He has taught at several colleges and universities. His most recent book of poetry is *Venus, Jupiter* (2023). His essays, poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared in various journals.

52. **Yeşim Ağaoğlu's** poems have been published in literary journals since the age of 18. Has seven poetry books published in Turkey and two poetry books published in Azerbaijan and in 2016 and 2017 two poetry books has published in New York, USA. And also has five poetry E-books in different languages. Poems translated into many different languages such as English, German, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Japanese, etc. She has a short theater play named "forbidden chirpings" staged at Hazar University, Baku, Azerbaijan.
53. **Yuan Changming** edits Poetry Pacific with Allen Yuan in Vancouver. Credits include 12 Pushcart nominations for poetry and 2 for fiction besides appearances in Best of the Best Canadian Poetry (2008-17), Best New Poems Online and 2019 other literary outlets worldwide. A poetry judge at Canada's 2021 National Magazine Awards, Yuan began writing and publishing fiction in 2022.

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