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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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POETRY

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

Blossoming of Truth

Blossoming in usual way tells the truth
Chirping, cooing, twittering or screeching
Grasses going green en masse after the rains
Wildlife remaining in forest and oceans
Tell the truth
Truth is abundant in the natural world
Unhindered by mind, brain, intellect or elusive word
In contrast
Whatever maybe the manmade thrust
Whatever interference in Nature's function
Artificial push against Nature's regulation
Finally imbalance the working of the Mother Nature
Resulting in Global Warming, Climate change
Biodiversity loss and denuded forest
Mines looted and corals bleached.
Changing sizes and shapes, giving shines
Value adding as per human choices apart
Nothing may be found what did not exist somewhere
Like sky, space, earth, ocean and other waters.
Thanks to the scientists who discovered many truths
But such truths change faces in time with newer truths
Whatever is invented was already hidden somewhere.
Man was born with mind with its different aspects
Some animals sharing it

Brains both have, man and animal
Intelligence included in them;
Nothing strange that plants born before them
Had most of the qualities inherent
Surpassing them
In other ways requiring further discoveries.
Why irritating with your artificial intelligence
What motive! Another push towards imbalance!

AJU MUKHOPADHYAY

Winter Weakens

Lazing in bed with a pillow between thighs
She is, the afternoon
Boys and girls tried to get warmth from the Sun
But of no avail
Mornings are foggy faceless Sun
Afternoons get fagged
As if the Sun has lost its zeal
Farther and farther north the Eskimos
The polar bears and the angst
In the southward slope stronger sun
Tans and bakes but milder in winter
In search of fire they move
Grasshoppers sit thoughtful
Winter wrings out the juice from the source
As she, helpless hugs the pillows
Losing the morning and noon
They get lost for days
The adults in search of warmth
The desperate cats
In search of new pastures of worth.

AMARENDRA KHATUA

My Waiting

Now the land is free,
But my legs are broken
Just in right time

Can you hold my hands,
These fingers of mine
Are pointed towards you?

I know, you will not.
Above your head a song
Floats in the name of freedom
And I'm lying on the ground

In renewing my waiting.

AMARENDRA KHATUA

Protest

You looked at me,
I spat.
You said I spit hate,
I wish I knew
How my stomach caught

Fire seeing you armed!
I spit blood nowadays
For any new beginning. And
You bring a stethoscope of consolation.
Explosion is the only colour my bloodied tongue Paints.

ANDREW SCOTT

It Is Written

By you, it is written.
The eroded path you are on,
the dark destiny that awaits you.
A Story created by your own hand.

You will play the hurt victim
however your dishonest actions
are planned from start to finish.
Deliberately causing pain to others
the end destiny for you,
it is written.

I have personally felt
your chameleon like ways
when you took me
and shattered my heart,
kicked away my feelings
without blinking an eye.

Your torment will not
be seen coming from the skies.
Everything will be lost
due to your own doing.
You will only know
when you are alone.
It is written.

ANDREW SCOTT

Fight the Flight

Fight the flight.

These are the words
that I am constantly
saying to myself
at all the rough times
I face and feel.

In fear, there have been
moments where I wanted
to curl up and give in.

The odds, at times,
seem to be stacked
against my spirit.
I feel that I am ready
to pack it all in.

Fight the flight.

I attempt too always
remember how I would feel
if I gave up without a punch.
Defeated not empowered.

A beaten attitude
is not how I wish
to live in this life
as I walk this earth.

Fight the flight.

AVDHESH JHA

More and More

How special of his ways;
He keeps on adding to my days;
Every day I wish for my last day
But every day I find a new day;
However patiently and passionately,
I kept awaiting the day I wished;
How special of his teaching ways,
Each day turned a special day;
Adding to my patience and tolerance,
And the ability to conquer myself.

DAVE LEWIS

Boats

Boats

Water waiting

Sticky stranded seals

Cold as frozen rope

As abandoned as the night

Netted masts under skull shell sky

Breathless blood, salty seagull mud

Beached boats, beached boats

Sardine stained wood

Hollow hope

Boats

DAVE LEWIS

Africa

We were all cold
Now we're warm,
You taste of beer
And need to brush your hair -
Tell me something nice.

The kiss of morning dew
Pitter-patters on your eyes,
Night creatures go to sleep
As the daylight appears -
Tell me something nice.

How long can you hold out
In the country of our children?
The rains will come
And the rains will pass -
Tell me something nice.

One day in the distance
We'll be free and happy
The trees will grow, the sun will shine,
And you will smile and love me when -
I tell you something nice.

ROGER G. SINGER

Stars Remember Us

secrets and
lost dreams

minced oaths
anger and lies

wasted seasons
of madness

as we
stand within
perfect darkness

speaking into
the chest of
night

ROGER G. SINGER

Trusting

a deserted
soul

standing with
wounded eyes

alone

holding the
hand of
quiet

where the
lost discover
comfort

FHEN M.

Aries

smoke floated from a dragon-carved candle;
they sacrificed meat when grandfather died.

children were rescued by a ram flying
from the fire of cinder and coals burning,

to give thanks to the god of the ocean;
to him was offered the ram's meat.

Aries hovers in the sky from the east,
a savior to the feeling of helplessness;

we light a candle, offer meat,
and worship our dead ancestors.

FHEN M.

Southern Cross

pufferfish swimming in the southern sky
inflates its body as you come nearer

your cross, swords, and hundred mouths
threatened the village you came to visit

we can only afford a fowl, an egg
for our families have hungry stomachs

find the Butete in the Milky Way
local chief may provide edible fish,
sacks of rice, plump pigs, girls and boys

man lives by bread first, Cross later.

GARY BECK**Display**

I may only be thirteen
but I have a woman's body
and it's time Mommy accepts it.
When it's really hot outside
I go for a walk
and meet my best friend, Cassie.
We wear tight short shorts, sports bras
and the workers watch us,
Hispanics, Eastern Europeans
who can't afford to live here
in our expensive neighborhood.
We always recognize them
cause they wear cheap t shirts
and their faces are lustful
as they watch our taut, sexy flesh
amply displayed for viewing
on our way to the gym.
We like that they look at us,
even though they're lowlifes
and sometimes make dirty comments,
but we'd never do things with them.
We feel safe showing off our bodies
walking in the neighborhood,
showing off we're young and hot.
Daddy doesn't like how I dress
and says I'm provoking trouble,
but he doesn't tell me to stop

cause he likes to look at Cassie,
who looks as hot as I do
and she's a little older,
about thirteen and a half.
Nothing'll happen to us here,
people are always on the street
so they may look at us,
but they won't do anything.
Summer's over in two weeks
and we go back to school
where we can't dress like this.
I tell Daddy not to worry
and he finally gives in
and won't bug me for a while.
I'm glad Mommy's so busy
cause she gives me a real hard time.

GARY BECK

Urbana

Rent is up, up, up
and we're forced to move
to poor neighborhoods
in the outer boroughs,
a long subway ride
to a minimum pay job
until I can't afford
to go to work any more.
The job didn't qualify me
for unemployment insurance.
I'm not eligible for welfare.
The only way to get money
is to do some kind of crime.
I don't want to sell drugs,
it's not a secure future.
I don't want to carry a gun,
I'll shoot someone, or get shot.
I won't mug the elderly,
that could happen to my Momma.
I guess I'll shoprob drugstore chains.
No one seems to get busted
so I'll try it for a while,
as long as I make a living.

GERMAIN DROOGENBROODT

Flood

Like wide-open arms
reaching pleadingly to the sky
the branches of a tree
in an area flooded by the storm
Nearby
pleaded heavenward
also of people numerous arms
but in vain.

GERMAIN DROOGENBROODT

A Victim

Gaza-

Not yet closed
but wide-eyed
and full of horror
the eyes

pursed the lips
because time was too short
for a farewell greeting
for a last prayer.

IVAN POZZONI

They Eat Voices

If they have white paper, the new writers who sing without a Muse,
would rival Géricault in his Raft of the Medusa.

Italian art has become an assault on the pot,
more fulfilled in the 'brothel' than the members of a porn film,
so in the Poetryweb the actor is confused with a stallion
full of anachronistic texts fit for the cover of Le Ore.

Lyrical democracy must not be a two-bit lyric,
it is essential to study and it is not forbidden to go deeper,
all of them now strictly improvising, equipped with a notepad,
as if they should sign up for Tú sí que vales rather than culture.

To write on the www we should set up an entry test,
It's forbidden to touch the keyboard on pain of sudden death,
not suitable for late modern art, Lucini teaches, his revolver at
his head,
the incurable disease of the turn of the century is called Adsl.

IVAN POZZONI

The Forgotten Children's Paradise

Forgotten children's paradise,
there play dead children asleep
in hot cars, without relief,
victims of mnemonic crises from work fatigue
that make them forget budgets, meetings or certificates.

Little girls play in a relentless summer,
indifferent to the sun that has dehydrated them,
free to soar in tides of air
in spite of the bad moments spent in respiratory crisis,
without having to feel heat and thirst.

Forgotten children's paradise,
dead children asleep play there
strangled by the insecurity of belts,
eagerly waiting to re-embrace, without rancour,
those who murdered them.

JEFFREY ZABLE

A Reminder

“I could always take one of those pills if it gets that bad!”
he writes to me.

To which I respond, “If you ever seriously consider
doing that, check in with me first. It could get pretty bad
but nothing is worth killing oneself over!”

And after sending that to him, I’m reminded that I’ve thought
of suicide on and off for longer than I can remember –
that I’ve always considered it an option for reasons that never
were related to who was president, or government policies
that affected me personally...

JOAN MCNERNEY

Skyward

Another hot day at the playground
filled with shrieks from children
tumbling down slides. Shouting boys
hop on/off a whirling carousel
as girls sing songs to jump rope.

Waiting for my chance on the swing.
Finally one is free as I clutch
metallic link chains pumping myself
up pushing pass trees feeling cool
breezes brush over me.

All the noise far below as I rush
towards blue skies my feet are
walking on clouds now.

KATHRINE YETS

Remember Rivers

(Inspired by Alison Townsend's The Green Hour)

I remember the water's murk
and the mossed rocks on shore.
Childhood called, but I did not answer –
left the tadpoles be.

The algae on the surface,
as green as any hour, swirled
around and the water striders capered
on the surface in the fast current.

The Fox was alive with spirits that day –
a lost friend turned Azure fluttered
around my foot and landed –
I had yet to feel true grief.

Memories flooded the shores,
and I tried to capture them in stanzas,
but there were no words
that could express the nostalgia of the sky,

so I simply held them inside myself
to save for a day I would be trapped
in thoughts and wishes of nature
to engulf me in the moments lost.

KATHRINE YETS

Olive Eyes

Leave me on the sidewalk
with martini olive eyes
round and round like a clock.
Leave me on the sidewalk.
Hold the sweet talk –
my heart is not between my thighs,
so leave me on the sidewalk
with martini olive eyes.

KEITH INMAN

Revelling Airs

it was Paris, anyway
when those doors opened
and we were swept in
with a revelling crowd wishing
the bride and groom all the best
until a very short waiter heard us speak
and tried to retrieve the drinks we held
high above our heads

KEITH INMAN

Digging for History

to understand the future

look closely
at the shoreline's
sheer history
of shells

compacted with their gods

LES WICKS

Julio

The eye of the travelled boat
coming up a travesty of river
arms of a haybale.

One mouth is a tree
once riddled with termites, plugged with concrete
& *doing great*.

He'd heard about patchwork monsters
so made one.

Creased bills for feet
unstoppable, inexplicable, denatured
as with most monsters
looking much like its maker.
All belief that remains
makes no sense when parts have been disunited

Though no reason
to downplay a life.

LES WICKS

There Comes a Time

She's giving up all that
what will they think stuff –
sorts out for herself what can be sorted
but lets the wilds flourish within that edited life.

So much lost. Most of her friends are dead.
Struggle, lose. Somehow okay with that.
Maybe a small disturbance
can be a tide
scours the sand of all rough flotsam.
That engulfing cleanse can't be fought
so she'll dive straight in.

Over across the sand
Her ex-lover still claimed the peak
of the largest dune as his own.
No audience beyond gulls & their staining.
Thirst long mocked this pinnacle
now he's left wearing nothing but excuses.

No looking back.
For her, there've been enough storms
& churning earth makes.

MANDIRA GHOSH

Spring Among Nukes

Can you hear silent whispers in the garden?
Whispers of fear and silent sun
Though the
Dahlias this time are in full bloom
Cuckoos coo from a unseen distance
And sunlight peeps through the window
On my desk
I watched her arrival.

Finally, spring has arrived.
Seems after ages

The leaves are rare green
buds unfinished still have blossomed
But new buds and new dreams
yet to see the full sunshine.

Morning hours
As I walk
In my green garden,
I suddenly watch and step on
Nukes in my fresh, innocent garden.

MATTHEW JAMES FRIDAY

Haiku Poems

I

Ants don't know they walk
on a moving ball; can you
feel the Earth's orbit?

II

Barn swallow
skims and scans the sand for flies
the Big Dipper.

III

47th birthday
snowflakes sparkles in the sun...
not too old yet.

IV

April brings hope –
elderly care-home old man
refills bird feeder.

V

Saving a spider –
so many different ways
to be the same

MICHAEL LEE JOHNSON

I Feel Lightning in Your Wind (V4)

I feel light in a thunderstorm.
I electrify your touch through my veins.
I'm the greenery around your life
that breathes your earth into your lungs.
I challenge all your false decisions and doctrines
with the glory of my godliness.
I'm your syntax, your stoic,
your ears, your prize.
I walk daylight into your morning breath
allow you to breathe.
I let the technique of me into your brain cells;
from the top tip to the bottom
of small baby foot extensions.
I'm the banquet hall of all
your joys, damnation;
your curses, your emotions –
and you're breathing with the wind.

MICHAEL MIROLLA**At A Distance**

I don't know about you (really, I don't)
but do you, some mornings, rise from bed
and see the world as cardboard, flattened
and without depth? Do you sit at the breakfast
table across from your partner and feel
you're looking at a TV monitor?
Do you get the urge to peek behind
the person to whom you're talking to make sure
it's not just a foam cutout held upright
by a flat pad into which the feet
have been inserted? When walking on the street,
are you forced to fight your way through layer
upon layer of what resemble strings
or see-through curtains lowered in your path
at random intervals? And which vanish
the moment you turn back?
No, strike that. Does the computer screen
upon which you're typing this poem
exude more reality than the limbs
of trees desperate to get your attention
by slamming against just-in-time window panes?
Do you undergo a melting sensation
(apologies to the film-thin wicked witch
for having appropriated that image)
every time you strive to pin something down?
Does the half-profile of the man on the moon
smile at you while trying to steal your shadow?

Are you afraid that the next time you blink
it will all disappear? And you will be left
without even a tiny pebble on which
to stand?

MITHIL JHA

Perception

Within a day,
You happened to come across,
a series of issues and you expect it more;
With a flipped environment,
you happened to feel an unworthy change;
Having everything same,
you happened to feel low and targeted purposely;
Although with all known,
you find yourself stuck amidst the unknown noise;
In the same world, now you feel,
as if you miss your world that you were in;
Know that the world is the same,
All that changed is only your perception.

MOYA RODDY

Photograph

Bleached by the sun
it should have shown us
arms wrapped around one another –
me angling my best side towards the camera,
you caught between looking at me and at the birdie.
Instead all it showed was two pairs of legs
joined at the hip:
a new kind of beast – a couple.
It was never our own story anyway.

MOYA RODDY**The Comfort of Shoulders**

Covid is still in the air
the day I see you on the beach –
you by the water's edge, me up near the dunes,
(we haven't met since lockdown
a few phone calls, emails)
stare a moment then rush towards
one another—stopping a little way off.
With a kiddish-adult voice, I say
This is how I do it now:
leaning my head to the right,
obligingly, you lean yours to the left,
kissing-kissing the air all round us.
A wave crashes against shingle,
sucks greedily at stones –
I feel it race through my body,
sense you feeling it –
and suddenly we are clinging to each other like barnacles,
drowning in the comfort of shoulders,
soft breasts, warm thighs.
We hold on and on – then as we're about to pull apart,
hold on some more:
hold on for dear life.

NATALIA FERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ-CABAL

(Almost) Haikus

The time of butterflies has passed
and the time of the fireflies has come:
but we do not glow in the dark.

This silence
of defeated cicadas
on its reverse side.

Raining inwards
to the source of the river
full of life.

NATALIA FERNÁNDEZ DÍAZ-CABAL

Still Life

Flour and water
bread in the making
for times of satiety.
Tallow, match and wick
delicate light
for brains in the dark.
Needle and thread
tailor-made dresses
for when vanity fades.

NEELAM SHAH

Clouds Upon a Sky

Upon the clear blue skies on a sunny day,
Appears a pure white puff of Candy floss,
A fluffy water vapor named Cirrocumulus.
The eldest highest member of his family sitting
Around 60,000 feet above the atmosphere.

He is responsible for covering the sky.
Changing shape constantly transforming into
Different pictures, he is moving gently across the skies.
Splitting himself and dividing himself into two halves.

Where the earth below, can enjoy cloud spotting.
There are no signs of water droplets seeping through him.
Although there seems to be more of his family arriving.
Below him, his brothers appear.
From different levels of the atmosphere,
Both cirrus and cirrostratus sit next to him
Sharing the responsibilities and duties of covering the sky.

His middle members of the family
Alto cumulus and altostratus join in,
Along with his younger brothers Stratus, cumulus, and
stratocumulus, the younger generation of the water vapors
family.

They have also blanketed the atmosphere and skies with their
grey whitest coats.

Otka, the doctor of measurement, measures their unit in heights,
As he sits peacefully at the weather station.

To make sure how much the skies are covered,
By Cirrocumulus and his brothers.

The weather has shifted. By evening the sun hits,
Cirrocumulus and his brothers which have,
Covered the whole blue skies,

Turned the skies grey from which tiny rain drops
Had begun to fall from them and hit the ground.

PETE MULLINEAUX

Wild Things

All those self-proclaimed civilisations – Roman, Chinese – and more recent empires, had their barbarians at the gates, behind a wall – Goths, Picts, Mongols, lying in wait for a chink in the defences – and when it comes to slaying and cruelty, slavery, never that much between inside and outside – as they say, fine margins. And here now, in fields and gardens, obscuring arbitrary divisions between cultivated and wild, we have nettles and briars covering, obstructing, undermining; ivy, Nature's siege engine, twisting, entangling – uplifting the hard inflexible stones. Even amongst their own kind there's injustice and rebellion: trees, while rooted in the same soil can become sky-hoggers, monopolising the light, leaving only their shadows below – so no harm in sharing a little, a few overhanging boughs coaxed down through weight of creepers on a branch, less-privileged seedlings inheriting the earth. They prove their worth: ivy stands for endurance, nettles for fidelity – and for their stings, a nearby dock; holly pricks awaken us to beauty's sharp edge; brambles offer nectar for bees, berries for blackbirds – and for the human animal, promise of jam instead of blood.

Out in the scrub: thistles, nature's romantics, still fighting their corner, as scythes become trimmers, mowers, and now chemical warfare of weed-killers, but they will ultimately win, regain their kingdoms should humanity self-destruct. As for mushrooms – more resistance, underground conspiracy; linking, entangling, loosening barriers between this/that, us/them, yours versus mine.

PETE MULLINEAUX

Beached

A giant flat boulder makes a perfect sun bed – or altar; stretched out, I sacrifice myself willingly, offer thanks to the great blue beyond and whatever it was that kick-started the Universe, be it a bang, or hocus-pocus spell – created energy – light; movement (without which I wouldn't be here, I'm no lichen or seaweed). And alongside yet more expansion, hasty forward-march of Time, a blessed counterpoint – the force that holds me here fast (or slow?) even as we circle that yellow glow at 1000 miles per hour – that gathered together those first whirls of cosmic dust, allowing stars to form – then planets such as ours, the microwave heat eventually coagulating into substance – a ball of fire, molten lava flow... until, finally, how rock, when cooling, arrived as close as anything can to stillness, organic life only becoming possible once the movement ceased, allowed roots take hold, grow, eventually flower. Can I grasp it? I explore with my hands ... this plain slab is surely the Buddha in disguise, I feel I could be lying on a lotus flower. Sure, the salty slap of seawater says 'wishy-washy' and of course, this serenity must be qualified – deep within, the stone still contains its ancient frenzy as electrons and other particles zoom around at the speed of light, the rock's crystals vibrate – this is at best, only a pause. The village cafe awaits: mind, soul, spirit – body, forever hungry.

QUDSI RIZVI

The Hug That Dreams Built

In the quiet, where words falter,
I imagine the weight of your shoulders –
how heavy they must feel.
The burden you carry, unseen,
settling in the spaces no one looks.

There is a kind of magic
in the way arms can become a refuge,
without demanding anything in return.
A hug – simple, pure,
a place where breathing becomes easier,
where silence says:
I see you.
I am here.

It is not desire but care.
Not fire, but warmth.
To hold you as though the pieces
of your breaking day could be gathered
and made whole again.

Sometimes I dream of this –
finding you where the world
doesn't know to look,
in that liminal space
between sleep and waking.

In dreams, the distance shrinks.
Here, I wrap you in a hug
large enough for your sadness,
firm enough for your fear,
gentle enough to whisper hope
into the corners of your heart.

This is not the stuff of romance.
This is the magic of presence –
arms becoming bridges
over a void no words can cross.

When I wake,
there is only the lingering wish
to fold time, to close miles,
to be a place of solace
where you can rest,
even for a moment.

If only the world allowed such hugs –
freely given, freely received.
A touch that says: You matter.
A space where all the broken edges
find, if not mending,
a kind of ease.

In your dreams tonight,
know that I will be there,
an invisible calm
holding you up,
until you can hold yourself again.

RAM KRISHNA SINGH

Kashi

She is declared a mental case
her legs are shackled tight
in the street she snails up and down

naked without food
she freezes in December
near the drain curls up

unnoticed by pavement dwellers
building a bonfire of twigs, papers
cast-off shoes and rags

under the bridge sipping tea
I hear the bell tolling at Rajghat
pilgrims make haste to catch train

RAM KRISHNA SINGH

It Is The Same...

It is the same house
the same alcove
I shed my loneliness in
reading prayers and psalms
chanting mantras in fumes

it is the same room
the same cement rack
crowded with earthen idols
of Ganesh and Lakshmi
worshipped last Diwali

it is the same altar
the same paper-Kali
framed in glass and
dusted with sindoor
my wife puts each day

it is the same floor
the same four walls
god watched us sweeping
and purifying with *dhoopam*
each evening before bed

it is the same prayers
the same pleasures
we rejoice with impulse
they savor with sacrilege
our rituals of lust and labor

it is the same incommunicado
the same swearing by coal
in the dark alley
nothing had changed
and nothing changes

RAKESH BHARTIYA

The Curse of Creativity

The curse of creativity is a curse extraordinary
You tend to see things under their skin
You see too much and see deep within
You go on pursuing a thing to the end
Sometimes beyond the end of the end
That disconnects you from a life ordinary
A vision ordinary and even the joys ordinary
Others laugh at your many and frequent oddities
While you keep on wondering on others' stupidities
World at large remains for you your own territory
While you struggle to stand firmly in your own territory
What matches you remains a mismatch for the rest
While you aim at the ultimate in your quest
You dare to see and feel eternity in one moment
While the world denies you even one normal moment
But, ask any creative person worth the name
Do you regret being in shadow of such curse?
And the reply will come clear and quite fast
Let this curse come on me also in next birth
All those small-small troubles and discomforts
Do dwarf in front of all that comes with
The bliss you erroneously keep on calling a curse!

RAMZI ALBERT RIHANI

The Mighty and the Wise

Pride often fools us.
We step forward too quickly
without fear, anxiety, or panic
We smile at the Gods
thinking we have their benediction
not knowing that these Gods are made of clay

Silent pride runs deep in our veins
grounding and anchoring us
like a sail forging through a storm.
It is gentle and humble,
knowing that its Gods are real
They are made of wisdom and care.

The mighty and the wise do not mingle.
Like a crow and an eagle.
The first thinks it is the greatest
The other thinks.
In the end, the first tumbles with all its might
The second rises with all its wisdom.

SUSAN P. BLEVINS

The Soul Will Not Be Denied

We wrap ourselves tightly in our dark mantel of fear,
trying in vain to retain the comfort and safety of the womb,
where we grew and flourished through no effort of our own.

And then we were expelled, into the harshness of
independent life, never understanding how deceptive and
ephemeral independence is, how false the concept of security.

We seek to cover our pain with the devil we know, and are
afraid to cast it off in case life in all its glory should
touch us and wound us into life.

But we cannot hide forever, for life is relentlessly
seeking us out, and uses every wile to pierce our
willful fog of oblivion, always inviting us to greater life.

One day the cloak will fall off. It won't be pleasant if we're
not prepared. Better to cast it off ourselves and plunge naked
into the abyss of life before we are pushed over the edge and
pitilessly forced to face our truth.

The soul will not be denied.

SUSAN P. BLEVINS

Brief Eternity

One day, long ago, on the shores of the Indian Ocean,
I entered the mystical garden where all is one,
losing all limitation of body,
all sensation of body,
all body

I was the swaying palm tree along the beach,
fronds waving in the sky that was also me,
birds flying into my crown and settling.

For a brief eternity
I glimpsed bliss,
bliss of belonging,
bliss of union with all,
bliss of freedom from boundaries

For just a moment I stepped
into this place that is no place, into
this time which is the crucible of all time
and dissolved into divine ecstasy

TAPAN KUMAR PRADHAN

Haiku On Soul

Haiku # 1

Soul to the body –
How are you, buddy?
Not dead yet.

Haiku #2

Body to the soul –
Return journey when?
Not again.

ARTICLE**1****Baudelaire's Influence on the Poetry of Ezra Pound****DR. VINAY KUMAR SINGH****Abstract**

Charles Baudelaire profoundly influenced Ezra Pound's poetic and critical vision, serving as a vital link between Symbolism and Modernism. Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* exemplified a modern poetry rooted in aesthetic innovation, urban imagery, and the interplay of decadence and transcendence. This resonated deeply with Pound, who drew on Baudelaire's themes and techniques while reshaping them for his modernist agenda.

Baudelaire's exploration of urban life, alienation, and the grotesque informed Pound's portrayal of the modern city as a space of fragmentation and vitality. The flâneur persona, central to Baudelaire's work, finds echoes in Pound's detached observations of modernity. Similarly, Baudelaire's musicality, synesthetic imagery, and emphasis on correspondences inspired Pound's Imagist principles, particularly his focus on precision and economy of language.

While Pound admired Baudelaire's innovations, he sought to balance critique with renewal, contrasting Baudelaire's morbid sensuality with his vision of cultural restoration. Through translation, commentary, and his epic *Cantos*, Pound adapted Baudelaire's themes of exile, memory, and the poet's alienation into a modernist framework. Their interplay illustrates Baudelaire's enduring impact, as Pound reimagined his legacy to address the complexities of 20th-century life.

Keywords: Baudelaire, Pound, Symbolism, Modernism, *Les Fleurs du mal*, Urban, Alienation, Flâneur, Imagist, Musicality, Exile, Cultural restoration

I

Baudelaire's influence on Ezra Pound is profound and multifaceted, shaping Pound's poetic style, themes, and critical approach. As one of the key figures of French Symbolism, Charles Baudelaire provided Pound with a model for modern poetry that emphasized aesthetic innovation, urban imagery, and psychological depth. Pound's engagement with Baudelaire's work is evident both in his poetry and in his critical writings, where he acknowledges Baudelaire as a vital precursor to Modernism.

Charles Baudelaire and Ezra Pound occupy pivotal roles in the history of modern poetry, both as innovators and as exemplars of distinct but interrelated aesthetic revolutions. Baudelaire's contribution to modern poetry through his collection *Les Fleurs du mal* is a cornerstone of the Symbolist movement, while Ezra Pound, as the architect of Imagism and a key figure in Modernism, reshaped English-language poetry in the early 20th century. The connection between these two poets is both profound and multifaceted. Through examining Pound's stylistic innovations and aesthetic principles, it becomes evident that Baudelaire's influence served as both a catalyst and a framework for Pound's poetic enterprise.

Baudelaire's poetry revolutionized 19th-century French literature by combining traditional forms with modern content. His embrace of urban life, exploration of the grotesque and the sublime, and insistence on the importance of correspondences – the mystical connections between sensory experiences and universal truths – created a template for later poetic experimentation. Baudelaire's fascination with the decay and beauty of modernity reflected a deep engagement with transience

and eternity, encapsulated in his famous notion of “*modernité*.” Equally significant was his focus on the musicality of language, where sound and rhythm heightened meaning, and his insistence on the poet as an alchemist of the imagination.

These elements would profoundly shape Ezra Pound’s understanding of poetry as a medium capable of encapsulating both immediate impressions and timeless truths. Pound’s innovations, particularly in Imagism and his epic *Cantos*, bear traces of Baudelaire’s influence, both thematically and stylistically.

Pound’s Imagist movement emphasized precision, economy, and the use of clear, sharp imagery. In his 1913 essay “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste,” Pound advocated for “direct treatment of the ‘thing’” and the elimination of unnecessary words. Baudelaire’s influence is apparent in this ethos, particularly in his insistence on the vivid evocation of sensory experience. For instance, Baudelaire’s poem “*Correspondances*” exemplifies the condensation of imagery and the focus on synesthetic connections, an approach that parallels Pound’s belief in the “image” as the primary unit of poetic expression.

Pound’s famous poem “In a Station of the Metro”: “The apparition of these faces in the crowd; / Petals on a wet, black bough.” exemplifies this synthesis (*Selected Poems*, 32). The juxtaposition of disparate images mirrors Baudelaire’s use of correspondences, where sensory impressions evoke broader metaphysical or emotional resonances. Pound’s concise style here recalls Baudelaire’s ability to distill complex emotions into a few charged lines.

Baudelaire’s emphasis on the musicality of poetry also left an indelible mark on Pound. Baudelaire’s deliberate use of rhythm and sound to enhance meaning, often drawing comparisons to music, informed Pound’s exploration of poetic

form and meter. Pound's insistence on "melodic intent" in poetry reflects a direct inheritance of Baudelaire's ideas.

In *Les Fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire uses rhythmic variation and sonorous language to evoke moods ranging from despair to ecstasy. Similarly, in Pound's Cantos, the interplay of rhythm and sound creates a mosaic of historical, mythological, and personal elements. Pound's integration of multiple linguistic registers and his attention to tonal nuance align with Baudelaire's musical aspirations.

Baudelaire's conception of the flâneur – the detached yet engaged observer of urban life – resonated deeply with Pound's own engagement with modernity. Baudelaire's poetic explorations of Paris as a space of fragmentation, ephemerality, and beauty provided a model for Pound's depictions of the modern city. Moreover, the impact is felt on the poetry of Pound's contemporary circle viz. on Eliot's "The Burial of the Dead" and other urban-themed works. Pound channels the tension between alienation and inspiration that Baudelaire so masterfully articulated.

For instance, Baudelaire's "*Le Cygne*" ("The Swan") juxtaposes the timeless and the transient through its exploration of Paris as a site of exile and transformation. Pound's urban imagery often echoes this duality, capturing both the decay and vitality of contemporary life. The metropolitan environment, for both poets, becomes a space where beauty and despair coexist, compelling the poet to mediate between them.

Baudelaire's alignment with the "art for art's sake" ethos influenced Pound's rejection of Victorian moralism and sentimentality in poetry. Baudelaire's belief in the autonomy of art – its capacity to exist independently of didactic or utilitarian purposes – provided a philosophical underpinning for Pound's aesthetic principles.

Moreover, Baudelaire's Symbolist tendencies, particularly his use of evocative and ambiguous imagery, informed Pound's approach to creating layered and allusive poetry. In *Les Fleurs du mal*, Baudelaire often merges the literal with the metaphorical, crafting symbols that resonate on multiple levels. Similarly, Pound's poetry, especially in the *Cantos*, employs a dense network of symbols and references, inviting the reader to uncover connections and meanings through active interpretation.

Beasts like shadows in glass,
a furred tall upon nothingness
Lynx-purr, and heathery smell of beasts,
where tar smell had been,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts...
Rustle of airy sheaths.
dry forms in the aether
And the ship like a keel In ship-yard, (*Cantos*, 8)

Baudelaire's depiction of the poet as a figure alienated from society yet tasked with chronicling its truths parallels Pound's self-conception. Baudelaire's poem "L'Albatros" portrays the poet as a sublime yet ostracized figure, soaring above mundane concerns while struggling to navigate the material world. Pound's life and work reflect a similar tension: his avant-garde innovations often alienated him from mainstream literary circles, yet he saw himself as a custodian of cultural memory and a guide for future generations.

This dual role as exile and chronicler is evident in Pound's *Cantos*, where he juxtaposes personal reflection with historical analysis. Like Baudelaire, Pound sought to transcend his immediate circumstances, using poetry as a vehicle to explore universal themes of beauty, decay, and human aspiration.

Pound's engagement with Baudelaire was not merely imitative but transformative. By integrating Baudelairean themes and techniques into his own poetic framework, Pound helped to

bridge the Symbolist and Modernist movements. His exploration of fragmentation, juxtaposition, and musicality expanded on Baudelaire's innovations, creating a new poetic language suited to the complexities of the 20th century.

Furthermore, Baudelaire's preoccupation with memory and the passage of time found echoes in Pound's work. Both poets grappled with the challenge of capturing fleeting experiences while situating them within a broader temporal and cultural continuum. In doing so, they redefined the scope and purpose of poetry, aligning it with the modern condition.

Charles Baudelaire's influence on Ezra Pound is a testament to the enduring power of poetic innovation to transcend linguistic, cultural, and temporal boundaries. Baudelaire's exploration of correspondences, musicality, urban modernity, and the autonomy of art provided a foundation upon which Pound constructed his revolutionary poetics. Through Imagism, the Cantos, and his broader aesthetic principles, Pound not only absorbed Baudelaire's insights but also reinterpreted them for a new era. This dialogue between the two poets underscores the continuity of poetic experimentation and the shared aspiration to distill the essence of modern life into enduring art.

II

Charles Baudelaire's influence on Ezra Pound is evident in themes of decadence, urban life, and exile, which resonate in both poets' works but manifest uniquely in Pound's modernist context. Here's an exploration of how these themes interplay, linking Baudelaire's legacy to Pound's innovation:

Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* epitomizes aesthetic and moral decadence, portraying beauty in decay, sin, and transgression. This sensibility profoundly impacted Pound's poetics, particularly in his exploration of moral ambivalence and

the duality of human experience. In his poems, decadence reflects the inevitable corruption of the modern soul and society. Baudelaire's embrace of artifice and the grotesque shapes the poetic mood of alienation and ennui. While Pound doesn't replicate Baudelaire's morbid sensuality, he channels a similar fascination with decadence as a lens to critique Western civilization's decline. In *The Cantos*, Pound juxtaposes fragments of cultural splendour and decay, suggesting that the roots of modern malaise are intertwined with past glories.

Baudelaire is often regarded as the quintessential poet of the modern city, particularly Paris. His flâneur persona – a detached observer of urban chaos – emphasizes the alienation and stimulation inherent in city life. Poems like “*À unepassante*” capture fleeting encounters in the city, encapsulating both connection and isolation in the crowd. Pound's “A Virginal” has something parallel.

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
 I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
 For my surrounding air hath a new lightness;
 Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
 And left me cloaked as with a gauze of æther;
 As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.

(*Selected Poems*, 22)

In *Personae* and other works, Pound adopts the city as a space of intellectual and cultural engagement. His interest in metropolitan life, particularly in London and Paris, mirrors Baudelaire's exploration of urban disorientation, though Pound is more concerned with intellectual vitality than sensory disarray.

Exile, both literal and metaphorical, is central to Baudelaire's self-conception as an outsider, a poet at odds with his society. This theme deeply resonates with Pound, whose self-imposed exile shaped much of his artistic identity. His sense of exile is internal and existential, stemming from his alienation

within the modern world. His longing for an idealized beauty contrasts sharply with the realities of his time. Exile becomes literal in Pound's life and work. After leaving America, he lived primarily in Europe, and his exile deepened following his controversial political affiliations. Pound's poetry reflects both the pain of displacement and the opportunity it afforded to critique his native culture. His admiration for European tradition and disdain for American materialism echo Baudelaire's ambivalence toward modernity.

Baudelaire's symbolic imagery influences Pound's use of dense, imagistic language, though Pound pushes further into abstraction and fragmentation. While Baudelaire often dwells in the hopelessness of modernity, Pound balances critique with a search for renewal, drawing on history, mythology, and economics to envision cultural restoration.

Baudelaire's exploration of decadence, urban life, and exile provides a foundation for Pound's modernist experimentation. Pound adopts and reconfigures these themes to suit his vision, using them as tools to critique, dismantle, and reconstruct the fragmented cultural landscape of the 20th century. The interplay between these two poets illustrates the enduring influence of Baudelaire's innovations while highlighting Pound's distinct voice and ambitions.

Ezra Pound's engagement with Charles Baudelaire represents a fascinating interplay of translation, adaptation, and critique that reflects Pound's larger modernist agenda. While Pound never undertook a comprehensive translation of Baudelaire's works, his fragmented translations, commentary, and poetic practice demonstrate an enduring engagement with the French poet's aesthetic vision. This relationship is emblematic of Pound's ambition to forge a modern poetic language through an eclectic synthesis of influences, reshaping

Baudelaire's themes and techniques to align with his modernist sensibilities.

Baudelaire, often regarded as the progenitor of modern poetry, deeply influenced Pound's early literary development. Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* was a cornerstone of French Symbolism and an exemplar of poetic modernity, marked by its exploration of urban life, ennui, decadence, and the tension between the sublime and the grotesque. For Pound, Baudelaire represented a pivotal link between the Romantic tradition and the emerging aesthetics of modernism. He admired Baudelaire's formal innovation, his meticulous attention to musicality and rhythm, and his capacity to transmute personal anguish into universal art.

Pound's engagement with Baudelaire primarily manifests in his critical essays and allusions within his poetry. In his essays, Pound praised Baudelaire's refinement of poetic language and his ability to distill beauty from the sordid realities of modern existence. Baudelaire's influence is evident in Pound's insistence on precision, economy, and the elimination of superfluity in poetry – principles that underpinned the Imagist movement he spearheaded. Pound viewed Baudelaire as a precursor to the Symbolist poets, whose work he drew upon to articulate his theories of the "Image" and the juxtaposition of disparate elements to create a heightened emotional and intellectual impact.

Translation, for Pound, was not merely a linguistic exercise but an act of transformation and renewal. His fragmented translations of Baudelaire reflect this philosophy, as he sought not only to render the French poet's work into English but to reinterpret it in light of his own poetic objectives. For instance, in his translation of "*Harmonie du Soir*" from *Les Fleurs du mal*, Pound emphasizes the musicality and evocative imagery while stripping away elements he deemed excessive. This selective

process underscores Pound's belief in the translator's creative agency and his commitment to adapting Baudelaire's poetry to resonate with contemporary readers.

However, Pound's critical engagement with Baudelaire was not without ambivalence. While he acknowledged Baudelaire's significance, he also critiqued what he perceived as the French poet's morbidity and self-indulgence. In Pound's view, Baudelaire's fixation on decadence and despair risked limiting the scope of his poetic vision. This ambivalence reflects Pound's broader preoccupation with balancing the aesthetic and moral dimensions of art. In contrast to Baudelaire's embrace of the grotesque, Pound sought to integrate a sense of renewal and vitality into his modernist ethos.

Pound's critical and creative dialogue with Baudelaire exemplifies the dynamic interplay of influence and innovation that defines modernist poetics. Through translation and critique, Pound both honoured and reimagined Baudelaire's legacy, positioning the French poet as a vital yet contested figure in his quest to forge a modern poetic tradition. This engagement underscores the complexity of Pound's literary project, marked by its simultaneous reverence for and transformation of the past.

Baudelaire's influence on Ezra Pound is a testament to the enduring power of *Les Fleurs du mal* and its visionary aesthetics. Through his stylistic innovations, thematic explorations, and critical insights, Baudelaire provided Pound with a template for reinvigorating poetry and making it responsive to the challenges of modernity. For Pound, Baudelaire was not just a precursor but a kindred spirit, whose work illuminated the possibilities of art in an era of profound transformation.

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BOOK REVIEWS

1

Poetry as a Season of Faith

JAYDEEP SARANGI

(*A Blur of a Woman*, Basudhara Roy, Red River, New Delhi, 2024, Pp 105, Rs. 299/-)

In the chatter of contemporary poets writing in English, Basudhara Roy is a rare talent with her astounding innate capacities for selection of words, lines/stanzas and thoughts--honest, fierce and powerful. Contemporary Indian women's poetry has been mirrored as varied forms of feminisms; radical to liberal. Without being loud and radical propagandist, so are they in the poems by Basudhara Roy. Her poetry is a critique of male dominated structures in our society and the stereotyped ideology associated to these age-old structures. But, we shouldn't read her poems with a set of predictions. We open *A Blur of a Woman* and we observe the Indian English poetry at its very best: "There is no ailment. Just the weather." ('Dukha')

Many poems of *A Blur of a Woman* are replete with references to daily home making, home management, sociological role relationships and the poet's personal engagement with the sensory world. Her descriptions of domestic chores are vivid and sharp:

"...a child's pockets must be emptied of pebbles
each day. Broken glass has to be swept aside,
loose threads cut, nails pared (.)" ('Chores')

Poet Basudhara's poetic corpus is a suspense thriller; full of surprises and twists of schemes in every page we read:

“Not all doors
shut dramatically
with Nora's bang.” ('Doors')

Basudhara prefers nonlinear over linear, intuition over materialism which makes her a poet with a difference. Her poems are faith assuring, and living with poetry, she is a preserver of emotional space in poetry and the poet after storms and cyclones of many forms. In a landfall of faith, Basudhara's poems lift us from mourning for personal losses, absences and departures to a fullness of the heart. The poet brings solace to the hearts of her readers as the sunshine does.

This collection is a rigorous search for what should poetry mean to a middle aged woman who is to play many role relations every day. Many poems unfold the poet's thoughts and impressions gently without being head-on; the tone is even and balanced and she expertly underscores the sense of menace and oppression threatening to engulf the multilayered female self and position(s):

“Recognise that despair
Your anthem of giving
You can never expunge blame
Misunderstanding or ingratitude
But your task is to not stop and go on.”
(‘Things I am Learning from the Sea’)

Her images never blur any reader; they are unmistakably individual, distinct and innovative. An artist of the highest order, Basudhara reminds us how our thoughts flow, at times, irregular. In some of the poems she focuses on small case letters to keep us focused on the small things – the seemingly everyday moments that encapsulate what is composting in life:

“She owns the place
and the little magic she has earned
by her labour's stir...
become a blur.” ('A Blur of a Woman')

With the use of sweet sounding consonants, mellifluous pace of these lines are engaging, smart and tender which fit in as her ideas move between the abstract and the tangible, faithfully:

“She forgets
how many laws she has upheld
or how many goodbyes she has said.”

(‘Woman at Twilight’)

Poem ‘Unknotting’ is expressive of the poet’s mastery over the language. How many of us can express things/ideas so powerfully yet tenderly,

“This day’s charity
must have a name I ache to utter.”

Basudhara’s meditative poems connect us with the earth where she uses extended metaphors to the struggle for equal rights for women. Her casket of poetry is so rich and fervent that it defies easy summary and superficial understanding. We need to be an intensely inward person to fathom her poems’ deep underlying meanings. We need to read her poems again and again and enjoy the beauty that can never fade,

“In your crushed arms I hear the beloved sing.
the watery assurance of rain in her voice
wipes clean this film of forgetting(.)”

(‘On Reading Shahid’)

What is magic out of words? What else is art?

Ghazals of this collection remind us Agha Shahid Ali who is credited with popularising the Ghazal form in American poetry. It’s what the poet’s ‘greater god’ to ‘dream’s dream’ to redeem in her.

Her poem ‘Night, Stalking’ is a soulful tribute to her mentor poet, Keki N Daruwalla,

“The island of poems sinks,
migrant birds pecking
in panic at its swan song.”

The title of this collection is a sharp departure from Basudhara's previous collections. The loaded title of the collection and the colourful book cover are no shortcomings as they stand as vital contrast to sweet, soothing and magical flow of (un)plumbed thoughts in the collection.

On a personal note, I have been, both held captive and mesmerised by the beguilingly simple language of her poems in *A Blur of a Woman*, their loaded imagery, incisive domestic realism and their persistent reaching for a sublime poetic space somewhere; between speech and silence.

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1. **Aju Mukhopadhyay**, a bilingual Poet, Author and Critic, regularly contributes to International Journals and Websites on varied subjects including Environment. Besides many poetry and other awards he has received Albert Camus Centenary Writing Award, Laureate Award in Best Author category (Non-Fiction) and Glory of India Award (Indian Achievers' Forum).
2. **Amarendra Khatua** is an accomplished writer and poet, with works published in English, Odia, Hindi, and Spanish. His literary contributions have been translated into all major Indian and international languages. With a prolific body of work, he has authored more than 40 collections, cementing his reputation as a versatile and widely recognized literary figure.
3. **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.

4. **Avdhesh Jha** is an author, poet, teacher, and observer, currently serving as Principal, Smt. B.C.J. College of Education Khambhat, Gujarat, India. With a doctorate in Education and postgraduate degrees in Mathematics and Education, he brings over 20 years of experience in the education field. He is the founder and chief editor of *Voice of Research*, a journal in social science, humanities, and technology. Dr. Jha has published nine books, 27 research papers, and presented over 25 papers internationally. He has delivered more than 90 lectures worldwide and received the Charottar Gaurav and Bharat Excellence awards.
5. **Dave Lewis** is a Welsh writer, poet, and photographer based in Pontypridd, Wales. He has written content for BBC Wales and contributed to global literary magazines. In 2007, he founded the Welsh Poetry Competition to discover hidden talent. In 2019, he launched the Writers of Wales A to Z database and runs Publish & Print, a company supporting overlooked writers. Lewis has published several works, including *Scratching the Surface*, *The Welsh Man*, and *Algorithm*. In 2020, he created the Poetry Book Awards. In May 2023, he was named Libraries Wales' "Author of the Month."
6. **Roger G. Singer**, Poet Laureate Emeritus, Connecticut Coalition of Poets Laureate.
7. **Fhen M.** was a fellow in a creative writing workshop. His verse "Uyasan" or "Toy" was published in *Pinili: 15 YearsofLamiraw*. His poems "A Name Whispered in the Wind," "Yakal House beside the Sabang River," "You'll Never Know," among others appeared in *Poetica* anthology series. Red Penguin Books' *AboutTime: AComing-of-AgePoetryAnthology* published his piece "Outside the Block Universe". His poem "Sea Snail" is featured in *Flora/FaunaAnthology* by Open Shutter Press.

8. **Gary Beck** has spent most of his adult life as a theater director and worked as an art dealer when he couldn't earn a living in the theater. He has also been a tennis pro, a ditch digger and a salvage diver. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines and his published books include 40 poetry collections, 16 novels, 4 short story collections, 2 collection of essays and 8 books of plays. Gary lives in New York City. www.garycbeck.com
9. **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.
10. **Ivan Pozzoni**, born in Monza in 1976, is a distinguished Italian writer, philosopher, and editor who pioneered the study of Law and Literature in Italy. He has authored numerous essays on Italian philosophers and ancient ethical and legal theories, contributing to both Italian and international journals. Between 2007 and 2024, Pozzoni released several books, including *Underground*, *Riserva Indiana*, and *Patroclo non deve morire*. He founded avant-garde magazines *Il Guastatore* and *L'Arrivista*, and currently edits *Información Filosófica*. Pozzoni established the Néon-avant-gardisme movement, endorsed by Zygmunt Bauman. His

work, translated into 25 languages, includes over 150 volumes and 1000 essays.

11. **Jeffrey Zable** is a teacher, conga drummer/percussionist who plays Afro-Cuban folkloric music for dance classes and rumbas around the San Francisco Bay Area and a writer of poetry, flash fiction, and non-fiction. He's published five chapbooks and his writing has appeared in hundreds of literary magazines and anthologies, more recently in *Ranger*, *The Opiate*, *Corvus*, *A Sufferer's Digest*, *The Raven's Perch*, *Dark Winter*, and many others.
12. **Joan Mc Nerney** is an American and a native New Yorker. She has recited her work at the National Arts Club, New York City, State University of New York, Oneonta, McNay Art Institute, San Antonio and the University of Houston, Texas. Published worldwide in over thirty five countries, her work has appeared in numerous literary publications. 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 release entitled *Light & Shadow* explores the recent historic COVID pandemic.
13. **Kathrine Yets** holds many educational roles, including being the founder and facilitator of LakeSide Poets & Writers. As Co-VP of Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets eastern region, she supports poetic communities. She co-founded Better Together with Food for Thought's host Deangelo Coleman. She has four chapbooks traditionally-published through Cyberwit and Unsolicited Press. Works can be found within Woman Scream Anthology, Olit, and Eternal Haunted Summer. She is a Jade Ring Award recipient. When not writing, she can be found on the shores of Lake Michigan, taking walks with her husband.

14. **Keith Inman**'s favourite lit class was in Dublin; best reading, a Spanish cafe; coolest invite, L.A.; nicest critique, Cuba. His books can be found in over fifty libraries worldwide. Keith lives in an old limestone cottage on the Niagara Escarpment.
15. **Les Wicks**: Over 45 years Wicks has performed widely across the globe. Published in over 450 different magazines, anthologies & newspapers across 39 countries in 17 languages. Conducts workshops & runs Meuse Press which focuses on poetry outreach projects like poetry on buses & poetry published on the surface of a river. His 15th book of poetry is *Time Taken – New & Selected* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2022).
16. **Mandira Ghosh** is an esteemed author, poet, educator, and researcher. She has earned numerous accolades, including the Bharat Nirman Award 2020 and Dr. Radhakrishnan Award. A Senior Fellow from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, she has been recognized for her work in literature and education. Ghosh has published poems, stories, translations, and reviews in various journals globally. A passionate promoter of Indian culture and heritage, she has organized poetry workshops at renowned institutions. She holds an MA in English, a diploma in Journalism, and a B.Ed. She is the author of 23 books, including *Krishna in Indian Thought Literature and Music* and *The Cosmic Dance of Shiva*.
17. **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' was published by Finishing Line Press in summer 2024. His second chapbook 'The Be-All and the End-All' was published by Bottlecap Press in autumn 2024. He has published numerous micro-chapbooks with the Origami Poems Project. Matthew

is a Pushcart Prize nominated poet. Visit his website at <http://matthewfriday.weebly.com>

18. **Michael Lee Johnson** is a poet of high acclaim, with his work published in 46 countries or republics. He is also a song lyricist with several published poetry books. His talent has been recognized with 7 Pushcart Prize nominations and 6 Best of the Net nominations. He has over 653 published poems. His 330-plus YouTube poetry videos are a testament to his skill and dedication. His poems have been translated into several foreign languages. Awards/Contests: International Award of Excellence “Citta’ Del Galateo-Antonio De Ferrariis” XI Edition 2024 Milan, Italy-Poetry. Poem, Michael Lee Johnson, “*If I Were Young Again.*” Remember to consider me for Best of the Net or Pushcart nomination!
19. **Michael Mirolla** has published close to 20 books of poetry and fiction. Among his awards: three Bressani Prizes. His novella, *The Last News Vendor*, won the 2020 Hamilton Literary Award. A symposium on Michael’s writing was held in Toronto on May 25, 2023. In September 2023, Michael served a writers’ residency in Barcelona. He makes his home near Gananoque in the Thousand Islands. <https://www.michaelmirolla.com/>
20. **Mithil Jha** is a young writer with a strong inclination towards language and literature. He is currently pursuing his education at Acadia University, Wolf Ville, 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.
21. **Moya Roddy’s** new collection *The Dark Art of Darning* was described by Rita Ann Higgins as “*enthraling ... entangled*”

...*daring* ...” Her debut collection *Out of the Ordinary* was shortlisted for the Strong Shine Award and she was also shortlisted for the Hennessy Award and won a New Irish Writing Award. Her poems have appeared in the Irish Times, Poetry Ireland Review, the North, Crannog, Stoney Thursday and Stinging Fly among others.

22. **Natalia Fernández Díaz-Cabal:** Polyglot, poet, translator, professor (at Spanish and Chinese universities), nomad, international lecturer, entomologist of words, self-taught visual artist. Ph.D. in Linguistics and Ph.D. in Philosophy of Science.
23. **Neelam Shah** holds a BA in International Relations and Media Cultural Studies (2014) and a Master’s in Psychoanalysis from Kingston University (2017). She is a remote Social Researcher/Consultant for MMC Economics, Finance, and Statistics, and a Freelance Mental Health Researcher for MQ Mental Health. Neelam is an Early Careers Researcher at King’s College London, a Research Scholar, and an academic journal writer and reviewer for PLOS Mental Health, Spring, and Horizon journals. Passionate about animal welfare, human rights, and environmental causes, she volunteers widely. In her free time, Neelam enjoys art, science museums, sports, and creative activities like digital photography and animation.
24. **Pete Mullineaux** lives in Galway Ireland and teaches Global Citizenship in schools. His most recent poetry collection *We are the Walrus* (Salmon 2022) was featured on the cover of the World Wildlife Fund’s *The Circle* Magazine. In 2023 his environmental film ‘Careful what you wish for orang-utan’ won Home-stage’s *Poetry and Folk in the Environment Competition* (pFITE). His work has been discussed on RTE’s *Arena* programme and a new work is forthcoming in the Irish Times. He’s been described by reviewers as

“profoundly sensitive” “gorgeous and resonant” “grimly funny” and comparisons made with Roger McGough, John Clare, John Cooper-Clarke and Pete Seeger: ‘Razor sharp, probing, beautifully written ... a gem’ – *Poetry Ireland Review*.

25. **Qudsi Rizvi** serves as an Assistant Professor (Contractual) in the Department of English at Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad. A published poet, his works have appeared in numerous national anthologies and refereed journals. In addition to his academic and literary pursuits, Dr. Rizvi is an international interfaith speaker, engaging in dialogues that promote understanding and harmony. His debut poetry collection, *Shades of Solitude*, was published in July 2021. His research interests include poetic aesthetics and the interplay of literature with themes of love, mercy, and joy.
26. **Ram Krishna Singh** is a renowned, widely published, anthologized, and translated poet with over 60 books to his credit. His latest poetry collections include *Against the Waves: Selected Poems* (AuthorsPress, 2021), *Poems and Micropoems* (Southern Arizona Press, 2023), and *Knocking Vistas And Other Poems* (Authors Press, 2024). Find him on X @[profrksingh](#) and on Facebook www.facebook.com/profrksingh.
27. **Rakesh Bhartiya**, born on 28 July 1954 in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India, completed his graduation in Electrical Engineering before joining a public sector bank. However, he left the banking sector after clearing the Civil Services Examination and went on to serve in the Government of India, where he retired as Joint Secretary. Following his retirement, he served as an adviser in the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights for three years. Currently, Rakesh Bhartiya is a full-time writer, composing works in both English and Hindi. He has authored six collections of short stories, two novels, two collections of

poems, two travelogues, and six collections of articles addressing social, cultural, and spiritual issues. Additionally, he co-edited a literary quarterly, *Pashyanti*, for three years.

28. **Ramzi Albert Rihani** is a Lebanese American writer. He received the 2024 Polk Street Review first-place poetry award. His work has appeared in several publications in the US, Canada, UK, Ireland, India, and South Africa, including ArLiJo, Linnet's Wings Magazine, Poetic Sun, Chronogram magazine, Phenomenal Literature Journal, Last Leaves Magazine, Cacti Fur Journal, Poetry Potion, Active Muse, Ephemeral Elegies, and The Silent Journey Anthology. He is a published music critic. He wrote and published a travel book, "The Other Color - a Trip Around the World in Six Months" (FMA Press). He lives in the Washington, DC, area.
29. **Susan P. Blevins** was born in England, lived 26 years in Italy and now lives in Houston, Texas, where she tends her garden, looks after her cats and enjoys reading, writing and playing piano. She also enjoys drinking wine with friends and reading for the blind. While living in Italy she wrote a weekly column about food. She now writes essays, stories and poems about food, gardening and her life journey and is published internationally. Given the chance she is still ready to jump into the abyss.
30. **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.
31. **Vinay Kumar Singh** is the Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Foreign Languages at Maharishi Arvind University (MUST) in Lakshmanagarh, Sikar, Rajasthan.

32. **Jaydeep Sarangi**, dubbed as ‘Bard on the Banks of Dulung’, is a poet with eleven collections in English latest being, *the half-confession* (2024) and Principal, New Alipore College, Kolkata, WB. He is also the President, Guild of Indian English Writers Editors and Critics (GIEWEC) and Vice President, Executive Council, IPPL, ICCR, Kolkata. Website: www.jaydeepsarangi.in

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