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# GJPP

## VerbalART

**A Global Journal Devoted to  
POETS AND POETRY**

**A Peer-Reviewed Print Journal**

**Volume 9, Issue 1 | Apr-June 2025**

*Chief Editor:*

**Dr VIVEKANAND JHA**

*Associate Editor:*

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**VERBALART**

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## POETRY

**AMARENDRA KHATUA**

### **Seeking Direction**

Some day you will pause  
and ask for directions which  
all the living must possess, but  
life may not require. East  
will indicate salvation. West  
will bring on, and South will kill  
whatever must be killed, and north  
will bleed.

Remember the nine months  
etching morning petals inside  
Hungry palpitations for a  
newborn and the years  
when all ceasefire with love  
and exile attained  
Topography of a tame routine  
for simple denials.

As soon as you stop  
And pop up the worlds Seeking  
directions, you will see  
how your future melts into  
your untold past. Then musings  
loose all original music  
from temporarily borrowed tunes.



## **AMARENDRA KHATUA**

### **A Karma Poem**

I cannot go anywhere  
My steps always dilate  
the lines before they disappear.  
Then my eyes betray all the  
movements that fly like birds at the  
End of a season without any formation.

Probably it is destined for me  
to stay legless and mute. I believe  
all the prayers are composed similar to  
my staying like this, dusty and seeking.  
The chants have meaning and a  
Slope for falling empty in bodily depth.  
I just exist in saying the words which  
echo without sound.

I will stay here till eternity.  
Eternity does not deal in  
salvation, but life must go on  
with or without its promise to deliver.

## **ANDREW SCOTT**

### **Bear in the Woods**

Back in the later eighties,  
A rabid bear broke out of the Renous zoo.  
Trapped there for years for tearing others apart,  
on the loose again.

Roamed free in the Miramichi woods, instilling fear  
in all as it was looking for its next attack of meat.  
Blood guiding the beast.

In the town of Spruce, up in the north,  
the hunger struck in venomous ways.  
The Flam family received the ultimate bite.  
Annie laid dead while her sister escaped.  
Fires set by the claws of the beast.

Those flames were not the only flames set by the beast.  
The Daughney Sisters burned at their own stake.  
leaving a trail of embers in Newcastle burning bright with pain.

Fear was growing all over.  
People knew the beast had the sweet taste of flesh.  
Lives were being shaken with terror.

Thoughts of all were confirmed  
when the life of Father James  
was taken from the community of Chatham Head.

Hungry growls were heard in the air,  
deep from the hidden forest.  
Echoing, not knowing where he was.  
Locked doors did not make people feel safe.

Manhunts by the brave  
tried to find and circle the animal.  
It took seven months to capture  
the murdering animal.  
Blood, flesh still in its teeth.

It has been decades since  
the woods were haunted.  
No one goes in them alone.  
Imaginary, faint growls  
fill the tree branches  
left from the bear in the woods.

## **ANDREW SCOTT**

### **Shame On You**

Speechless when I look at you.  
Like most, never saw your true self.  
Chameleons have a true disguise  
and you are better than most.  
Shame on you.

Sweet, reassuring words out of your mouth,  
making people feel they can walk on water,  
not knowing your mind.  
You had a plan to make the unexpected drown.  
Shame on you.

Present yourself as nurturing and generous,  
willing to an open mind and guidance  
only to be pushing them to an edge  
and letting go as they fall over.  
Shame on you.

You turn into a ghost before the blood spills.  
I have seen people like you all of my life.  
Sad that you slipped by  
with a knife that left an angry scar.  
Shame on me.

**AVDHESH JHA**

**Choice**

With the choice of good or bad,  
Right or wrong, and do and don't,  
We have the choice of a song to sing,  
However, we select only that tongue  
Which befits us and suits us most.

## **DOCTOR PESSIMIST**

### **Advancement**

A lot of humans are obsessed with advancing in life.  
Doubters really love hindering you from succeeding.  
Vulgar humans will do anything in order to get far.  
Ask anyone if hard work is truly worth it these days.  
Not many people will understand your question at all.  
Crazy humans keep inventing challenges for their fame.  
Every single human being needs to understand how I feel.  
Many people in this world deserve to advance in life, folks.  
Every member of the one percent hinders your advancement.  
None of the sheep understand how they're constantly hindered.  
The Toxic Terrors will someday wake up and allow me to win.

**DAVID R MORGAN****Laugh**

I have this dream where I save the world ...  
I've always had a keen sense of humour;  
yet jokes, like atom from atom, soar apart-  
their centres do not hold; as gnomes escaping  
from their respective front gardens  
and where they once stood -  
the grass tearful with dew.  
I have this dream where I save the world  
with the ultimate joke, bringing things together.  
A gag, subtle as syllables of sunlight- revelation bright.  
So I tell myself joke after joke in my head in my bed.  
Just before sleep my pillows smile, showing their teeth-  
my neighbour's dog howling its psychic head off.  
Did you hear the one about? I saw this bloke  
the other day! Shadows murmuring, Terry keeps his clips  
on ... through my mind, Mona Lisa giggles frolic free.  
Yes, I've always had a keen sense of humour,  
but it's mine and no one else's. It's all mine  
and that's why I laugh alone!

**DESMOND FRANCIS XAVIER KON  
ZHICHENG-MINGDÉ**

**Pietro da Cortona's Lost Painting**

The columns in a row, fifth column  
not that it makes a memory of things.

There are four other columns  
nowhere near the painting, I remember.

It's the one I kept going back to look at,  
the one I kept mistaking, image for image.

Only metaphor because the truth was too  
filled with light – the light whitewashed.

Every kind of detail fluid, like song  
and movement, such recollected sentiment.

The painting situates itself behind  
the third column, its old paintwork.

Still hidden, not in shadows, but backlit  
into more of the sum, dawn of all dawns.

I was seated at a table made of iron,  
a chair of four legs; it stood for something.

That I still can't recall; memory is an evasive  
thing, you as illusory. Once I thought –

forgetting was as powerful as memory.  
Now, I don't know anymore, and it's okay.



**DESMOND FRANCIS XAVIER KON**  
**ZHICHENG-MINGDÉ**

**Image-Text-Image-Text-Image-Text-Image**

Look to the calligraphy, you say.

*[look in the eye – ]*  
*[look upon again – ]*

Look to the pity, the pitiable  
loss  
of meaning.

*You know this loss, you say.*

*You recognise this –*

*You* acknowledge its distance,  
grand nature of its grief.

How insurmountable,  
yet possible, and sensible.

Intensely, at every Mass  
to look up at vaulted ceiling.

When once, through a lens  
you saw the host of holy saints.

Yes, the communion you find  
of spiritual union – shared

graces, when we are one  
mystical body with Christ.

Look to the calligraphy,  
what is  
already sketched.

Then etched.

## **DJ TYRER**

### **Authority**

Authority is a curse  
Upon those who wield it  
And, more so, upon those they whip with it  
Beyond the bounds they press  
Abusing their position  
Misusing the power they wield  
Authority is a drug  
That blights those who have it  
And, ruins lives and neighbourhoods  
Always desperate for a fix  
They need more and more  
They can never give it up

## **DJ TYRER**

### **Elevating Thoughts**

Lark-like, a curious term to use, a revelation  
For a soul that grows expansively  
Qualities the same but greater quantitatively  
As occurs in Baudelaire's poem *Elevation*

For the lark can fly and swoop and soar  
But remains small and dainty in size  
An ever-expanding lark would be a surprise  
Such as was never, ever seen before

Lark-like, metaphor expands to fill the void  
A thought that grows bigger over time  
A thought that grows ever more sublime  
Until it becomes impossible to avoid

**ELISABETH FRISCHAUF**

**So hot, so dry June**

Fattening flower moon ripens  
raspberries with quicksilver rays.  
Night cool commands  
a film of dew. Coats  
thirsty leaves. May rains  
were generous and now nothing.

Next crop's green berry optimists  
begin to harden into small fists.  
Such bounty promised,  
but now the leaf's  
white underside curls.

The plant folds.  
Does it pray for rain?  
The garden fastens me  
in its wide belly.

**FABIYAS M V****Oppaa**

Though wrinkled,  
her certificate is intact in her safe.  
She had failed to find a job  
with her degree in zoology.  
Her hands smell of the dried prawns,  
which she sells in a bamboo basket.

People pity her unmarried loneliness.  
But nobody knows her old spring.  
Her secret lover's canoe zigzagged  
at midnight.  
Erotic ecstasy seeped from her soul.  
It was not a velvet bed  
that created orgasm.  
When she had bathed in the canal,  
a sweet sensation surfaced  
from the scratches on her back.

On the lap of her orphanhood,  
there wasn't any social poisoning.  
She grew up human.  
But her maverick growth is loathsome  
in her society.

She is always laid-back.  
Fortitude is an antidote to snag.  
She adheres to hope in the umbra.

That mossy headstone is nonsense,  
she muses.  
Even if she digs too deep,  
she won't find her dad.  
She hasn't read any holy books.  
Death is never a frightening furnace.  
Now she sprawls on the floor of her hut,  
longing to be recycled through the mist.

## **GARY BECK**

### **Fading**

Summer is over.  
Rays of warmth are departing,  
not to return for many months.  
The days and nights get colder  
until chill courses my bones  
that refuse to carry me.  
I sit in torn armchair  
in tattered overcoat,  
wrapped in blankets  
and do not know  
if I will see the spring.



**GARY BECK**

## **The Prevalence of Greed**

Election day is over.  
The winners are happy  
getting another term  
or a new position.  
The cries of: 'I've been robbed,  
the election was stolen',  
haven't hit the airwaves yet.  
If we didn't know better  
we would appreciate  
democracy in action,  
but some of the losers,  
election deniers,  
are preparing to protest  
the elections they lost,  
a painful reminder  
individual greed  
is far more important  
than the needs of the nation.

**GEETANSHI BUTTAN****October's Femininity**

Standing near the stove,  
Waiting for the tea to turn golden,  
To be served, to my husband –  
To whom I am obliged and dutied to devotion unseen.  
The soft, golden October light falls on my crimson red bangles,  
Glinting like gods but bound in metals.  
My effulgent gold ring veils under the wheat dough,  
A soft whispered secret, the language of love –  
Crafting warmth for him,  
as my own hunger buzz beneath the skin.

While all these dates on the calendar are marked pink,  
While people across the globe  
will celebrate the existence of a woman.  
I stand here, nameless.  
Stirring the spatula over the saucepan,  
Sprinkling salt and chilli as per his taste.

While the world will be commemorating,  
I will bent low, brooming traces of dust,  
Pushing the clothes in the washing machine,  
Moping the table top and ironing the infant's new pants.  
While the news channels, Twitter and Threads  
will be filled with unfiltered and bold comments  
about International Women's Day,  
I, will be dazed in the endless list of chores  
undone by the end of the day.

October sunsets are feminine,  
They turn into an ombre of purple and orange.  
It urges me to wrap myself in a thin shawl,  
Letting my eyes drown in the calming effect of the dawn.  
While the night turns masculine,  
As I crawl over the bed of pain and not peace.  
He, grabs me for he wants, warmth –  
A warmth that does not feel warm,  
But a realisation of his lust over affection.

I stare at the ceiling,  
With eyes wide open.  
I ponder about,  
Who am I?  
I interrogate,  
Why shall Savitri bring her husband from the god of death?  
Who shall be my Savitri?  
Why shall I be treated as goddess Laxmi  
on one day and like a slave the other?  
When shall my femininity not be  
misunderstood as submission but equality?  
When shall I be free  
to feel the warm October womanhood,  
And not the cold December breeze,  
Bruising my traumatic marriagehood.

## **GERMAIN DROOGENBROODT**

### **Witnesses of a Time**

Just as the rain  
erases traces left behind,  
disappears by a technical problem  
or decision of higher powers  
what we once entrusted  
to floppy, computer, VHS or CD.

What will soon remain of us, only yellowed  
that once was written on paper  
by typewriter or pen –  
and of those who come after us,  
nothing at all?

## **GERMAIN DROOGENBROODT**

### **Useless Prayers**

So many calamities take place on earth  
continually and increasingly plagued  
by disasters and injustice,  
although millions of prayers  
are daily sent to heaven.

But which God, who speaks all those languages,  
can give them a hearing, when it is man  
who disrupts even the heavenly vault?

## **GORDON SCAPENS**

### **Family Loss**

Death fills conversations.  
Now there's a blurring  
by degrees, of a life  
caught out of time.

Family has walls  
closing in on them  
as their world reduces  
to a moment gone.

Comfort is a memory  
they search to recall  
but don't know the rules.  
Tears are small prayers.

Words overbalance  
trying to pass for answers,  
friends are asking questions  
in the present tense.

Anyone with a message  
seems to look like God.  
This isn't spiritual,  
it's the poverty of loss.

Now we must accept  
the binary of time  
is the biggest thief  
of our loved ones.

Hold them until you can't.  
Forever is only now.

**IRENA JOVANOVIĆ**

**The Jewel Forest**

Green forest is quietly glittering  
shiny drops adorn trees  
leaves are trembling and shaking from pleasure  
being deeply satisfied and happy  
small diamonds are sparkling  
in emerald jewel wet forest  
lightened by the effulgence of sun rays  
joyfully fusing profuse bright light beams  
through kaleidoscope patterns of branches  
spreading rhapsody of ravishing brilliance  
symphony of exalted, unlimited joy  
in the rising of twinkling beauty  
in opulent shine, true richness  
thousands of violins in the air  
vibrating sweet canon of ultimate joy  
in a topmost manner  
pure green jewel  
of forest bliss treasure  
of love of nature  
divine

**IVAN POZZONI****The False Story**

I have a symptomatic story to tell  
the story of the 300 at Thermopylae,  
who got themselves massacred,  
the story of Simon of Cyrene,  
caught in almost fantozzian ways,  
the story of Julian, imperator killed by the Persians.

The story of Torismund, in his race to Toulouse,  
the story of Wallace, and his bagpipe,  
the story of Louis XVI and his head,  
the story of Hitler's bunker and the world in celebration.

Is this really the story we want to tell,  
or the story of Asine and her riding cows,  
or the story of Ezekiel and his orchards,  
or the story of the slave Poppeus with his prohibitions.

The story of Euricus with his seven sisters,  
the story of o'Brien and his seven thousand forks,  
the story of Francois and his dairy farm,  
the story of Hubner with his luminaria.

Which story is true and which story is false?



**IVAN POZZONI****Gul Makai**

Your name is Malala, Yousafzai,  
challenging name as a Pashtun passionaria,  
an Afghan Joan of Arc,  
on a fourteen-year-old girl,  
student in the Pakistani region of Swat.

Your name is Malala, Yousafzai,  
bursts out, loud, like the bullet  
of a Kalashnikov lodged in your brain,  
at the age of fourteen, vindication,  
by shari'a-defending barbudos,  
of repressed Taliban (from the western invasion).

Your name is Malala, Yousafzai,  
you wished to be a doctor, a vocation,  
you fight, between life and non-life,  
in hospitals all over the world,  
symbol of a new generation,  
'Where is Malala?' your attacker asked,  
and, terrified by you, he shot.

Your name is Malala, Yousafzai,  
you continued going to school  
against a brutal interpretation of shari'a,  
renaming yourself Gul Makai, in your diary,  
while Taliban beheaded, in Swat,  
innocent victims of un-islamic behaviour.

Your name is Malala, Yousafzai,  
fierce Cornflower of Swat.

**JOHANNA N**

**Before the Clock Struck Nine**

And as the clock strikes nine  
And i go out wearing this body of mine,  
My mind tells me, you're fine.  
But there's this knot in my stomach  
That doesn't seem to unwind.  
But my mind insists, you're fine.  
So there i go,  
Manoeuvring myself through the crowd.  
I stand in line,  
Ordering my third wine.  
Meanwhile, there's a war going on  
In that stupid head of mine.  
So i rush to the bathroom,  
Still tempted to do another line.  
I feel a shiver going down my spine.  
This isn't who i planned out to be  
When i was nine.

**JOHANNA N**

**White Flowers - Dead**

Pour me a drink.  
Watch me swallow - devour you whole.  
Watch me speak, unfiltered.  
And don't you dare interrupt me.

Pour me another.  
I've been silent too long.  
It's cruel, really-  
Watch this rage unfold like a bouquet of white flowers.

White flowers – innocent-  
But i can't pretend anymore.

I stayed silent for so long.  
But my white flowers... They died years ago.

Maybe the last time i watered them,  
I was eight.

But how dare you blame me  
For forgetting-  
When all i was fed was poison?

Actually,  
Pour me another glass.  
The flowers are dead.  
Rage is all i have left to give.

## **JOHN GREY**

### **Coming Home to You**

I parcel myself out, bit by bit,  
to a theory I mistook for truth.  
Turns out, it only ever took, never gave.  
I was loyal to its liturgy,  
like a prisoner to his chains,  
called it advancement, called it progress,  
but it was just power dressed in a suit and tie.

Business - I've chased it like a imbecile  
from one worthless company to the next,  
each job less certain,  
each breath a little thinner. But then -  
your face, lamplit and inviting...  
I wanted night forever,  
the next day never to begin.

**JOHN ZEDOLIK**

**Fluid Volume**

Containing the heavily honeyed green tea  
is a large mug ringed by a pastiche  
of painted images by Paul Gauguin,  
a pleasing contrast with the bone-white,

which young Rena presented to me as a gift  
a generation ago, having apparently taught  
her well in that awkward age that demands  
patience and care deeper than this sixteen-ounce

reservoir whose capacity, nonetheless,  
is sufficient for the memory and hot liquid  
to boot, dark and keeping its heat like a day on Tahiti  
in those South Seas so many years gone, sailed away

**JOHN ZEDOLIK**

**Snow**

The body breaks down,  
shards sloughing off  
in the precipitation

of seconds, each sharp  
as a slice, fierce snow  
that severs without a sound

'til the drift accumulates  
what has now dropped  
to gather a high tumulus

holding no hollow for remains  
regal or down the social line –  
the grained surface the same

as the center mote, fallen the first,  
now the heart of finishing to ever,  
the source now failed, without a beat

## **K.V. RAGHUPATHI**

### **War Snippets**

Now is the time for war, you say  
to release hatred to survive.  
This living itself is painful, I say  
yet endures ensconced in boots, bullets, and blood.

You have only an impulse of killing  
while I have only an instinct  
to survive in the clouds of tumult;  
I balance all, while you destroy to create disorder;  
the years ahead seem to breathe  
a waste of breath of violence the years behind.

You watch visuals of war  
I preach petals of peace;  
You read messages of war  
I memorize the songs of love;  
You write about war  
as I fear about the meaning of existence  
lost in the boom of gunshots.

We are over-armed, under-educated, and semi-sensitized.  
For those who scroll, watch, and grieve,  
can the abstract pain they *see* make them more human?  
We construct only to deconstruct in drones and detonations.  
As the cries of the mothers and babies ripple across the  
continents  
we look on in silence as though untouched and undefiled.

You wandered and settled here and there  
all over the world like gypsies  
to flee from blood and hatred.  
But you cannot recreate home  
amidst airstrikes, fraudulent declarations, and treaties.  
You must return home to make your home again.  
By then, you have lost your roots in bloody wounds.

Take me to a land of no war  
where gathers no dust and blood for peace,  
where screams no shells, sanctions, and screens  
but the stink of blood will not go away  
as the clouds of fear hang with its smell.

I think of the future, the life in the world  
after a hundred years from now.  
I may not be alive to witness  
swarms of quakes  
beneath the bleeding sky  
breaking the foundations of life.



## KAVYA BISEN

### Ruby Jane

She roused in a fairy land,  
Od wispy clouds with verve and flare.  
Sprinkled glitters on roses at wee hours,  
And slept through nights bespangled with stars.

Braided hairs with covert tale,  
Peonies and daisies graced the garth.  
Barbs sat at back of the home,  
With glass of wine in meadows she roams.

In due course blue butterfly came,  
Wings plated in silver dust.  
It sang ballad of life and its fight,  
She followed it to wets in the night.

Illusions grew within her heart,  
Glass of wine sparkled with cider.  
She overlooked the shifting skies,  
As silver dust adorned her quest.

Roses lost their glint and glow,  
Dried peonies lined rows of the yard.  
Barbs, out of wine she crafted,  
Cider of apple in storage shafted.

Her hairs flew with may's gale  
Hearty whispers bruit on all hands

.....

Books, wine and a pond of golden Tench  
The house is empty-  
no Ruby Jane

**KEITH INMAN**

**Pollen**

silver sky-fall  
smote the air –  
prisms of flight

**KEITH INMAN**

**Waiting for a Plane, Toronto**

Snow keeps falling  
on the solemn faces floating  
in the plate glass window

**KEITH INMAN**

**Mother**

in an absence of light  
she found stars shining  
in her children's eyes

## **KUMAR KAUSHIK RANJAN**

### **Haiku Poems**

**1.**

Spring's knees buckle –  
petals exhale into wind  
yet the pupils bloom.

**2.**

Petal-script lingers –  
juice spells ferment in soil  
blackboard of earth

**3.**

Stream's stolen lullaby –  
a paper tongue laps up  
the wind's loose change.

**4.**

Hail-liturgy –  
the sky's glass catechism  
stitched into skin

**5.**

Spring's audit –  
bankrupt wings  
accrue interest.

## LES WICKS

### The Last Prayer

I wish a god existed.  
Anyone who writes  
knows how words dissolve in aether.  
Another ear, an ear with *influence* – yes.

This life has been a tangle of questions  
so I know what I'd ask.

We'd meet in a rich green field  
beside an abattoir.  
I'd wear my best suit  
pre-torn for humility.  
There would be precautionary weapons.

While struggling for politeness  
this Being wouldn't have it easy.  
Perhaps like the best fights  
the blood could be forgotten later.  
We'd share a drink of rainwater  
then go off to swim in the infinities.

## **MADHURA DONODE**

### **The Season That Didn't Belong**

They called me early, called me wrong  
Too strange to sing their quiet song  
I came in rain, I came in fire  
I left before their hearts could tire  
The trees just stared but moved along  
I was the season that didn't belong

One moment I burn, the next I'm ice  
Too warm to hold, too cold, too nice  
I changed the sky, I shook the air  
I left my scent on what was bare  
But still they hoped I'd just be gone  
I was the season that didn't belong

They said, "You never last too long"  
And maybe, yeah, they weren't all wrong  
But if I stayed, the earth won't move  
The stars would break their quiet groove  
So I leave, even when it feels wrong  
I was the season that didn't belong

I know too much to fight the flow  
I go because I need to go  
But I still write across their skies  
A little sun, a little cry  
Even gone, I still stay strong  
I was the season that didn't belong

**MAITHILI NAGAREKAR**

**What is the truth?**

Do I care for her or I care,  
For I want to be cared by her?  
Do I love her or I love her,  
For I want to be loved by her?  
Whatever be the truth,  
The fact is this care and love is my life.

**MICHAEL LEE JOHNSON**

**Steel Bars a Single Sheet**

I'm Steely Dan Seymour Butts,  
South America, trust me on that.  
I can't pull up my sheet inside  
these steel bars anymore. 25 to life.  
No man is God in the cold or the clouds.  
Isolated poets grab words anywhere  
they can find them in newspaper clippings,  
ripped-out Bible verses are a sin.  
No one pities people like me in prison.  
Spiders hang from my cell ceiling –  
dance the jitterbug, "In the Mood."  
Jigger bug fleas on my unpainted  
cement floors.  
My butt is toilet paper brown, flush.  
Toxic thoughts grind on my aging  
face, body, and declining health.  
In this dream, I reach  
for a hacksaw that is not there.  
End this night & so many more  
suffer in just a snore.

**MICHAEL MIROLLA**

**The Lengthening Shadows**

Dim of dusk  
Druid dawn

The lengthening shadows seek  
detachment

In the hope of rupture,  
they stretch across the dewy damp  
ghosting ever forward  
past pasture enclosures  
ignoring barbed-wire fences  
beyond the glints  
that sparkle to trap  
the unwary into believing  
the stillness will last  
into the sultry day  
the bog-plagued night

At the edge of sunlight  
they glide oh so gloomy  
in triumph  
to darken each blade  
be it grass or sprout  
each miniature globe  
of tense water  
laid out in their  
exactitude



as if with care  
or purpose

Dim of dawn  
Druid dusk

The lengthening shadows seek  
freedom from  
our three dimensions  
a separation  
from earthbound hosts

But time catches up  
and day or night descends  
for a sudden vanishing

**MOHIT SAINI**

## **The Homework-Eating Hedgehog**

My teacher said, “Just do your math –  
it won’t take long, you’ll see!”  
But when I turned to grab my book...  
it vanished. Poof! (Not me.)  
A rustling came beneath my bed –  
a snuffling, inky nose.  
A hedgehog munched my fractions,  
wearing glasses (stolen prose!).  
“You’re eating all my homework!”  
“Correct!” he crunched with glee.  
“I only nibble problems  
that add up incorrectly.”  
Now every night I leave out  
one wrong equation – just in case.  
He rolls into a number-ball  
and erases my mistakes!

**LALIT NAVANI**

**Ode To Paradise**

Evolution of footprints,  
Of hunters and hunted,  
Strange accoutrements each carry,  
For stranger wars and kills.  
Disillusioned leaves and mottled bark,  
Dead lumber, truffle, petrichor dance,  
Arrogant cobwebs stand tall,  
Chop! Chop!! They too fall.  
Diurnal and nocturnal,  
Axiomatic creatures and all,  
Plan, plot in the realm of God,  
Live another day of fear and fraught.  
Tributaries, beehives and cascades,  
Shiver around mountain shades,  
While residents keep a strict vigil,  
Shenanigans collude; put them in peril.  
Romancing trees of all kinds,  
Separated by selfish thoughts and evil minds,  
Many would die of gaping holes,  
As sun, rain end life below.  
Crippled plants and withered vines,  
Putrefied locals merge with soil,  
Feeding brigades of souls in the cycle of life,  
As tumultuous despots once again, strike.

**NATALIE JO-ANNE DIENGDOH****The Rooster's Promise**

In the ancient days of golden hue,  
When one tongue spoke, and all hearts knew,  
A thanksgiving dance, in garments bright,  
Filled the day with joyous light.

But in the dusk, when shadows loomed,  
The Sun and Moon, in dance assumed,  
Their graceful steps, in evening's glow,  
Lit up the sky, in radiant show.

Yet scornful minds, with envy's sting,  
Cast shadows dark, where hatred sings,  
And Sun, in sorrow, fled the sight,  
To *Krem Lamet Latang's* shrouded night.

An age of gloom, where sin held sway,  
In darkness deep, it held its prey,  
Temptation's lure, confusion's plight,  
Led souls astray, from truth's pure light.

Many sought to bring her back,  
To end the world's relentless black,  
An open council, under heaven's gaze,  
Decreed a plan, to end the haze.

The rooster chosen, with feathers fair,  
To journey forth, through darkness' snare,  
To *Krem Lamet Latang's* hidden lair,  
And plead with Sun, her light to share.

Reason and covenant, in sacred vow,  
Between the rooster and God, avow,  
To bear mankind's sins, his pledge devout,  
In exchange for Sun's return, no doubt.

And lo, as promised, at dawn's first ray,  
The rooster crows, to welcome day,  
Three times he calls, with voice so clear,  
Heralding Sun, dispelling fear.

The rooster's pledge, a sacred bond,  
Between God and man, forever fond,  
A mediator, in feathered guise,  
Bringing hope, beneath the skies.

For in his sacrifice, the truth does shine,  
That love prevails, in every line,  
The son of God, with neck outstretched,  
For mankind's sake, he faced death's wretch

## NELS HANSON

### Nocturne

Remember by a lover's place  
deer stroll with speckled fawns  
and always clear nights streaking  
meteors land where the world's

lights end. Gods, beasts, heroes,  
beauty, the dusty constellations  
stir across the lit dome, mishap  
with victory, all those forgotten

legends. An owl with x-ray eyes  
hoots from Athena's shoulder,  
now from a near oak as others  
hear and wait at her warning,

the hungry ones grazing seeds,  
dark berries, shaded greenery.  
At sunset that cry would stop  
a fierce Aztec's heart but soon

in silence many fearless small  
furred animals and I browse  
again the grass turned golden  
by your window's yellow lamp.

**NICK COOKE**

**Coming Round**

I come round from surgery to find  
the nurses calling for my wife and she  
enters the frame rather as Mrs Robinson  
did, with Benjamin flopped on the lilo.

She whose words are sometimes harsh  
these days loves more through actions  
and, right now, looks. I won't say  
it was worth smashing my elbow for this

but it strikes me life is largely about such  
moments of knowing you're not alone  
(*pace* Matthew Arnold), and if you are  
these are the times you'd feel it most.

I who am no smug married, whose union  
has been no model, nonetheless trumpet  
the touching of fingers, the frown of concern.  
Larkin was right: let us be kind.

## **RAKESH BHARTIYA**

### **Unload Yourself**

It is time to unload yourself  
One by one, leaving out none  
It is time to unload yourself  
Of all those worldly desires remaining unfulfilled  
Of all those worldly goals remaining unrealized  
One by one, leaving out none  
It is time to unload yourself  
The journey of a different kind is overdue  
The journey within yourself is overdue  
That journey simply can't be undertaken  
With so much of such worldly burden  
Unload yourself fast before time runs out  
The time to move beyond time runs out  
That journey's road is right inside yourself  
The road leading you to your real self  
But you just can't afford on that road this burden  
All worldly assets become on that road a burden  
So, one by one, leaving absolutely none  
Unload yourself of all this worldly burden.



## **RANGEET MITRA**

### **The Destiny**

The body loves the roots of a tree.  
The smell of fish emanates from the water.  
I hear screams in my dreams  
I am polygamous, which I am not interested to hide.  
The sea standing on the mountain.  
There is no way to go.

**ROGER G. SINGER**

**Final Gathering**

the congregation sings

psalms read  
silent prayers

friends with tears  
enemies with smiles

forget me nots

final words  
then quiet

**ROGER G. SINGER**

**Edge of Desert**

curved skies  
thin clouds  
a few stars  
on distant black

waning warm sands  
as cool air  
descends and surrounds

scattered brush  
bleached bones  
foot prints

spiders and snakes  
a distant howl

far off mountains  
shadowed perfection

**SIMRAN SURI**

**From Cross to Right**

I carried a cross in my mind  
a cross of endless running.  
Yes, I could not run,  
or perhaps I was simply tired  
of chasing shadows,  
racing to be the master,  
a master for the world.

But the truth cut deep  
I could never be full,  
never quench this thirst.  
There would always be a piece missing,  
a portion left behind for others,  
and my soul would stay hungry.

So I made a choice  
to turn that cross into a right  
not a right for the world,  
but a right for myself.

Now, I wear it proudly in my mind,  
a great shining Right  
not to please the crowd,  
but to claim my own truth,  
to walk my own road,  
and finally...  
to arrive where I belong.

**TAPAN KUMAR PRADHAN****At the Bus Stop**

Eight-thirty! ... still no sign of the bus -  
The driver must be sipping his coffee  
By some roadside *dhaba*, why should he care  
If the passengers suffer? ..... if I suffer?

A quarter-to-nine! Gosh... I wonder whether  
That driver is still having coffee there  
Or gossiping somewhere, maybe now chewing *paan* -  
Or is that *dhaba* owner a breasty woman?

Nine-fifteen! when shall now I reach office?  
Have those drivers all called a sudden strike?  
Lo! Gandhi taught them *hartal* and now  
They are striking everyday - bless Democracy!  
They will pilfer the diesel, then sell the tyres  
And they'll strike now for more salaries!

Nine-thirty now! ..... Bless me Lord!  
Is that bloody driver debauching somewhere?  
Oh I know these drivers and those *dhaba* women -  
Go debauch whole night, who stops you rascal -  
But you will debauch *n-o-w* at nine thirty!!

A quarter-to-ten! .....O my Lord!  
Has that driver met with a crash or what  
Must be drunk with hooch, and dead asleep  
Or maybe the helper was driving, who knows now

Anybody can get a license these days  
By bribing the R.T.O. - the cursed lot!

It's ten! ... Oh no, I'll take a taxi -  
Taxi! ...oye, ahoy! Taxi! Taxi! Taxi!  
Hah...no, why should he listen  
Cursed lot!  
I'll walk to office ....!

Arrey, what! The bus has arrived!  
Ah, at last! Oh, thank you dear dear driver -  
Thanks Lord! I won't have to walk to office  
Slow down, slow down, do not hurry now, dear driver!  
I think there must've been a traffic-jam somewhere -  
The bloody Kolkata traffic these days!!

## **TAYLOR GRAHAM**

### **Merry Bell**

The messenger was a photo on the rescue-  
dog website. She looked nice – no,  
her eyes held me like deep wells in desert.  
Two brown aughts encompassing  
the world. She spent most of her young life  
in a crate. Let her out, she's game  
for anything, appreciating the free-fall  
of an oak leaf, the possibilities  
of two people walking from gate to kennel.

**UZMA HANEEF**

**Ruthless Winter**

O dear Winter! How harsh are you!  
Take lessons from the Spring,  
That lets the lovely birds sing.

Take lessons from the Fall,  
That makes the poor leaves crawl.

Gentle breeze touches the face,  
With the fragrance in the air.

Yellow carpet of the leaves shields the ground,  
With the layer.

So is the gentle Spring, so is the fearless Fall.  
Winter is named a cruel season among all.

Every weather arrives with many restrictions,  
But your length of season is filled with afflictions.



## YUCHENG TAO

### She

She is like Venus –  
a lost harmony of form.  
I long to touch her hair,  
flowing like the ocean.  
I lose myself in her sparkle,  
drawn from the aquamarine blue,  
drawn from the depths of her eyes.  
But I search,  
on and on,  
tracing only the muddy shores  
she leaves behind.

She is the Venus of the sea,  
swaying with the ocean's endless  
rise and fall.  
Her brokenness,  
like shells left behind after a storm,  
is pure and beautiful.

## CONTRIBUTORS

1. **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.
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 and two books of photography. *The Road Unknown* is Andrew Scott's newest collection of poetry and prose.
3. **Avdhesh Jha**, an author, poet, teacher, and observer, and principal at Smt. B.C.J. College of Education, Khambhat, Gujarat. A doctorate in Education with postgraduate degrees in Mathematics and Education, he has over 20 years of experience in academia. Founder and Chief Editor of *Voice of Research* journal, he has published nine books and around 27 research papers, and presented over 25 papers at various academic forums. He has delivered more than 90 invited lectures globally and has been honored with *Charottar Gaurav* and *Bharat Excellence* awards.
4. **Doctor Pessimist's** published works include ABOUT THE DANCE FLOOR, THE CLOCK (Black Petals 2013),

DEMONIC SNAKE (Blood Moon Rising 2013), and THE ABANDONED HOSPITAL (Home Sweet Horror Volume 1 2024). He posts dream stories on his blog, Father of the Demon 2.0. He posts comics and poetry on Pessimist Press.

5. **David R Morgan** is a full-time teacher and author. He lives and works in England UK.
6. **DESMOND Francis Xavier KON Zhicheng-Mingdé** (b. 1971) has authored nineteen books, spanning poetry, fiction, memoir, and experimental writing. His newest work is *Heart Fiat*, a collection of Catholic poems. The former journalist has edited over twenty-five books, several pro bono for non-profit organizations. Among other accolades, Desmond is the recipient of the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Award, Nautilus Book Award, Singapore Literature Prize, two National Indie Excellence Awards, three Illumination Christian Book Awards, three Independent Publisher Book Awards, five Living Now Book Awards, and eight Catholic Media Association Book Awards. He has taught writing for over two decades, and is on the creative writing faculty at Nanyang Technological University.
7. **DJ Tyrer** is the person behind *Atlantean Publishing*, editor of *View From Atlantis* and the *5-7-5 Haiku Journal* webzines, and has been published in issues of *Genre: Urban Arts*, *Haiku Journal*, *Lothlorien Journal*, *Poetry Quarterly*, and *Tigershark*, and online at *A New Ulster*, *Enchanted Conversation*, *Library Love Letter*, *Morphrog*, *Plato's Caves* and *Poetry Pacific*. The e-chapbook *One Vision* is available from Tigershark Publishing's website. DJ Tyrer's website is at <https://djtyrer.blogspot.co.uk/>
8. **Elisabeth Frischauf**, born in New York City in 1947 has a long career as a neuro-psychiatrist, artist, and poet with two English/German bilingual full-length verse memoirs available from the Theodor Kramer Verlag in Vienna, Austria, with the third volume of the trilogy due in Spring 2026. Two more manuscripts are in circulation. She

publishes regularly in on-line venues. A grandmother, she lives on a small plot of land north of New York City.

9. **Fabiyas M V** is a writer from Orumanayur village in Kerala, India, and the author of several poetry collections, including *Monsoon Turbulence*, *Being Human*, and *Eternal Fragments*. His works have appeared in numerous international journals and anthologies. Fabiyas has received several awards, including the Merseyside at War Poetry Award (Liverpool University), the Lest We Forget Poetry Prize (Auckland War Memorial Museum), and the RSPCA Animal Poetry Prize (UK). A Pushcart Prize nominee and finalist for the Global Poetry Prize 2015, his poems have also been broadcast by All India Radio. He teaches English.
10. **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](http://www.garycbeck.com)
11. **Geetanshi Buttan** is an Assistant Professor in English, a writer, and a poet from Bhopal, India. Her work often blends confessional honesty with philosophical reflections on love, identity, and memory.
12. **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.

13. **Gordon Scapens**, widely published in various countries over many years in numerous magazines, journals, anthologies, newspapers and competitions, most recently first prize in the Brian Nisbet poetry award. His latest book is 'History Doesn't Die'.
14. **Irena Jovanović** was born in Zaječar, Serbia, in 1971, where she lives and creates as a Master of Arts and Ceramics Design with 20 solo art exhibitions, writing poetry in Serbian and English. She also writes in Serbian, and has created a Poetesses Club "Blade of Grass" in her hometown and leads it. She has also founded a regional branch of the Association of Writers in the Homeland and Diaspora in her hometown, and is Editor-in-Chief for all printed their editions. She is widely represented in many domestic and regional magazines, anthologies, and blogs with poetry in Serbian, and has several poetry books in preparation.
15. **Ivan Pozzoni** (Monza, 1976) is an Italian poet, essayist, and theorist. Between 2007 and 2024, he published numerous works, including *Underground*, *Riserva Indiana*, *Versi Introversi*, *Mostri*, *Galata morente*, *Carmina non dant damen*, *Lame da rasoio*, *Il Guastatore*, *Patroclo non deve morire*, and *Kolektivne NSEAE*. Author of over 150 books and 1,000 essays, he founded the avant-garde movement *NéoN-avant-gardisme*, endorsed by Zygmunt Bauman. His poetry has been translated into 25 languages. After six years of academic retreat, he returned to the Italian artistic scene in 2024, reviving the *NSEAE Kolektivne* (New socio/ethno/aesthetic anthropology) – [kolektivnenseae.wordpress.com](http://kolektivnenseae.wordpress.com)
16. **Johanna N** is an aspiring writer with a lifelong passion for expressing herself through words and creativity. At twenty-two, Dutch is her first language, though she has a particular

affinity for English poetry. Always on the move, she finds inspiration in the smallest details of everyday life. Simply put, she is a twenty-something learning through trial and error, embracing the journey of writing with curiosity, honesty, and an open heart.

17. **John Grey** is an Australian poet, US resident, recently published in *New World Writing*, *North Dakota Quarterly* and *Tenth Muse*. Latest books, “Between Two Fires”, “Covert” and “Memory Outside the Head” are available through Amazon. Work upcoming in *Haight-Ashbury Literary Journal*, *Amazing Stories* and *River and South*.
18. **John Zedolik** is an adjunct English professor at Chatham University and Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His poems have appeared in journals including *Abbey*, *The Bangalore Review*, *Commonweal*, *Poem*, and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. He has published five collections: *Salient Points and Sharp Angles* (2019), *When the Spirit Moves Me* (2021), *Mother Mourning* (2023), *The Ramifications* (2024), and *Lovers’ Progress*. Zedolik often uses his iPhone as a poetry notebook, embracing technology to craft his work.
19. **K.V. Raghupathi**, a former academic, poet, short story writer, novelist, critic, columnist, and book reviewer, writes in English despite speaking Telugu as his first language. Widely published and anthologized both in online and print journals in India and abroad. He has so far published fourteen collections of poetry, three novels, and two short story collections. His third collection of stories, *Summer Death* is in the pipeline. He regularly writes to the Speaking Tree columns of Indian National English dailies, *The Times of India* and *The Economic Times*. He is a recipient of several national awards for his creativity. He lives in Tirupati (India) and is actively engaged in writing. He can be reached at [drkvraghupathi9@gmail.com](mailto:drkvraghupathi9@gmail.com)

20. **Kavya Bisen**, an 18-year-old poet from India, writes with a youthful voice and a deep love for words.
21. **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.
22. **Kumar Kaushik Ranjan** is a mechanical engineer (B. Tech, Dr. B.C. Roy Engineering College; M. Tech, PhD, IIT-BHU) and a poet whose work bridges logic and lyricism. He has taught for over a decade, including under India's TEQIP-III program and currently as Senior Assistant Professor at Tolani Maritime Institute, Pune. His poetry explores time, love, technology, and existential absurdity, blending philosophical depth with sharp social satire. Outside teaching and writing, he examines the mechanics of longing and the algorithms of grief.
23. **Les Wicks'** 15<sup>th</sup> book of poetry is *Time Taken – New & Selected* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2024). For over 50 years Les has been active in the Australian literary community. He has been a guest at most of his nation's literary festivals alongside a substantial list of international ones. 2024 Boao International Lifetime Achievement Award, 2025 Silk Road Oceanian Poet of the Year. Publication has been seen in over 500 different newspapers, anthologies and magazines across 39 countries in 18 languages. Has conducted workshops around Australia, edited various projects over the decades, latest being *Class* (2024) & runs Meuse Press which focuses on poetry outreach projects like poetry on buses & poetry published on the surface of a river.



24. **Madhura Donode** is an aspiring poet with a deep passion for capturing emotions and reflections through her writing. Though not a professional writer, she strives to create work that resonates with readers and would be honoured to have her poetry featured in esteemed publications.
25. **Maithili Nagarekar** is a management graduate with a deep passion for literature and the arts. She has authored several poems and also works as a financial advisor.
26. **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 7 Best of the Net nominations. He has over 653 published poems. His 336-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.*”
27. **Michael Mirolla** is the author of more than two dozen novels, plays, film scripts, and collections of short stories and poetry. His novella *The Last News Vendor* won the 2020 Hamilton Literary Award, and he has received three Bressani Prizes for *Berlin*, *The House on 14th Avenue*, and *Lessons in Relationship Dyads*. His recent works include *At the End of the World* and *Becker’s Universe & Other Stories* (2024). Mirolla has held several international residencies and serves as publisher and editor-in-chief of Guernica Editions. Born in Italy and raised in Montreal, he now lives near Gananoque, Ontario.
28. **Mohit Saini** is a poet, writer, and researcher, serving as an Assistant Professor at Compucom Institute of Technology & Management, Jaipur. With eight years of experience in language and linguistics, he specializes in literature, second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, multilingual



education, and language policy in higher education. He holds a B.Ed., an MBA, and an M.A. in English from the University of Rajasthan. An author of published poetry, he also reviews research papers and serves as Editor for the *Journal of Advances in English, Telugu and Indian Languages* (AQIE Publication) and the *International Journal of Language, Linguistics, Literature and Culture*.

29. **Lalit Navani** worked for 14 years as a web developer, production controller, and documentation manager at Mr. Gurdas Maan's media and film production house. Since 2018, he has been freelancing in web development and content writing. A Textile Technologist and Chemist with a Diploma in Web Development, Lalit writes blogs, articles, product descriptions, social media taglines, whitepapers, and press releases for digital marketing and e-commerce companies. He is also a published author and accomplished script/screenplay writer with several non-commissioned works. He resides in Andheri West, Mumbai, with his family.
30. **Natalie Jo-Anne Diengdoh** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Fashion Communication at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Shillong. She is engaged in teaching, research, and academic initiatives in the field of fashion communication, contributing to the development of creative and professional skills among her students.
31. **Nels Hanson** grew up on a small farm in the San Joaquin Valley of California and has worked as a farmer, teacher, and writer/editor. His fiction received the James D. Phelan Award from the San Francisco Foundation and his poetry the Prospero Prize from Sharkpack Review.
32. **Nick Cooke** has had around 75 poems published or accepted, in a variety of outlets including Acumen, Agenda, Ink Sweat & Tears, the High Window Journal and Dream Catcher, along with around 35 poetry reviews and literary

articles. In 2016 his poem 'Tanis' won a Wax Poetry and Art competition.

33. **Rakesh Bhartiya**, born on 28 July 1954 in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh, India, is a writer and former civil servant. After graduating in Electrical Engineering, he briefly worked in the banking sector before joining the Indian Civil Services, retiring as Joint Secretary. He later served as an adviser to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights for three years. Bhartiya is now a full-time writer with eighteen published books in English and Hindi, including short story collections, novels, poetry, travelogues, and essays on social, cultural, and spiritual topics. He also co-edited the literary quarterly Pashyanti for three years. He resides in New Delhi.
34. **Rangeet Mitra** is an environmentalist, sustainability practitioner, and Bengali poet working at the intersection of science, social justice, and community empowerment. With over a decade of experience in water governance, climate resilience, and nature-based solutions, he contributes widely to India's WASH and climate-development sector. A published poet since 2002, he uses literature to explore identity, memory, and resistance while advocating for equity, sustainability, and inclusive futures.
35. **Roger G. Singer**, Poet Laureate Emeritus, Connecticut Coalition of Poets Laureate.
36. **Simran Suri** is a 20-year-old writer from Mohali, India. With a keen interest in creative expression and storytelling, she brings a youthful perspective and emotional depth to her work. Her writing reflects an exploration of identity, emotion, and the subtle beauty found in everyday moments.
37. **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.

38. **Taylor Graham** is a volunteer search-and-rescue dog handler in the California Sierra Nevada and served as her county's first poet laureate (2016-2018). She's included in the anthologies *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Santa Clara University), *California Fire & Water: A Climate Crisis Anthology*, and *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library). Her latest books are *Windows of Time and Place* (Cold River Press.) and *Walking the Bones* (Hot Pepper Press).
39. **Uzma Haneef** is a teacher, digital marketer, and a published writer. She is from J&K, India. She completed her schooling from Fayaz Educational Institute and SSM Higher Secondary, Srinagar, and later pursued her BCA and MBA from Iqbal Institute of Technology and Management. Beyond her professional pursuits, she loves traveling and watching movies.
40. **Yucheng Tao** is an international student from China, currently studying songwriting in Los Angeles. His work has been featured in Wild Court (UK), The Lake (UK), Red Ogre Review (UK), Cathexis Northwest Press, and NonBinary Review (which includes an interview). His poems have passed into the semifinalist round of the Winds of Asia Award by Kinsman Quarterly, and many poems and fiction have been published in Yellow Mama, Apocalypse Confidential, Waymark Literary Magazine, Ink Nest, The Arcanist, Synchronized Chaos, Down in the Dirt, Academy of the Heart and Mind, and others.

# GJPP



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