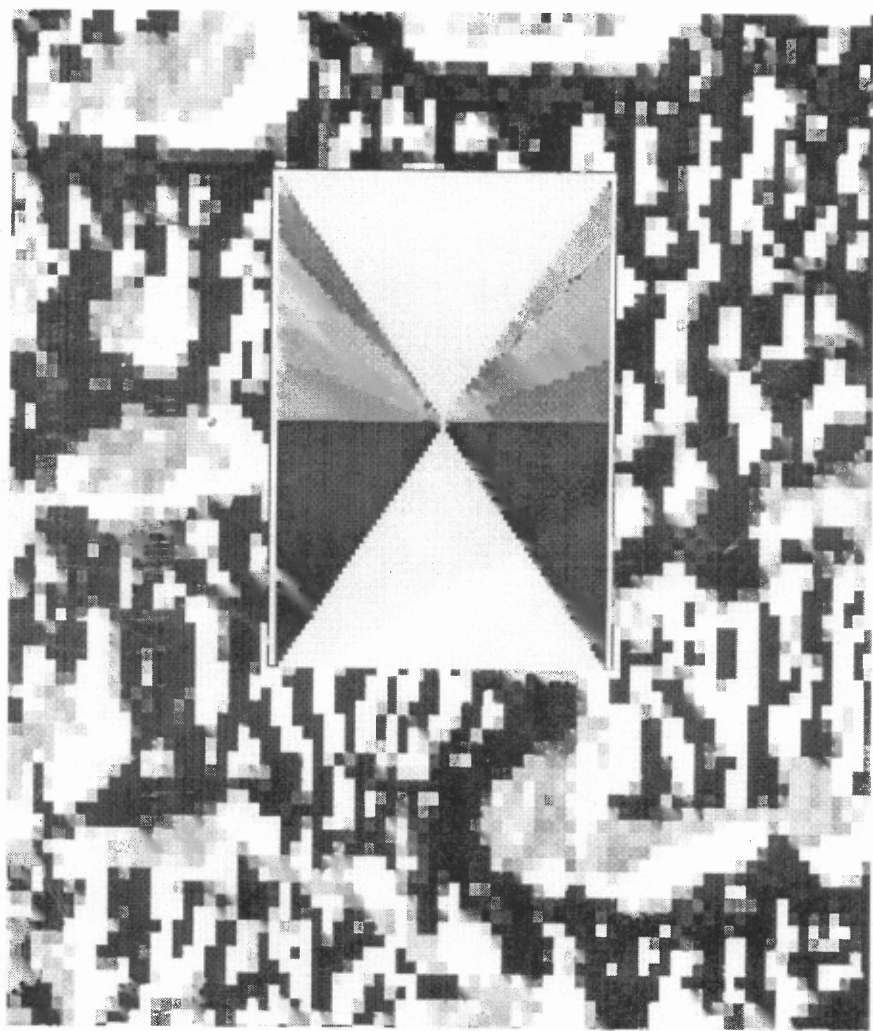


# Kavithalaya<sup>2002</sup>

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# DEVINA VADERA

## **So afraid of dominance**

afraid of pain  
afraid of the wrong  
afraid of falling leaves  
Just breathe.

---

## **Great giants**

reaching out for the soft mist...  
To conceal themselves  
From the evil myths of the world.

---

## **Dirt....**

close your eyes  
Expose it...  
they'll laugh  
Escape from it...  
they'll follow  
Hide...  
they'll seek

---

## **I wanted to get away**

Away from the...  
Worthless,  
Insignificant,  
Minorities of the old world...  
Reach new dimensions  
With a few rupees and tobacco in my hand,  
My guard up  
And my soft tears hiding in my pocket.

---

## **The shade protected me**

From the scorching guilt  
You tried to reflect on me...  
You failed,  
I laugh in your face,  
But inside your smile stabs  
The inner core of my heart  
Leaving me with blood stains on my floor.

# DEVINA VADERA

**The twisted pattern of the eucy trees**

Made me dizzy

I fall on my back

and am eaten by worthless yellow bugs.

---

**Huge words flashed in my face**

As you tried to explain

Where you had been

I fell apart as building blocks

And was trampled by big yellow dogs.

---

**I fell energy in my soul.**

It longs for you

Silence...

No response...Suddenly

through your mouth...

I try to talk back, But a

sick

twisted

feeling makes me turn away

and run...

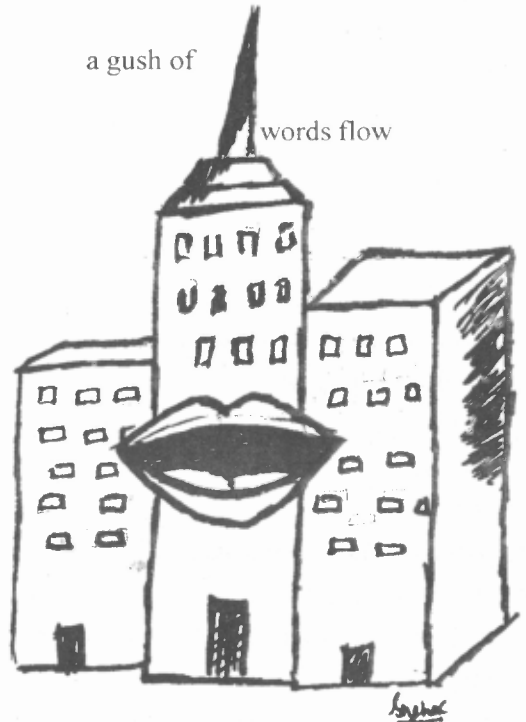
Miles and miles into the perimeter,  
the city skyscrapers slowly becoming  
a nightmare of the past...

I need the future to come by fast.



a gush of

words flow



### Just You and Me, How Freely We Sail!

Together we sail through the neverending ocean,  
Travelling, attempting to cross the horizon  
On a voyage which we'll never complete

We encounter islands every minute:  
Orville, Rushdie or maybe Arthur Miller.  
Some feel sad some feel romantic others make us feel some bliss.

On the islands, we find caves.  
They provide us with insights of the great writers' ideas.  
They are no other than their fascinating minds.

Often, we cross overflowing volcanoes;  
Cauldrons of ideas, which seem neverending.  
The overflowing minds of the most imaginative writers.

Intoxicated we are by these scenes we will never find in our own world.  
This voyage seems to take forever.  
Just you and me how freely we sail!

### Aliens On Earth

How minute you seem,  
So far away; so many light years away.  
Over there in the Milky Way.  
We are telling you what we think.  
"We are what you call Aliens"

**SIMMER**

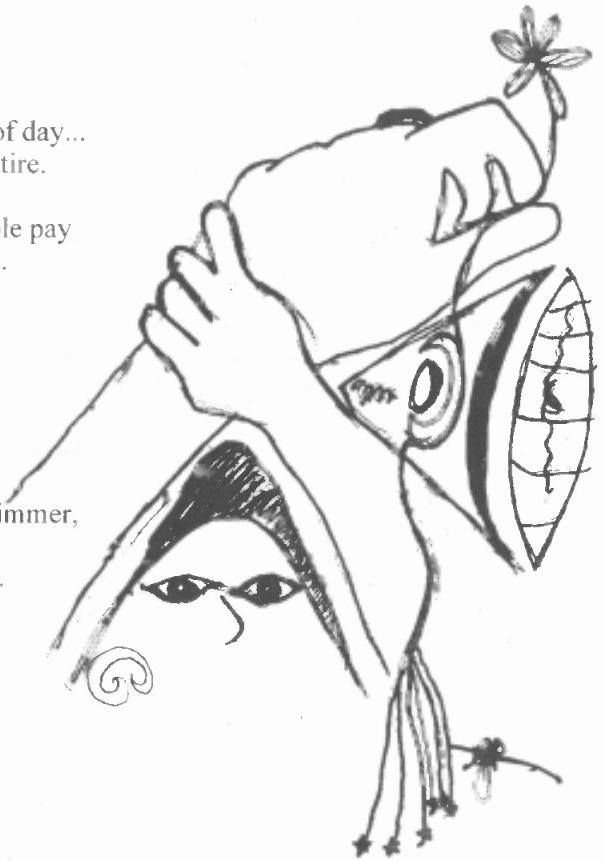
a slip of the wrist, exists, betwixt  
interruptions of the calm cool parodies of day...  
nevermind the frogs' song, i will be a satire.  
a ripped vocal chord; it insists  
to be included with balms ignorant people pay  
to have administered to their sorry attire.

stoicism waxes eloquent with a sunset.  
can it be so borrowed an  
emotion so as to dull pure inspiration?  
images, once forgotten, help set  
transient hands, and  
minds resting from life-long visitations.

the lake has grown dimmer; does not shimmer,  
the human lake is made of sterner stuff  
thought it is water that makes is simmer.

**FLOAT**

never you mind  
hollow ground will recover  
follow bones back to the  
bed. ready to convey  
messages, but she's not  
in, i'll take her dues for her.  
switches off and turned away  
for good measure. coma back into  
the fold and play till your eyes  
feel cold, medicine'll take my  
nerves away. yes i suffer from  
grating head aches so bad,  
i've got one hell of a verve:  
to come out here and call you out  
to go alone and to go without  
pull your p(a)unches in time with the  
man who tells you you've already lost  
alright so far, but what freedom,  
what cost  
makes it right?  
i've been had after all.



FARDEEN C.

## SPRAY THE OCEAN, SPARE THE KID

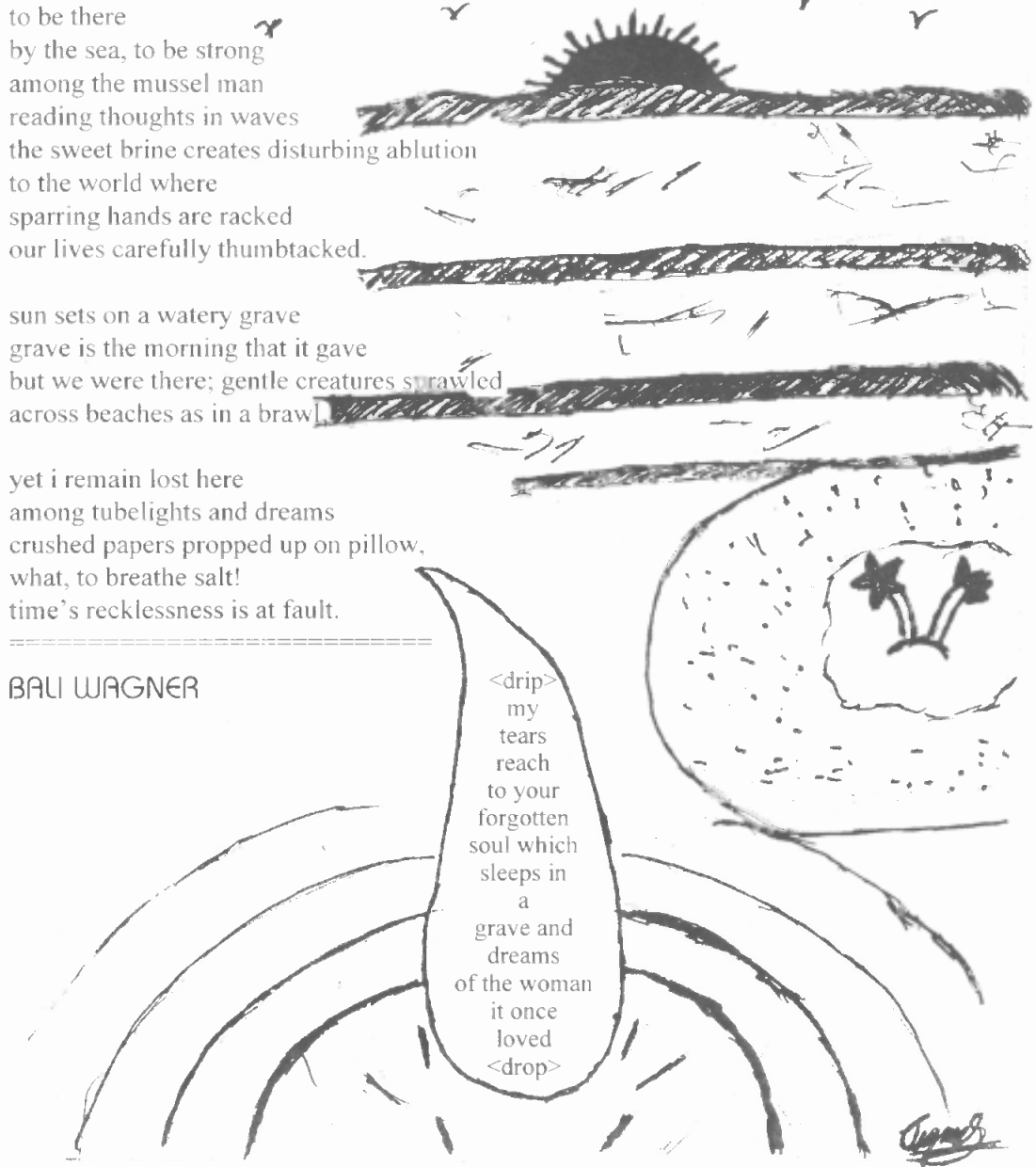
to be there  
by the sea, to be strong  
among the mussel man  
reading thoughts in waves  
the sweet brine creates disturbing ablution  
to the world where  
sparring hands are racked  
our lives carefully thumbtacked.

sun sets on a watery grave  
grave is the morning that it gave  
but we were there; gentle creatures sprawled  
across beaches as in a brawl

yet i remain lost here  
among tubelights and dreams  
crushed papers propped up on pillow,  
what, to breathe salt!  
time's recklessness is at fault.

=====

BALI WAGNER



<drip>  
my  
tears  
reach  
to your  
forgotten  
soul which  
sleeps in  
a  
grave and  
dreams  
of the woman  
it once  
loved  
<drop>

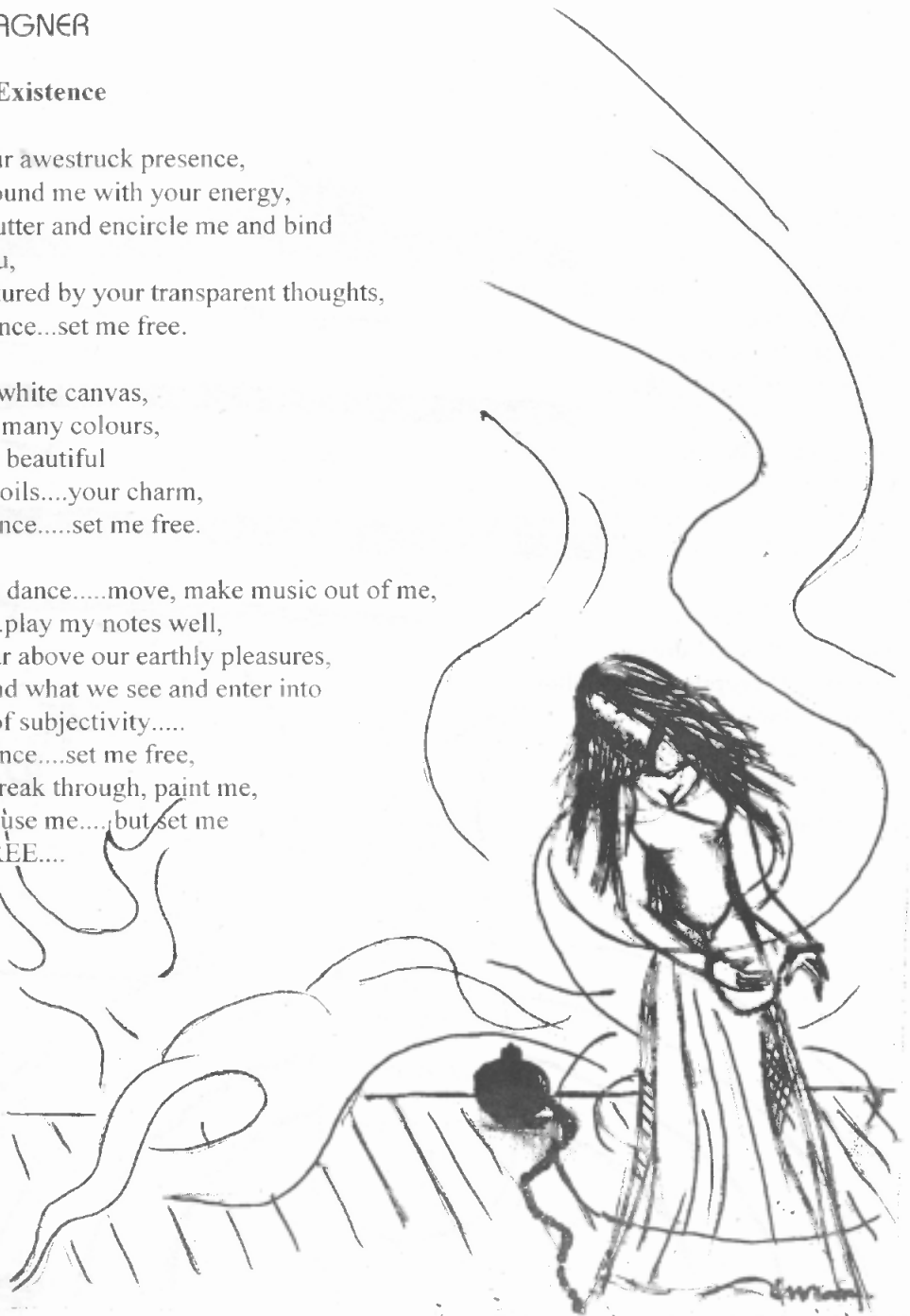
BALI WAGNER

## Ode To Existence

I feel your awestruck presence,  
you surround me with your energy,  
as you flutter and encircle me and bind  
me to you,  
I am captured by your transparent thoughts,  
on existence...set me free.

I am the white canvas,  
paint me many colours,  
make me beautiful  
use your oils....your charm,  
oh existence.....set me free.

make me dance.....move, make music out of me,  
use me....play my notes well,  
let us soar above our earthly pleasures,  
fly beyond what we see and enter into  
a world of subjectivity.....  
oh existence....set me free,  
Let me break through, paint me,  
sing me/ use me.... but set me  
FREE....



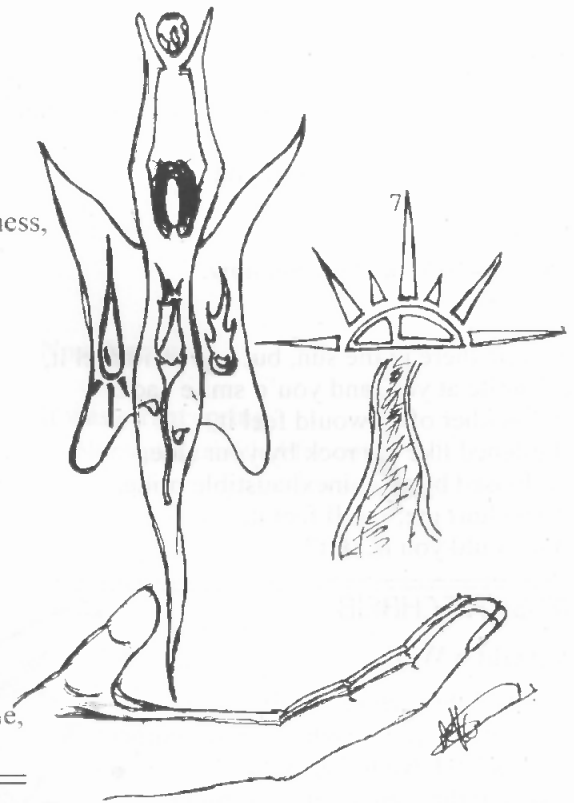
# BALE WAGNER

## Sati

She is guilty of all,  
the mother of all, the earth,  
the giver of the givers,  
as her grand ego disperses into human madness,  
she never lets go-never relaxes,  
always full in control,  
she is Sati.

The immense yearning for power,  
the extreme pleasure in endless dancing,  
the motionless hours of meditation,  
the discrete laughter,  
the powerful presence  
it is her....she is Sati.

She is the Leo,  
she is the beautiful flower that we pluck,  
she is the sweet water flowing,  
she is the clear crystal with so many cracks,  
she is the mystic rose with the sweet perfume,  
she is Sati....Sati my mother.



---

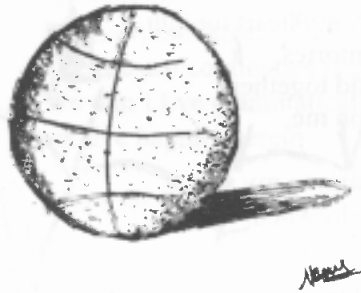
## NAMITA S.

### B'ball

The echoing thump of energy on asphalt  
Potential air-filled universe  
Defies the law of gravity,  
Fulfills it,  
A world in a few feet,  
A sphere of dreams,  
A chance,  
A goal,  
A game

\*\*\*\*\*

If could take a picture of this moment,  
And catch this millisecond of our relationship  
Would it develop?  
Or would it remain a negative?

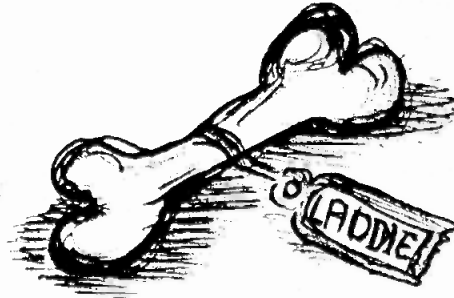




## PAUL LOVE

### Laddie

My dog ran away on New Year's Eve.  
We scoured the streets,  
Called and recalled his name...  
"Laddie!... Laddie!"  
For answer, at one street turning,  
An old impoverished cat  
Flashed double amber caution signals  
As if to tell us "Go home  
And mind your own business".



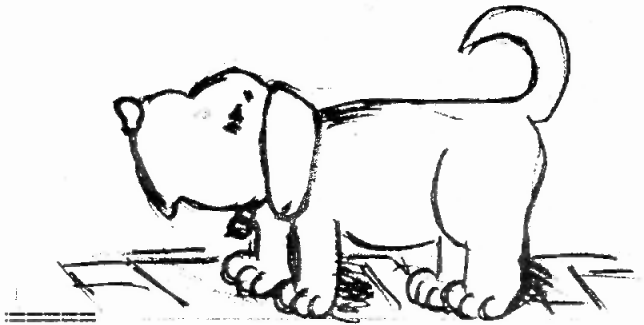
On, on we struggled  
Twelve o'clock, midnight. New Year!  
But nothing new.

Two o'clock. Old-Year at heart,  
Homeward we dragged ourselves  
For fitful sleep.

Next morning on the verandah,  
There lay Laddie:  
Fur dishevelled, eyes blood-shot,  
Filthy, but lovable still,  
Stub-tail wearily wagging,  
Rolling up bleary eyes at us  
Which begged, "Don't scold me".

And I wondered:  
Where was he when the clock struck twelve?  
How did he celebrate?  
Was he carousing with the boys  
Down some dark alley  
Smirking and chortling  
As he heard us calling him?  
Or did he see the New Year in  
With some choice canine mistress,  
Special for the festive day?

We'll never know  
For Laddie, like all good dogs,  
Kept his confidences.



K. MANIKANDA BOOPATHY

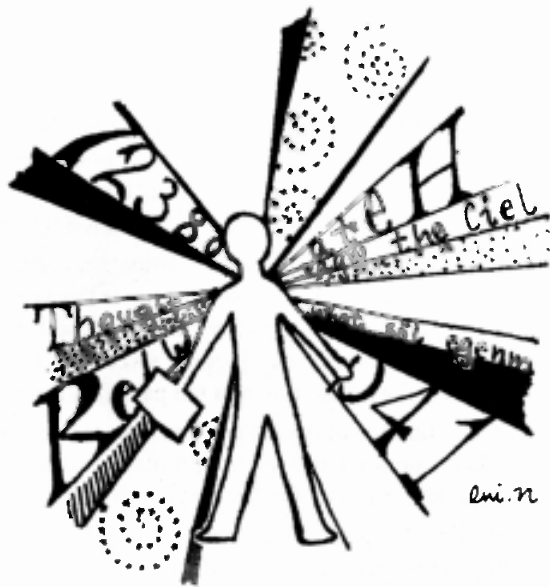
### Life is Poetry

Life is poetry; interpret it.

Most people say  
Life is a Mystery.  
Many say  
Life is a failure.

Some say  
Life is filled with troubling sentiments.  
A few say  
Life is but 'no peace'.

They are cowards  
'Cause  
They don't take life as it is.  
Only a handful trust.  
Life is poetry: interpret it.



---

M. MOOVENDHAN

### An Identity Crisis

I entered a garden  
With my curious friends,  
My heart was lightened,  
On seeing the flowers  
One of my friends  
Quickly started plucking them  
To make a grand bouquet.

The instinct of imitation  
Spread like a forest fire.  
My best friend, beside me then,  
Fell to temptation  
But she plucked them for  
A different goal: to keep them safe  
In her book.  
She handed me the wounded blossoms  
One by one in my sinful palms.  
My heart felt a hammer blow  
With each plundered gift.  
Finally when the massacre ended  
The garden had lost its identity.



## On A Visit

The path on which I toddled to school with a pink book-trunk had two stretches cut by a main road. One stretch was narrow with one side compounded by the wall of a yellow Catholic church whose tower all in the town could see and whose bells every one could hear from their homes. On the other side, there was a patch of an open toilet and bundled up huts, and at the end were lined-up butcher shops. Bones and street dogs were all around. The smell was a permanent part of my school-going ordeal.

The other stretch towards my destination came after I crossed the main-road, looking at neither side. On this stretch there were match factories that were little bigger than mines, and in them children in large numbers were working. After this came the first of my two favourite stop-points. One was the bunk-shop where I bought my jaggery sweets or gooseberries, which I packed in my trunk and ate through the day. Two handfuls cost ten paise, half my day's pocket money.

At the entrance of my school was the old woman eternally clad in a white saree. With one of her legs stretched, she fried and sold sweet little "bondas". Each one cost the mammoth sum of two paise. But she liked me, I guess: for three paise she gave me five.

My school began with an assembly of all the students. The option to escape standing in the sun was to attend the prayer at the church that stood as one entered the school. Having gone late, I invariably ended up attending the prayer to avoid getting punished. And invariably I was kneeling down throughout the prayer time.

I rode again through this path on a visit recently. The Catholic church remained the same but looked a little small. The open toilet area had become more organised with some kind of disinfectant sprayed over it. A covered toilet at one end of the patch remained closed with thorny bushes. The huts have become square blocks of concrete. The aging butchers were competing against broiler-chicken stalls. The bones, for a moment, became unfamiliar with the feathery stench.

The bunk shop had vanished. Its owner, 'Maap jahn anna' whose name I later understood to be Meh-a-boob jahren, appeared in my blurring vision. As expected, the old lady was not there, but the smell of my favourite bondas lingered on within that area of 4 square feet. The walls of the school had faded though they bore a fresh yellow distemper on them.

Some of my teachers had a frail remembrance of me and my pranks. I heard graying stories of death when I enquired about a few teachers whom I didn't see. The church remained the same and I saw the prayer-songs in white. There was a small shrine of Mother Mary in the front, which I remembered only after seeing it again. I didn't have to kneel down this time. I felt heavy.

With ashening cigarette between my fingers, I rode back. The match factories seemed to have escaped the travails of time. Small, young children were getting in and out of the buses that belonged to the factories.

At a butcher's shop, I stopped. He remembered me with I mentioned my father's name. There was a glass of tea that had come for him. He took it from the butchering plank and compelled me to drink. I was happy and drank the tea listening to his talk about the general state of affairs in town. When I gave back the glass, some fat was sticking to my fingers. I didn't wash my fingers. The smell was familiar. Lounging at my home thinking about the visit, I heard the clock strike twelve. I was reminded of the church bell. But I didn't hear it ringing.

K.S. FATHIMA NAZREEN SEEMA

### A Gift on Valentine's Day

Let me kiss your forehead  
Where the sweat sweet is being shed  
By honest hard work to hold my hand.

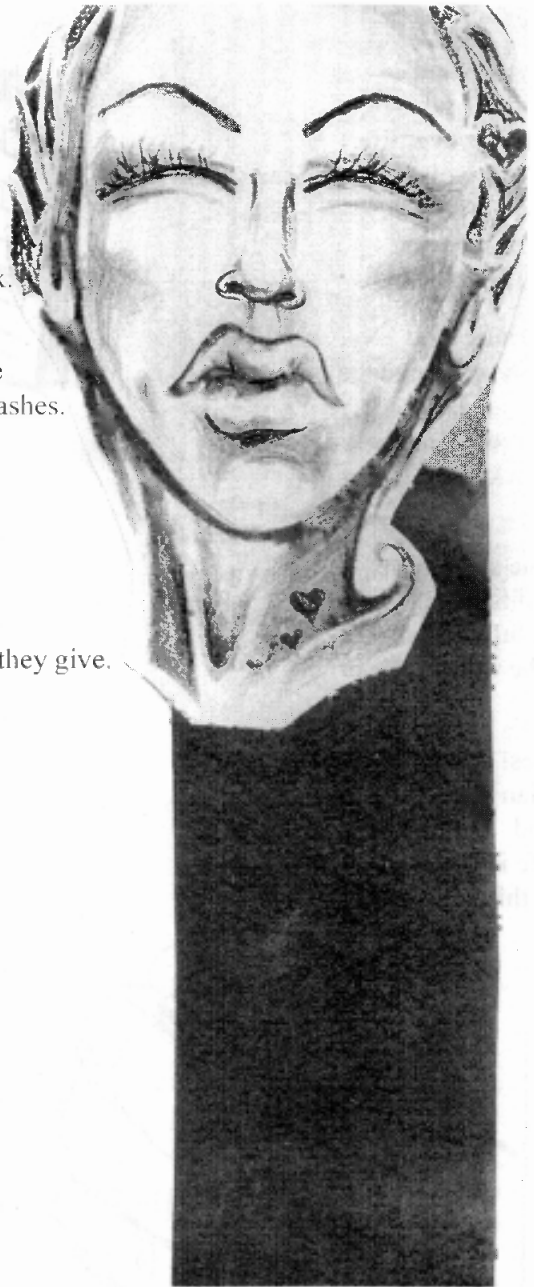
Let me kiss your nose  
That creates a tempest in me with great force  
By blowing your warm breath around my neck.

Let me kiss your eyes  
That have the power and patience to hypnotise  
Me soul and enslave it behind the bars of eyelashes.

Let me kiss your cheeks  
That have grown soft black grass for weeks  
That my tender lips will not get hurt.

Let me kiss your lips  
For the beat of my heart often skips  
By uttering concerned words and the rewards they give.

Let me give my kisses as my gift  
For, except his Love, I have got nothing left  
For the wonderful person whom I trust.



J. PRIYA CAROL

### Life ... Man

Pen in hand  
Alone I sat  
Musing over life,  
Musing over man! Is man good?  
Is life fine?  
Is death near?  
Is life so dear?

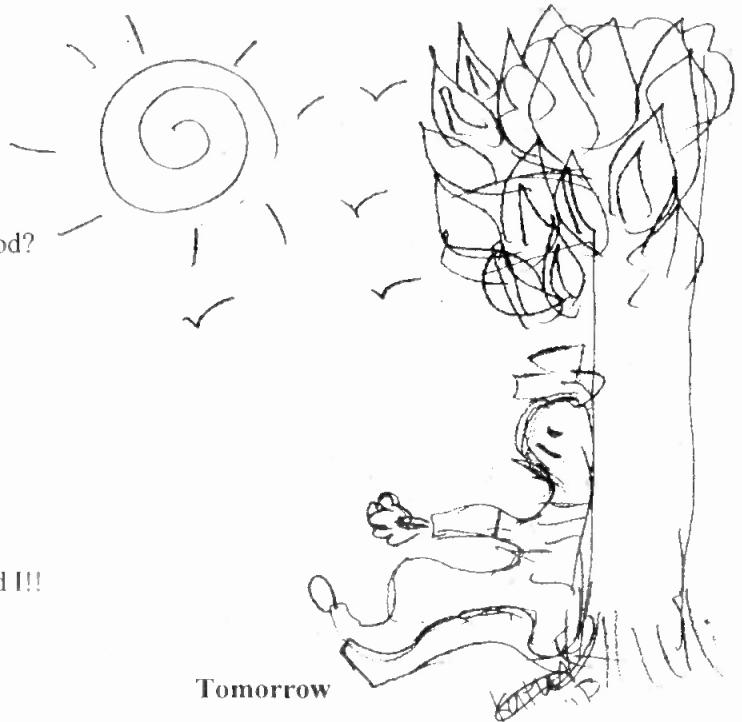
A rainy day:  
Nature's language  
At its play,  
Screeching, humming.  
Crickets chirped,

And so did I !!

The sun returns  
All is calm  
A full loud silence.  
the world feels bright,

And so do I !!

Yes! After all  
Man is good  
and  
life is fine  
If this is life and if this is man!!!

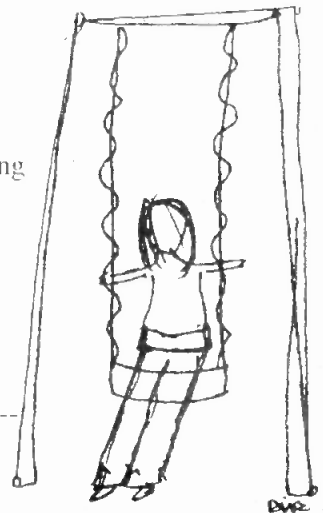


### Tomorrow

yesterday on the road  
pushed hard  
I fell back  
eyes closed tight  
I cried  
fist clenched hard  
I curse.

Today, on the swing  
pushed hard  
I came back  
eyes wide open  
I laughed  
fist stretched out  
I clapped  
Tomorrow, on the--

Are you ready?  
I am!!



J. PRIYA CAROL

### Life is Poetry

Life is poetry : interpret it.

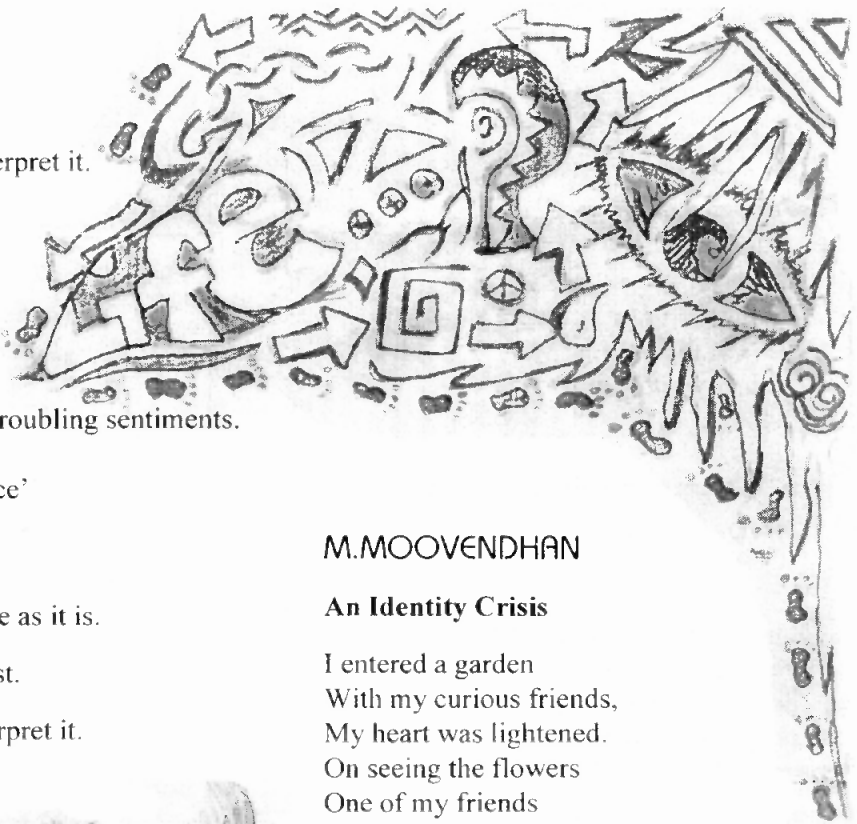
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M.MOOVENDHAN

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My heart was lightened.  
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One of my friends  
Quickly started plucking them  
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Spread like a forest fire.  
My best friend, beside me then,  
Fell to temptation.  
But she plucked them for  
A different goal: to keep them safe  
In her book.  
She handed me the wounded blossoms  
One by one in my sinful palms.  
My heart felt a hammer blow  
With each plundered gift.  
Finally when the massacre ended  
The garden had lost its identity.

Six Untitled Bits

I  
Dried raisins  
    Will survive  
    The test of time.  
Fresh grapes cannot.

---

II  
God is here  
    Not on his own;  
He needs you  
    To make the picture complete

---

III  
Mondays are condolence days  
    For those who pass away  
On Saturdays and Sundays

---



IV  
A policeman can stop me  
    For I don't have a  
license to drive.  
Critics cannot.

---

V  
The boy sang  
    'Rain, rain, go away',  
His mom waiting for metro  
water.

---

VI  
Summers and Winters,  
Days and Nights  
    All juxtaposed like  
You and me.

T. SUGIRTHA

### My Space

Is my house such a lovely place?

A pleasant one, or a comfortable one?

Or perhaps a divine solace?

I don't know.

But I find people calling on me there

During summers and winters:

Some with their ailments,

I am not a doctor.

Some in their crises,

I am not a counsellor.

Some with gifts of love,

Some just to say, "Hello".

A few move away

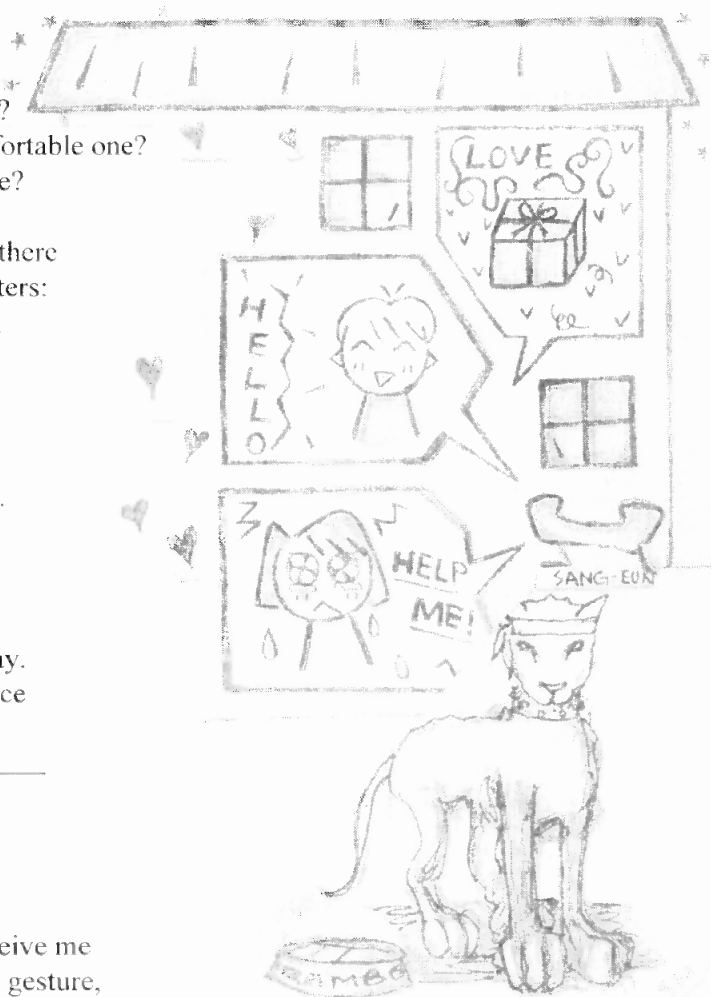
Like the dried hay.

Some return again

Like the fly you shoo away.

Others cling on to the space

Add claim it's theirs.



M. ANGELINE FERNANDO

### Rambo

There you are, ever ready to receive me

With a joyful word and a loving gesture,

Thought it's the same word and gesture

Every time.

Each day it conveys a million messages.

Nothing gives me more pleasure

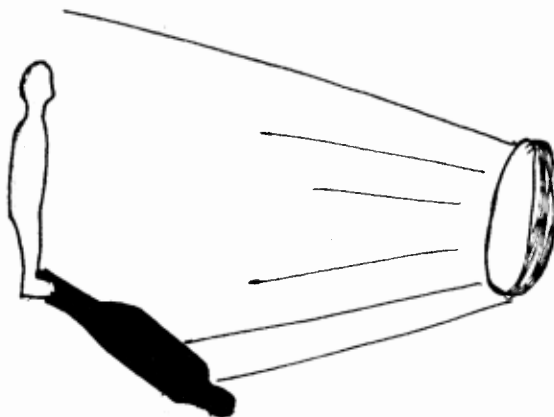
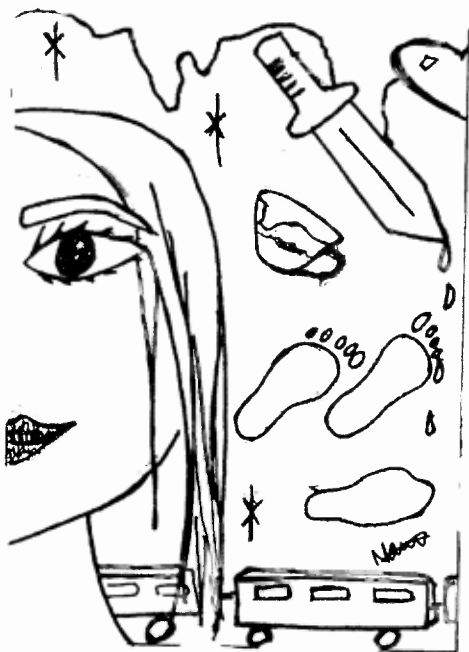
Than your BARK and the WAG of your tail.



M. ANGELINE FERNANDO

### Quest

Alone, afraid and apprehensive  
In a new place among new faces  
Strange, yet familiar.  
Exhilarated and exhausted  
I go on,  
Waiting and watching  
To be recognized or neglected,  
To be identified  
For what really I am.  
Striving and seeking  
To reach my goal  
To be victorious or vanquished  
To be identified  
For what really I am.  
Taking one step at a time  
I go on...



RAVINDRAN SOLOMON

### Lust

Steps by the river,  
Dainty wet footprints  
The lingering smell  
Of soap on naked skin.

### Laughter

A hesitant smile  
While his friends guffaw.  
The worried old man  
Awaiting new dentures.

### Anger

The china cup lies,  
Broken, on the floor,  
A million shards  
Of scattered love.

### Murder

The broken body  
Lies under the bridge.  
The slithering train  
Long gone with a hoot.

N. POOVAUNGAM

(Translated from the Tamil of Sudhrathari, “Anehamai Avan”)

**Probably He**

He  
Who filled this earth with colours  
Is most probably blind

He  
Who rendered the air musical  
Is most probably deaf

He  
Who made eloquent words of the supreme silence  
Is most probably dumb

He  
Who painted the directions into  
Enticing distance and unscaled peaks  
Is most probably lame

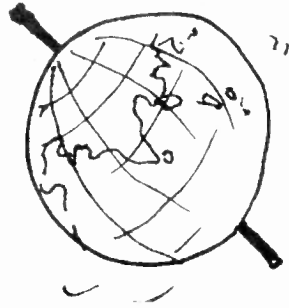
He  
Who decreed with impartiality  
The impermanence of births  
And  
The discontent of existence  
Is most probably  
Complete.

### So Sound A Sleep

On my way to Church,  
I couldn't stop wondering  
At a dog, big and brown,  
Sleeping at peace, perfectly still,  
In the middle of the bustling highway.

Could I ever sleep  
So very sound, sans any disturbance?  
If only I could sleep in peace!  
'If only ! If only' I told myself.

Lost in my own sweet thoughts  
While returning home,  
Little did I realize, on seeing the  
Corporation van  
That Death, being very considerate,  
Had taken with him the dog.



### Poles Apart are We!

He fair, I dark,  
Poles apart are we!  
He tall, I short,  
Poles apart are we!

He slim, I fat,  
Poles apart are we!  
He rich, I poor,  
Poles apart are we!

He mediocre, I genius  
Poles apart are we!

He iconoclast, I conventional,  
Poles apart are we!

He agnostic, I spiritual  
Poles apart are we!

He idealist, I practical  
Poles apart are we!

Poles apart we may be,  
Yet we do live in harmony,  
Remembering the promises  
of love  
We did make  
On the day of our matrimony.

## S. JOHN BRITTO

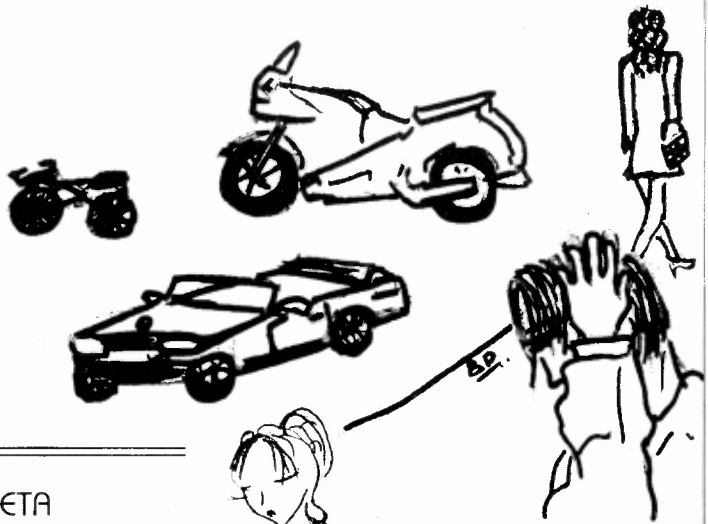
### For a Ride

On a cycle I pedalled,  
"Hi" said she.

On a bike I sped,  
"Hello" said she.

In a car I drove,  
"Darling" said she.

"They're not mine" I said,  
"Good Bye" said she.



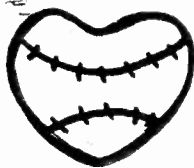
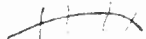
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## C. CANDACE JESSIN GRACETA

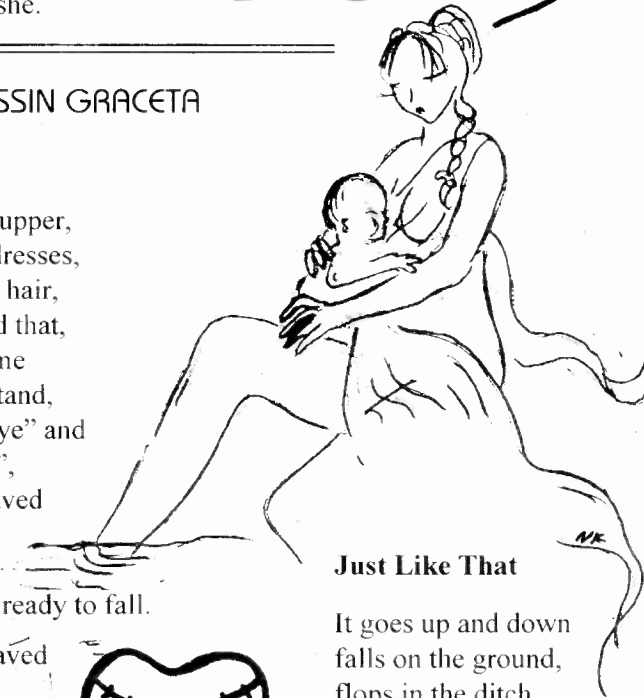
### Ma

she served made supper,  
ironed my dresses,  
plaited my hair,  
She talked this and that,  
came with me  
to the bus-stand,  
She said "Good Bye" and  
"Take Care",  
she smiled and waved  
her hands.  
I saw the little  
tear drop that was ready to fall.

She smiled and waved  
her hands.



*Eisha M.*



### Just Like That

It goes up and down  
falls on the ground,  
flops in the ditch,  
breaks the neck of a lily,  
shakes the leaves of the tree,  
it is kicked, it is squeezed,  
it is smashed,  
yet it remains the same.  
A ball, and my heart.