

KAVITHALAYA

The 16th Annual Writers' Workshop 2008

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The 15th Annual Writers' Workshop 2008

Jointly hosted by *Kodaikanal International School* and *The Study Centre for Indian Literature in English and Translation, American College, Madurai*

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FOREWORD

The 16th Annual Writers' Workshop 2008, organized by Kodaikanal International School and the American College, Madurai, was held in the KMU on 7 - 9 August. The visiting guest writer was E.V Ramakrishnan, a bilingual writer who has published poetry and criticism in English and Malayalam. His books of poetry are: *Being Elsewhere in Myself* (1980), *A Python in a Snake Park* (1994) and *Terms of Seeing: New and Selected Poems* (2008). He is also an accomplished translator of modern Indian poetry: *The Tree of Tongues: An Anthology of Modern Indian Poetry* (1999). His edited works are worthy of mention: *Narrating India: The Novel in Search of the Nation*, *Crisis and Confession: Studies in the Poetry of Theodore Roethke, Robert Lowell and Sylvia Plath* and *Making It New: Modernism in Malayalam, Marathi and Hindi Poetry*. He is Professor of English at South Gujarat State University, Surat.

The workshop began with Mr Ramakrishnan's lucid and insightful talk about the world of letters followed by absorbing discussion on the complexities and intricacies of life and human relationship as reflected in literature – Indian and European. Reading eloquent lines and telling passages from various works helped the rapt participants of both the institutions to visualize and appreciate the undying beauty of many-splendoured literature, the delicate nuances of translations and the union of *vak*, the human voice and *artha*, its essence.

This volume is the product of the workshop.

Sudeep Ghosh

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NOMADS

S. Selva Revathy

It was a bright evening.
On my walk I came upon
a group of people.
Clad in brightly coloured
Clothes, they spoke loudly
in their own language which
I couldn't make sense.

Innocence brightened their face.
Hard work hardened their muscles.
They were a picture of magnanimity.
Love radiating from their eyes.
Why did they alienate from me?
Because, they would rather alienate
Inhumanness, and would never be part of it.

THE MORNING STAR

S. Selva Revathy

The morning star
Slowly, rises from the resting place
Its ascent awakens the inhabitants.
Its presence lights a ray of hope in everyone's face.
Crowded city begins their routine life.
Under the scorching eye
Everything is witnessed
The rays not only enlighten us
But bring light in everyone's life.

TREMENDOUS

S. Selva Revathy

He might not have known, his words
keenly observed by a stranger.
I was wondering...
This particular word possesses some effect
Tremendously...
The word conquered me
Tremendously...
The word pre-occupied my mind
Tremendously...
I sensed, this word created a drastic change
Not only on me
But also on everyone
Tremendously...

It was a terrible night!
Sorry, many nights.
It seemed to me funny.
And sometimes even
A tug of war.
You know who are my enemies?
Sorry again.
Not my enemies, but everyone's
I wonder
These midget persons earned
The favour of enmity
All over the world.
Not a single soul
I suppose, is ready
To like and accept him.
There is no other go but
Re-align in the profession of begging
There is a saying,
Beggars cannot be choosers
But
These mighty, macro, miniatures
Demand a fine red wine.

THOUGHTS

G. Alan

Thoughts are like raindrops,
They fall from above
And quickly disappear.

A MOVING CLOUD

G. Alan

Nothing is more mystical
Than a moving cloud,
It casts no shadow.

CIGARETTE SPEAK

G. Alan

Some hate me, I don't know why,
But I am comfortable with everyone.
Vendor Samy and Singer Muthu relish me.
They know me and I know them.
Well, I have a burning purpose,
The purpose, millions would agree,
"LIVE LIFE KINGSIZE"

MY COMPANION

M.S. Xavier Pradheep Singh

"Hey, you look smart today,"
I tell him but
he says nothing.
Everyday as I pass by him
I'd stop and
speak to him.
He'd be silent as usual.
I've known him for a long time.
He's my best companion and
my silent listener.
I smile...
He too smiles!
If I cry he too will cry.
Nothing on his own.
He is my other self --
the one in the mirror.

TRAPPED

M.S. Xavier Pradheep Singh

On my bed
I'm safe today
rescued from mosquito bites,
my endless rolling on bed, and
the past sleepless nights.
'Good Night,'
'All Out'
nothing helped.
But
this is the day the LORD has made
and I've got
a new mosquito net.
Happily I watch from within
those draculas flying outside
hunting for my fresh blood.
Ding...
The clock strikes one.
And I'm still awake.
I'm bitten by a thought:
*'They move freely
but I'm trapped.'*

UNTITLED

Balraj, J.S.

Early morning I go for a walk.
I let no one but me to come with me
When dogs look at me they bark
As I pass by that stunning garden
A flower makes a smiling remark
Why is it not the same with me?
I have to force a smile out of me
But I know, I should wrestle
To spread the fragrance of a smile
With all I meet every day in my life.
I have a longing in my heart
To learn that beautiful art...

"USE ME"

M. Jone Dorothy

When do we go
In search of the One above?
Only when we want
To dispose of something
Causing discomfort to life

So also do we do
To the bin calling "Use me,"
Forgotten till
The need arises.

But unlike the bin,
We do not see
The need of the One above
To call for Him,
Need Arising or Not.

A BLADE OF GRASS

M. Jone Dorothy

A single blade of grass,
Standing up so proudly,
Yet with a stoop
Like humility in greatness.

Stamped on
Yet not destroyed,
Drying up
Yet ready to be reborn.

Not alone,
Being part of a great multitude.
Yet each makes a difference
In its own place.
A blade of grass!

PLAITED HAIR

M. Jone Dorothy

Long, straight, pitch-black hair
Free to be worn any way.
But best kept plaited
With all the curves and twists
Its taken into, to keep each hair in place.

That's what life is like.
Free to be lived any way.
But best lived by
Learning from all the twists and turns
That come across and keeping ourselves in place.

KALEIDOSCOPE

A. Srinidhi

The kaleidoscope of life takes many turns
just get through today, for tomorrow we yearn
when the hard times are over, then we enjoy
when this is accomplished and that is done,
will gaze at the colours as reflected by the sun.

In an instant, a moment, a simple phone call,
from the domain of cosmos, we quickly fall
plunged into darkness, disbelief and fear
we had great plans for the coming years.

Our lives changed for ever, we look,
once again as the colours of our kaleidoscope
become muddled and dim
out of focus and out of life
overwhelmed by the deep darkness of night.

We somehow gather the strength and resolve
to accept our disease and involved
we take charge of our life
we look forward once again for the light.

Everything is now different, as our kaleidoscope turns
The kaleidoscope is dynamic, may be dormant,
but never static.
It never ends changing colours.

WHERE DO WE GO?

A. Srinidhi

"Mom, make it a little faster or else we may miss our train." I was worried.

It was exactly 6 o'clock in the morning. The Chennai sky had nothing to say, it was crystal clear.

"If only you hadn't gone to NIFT, or to Mumbai, we'd have no such tensions" my mom said.

Yeah! I thought, 'NIFT' this is where god, or rather I, put myself. For the past two years I have been shuttling between these two cities having the same kind of life. Rush, hurry, haste, and crowd constitute life here. It is just the name which differs; it is an electric train in Mumbai and local train in Chennai.

Anyway, I thought, I do like the way of life. If you can look at it positively, it is not rush or hurry. It is rather lively, vibrant and dynamic.

"Pom, Pom," a loud horn broke my thoughts. In next fifteen minutes, "Chennai Central Station welcomes you," I hear the announcement as we entered the lobby.

We got into the train and after exactly forty seconds the train started. Namrate and I waved goodbye to my mom.

The value of a relation is not how much one feels happy with someone, it is the loneliness one feels without that person. I thought. I only know how much I used to hate my mom for waking me up in early mornings. And only now do I know how it feels to wake up to a parentless, lifeless and lonely house.

My co-passenger Namrate was reading the newspaper. "Hey, hear this" she said, "Navi Mumbai burns in rage of riots." By that time, the train reached the outskirts of Chennai and stopped at "IT corridor." I remembered what had happened two years ago in the same place.

"Two years ago, a similar riot broke out here, didn't it?" she asked.

"Some kind of remedies are necessary, not riots like this" I said.

"It is a good suggestion, but who is there to execute it?"

"That is nothing, but the fate of our country" we said together accidentally. Ha...

ha... ha... we burst out laughing.

But is it a matter of laughter? It is a serious issue, but again we are handicapped to do anything, as we are just silent spectators to these kinds of happenings...

In the compartment where we were travelling, were a group of school students on an excursion to Bombay.

"Hey! You must be the one who did this," their laughter and gossip continued.

Those fresh memories of my school days crossed my thoughts-- such unpretentious, instantaneous loud laughter! School life is something one can never forget... the most beautiful and the happiest part of human life.

"I wish I could rewind time, so that these beautiful days could be relived. I wish it was possible" I said.

"Such moments can only be relished in memory; can't be relived in reality" she said. Probably she was right, that one can't live memories... Memories are to be relished and life is to be lived! But... How bitter is reality... and how sweet are memories!

Suddenly I remembered one of Shelley's sonnets. He says, "I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"

I realized.

Then memories can also be bitter and reality can be sweet. Whatever it is, sweet or bitter, reality and memories, both are components of life. Memories are part of reality, but not reality itself.

Hummm... Life is like a train journey, at times you get bored and at times you get excited. But one got to be going ahead towards the destination as time goes on, unidirectional like a one way street.

After a second, I thought "Oops! Indian trains are never on time, as life is." My laughter was back to me.

By the time the train was nearing our destination, we started to unchain our luggage. After a minute or two, we got down and waved to each other as we went in opposite directions.

A REVISIT TO MY PAST

A. Srinidhi

I am my mom's boy,
filled with fun and joy;
Up above the sky,
I want to fly high.

I had sweet dreams
of brown chocolates and ice cream;
I also had scary dreams
of the devil's scream.

I want a cup of lime,
humming a sweet rhyme;
During the evening hymns,
being in my evening time.

I would die for a nap,
on my mother's lap;
never had we such a gap,
from filthy fate's trap.

I looked back into my book,
though it had been steady and slow;
there have always been a blow,
to get a gaily glow.

I never wanted pain,
but all in vain;
Never came my awaited train,
leaving me in deep drain.

Through all these days,
grown and gone;
I had to moan and groan,
betrayed, all alone.

TYRANNY OF EVERYDAY

K.M. Vikram

Everyday breaks
Moulds
A futile creation

Everyday loads
Reloads
To a numb submission

Everyday sucks
Blows
Mental masturbation

Everyday floats
Robs
Any hope of adaptation

Everyday discovers
With every day flows
Banal rivers of emotion

Everyday breeds
Sows seeds
The hypocrisy of indiscretion

Everyday grinds
Suffocates
Putrid fumes of competition

Everyday habituates
Liberates
Generates an addiction

Everyday sighs
Humilities
Parodies of comparison

Everyday machinations
Permeates
Waves of trepidation

Everyday births
Mourns
Logic of reason

Everyday betrays
Promises
Manufactured gods of delusion

Everyday feeds
A parasitic leech
Tears of desperation

Everyday chaos
Transmogrifies
Tomorrow's retribution

Everyday pallor
Resonates ennui
Pantomimes of fruition

Everyday
Schadenfreude
Irony of regurgitation

SHIRRED SHINDIG

K.M. Vikram

I found no people for killing time
So I found time for killing people

I wanted the green to shine
So I shone green and became wanted

I snorted while standing in lines
So I snorted lines and kept standing

I went on a drive to feel fine
But I got fined for being driven

I got counted up to the nines
So when I hit nine I started counting

I loved the air fresher with pine
So I pined for air fresheners

I wished the world would owe me mine
So I laid mines and owned the world

YAWNING CHASM OF NIHILISM

K.M. Vikram

To control the mannequin, your veins will itch
Venom leech holds your switch
Without circulation, your nerves will twitch
Time will morph you into a lich
Pitch out any notions of a glitch
Nine stitches are no longer a hitch
Wear the sucker, it's your kitsch
Be a masochist, marry that rich witch
Yeah. Everyday made you its bitch.

ABANDONED

Beatrice Akinyi

Inside a once humble abode
Swings a potholed piece of painting
Its remnants fading slowly into the dirt
Hard to imagine, the message remains intact:
"Broken pieces"

For years now it reflects the history
Of its household
Once upon a time... It was an object of Praise
A masterpiece that commanded Respect
Today
The crooked wooden window
Reminds it of the storm it has survived
Its earthly brown finish had seen
A complete makeover.
Soon,
It will be filled with heaps of mud
And a network of cobwebs.
The constant screeching of the Rusty Hinges,
Alerts it of its impending Death.

GONE

Beatrice Akinyi

Like an Angel, I had no dreams.
Fulfillment, was nothing out of the ordinary
Crying and not feeling sad at the same time
Was such a happy Ending.

Who asked you not to eat too much candy?
After all, the milk teeth will soon be gone.
Building castles had been my greatest pleasure.
The crispy sand,
Tasty dirt
It was a complete set up
I wished not to kill it All
But without warning, it happened.

Now I stand old and withered
I still have these false hopes
Maybe unfulfilled dreams.
Still,
I have that Gleam in my eyes
Whenever I feel the crispy sand between my fingers
So real, so unchanged.

A DAY AHEAD

Beatrice Akinyi

Living in Hellsgate had always been quite an experience. Everything about this place was devilish. The air stank of Russian whisky that forced the stomach to churn painfully. Especially, if you were a newcomer. Kharma admired the street walls with renewed curiosity; they were draped in heavy graffiti that perfectly concealed the worthless bricks that served as a protective wall to the entire neighbourhood.

Kharma had only stayed here for ten days and was accustomed to the familiar file of young girls, heavily perfumed, lining the bar houses. He felt helpless thinking of this whole set up, but soon it would be a part of him.

A few metres from where he stood flowed an artificial river that served as the main sewage. On its banks two half naked kids of about the same age played, unaware of the hazards surrounding them. Happily they seemed to be fishing, anticipating a big catch today! He tried chasing them away from the filthy stream's flow but they waited helplessly such that he had no option other than to leave them to continue with their afternoon session.

He could not bear the sight much longer. Disgusted, he rifled through his pockets, fished out some cheap cigarettes and begged for a lighter from a good Samaritan and blew a thick cloud. Sighing lazily, he consulted his plastic wristwatch and realized it was time to trek down to the construction site. He hadn't even thought of lunch, not even breakfast and for a moment he felt deadly pangs of hunger.

Strolling down towards the entrance, Kharma passed the bar house and headed for the gate. Spontaneously, his head turned and for a split second, he retraced his steps. He thought of a single drink, not too much, just enough to keep him strong through the hectic day ahead.

BLOOD AND TERROR

S. Saranya

'Tis common today, like an everyday bath,
To witness and hear about blood-bath.
White newspapers, soaked in red blood,
Daily, carry the news of blood-shed.
Baptized as terrorism, war and much more
It poses its ugly face to the core.
Not just here and there, it crawls everywhere
Swallowing human lives and costing us dear.
A glut of passion for his God or land or his men
Makes the blood-seeker a demon.
These wretched men go on a killing spree
Taking others' lives for granted and free.
Their minds journey back to a primitive age
Loaded with contempt and barbaric rage.
Accustomed to these blood-seeking ritual actions
Vulnerable we are to show our reactions.

HE IS A MENTOR

S. Saranya

He is adept in his art
He devotes his attention solely--
To what he does peacefully.
Perfectly content with his plain life
In a limited space,
Unlike mechanical men
Running their greedy race.
I go to him--he does not see me
But inspects, the things I give,
With due care and willful soul
He performs his tasks--
Accepting the mentor's role.
He mends my torn sandals.
Mends my mind too
Changing the perception of life.

MOTHER OF AMBIGUITIES

C.A. Annie Sahaya Anshu

When I silently suffer in pain
You come to soothe me.
But when I proclaim my sufferings
You don't lend me your ears.
When I angrily scream at you
You never fail to pamper me.
But when I shower love on you
You resist and turn away.
Sometimes you cuddle me.
Sometimes you neglect me.
A mother of ambiguities!
But never does love cease
To sparkle in your eyes.

TO BE HIS PERFECT DAUGHTER

C.A. Annie Sahaya Anshu

He is a great provider
I readily accept what he gives.
He is a loving caretaker
I willfully find shelter in his love and care
He is a fantastic entertainer
I ardently participate in his entertainment
He is a good teacher
I eagerly listen to his lectures.
He is a perfect guide
I passionately crave for his guidance
But when he serves as an advisor
I feel aggrieved with his words of advice.
After all he wants his daughter
To be perfect and the best
Why shouldn't I be his perfect daughter?
For the one who plays various roles.

A POET BEGGAR

K. Arun Kumar

A tall tree
With two small birds,
A beggar
Who can't walk, begs for food.
And a poet
Watches it.
The two birds
Watch the beggar
And titter.
The poet does
The same.
The beggar is
Angry and asks them "Why?"
The poet answers
"We two are beggars
I am waiting for words
And the two birds are
Waiting for food."

A Dog Poet

K. Arun Kumar

I saw a dog
Running here and there.
Its legs restless,
Eyes red,
Its tongue-like tail
Swayed, too
Its wide mouth
Dripping with saliva.
He is not a dog.
But a dog poet--
Infected by the rabies of Poetry.
Wanting to bite
Someone, anyone
With its
Infectious venom.

WRITING WORKSHOP - KODAIKANAL

P. Roland Rencewigg

Oh! My! I have to look at her again
 I really don't intend to!
 But then, I have to!
 Because she looks at me
 Every day! Every morning!! Every moment!!!
 Before victimising someone.

How many men she has enticed and seduced
 Deceiving them with her traditional chaste sari
 With kumkum and bindi
 On her forehead and Eve's orange!
 She puts her mangal sutra
 Over her sensuous bosom
 To escape the law.

Whether I like it or not
 I, the gazetted officer
 Stand no guarantee
 For her character and conduct.

Oh! If I could reflect
 Not just the outward appearance
 But the inner intentions too,
 For 'APPEARANCES ARE DECEPTIVE.'

"-----"

P. Roland Rencewigg

I looked at her
 She looked at him.

I smiled
 She just took a glimpse at me

I snapped to draw her attention
 She straightened her ears

I showed her a bone
 She got up and started trotting

I went near him
She pounced on me wagging her tail

As if to say
I'm not like you humans

To fall prey for baits
And lose my puppy.

SUNDAY, 6 O'CLOCK

B. Prabhu Kumar

It was a Sunday evening. The central railway station was crowded with people. One cannot guess which state we are in by looking at the faces of the people there. People there were of mixed races and skin colors. There were Solankis, Guptas, Raos, Jains and many others. Chennai Central always looks like a place where Babylonians have gathered to build Babel, the chaos of shouting in all languages spoken in India. And if it is the time of arrival of train to Mumbai, then the whole station will be pandemonium.

Time: 17.45. I just entered the railway station when the automated voice announced that the Mumbai Express is about to leave in five minutes. I was afraid that my reddish eyes and untidy hair might draw some attention towards me. Luckily it did not. I don't want to make any scene that might ruin my opportunity. I moved my eyes over the crowd, scanning. This might be the last chance I'll have. I have to find him, soon. There is not much time left. Everything must happen the way I planned.

The bulge in my pocket was clearly visible. I felt the gun in my pocket with my fingers. My heart was pounding as if it was about to burst out of the rib cage. I took my hand out of the pocket to avoid police suspicions. He should not show any outward signs of danger. My fingers were inching towards the gun. I wanted to take the gun and empty all the bullets into his chest. He has to be attended. But time has to come. I know how many guys have ended up in jail since they acted at the wrong time.

I just remembered that he always travels in the First Class A/C compartment. I pushed through the crowd towards the passenger list chart near the door. I scanned the list, ah.... I found him. His seat was not near the gate. So I moved deep into the train. He was there, fumbling through his bag for something.

Time: 17.50. I asked, "Mr. Bose?"

"Yes."

I pointed the gun at him and said, "You have asked for it, haven't you, Mr. Bose?" He stared at me curiously for few seconds and his face lit up. He asked pointing me with the eye glasses in his hand, "Ajay, right?"

"Yes."

He sat up straight and asked, "Tell me, what is all this?"

I took some breath and started, "This is just an ordinary regular revolver, nothing special .6 rounds. Takes time to reload for unpracticed hands, makes a loud noise, easy to use but less accuracy. No silencer can be fitted, definitely not suitable for

people like you."

"This is not for me, just for my boys."

"So, what do you say?"

"I'll take it." He took the gun carefully from my hands and packed it carefully beneath his clothes.

"Thank you, it has been pleasure doing business with you."

I stood up and hesitated for a second before moving. Finally, I inhaled deeply, and asked, "Do you know Mothilal, my father? He was working in a sugar factory."

"I can't remember well. What does he do now?"

"Nothing. He is dead."

"Oh, I remember now. He is the guy who was found dead in sugar molasses?"

"Yes."

"I feel sorry for you. The investigation is going on, right? Don't hesitate if you need any help."

"Thank you, sir."

He waved his hand in dismissal.

Time: 17.55. I got out of the train. My hands were trembling. I was furious with anger. I was not able to control myself. My whole body was shaking. I know, he is the one who was responsible for my father's death. But he acts as if he barely knew him. He should be punished. But how could I ever do that? He is a man of power. He has money and power. I could not allow myself to be caught for murder. I have a family that needs me. My complaints will not be accepted. I have got no other choice. It has to be like this.

Inside the train, Bose packed the bag with gun securely, and kept it beside him. When he looked down his seat to check his other luggage, he found a white parcel. He weighed it with his hands to guess what is inside.

Time: 18.00. I came out of railway station. I looked around for it. I found it and moved towards it. I went directly into the booth and closed the door behind me. "Hello, control room?... I have information... yes... My identity is unnecessary... cannot say the source... there is a bomb in..."

OLD MEN, ROCKING CHAIR

B. Prabhu Kumar

It rocks
In the cottage
To and fro
Like a boat roped to the abandoned shore
Gentle and silent.

A wavering mind
Dithering like pendulum
Over two different ideas

A time warp to an old man
Who becomes reminiscent of his past
Laid near a fire place
He rocks on that chair
With a hot coffee cupped in his hands
Sipping slowly
Nostalgic of callous and fertile past

Laid in a corner
In darkness
Another old man sits,
Numb with cold, with a nippy coffee
Untouched over the table nearby
Reminiscences of a blundered past

As a clever man learns from his past,
An intelligent man learns from others.

INEVITABLE EVIL

T. Ganesh Babu

What a tiny little creature
you are;
with your size
would anyone think
that you are
such a troublesome brat!

Chasing every individual
to the core.

Get me the person
who invented you;
I would KILL him.

And now that
you have almost become
a part of me
I cannot even desert you
at this stage.

.....
Do you think
you have commonsense?

If at all you have,
without my command,
you would not have
woken me up
Sunday morning at five.

If at all you have,
you would not have
girrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrred
when my boss was
dictating
a very important letter.

If at all you have,
you would have allowed me

to piss in peace.
How many times you know
you have threatened
in the bathroom,
whenever there is a ring tone
unable to identify
whether it is actually ring tone or ...

I am waiting for the day
when you are upgraded
so that
when anyone calls,
you would read my mind,
and answer:

"THE SUBSCRIBER
YOU ARE DIALLING
IS CURRENTLY VERY ANGRY;
PLEASE
DIAL
WHEN HIS SOUL
RESTS IN PEACE."

BACK-SEAT DRIVER

Paul Love

I'm not a back-seat driver--really!

The friend who ferries me about from post to post
In our sea of city traffic
Drives like he's playing hockey
With a blind-fold Referee.

But I take no notice.

My silence and my nonchalance spring
From a sense that the dance of our city's traffic
Is choreographed by a power far beyond
My wit and claim to understanding.

The grace with which cars, lorries, bikes and minivans
Chide and accost each other
Only to weave and interweave
In ripples and in waves that far outdo
The efforts of our top designers--
This grace it is that causes me to trust
The blaring horns, the twists and turns
With which my driver makes his way, despite
The slings and arrows of our city's traffic,
And makes me trust that though we come
Within an inch of other vehicles
We'll surely reach our destination.

No, I'm not a back-seat driver.
I'm a back-seat sleeper.

THE DAYBREAK

Nirmal Rajah, R.

Daybreak

Another new morning
Cool, damp and foggy
Grass blade with the weight of dew
Bends low, throws the dew drops
With much difficulty
On a dead dry leaf
Resting on the dirt below
Sending a gentle quiver
Through the veins of the leaf
Where the brown beetle nests.

A curled cat unexcited and uninterested in its
Surrounding, near an undergrowth.

Blank pages fluttering in my hand
Untouched by the pen's tip
I sit vulnerable.
With nothing to write.
The wind blows harder
Carrying the dew-wet frail leaf with it

More brown beetles swarm by
The soft purring of the cat
Rustling of leaves
A distant bird chirped
Well... I think
I have something to write.

LOVE, LIE, LIFE

Nirmal Rajah, R.

To think that earlier today I was sitting in a restaurant. It was raining outside. I kept staring at the chaotic street folks running for a shelter from the pouring clouds, and the unaccompanied lass, who remained unaccompanied and unattended by the frantic waiters running for others' orders. There was some appropriate beauty in the overcast desolation and drizzle. She remained, as if she was waiting for someone, and so I remained too.

Well... I doubt whether Dhanya, my old sweetheart, knows that it is her old lover boy sitting in a table across the hall, staring at her. She was whispering, giggling, laughing... to someone in her mobile phone. I sharpened my ears to hear what did Dhanya say. Why is she so amused? To whom is she talking? And how long will I be able to bear this?

I tried to get up, blunder over the corner of the table and send a glare flying, perhaps my cry and the bang will crash on her idyll but ... I didn't. Why should I?

I will leave her now. I have to ... but why should I? The very thought of going away from her sounds disappointing, and thinking over my few days with her and many days without her. There was a rambling thought in my head. Why'd she leave? What went wrong? Why is she back now? How'll I talk to her? And what will I say to her?

Although we sat in the very same restaurant, sharing a same drink, holding our hands tightly, feeling its warmth, talking endlessly about nothing and looking into each others eyes, sometimes she gets red with blush and anger when she is embarrassed, when I swab her lips smeared with bits of chocolate.

She looked the same Dhanya who left me six years ago. She had a spectacle box on her table. But I had not noticed it as a pair of reading glasses. She had grown old a bit.

"There is no need to be scared in love for I'll never leave you" she said once, holding my hands in hers with tears in her eyes, and there I stood with wide eyes, full of pride and security.

Those small fights, for every lie she would magnify into a betrayal and even in an open statement she read hidden meanings and made a new sense, but the gentle embrace after those forgotten fights, I was so sure that we would never part.

I stood up and moved towards her table. Dhanya's mobile laid silent on her table. Still crazy for her after years, ten more yards to lay my palms on her shoulders. She'll be surprised, I thought.

But from nowhere, he came, sat in front of her, holding her palms he apologised for being late. Who is he?

Now asking her opinion of the sauces, what she hated, but alas! She is ordering the sauce... that she hated, really hated, and so did I. Just for her.

I fear my own madness; I'll vault across the hall and choke either of them... I remember Dhanya's face, her lips, kindness and placid nature. I never wanted to leave her.

"I'd rather be dead or see you dead than with another man" I remember the words I uttered when she had met me last. Not eccentric. It is ordinary human love, anyone who loves is jealous. I stormed through the dining hall.

As I neared Dhanya, I noticed it. I felt numb, paralysed when I noticed the yellow 'mangalyam' nesting on the valley of her breasts.

"Oh, she is married, Dhanya, my own Dhanya is a married woman now!" my feet refused to go any further towards her.

I felt so envious, but she didn't seem so, maybe she wouldn't love me enough because she loves her husband now. She would be secure now, just can't say in words or better. I thought of hating her from that time. Hatred is like physical love. It has its own crisis and period of calm. I walked towards the entrance. The rain had stopped and the sky appeared clear.

I hurried in the streets, Dhanya forgotten completely. I walked fast on the wet pavement, thinking of my sweet wife, her anger whenever I reach home late.

THIRTEENTH DAY

(Translation of Pathimoondram Naal by Lakshmi Kannan)

Joel Timothy

As soon as I reached home, I saw a pot of burning charcoal at the entrance. Some men stood around it. There was sepulchral silence. My uncle saw me.

"Why? You have come so late – not to be here before your father died," he said, holding my trembling hands. He covered his mouth with a handkerchief and returned to the group of men who were mourning silently.

Inside the house, there was another group of women who remained silent. But upon seeing me some of them began to sob.

"Oh! What a pity! You were not lucky enough," they cried.

My aunt hugged me and wept uncontrollably. It was expiating her grief through this act. I hugged her tightly. Let her sorrow be drowned in her flowing tears, let it disappear. I wished. Will there be another chance or situation for her to cry?

"How could he leave us like this!," someone cried from behind.

My father was on the floor like a meek cat...a smile like a ray of light on his lips. How long has it been since his face radiated peace? His body tortured him with many diseases and pain. Even his blood vessels harassed him. A release at last from this prison for you, dear father. Come back soon!

My mother stood still near me, tired and exhausted from taking care of my father with utmost devotion. I touched my mother's shoulders. She looked at me. Then at my father's body. There was a lump in her throat. Some women who have gathered there wept loudly. Mother glared at them. There was a lot of meaning in that glare.

After cremating the dead body of my father we observed all rites. We found more meaning in those rituals. These rituals gave us the necessary support and helped us balance our life. We took refuge in them.

In a way it felt good to be suspended between life and death. Not to worry about living – dishevelled hair, bare forehead, crumpled sari, shabby face. All of these gave us freedom from life. These allowed us to go about with a sad long face, not focused on things pertaining to life. Within the boundaries of sorrow there was no need for artificial politeness. No need to construct a smile, no reason to be witty. One can be adamantly silent. One can sneak out of the maddening conversations.

What sweet sorrow! What pleasurable sadness!

This condition was only temporary, only till the last day of all rituals. Thirteenth day was meant to remove the evil and the inauspicious from the home. Life, after that, took its revenge. It drew us into its whirlpool. After relishing this casual friendship with death and after enjoying the freedom of suspended animation, this experience was lost to us. We were once again trapped in the rituals of living. We had to perform small acts to prove that we also live. We proclaimed, "We also live."

"Why do you cry eternally? Why can't you wear a bright coloured sari and appear cheerful," said an old woman in the family.

"Actually I did not want to mention it. Being gloomy always will make you lose your charm."

"Your father fulfilled all his duties, lived a full life, saw the next generation and he died. How long do you think are you going to be like this?" murmured some people.

"Why this demeanour, that too on a Friday? Wash your face, put some bindi on your forehead, adorn your hair with flowers. You know how you would look if you had a large bindi?" some tried to encourage me.

Father, a strong support thirteen days ago, left this fast-paced world hurriedly. He vanished. These thirteen days got repeated first in Mysore, then in Delhi. I had a meeting after a long gap. A subtle fragrance from the perfumes wafted and filled that room. Petty conversations, customary courtesies, and silent laughter. Expensive clothes, inside them curvaceous bodies.

"Hello! You have become thin! Are you not keeping good health?"

"What...hello, I am very sorry."

"Hi! I have not seen you for six months. Where have you been hiding all these days? Hibernating?"

"Yes. I heard. My heart offered condolences. How old was your father when he died?"

"Ch..ch..ch...very sad!"

"Hello there. Somebody told me that you have come back. I was searching for you in this room for half an hour. When did you come to Delhi?"

"I heard the sad news. My sincere condolences."

"Hello, old girl! When did you come? What are you up to on Saturday? Shall we meet?"

I slumped into the sofa near by, drinking juice and stretched myself. I nodded in agreement. I said yes twice as if to add emphasis. I giggled loudly. I became a puppet. I listened to the conversations pretending to be eager. I laughed again hysterically. My eyes revealed excitement.

"Well, I can take this doll in my car and take it thirty or forty kilometers outside Delhi. Let me ask her out. Will she refuse as usual? Or will she accept in this situation? Will it make her weak? Perhaps..?"

This doll sipped the juice and shook its head this way and that way. Shadow of my father's figure disappeared suddenly.

I surveyed the room with my eyes. Perfect suits, slacks, expensive saris and the shining body. The body! That makes them crisscross the room in search of food, that bodies that survive the quotidian exchanges.

Hidden inside the clothes, these bodies move without strength casually. One day the same body will fall. It is a burden. It has an iron grip on life until one goes on bended knees pleading for freedom.

"Hello"

"Hi"

"So we will meet this Saturday?" he sounded as if from inside a water bubble. The lean figures roamed around like living statues. There is not salvation for him who wants to take the doll in a car, this pathetic doll till there is a pot of burning charcoal.

THE DAY AFTER YESTERDAY

David Jeyaraj

I thought I've reached.
She said, she didn't.

I felt we made a perfect two.
She said, 'not yet'.

'You need sideburns to match Kamal Hasan'
Said she, caressing my clean cheeks.
I oiled it over till it sprouted.

'You are a Rajni, but the hairstyle...'
She surveyed my corporate head.
The hairdresser ran out of options.

'No one dresses like John Abraham'.
My shabby clothes were her new target.
I ransacked Raymond's till 'I got it'.

Now I pause to look at the lost 'me'.
I have been changing for her.
She has been changing me for herself.

I keep moving towards her ideal.
She keeps moving the same 'ideal'.

Am I Jason after a golden fleece?
Am I chasing momentary rainbows?

Where am I going to?
The day after yesterday
Is not going to be any different.

She has a 'dream boy' in her heart.
I realize I am not 'he'.

Today, I call the shots.
I stop moving.
She goes ahead.

I look at the frame she had for me –
A mould, she thought, is good for me.
Now I realize
She never wanted me.
She wanted me to be somebody else.

I ordered myself, 'Stop'.
'You are not worth it' – she is gone.

'Thanks' I told to her fast vanishing figure,
'for making me realize
I am differently made'.

EVERYDAY

J. Jothi Viknesh

Everyday she woke up early,
I shouted at her.

Everyday she cooked my savouries
I criticized her food.

Everyday she washed my soiled clothes
I added more to the bundle.

Everyday she worked when I came home late,
I despised her fussing.

Everyday she cared for me when I was out,
I hated her emotion.

Everyday she was there for me
UNTIL

I cry for her love,
her care,
her affection,
her emotions,

UNTIL, I miss my mom "Everyday."

SPEAKER?!?!

J. Jothi Viknesh

He spoke of history of the great continents.
He spoke of the anatomy of earth.
He spoke of spirituality and reality.
He spoke of what is what isn't.
He spoke of things that were void.
But at last said those most sensual words,
"Wake up guys! Time to go!!!"

JAY JAWAAN, JAY KISAAN, JAY MUCHLIMAARS, TOO!

Frederick Samuel, I.

My five-year old
 Small friend
 Who lives by the coast
 Knows a bit more about
 The Coast Guard,
 Than about a post card.
 He really wonders
 What's indeed wrong between
 His fisherman father
 And that foreign Naval Officer.
 He doesn't know
 Why father is frequently
 Kidnapped, and again and again
 Beaten.
 It remains a puzzle for him
 Why his little friends'
 Fisherman fathers
 Are so often shot dead
 Amidst the roaring waves
 Of the Indian Ocean.
 Or,
 Why they're time and again
 Brutally assaulted
 In that monkey-tamed land.

They're used to
 The curses
 That come out of
 The mouths of their wailing
 Mothers,
 In front of the corpses of
 Their loving husbands.
 It is the curses
 That help the little ones see
 Those 'heartless tyrants'.

The young men of the coast
 Curse their ill-fate

Of being born
On that damned shore.

Their fishermen are
Unlike others.
They aren't free of arrests,
Shootings, punishments, or beatings.

Children easily come out
Of their sorrows
When those 'whitewashed graves'
Pay visits in
The sophisticated array of cars
'Address' the Central Government
In the highest pitch of voice,
'Fast' till someone brings them
A cup of juice, and then
Fly back in cars
To continue with their 'public service'.

But
My little friends of three, four and five
After losing their fathers
To brutal bullets
Fast till death, really till death.

Please don't ask me
To stand up
For the National Anthem
Sung for an indifferent India.

SIN NO MORE...

Frederick Samuel, I.

"What makes you limp, Marah?" asked mother.

"A fall on the street," Marah replied in an indifferent tone.

"Fall? A fall, or a pit – fall? Ha ha ha..!" Mother came closer, laughing. Maybe she wanted to have a look at the wounds.

"Stop it, mother! Will you?" Marah yelled out in disgust. Mother lifted her face by the chin. It was reddish. Reddish because of shame and guilt. Anger because of her totally helpless state. Mother found Marah's pampered breasts going up and down forcibly, puffing out air.

"What happened, darling?" mother sat by her, examining the wounds. The right big toe was badly hurt and was letting a considerable amount of blood. The pain was so bad that it irritated her mind. 'Must have hit against a stone.' And a scratch on the left knee.

"Not worse," said mother in a soothing tone, as her eyes were surveying those two holes on her new lame. 'Might have been caused when Marah fell down.'

"Tell me what happened, dear." By now mother had started washing Marah's wounds with water. 'A dressing after applying some olive oil will do.'

Marah broke down and rested her head on her mother's shoulder. She started crying vehemently.

"It happened again today."

Words popped out amidst sighs and sobs. She looked at mother with bloodshot eyes. They were brimming with tears.

"They were telling that they had caught me red-handed. Then they let that scoundrel get away."

"Did they really?" asked mother, with eyes engulfed in tears and lips quivering rapidly.

"Yes. I couldn't even find a bit of mercy in a single eye there. They started chasing me, unmindful of the fact that I was half-naked... Boys, young men, old aged...

Everyone. Everyone of those savage beasts."

Mother's head was tilted down. She was sobbing. Tears rolled over her cheeks and on the knee – wound. Tut! It was irritating.

"Did they just let that man go?" mother asked in a shaking voice.

"Hm. He was also there with his kinsmen, chasing me. It resembled a pack of brutal wolves."

By now Marah had stopped weeping. There were no more tears. Dry. Not even a drop.

"Thank God that the young prophet came that way." said Marah.

"Young prophet? Who?"

"Jesus. Jesus of Nazarene."

"Jesus? Mary's son?"

"Yeah. That carpenter." The reply came listlessly.

"Then what did he do?" mother asked curiously, expecting an unmitigated solution.

"He just commanded me not to commit sin thereafter."

"Do not joke for heaven's sake. Is that what he really told?"

"Yes, mother. He said that he had forgiven me, as if I asked him for forgiveness. Shameless men. Shameless society. He ordered that I should not sin anymore. Shameless people."

"What punishment did he give that man, then?"

"Punishment? Come on, mother. Don't be foolish. Why punish? He's a man, isn't he? Punishing a *man* for committing adultery?" said Marah, giving a contemptuous accent to the word 'man'. "Ridiculous!"

"Did you at least talk to him?"

"Absurd! He wouldn't look at women. Don't you know that? Do you think, in

Samaria, when He asked for water to that woman, he looked at her? Hardly a look. And just think of a woman like me!" She looked so indifferent.

"No mother. No respect at all. Respect, at least as a woman. At least as a human being. I'm a bit perplexed, mother. To curse Moses, or to curse his commandments, or the community, or the feuds, or you, or my own fate?"

Marah exploded to weeping again. She started wailing so bitterly, slapping herself on her face.

Mother was sitting still. Someone was knocking at the door. "Who's that?" mother asked in a feeble voice.

"It's me... Abijah..."

"What? What's the matter, Abijah?" mother asked, in an annoyed tone. She was afraid what news Abijah could have brought. What she had feared had come to pass from Abijah's mouth.

Abijah told: "Is Marah there? There's a man in search of her. Ask her to come and attend him, okay?"

Mother was confused. "Sin no more?"

Cosmos*

Aditya Menon

Now that I hold
This pink pen
Like a ping-pong paddle,
I remember the cosmos.
No, not the big one,
But the microcosm,
Those pale flowers
That spring
From my unweeded garden
Before
My chess-coloured rabbit,
Noble
As a king of yore,
Was laid to rest.
They were the ground's
Antennae,
Popping out
Like ping-pong balls
From squeezing fingers,
And now,
They pop up in my memory.
Take a seat,
Sweet friends of my youth!
Rest your roots awhile.

*The cosmos is a type of pink flower.

SONNET TO MY SELF-PORTRAIT

Aditya Menon

Who drew you on this page tonight, my friend,
You still cold mirror moistened by my breath?
We greet each other many days on end,
And yet the ink has never seemed so wet.
Dark ladies, eyebrows meeting in the glass,
Describe your silverpoint curves again,
And tease the meaning out of the crevasse,
Cut cold the bridges framed by men.
I don't draw bridges, roads or waterworks,
Or conversation at the classroom doors,
But listen where your shining footstep lurks,
Narcissus echoed on the bathroom floor.
And you, you ooze like teardrops on a cheek,
Or like a sonnet learning how to speak.

ACCEPTANCE

Yash Malvi

The most beautiful woman has a broken heart,
The brightest flowers have thorns so tart.

The greatest king sits on the throne, frowning a frown,
Imitating a smile on his face, dances the unhappy clown.

An athlete with a limb injured,
An innocent animal with its life endangered.

This world without any peace,
A puzzle with a missing piece.

A deer without any musk,
An elephant with a broken tusk.

A rich man with an insatiate conscience,
A sailor with a broken compass.

If acceptance is what we will yearn,
Near perfection is the reward that we will earn.

And when the weaknesses do we overcome,
Perfection is what is next to come.

THE JOURNEY

Yash Malvi

No direction in your mind,
Your destination you shall find

Your bus leaves,
Your past precedes.

You go with the flow,
And watch yourself grow.

Your bus is all you have,
Through sunlight and moonlight do you drive.

Turbulence is inevitable,
Resistance is futile.

All outside the window is a blur,
Outer existence turns unclear.

What you see is what you know,
What you see is where you go.

Wherever your bus will venture
Is the new place that you enter.

You are navigated,
Your route is generated.

The driver takes you where he goes,
All you depend on is on what he knows.

You reach close to your destination,
And you suddenly feel a sense of satisfaction.

The bus starts slowing down,
The blur outside starts clearing now...

You have finally reached,
Success, triumph, rapture...
Your journey has been completed.

All movement in the bus seizes,
Your anxiety just freezes.

Life has tested your endurance,
You are freed of sufferance.

You can now rest,
You have passed your test.

LIVE

Lili Dreikhausen

The magic of a single moment,
can be worth a lifetime,
An understanding can be deeper
than a multitude of spoken words,
The greatest opportunity can be lost
in the foolishness of a reasonless fear,
A thoughtless comment can destroy
what seemed to be the strongest bond,
An eternity can dissolve into seconds.
Mistakes are made.
People change.
The world keeps spinning.
I find myself so often lost,
In the madness of the moment,
The meaningless trivialities,
which we let ourselves,
believe to be of some importance.
The beliefs, the value, the facts,
That make up the complexity,
And define the mind,
Are so often let slip,
And we live them only as analyses of the past,
And plans of the future,
But what of the present,
What of the every moment,
What of now?

THE ARTIFICIAL

Lili Dreikhausen

Clouds drifted across the horizon, as the trees on the opposite bank gazed at their reflections, merging with the gray sky on the surface of the lake. A soft wind blew over the water, the minute waves taking with them the shadow of reality they bore upon their shoulders. The scene which had, only a moment back, been so clear to the eye was now veiled. Fogged, for the source of understanding had been drawn from beneath its previous steady stand.

A perfect reflection of the human mind. We let ourselves believe with all willingness and trust when what we are being told is what we want to hear, even if that is the least credible of possibilities. While if we mistrust, our mind will twist every spoken word, every meaningful look into the shape of treason. All we see is influenced by interpretation, by the emotion and the thoughts, but then again without that we would be reasonless and shallow, purposeless and without a soul. So it is up to the individual to see with the clarity of truth, and understand with the thirst of knowledge, to be oneself in every aspect and grow from within with every passing moment.

The human of today, who is only the same species of creature that built the beautiful chateaus of the 18th century in the provinces of southern France, furnished with the most splendid selection of beautiful trivialities, which today have become prized antiquities, decorates this very same chateau with artificial flowers, in the magnificent entrance hall, otherwise filled with originalities. A painful contrast.

As is the prospect of walking onto the cold forsaken graveyard, on a day, abandoned by the sun, and there, amongst the cold grey stones, where beneath rest the bones of the dead, the very air heavy with the lament to those who will never return, upon the memorials, with names, that no longer have a meaning, for the wind in its eternal dance, has stolen their voice, the faded letters can no longer be read, there, in their outstanding brightness, the colourful tags of sorrow, left by those pitiful ones left behind, read words of shallow truthless vanity.

Days

Lili Dreikhausen

On some days, I am captivated by the beauty of a single blossom that throws forth its colour in such a violent air, that my eyes are held to it as though by compulsion.

On others I forget the essence of life, and am a gray day, shallow and empty, with a forgotten purpose and a broken soul.

On such days it is you, who holds my hand, and with your warmth, breathes life back into me.

A SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Kavitha Selvaraj

It's a struggle to find in everyone's life
A question with answers all never alike
Some say things to which others agree
But honestly, is the key to it with you, or me?

He says open your soul to the world we have
Notice the things both good and bad
Listen to the silence after each sing
Live today, tomorrow it's all gone

She says close your eyes and look within
For this is where it always begins
See yourself, just who you are
Don't look too hard and don't look too far

Everyone has things to say
And I tell you – it is all truth in its own special way
But listen here now; I am no one to claim
That truth can be found, let alone be tamed.

IF ONLY IN DREAMS

Kavitha Selvaraj

I dreamt about us last night
About all the times we shared
In perfect bliss and happiness
To which nothing is compared
Yet nothing is left but this Dream.
We walked, we sat, we danced and sung
A song about our timeless love.
So no matter what the obstacle
Time, change or distance
The fact remains that we both know well
I belong to you and you belong to me
Even if it only means in Dreams, not reality.

WINGS

Noah Chettri

The sun on my face
The wind on my legs
I feel like I am flying
I am in a heavenly state

Wings on my back
Wings on my feet
I am going to a place
Where angels meet

SEASONING

Noah Chettri

A drop of Spring
Makes the soup go green
A pinch of Summer
Makes my tongue go dry
A cup of Autumn
Leaves behind a red splash
And finally
A drop of Winter
To make everything sweet.

THE WORKINGS OF THE HUMAN MIND ON A LAZY SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Noah Chettri

I often sit alone and inquire
Why my fate and destiny
Are always the contrary
to my desire

Does the God above find enjoyment in irony?
Or does He wish punishment on me
Sometimes He makes me cheery
But sometimes all I receive is uncertainty

I guess life is not meant to have an answer
It runs in a cycle
Never stopping and ongoing always
Some say that the cure is innocence
Which makes your sorrows little
And makes sure your soul in heaven stays.

THE FUTURE

Nadisha Sagar

It is tomorrow or maybe next year
That the future will reveal itself?
Love and peace? Or pain, a tear?
How much longer or how near?

Do we have to wait for it?
Or can the lines on our palms say it all?
How long we will live, how wealthy we will be,
Isn't this a bit too much to foresee?

Or maybe it's not all about lines or cards,
But about one's own will to be,
To be yourself and nothing more,
This is what you should desire to see.

So the future lies in only your hands.
Live today and take a stand.
Don't hold back, you have nothing to fear,
As it is all in your hands, it's all right here.

TRANSPARENCY

Sumi Mahmud

As I fall into transparency...
I find myself in a linear world.
That contains neither curves nor bypasses,
Just lines.
My idea of life reversing into immortality.
Emotions become complex,
With the art of simple actions.
Visuals are only a haze;
Sounds are only a buzz;
The feeling of numbness hovers over me,
As I fall into transparency...
I am only fictitious;
An individual made by other beings.
Shut out from imagination,
Entering into reality.
What is reality without I?
What is reality without us?
What is reality without you?
Dislocated and twisted into the realm of living,
Until you realize the sarcasm within.
You act ironic; metaphoric,
And hint at the agony of the flames of life.

NEGATIVES OF AD-HEAR-ING KNOWLEDGE

Sumi Mahmud

Observe a flower
 Observe its beauty
 Translate the language
 Connote its maturity
 Narrate and reveal
 Energize the ordinary
 Simplify and heal
 The essence within
 Now think and accept
 What and how you feel
 Accept the judgments
 And opinions you seal
 Block it all
 Failure and revenge
 Don't say a word,
 Don't leave a sound
 Just play it off
 And when it's done
 □ Press rewind □

BLUEPRINTS

Sumi Mahmud

Imprinted on fate
I feel the exotic sight
I feel the eccentric smell
I feel the extravagance of thy touch
I feel the empathetic notes of the sound
Am I now?
Am I tomorrow?
Am I yesterday?
Or am I, I?
Experience of the shock within thy heart
Emotions of the excitement within one's soul
All of which are the knowledge or our "wired society"
Knowledge being the core blueprints of our leader within.
Circulation of the heat of read
Wholesomeness of the purity of white
Essence of the calmed beauty of blue
All rebound of the darkness inside.

SKIN DEEP

Aaliya Jamal

Pretty dresses. Thought processes.
Eyeliner. Skin definer.
Shiny shoes. Painted toes.
Crowds of people.
Talking. Laughing.
Tick Tock. Tick tock.
Hands of the clock.
Class to class.
"Do you need a pass?"
Mingle. Mingle
Humm a jingle.
Freak out. Have a laugh.
Sunsets.
Material ways.
The day is a haze.
Weeks are a blur.
Emotions spurred.
Mental Isolation.

THE SEED

Sushant Nag.

There is a seed within me
Someday when the fire is lit
The seed flourishes to a tree
A crazed evil I dare not omit
For the acceptance of society
I cut down this beautiful tree
The fire is choked but never out
The tree is gone but a new seed is about
Today the fire roars
All I hear is insane laughter
Yet looks still can be deceiving
Again the seed grows, only faster
Just one murder, in order to relieve
The sun shines bright again
The sky is colorfully blue
Was this all a phase?
Something to work through?
It was all just curiosity
The fire burns but doesn't roar
There's neither seed nor visible tree
Ease seeps in, now complacency
I feel a sense of balance and equality.

EVERYDAY, EVERY TIME

Kaustubhi Sharma

The sun rises and cradles a new day,
The same sun shining in the same way.
The clouds drift, the sky stays.
The river flows, the rocks stay.
The breeze is capricious,
The trees stand far away.
Everything done as child's play.
He looks at the scene unchanged.
An aura of darkness,
He is not quite sane.
The night falls,
The day dies.
Another person solemnly cries.
The wind blows strongly.
It makes him angry.
He disowns all ideologies,
No need to become a prodigy.
Everything is a lie but he does not know why.
Everyone grows but then everyone dies.
The truth never lingers,
It always flows by.
Everyday, every time.

WASHING AWAY

Kaustubhi Sharma

He walks on the sand,
Leaving his footprints behind.
Yet every time they are embedded,
They are washed on the sly.
He walks, he walks,
Leaving his footprints behind.
Yet every time they are washed,
He never looks behind.
The sun rises,
Drapes him with its aura,
The water gleams,
It likes its new game.
It gushes toward him,
Then smirks at his footprints,
Slyly, slyly washing away...

I WONDER...

Judith Marzo Carter

As I sit and listen I wonder why I am sitting and why I am listening. Why am I laying my complete trust in what another man is telling me? We are brought up in a generation of questions yet at the same time we stay immobile in our education. We absorb what we are told without doubt, without the inquiry of how he acquired the knowledge, and why he is so sure in his statements. If we look further, we cannot bypass the corruption of opinion that infuses us all, and the unpreventable corrupted knowledge that is passed on to us. Looking into it on a more personal level, as a person with too much time on his hands, I cannot help but connect it to all of society that lies beneath our feet. Although it has no shape, no tangibility, it lies embedded in our walls and in our souls. It defines the underlying rules that make us conduct ourselves in the way we do, yet if you ask some why, the most likely response will be one filled with either uncertainty, or ignorant obedience. Take the example of schooling, we sit, we study, and we live all under the authorization of people we hardly know, yet we do not object and the few that do are snubbed. As we sit, we do not wonder why we are spending the good majority of twelve years of our life filling our brains with information that for the most part is completely and utterly useless. Yet despite the lack of common sense behind it, the deceitful power of the laws of society pulls us to our desks every day. When I was in 5th grade I read a book called *The Giver*, which told the story of a brainwashed communist community. While reading it, I was filled with a deep sense of disbelief. Now looking back on it I wonder if the Stone Age generation would get the same feeling while looking upon the way we enact and obey to the society that grasps us. Take a look at yourself, just by reading this you are obeying a law of society, you are obeying it by understanding my words which have been obediently learnt by you. You are following another rule by being in a place where society tells you, belong.



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