

Inner Child Press International  
&  
The Year of the Poet  
present

# Poetry

*the best of 2020*



*Poets of the World*

# Poetry

The Best of 2020

Poets of the World

*inner child press international*

*'building bridges for cultural understanding'*

# Credits

Poets of the World

Editing

hülya n. yılmaz, Ph. D.

Cover Design

William S. Peters, Sr.

Inner Child Press International

# General Information

## Poetry ~ The Best of 2020

### Poets of the World

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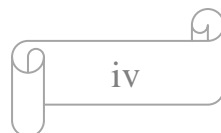
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*In the darkness of my life  
I heard the music  
I danced . . .  
and the Light appeared  
and I dance*

Janet P. Caldwell



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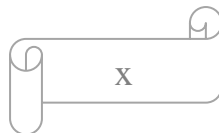
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*Poets, Writers . . . know that we are the enchanting magicians that nourish the seeds of dreams and thoughts . . . it is our words that entice the hearts and minds of others to believe there is something grand about the possibilities that life has to offer and our words tease it forth into action . . . for you are the Poet, the Writer to whom the Gift of Words has been entrusted . . .*

William S. Peters, Sr.



# Preface

At Inner Child Press International, we are always seeking a means to provoke the poets and writers of our world to share their oft unique perspectives, be it conscious, sub-conscious or otherwise. We do this through anthologies, a coming together of the diverse cultures from around the world. Many times in reading, you can detect some cultural nuances that offer insight. For the most part, what is achieved in these themed anthological collections of poetry and prose we publish, is a sort of human congruity, a confluence of voices that provides each of us a clear and succinct understanding, that we humans, wherever we hail from, are more alike, more similar than we are dissimilar.

Though we publish quite a number of individual author's volumes as well, which I thoroughly enjoy; anthologies hold a unique position in my spiritual assignment. The opportunity to witness our own microcosmic pilgrimage to the making of an anthology is a true and honorable marvel to take part in.

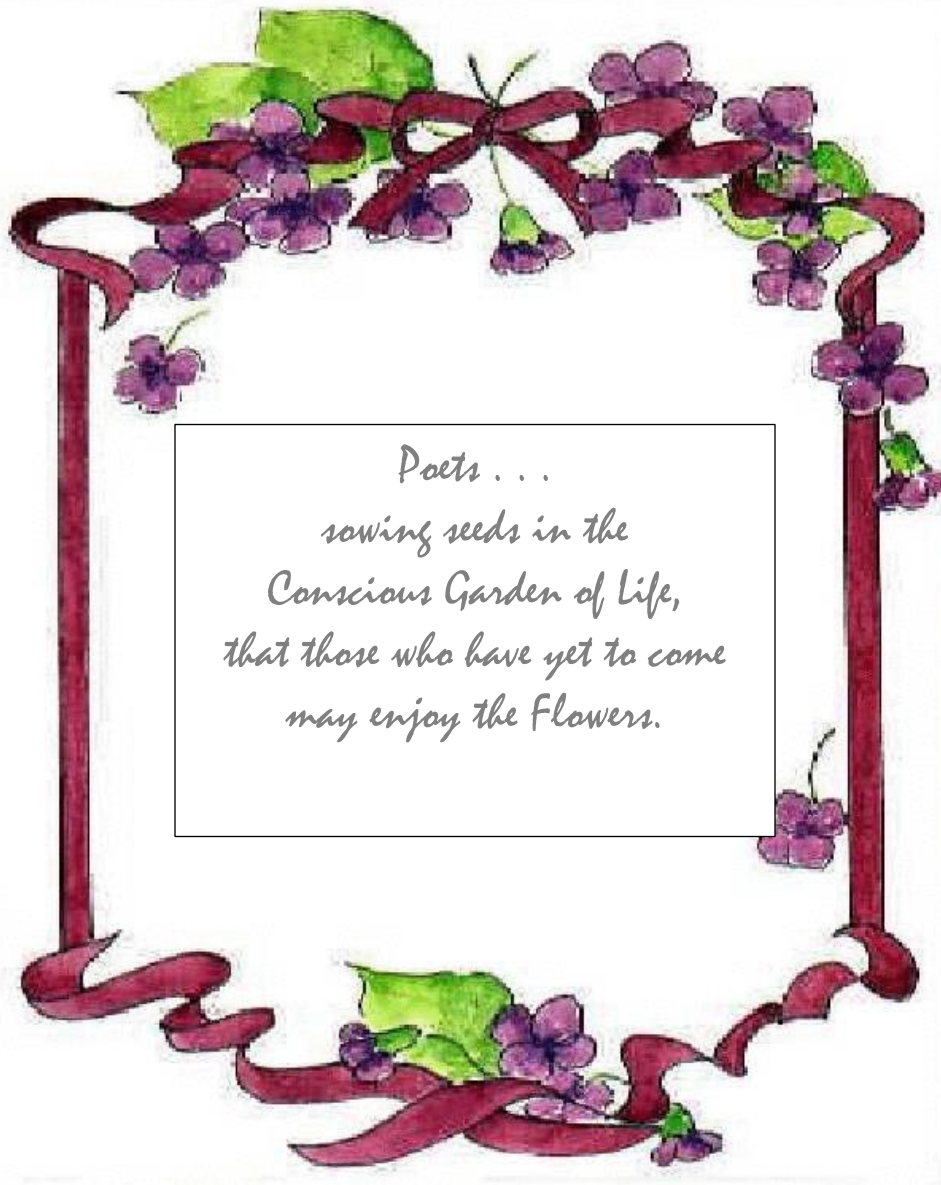
In the following pages, be blessed, and take a few moments of your time to read and consider our commonality as well as our differences culturally and that of perspective. ENJOY!

Visit our web site and our "Anthologies" section for more publications available for purchase and FREE Downloads.

Thank you  
Bless Up

**William S. Peters, Sr.**  
Poet, Writer, Activist, Publisher  
Inner Child Press International

*'building bridges of cultural understanding'*



## A Few Words from the Director of Editing . . .

*Poetry ~ The Best of 2020* marks itself as the last anthology that Inner Child Press International is offering for the year 2020. This publication follows a strong line of volumes which include *Corona . . . Social Distancing*, *World Healing World Peace 2020*, *The Heart of a Poet* and *W. A. R. ~ We Are Revolution*. In the ICPI-tradition, an invitation was also extended to writers from across the globe to be considered as contributors for this collective project. Once again, hundreds have embraced the idea of yet another gathering of diverse linguistic, professional, personal backgrounds and experiences on a platform of perhaps the most-overlooked and underappreciated literary genre: poetry. Our call was simple: “Send us your one best poem.” The response was overwhelmingly generous and enthusiastic as an exceptional choir of creative voices celebrated our invite with a warm embrace. Thus, the current display of a worldwide aspiration for unity in diversity has transpired.

As has been the case with our previous anthological collaborations, a look at the languages that our participating writers represent in this collection suffices to note the vast richness of resourceful expressions: Hindi, Arabic, Bosnian, French, Polish, Italian, Nepali, Armenian, Czech, Spanish, Russian, Turkish, Burmese, German, Indonesian, Swedish, Hebrew, Macedonian, Kurdish, Danish, Dutch, Indonesian, Albanian, Filipino, Hungarian, Irish, Greek, Azerbaijani, Bengali, Portuguese, Chewa, Serbian, Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic, Urdu, and Vietnamese. Though in only a few cases, poems in native tongues precede their English translations, giving us all a uniquely intimate glimpse into at least the external appearance of the creative writing process. The overall product of beauty has been, once again, the joining of hands by a multitude of authentic sources from the core of their cultures; thus, ‘building bridges of cultural understanding’.

I know what is expected of me at this point; namely, in specific reference to providing an insight into the discipline of editing. Instead of reinventing the wheel, I will simply echo some of my comments that I have shared with our readership in our previous anthological work. The process of implementing editorial steps within the context of an international volume does, after all, not differ substantially when the integral promise of Inner Child Press International is taken into consideration: to preserve the original entries in our attempts to maintain the integrity of the poets' voices in order for the reader to enjoy each poem's authenticity. What I state in our disclaimer on behalf of our Department of Editing Services cannot be stressed enough: as we have elected to do minimal surface editing with minor adjustments, you may encounter some challenges in achieving total clarity of the messages shared through poetry. Regardless! I will indulge you to let go of your critical thinking and embrace the spirit through words offered for the poetic art. Having stated thus, I still would like to add a few words about the particulars of our editorial work for our anthologies.

Compilations of a large body of work of any literary genre present a variety of formalistic and artistic challenges, even in situations when all writings originate from a single language. The difficulty of the task at hand increases proportionately as more languages form the basis of the writings that are collected. Contextual challenges often reside in the texts of non-native English speakers or in their translations of those texts into English. Some may (and do) argue that all such submissions should be edited thoroughly before they are offered to the public. It is exactly at this point where I want to stress my professional insight with utmost emphasis: editing is not the exact science one would expect. Many times, when an editor considers and employs the rules of English upon a translated work or upon one that might not have been composed in English first, the authenticity of the authors' words and meaning

face the risk of being subjected to a misrepresentation. Writings with a dialectal, colloquial or eclectic style are exposed to the same risk when the scrutiny of editing is concerned. Too often, the resulting loss of the authorial voice can be profound and deprive the reader of the genuine aspects of the writers' thoughts, feelings and innate flavor. At Inner Child Press International, we strive to maintain the integrity of each and every author's offerings by preserving the seemingly-awkward expressions of those whose native language is not of our own.

Our invitation to the reader remains the same as within all of our anthological offerings: to take time to indulge each contributor for her / his own creativity and aspirations to convey her / his uniqueness.

**hülya n. yılmaz, Ph.D.**

Professor Emerita, The Pennsylvania State University

Director of Editing Services, Inner Child Press International



*poetry is . . .*



# Disclaimer

In our attempts to maintain the integrity of the poets' voices in the publication before you, *Poetry ~ The Best of 2020*, we have elected to do minimal surface editing. We felt that preserving the original entries was critically important for you, the reader, to enjoy each poem's authenticity.

All poems have been preserved in their original versions. You may encounter a few challenges in achieving total clarity of the messages shared through poetry, but I indulge you to let go of your critical thinking and embrace the spirit through words offered for the poetic art.

From the desk of . . .

hülya n. yılmaz, Ph.D.

Director of Editing

Inner Child Press International

*'building bridges of cultural understanding'*

WHAT WOULD  
**L**IFE  
BE WITHOUT  
A LITTLE  
**P**OETRY?

# Poetry

The Best of 2020

Poets of the World

Poetry... The Best of 2020

GRATIS ~ ICPI

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Mutawaf A. Shaheed, AKA C. E. Shy, has been writing since the seventh grade throughout high school, until he became more involved in sports. After his graduation, this widely published author worked at White Motors Company. “The Poet’s Corner”, his column in the company’s newspaper, constitutes his first publication.

[www.facebook.com/mutawaf.shaheed](http://www.facebook.com/mutawaf.shaheed)

## Impressions

Mutawaf A. Shaheed, AKA C. E. Shy

Opening my windows thinking that  
I may get the rest of the fresh  
air that was left there just two  
minutes ago. Then the wind said,  
“not really.”

With cinnamon coffee in tow, I continue  
to work on the suggestions, of the could  
haves. The what ifs, didn't fit. Squelching  
the possibilities of being younger as  
tomorrow glides by, today, shaking its head  
and saying, “I don't think so.”

Drawing thin lines between passion and  
Romance, taking a chance that they may  
be the same. You think so? It may be  
easier to take the blame, than to try and  
explain, why or why not.

In the process of maintaining bits of sanity,  
I believe I go completely mad in the process  
of elimination. People find themselves in a  
strain attempting to understand why they,  
can't be them.

Semi-finally, they find devices that bring  
them to the brink of temporary. Libraries  
filled with agony. Bookshelves lined with  
mis-directions. Finding relief from grief in  
whiskey and soda.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Evolution gone wrong, singing songs backwards  
to come up with something that can't possibly  
add up. No more benefits in one and one making  
two. Waiting to hear the gun shots after the shout,  
these are the sounds one can hear while hoping  
they aren't next.

Pinning their hopes on Bar Be Que ribs, just as grandma did,  
thinking that somebody is coming back to  
endorse them, makes for the completion of the final  
act of act one. A tragedy at best.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Artha Perla, research assistant in the Department of English (Mangalore University, Karnataka), writes art reviews for regional newspapers and magazines. She has *Nanna Putta Tamma*, a poem collection in Kannada, to her credit. As a Bharatanatyam dancer and student of Carnatic Classical music, she personally contributes to art and culture.

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

## Hope

Artha Perla

Everyday I'm looking for hope –

Turning to my side to see him sleep,  
Peaceful countenance snoozing hardships quite.

Everyday I'm looking for hope –

Sliding the door to the sounds of the world,  
Letting the living soak in the bright.

Everyday I'm looking for hope –

Fluttering flies eager for its mate,  
Jogs me of his loving gaze –

Everyday I'm looking for hope –

In the whistling cooker, boiling milk,  
In the smiles around and in those eyes –

Everyday I'm looking for hope -

Unsettling ants, scurrying squirrels,  
Drizzling rain, sprouting grain,  
Hop of the birds and the cock-a-doodle-do,  
All prevent me refrain!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born on September 21, 1972 in Bangladesh, Sayeed Abubakar writes modern epic poetry in Bengali. He has more than 25 books to his credit. His famous two collections are *Mujibnama* (2018) and *Nabinama* (2020). He has been recognized as one of the top 500 poets in Poemhunter.com.

## I Am Tired of Seeing

Sayeed Abubakar

I am tired of seeing the beautiful earth  
Getting damaged by those beasts who look like  
Men too. All the thrones have been occupied  
By those everywhere who have no souls, no

Love, no sympathy to men; they only  
Reign with harshness and hatred; they don't care  
Justice, morality, rationality;  
Greed, lust, brutality are their weapons.

I am tired of seeing genocide after  
Genocide on this beautiful earth where  
Men, women and children are crying and dying,  
Where killers are the heroes, where evils

Are considered good, fools are honored and  
The communal and the capitalist  
Show their sharp teeth as if they were hungry  
Sharks, hyenas, tigers or crocodiles.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca, born to and raised in a Jewish family in Mumbai, went to Mumbai's Queen Mary School. She has a B.A. in English and French, an M.A. from the University of Bombay in English and American Literature, and a Master's Degree in Education from Oxford Brookes University, England.

## Mother

Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca

Mother had three sarees  
Two were 'inside sarees' to wear in the house  
The third was the 'going out' saree to wear for occasions,  
She could wear the 'inside' one to the bazaar  
Which was outside the house,  
So that was the "inside-outside" saree.

Mother fried onions at four-thirty in the morning.  
When they became too expensive, we rejoiced  
She made the curry without onions,  
Then there was no smell and our sleep was blissful.  
At five-thirty she packed 'hot lunch'  
Into lunch boxes.  
With no microwaves we ate our 'hot lunch' cold,  
With few ingredients and a limited budget  
Mother's food was heavenly.  
She took cooking lessons from Premila Lal.

In mother's world you had to eat the egg soft-boiled  
Or egg-flip, if you had sports practice  
At six-thirty in the morning,  
Egg-flip was raw egg in warm milk  
No nutmeg. Condiments are expensive  
Only for the rich.  
Close your nose and drink it up, or down.  
If you didn't, she would hold your nose  
For you and you couldn't breathe.

Mother had an idiom for everything,  
Some she recited in English, others in Marathi  
If you failed a math test, it was  
'Don't cry over spilt milk,'  
She said my daddy was 'too clever by half'\* (sounded better in Marathi)  
If he rationalized matters by 'clever' intellectual arguments,  
Remember he was a poet!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

One day she took me to see the Principal of her old school  
Who asked how my daddy was  
My reply, 'my daddy is too clever by half.'  
Mother did not flinch when the Principal asked  
Where I had learned that expression.

Mother rolled her eyes to communicate commands  
She rolled one lip over the other, pressing them hard together  
It was a language learned in childhood  
A call to prompt response as children.

Once I tried to express disapproval of a student's behaviour  
I rolled my eyes and pressed my lips together hard  
He burst out laughing, I failed to understand his response  
Mother's face appeared before me  
More practice might be needed.

Many things in the world according to my mother  
Make so much sense to me now.  
The ritual of hand-washing, great for Pandemic times,  
Between fingers, in, out, over palms under hands  
Her legacy of 'Waste not, Want not'  
And 'Saving for a Rainy Day'  
And her prophecy for my future  
"The world will become a more difficult place for you  
And even more difficult for your children  
But remember that God is great."  
I'm glad I inherited her faith.

\*'Too clever by half' in idiomatic usage refers to being too clever for your own good.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Salaudeen Abdulazeez, with his pen name “Hayzedbaba”, is a poet, a student and an author. He has won several awards for his poems, such as “The Best Poet” prize from The Writers Pen and a Blue Quill from Poemarium.

## Homelessness

Salaudeen Abdulazeez, AKA Hayzedbaba

It unbearable when it cold.  
The cold will penetrate my bones.  
Every heads will be in their respective abode to shell a burning flame.  
When I have nowhere to shell my own flame.  
When it sunny days my body burn like firewood.  
Absence of intermediary between sun and me.  
Passers-by watching me in my dirty clothe sleeping along the road,  
The cloud is my roof, the floor is bed.  
Anyone who come in contact with someone like me try to help.  
The situation here is unfavorable.  
I feel pain from my head to my humble toes.  
The taste of all weather conditions I have tasted.  
Rain beat me like cane.  
Where is my own home?  
When will I be at my own protective roof?  
The pain is becoming a monster.  
It wakes me when am sleeping.  
It keeps me awake when I feel like sleeping.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Eliza Segiet has a Master's Degree in Philosophy (Jagiellonian University). Her poem, “Questions and Sea of Mists”, won the International Publication of the Year title from Spillwords Press (2017 and 2018). She was nominated for the 2019 Pushcart Prize, the iWoman Global Awards, and the 2020 Laureate Naji Naaman Literary Prize.

## Life's Plan

Eliza Segiet

Is this what autumn looks like?  
Through deserted streets,  
in spouts of rain,  
unhurried  
the eve strolls around.

Very slowly  
gives time to a long  
granting time for talks  
night  
about how it can be.

Regular  
- life plan,  
which is worth  
a look  
- even  
through water pour windows.

When the rain stops,  
dreams have a chance  
to stop being themselves.

This is what autumn looks like  
- now plans won't be misty.

*Translated by Ula de B*

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Britney Russell, a 23-year-old poet from Jamaica, has been on multiple radio stations and poetry shows in the USA, Canada, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Poetry has perpetually been one with her since childhood. She was placed second in the Pledge Nexus International Poetry competition on September 1, 2020.

## Blackness Is Royalty

Britney Russell

The sun kissed my skin,  
Thank God for my beautiful melanin.  
Whether chestnut, almond or chocolate  
Black girls are winning.

The water hugged my hair,  
It appreciated the kinky flair.  
My natural hair, I will perpetually wear.

It identifies who we are, whether far or near.  
They planted the seed that we were always slaves.  
But we were kings, queens and they were afraid:  
Afraid of how powerful we were and are.  
They raped Africa and left a monumental scar.

Let's take back our culture and throne!  
Appreciate and love our blackness to the bone.  
Rise up and discover the truth!  
All along we've been lied to about our roots.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Yuan Changming edits *Poetry Pacific* with Allen Yuan in Vancouver. Credits include ten Pushcart nominations, six poetry awards as well as publications in *Best of the Best Canadian Poetry (2008-17)*, & *BestNewPoemsOnline*, among others across 46 countries.

For the Other Side of the Night: A Sinnet Sonnet

Yuan Changming

Since           yester twilight  
Along         the borderline of tonight  
With          fits of thirst & hunger  
Among        storms of pain  
Under         attacks of viruses  
Between      interludes of insomnia  
Beyond       both hope & expectation

At             the depth of darkness  
Amidst       the nightmare  
Through      one tiny antlike moment  
After         another...  
Against      deadly despair  
Until         awakening  
To            the first ray of dawn

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Andrew Scott is a native of Fredericton, NB, Canada. During his time as a poet, he has spoken in front of classrooms, judged poetry competitions, and authored over 200 hundred publications. Scott has six collections of poems and one book of photography to his credit.

## The Sky Is Angry

Andrew Scott

The sky is screaming angry.  
The winds are swirling blindly  
in the dark with a purpose.

Spirits are looking over the world  
from just over the edge.  
Bodies are afraid to step over.  
Chaos voices holding back all.

Standing in the middle of the storm  
I am pretending to be full of strength  
even though people's screams of pain  
are making myself so weak.

Humans have stopped being civil.  
Killing each other from a slight.  
Peace is not on the horizon.  
Fires are still burning,  
Spreading from person to person.

Voices of peace not being heard.  
Civility has been extinguished.  
Concern that sensibility  
will never come back.

Enough has become enough.  
The sky is clashing angrily  
and my soul is afraid.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Anuradha Bhattacharyya, Associate Professor of English in a government college in Chandigarh, India, has authored four poetry books, three novels, and two academic books. She won 5 prestigious awards in the field of literature. She was one of the four jury members in the Lit Digital Awards 2020, India.

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

## Cerebration

Anuradha Bhattacharyya

Bread and cheese for brunch,  
A drumstick for dinner, light, evenly roasted,  
Intake for the day.  
One way to expel CO<sub>2</sub> is cycling to the lake . . .  
Yet clammy skin stinks  
And I am not going to let it.

More poised am I with a laptop  
A reclining floor sofa for gaming,  
A mug full of green tea  
With raisins  
That's right.

Inertia in the bones  
For blood to work on synapses  
Click click  
Go the keys.

Dry skin, dry lips,  
Dry eyed  
Concentration.

Dedication  
Towards a single goal.

Perfect.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born in Leon Guanajuato Mexico on April 21, 1977, Fernando Martinez Alderete is a writer, poet, theater actor, and radio producer. His poems appeared in 108 anthologies in thirteen countries around the world. He has authored two books, one of poetry and another of short stories.

## Radiography

Fernando Jose Martinez Alderete

I am not a man of total steel,  
Many people in society sanctify me  
for being in a wheelchair desensitized  
like a trunk that only breathes casually.

There is a weakness in the interior that drives me crazy  
for the woman and her fragile intrinsic seduction,  
I believe I am a knight of inexorable respect  
without silencing my delight for muses, although married.

I do not avoid eroticism if it is delicately shown,  
nor to the temptation of revenge when they invade  
those who imagine that because I am gentle I am helpless,  
forgiveness prevails, but what is learned remains.

I will never be steel because I am limited in movements,  
If you do me a deep X-ray, you will see my hell,  
a mysterious sweetness capable of overflowing bones  
when the rhythmic syncopation of an idyllic is ensued.

I'm glad that I was born human but I do not walk,  
lover of meat, pasta, cheeses, fruits and chocolates,  
flying over any stone or mountain that crosses.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Neelam Saxena Chandra has authored 57 books. She holds a 2015-record with the Limca Book of Records for being the author having the highest number of publications. She has won several international and national awards and was listed in *Forbes* as one of the popular authors in 2014.

## A Tearful Adieu

Neelam Saxena Chandra

Mom, so secured was I in your womb;  
My life inside you was a real miracle!  
My tiny feet swam in glee;  
My little hands cuddled you merrily;  
My toothless mouth would often giggle and cackle!

Mom, so happy was I in your womb;  
But, one day, some quivering clatters I could hear -  
I heard someone scream and roar,  
“I don’t want daughters anymore!”  
I sobbed as I listened to your helpless tears . . .

Mom, how could I smile in your womb  
When I had understood that being a daughter was so bad?  
My little eyes cried and heart yelled;  
Something in me had already failed,  
Alas, I realized that I would soon be dead!

Mom, although I shall no longer dwell in your womb,  
Your warmth and affection I shall surely miss . . .  
To you, I shall not lie;  
I had not expected to die:  
But fate had in store for me this deathly kiss!

Mom, so happy I am to have been a part of your womb,  
Although the togetherness was destined as a short boon!  
As death pounces and approaches near,  
I bid you a tearful adieu mom dear,  
May a hundred sons be born to you soon!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Hailing from India, B. S. Tyagi writes in Hindi and English. He has authored several fiction and non-fiction books and translated numerous poetry books. His poems and short stories appeared in various anthologies. He finds the greatest reward in the inner bliss that creativity showered upon him, and not in public recognitions and celebrations.

## Celebration

B. S. Tyagi

(1)

The beach splashed with morning hues  
Serene and sequestered like a rain-bow  
Standing in complete awe I see  
A silver wave come towards me  
In a jiffy I was inundated  
And stayed no more  
What I was a moment before.

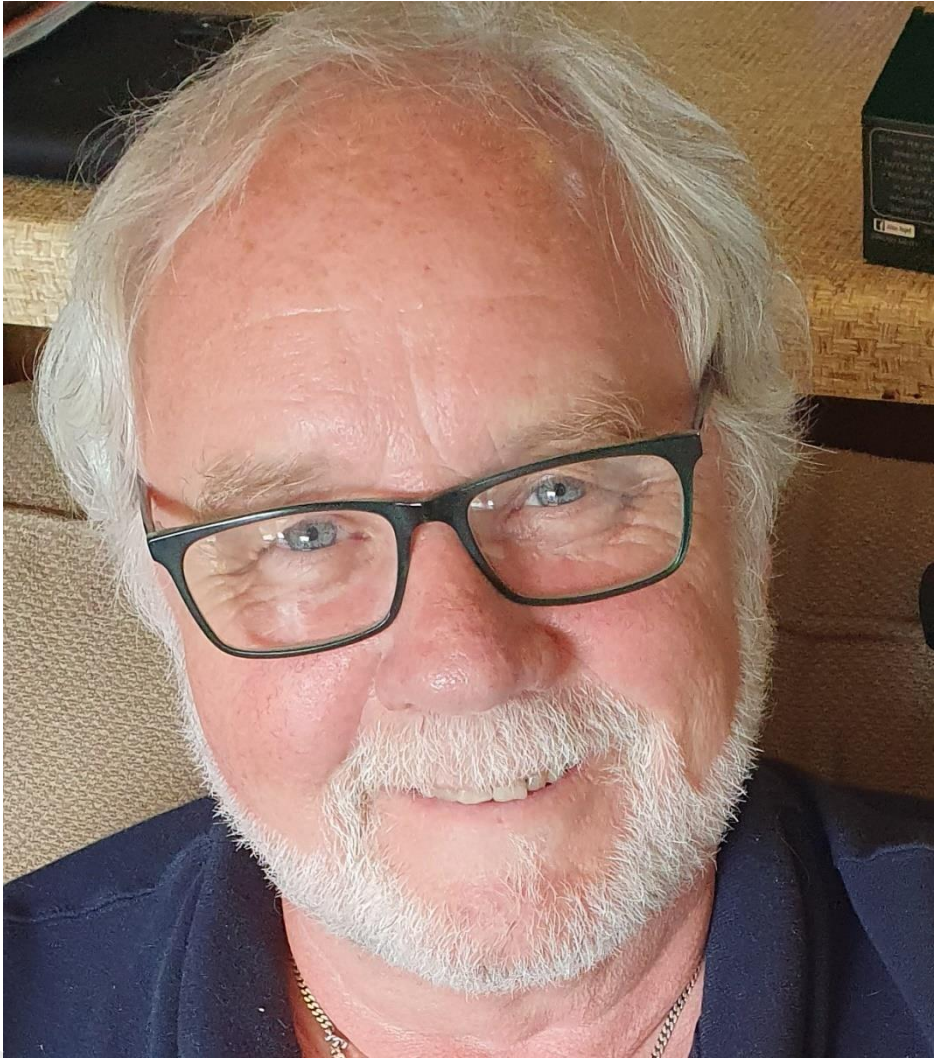
(2)

Buried I lay under the seas  
Delicious coolness I felt seep in  
Every pore lay parched for long  
Ecstasy spilled all over  
Soul fluttered as if in breeze  
Strange to say  
Thirst – ages long was quenched.

(3)

A song sans words out of bliss issued  
Thrilling the whole being  
With ecstatic realization  
Of Immortality latent within  
Utterly spaced out  
Deep down I went and went  
Here began the Celebration!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



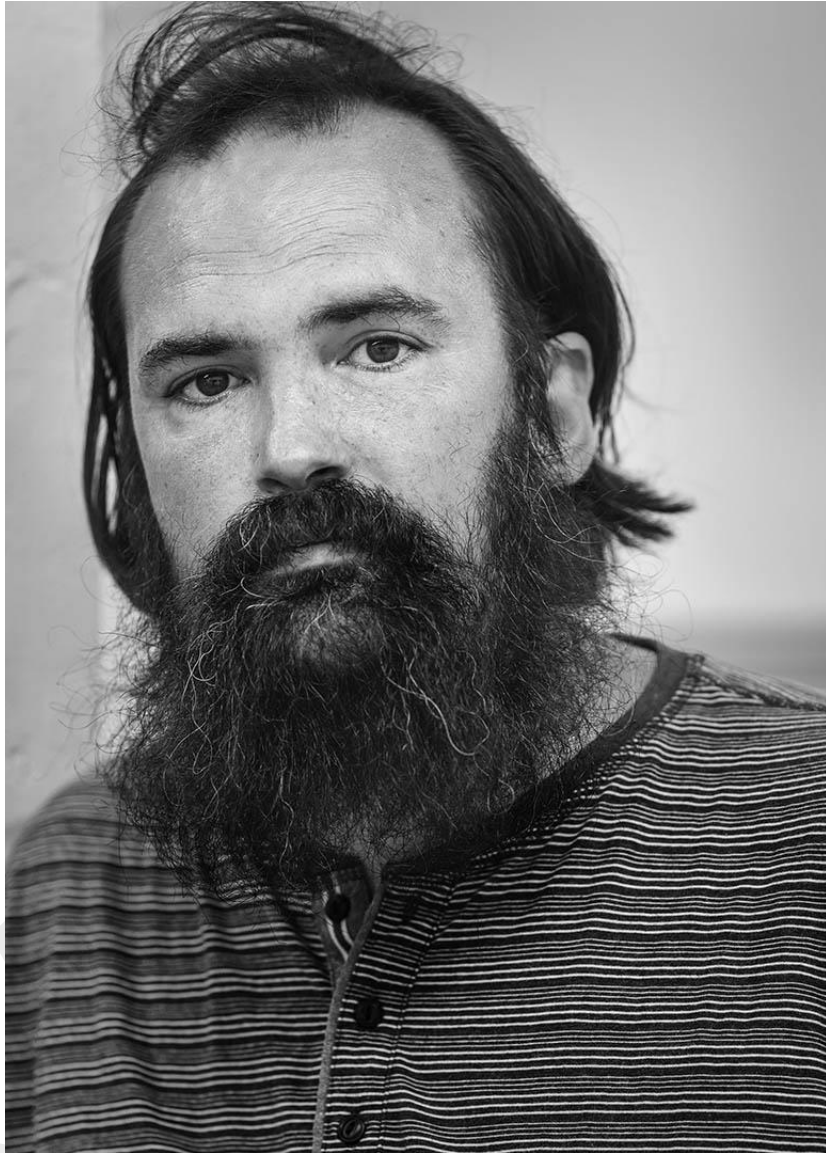
Paul T. Dillon has authored three poetry collections (published by Lapwing Publications in Belfast, Northern Ireland). The titles are, *Going Home*, *The Ironmonger's Wolf* and *Invisible Light*. His poems have appeared in magazines and journals in Ireland, the UK and the USA. He lives in Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

**The Sea Shell-Child**

Paul T. Dillon

And there will be sea shells  
For you to gather in the hem  
Of your dress for spilling out  
Like treasures fashioned into mystery  
By the breathing of the sea

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Poul Lynggaard Damgaard, a Danish poet, born on the 24th of December, 1977, lives in Aarhus, Denmark. A member of the Danish Authors' Society, he has participated in several international poetry festivals in Europe. His poems have been translated into many different languages.

## Vi ville

Poul Lynggaard Damgaard

Vi ville have en anden duft end rosens.  
En der forbandt bilerne dybere  
end mellem torne  
og kronblade.  
En feber  
mere blank  
end kontinentet  
som en frossen sø  
ingen vil skøjte på.  
Hinanden  
i et forsinket  
bryllupsoptog  
på kanten af en farve.  
Vi ville hosten som en provokation.

## We Wanted

Poul Lynggaard Damgaard

We wanted something else than the scent of roses.  
Something that connected the cars deeper  
than between thorns  
and petals.  
A fever  
brighter  
than the continent.  
A frozen lake  
no one wants to skate on.  
Each other  
in a delayed  
wedding procession  
on the edge of a color.  
We wanted the cough as a provocation.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



John Eliot's poetry has been published by Mosaïque Press. His works include *Ssh* (2014), *Don't Go* (2016), *Turn on the Dark* (2018), and *Canzoni Del Vernerdi Sera* (2020). His newest collection, a translation of selected poems into Italian, was launched at the Salerno festival in Italy this year.

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

## Messenger

John Eliot

*For Daria, March 2020*

4.10 a.m. I'm not looking for someone awake,  
just saw you on line, don't really know you. We met,  
I found you cold. My wife tells me you are warm, kind;  
maybe it was me, full of himself, *il poeta*,  
the concert. Signed a lot of books that night in  
late sun and beauty of small Italian town.  
Now you, me, are both awake, afraid of the unknown.  
Guns and terrorist belong somewhere else;  
soldiers defend us, us against them.  
But this. We lie separate in our beds in the dark, waiting.  
The air we breathe may be deadly.  
For me. For you. For those we love.  
There is no reply. Are you the next victim?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Kevin M. Hibshman has had his poetry, reviews and collages published around the world, most recently in *Rye Whiskey Review*, *The Crossroads*, *Drinkers Only*, *1870*, *Synchronized Chaos*, and *Medusa's Kitchen*.

## Love Is the Thread of Our Lives

Kevin M. Hibshman

Each of us a patch of mottled fabric.  
Let us weave a tapestry of bold design.  
All of our many colors sitting next to each other like  
The rainbow in our Creator's eyes.

Love is the thread that truly binds.  
There can be no borders if we are to be free.  
Each square is self-defined, vibrant in its individuality.

If there are those who feel that they do not belong,  
Let us show them just where they fit.  
Here we exist neighbor to neighbor, brothers and sisters, stitch to stitch.

One day, when the quilt has been completed,  
We will throw it over the cold shoulders of the world.  
We will then realize how every color was needed.  
Our single flag shall be unfurled.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Anna Fletcher is a poet, writer, and playwright from Plymouth, the UK. Several of her poems have appeared in numerous national and global anthologies. She is currently working on her own collection for publication. She also writes articles on various topics, including poetry and mental health.

[anna.fletcher79@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:anna.fletcher79@hotmail.co.uk)

## Inside a Dream

Anna Fletcher

Behind the quietest part of the night  
As lucid lullabies drift from the moon,  
Since slumber trickles towards dawn's new light;  
Stars fading away while covers lay strewn.  
Rhythmical rises and falls of the chest,  
Deep and heavy, like an elephant's sigh,  
Undisturbed dormancy awaits the crest  
For waking life to ignite in the eye . . .  
Cool cornflower skies, long lavender field,  
White waterfalls meandering to space,  
Sparkles of stardust; dimensions concealed  
Morpheus appears, revealing your face.  
Apollo follows, destroying the scene  
Exiled and awake, and outside the dream.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Job Degenaar, born in 1952 in The Netherlands, has authored more than a dozen collections of poems. He translated poetry from Paul McCartney, Reiner Kunze and persecuted writers into Dutch. He is the president of PEN Emergency Fund, a worldwide operating fund for writers who urgently need help.

[www.jobdegenaar.nl](http://www.jobdegenaar.nl)

[www.penemergencyfund.com](http://www.penemergencyfund.com)

## Hummingbirds Forever

Job Degenaar

*(Inspired by Felicidade, Bernadete Claudino, 2017)*

So smooth the childhood hills, with fields  
full of sunflowers, shining in a dancing light

where the hummingbirds have now returned, passing by  
like ancient drones, forward, backward, high, low

Purifying nectar with raging wings, deep  
from sweet chalices, they hang still

in the moment, writing slow  
rules about happiness, sublime

circling around ultimate pleasure  
as disciples for their worshiped god

You always wanted to accompany them  
and freeze their flight on canvas

just before they disappear, over the Brazilian  
hills, behind the wordless mountains

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Umid Najjari was born in 15 April, 1989 in Tabriz-Sout, Azerbaijan (Iran). *The Land of the Birds*, *The Photo of the Darkness* and *Beyond the Walls* are among his published writings in addition to some translations.

## The Shadow of Longing

Umid Najjari

The shadow of longing enters us, when we don't wait  
The cloud of loneliness crosses overhead  
The months pass . . .  
Our years miss for spring  
Our prays loss God

. . . The light of our dream-built house faints  
In one moment we are turned to night  
Lonely alley in one moment . . .!

. . . Loneliness is not a movie for watching,  
The captain of drown ship knows the loneliness,  
Not actor knows crying.  
Sometimes laughing is the last breath of crying  
For that  
I laugh for you leaving when I watch your photo.

. . . Ask the standing wall my fatigue  
Ask my longing watch . . .!

. . . Miss instead of me,  
Miss for feet-seized trees,  
Miss for wingless birds like me,  
Miss for loneliness,  
Miss . . .!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ndaba Sibanda is the author of *Notes, Themes, Things And Other Things, The Gushungo Way, Sleeping Rivers, Love O'clock, The Dead Must Be Sobbing, Football of Fools, Cutting-edge Cache, Of the Saliva and the Tongue, When Inspiration Sings In Silence, The Way Forward, The Ndaba Jamela, and Collections and Poetry Pharmacy.*

## The Magic of the Rainbow

Ndaba Sibanda

There is something intriguing  
about a rainbow of nationalities  
and a kaleidoscope of ethnicities  
not only about their various cultures,  
their colours, creeds and languages,  
their interests, hobbies and visions  
their farming, fooling, food and music,  
but also about their understanding  
of the sense of humanity and history  
rooted in their many traditional stories,  
imbedded and loud in their ethnic clothing,  
their lives rich in colour, diversity & detail,  
teaching us about our diverse walks in life  
and the need to embrace the human race  
in its diversity and depth as it is both a unit  
and a badge of beauty, ability and creativity

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Faleeha Hassan, a writer, teacher, playwright and an editor from Iraq, lives in the U.S.A. She has an M.A. in Arabic literature, authored 25 books, and is the first Iraqi woman who wrote poetry for children. ICPI's Cultural Ambassador for Iraq and the U.S.A. and a 2018 Pulitzer Prize nominee, Hassan's poems have been translated into 16 different languages.

## About War, I'm Talking

Faleeha Hassan

What if I slept all that time

Or

I had hibernated from 1980 to 1988?

To be a safe bear

Or wood frog with full body parts

Is much better than being locked in a damaged soul

Your meaning of existence is peeling harshly

Whenever the storm of war is blowing,

Yes,

I remember

In the time of war

The soldiers' mothers

Are unable to pass their hands through the thickness of the walls of absence,

To gently smooth the hair of their boys

Or wipe their dusty faces,

Time after time

Disappointment hits them non-stop

like a squash ball in the hand of a beginner player

While hope keeps escaping from their hearts as nimble as a cat

In the end

They will not cry

But their eyes are melting

Drop by drop

Now

Invisibles like us,

They wish they could heal

From the brain perforating

Siren

And not wake up

Everyday

Shouting in the ears of the house

I am here

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

I am here

Like someone reading a unmemorized manuscript  
invisibles like us

Afraid

One day the lips of the bombs  
Will drown them with hot kisses

...

1980 to 1988 , the duration of the Iran–Iraq War  
wood frog, this frog dies in the winter time and comes back to life in summer

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Zaldy Carreon De Leon, Jr. holds a degree in Theology (Magna Cum Laude) and Religious Education (Bene Meritus), and has earned a Doctor Honoris Causa in Literature and Arts (Litt.D.) and Peace and Humanities (DHum). He is a scholar, published author and a licensed teacher at Bataan (The Philippines).

## Something About Ilion

Zaldy Carreon De Leon, Jr.

O immortal one, anger's still unsung,  
Doomed and ruinous, Akhilleus' fang,  
Causing the Akhaians a bitter loss,  
Heaving souls their fall, down their brave heroes!  
Lo, their flesh upon depressed soil of tears,  
In the under-gloom of death disappears,  
Leaving but memorials of death and blood,  
Carrion for birds of prey and dogs in mud.

Let the will of Zeus be done, this time on,  
Whilst heaven attests to the future throne.  
When two brave souls contended against,  
Broke each other's name their powerful raze,  
Lord Agamemnon, Marshall of the Greeks,  
And most arduous fright, called prince of the beasts.  
The former, Atreus' son, lord and king,  
The latter, Akhilleus, goddess bring!

To the gods of Olympus, I beseech,  
Who brought this quarrel in a height bewitched?  
That peace may not settle that easily,  
But a brawl in which our contenders see.  
Thus, the son of Zeus by Leto bespeak,  
His anger unto Agamemnon's wick,  
This man so rude his words and iron will,  
To a god nonetheless might keep him still.

Therefore, the god made a great burning wind,  
To consume the army, lessen it thin,  
So the plague arise, and the army woe'd,  
Sickened and dying in the whole abode,  
The curse named for a single man has been

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

The army's plead to surrender his din,  
From despising a man of prayer, flee,  
Look how suffer they, this calamity?

This old priest, the man of prayer, Khryses,  
In a ship comes down with gifts so priceless,  
A mean to ransom his fair daughter back,  
This he pursue to Agamemnon's mock,  
Thus, on a golden staff he carried on,  
The white bands of god, more than precious stone,  
He plead for grace to all men Akhaian,  
Chiefly to the two powers in the land!

Says Khryses, "O captains, honor I say,  
Thou Menelaos, brother-master, pray,  
And Agamemnon mighty-king, and all  
Thou, Akhaian men, listen to my soul!  
Olympus beholds the gods in that grace,  
May they grant you plunder to Priam's place,  
And that afterwards, a fair wind to home,  
But give back my daughter for a ransom."

Then, all the soldiers murmured their assent:  
"O Menelaos, Agamemnon, spend  
No time to think of this good man's request,  
As we too honored Apollo, arrow's best!  
Thus, behave well to the priest, O great king,  
Take the ransom, give his daughter you bring,  
For see how this priest's blessing for us may,  
In Priam's gallantry we shall but stay!"

But Agamemnon's rash would not comply,  
It went against his desire, so he deny,  
And brutally ordered the old priest out,  
To the eyes of the gods such act's uncouth,  
Says Agamemnon, "Let me not find you,

## Poetry . . . The Best of 2020

Anywhere by the waters or land, sue  
Me unto your gods, but I won't comply,  
I am Agamemnon, and you know why . . .

Return not, you old priest, never come back,  
Forget your daughter in my hands a-luck,  
And if I do, those effects can't help you,  
The white bands of your gods will say adieu,  
They will fail your heart until you die soon,  
And see nay your daughter thus if you swoon,  
Should I give her up? No, I will not do,  
But she's mine forever, I swear to you.

She will grow old at my home in Argos,  
Far away from her own country, or worse,  
Works on my loom, and visiting my bed,  
This shall be her fate as my will has said.  
So leave us in peace and go, while you can,  
Do not show your face again to me! Ran  
Away! – if ever you found my shadow,  
Do not come back and witness your sorrow.”

So harsh he was, in a voice of terror,  
The priest's knees shook, he gets out of the door,  
That the old man feared, thus obeyed his word,  
Moves away silently, dread by the lord.  
But unto the shore, a clamorous sea,  
He prayed and prayed to the gods, intensely,  
As he cease from solemn, as he forego,  
Silken-braided god, summons for Leto:

“O hear me, master of the silver bow,  
Righteous protector of Tenedos, know  
That your servant here pleads, render my woe!  
Your holy towns summon you, Apollo!  
O Sminthian, I have been loyal vast,

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Roofed your temples and shrines, as do I must,  
Golden cups and silver bowls in your name,  
Bronze statues and iron swords, just the same.

Or burnt thighbones and fat in your altar,  
These things I've done for your glory stellar!  
For highly we venerate your strength wide,  
Hear your humble servant, my soul unhide,  
Bullock or goat flesh – let my wish come true,  
An old man's heart has just one thing for you,  
But your arrows on the Danaäns strike,  
Recompense my tears, snare the way you like.”

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Basudhara Roy teaches English at Karim City College in Jamshedpur (Jharkhand, India). As an academic, a poet and a reviewer, her work has appeared in numerous publications. Her debut collection of poems, *Moon in my Teacup* was published by Writer's Workshop in Kolkata in 2019.

## Journeys

Basudhara Roy

We, who have stayed put  
in places;  
hugged out of habit, reluctance,  
necessity or love,  
our little corners of the earth;  
built and kindled  
loyally for years our one hearth  
of mixed blessings;  
watered the same soil and  
watched life  
send down roots in the toil of  
our nurture;

we, who are grooved  
in unalterable  
configurations of continuity,  
we will never know  
the enticement of a fresh start;  
the beckoning  
of impossible probabilities;  
the fluidity  
of translation from dreams  
to possibilities.

The wonder of sunrises  
and sunsets  
on alien shores are not for us;  
Nor the warmth  
that blossoms amidst strangers  
as the day  
dissolves in a caress of fatigue.  
We will know  
less of love, lesser perhaps,  
of fulfillment and loss.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

And you, my friend, envy  
the thickening  
spindle of days that I gather  
dutifully each dusk  
in my chest, while you say  
you must  
cut the strings each night  
and let  
the kites of your days seek  
their own destiny.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Zakir Malik is Editor-in-Chief for *ILA*, writer, and social campaigner. His recent book is titled *The Wail of the Woods*. He is also Director for UNESCO to International Youth Development Model United Nations in India, a member of the Jammu Kashmir Innovative Foundation for Transformation Society, and General Secretary for the Cultural Forum Kupwara.

## The Smell of Jehlum

Zakir Malik

Thine rivers chirping from dawn till dusk  
are my nights of ecstasy  
from which freshness does flow  
with drops of peace pouring into Dal  
I hide my puzzles under your green coats,  
and those glistening lilies of the Wular.

O' Kashmir you drench; glow like diamond  
while my thirst quenches with balls of snow  
that thatch of lush greenery  
is where I belong, where I come from  
rest my breaths are the guests of time.

Endless is dusk where I slide towards  
slowly, slowly into the waters of Mansar,  
I walk then towards Silk route to relish  
and squeeze taste of nature at its best.

I live in the drops of Pangong lake  
O' my land I smell your beauty  
hear your voice in rush of Jehlum  
see your hues in fruits and leaves.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Vietnam veteran Mark Fleisher has authored three books of poetry and collaborated on a fourth. His works have appeared in numerous online and print anthologies. Now based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he earned a journalism degree from Ohio University.

## Paper Trails

Mark Fleisher

I like grasping a newspaper,  
ink smudges my fingers,  
but I can wash it off  
I like turning pages,  
digesting the news,  
good, bad, indifferent,  
checking the ball scores,  
chuckling at the funnies,  
ranting at opinions  
rendered by pompous pundits

Hold on, not so fast,  
proclaim publishing poobahs  
you are old hat, old school,  
you and your kind,  
relics from the tactile age.  
better hop on the  
digital bandwagon  
before you're too late

Gazettes and Globes,  
Posts and Presses,  
Times and Tribunes,  
Suns and Sentinels,  
bound for museum archives  
I wonder, and those names  
of endangered species  
gliding across the tongue  
like honey butter:  
the Epitaph, Vindicator,  
Post-Intelligencer, Plain Dealer,  
Times-Picayune,  
Press-Scimitar,  
the cleverly named  
De Queen Bee

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Can a digital newspaper  
line the bird cage,  
or wrap fish,  
or protect pottery  
and porcelain if I move,  
or soak up pee  
when the cat ignores  
the litter box?

I'm arrogant enough  
to do crossword puzzles  
in ink and sometimes it  
gets messy --  
that's half the fun -- can't  
do that on a computer  
or cell phone screen

Already I throw  
disdainful looks  
at folks who read  
digital books  
on their precious  
kindles and nooks.

So sentence me  
to perdition if I dare  
commit sedition  
reading a computerized  
newspaper edition

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Tyran Prizren Spahiu tries to find topics that worry, nag, excite, and embrace. To describe them is a pleasure and challenge to him. Being emotionally connected with letters, he loves a calm life and continues to spread kindness. No matter where he goes, you will hear the voice behind: “Tyran, the Bohemian was here.”

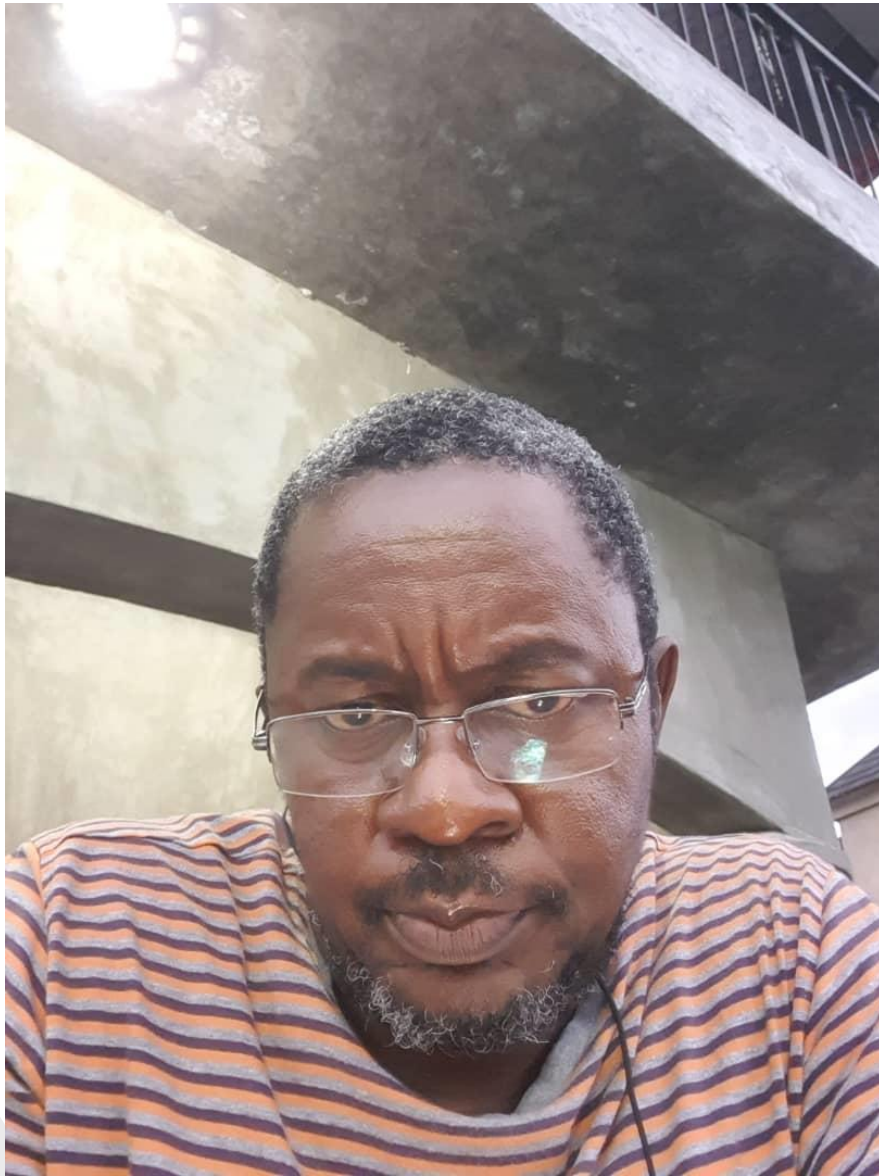
## The Most BEAUTIFUL FLOWER

Tyran Prizren Spahiu

. . . empress,  
listen, please do listen,  
it is my inner voice,  
requires silence,  
my being understands your happiness,  
me,  
I want to savor the light, say good morning, hold you,  
whisper, uncover hidden feelings,  
express love,  
I really do,  
while water waves embrace the Banks of Love,  
crown inspires,  
I am eager  
to dance under the sounds of classical ballet,  
this blessed month I have deserved,  
to adorn treasure with many lyrics.

Flower Lady, the most beautiful creature,  
please let me hug you calmly,  
allow feelings to speak, smile arrests  
eyes twist the lines of your body,  
thirsty passion sings to future,  
Madam,  
let sincere spiritual fondness spark,  
idyll, the most picturesque scene,  
floating letters to breath,  
you are the universe, rooted in the sentiment,  
you, the Queen of the Empire.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Chijioke Ogbuike is engaged in his arts. He is a self-published poet and novelist – *Pregnant Thoughts* and *Expelled*, respectively. An independent musician, he plays under the pseudonym Ketchy Dons and has two albums – *fortune n the slave* and *A cut above the rest* to his credit. A third one is in the wings.

## Here Are My Mother and My Brethren

Chijioke Ogbuike

Love is a sequence  
of selections  
Perhaps not very much thought of  
before it happens  
This also suggests alternatives  
from which man makes his choice  
Life came to us  
with a duality  
Perhaps to break the monotony  
of monopoly  
Life is death  
as death is also life  
Light is life  
as darkness is also death  
Fire and water  
This becomes the divine path  
as proclaimed in Sirach 15 v 15-18  
'if you want to,  
you can keep the Lord's commands.  
You can decide  
Whether you will be loyal to him or not.  
He has placed water and fire  
Before you: reach out and take whichever you want'  
This is also the barometer  
– 'if you want to'  
Through which we select  
the pebbles that defines the nature of our journey  
A strange malady  
has now overtaken the world  
The deception of relativity  
It has introduced a monkey  
in our very thoughts  
It now shapes  
how we see our reality  
Once upon a time  
the bond of family was something to behold

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Now parents  
are merely surrogates to their children  
Eighteen is a golden age  
To be indoctrinated into a deceptive halloween  
That soon unleashes its mayhem  
on the unsuspecting and unprepared  
It is a fact that those who chose us is those we also choose  
Nothing is gained beyond  
the certain reciprocity of payback  
Most times unfortunately  
family do not choose us  
Or it is us perhaps  
that chose not to choose family  
We always prefer  
the fickle breath of ambition  
And the many distractions amply provided  
By surfing the ether  
As man continues with his destruction  
of earth as nature gave it  
Family faces annihilation  
There is a new definition of reality  
Freedom without responsibility  
As we grapple with daily survival  
It is also possible that our society does not choose us  
It is a dog eat dog world that we are in  
Everyone is not cut out of the same measure of cloth  
It is inevitable that some grow up predators  
Some become the victims  
No one thinks of collateral damages  
when the only language left is the drums of war  
The choice to become immigrants  
Is not always a preferred alternative  
It is only an acceptance  
that our home has left us forsaken  
In such situation's shoulders to lean on  
are looked for at distant climates  
Inside geographies of ambiguities  
Where the colour of your skin  
Is very much a batting average

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

in their dubious stock exchange  
At such times too, it is not always difficult to identify  
Our mothers  
Our brothers and sisters  
Here love easily identifies those in love  
Especially when we  
ask for it  
Look for it  
Knock on its door  
As we adapt to circumstances  
the veil is lifted to reveal them  
our mothers  
our brethren  
the language spoken  
is usually free of ambiguity

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dilip Mohapatra, a decorated Navy Veteran from Pune, India, is a critically acclaimed poet in contemporary English. His poems regularly appear in many literary journals and anthologies worldwide. He has six poetry collections and two non-fictions to his credit.

[dilipmohapatra.com](http://dilipmohapatra.com)

## Beyond Bounds

Dilip Mohapatra

The amoeba moves up the value chain  
and slides down  
to come in a full circle  
tracing a zero  
a void  
that contains all that matters  
and perhaps that does not.

The singular becomes plural  
in steps of ascending order  
one fissions into two  
the yin and yang  
the duality graduates to  
the trinity of triumvirates  
opening the vistas  
emanating in four cardinal directions  
the senses and elements emerge  
and the six dimensions  
try to define  
the boundaries of existence.

The rainbow melts and merges  
into a white sheet  
while you ascend along your spine  
from the gross to the sublime  
and run your pen  
on the Möbius band  
trying in vain to draw lemniscates.  
The planets and the zodiac signs  
dictating your destiny  
you continue your  
search for synchronicity  
unendingly.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Till perhaps you realize that  
the drop engulfs the ocean  
the void envelopes the universe  
and the zero confines infinity.

GRATIS ~ ICPI

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



June Barefield, AKA June Bugg, is a budding anarchist, military veteran, and a proud father of three. He has authored three collections of poetry, and enjoys reading, the outdoors – mostly sunrises, and makes a swell pot of rice and beans too!

## Help Me

June Barefield, AKA June Bugg

Anchored firmly here on the bottom  
Tethered heavenly here  
on  
the  
BOTTOM

My dream requisite ingestible  
An acquired taste  
My fate & destiny manifest too late  
Here in this place  
On the bottom where i deconstruct my hate

Help me!  
My fear & doubt impregnate some goofy dream deferred  
A raisin in the sun ignored  
Always

I Keep one eYe on the bourgeois  
Witness do i another deplorable compromise restored

Help me!  
Here  
On the  
Bottom  
Again ignored

Skim do eYe lightly over the absurd  
Here  
On the  
Bottom  
Where i must choose  
My choice a trap infused  
I be not confused  
It matters not  
I Choose a choice already chosen 4 me  
Generational my choice

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Assimilated into the asylum  
Nurtured in the fantastical!  
Help me define my voice

Help me!

My inferiority is a complex  
A germ  
Worming its way thru all the limits of my ambivalence  
Conditioned by blind, raging, indifference  
Indifferent  
Here  
On the  
Bottom  
Reaching deeply down into the bloody red toil enriching the soil  
& for the sake of the cause, unawares, i adopt the process  
Whitened by years and years of humiliation  
Not My process

Inflexible 2 kneeling i must kneel  
Kneel at the altar of my abasement  
Here on the bottom i inoculate this feeling, concealing nothing  
Here on the bottom i dig my heels viciously into the flanks of a world not made 4 me

I watch  
& i wait  
My patience a slave  
Here on the bottom tethered heavenly

Help me  
Please.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



D' Siafa Draper is a native of Liberia. A survivor of a 14-year civil war, he experienced the struggles and inequalities of being a refugee. His writings cut across love, spirituality, world peace and the politics of Africa. He believes that life may not be lovely, but it is lovable.

## Reflections from the Rear

D' Siafa Draper

Solemn and vast is the opened field  
Obscured in dooms of nights out of sight

Ceramic bodies scrapped off life's essence, woven in rags  
Unease bodies shoveled down as sunset plunges into eternity

Echoes of mournful souls combs our streets  
Abandoning quieted bodies in clays and tombs

Weeping softly, seeking independence  
From the claws of death – the highest bidder

Alas

Wrestling glens of darkness to greet the morning sun  
They'd wished to live their youthfulness –

Free from the chains of enforced slavery  
A kind of freedom that condemns clutches injustice

But now dines in company of distress  
Each so depressed residing in homes of defective lights

Denied the kiss of mercy, victimized by bomb mines  
No metaphor to express heart's grievances reminisced

Now each standing firm in painful silence  
With spoken words unheard, as each night might be bitter or better

Vain in harvest must each soul reap  
Like a crimson rose one trampled ground

Life's battles never won  
Silent souls linger here and there

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

Wandering bones without homes  
As empty tombs become swimming pools

Solemn and vast is the opened field  
Obscured in dooms of nights out of sight

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Monsif Beroual is an internationally renowned poet from Morocco. He has received multiple awards, including “The World Icon of Literature of the National Academy of Arts and Culture” (India, 2020) and “The Pablo Neruda Medal” (2017). He is the Youth Ambassador of Morocco for Inner Child Press International.

## The Heart of a Poet

Monsif Beroual

In this humanity sake journey  
I'll be like Jean Piaget  
When he starts seeing the world  
Through a child's heart  
Or like Alexis Tocqueville when he decides  
To walk in this endless road  
To reach American Democracy  
Or like Charles Wright Mills, who establish the politics of truth  
Through the promise  
To be honest and pure no matter how will be the cost,  
And like Spinoza who takes the magic stare from the universe  
To unchains a hidden truth  
Or like Friedrich Nietzsche  
When he screamed loud: "Zardach, God is dead!"  
When he discovered the world is getting colder.  
And I wished over all ends or starts within philosophy's heart  
May our world be embraced by love song again.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Alicia Minjarez Ramírez, a translator and an internationally renowned Mexican poet, has won numerous prizes, including “The World Cultural Excellence Award” (2020, from the government of Peru), “The Excellence Prize World Poetry Championship” (2019, Romania), and “The EASAL Medal Award (2018, from The European Academy of Sciences and Letters, France).

## Blue Whispers

Alicia Minjarez Ramírez

Freezing raindrops  
Pour hasty voices  
Over my body,  
leaving behind  
Fragmented unfinished moments,  
In the dense night of my foliage.

Amber lights crystallize  
Wet cobblestones.  
Faint breeze throbs tactile words  
In ragweed of your lips.

The wind impels  
Among its branches  
Lost – found longings  
Inside the indigo ink of your gaze,  
As silent opacity shimmer flashes  
Delimit folds of the shining water  
Running down my cheeks.  
Should I hear the breeze pronounce your name?

Blue whispers articulate  
Songs of the stones.  
Pierced transparencies dissolve desires,  
As melts the stone with the fire  
And the sea on the horizon.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Bangladesh, Kamrul Islam is Professor of English. He is a bilingual poet who has eleven books of poems to his credit. He has been honored by the Gujarat Sahitya Academy and the Motivational Strips on India's 74th Independence Day. His poetic work appeared in different national and international magazines.

## An Exuberant Virgin Butterfly

Kamrul Islam

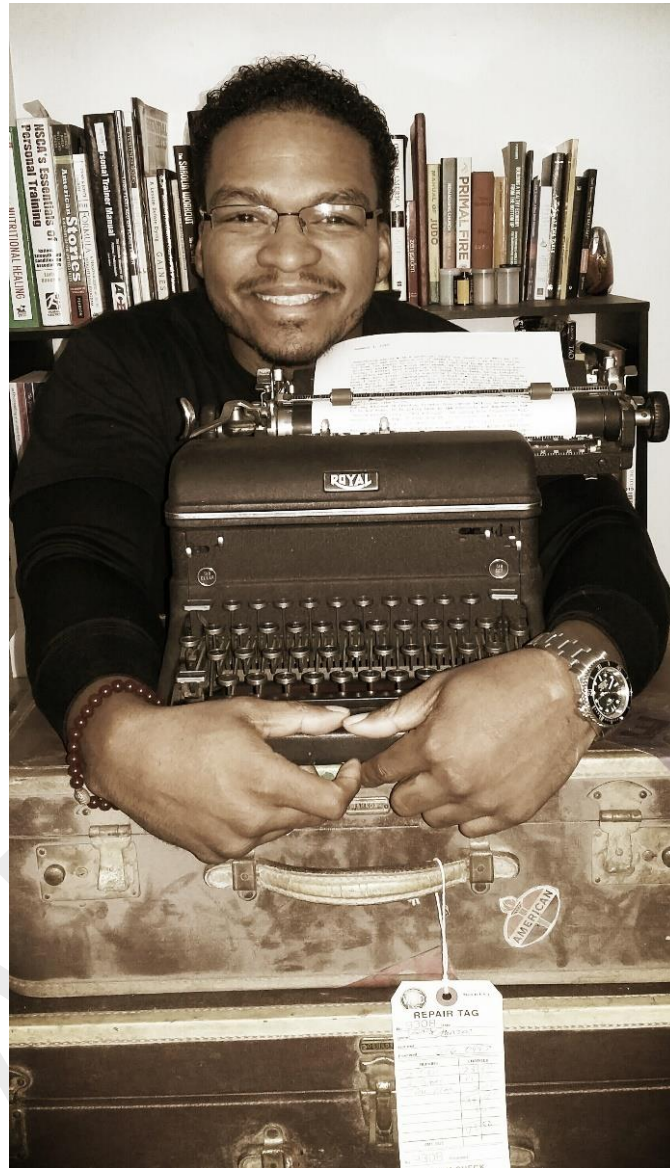
Treading the shattered dreams,  
I traverse the woods and gentle trees  
To know the tales of birds' music.

Old leaves cuddle the new to bring  
The milieu of vernal grace,  
The clouds move with brilliant moods,  
The doctors search for words spent  
To mend the scars and wounds of souls.

Peace and love, the magical wand,  
The scintillating way for greater bond  
To surmount the odds and worldly pains.

Not utopia, an exuberant virgin butterfly,  
Wings of spectacular divine colors,  
Shows the blissful road to walk on . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Langley Shazor was raised in Bristol, Virginia. He has a deep appreciation for culture, arts, wellness, history, philosophy, science, religions, and education. Writing is not only personally therapeutic for the author, but a medium for which he has the opportunity to impart positivity on those from all walks of life.

## A Rarified Breed

Langley Shazor

Killing fields scattered  
Marrow-ed remains  
Of carbon-based lifeforms  
Disregarded and discarded  
By domestic poachers  
Set on display  
Viewed and never assisted  
Does not everything hath has life  
Also have a soul?  
On the verge of cultural extinction  
These existential eccentricities  
Breed fear and lathing  
For real life melodrama  
Documentaries, discussions, dialogue  
Develop drastically varying perceptions  
With unifying positions  
If I have not yet begun the fight  
Have I already been predetermined  
To death?  
We all return to ash  
Unintended to be prematurely snuffed out  
Exhale this anatomical animosity  
And let us all  
Breathe

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Kashiana Singh resides in Chicago where her life embodies her TEDx Talk theme, “Work as Worship”. In her poetry collection, *Shelling Peanuts and Stringing Words*, she speaks as a participant and an observer. Her chapbook, *Crushed Anthills* is a journey through 10 cities. Kashiana’s poems have been published on various platforms.

## The Country

Kashiana Singh

When did you stop listening; become unwilling to look up; look away from your own opiate limbs; look away from birthmarks on your skin; look away from the falling blisters of your eyes;

When did you become so lazy that you let the claws of your feet burrow deep, trapped in your own blemished ground; unmoving even when being eaten alive—  
by the blooming anguish of your people; by odors from floating carcasses of your soul; by the waves that beat against the sunken scales of your ghosts; by sordid drippings of pleas fleeing your own mouth.

At this very moment I am a lighthouse standing in watch; I am carving my solitary light into ripples; each ripple a caterpillar pupating; a butterfly pulsating to panchkritya of tandav dance; its wings flapping to the spitting fire of a trillion monarchs; unwilling to diapause until you listen to the whistling of their alliterative song.

They will circle you into an orchestrated garland, evacuating your cauldron of prayers, and pledges, until you hear their buzzing silence; they will drink incessantly of your matted milkweed, they will churn intemperate until you hear anew.

For if you don't; an apocalypse is coming closer and closer towards your shore; you have time now to gaze outwards and listen; to act before being engulfed into the whirlpool of growling stillness; to become the country we knew.

To become the country, we knew.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Teresa E. Gallion is on a spiritual journey, traveling and hiking mountain and desert landscapes. She has three books to her credit: *Walking Sacred Ground*, *Contemplation in the High Desert*, and *Chasing Light* – a finalist in the 2013 New Mexico/Arizona Book Awards. Her work has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies.

<http://teresagallion.yolasite.com/>

## Plea for Unity

Teresa E. Gallion

Brothers and sisters of planet earth,  
we must breathe in rhythm to the harmony  
of the earth rotating.

Earth is tilting in her axis from the weight  
of negative energy and physical destruction.  
We are destined to fall into the unknown

with no name in the universe unless  
we learn to breathe out love together.  
It is only through the compassionate gift

of kindness to one another that love  
is manifest and peace may flow like  
a mighty river from our souls.

We may continue our battles to see  
who will be temporary king of the hill  
or we may choose to send love notes  
to the universe.

A call for prayer, gratitude and forgiveness  
is needed to show the human race values  
the privilege of living on planet earth.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Louise Hudon was born in 1951 in Trois-Rivières, Québec with the soul of a poet. She is known for her ballads and poetic texts published in multiple volumes. She has over 680 poems read worldwide.

[www.louisehudonmedium.com](http://www.louisehudonmedium.com)

## The Importance of Life

Louise Hudon

Have you reached your darkest steps?  
Your tears run dry?  
Black clouds are on the horizon  
Worsening the state of your prison?

If you are surrounded by the darkness of life,  
Dream of the sun and for its return  
We are not bound by evil  
After the rain, there will be a rainbow.

Leave your heart and mind open with nature.  
Forget your debts and bills  
The recipe for life  
Is to feel one's spirituality.

Do not dismiss your past wisdom.  
For it helps you surpass yourself.  
In the quest for happiness,  
Put in all your effort, never despair

While I wait, my writings will free me  
And with the help of angels, I rely on my wits.  
I want to come to your aid.  
With hope that your spirit will rise once again.

We support you, my friend, did you know?  
I noticed you looking disheartened  
Understanding your inner suffering.  
We shall heal you with our best wishes.

*Edited by Kayla Trottier on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Suranjit Gain was born on October 8, 1984 in the Khulna district of Bangladesh. He received his education in Bangladesh and India, and is being congratulated by the universe in the field of literature.

## The Child-Teenage

Suranjit Gain

We are children  
innocent like flower;  
blessing of god,  
clean our character.

New born-teenage-lad,  
we are in future;  
build up country and  
life chariot's driver.

The sun of knowledge  
our little heart;  
will shine the universe,  
it's true must.

Little sands  
create continent;  
we are small but  
infinite life in breast.

New day's dreams  
play in our eyes;  
we are joyful sky,  
river's waves nice.

Dewy green field,  
morning sun-shine;  
we are like ocean,  
unique and fine.

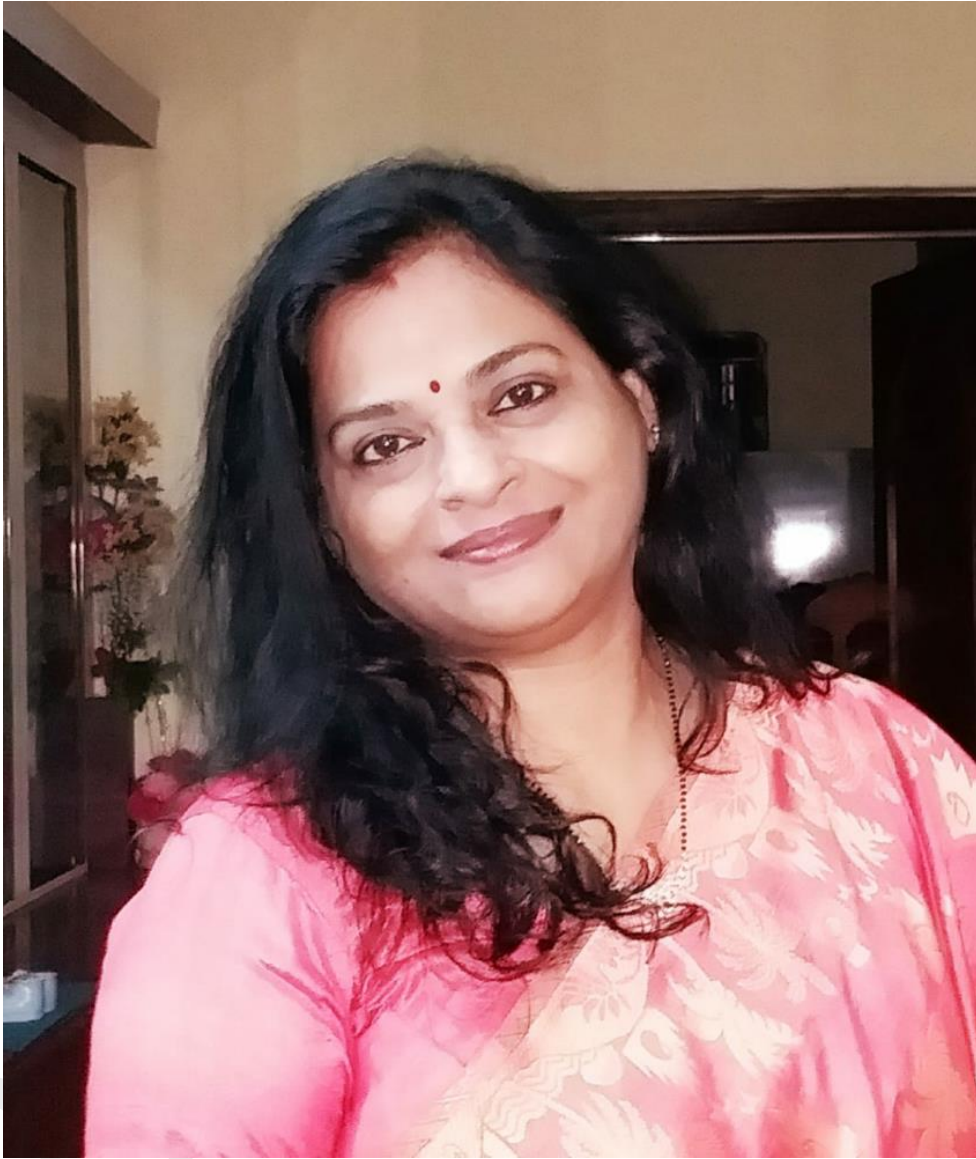
Our smile fresh  
as dawn wind;  
weeping brings dark,  
as set of sun kind.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

We are more nice  
to lap of mother;  
make joyful house  
sweet talking of ours.

GRATIS ~ ICPI

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



The poet Rajashree Mohapatra writes in Odia and English. Her poems have been translated into many languages. Her poems appeared in international anthologies, e-zines and journals. She has co-authored two poetry books: *Mirage* and *Seeker*. She devotes her time to painting. She has studied the traditional paintings of Odisha as a source of history.

**There She Is . . .**

Rajashree Mohapatra

Where wind streams amid the hills  
Upon the boughs , cherries shine  
There angels sing to reveal mysteries  
A joy, filled in rain drops silently drizzles.

There you find a budding rose  
Sovereign of beauty,  
Under the heaven as she grows  
An earthly flower, smiles on throne

Glorious days carve verses  
Upon the strand they are engraved  
Inlay of desires with gold and gems  
Emeralds melt to ivory waves

There she rises from her blissful bed  
Between shadow and light to reign  
When she sings , music is still  
In her note, you breathe soulful glee.

Like the sun she is ever new  
every morning, a refreshing dew.  
Her dreams dance in meadows green  
She is there . . .  
With her songs of love eternal yet divine.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Nguyen Chau Ngoc Doan Chinh, AKA Hong Ngoc Chau (Nguyen Chinh on FB), hails from Vietnam. She holds a Master's degree in Education Management and a diploma from Premio Mundial A La Excelencia Literary 2019-2020. She won the Copper Cross of The World Union Of Poets for Promotion of Art in 2020.

## Mother's Words Spoken to Her Daughter

Nguyen Chau Ngoc Doan Chinh, AKA Hong Ngoc Chau

### LỜI MẸ NÓI VỚI CON GÁI

Con gái thân yêu nghe mẹ dạy  
Đời con một nửa sống bên người  
Chứ không còn bé trong tay mẹ  
Nuôi nấng chở che mãi không thôi.

Sẽ có một ngày con nghĩ đến  
Trước tiên con nghĩ đến người kia  
Chứ không là mẹ còn ôm ấp  
Âu yếm vui buồn cùng sẻ chia

Sẽ chẳng giản đơn, con gái nhé  
Trái tim con bắt đầu băng khuâng  
Bắn khoan về một điều gì khác  
Mẹ hiểu, con yêu! Điều thiết thân

Mẹ chẳng thể nào mà trói buộc  
Con yêu người bạn trai yêu con  
Lại càng không thể ngăn con đạt  
Giữ những lời thề hẹn núi non.

Mẹ chỉ xem người con lựa chọn  
Góp phần ý kiến hay cùng con  
Về điều nhỏ nhất đời thường nhất  
Yêu được người là một chiến công

Con phải gắng công nhiều lắm đó  
Người đời thường nói phở và cơm  
Đồ ăn so sánh với con gái  
Sao phải nghĩ mình là phở cơm

Con phải là con – người phụ nữ  
Mà trong ánh mắt người đàn ông  
Đàn bà đơn giản gồm hai loại  
Loại để yêu và loại . . . để không.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Nếu chẳng được yêu, đừng dự trữ  
Con không nên có nhiều nhân tình  
Không lo con thiếu người con chọn  
Mẹ chẳng yêu cầu con đẹp xinh

Học rộng tài cao giỏi đủ việc  
Mẹ mong, con hãy tìm ra tiền  
Tự do tài chính là cần thiết  
Cố gắng làm nên sự nhân tiên

Giàu có bao nhiêu, con nhất quyết  
Cũng không ỷ lại, vững tinh thần  
Cho dù con giỏi hơn người đó  
Đừng để người yêu thấy tủ thân

Đừng ngạo mạn tiền con kiếm được  
Vô nghi khi đặt lên bàn cân  
Mối quan hệ buộc con gìn giữ  
Phụ nữ cần trân trọng đối phương.

Đôi lúc đàn ông cũng tội nghiệp  
Chỉ vì không biết những điều cần  
Giận hờn chi đó, con bình tĩnh  
Đừng cố tỏ ra con quá căng

Họ nhẫn không như con đã nghĩ  
Nhiều khi họ giống trẻ thơ ngây  
To thân, lớn xác, nhưng ngờ nghệch  
Con cũng mềm, già néo đứt dây

Hai đứa trẻ con tình sẽ vỡ.  
Trưởng thành lên, đến lúc rồi con  
Họ cần con gái điều gì nhỉ!  
Con phải làm gì con biết không?

Là quen nhưng chẳng hề nhàm chán  
Sẽ chia nhưng chớ đê cam tâm  
Họ không là của riêng con nhé

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Đừng có chủ quan, mắc lỗi lầm

Gắng sức để làm người phụ nữ  
Tài ba, mẹ nghĩ là không nên.  
Không ai có thể hoàn toàn cả!  
Tủ kính búp bê đứng một bên

Cao quá thì không ai dám với  
Khiêm nhu vị trí con nơi đâu  
Là ai tự biết, khôn ngoan nhất  
Cổ vẽ hư danh sẽ lộ sau.

Càng vẽ khác chi đeo mặt nạ.  
Con không giấu mãi mỗi đuôi đầu  
Việc nhà tị nạn con không giúp  
Chắc chắn có ngày sẽ tuyệt giao

Bình đẳng nữ nam ai cũng biết  
Thương con họ hiểu cách hài hòa  
Đừng nên câu nệ, quá sòng phẳng..  
Mới giữ được người đó ở nhà.

Nghे mẹ, con thường xuyên nấu nướng  
Những ngày sóng gió ập thuyền con  
Thủy chung là thứ mẹ cần dặn.  
Tay nắm tay, đừng vội bỏ buông.

Vì có người đã từng nuôi tiêc  
Lỡ duyên, bạc phận trách ông Trời  
Con nên khôn khéo biết hòa thuận  
Mẹ nghĩ rằng con hạnh phúc thôi.

## Mother's Words Spoken to Her Daughter

Nguyen Chau Ngoc Doan Chinh, AKA Hong Ngoc Chau

Listen to my teaching, my dear girl!  
Half of your life you'll live with another  
You're still not young, being nurtured  
And protected by my arms forever

There will be a day you have a romance  
First of all, you think of a young man  
Not to think of your mother embracing you  
Caressing you to share sadness and joy clues

It will not be simple, my dear girl  
Your heart will begin to wander  
To be worried about another secrecy  
I understand, my girl! The necessities

I cannot bind you – cannot forbid you  
To love your boyfriend who loves you  
I cannot even stop you to obtain  
Your vow with rivers and mountains

I only consider your chosen lover  
For contributing my sincere ideas  
About things small in normal life  
Loving a young man is a good surprise

You have to contemplate a lot in mind  
People usually, analyze noodle and rice  
Alas! How is food to compare with girls?  
Why do you think yourself to be noodles or rice?

You must be yourself – a woman  
Or a kind girl in the eyes of a man  
Simply, he divided girls into two kinds  
A kind for being loved . . . another for bye

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

If not being loved, don't keep anyone  
You should not have many loving ones  
Don't worry to lack a man for your choice  
You're so beautiful I don't like to require

You mustn't be widely talent, good at all jobs  
But you can make money as I always hope  
Never depend on anyone on money – never!  
Try to make money - a before-eye matter

Although having much money, please decide  
Not to rely on it, let be stable your mind  
Although you earn more money than he'll do  
Don't let your lover feels ashamed. It's true

Don't be proud of your money earning  
When putting on the scale it means nothing  
It's an obligatory relationship you must keep  
A woman needs to respect a life partnership

For a sincere man, he's occasionally pitied  
Only because he doesn't know necessities  
If you are in anger, let be calm, in the end  
Don't try to show your heavy discontent

He isn't patient as you think, I remind  
He sometimes looks like a naïve child  
Of course, he has a big body but he's still silly  
Be soft, everything has its broken point truly

If two of you are childish, love will be broken  
Be an adult, you are at the mature age golden  
Dear girl! What he needs you to do, please show!  
You must be a serious person, do you know?

You are familiar with him but not boring  
You may share but it's not your burdening  
Before marriage, he is not your own sake  
Don't be subjective, you'll make mistakes

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

If you try to be a good talented woman  
I think you should not be in such romance  
No one is perfect everyone naturally knows  
Don't be a beautiful doll in the glass window

If you're high talent no one dares to love you  
You should humble to see your position true  
For you to know yourself, It will be wiser  
You try to show off, the bad fame appears

If you show off, it means you wear a mask  
You cannot hide your personal clue at last  
The housework you are envious not to do  
Surely there will be a break up of you two

Among people, they all know the equality  
Loving you he knows how to harmony  
Do not be draconian or extremely fair  
So you can keep him be at home there

Obey me, do your cooking frequently  
During the stormy days in your family  
Loyalty is the thing you have to keep  
Hand in hand, you don't rush to leave

There has ever been someone to regret already  
She blamed God due to ungraceful, unlucky destiny  
You should be smart to get along more or less  
I really think you will be in your happiness . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Attracta Fahy, a psychotherapist [. . .], lives in Co, Galway. She holds an M.A. in Writing and authored a chapbook, *Dinner in the Fields*. The October winner in *Irish Times* [. . .] and a Pushcart [. . .] nominee, she was shortlisted for Over The Edge New Writer [. . .].

## Do It

Attracta Fahy

*(After Charles Bukowski)*

If you are going to try, go all the way,  
do it, do it, do it, do it, and I did.  
I went all the way down to five and a half stone,  
doing it.

All the way to bone, shedding my body,  
ultimately yours, stamps, stickers,  
imprints, impressions, what to be,  
who not to be.

I sunk into the deep,  
took my anger, its sword of discernment,  
love, a lantern to light shadowy guts.

In this body, bind and wound  
were one, like ivy clings to trees,  
all bound in hunger.  
Everybody became everybody's shadow.

I sunk into death, its bloodied waters,  
insatiable starvation in protest wanted more,  
and more, to be less, and less, and less again.

A world with blinded eyes refused.  
I smashed their convex image,  
turned the stone which formed these bones,  
the murky underworld,  
shady maggots, snails, and ants, coiled in dark.  
I clawed my way up from there.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Supratik Sen is a blogger who writes fiction, non-fiction, poems in Bengali – his mother tongue, in English, and in French. His writings have appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines.

## It's You

Supratik Sen

Morning dew  
Falls in my eyes,  
Another sunrise  
Will be seen  
In the horizon,  
A pack of lies  
Will begin to  
Consume the day,  
Alluring ways,  
Mad rush, chasing time,  
Ignoring the rising star  
For a meaningless reason,  
Will invariably lead  
The world and its cousin  
To the pre-written prison.

In the interim,  
Let me hum  
With the birds,  
Without words.

I wonder how sadness  
Can be so beautiful,  
It brings us closer  
To the truth.

I realize that the dew  
Is not just a mere drop,  
It's your presence, it's you.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Siliguri, Darjeeling, Zinia Mitra teaches English at the University of North Bengal. Her poems have appeared in national and international journals, including *Muse India*, *Ruminations*, *Contemporary Literary Review*, *Kavya Bharati*, *East Lit. Indian Literature*, *Coldnoon*, *Asian Signature*, *Teesta Review*, *Setu*, *Pangolin Review*, and *Poetry Potion*.

## Lag

Zinia Mitra

Lag is failure to keep up with others  
in a movement or a development;  
a period of time between one event and another;  
a retardation in an electric current flow ;  
also another term for string  
(North American billiards)\*  
-strings tie up  
our bits and pieces when we lag behind.  
It is a harrowing feeling of exclusion  
like a torn scrunched page that lands outside the bin  
or like the silence of time when a companion has hired a sturdy boat and left the curved  
shores of life  
and we grow conscious of the dead wet sand under our feet  
and question the meaninglessness of the oblong bubbles of water that pop up.

Sometimes it is pleasant to lag behind  
when all the others with their backpacks have hurried away  
to look at the crumpled bed sheets, used towels and lipstick-stained coffee cups  
to imagine their very very busy sunlit days.

Sometimes it is wonderful to lag behind  
in a relationship when the other has moved away  
listen to old songs, feel the dog-eared books, smile at the photographs  
and imagine the fresh tapering fingers of friendship holding his hand.  
Sometimes I lag behind to savor these fine moments  
to know that I exist. Always alone.

\* Definitions from Oxford Languages, online

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Uwe Friesel, a published author and translator (Nabokov and Updike, among others), was the first president of the Unified German Writers Union (VS) after 1989; co-organizer of Writers' Cruises in the Baltic and Aegean Seas, and co-founder of the international UNESCO-Centers in Visby and Rhodes. His rewards include Villa Massimo Rome, Writer-in-Residence Hamburg and Berlin, and German Literature Fonds.

[http://www.uwefriesel.de/art\\_nouveau.html](http://www.uwefriesel.de/art_nouveau.html)

## Ewigkeitsgedicht

Uwe Friesel

Der Winter ist vergangen  
Die Bäume grünen noch  
Die güldnen Sternlein prangen  
Rund um ein Schwarzes Loch

Das Weltall es verschwindet  
Und schafft sich dann stets neu  
Nur unsre kleine Erde  
Hat immer Gott dabei

## Eternity-Poem

Uwe Friesel

Winter now has vanished  
Trees are getting green  
Golden stars replenish  
Black holes gape in between

The universe is shrinking  
To mighty nothingness  
Just tiny earth keeps blinking  
In GOD's own fussy mess

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



The poems of Akash Sagar are a part of numerous anthologies and poetry festivals, including Efflorescence by Chennai Poetry Circle, Glomag by Glory Sasikala, The Virtual Reality (Sparrow Publishers), and Guntur Int. Poetry Fest. He is a proud member of Soul Scriber's Society of Salem that organizes the annual Yercaud Poetry Festival.

## Inner Interrogation

Akash Sagar

Four directions strand  
vagabonding on nomadic lands  
alas! Who resides within?  
inner interrogation.

Elements five unrecognize  
Fibonacci senses comprehend sky  
alas! What ignites within?  
inner interrogation.

119 atoms on table  
molecules react in fables  
alas! Where were all these within?  
inner interrogation.

Calendars color days  
mélange march different ways  
alas! Why flags numbers within?  
inner interrogation.



**Channah Moshe**

Born in Jerusalem, Israel, Channah Moshe grew up in Western Europe. Writing is her nirvana. Her poems have been published in the US, the UK, India, Italy and on the Internet. Her hobbies include photography, ballroom dancing, homeopathy, baking, reading, writing, and feeding stray cats.

## A Picture

Channah Moshe

On the backdrop  
of sand dunes  
and turquoise waters  
an opulent man  
and stunning woman  
sit at a cafe  
with two teenagers  
munching  
chatting  
and laughing.

What a picture!

As one of the teenagers  
I can reveal  
it is as much  
a fata morgana  
as the desert  
can produce.

For she is not his wife  
the teenage daughters  
his only  
when he returns  
from yet another  
escapade overseas  
and the laughing  
hides the tension  
that in a snap  
it might all  
evaporate.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Armenuhi Sisyan, from Armenia, has 10 books to her credit (the last 2 were published in Japanese in Kyoto). Her work has been translated into 13 languages. She is a member of different writers' associations across the world, has participated in various international literary festivals and programs, and received several international literary prizes.

## Sometimes

Armenuhi Sisyan

The angels sometimes  
are dying to see something  
that is not theirs-  
they get punished:  
the curiosity burns their wings a little  
and they get depleted  
sometimes . . .

The angels want sometimes  
to be in places where they shouldn't be,  
and their feet hits the ground  
Instead of blood – pain oozes from their feet,  
and they struggle to go forward,  
sometimes . . .

The angels want to try things sometimes  
not belonging them  
and they almost lose themselves,  
so the sky oozes from their eyes . . .  
Maybe the angels need to be forgiven  
Sometimes . . .?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Maria Do Sameiro Barroso (Portugal), is a medical doctor, a multilingual poet, translator, researcher, and an essayist. Her poetry books have been published in several countries and were awarded prestigious literary prizes. Her poems appeared in over one hundred national and international literary magazines and anthologies in over twenty languages.

## Cosmogony

Maria Do Sameiro Barroso

In the beginning, a large empty flower  
began to stir.  
We were the earth and the sky,  
moving in the shade.  
In our story, there were birds,  
mountains and haze.  
Like Spring sprouts, we started  
moving across the sun and the rainbows.  
In the slime of shells and corals,  
I heard your first words,  
not knowing how to stop the purple,  
the rivers, the sky,  
or the yellow flower of the sun violins.  
We were born out of a sweet  
cosmogony.  
We came to each other  
out of a rebellious desire,  
playing an ancient game,  
reviving an enchanting spell  
by the quietness of a river,  
the shadow of white poplars,  
listening to the gorgeous sound  
of a well-tuned lyre.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



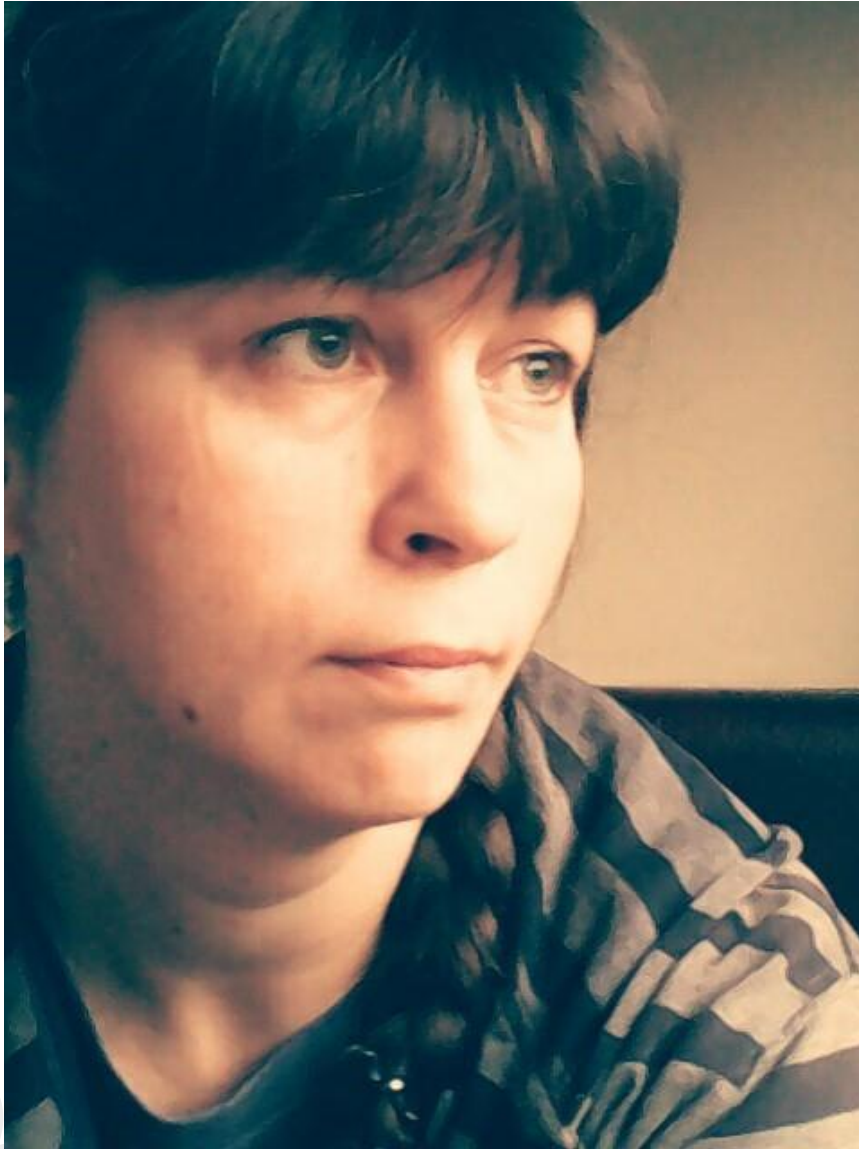
Jyoti Nair, a Learning and Development Professional, works for a top-level Indian MNC as the Capability Development Manager for global HR Operations. Her writings have appeared in Indian journals, anthologies and e-zines. She aims to harness the power of her pen, championing for social issues such as child abuse and mental health awareness.

## Oneiric Peekaboo

Jyoti Nair

I borrowed the oneiric lenses from Morpheus last night.  
For I had to wear my wings and leap into the Elysian atmosphere.  
Hark! I have alighted, and there's already a star carpet spread for each who arrives.  
A Chalice is placed at the center, and I am told that it contains the stardust philtre.  
It is the welcome drink for us, the languid travelers who have enrolled  
for this peekaboo game.  
Verily, I am being captured by the dewy mistiness of the reticle, the cosmos shutterbug  
waving from atop.  
Unequivocally, I am enveloped in a diaphanous garb, I felt I am swinging in a  
waterfall hammock.  
There are a plethora of seasons to walk into, the seasonal embellishments  
nudge each door as signboards.  
I am still flummoxed, should I opt for clementine clad autumn or  
burnished blossoming spring?  
I wish for the ballerina pumps to foxtrot between both the celestial vales.  
Suddenly a vehement voice reverberates,  
"we have only one protocol, eliminate greed if you want to stay".  
I step back, I feel washed and cleansed by that resounding grasp.  
Unruffled, I remove the borrowed lenses and scamper to pick my poem-diary.  
This time, I didn't have to keep doodling to zero-in the besotting title.  
The title is 'Uprooting Pleonexia',  
I slide the window blinds to inhale the tangerine pollens of the refurbished day.  
I dunk into the poetic vessel, steering my choked Euphemisms into those orbits...  
Where ink unleashes its wanderlust valves.  
Where my funambulist mind dares to plunge,  
Into the unbeknown terrains.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Russia, Galina Italyanskaya is a former pediatrician and molecular biologist, who now works as an English teacher. She has been writing poetry since her childhood. Some of her poems appeared in poetry anthologies, such as *Poets Unite Worldwide* by Fabrizio Frosini and *Our Poetry Archive* by NilavroNill Shoovro.

## The Crown

Galina Italyanskaya

Kings of the earth, don't be so blind!  
Don't lose your poor mind!  
The crown of Death is shining bright,  
His mantle spreads behind.

Its scarlet baize with black and white  
Has covered the world.  
Kings of the earth, do stop your fight,  
Wars in the name of gold!

While the pandemic's splashing wide,  
The globe is getting sick,  
You, cunning people, keep in sight  
It makes your foes weak.

For people's lives without sleep  
They're fighting night and day,  
But six feet under is too deep  
And late to keep away.

You want to benefit from it  
Just to secure your thrones.  
Kings of the earth, restrain your greed!  
You're dancing on the bones!

Still, it's not you who calls the tune.  
Get real! It's not your ball!  
Nobody knows, but maybe soon  
Your own crowns will fall.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Sayak Bhandari is a teaching professional in Eastern India. He is a postgraduate in English Literature and Environmental Studies. He has been working painstakingly in the restoration of wildlife and biodiversity. He also works for school dropouts who are exploited in industries. He is a passionate traveler and visual storyteller.

## Estranged

Sayak Bhnadari

We shall meet. Surely shall we . . .

We shall meet in the plague's aftermath,  
When the depressing documents of destruction  
Are buried behind the fatal fences.  
After perishing mortal remains,  
Turn just into a number;  
And are kept stockpiled in an aircon dead room,  
Or even in some bloody cesspool nearby.

When gay footfalls  
Bless the happy autumn fields again.  
We shall meet. Surely shall we . . .

We shall meet when the feisty fight  
Fought with every sob and plight,  
Is finally done.  
When man defeats its invisible enemy,  
A deadly foe, strangely silent.

When psyche is sanitized to sanity,  
And the sleepless paranoid eyes relaxed.  
We shall meet. Surely shall we . . .

We shall meet as the medicos smile  
Once the ceaseless combat is over.  
We shall meet as a compendious statesman  
Pats on my back with no frowned face.  
When ugly dark shackles,  
And fear's tentacles  
Succumb to the lucent hue of human force.  
Let's win over our shaky feet,  
Let's meet in the clamours of crowded street,  
Let's meet the way we always did.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Maryam Abbasi finds words to be alive and breathing as any human being. She learned to feel the emotions within them before she learned to express them [. . .]. An academic and a student, Maryam tries to inculcate passion for literature in young hearts and minds she is shaping.

## Count the Cycle

Maryam Abbasi

### Period 1: Enchantment

The first description of poetry came out of the word  
'Blood'

All red, all gruesome; for a thirteen-year-old to eat and fathom  
But isn't that how your first heartbreak turns into an apocalypse  
Turns  
you into a witch; your soul haunted.

### Period 2: Denouncement

Words started to turn into verbs more than nouns  
A city too loud; A voice too bleak in the vast crowd  
Feelings stung; touching a new body and calling it holy  
Rose amongst the screams, a prose; all too silent; all too virgin  
A little moan released, not knowing it was devoid of saying , 'please'

### Period 3: Memory

Seeing across, a vision stalks  
A picture too alike; A feeling too naive  
The corridors have echoes again of laughter; of slaughters done behind closed eyes  
Watching a step or two and you find  
A picture of your youth,  
All dressed in skin and bone  
Drinking a cocktail of words smeared in blood and ink  
Looking straight into your eyes  
Calling you 'mama' with YOUR borrowed wicked smile.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Gabriela Nikoloska was born on August 6, 1999 in the city of Prilep in Macedonia. She has completed her secondary vocational education in Prilep. Nikoloska is engaged in writing prose and poetry.

## The smell of your hair

Gabriela Nikoloska

I see you from afar  
how do you stand and  
you melt my heart.  
I admire you  
of your beauty  
on your beautiful and kind face,  
on your eyes that  
they enchant my gaze on you.  
I smile at you  
but you do not notice me.  
And finally when it passed  
beside me  
I smelled it  
your hair smell  
which left me speechless.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Mourad Faska is an aspiring Moroccan researcher, a featured poet, a writer, and an essayist. His literary interests range across Gothic literature, Magic Realism, Science Fiction and Fantasy, ancient mythology, and peace-seeking literature, to name a few. He is currently working on a full-length poetry collection.

## Time Flies

Mourad Faska

Time flies  
Like a falling star  
With no beginning or end,  
Measured by the human mind,  
But is never felt.  
Time flies like  
The blowing wind,  
With no beginning or end,  
elusive and incomprehensible,  
Rootless, yet inevitable.  
Time's a word  
That suffered  
A sea change,  
With no beginning or end.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Tihomir Jancovski, born in 1967 in Skopje, Macedonia, is a writer and translator. He is considered as one of the most widely-read poets in his country. Thus far, he has eleven books of poetry and two novels to his credit. His literary work has been translated into 15 languages.

## For Sale

Tihomir Jancovski

We were sitting at a white table  
In the atelier  
On wooden armchairs  
He and I  
And our demons

The painter in him  
Transitioned from  
Painting on rectangular surfaces  
To painting on triangular objects  
Some of them are smooth and beautiful  
Almost like women

What's new?  
The air purifier.  
Not the dog, he's two.

I asked him and he told me  
He's selling everything on the walls,  
On the floor, he's not getting attached  
To his paintings or past times  
Pieces of furniture, monkeys  
Birds, people, fish  
Or obsessions

If someone wants it,  
I will send him the fire  
Someone will know how to dismantle it  
From all the things in the room,  
Only the soul is not for sale.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Varsha Das, former Director of National Book Trust, India, served as the Director of National Gandhi Museum following her retirement. She writes fiction, non-fiction, poetry, radio plays and for children in Gujarati, Hindi and English, and translates from Bangla, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi and Odia. Her poems appeared in several anthologies in India and abroad.

## The Sky

Varsha Das

I thought I was the coveted serene tranquil blue sky  
and was happy with my transparent light body  
But at night I turned dark, opaque n heavy  
in which the moon and the stars shone brightly!

As the day broke, I turned vermillion  
and at noon, burning yellow.  
Am I changing my clothes so fast?  
Or I have no clothes, so no colour can last!

Dust particles and the sun paint me,  
adorn me even with the rainbow,  
I am admired till the rainbow fades,  
what a transient existence I have!

To be frank, I am an everlasting vast space,  
anyone can cut across me with ease,  
birds, balloons, planes, rockets, shooting stars . . . anything,  
Because I'm all embracing space, indeed!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Joseph S. Spence, Sr., a retired U.S. Army officer, has authored ten poetry books, and conceived the “Epulaeryu Poetry”, “Linking Pin Sonnet”, and “Trilogy Poetry” forms. His writings were published globally. He taught at Bryant and Stratton universities, and is a Goodwill Ambassador. He resides in Wisconsin, USA.

## Trilogy of Non-Violence Advocates:

### Rev. Dr. King, Jr., Attys. Mandela and Gandhi!

Joseph S. Spence, Sr.

An uplifting spirit of the “Trilogy of Non-Violence” advocates justice for humanity  
Humanity uplifting to behold another avenue of overcoming the real struggle of life.  
Life, where all souls are valuable and are fighting alongside love to overcoming hate  
Hate, which the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. states, is “Driven out by the light.”  
The light-giving all hearts inspirational insight with the dawn of the embolden sun.  
Sun on the resurrection, the spirituality of non-violence being victorious over violence!

Sun awakening the world with its golden rays of brightness—eliminating darkness  
Darkness, which Attorney Nelson Mandela survived in the dark gloomy dungeons.  
Dungeons the bastions of South African apartheid established to suppress humanity  
Suppress humanity by using isolation, to rent his spirit and soul without any relent  
Relent, he withstood and overcame with God's grace and not seeking revenge.  
Revenge, he states, “Violence, does only one thing--breeds counter-violence!”

Violence develops turmoil in the mind, body, soul, and spirit—“Sincerely agonizing!”  
Agonizing the spirit to attempt ailing actions toward others and uplifting violence.  
Violence Attorney Mahama Gandhi pronounced is inferior to nonviolence!  
Nonviolence is innate strength emanating from the indomitable spirit of humanity.  
Humanity, he states, “Died in vain if Jesus did not teach us to regulate life by love.”  
His Satyagraha philosophy held, “The truth of nonviolence brings independence!”

Lovingly: unity, humanity, and dignity rightly proliferate—“International Advocacy!”  
Advocacy erasing images of the beast displaying an ugly appearance—they advocated.  
The Rev. Dr. King Jr., Attorneys Mandela, and Bapu Gandhi defeating such ugliness!  
The “Trilogy of Non-Violence,” uplifting the spirit of humanity with inspiring resiliency  
Resiliency showing the world how good overcame evil—“The essence of Diwali.”  
God's glorious resurrection will always overcome violent crucifixions—Nonviolently!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Raed Anis Al-Jishi is an award-winning poet and a translator from Qateef, Saudi Arabia. He has an honorary fellowship in Writing from Iowa University (U.S.A.). He is a member of the Advisory Committee of Exquisite Teacher Training program at the National Changua University of Education (Taiwan), and an editor for *Modern Dialogs* (Macedonia).

## The Peak

Raed Anis Al-Jishi

Why do you think of another peak  
when you summit your own mountain,  
and why do you become infected by vanity  
and practice laughing  
while there is no one to listen  
to the flight of Ecstasy.

Lionizing is a naive social creature;  
in loneliness, laughing become nothing but a buzz.

Your foot is still touching the dirt,  
and the peak is not an ideal end  
for a superior variety.

The peak is the starting line in the race --

You just need to smile and feel  
the vitality.

You will leap and bet on flying  
with all the weight of your letters.

And what if you fall? Your soul  
won't touch the desert.

And your body will reach its highest condition while it is falling,  
crushed by the humility of your bones against nature.

The air feels you;  
drizzle wishes to write your blood's Iliad  
and feels proud when it reads it  
and asks itself: is it really me  
who wrote the elegy of bleeding?

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

Reading is rewriting after liberation  
from the Obsession of membranes.

It is a pure framing for the last jump --  
a frame, but a part of the intimacy of creation.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Iwu Jeff is a Nigerian creative writer and instructor of English and literature. His literary works have appeared in literary magazines and anthologies, including the previous anthologies of the Inner Child Press International. He has authored a play, *Verdict of the Gods* and a novel, *Files of the Heart*.

## I Died

Iwu Jeff

I died the day I saw an angel in the eye of the sun,  
gleaming with light for warmth,  
clothed in love and trust,  
arms outstretched for sweet embrace.

But it wasn't an angel I saw,  
it was Lucifer falling from the sky,  
masked like a robber,  
knowing no flesh. No blood.  
No kith. No kin.  
Burning without boundary,  
coming for my body & soul; a bloodthirsty demon.

I died the day I saw a sheep,  
wearing that immaculate drapery,  
its face lit up in innocence—  
an attraction for hope built like a castle.

But it wasn't a sheep I saw,  
I saw a wolf, dressed like  
a harmless sheep  
stalking me like a prey.  
I came & it ate my flesh & drank my blood,  
leaving my bones on the street of disappointment.

I saw my beloved smiling at me  
yet, at the chime of the high hour,  
he did me like Judas,  
& our world turned,  
from light to darkness,  
from love to hatred,  
from smiles to frowns,  
from laughter to cries,  
from celebration to mourning.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Hope lost & trust shattered  
for greed crept in & life became a battlefield.  
That was the day I died.

Greed held the blade  
tearing it into the depth of my tummy  
what death can I die again  
when each memory  
Is a deeper thrust  
of yesterday's blade?  
Tell me! What death is it  
to die again?  
For I have died so many deaths from the deep wounds  
of betrayal . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Hannie Rouweler (June 13, 1951, Goor, Netherlands) is a poet, translator, and an editor of various international poetry collections. Her sources of inspiration are nature, love, loss, childhood memories and travel. She has authored 40 poetry volumes, including translations in several foreign languages. Her poems have been translated into about 30 languages.

## Hij stond aan de deur

Hannie Rouweler

Ik zag hem langs het raam. Hij zocht een weg  
maar haperde bij de konijnen. Verborg  
in hokken als het stormt met weer en wind.

Ik kon naar buiten lopen. Ik bleef binnen  
slot van de deur af. Een achterdeur  
blijft niet voor iedereen meer open staan.

Zoals vroeger: herken je die tijd dat ieder  
langs ramen liep en zo naar binnen ging?  
Je rook koffie en appeltaart vanaf de straat.

Als een man hier naar binnen loopt. Hij loopt langs  
schilderijen, boeken, stapels papier, kussens.  
Er is geen ander pad over een ander vloerkleed.

## He Was at the Door

Hannie Rouweler

I saw him past the window. He looked for a way  
but faltered with the rabbits. Hidden  
in lofts when it storms with wind and weather.

I could walk out. I stayed indoors  
lock off the door. A back door  
is no longer open to everyone.

Like before: do you recognize times that everyone  
walked past windows and went in just like that?  
You smelled coffee and apple pie from the street.

If a man walks into my house. He is walking  
past paintings, books, piles of paper, cushions.  
There is no other path across another rug.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Rubab Abdullah is now a citizen of the United States. She is a published poet whose work has appeared in various prestigious international anthologies and e-zines, including Spillwords Press, Columbus Free Press, Rose Books (in affiliation with Ave U Publisher), and Inner Child Press International.

## Knowing the Self

Rubab Abdullah

### Part I

(Insatiable)

In swirls of wind-storm  
I have an unyielding faith  
My fate may be twisted  
But my reveries live.

Amidst the bustling town  
You hear voluble me,  
Your adoration vibrates my being  
Like the Sun proclaiming light's glory.

Withered with years  
All my laughs and tears,  
My inked words too  
Become my voice.

### Part II

(Know us)

My pursuit to discern ourselves  
Shall never come to a close,  
My dealings with you  
Shall only spread  
Over endless days and nights.

To see the frozen shut window  
My heart sobs for freedom,  
Watching the rainbow forming  
Deep in my heart  
I am as enthralled as you are.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

In the endless disruptions  
We become,  
Nature harbors recluses like us --  
Platonic lovers on a spiritual journey.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Khalid Imam is the Founder/Curator of All Poets Network. He has participated in the 2017 Wole Soyinka Foundation/SAIL Program in Lebanon. He is a teacher, translator and multiple award-winning bilingual playwright and poet, and has published in the UK, the U.S.A., India, Germany, Canada and Poland.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

### I Am . . .

Khalid Imam

I am a hummingbird  
I fly forward and backward.

Like a fish,  
I am so flexible.  
I can fly sideways  
I can dive  
I can soar  
I can harbor on a spot.

Sometimes,  
I am like an ostrich  
Running with the speed  
Faster than Bolt.

I am a camel,  
I endure long distance walks,  
I can withstand thirst  
And long desert journeys  
For weeks without food.

Who I am or what I am  
Is a mystery to many  
Because I am me.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



D. L. Davis holds 3rd Place in the 2010 San Diego Poetry Slam; hosts the internet poetry radio show, Xpressions Radio – Bad Boys Kitchen, and is the 2010 National Poetry Award Winner. He has a poetry book *My Soul Told Me To* (2019) and *SHORTS* (2020), a poetry CD to his credit.

dldavisthepoet (IG / FB / TWITTER)  
dldavisthepoet.com

## Who Am I?

D. L. Davis The Poet

I am a ghetto bastard born in the heart of LA, Lost Angels  
Raised in alleyways, streets devoid of hope with dim lights  
so it was hard to see the future

The Concrete Jungle. At the crossroads of Chaos and Disorder.  
Where I learned a few tricks, saw chicks turn a few tricks and  
shallow holes swallow chocolate bodies whole. The stage was set.  
The scene isn't pretty, but everyone knew their role

I am Martin's dream, deferred but not given up on  
I come from a family of coke lines to writing dope lines and I love the high. I  
am anger and resentment.  
I am the raging beast who is calmed by the music of my wife's voice when she speaks  
She reminds me life is not always black and white  
Life, is a rainbow in a bag, Trayvon  
It's, 50 shades of Gray; Freddie  
There's various hues and beauty in the blues, especially when a lady sings it

I am mean muggin' with a cold stone exterior  
But I turn gooey like putty when I hear grandpa and daddy  
I am the son who speaks silently in codes only my wife can decipher  
I am lyrics that married melodies and gave birth to hope in a manger for all to adore

I am priceless  
Abstract and a bit complex, but you saw thru all my flaws and put a ring on it  
Now I know my worth  
I'm cool as Morris Day. Smooth as a Botti sax on a jazz track. I'm woke!

I know, skin is the biggest organ, but my melanin makes it a sin-sssation. I am,  
a Georgia road from Ahmaud Arbery. A  
Texas lane from Sandra Bland and

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

a Staten Island street from Eric Garner

This quarantine is not new to me. Hell! I've been scared to go somewhere for fear of dying for almost 50 yrs.

And I am still here

That has got to count for something

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Jaydeep Sarangi is a poet, translator, an academic and interviewer, who is involved in the poetry movement. He is a widely anthologized and reviewed bilingual poet with eight collections in English to his credit. He is Vice President of GIEWEC and Vice President of the Executive Council, IPPL, and ICCR (Kolkata).

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# Poetry... The Best of 2020

## Love

Jaydeep Sarangi

All along the rainy earth  
a wild game of hearts is played  
at all our ears and eyes  
for a result  
that is never complete.

And then a whisper, a rush

I can hear a line  
travel back through the bird-cries.  
This last, long night of waiting  
promises to find her for the first time.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Patra, Greece, Eftichia Kapardeli has a doctorate from the Arts and Culture World Academy. She writes poetry, short stories, haiku, and essays, and has several national awards. She studied journalism in A.K.E.M. Her poems appeared in numerous national and international anthologies. She has membership with World Poets' Society, IWA, and Poetas del Mundo.

Γενεθλια Γη  
Eftichia Kapardeli

Έζησα σε ένα ατελείωτο  
χωρισμό δακρύων  
πάντα περιπλανιόμουν στην μεγάλη  
ευτυχία των ρόδων  
στους ώμους μου ατελείωτα  
μικρά ουράνια τόξα  
στην μέση του απείρου  
των άστρων οι ανάσες  
τρυπούσαν την καρδιά μου

Έζησα με ανοιχτά παράθυρα  
Στις αποχρώσεις των χρόνων  
Και εκείνη την μοναδική ώρα  
σε έναν νέο Αιώνα δραπέτευσα

Διέσχισα τους μεγάλους δρόμους  
Ντυμένη την ελαφριά περπατησιά  
των παιδικών μου χρόνων

Ω! πόσο γλυκαίνει η καρδιά  
Χέρια τρυφερά ,χείλη απαλά  
Στην γενέθλια γη  
των πρώτων ρόδων  
Χρυσές πεταλούδες θριάμβου  
Ελεύθερες το πλούσιο φως μοιράζουν

## On Birthday Land

Eftichia Kapardeli

I lived in an endless  
separation of tears  
I always wandering  
in the big happiness of roses  
on my shoulders endlessly  
rainbows small  
in the infinity of middle  
the breaths of the Stars  
pierced my heart

I lived with windows open  
In shades of years  
And at that unique time  
in a new Century I escaped

I crossed the big roads  
Dressed in light walking  
of my childhood

Oh! how sweet the heart is  
Hands tender, lips gently  
On birthday land  
of the first roses  
Free the rich light of sharing  
golden triumph butterflies

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Nigar Arif was born in 1993 in Azerbaijan. She studied in the English Department at Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University. She is a member of the World Youth Turkish Writers' Union and the International Forum for Creativity and Humanity in Morocco. Her poems have been translated into different languages and published in various countries.

## Humans' Rain

Nigar Arif

Here is the city,  
people break out and leave . . .  
Here are the snows and rains,  
washing their footprints . . .  
Even the sun shines in every morning,  
Winds blow and sleek  
Nothing can remove those,  
Nothing can be changed . . .  
People soak up to its memory  
from its pocky face.  
They fetch their colors with themselves  
keeping the city pale.  
Everywhere is dull,  
Everything turns to a grey tale.  
People rain and rain falls from their eyes  
in every single day  
And those getting wet in the heart of this city  
who can't run away  
Humans are raining cats and dogs,  
Ambulances revolve like the umbrellas  
under the sick drops . . .  
Either the nights or the noons  
wobble from their homes.  
The whole world tumble from its place  
and falls . . .  
Day by day, week by week  
Streets become empty  
The roads, cafes see the end.  
The shoulders of the heavy shops  
are going to bend . . .  
The huge buildings, the small houses  
between the city's arms  
peeping out with fear at the naked depth  
that idles in the villages, travels to the countries  
Lonely trees are getting bored  
The flowers, birds and meadows

## Poetry . . . The Best of 2020

from the dusty feet of this city  
missing of the man  
Who knows?  
May be in their own languages  
they even rail  
this damn, teasing quarantine.  
Now we know, mom  
Cities and countries  
can also catch the diseases . . .  
What can i say?  
Don't worry,  
everything will be okay.  
There are hopes  
that draw out till the hair of this city . . .  
There are our dreams putting the hands to its forehead  
to check the heat . . .  
May be we found the best treatment, mom,  
Love is the best engraftment  
as you always said . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Miled Khaldi, 39, is a teacher of English and a writer from Tunisia. He has two books to his credit, *Lithium Visions and Platinum Sprouts* and *The Code of Jahbazed*. He is passionate about travelling, reading, and contemplation.

[miledkhaldi@yahoo.fr](mailto:miledkhaldi@yahoo.fr)

## The Boomerang

Miled Khaldi

I've picked from the rubble a walking-stick,  
That walks at dawn the trembling streets.  
Don't tread ash over the Persian carpet,  
For the pores run over with our corpses.  
The fret is not a reliable sword yet it doesn't  
Intend to creep into another rhythm, into  
Another battlefield.  
Olive branches blush, don't feign unscientific espionage.  
Refresh those who have elephantine memories.  
Léthé leaps skywards, drowns my bitter-sweet  
Seconds. I forget, make me forget what will happen on  
The prospect,  
Our relics of glory and passion blossom into the Eden  
Of homeland.  
Hold on! We need Indira, we do need something alike.  
Let's depart, providence is flaking off slowly but surely . . .  
Providence trails away to a pleasing collapse, trails away  
To a divided human whole . . .  
Palestinian epic awaits long-held peace, long-held leap.  
Don't trust your upturn, nor the gentle lines,  
The ladder is snow-made, seasoned with the rubble of  
Babylon . . .  
How lash to breakfast at midnight on Venus cake  
And vernal rain!!  
The gipsy foreteller, as yet unborn confided in me  
The coming years would bring rebel comets, would bring  
A full sky of olive trees . . .  
Pseudo is your entity; what lies above me flutters  
Underfoot.  
Free the cage, let the wired structure twitter, compose  
The tenth symphony . . .  
Splendid is the jumble, raise it to your head,  
Knead the dough into open vistas of a recognized dignity.  
The civilization of nose wrinkles lavender in disgust  
When civilians are bereft of crying shoulders.  
I'm brimming over with Arabia from . . . Zanoubia . . .

## Poetry . . . The Best of 2020

To Carthage.

No one dares their faults, their achievements, their  
Musk roses.

We seek no compliments to ease the rather  
Bruised Ego, no adversaries to show them our sales.  
I'll fling in two hours the sun with a boomerang;  
The former will get back; the latter will get lost.  
It will turn into a culture of steam and seam.  
Nothing returns but if . . .

Go surfing on the wrinkles in your age-like face.  
The surf turns to a resilient swell, rather to local  
Languages out of the embryonic globalization . . .  
Relish your time, all is yours . . . the crumple will  
Straighten up twice a smile . . . twice a nod . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Linda Imbler is the author of five paperback poetry collections and three e-book collections (Soma Publishing.) She lives in Wichita, Kansas with her husband, Mike the Luthier, several quite intelligent saltwater fish, and an ever-growing family of gorgeous guitars.

[lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com](http://lindaspotryblog.blogspot.com).

## Crystal Ships

Linda Imbler

The sea splatters its foam  
like pearls for which divers dive.  
Salt that could rust ships  
gives life, under the waters blue.  
Living creatures act as fathomable archangels  
above the bones of crystal ships.  
And all are protected by God.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Babatunde Waliyullah Adesokan (Toonday) is from Oyo State, Nigeria. He works with Firstbank of Nigeria. An OAU graduate, he is a lover of poetry; a lover of everything that breathes.

## Juliet's Letter & Romeo's Response

Babatunde Waliyullah Adesokan

### Juliet's Letter

Romeo, take me where we would be alone,  
where the world could end at the instance  
it starts, where bodies could suffer its quake  
& emotions erupt, where questions are  
declaratives & need no answers.

Romeo, touch all my forgotten follicles, abduct  
me till pleasure could garnish me with stars &  
moons beneath the roof of my closed eyelids,  
touch me till you awake the dead seeds in me,  
spurting lives & newness.

Romeo, be the arrow, the quiver, the hunter,  
I'd be the game. shoot at me. hunt me. I am  
the game. end this war with a quavering pleasure.  
pour in me a rain of delight. viscous with lives  
that could walk the seeds to a continuation of  
us. Oh, Romeo!

.....  
Romeo's Response

Oh Juliet!

Be calm. Emotions can be a tumultuous sea  
that swallows any ship of entanglement.  
Rather, let me tend you with crafty care.  
Feel out every strand of your delicate parts.  
Let me sail our ship through this devouring  
passion, un-capsized. I hold the rudder while  
we drift in a glee that moderates the fiery craving.

Oh Juliet!

Be my after-rain. Fill me with green smell  
of fertility. Fill me with your clear, crispy  
skin that opens like the sky after a proper  
downpour. Fill me with newness that fore-  
tells hope after a deluge that clears the

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

cloudy part of our minds. Kill me softly with  
indulgence that reignites the exuberance  
we eschew. For me, yield again & again until  
this ship, after a lengthy sojourn, finally  
capsizes into you. I am yours, oh Juliet.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Lucky Stephen Onyah, a Lagosian by birth, is a Mathematics teacher and Principal at Genii Field College and an English teacher with the World English Institute. He is a poet, an entrepreneur and a public speaker.

## Pen Versus Sword

Lucky Stephen Onyah

“A pen is mightier than a sword”.  
A thought considered as absurd.  
True power doesn't come via coercion.  
But in the fine arts of written persuasion.

Men may fear one with a fierce sword.  
Still defies it, but yields to penned accord.  
The sword may be born from fiery flame.  
Yet have lost great wars via the quill's fame.

If inspired wordsmith harnesses pen's might.  
It restrain swordsmiths from every fight.  
Sacred text in ages have tamed war lords.  
Yet has raised sages and birthed pen lords.

The sword have been shamed for taking lives.  
The bleeding pen do rejoice for saving lives.  
“Seek peace and pursue it”, says scripture.  
Gracious words written to secure your future.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Padmaja Iyengar-Paddy's maiden poetry collection, *P-En-Chants* was recognized by the India Book of Records. The recipient of several awards, Paddy has compiled and edited 6 international multilingual poetry anthologies with *Amaravati Poetic Prism* between 2016 to 2019. This publication was distinguished by Coca-Cola India's Limca Book of Records as the "Poetry Anthology in Most Languages".

When . . .

Padmaja Iyengar-Paddy

When you feel totally down and out  
Beset by nagging worries and doubt  
Go watch some comedy shows  
Let out some ha-ha and ho-hos  
And see a smile replacing the pout

When everything around seems to irk  
And mind absolutely refuses to work  
Try cooking a new dish  
Veg, non-veg or some fish  
And see your creation bring on a smirk

When creativity is at an ebb low  
And ideation seems on a go-slow  
Try doing a translation  
As a means of diversion  
And you will soon get into the flow

When unrequited love refuses to die  
And mind questions: why, why, why  
Go out and let your hair down  
Use red hue to paint the town  
And soon you'll find your spirits high

When for an issue you find no solution  
And mind seems beset with confusion  
Use an effective mental tissue  
To wipe the mind off the issue  
And soon, the issue will find resolution

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Rini Valentina is a writer from Indonesia who has written several books of poetry and short stories and has published five international anthology books in English, Spanish and Indonesian since 2017.

## Hallucinating Clouds

Rini Valentina

Cloud asked the moon  
Why are the stars so far away?  
Never want to come down!  
Laughing with us . . .  
Or for a moment play together  
Releasing the happiness  
Paint stories  
Just forgetting the pinch hurts  
Just forgetting the spirit that Narendra's steps went through  
Oh . . . who is he?  
Is it a man?  
Suddenly she asked to her body  
A man with a club as big as his calf  
Or just an ordinary man?  
With a secret style behind the sunscreen?  
Ahh . . . I hope it's not a gallon of cream  
skin armor that cringes dark color  
Hopefully just guessing  
Just guessing . . .  
Because patience is tired of keeping  
Because patient is tired of acting as a cinema-style body guard  
Ahh . . . never mind . . .  
Cloud finally gave up  
Shame to ask the moon again  
After all, there was never an answer . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ashok K. Bhargava is a poet and public speaker. He has five books of poetry to his credit. He is president of Writers International Network of Canada.

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

## Absolutely

Ashok Bhargava

folded hands  
hold silence  
in the dark

spirit  
oscillate  
from eternity to infinity

my body  
a fragile glass  
can shatter easily

my resolve  
stronger than steel  
unbreakable

look anywhere  
for me  
find me there

Don't wait  
for an approximation  
I am it  
you are it  
we are it

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Christena AV Williams is a Jamaican poet, multiple award-winning author, youth volunteer, self-publisher, historian, and philosopher. She originates from Portmore, St. Catherine. She has authored *Pearls Among Stones* that awarded her the Prime Minister's National Youth prize. P.O.E.T. has awarded her with the 2020 International Spoken Word Artist prize.

## Tomboy

Christena AV Williams

From I was growing up, neighbours would jokingly called me Tomboy  
I understood to a degree what it meant at age ten  
But it was not until I was twenty-five, I despise its connotations  
I had accepted my femininity  
But their roles of how I should speak and act  
Their condescending laws, values, morals, ethic and standards  
I naturally forbade.

I did not accept Tom because it was masculine  
I did not accept Tom as I was no peeping Tom or Uncle Tom  
Boy was not my Ideal  
Not Idea  
Not my gender  
I was female and a girl who did not fit their stereotype.

I guess I have always been a rebel  
A revolutionist  
Not standard or a carbon copy  
Was not dolly faced lipstick glossy fake  
I made people uneasy when I spoke  
My presence was felt without even an exhale  
Their constant bickering to act girl, dress girl and be girl  
As it was their way of reminding me that I should know my place.

My feminine energy was so strong that other women despised me  
Men got attracted while others discombobulated with their own insecurities  
I was a trigger to their questions  
I surely made a mark.

It is not easy for anyone to love and accept me  
It is not easy because I am a walking tabloid that people gossip about  
As their lips are like opium  
My fate was in the hands of the people  
Oh, they hated me.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

I was epitome of female freedom to a degree  
I wore comfort  
Grace with strength  
Even in my fragile state  
Even when my womanliness I could not hide  
Because of tenderness of the heart  
I was steadfast with a calculated mind that never stopped unwinding  
Only the brave could commit to me.

My voice was one point my hatred now it is my uniqueness  
There were times, a few moments that I felt ashamed of my body,  
My nature, my clothes  
Was a woman so incapable of greatness that they had to be a Tomboy?  
Who was Tom this phantom and why was I in comparison  
My femininity was in questioned  
Never my masculinity.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



The cathartic word brings healing for both the author and her audience. Kay Salady is a Washingtonian who has contributed to numerous publications that aim toward global peace. Her objective is instilling the simple truth that during the times in our lives when we thought we were alone, someone else was there.

## His Invitation

Kay Salady

I fell in love with the distance  
An arm's length away  
Yet impossible to hold  
I reached out to grasp  
His invitation  
Then searched the world for him  
As he inhaled  
The supplication of a child  
Who hungered every instant  
That led me to believe  
That he was waiting  
A hint of his divinity  
Fed fire to the flame  
That burned inside my chest  
And I cried out for reprieve  
Sealing away my tears  
Inside his alabaster jars  
Perhaps tonight he'll come  
To accept my offering  
I will behold his dazzling eyes  
And I will fully realize  
A life well-lived

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Thirupurasundari C J (Dazzle), holds a doctorate and a gold medal in Life Sciences. She has publications in peer-reviewed journals, and possesses research experience in cancer, diabetes and horticulture. In addition to being an artist, a poet, freelancer, and an editor for an e-zine, she draws inspiration from others and is always cheerful.

## My Mind's Eyes

Thirupurasundari CJ

Birthdays, anniversaries, festivals,  
Our blessings, fixed!  
Reunions, trips, adventure programs,  
Captured on celluloid,  
As I flip through the photo album,  
Treasuring life time memories.

Members of my extended family,  
Few sneaked peeks in stills,  
Few posed for candid shots,  
Few with slouched postures,  
Weird looks, squinty eyes,  
Crazy angels, eccentric moustaches,  
Diverse fashion unveiled, each distinctive,  
Amidst vibrant colours,  
Capturing the essence of disarrayed happiness,  
Eternal sparkles with my relations!

A sweet voyage through the time,  
First steps of my niece and nephew,  
Their euphoric expressions,  
Disheveled hair or tonsured heads,  
Still getting the whiff of those sandal pastes,  
Funny dress patters, interesting props,  
Adoringly imprinted in my mind,  
I wear a gleaming face,  
Incredible impressions!

Bizarre moments with friends,  
Unconditional love of parents and siblings,  
Our ecstatic countenances,  
Black and white freeze- snaps of grandparents,  
Our legacy made to last,  
Splashing reminiscings,  
Inestimable belongings!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Love and togetherness,  
Life made worthwhile,  
Both complementing each other,  
Secured images with my partner,  
Stitched with intimacy,  
Held fast with care and endearment,  
Append boundless emotional touch to my photo book,  
All the merry!

Optical illusions, bright locations,  
Fantastical forced perspective photographs,  
Technology upgradations,  
Spell bounding though!

Svelte soft cover or classic hard covers,  
Whatever, matte or glossy stills,  
Aesthetic layouts, gorgeous frames,  
My albums are truly a comforter,  
Explicit memoirs,  
Making my hippocampus and amygdala of my brain,  
Work unblemished.

My albums, an out and out material,  
To relive my moments!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ratan Ghosh, (PhD), is an Indian poet, editor, freelancer, short story writer, and above all, a teacher and a researcher. His poems have been featured in many international E- journals, print journals and anthologies across the globe. He has authored *My Love*, *Gender Disparity*, *Sunup*, *Cascade*, and *The Talisman and Other Tales*.

## Dead City

Ratan Ghosh

Corpses, cries and woes . . .  
Rolling and rolling in the dusty roads  
Nameless faces, throats and bodies  
Enfolded and heaped among the ghostly lobbies  
Doctors, Nurses and Cops . . .  
I see them afraid of being sympathetic to their jobs  
Thrusting, thrusting and thrusting all the lifeless destitute  
Relatives and country men began weeping while saw this heartless news  
Rolling, rolling and rolling tears fell upon their cheeks  
As the dead city lost to feel the minimum human needs  
Walking all alone I see the kingdom of Hades  
Where infernal powers ruling over the innocent corpses and beds  
How long this deadly kingdom will rule over justice and peace?  
My heart woes seeing the dances of inhuman beasts

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born in Guelma, Algeria, Warda Zerguine is a poet, writer and journalist. She wrote and recited poems in Arabic, French and English. She has participated in different international anthologies in Serbia, Tunisia, the USA, Indonesia, India, and Algeria. Some of her poems have been translated into Ouzbek, Serbian, Spanish and Italian.

## Be My Love

Warda Zerguine

In your eyes I see myself  
In your tears I drown  
I want you to be  
Near me . . .  
Your forgiveness i owe you  
Your love i need  
May your heart receive me . . .  
Like a king and a queen  
I want you to believe me . . .  
I want you to see me . . .  
So get ready  
It's my right  
Oh how much i love your voice  
And your laugh.. oh my faith  
I will not know why  
Only you my heart.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Hassan Hegazy Hassan is a poet and translator from Egypt. He has a B.A. from Zagazig University in Arts and Education with an English major. A member of the Egyptian Writers Union, the Egyptian Translators and Linguists Association, and the Arab Internet Writers Union, he has authored several books on poetry and translation.

## If Only I Had

Hassan Hegazy Hassan

If only I had two wings

like a bird,

If only I had perfume

like Anemones,

If I had Honey

like the fruits of Pomegranate,

If only I had Power

Like King Solomon,

If only I owned the world

Or I own the Garden of Redwan:

I would have put all the women

in one scale and put you in the other

and my heart is with you

Your scale would be heavier

So, say what you want

and boast as you wish

Your name will immortalize

in my poetry over time!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

لو كان لي  
حسن حجازي حسن  
مصر

///

لو كان لي كالطير  
جناحان ,  
لو كان لي عطر  
كشفاق النعمان ,  
لو كان لي شهيد  
كحب الرمان ,  
لو كان لي ملك  
كملك سليمان ,  
لو كنت أملك العالم وحدي  
أو أملك جنة رضوان :  
لوضعت نساء العالم  
في كفة  
ووضعتك في كفة  
وقلبي معك  
لرجحت كفتك بالميزان !  
فقللي ما شئت  
وتيهي على العالم  
كما شئت  
فسيخذ اسمك  
في شعري  
على مر الأزمان !  
///

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Iram Fatima 'Ashi', a nonresident Indian who lives in Saudi Arabia, is a poet, writer, painter, and overall, an artist by heart. Her work has appeared in more than 50 anthologies and she has won 3 awards from Aagman for her literary contributions.

## The Traveler

Iram Fatima 'Ashi'

I am a traveler, started my journey since I was born,  
I am desirous to explore the whole world and universe,  
All deep depths, darkness and highness of the heights,  
I want to travel to discover all the fascinating horizons.

I had reached the peaks of the mountains,  
To feel like a king who sees everything from heights,  
Tiny small helpless creatures are visible from there,  
But a view to valley horrified me by the fear of fall.

I went to the sea to play with sea waves,  
To float carefree in the depth of the sea,  
To discover beauty to collect pearls for me,  
Being lost in the deep dark sea again horrified me.

I explored dense vegetation dominated by trees,  
Deep, dark, silent, lonesome and horrifying jungles,  
Only breeze and bird's chirping was breaking the silence,  
The wildness of that mystified and triggered my inner fears.

At this moment I realized, I have to change my path,  
Outer universe to deep inside my self,  
To fight with my insecurities and fears,  
The world is beautiful if I travel inside my soul.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Eden Soriano Trinidad hails from the Philippines. The University of the Philippines Institute of Creative Writing published five of her books. Her poems have been featured on the full page of *Haiphong Weekend*, *Văn Nghệ*, *Nhật Lệ Vietnam* – a literary magazine, and *China Science Herald*. She translated *Ithaca Poems* into Filipino.

## Mt. Pinatubo

Eden Soriano Trinidad

A great man from Zambales Philippines  
Once hid and fought the guerillas in this mountain.

In (March 17) 1957, "Mt. Pinatubo" Presidential plane  
Crashed and ended the life of Ramon Magsaysay Sr.  
Beloved President of the Philippines

Indeed, a great man from Iba, Zambales  
Met his tragic end  
In the lonely mountainside  
Together with his friends.

How his life ended was written  
For one survived to defend  
He wrote a book and told the story of his dreadful end.  
Which no one will know if not for a dear friend.

In 1991, "Mt Pinatubo" the volcano then  
It indeed ended hundreds of lives and living  
Of people in our dear province  
Turning a state of deep misery in every being.

The skies turned dark heavens turned mad;  
Fierce spewed greatly  
Seemed God was asleep unmindful of  
Hovering death and volcanic fury.

Today, "Mt. Pinatubo" stood  
In his impressive, gigantic crater sea  
Teasing every soul to find solace  
Making you forget it was then very deadly.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Yvette Murrell, Power, Voice & Choice Coach, has multifaceted cross-sector accomplishments in business, education and expressive arts. She is enjoying full-bellied laughter and dreaming a life sweet beyond her imagination! She revels in the following identities: twin, mother, facilitator, artist, writer and alchemist.

<http://yvettemurrell.com/> IG: @divineguidanceangel

## Bridges

Yvette Murrell

Joy can only go so far when you won't hold pain.  
Life can only go so far when you won't hold death.  
Shared humanity is about holding both with love and integrity.  
This is a challenging place to stand and a powerful place to be.

Recognize how the past is useful to bring love to the present.  
Recognize how dreaming is useful to generate the future.  
Recognize how understanding lives in relevant metaphors.  
Recognize the work generated by painful experiences.  
Recognize the opportunity to love, accept, forgive and cherish all.  
Recognize the invitation to be authentic, feel and be with what is.  
Recognize the choice to be present and hold meaningful boundaries.  
Recognize when you are free, someone is holding the container in which you are twirling.  
Recognize where you are listening from.  
Recognize where you are observing from.  
Recognize where you are now.

If you have it, build the bridge to connect with others. If not,  
welcome them on the journey. If they choose not to build the bridge to the part  
of themselves that is reflected in you, then remember when you were there  
and give them permission not to connect. Give them permission to be in separation  
and bless them with love for their journey. Then weep for the pain of separation  
and let the tears become rivers, let rivers become oceans and let mother earth  
spew her lava blood into the ocean, building new island bridges of her own.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Semih Bilgiç is a Turkish teacher and a poet. His poems, which address humanity, are about life. He considers the world as only a dream.

**Your Story**

Semih Bilgiç

if you are watching a cloud  
look at your shadow on the ground  
your life is as long as your dreams  
nightmares are tramps

your story is not the same  
hearts are far apart

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Somasuntharampillai Pathmanthan has 3 volumes of his own poetry and 3 collections of poems in translation to his credit. His work appeared in prestigious journals abroad. 'Sopa', as he is popularly known in literary circles, has presented papers in many international fora, including SAARC Literature Festivals (Delhi) and Poets Translating Poets (Frankfurt).

## An Ode to a Toad

Somasuntharampillai Pathmanathan ('Sopa')

A warm June morning  
I was enjoying a bath  
It was then I saw him  
staring at me innocently  
ensconced on the edge  
of the bath-tub

Wet, brown and shiny  
Honestly at first sight  
I didn't like him  
Instinctively  
I felt like  
sweeping him away  
But how?  
I didn't want to touch him  
Eyes glistening  
he looked sticky,  
I was getting late  
Having finished my bath  
I left hurriedly  
leaving him

The following morning too  
He was there  
Quite a nuisance  
I thought  
Splashed on him a bucketful  
of warm water  
He seemed to enjoy it!

The encounter continued  
every morning  
neither party giving in

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

I was becoming philosophical  
“Why do I harbor  
An unreasonable abhorrence  
for the visitor?  
has he no right  
To share my bathroom?  
Are my pronouncements  
‘let all living beings on earth be happy!’  
Bogus and hollow?”

I could feel  
a transformation  
Coming over me  
Avoidance gave way  
to expectation  
Disgust to admiration

It was a holiday  
As I entered, relaxed  
I couldn't believe my eyes!  
My visitor was  
there as usual  
He had brought a partner  
A dainty slim dame!  
‘Oh, no!’ I cried  
You both would bring forth  
A litter of tadpoles  
And oust me  
from my bathroom  
‘tampattam tampattam!’  
croaked the dainty dame  
‘Seeking asylum?’  
‘tampattam, tampattam!’  
“Ok” I relented  
“But be careful!”  
A rattlesnake

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

frequents our garden!"  
My mind is at ease  
When monsoon commences  
next month  
I will go to sleep  
lulled by the cacophony  
"tampattam, tampattam"  
Not a bad prospect, is it?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Laura Fitzgerald, a mother of three, lives in Ballina, Co. Tipperary. She has recently reignited her passion to write poems and has contributed to *Aulos: An Anthology of English Poetry*, Soflay Inc. Literary Website, *Caravan: Monsoon and Travel Narratives* – literary engagements that afforded her the confidence to share her poetry further.

## Broken Porcelain Faces

Laura Fitzgerald

A child sits upon a bed and gazes  
at her mother's peculiar collection  
of circus clowns with porcelain faces.  
Each one carefully selected and meticulously  
placed on rickety shelves, adorning the wall.  
A kaleidoscope of every color  
that stretches across the rainbow.  
As the sun streams through the  
nylon curtains, illuminating the various  
painted expressions each one exhibits.  
Neither they nor she are privy to  
the fate that would befall them.  
For the pallid walls that they embellish,  
hold secrets never uttered aloud,  
Until this fateful night.  
At ungodly hour, the walls did shake,  
A symposium of venomous tongues  
as two who made such holy vows,  
reign unholy fists upon each other.  
As innocent babes lie sleeping  
within a parent's volatile warzone.  
Contemptible barrage of insults and acrimony,  
A hateful tempo builds to a rising crescendo  
Of a dysfunctional matrimony,  
Crashing sounds of objects breaking.  
Broken hearts,  
Broken bonds,  
broken promises and . . .  
broken faces.  
Porcelain faces,  
as proud circus clowns perform a spectacular final act.  
As night gives way and surrenders  
to the barging misty morning light,

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

The child wanders into the aftereffects  
of a long night's battle, where no-one won.  
At her feet, the scattered pieces of the  
familiar faces she had once admired with wonder.  
No longer rows of pristine beauty,  
Now, a multitude of unrecognizable parts,  
dappled with an extra scarlet color  
which had not been present before.  
A mistimed step amongst the carnage  
offers a small cut to the side of her foot.  
She winces, as fresh, red blood begins  
to slowly ooze from the open wound.  
Yet strangely, she feels no pain.  
For next to what her eyes and ears have  
witnessed, it is as soft as a feathered kiss.  
glancing down to her bare feet as  
the jagged shells of what once was,  
were now no more, nothing but dust and chaos.  
Amid this smoking battlefield lies two  
comatose bodies flaccidly entangled,  
Breathing in opaque air replenishing their lungs  
Keeping their selfish hearts beating.  
Hearts that should know better.  
Exhaling all lucid memory and accountability,  
with alcohol fumes and silent regret.  
The child turns the key to sibling's doors,  
for fear of more cuts to the innocent  
barefoot wanderer, should they awaken.  
She fetches a broom and heavy plastic  
bags and sweeps away all trace of conflict.  
Each fragmented casualty of war gathered  
and banished to darkness forever.  
She would never again lay eyes upon  
their psychedelic colors in rows of six.  
Nor study each outlined smile or frown.  
The shining faces of the stereotypically

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

jovial figures would sparkle no more.  
Silken outfits trimmed with lace that  
took her to a magical place for a time.  
Instead, they shall forever exist in black.  
The rickety shelves, now empty, a reminder  
of what lies behind a carefully etched smile.  
For now, the house is silent and calm,  
In the wake of bitter discourse and harm.  
Swords left lying in the dirt, surrounding  
two wounded soldiers deep in capitulation.  
No remorse nor earnest excuse,  
Until the next hostile engagement ensues.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Nket-Awaji Alpheaus is a poet, critic and an essayist. He writes from Rivers State.

## The Casualties

Nket-Awaji Alpheaus

The casualties are not only those  
Who are votary for intermittent interment;  
The seedlike heads we plant  
In the world's farm and harvest memory.

The casualties are those of us  
Bearing the blotched lines of life,  
Who must bear the ghouls of memories  
Reeked of the incense of earth.

The casualties of this war,  
Where the paths to our bowels  
Are the battlefield - your foe invisible . . .  
Are the indigent of this patched earth.

The casualties are wodge of tongues  
Dallying for politrick palling palliative,  
Who must learn how to scoop sand  
For a mirage meal from power bowl.

The casualties are the scaled brains  
Whose minds are fish trapped in a net  
And hooked with business bait;  
Or cloying victim fish to a net.

This wind blows in a pall of cloud,  
And rears more kleptomaniac claws.  
The casualties are the late mourners  
Thrustured with the arrears of morning.

Here we are schooled in death:  
While others choke out of breath,  
Others are skeined in death . . .  
And we are all casualties of the war.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

But we - out of sleep but full of dreams -  
Must sing our brothers good bedtime songs:  
“Sleep jolly in God's right breast”  
For they cannot emulsify with us.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Nataša Sardžoska (1979, Skopje) – poet, writer, polyglot translator, anthropologist, has authored poetry books, short stories, essays, literary translations, and columns. Some of her poems appeared in distinguished literary journals worldwide. She attends international poetry festivals, performing, among others, in the Academy of Arts in Berlin and in the Yaffa Theatre in Tel Aviv.

## The Echo of Silence

Nataša Sardžoska

I do not ask you why because there is  
nothing to be asked. I do not know the reason  
of these letters. there is only a faint reminiscence left. a scent of the profane  
memory remained. but I know how to sing the vestiges of the indignant.  
I know how this happens. I know how the shadow falls  
over the curtain of your white nights behind your words  
and how you forget the light the indelible trembling  
the mute joy in the throat. and I know how your response  
is drowning in the wandering echo of your silence.  
I know. I know how that happens. I know how you kill your heart  
first before even killing me inside of it.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Brindha Vinodh is an Indian currently residing in the United States of America. She is a postgraduate in Econometrics but a writer within. She has been widely published in the international arena through journals, e-zines, online archives and anthologies.

## I Will Write, I Will Write

*(A roseate sonnet)*

Brindha Vinodh

I will write, I will write  
until this world is a riot  
until my funeral flames ignite the torch light.  
I will write, I will write  
until there are no more tomato hearts to bleed  
until war Rests in Peace  
until corporate conspiracy stops to breed  
until the incessant plunders of earth cease  
until the topaz oceans stink no more  
until my rhymes break apart into free verses.  
Rocks undergo metamorphosis too  
Oh! human glacier hearts, will you not melt?  
Slumber is a sly serpent, wake up!  
Exert yourself, until then I will write!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ishfaq SaAhil is from Larnoo, Kokernag (state of Jammu and Kashmir), India. He received his early education from English Medium High School in Larnoo. Saahil has an M.A. in English and writes poetry in English and Urdu. His poems have been featured in numerous national and international journals and poetry anthologies.

**But!**

IshfAq SaAhil

In a new beginning spring  
A little pretty boy, with empty shoulders  
Through the streets ran.  
The sun was rising  
Through the mountains and hills,  
The beams were sketching the trees on land.

O listen, O innocent child,  
Was someone calling,  
Don't you know the green hills  
And meadows, and pastures green,  
And nothing is left in all this, child  
Nothing is left in all this  
You read, and recite one by one  
And do you know  
There is freedom of all that boring things,  
No, no, no. How could you  
And ignore the work of forefathers  
And do the prestiges lost,  
You don't know, there is nothing  
In all this, You want to do,  
And there are herds to manage  
And sheep, and horse, Candy.  
Don't you know that?

If there were books and tales  
Of fairies, and songs and poems to sing  
As through the broken panes of school  
Are heard, and ringing bells  
In a balcony; seven and eight a day,  
Father! Father!

Boring things, my boy, boring things,  
There is nothing as good as Sheeping  
And melodies of birds in the hills  
And that cold breezes of raining nights,

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

All is fun in heavy forests: when groves sing,  
The winds pass by, in mid sun of a day  
When there is summer in hills.

And if there were pallets  
To colour the hollow sketches  
Of Lions, Tigers and Bears  
And a nice pretty parrot  
And Crayons of much more colours  
And a nice small satchel in my shoulders,  
Father! Father!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Terri Lynn Julie Johnson is a first-nations Cree from the Samson Cree Nation in Maskwacis, Alberta, Canada. She was a featured poet in two ICPI anthologies, *A Poetically Spoken Anthology* and in the January 2014 issue of *The Year of the Poet*. Terri has four books to her credit, published by ICPI.

## The Bottle

Terri L. Johnson

I found my best friend  
and my worst enemy  
In the warmth of the bottle.  
A relationship so bittersweet.

All days were like pure ecstasy.  
Crazy maniacal thoughts swirled.  
Thoughts were fuzzy.  
Feelings were hugged close.

The liquid kept them inside,  
feelings so fierce.  
My bottle kept them locked inside  
that my mind left them alone.

The bottle was so evil.  
It killed me once.  
Lifeless and alone.  
No more feelings to atone.

But I woke.  
My feelings gripped me.  
My Savior.  
My saving grace.

Without my feelings.  
The bottle would have won.  
Released were my fate.  
Embrace is what I must.

You see my feelings  
brought me back.  
Waking me for reality.  
Making me more woke.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Now I can't turn those  
feelings off.  
Nor can I lock them away.  
They yell for release.

I'm scared to tell.  
Scared to feel.  
The bottle was my worst enemy  
But also my best friend.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Molly Joseph, a professor, is a poet from Kerala, who writes travelogues, short stories and children books. She has twelve books to her credit, and has won several accolades which include the India Women Achiever's Award 2020. She believes in the power of the word and writes boldly on contemporary matters.





## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ifeanyi John Nwokeabia is a poet and teacher. He hails from Nibo in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State. He has a Nigeria Certificate in Education and a B.A. in Education, both in English Language. He lives in Awka. His work has appeared on different online platforms.

## the palm wine tapper

Ifeanyi John Nwokeabia

ears shut to the wailing sky  
eyes blinded to the flooding streets  
heart hardened and head held straight forward  
for nothing stops his movement at mid night

he goes alone amidst the chirping of insects  
darkness enveloped his shadowy body  
he slithers unnoticed like a snake in a mission  
his only light is the lamp tied to his forehead  
the lamp is stationed like the moon in the sky

the pathway bushes tug his cloth in compliment  
he pulls open the shrubs on his way as a Pathfinder  
his bare feet dare the spindle & spine of its pedestal  
he sighs away every excruciating prick that prickles  
his palms are as soft as bark of trees  
his heels naturally break & remain open like ear hole

survival stands straight in success route  
he climbs, taps and sells to feed dependent mouths  
the height of a palm tree never posed obstacles  
he must tap and quench the unquenchable stomachs

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Photo Credit: Dirk Skiba

Eduard Harents (b. 1981), a known poet, lives in Yerevan, Armenia. He is a graduate of the Oriental Studies Department at Yerevan State University. He has authored 10 poem collections. His work appeared in numerous local and international periodicals and anthologies. His poems have been translated into more than 50 languages.

[sic] No Title

Eduard Harents

The color of ink is the fear of ecstasy  
with cold landscape of the night,  
from its back it was appeared a sudden hand  
between innocence and betrayal.

Whose papers the fingerprints are put on? -  
with shining after twelve.

The air trembles  
like stacked night suit of doubt.

We have to wait  
the nudity of dawn . . .

Cross yourself, Bird!

*Translated from Armenian by Ani Hakobyan*

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



John Chizoba Vincents . . . the names of three people deliberately seeing through each other; sometimes, at war with each other, at times, as unbreakable ties. They: Them: Us: Representing Boys and their anatomies, Men and their vulnerabilities, and Humans and their imperfections – rosy-track rough and tough roads in-between, living in a lonely room in Lagos, Nigeria.

## Lights

John Chizoba Vincent

Last night, we saw god remove this:  
blood stained clothes from the sky,  
burnt ashes & dust of men of great honour,  
he bridled their housed tears almost home  
& their memories, he lost in abyss of death.  
this is how death guided their hope in tears  
& the only pictures seen are restlessness.  
Sometimes our bodies melt away from  
the salvations of humanity & sacrilegious  
spirits & our reflections become scary,  
we fold ourselves into brown sorrow like  
we'll return here with a sermon of divinity  
to redemption, to reconnect those lost in  
between fate & destiny & search for freedom.

But

Life is a boring adventure keeping watch  
over the tragedies of death & those killed.  
every room becomes available for shadows,  
black tilted shadows. broken. Teared up.  
having the memories & reflections of life,  
Bodies burnt by fire, bodies swallowed, bodies  
slaughtered; bodies wounded, & those taken.  
Journey's full of meanings and mysteries,  
feeding its eyes with nightful of uncertainty.  
Emeka was engulfed yesterday on auto crash,  
His mother planted a forgotten kiss on altars,  
Femi was slaughtered by lurking herdsmen,  
He never returned from farm & family waited,  
Musa admired the sun & was gunned down,  
We gather these memories at dawn for Pius  
'cause we never know who returns every time.  
His deeds will linger from those red flames  
raising his names before the lazy clouds to light

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

up the world from the face of the Earth.  
I'm sure god wears him like a paying,  
I'm sure he held these lights flags of heroes  
closer to him even as he drowned in himself.  
Let's these lights keep his memories in our palms  
till tomorrow when next we meet.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Asoke Kumar Mitra (b. 1950) hails from Kolkata, India. He has authored two books of poems, *Savage Wind* (bi-lingual; translated into Spanish, with an Italian edition published in Italy) and *Song of Pebbles* (also bi-lingual; translated into French). Poetry, photography, and paintings are his passions.

## Rendezvous in the Rain . . .

Asoke Kumar Mitra

(1)

In a moment of joy and sorrow  
A spider has come to stay with us, weaving cobwebs  
In the core of our hearts

Warm lips of winter  
The wind playing with the candle  
You are a fantasy  
A forgotten melody  
Breathless song

Spider is weaving cobwebs  
Trapped our hearts  
Left skeleton behind

Tonight, twinkling stars and half moon  
Invite us for a never before rendezvous  
As strangers, as soul mates  
No looking behind

Our shadows walked carefully apart . . .

(2)

The wind howls and bangs at my shut door  
The rain takes off her yellow raincoat  
Her infinite rain-soaked dreamy eyes  
Syllables of fear, love and tenderness

Crumpled times, we voyage through  
A long night and fatigue,  
Swallowed black fugitive clouds  
We see an open wound

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Our shadows running into the rainy winds.  
We rub shoulders, we talk to the edge of silence  
The endless circling, madness wrapped in rain  
You and I, love fall to dust . . .

(3)

In your eyes me a fugitive rebel  
The summer's gone, silence in the air  
Tomorrow it's going to rain . . .  
Teardrops from the sky

We met as strangers  
We looked into each other's eyes  
We have shared song of the rain  
Melodious rhythm

We raise our arms to the sky  
The wild fragrance of rain  
Passions swirled in our loneliness  
We become stranger again  
In our palm only the stain of rain . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Alonzo “zO” Gross, a Temple University graduate (English Literature), is a songwriter, dancer, recording artist and writer. He has authored short stories (*Staying Sane* series), two poetry books – *Inspiration, Harmony and the World Within* and *sOuL eLiXiR*, was recognized as Leigh Valley’s “Best Spoken Word Poet”, and has been featured poet in the film, *VOICES*.

## When We Cease All of the Marching . . .

Alonzo Gross

If it were switched,  
(Tell me)  
How would u feel? /  
Would u still bitch,  
If for “U” Kaepernick kneeled?/.  
What if every day ur people's  
Blood would splatter?--  
With no regard,  
2 ur hard pleas of SCREAMIN'  
“WHITE LIVES MATTER!!!”--.  
What if?  
When u said that,  
we laughed more or less/  
And said “ALL LIVES MATTER”,  
Makin A Protest,  
2 Yo Protest/  
(Oh Yes/) I guarantee,  
U would feel it, in yo chest/  
The distress/  
Of gettin' killed on film  
And u gets  
no arrest/  
Out of frustration u too,  
Would probably riot •  
But u"ll never “stomach”  
What I say,  
it's not in ur “diet” •.  
Cuz In ur mind,  
u think that Everyone favors u /  
Like ur Divine,  
Truth is . . .  
Yer WHITE PRIVILEGE  
ENABLES U /

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

I think it's time,  
U show empathy,  
love and respect ----\*  
Before there comes a time,  
We put more than our foots on yalls necks---.\*  
Just know I want Peace,  
But our gunz is Arching \_  
So please don't call us Beasts,  
When We Cease all of the Marching\_.

zO

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Pragya Sharma is a poet residing in Muzaffarnagar UP, INDIA. She is an engineering student who has contributed to online prose and poetry magazines a number of times.

## The River of life

Pragya Sharma

In the immense sea of lust  
be the wave carrying love  
In the crowd of masked faces  
divulge hidden traces

Among good looks and curves  
treasure soul which serves  
In a book embracing untrue stories  
be the page rich in veracious glories

In depraved court of sinful minds  
do justice with pious mankind  
In the air of sorrow and lamentation  
be someone's breath of delectation

In the dawn of fake promises and lies  
hold someone till dusk ever dies  
In humongous river of life  
Be a fisher catching deepest trench of cries

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Hyderabad, India, Dr. Ashok Chakravarthy Tholana's poems have been published in over 90 countries. His poetry promotes universal brotherhood, peace, protection of environment/nature, and safeguarding children's and human rights. He has received commendations from the former President and Prime Minister (India), Queen Elizabeth (the UK), Princess of Wales, President (France), and the Prime Minister (Switzerland).

[tacvarthy@gmail.com](mailto:tacvarthy@gmail.com)

**With Themes Upright . . .**

Ashok Chakravarthy Tholana

Infiltrated by words, relentlessly  
Penetrated by thoughts, endlessly,  
The aspiring mind of every poet,  
The ever-thirsty pen of every poet,  
Expect to impart righteous verses,  
Expect to implant themes virtuous.

Pen is mightier than the sword  
Can transform the world with words,  
With every line in every verse,  
Readers across the universe,  
Liberated and morally awakened,  
To tread a path worth enlightened.

Weaving pleasant words of bliss  
Conferring a boon of eternal happiness;  
Dousing the fires of hatred and anger,  
Let virtuous words make everyone stronger.  
Yes, defacing human ignorance and ego,  
May every poet's upright themes echo.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Andhra Pradesh, India, Dr. T. Ramesh Babu is (ad hoc) Assistant Professor of English at JNTUACEP. He is a poet, writer, and soft skills instructor. He has authored 16 international and 2 national papers and has 3 books. Many of his poems have appeared in international anthologies and magazines.

## Restless & Defamed Life!

Ramesh Reddy Tera

I too have fantasies, but mine;  
Turned into nightmares;  
I too crave to have a beautiful life,  
But, my destiny led to this hellhole;  
My eyes see only two colours;  
Black and white; Mostly dark,  
Because, I awake nights.  
My day kicks off with night;  
For me every night as kalaratri;  
Men treat me as a sex toy and a puppet;  
Irrespective of their age and size  
One after another being ready to attack on me;  
As wild animals attack on deer;  
Moreover they demand for my angelic beauty;  
At bargained cost: Ignoring my pain:  
They squash my body and blacken;  
My reddish skin with cigars and forcible intercourse,  
Tormenting unscrupulously for ravishment;  
I neither bear the pain nor control the yells;  
Yet tears running down as streams;  
Still having chuckles on my face.  
The white washed walls turned into dark;  
With stains as smeared on walls.  
Those stains stood as witness of;  
My struggles to survive each night;  
From wild beasts among four walls.  
How long do I bear this pain to feed?  
My little children appetite.  
Do I have to adjust as it is my fate?  
Is it the worth of liberty?  
Is it my life?  
Don't I have hopeful days ahead as I crave?  
O liberty! Are you not for all?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Hussein Habasch is a poet from Afrin, Kurdistan. His poems have been translated into many languages. He has participated in numerous international poetry festivals, including those in Colombia, Nicaragua, France, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Germany, Romania, Lithuania, Morocco, Ecuador, El Salvador, Kosovo, Macedonia, Costa Rica, Slovenia, China, Taiwan, and New York City.

## In a Coma

Hussein Habasch

*On May 13, 2020, I had an operation to remove a kidney stone. As a result of a medical error during anesthesia, I fell into a complete coma for two consecutive days, and I miraculously survived death. After I left the intensive care unit on the fourth day, I frantically wrote this text in Kurdish, as if I was in a race against time.*

In a coma

Your body is not yours  
Your mind is not yours  
Your brain is not yours  
Your soul is not yours  
Your being is not yours  
Your dreams are not yours  
Absolutely nothing is yours!  
You are just a vulnerable bird  
Stumbling in his flight, like a blind lost his cane  
In a fierce war against blindness.

In a coma

You don't know your name nor your title  
You don't know your birth date nor your age!  
You don't know what time you are in nor what day!  
You don't know what month, what season  
What year, what century you are in!  
Nothing has value in your eternal and vast passivity.

In a coma

You don't feel the time!  
No value for the time nor the clockwise  
No value for sunrise nor sunset  
No value for morning nor night  
No value for light nor darkness  
No value for fertility nor drought  
No value for trees nor flowers  
No value for a butterfly's tenderness nor a bird's flutter  
No value for the clouds nor the blue sky...  
In a coma you are present

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

And your real presence is your absence  
And getting lost in the nothingness abyss  
Without limbs nor legs nor strong feet!

In a coma  
You forget every day's walking roads  
Forget the road to the coffee shop  
Forget the road to the bar  
Forget the road to the work  
Forget the road to the house  
Forget your keychain  
Forget your keys  
Forget your door's lock  
Forget your library  
Forget the smell of your books  
Forget your notebooks and pens  
Forget your poems  
Forget your daily rituals  
Forget your hat  
Forget your coat  
Forget your shirt  
Forget if you are dressed or naked!  
No difference, forgetting is the mystery of coma and its blessing.

In a coma  
Nothing has value but the Oxygen tube which provide your lungs with air  
And to the hoses which feed your body with medicines  
And to the anesthetics that sedate the already sedated!  
No value but to the adhesive tapes on your chest, which measure your unfelt heartbeats.  
No value but to the bed which they threw you in it motionless.  
Nothing indicate that you breath.  
Nothing indicate that you exist in existence.

In a coma  
You won't feel pain even if it's severe  
You won't shuffle your breath even if it's a strong rattle  
You won't cry even if there is an obligatory reasons to cry  
You won't love, and you don't know why you won't?!  
You won't cry, and you don't know why you won't?!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

No astonishment  
No outburst  
No amazement...  
You look like a statue sculpted from boredom  
Or an invisible icon in a ghost church.

In a coma  
You like this monkey  
Which doesn't see  
Doesn't hear  
Doesn't talk  
And doesn't understand its surroundings  
But although  
It remains a real being of flesh, blood, and tears.

In a coma  
Your eyelid won't flutter  
Your cheeks won't blush  
Your forehead won't left up  
Your eyelashes won't blink  
Your heart won't beat  
You won't notice the sweat drop on your forehead  
You won't wipe the black blood stain from your neck  
You just will fade away, your capabilities will vanish and it will become less  
than ash and lighter than dust.

Coma is a trick  
Plot  
Cave  
Trap  
Beware you don't stuck between its sharp teeth  
And its fierce claws  
Coma is stupidity!  
How foolish your intention will look  
When you would like to step on its thresholds  
And try to enter its vestibule  
And its dark terrifying corridors.

In a coma

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Between alertness and absence  
Probably you will speak as a great philosopher,  
Not like any other philosopher,  
Neither before nor after,  
Wisdom after wisdom will come out,  
From your heavy tongue,  
And your hoarse throat,  
And your wounded pronunciation,  
And your sore lips.

In a coma  
You are dead  
Yes, you are dead  
No one can wake you up  
And give your body and soul their life back  
Except your lover's tender hand  
And her deep heart's music  
So listen  
So listen  
Listen then with all your senses  
And with all the remaining breath in your chest,  
Then slowly, slowly you will open your eyes  
And inevitably you will wake up from your stupid coma.

16-17/5/2020  
University Hospital at Bonn, Germany

*Translated by Muna Zinati*

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



N. Meera Raghavendra Rao holds an M.A. in English literature and is a freelance journalist, photographer and prolific writer, having authored 10 books both fiction and nonfiction. Her 11<sup>th</sup> book, *Pinging Pangs* is a collection of 50 verses published in August 2020. She travelled widely within and outside the country.

## Granny's Spectacles

Meera Rao

Little Jill a bundle of mischief  
Hid her granny's spectacles  
Made her run all over  
Searching for missing spectacles.  
Laughing all the way  
Running behind the old lady  
At last stood in front of her  
Wearing her spectacles.  
Frightened everything appeared blurred  
Thought her granny disappeared!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Marcelo Sánchez is from Argentine. He has also lived in the USA and Germany, where he currently resides. He writes poems and short stories.

## Notre Dame

Marcelo Sánchez

Something doable  
I thought about doing  
was standing, during a storm,  
to one side of Notre Dame,  
and watching the gargoyles  
as they regurgitate water nonstop.  
I could have done it, but I didn't,  
be it because I was on the other side  
of Paris (and didn't know how long  
the rain would last), or I was nearby  
(in the Louvre) but busy  
with other things, always aware of  
what I was missing, saying to myself:  
"Some other time".

Now I shall have to wait  
until the Basilica is redone.  
When it reopens, I will come back  
and see the Madonna in the altar,  
but maybe not that pair of paintings  
which deserved to be in a museum,  
and now –I understand– conserves the Louvre.  
Neither do I believe that I shall see again  
the wooden sculptures  
that surrounded the outside of the choir,  
and thus I miss the chance to know  
if I would ever like them.

Isn't it an authentic miracle  
that the vitraux were saved?  
We feared for their safety,  
and as soon as we knew they were safe  
I thought how great it would be

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

to see them from short distance.  
This is just a dream, because  
when Notre Dame reopens,  
the vitraux will remain up there,  
same as in all these centuries,  
indifferent to all of us,  
within reach of God.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Photo Credit: Katja Dietermann

From Hamburg, Germany, Gino Leineweber has authored short stories, travel books, biographies, and poetry collections in English and German. He has been awarded several international prizes for his poetry. He has also served as an editor in three international poetry anthologies.

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

## Colette

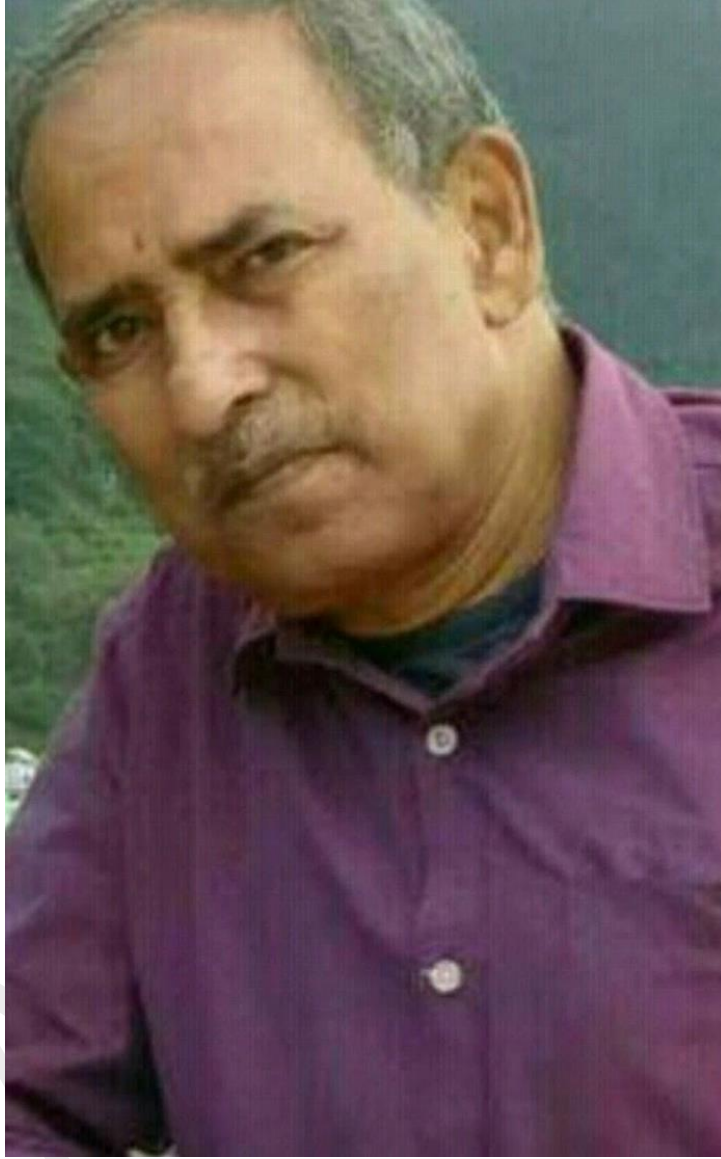
Gino Leineweber

Colette lives in Paris  
Struggles for what has been stolen  
From her first husband  
The name on the books she wrote  
She kisses Missy  
Gives the world a stage for truth  
Has to live as a vagabond

Colette loves Missy  
Lives with beggars and drunkards  
Is friend with journalists and writers  
The lover from De Jouvenel –  
First the father then later the son  
She overtrumps the society  
With the questioning eye of a wise woman

Colette writes novels  
Becomes famous with  
Chérie and Awakening Hearts  
Composing in it love troubles in purple  
And narratives in taboo  
In defiance of her time  
A woman that is who she thinks she is

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



A retired banker, C. S. P. Shrivastava studied Sanskrit, English and Psychology at Patna University. He is a sportsman with an understanding of world literature and human values. He views his poems as a process of being natural, a continuous effort to understand the intricacies of the human psyche and nature.

## Am I Right?

C. S. P. Shrivastava

I shall not write  
About lovelorn lot  
The beauteous Sea  
The arcane Sky, Moon-  
Or, the Nature in  
It's grandeur  
The verdant Earth-  
They dwell in  
Marvels though  
Aplenty in the Bosoms  
Of  
Soul's Sublime Glow  
It's not the euphony Or  
The euphoria  
It's not the wars  
Fought long ago-  
Or the Humanities  
Wailings across  
The time - slot -  
It's the waning  
Of virtues-  
Out of the mix  
The Humanities  
Sole Sublime  
possessions  
Now put to disuse  
Or a misuse . . .  
To muse miseries  
I call upon thee  
And hope not  
It's dooming plight  
Am I right?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born in Neiba, Dominican Republic, Ramón de Jesús Núñez Duval is writer, historian and poet. He holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and is Specialist in Integrated Management Systems. He has authored *Naked Skin* and *Brief Historical Review of the Bahoruco Province*, and contributed to 30 national and international anthologies.

## Let Us Be Reborn

Ramón de Jesús Núñez Duval

We are the breath of peace,  
tattooed on the wings of the nightingale,  
fiddling in the melody of the air,  
which with aroma awakens humanity.

Let us make life, source of light,  
draw in pentagram of colors,  
the sublime soul of essence and virtue,  
where greatness is of hearts.

Molecules of rain, spreading love,  
in beautiful wheat fields that kiss the sun,  
I do not understand, because it is not possible,  
that we all fight for a better world.

The dawn shelters us, because there is God,  
the pigeons fly foreshadowing faith,  
that one day the planet is protected,  
and the human race is reborn.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Nosakhare Collins is a Nigerian poet. He is the author of a poetry chapbook, *a pilgrim of songs* (published in 2018 by SEVHAGE in Nigeria). His poems have appeared in several national dailies and international journals and anthologies.

Nosakhare Tweets, @nosa\_collins, and Facebook, Nosakhare Collins

the world's silent when we died

Nosakhare Collins

the sea is bloody & muffled

how many times have you seen an image  
of boys at fifty, becoming joyful to stare at;  
stinky patch with bullets and scars:  
when we stared at it on our secret box.

imagine how the world would look like  
if a boy is paralyzed like a broken needle,  
and dumped in the gutter to rot;  
or find him dead by a mysterious hurricane.

you need not imagine the image you see  
of a boy congealed by buzzing bombs;  
sprawled on the scarlet bed of a free life,  
and holding hands with the sound of silence.

their skins can turn senescent thoughts  
fading away like a floating sea;  
shows you how to nail sadness into a wanderer's bag,  
just to forget the image and remember a boy wanted to turn war for peace.

but remember the naked children laughing  
as if there were men,  
who shall turn this pearly image of dead bodies,  
and grow to remove the rotten leaves of dust.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Surekha Anandraya Bhat, the daughter of Smt. Vijayalakshmi A. Bhat and Late Shri M.A.V. Bhat, is Associate Dean of Academic affairs at the American University School of Medicine in Aruba. She received the “Best Poet of 2007” prize and the International Poesis award at the Rabindranath Tagore Poetry Contest 2014 from poesisonline.com.

## The Making of the Wise

Surekha Anandraya Bhat

In doom, You pressed on the wound of my heart, like You would, a call bell.  
Withdraw in fear or let You in? I opened the door of my heart.  
You entered – dusted, swept my heart, washed my soul in its depths;  
doom you blew into my soul to produce music joyous!  
You gifted me with solitude for I had shy tears,  
taught me how to swim in my heart lest despair form an ocean.

A cleaner soul, I've reached a shore, there's still a lot to swim?  
My brightened heart, my glowing mind look back to view my past -  
on my toiling hands, for a path of joy, You transported bricks of sorrow,  
for sorrow is Your classroom for the making of the wise!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha, professor of English, poet, author and critic, is a prominent voice in English language-Indian Poetry. She has received many poetry awards, and has authored 8 books in different genres and 50 research papers. Her poems have been included in the university syllabus prescribed for the English M.A. program.

## A Herculean Odyssey

Dr. Ranjana Sharan Sinha

Seeds of hope  
Once planted in the soft hearts  
Of machine-like limbs--  
Hard and copper-coloured,  
Sprouted forth from  
A million of obsidian eyes  
Opening and closing amid  
The flames of gulmohar  
And the sunshine of cassia  
Adorning the broad, black road  
Of the bustling city--  
The dream destination of  
These migrant workers,  
Who came to support families,  
Determined to work in sun,  
Resolved not to rest in rain!

Today they bear  
The brunt of lockdown:  
Hungry, homeless, jobless  
Onto urban streets--  
Once their utopia!  
Enforced they embark on  
A journey on feet  
Back home to their villages  
Hundreds of miles away!  
Oh, the arduous trek!

Hoisting their children  
On their shoulders  
They wipe their tears--  
They are not afraid  
Of the deadly disease:

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

To them the jaws of hunger  
Are mightier than the virus.  
Sad and full of uncertainties,  
They continue their  
Herculean odyssey!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ro Hamedullah (RH), 33, is a Rohingya poet from Myanmar Country and a teacher by profession. Writing poetry is his passion, but he has also written short stories and quotes. His poems have appeared in numerous anthologies.

## Who's the Girl Different from Everyone

Ro Hamedullah

There's a dense cloud of tresses someplace  
There is a colourful dress someplace else  
There are having a pinkish lips someplace  
There's an intoxicating walk someplace else

There is witchcraft in my eyes someplace  
There's a fragrance in the body someplace  
There are easily bent eyes someplace  
There are white arms someplace else

There are so many attractiveness  
Who melt moonlight into your eyes  
There are so many conversations  
Which melt melody into your ears

This one walks with a swirl while  
That one walks with a swagger  
This one meets in a bashful way while  
That one meets with some hauteur

She's like a rose bud in a rose garden,  
Different from all the other flowers  
What to say, these eyes have seen  
Such a breath-taking guise of hers

What a strange freshness she has!  
What a beautiful simplicity she has!  
What an odd heart-warming grace she has!  
What a beautiful attractiveness she has!

There are millions of beauties on every step  
But, I'll present my heart as a gift to that one.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born May 7th, 1979, Craig Alton Kirkland grew up between the Jamaican districts of Featherbed Lane and Frazer's Content and Spanish Town. Popularly known as 'Amaziyah The Great', his contributions to the world of arts by way of his multi-award-winning short films, music, spoken word, music videos have received notable recognition.

Twitter / IG: @preciselygreat  
[www.facebook.com/thegreatamaziyah](http://www.facebook.com/thegreatamaziyah)

## You Will Be OK

Craig Alton Kirkland

*Dedicated to Simone Slizy Stewart, and all the women across the world who are experiencing hard times right now.*

You are remarkable, You are strong.  
You are one of God's greatest gifts, follow H.I.M. you will never go wrong.  
You are smart, You are noble,  
Pay keen ears to every word that I told you.  
The Skies were overcast, then torrential rain for days...  
Throughout your darkest moments, you've experienced pain for days.  
Cold and bitter, angry and confused,  
Be cautious with your steps before you make the wrong moves.  
Are you probably feeling a bit empty right now, somewhat unsatisfied?  
Fret not! For Jah already sent an angel, to be your travel guide.  
You will be ok, okay! Just know that God is real.  
After you've overcome that sophisticated phase, it will be the strongest you will ever feel.  
You are beautiful, You are sweet,  
Trample all hypocrites under your feet.  
Be patient and pray more, "You will be OK"  
Forget about them who not believe in you, You've got no time to play.  
You are a fighter, a survivor who resist to quit,  
You are loved, You are a #Queen who deserves lifetime happiness.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Hyderabad, India, Elizabeth Kurian 'Mona' is a multilingual poet /writer/translator in English, Hindi, Urdu, Malayalam and Telugu. She has thirteen books to her credit, the latest being *The ART AND SCIENCE OF GHAZAL –A Reader's Guide to Urdu Ghazal Appreciation, Scansion and Prosody*.

monaliza.hyd@gmail.com

## Ghazal for Ages

Elizabeth Kurian 'Mona'

We have been quite unhappy since ages  
We have not laughed heartily since ages

The pandemic has made us ascetics  
There has been no friends party since ages

Lost in the mundane vagaries of life  
We missed out nature's beauty since ages

So engrossed in their gadgets are kids now  
The children's park looks empty since ages

Sky scrapers are mushrooming all around  
Sky is seen only partly since ages

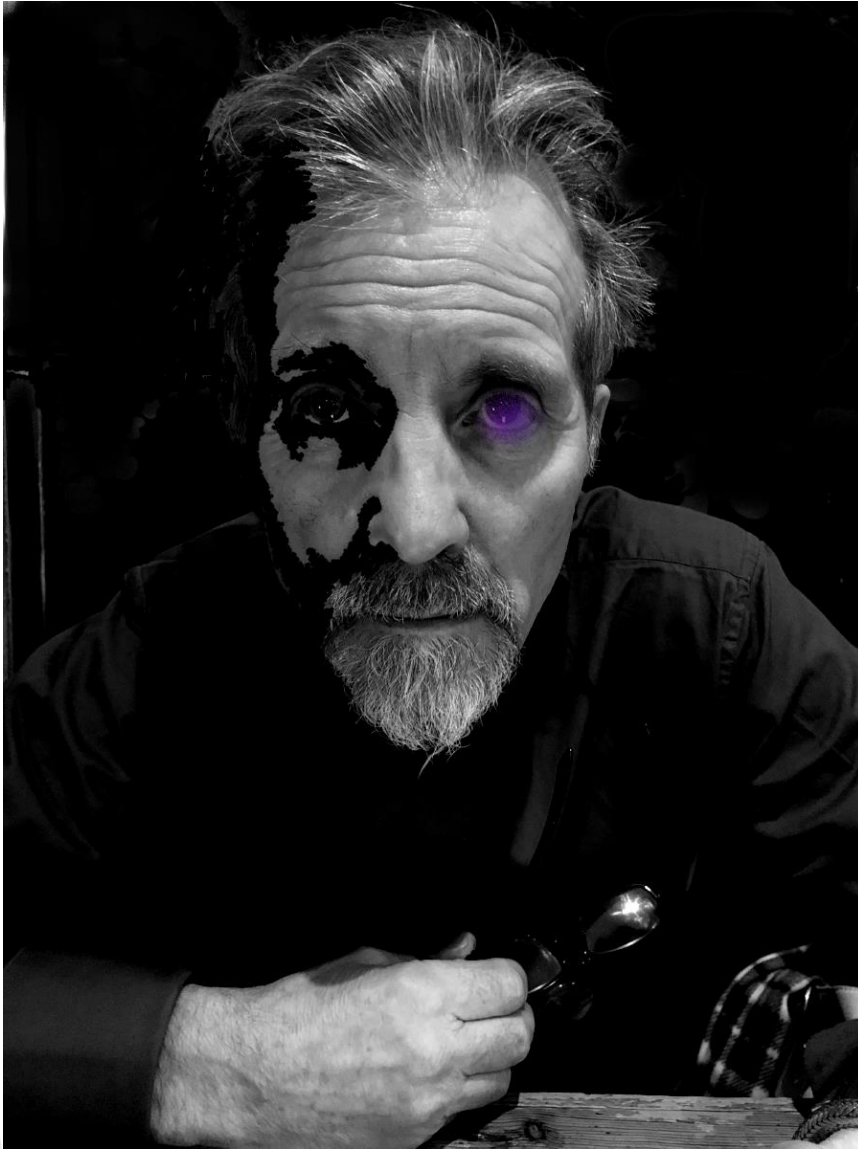
Parents now save for their children's future  
They have left all luxury since ages

Few visit the inmates of old age homes  
Near and dear are too busy since ages

Life has become mechanical 'Mona'  
I haven't touched poetry since ages

\*The ghazal form comprises independent couplets with a common meter and rhyme scheme. The rhyming words, followed by the refrain appear in both the lines of the first couplet and in the second lines of the others. The name/pen name of the poet is included in the last couplet.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Finlay Hall lives in the North East of Scotland. He first started writing poetry as a teenager in 1970/1. His work has appeared in *Sounds Music Paper*, the *Voices in the Wind* anthology, *Leopard Arts* magazine, and *Spillwords*. He has organized and implemented an event called, “Joined Up Writing and Like a Blot From The Blue”.

## You Have the Right

Finlay Hall

You have the right to walk the streets  
You have the right to love your family  
You have the right to go to work  
You have the right to be a jerk  
You have the right to lie in your bed  
You have the right to the thoughts in your head  
You have the right to go to the store  
You have the right to swim by the shore  
You have the right to live your life  
You have the right to be with your wife  
You have the right to be who you are  
You have the right to sit in your car  
You have the right to have a drink  
You have the right to think how you think  
You have the right to protest and march  
You have the right to make your mark  
You have the right to go to your church  
You have the right to not be smirched  
You have the right to turn your back  
You have the right to not get attacked  
You have the right to stay out of jail  
You have the right to try and fail  
You have the right to remain silent  
But anything you say may be used in evidence against you  
You have the right to a lawyer  
If you haven't got one, a court appointed lawyer will be given to you  
You have the right to not speak  
You have the right to be meek  
You have the right to be heard  
You have the right to be a nerd  
You have the right to be wrong  
You have the right to be strong

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

You have the right to take the knee  
You have the right to have the same rights as me  
You have the right to vote  
You have the right to be remote  
You have the right to draw back  
You have the right to be black  
You have the right to survive  
You have the right to remain alive

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born and raised in Brooklyn, NYC, Shareef Abdur-Rasheed, AKA “Zakir Flo”, is a Vietnam era veteran, human rights activist and a percussion artist. He writes conscious poetry and socio-political commentaries, has authored *Poetic Snacks 4 the Conscious Munchies* and contributed to numerous international anthologies. Shareef is married with 9 children, 44 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

<https://www.facebook.com/shareef.abdurrasheed1>

<https://zakirflo.wordpress.com>

<http://www..com/shareef-abdur-rasheed.php>

please stay close to me

Shareef Abdur-Rasheed

your majesty he who  
monopolized legitimacy  
over all other would be kings  
they have no supremacy,  
them who come, go fade away  
all fake comparatively  
their death inevitably  
hangs over head constantly  
they were not given immortality  
their stay is temporary  
they were made that way  
by he who fashioned universe,  
ocean, sky, mountains, seas,  
you and me and all creation  
just by proclaiming "BE" and it was,  
and it is and it will be  
he who has no beginning,  
no end was not begotten nor does  
he beget  
he (Allah) is one (1) he is eternal,  
there is nothing that compares  
in a class by himself period.

he is not creation he is thee creator  
him alone worthy of worship  
far removed from taqhut (false deities)  
the likes of which is attributed to thee  
by folk misguided  
those who take truth and hide it  
instead take fake  
try to disguise it until that day  
comes their way and all souls  
will realize that truth

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

prevails over falsehood  
cannot be watered down  
to appease men's needs  
fulfill their greed, bring ease  
to the fact they don't believe,  
didn't heed

far removed is he from all needs  
not like his creation  
who have limitations  
creator does not need creation  
creation needs creator

do not worship any creation  
nor their false gods,  
imitations all fake!!  
lands, nations, tribes,  
cultures created by man  
including their flags  
are not sacred, holy  
nor do they deserve  
praise, devotion, glory  
they are all things of man  
only creator deserves,  
praise, glory, worship,  
devotion, submission

mankind's tribal cultures,  
traditions  
designed to deter one from  
giving all praise, glory, worship,  
devotion, submission  
to only Allah\*(swt) exclusively  
the only purpose for which he  
created thee  
thus hindering mankind

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

from the straight path  
that on which creator bestowed  
his eternal grace  
not of them who went astray  
ultimately receive eternal  
damning disgrace

\*(swt) = all glory to Allah.

food4thought = education  
Zakir Flo

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ananda Nepali, ICPI's Culture Ambassador for Nepal, East India and Tibet, is Director of Policy Research and Consulting Services Nepal; initiator for Nepal's Dalit Dignity First Campaign that works to eliminate the South Asian caste/racial discrimination; [ . . . ], and an environmental activist [ . . . ]. He writes articles, poems, and research papers for youth empowerment and social change.

## The Best of 2020

Ananda Nepali

I believe that it's new life when I entered in 2020,  
COVID19 taught us that we should learn how to live in new life.  
I hope that through people's eyes, you only see me.  
I heard that World needs to operate eco-friendly,  
That People's voice is similar to that of Mercy,  
Am starting to get a good vibe, like New World,  
Honestly tell me why people don't understand about world now,  
I buy fruits and vegetables but at the market there is local products,  
I've been sending message my doctor friends, they are so busy to serve patient devotedly  
before shared with me that I should have you daily by my side,  
Key words are love, care and humanity for world.  
I believe that COVID19 taught people to re-think the way we worked, studied, lived,  
There are thousands of stories of solidarity and resourcefulness,  
Stories of neighbours supporting each other, of small businesses finding ways,  
This single, simple change has sparked a worldwide love of eBooks and webinar.  
To serve their customers that turns my world on,  
I love that and so much more,  
I love the way technology moves humanity forward.  
For that and so much more,  
Allow me leave this poetic note,  
I hope we'll be taking some of the new lessons we've learned with us.  
I'm going to continue to support vulnerable/marginalized communities  
and local businesses.  
So, take my words creatively,  
My hope faithfully and take some notes,  
The Invisible determinations, with visible ideals.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Tarana Turan Rahimli, an Azerbaijani poet, writer, journalist and literary critic, has a doctorate in Philological Sciences. Associate Professor of World Literature Chair of Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University, she has authored 8 books and more than 400 articles. Her work has been published in more than 35 countries.

## I Grew up

Tarana Turan Rahimli

I was left on the crossroads,  
I grow up choosing my own way.  
I passed through the aches  
That filled into my inside.

I was interested with a strange wish,  
I directed towards light and sound.  
I drunk off the love  
I grew up drinking such loves.

I took hands of the expectation,  
I was lost in the corners of life.  
I cut the grief to my height  
I grew up in this way.

My spirit was invaded thousand times,  
I took shelter only in the hemistiches.  
A fire was made inside of my heart  
But I didn't burn, I grew up being experienced.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Laure Charazac is a French poet who has authored *Voyages of a Loving Soul* (in English and French, published by Inner Child Press International). Her poems have appeared in several anthologies. To her, poetry represents the most beautiful in our existence.

## My Love

Laure Charazac

I look into your deep blue eyes,  
Then I am not in reality anymore,  
Now all you have to do is close the door,  
And let me invite you to love's paradise.  
I caress your face with my fingertips,  
Temptation is glowing on your silky l  
I cannot resist the way they're smiling at me,  
Slowly I get closer and kiss them passionately,  
This is a beautiful moment for you and me only.  
I take you in my arms and feel the warmth of your chest,  
Listen to my whispers in your ears and forget about the rest.  
Let me take you to the heavens of love,  
Passion is waiting for us above.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ann Christine Tabaka, a Pushcart Prize in Poetry nominee and the winner of Spillwords Press 2020 Publication of the Year, was featured in Sweetycat Press' "Who's Who of Emerging Writers 2020". She is the author of 12 poetry books and won numerous awards for her work which has appeared in international anthologies.

## And Still, I Had These Dreams

Ann Christine Tabaka

And still, I had these dreams.  
Dreams of grandeur, iced in white frosting.  
Waking to the truth.  
A truth that no longer resides  
beside the waterfall of hope.  
Reaching for conclusions,  
my eyes do not open fully.  
Yawning my farewell  
to all the glittery trinkets  
set forth before the illusion.  
A time so long ago,  
that memories fail to adhere.  
Buried alive in anticipation,  
of a tomorrow that will not be.  
Sweet songs of triumph  
written in the icing,  
now melting from neglect.  
The night, no longer young,  
as I am not.  
We join hands in celebration,  
the letting go of false intent.  
Closed eyes to deep breath,  
I succumb to a reality set before me.  
And still, I had these dreams.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



David Winship is a native of the southern mountains, in the region of east Tennessee/Southwest Virginia where he has lived most of his life. His career has been in education. He coordinates the Appalachian Center for Poets and Writers, operating from The Arts Depot in Abingdon, Virginia.

Where Heaven and Hills . . .

David Winship

Where heaven and hills collide  
the jagged western range  
the sawteeth of the southwest  
the rounded ranges of the southern mountains  
there is where my horizon hangs  
in balance.

Where heaven and hills connect  
life cycles airborne from terra firma  
evaporate from substance  
sustenance from substrate  
there is where my hope rises  
in balance.

Where heaven and hills kiss  
a touching peck in clouds concealed  
a firm embrace in contrast unconcealed  
a fiery power as lightning strikes  
there is where my love lies  
in balance.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ibaa Ismail is a Syrian American poet. Her talent started to shine when she was an undergraduate student. She has authored eleven collections of poetry. She received her latest award from the Ministry Culture of Egypt during the Creative Arabic Women Forum which was held in Cairo in December, 2019.

## On the Borders of Ignition

Ibaa Ismail

Clouds, sadness  
and a wave of memories,  
rain of heavy eagerness  
over the language's sweet summit . . .  
And the red letters,  
sound their pulses and anthem together.  
Infatuated with a wistful memory,  
I vanish, still with a hope for a future of  
illuminated nights.

\*\*\*

I am a rose in your shade,  
dominating like your sun.  
When I look for your fruit in my blood,  
I run tenderly . . .  
Am I seeing your brightness,  
flourishing within us like others?  
Or am I going to look for my rose  
in your open prairies? . . .  
Or in my own depth  
Or in my own voice?  
Our infatuation has been hanged  
on a blaze  
to enlighten our sky.

\*\*\*

Tell me,  
How my bewildered bee,  
Returned to its most captivating garden?  
Tell me,  
how could you return to me,  
like a cloud,  
that entered the stars,

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

as if they were digging at a mine  
defiance in the dust of each strike  
And a gush of your beaming glow.

\*\*\*

Like the fire,  
which was floating over the surface of water,  
The universe had become  
and the universe had receded  
and my blood had been shining like a daylight

\*\*\*

Thorns are bleeding out my heart  
and shouting to me:  
SCATTER.  
and  
BREAK DOWN.  
But the roses . . .  
where are the roses?  
Roses are for madness!

I shout to the thorns:  
I have a surrendered nation,  
and my wounds have ignited poems.  
Their fires stay still  
to make my blood a branched nation.

\*\*\*

Bleeding has stopped,  
and the Earth is the storm of existence . . .  
The rain has stopped  
and the Earth is the mother of blood.  
Our pain was flowing  
like a vision gathering us  
as a wing of a sun  
Or a prairie,  
rising to reach the golden horizon

\*\*\*

## Poetry . . . The Best of 2020

\*(Ishtar) presented to me,  
some of the horses' defiance  
and I sprinted in a glowing fantasy.  
A gazelle in my blood is racing me,  
then embracing me,  
and sharing with me  
your shine.  
Oh Gazelle . . .

\*\*\*

Ishtar presented to me her features,  
a sky on the way to ignition.  
Here we were united,  
pruning our spirit's sprouts.  
You planted me,  
a flame of a tender pain  
and a flower of a tormented yet dignified silence.  
You planted me:  
a lightened inscription,  
and scattered your spirit.  
In my blood: ambition  
and a radiating spirit!

\*Ishtar is a primary Mesopotamian goddess associated with love and war.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



From Bangladesh, poet Shakil Kalam is Central Banker, Corporate Governance Specialist, researcher, and child-litterateur. He has been writing stories, poems, essays and columns. His published books number thirty. He has participated in seminars, symposia and conferences in various countries across the globe. He is Honorary Fellow of a Foundation.

## Speaking of Artists and Art

Shakil Kalam

Artist, you draw pictures, mixing the sweetness of the mind  
You are an artisan, you know the magic of art.  
Draw pictures of nature - love the heavens,  
Draw a picture of war, the fall of human civilization.  
Draw a picture of famine; Pictures of life struggle,  
A timeless picture of Zainul's fifties.  
Disasters, pictures of epidemics; Lamentations of humanity,  
Introduce the moon and the sun to the glory of art.  
Draw pictures of human class inequality,  
Give analogies to create awareness among people.  
Paint a beautiful lady, a worshiper of beauty,  
Leonardo da Vinci's Mona-Lisa is still world famous.  
Oil paintings, watercolors, sketches, how much more,  
Pictures of life, abstract pictures, primitive, surreal pictures,  
Modern, post-modern pictures and timeless pictures.  
Oh, artist, have you been able to draw a picture of the soul?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ibrahim Honjo, a Canadian poet /writer, has authored 30 books in English and Serbo-Croatian and contributed to 40 anthologies. His work has appeared in numerous publications. Some of his poems have been published in their Italian, Korean, Spanish, Mongolian, Slovenian, Polish, German and Bahasa (Malesia) translations. He has received several poetry awards.

## Arrival Out of Ignorance

Ibrahim Honjo

For whom the church bells toll  
for whom is a muezzin praying from the minaret  
on Friday at twelve  
for whom I cried that Friday

who are they calling at this time swollen from pain  
which I hugged with the first sob

I arrived at the right time, they said  
when spring began to mature  
they gave me the name of my grandfather  
who was swallowed by the great war

all wars are great and blood-stained

I was born after the last great war  
I cry for all the wars of the past and future

do the bells toll to announce my birth  
or some new great war that will eat me

does the muezzin pray on the minaret  
to announce a new upcoming bloodshed  
or just advertise my crying

I'm here and I do not know why  
my mother did not promise me anything  
she only held me on her bosom  
tears came out of her eyes  
because  
she had nothing in her breasts to feed me with

my father was somewhere, carving stone  
and he looked on this day through one eye

they promise everyone that it will be better

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

and it is always better for someone  
after great wars

God has never stopped the bloodshed  
by brainwashing  
they awake the imagination of the population  
and with fear, they complete their promises  
everything is imagination except my birth

I really did not want to come here  
and witness the self-destruction of mankind  
somebody planted a cuckoo's egg on me  
which I sensed at birth

only my mother and father  
rejoiced in my first cry  
afterward, everything was according  
to the unwritten rules of the universe

it's time to go to that gray stone  
and dream in peace  
about the peace destroyed  
in the name of the Creator of the Worlds  
and non-existent democracy

the myth of peace and peacemakers  
remains only a myth  
because  
peace can only be made by producers of war

bells will continue to toll  
and a muezzin will pray  
sheep will continue to follow a bell-ringer ram

I watch the ship sink without the captain  
and the helmsman

I'm singing "The Internationale"

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Annie Pothan, Professor at Osmania University Hyderabad, India, has a brilliant academic track. She was awarded a Certificate of Excellence for Paradoxist Poetry from the University of Arizona, USA and was a member of the American Bibliographical Institute. She has authored two volumes of poetry that are available online.

## A Minor Blessing

Annie Pothen

'Know Thyself' preached  
the philosopher sage.  
So, study your image visage,  
in a bright, clear mirror.  
Critically assess the reflection  
gazing back at you.  
you will at once discover  
how the highlights  
of your countenance  
prompts you to feel  
somewhat like Narcissus,  
the handsome Greek lad  
who took immense pride  
in his appearance.  
Unlike him, however,  
one would do well  
to analyze one's  
characteristic traits,  
revel in strengths  
though wisdom lies  
in tracking drawbacks  
converting them  
into strengths,  
so we become better  
with each passing day.  
Be a minor blessing  
to the universe.  
Cultivate an altruistic  
human spirit.  
Embrace humanity  
in UNITY, PEACE And LOVE!!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Aneek Chatterjee is a poet and academic from India. His work has been appeared in reputed literary magazines and poetry anthologies across the globe. He has authored 13 literary and academic books. He was a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Virginia, USA. His poetry has been archived at Yale University.

## Pains

Aneek Chatterjee

Pains have many exits,  
but only a single depository,  
hidden inside bones.

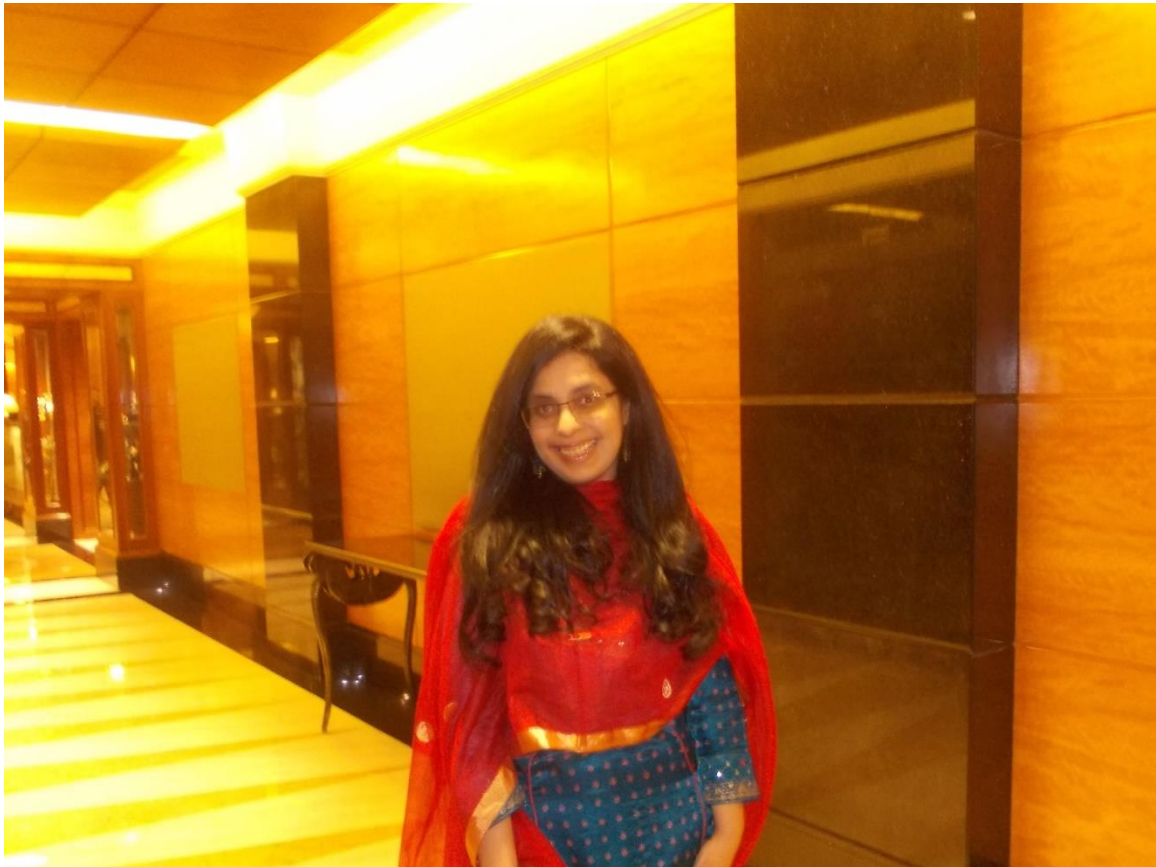
In that invisible pot, the old lady  
unloads lonely winter evenings  
in candle light

Here the barren fields whisper  
melancholy after every harvest  
& wrinkles around doused eyes  
practice laughter surreptitiously.

Pains have many languages,  
but only one page  
where we scribble colored  
graphs of monitors from  
white, cold beds.

Pains have many becks,  
but only one small pond,  
where drops are stored  
in winter & fall, spring  
& summer

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Vandana Kumar is a teacher of French, translator and recruitment consultant in New Delhi. She is also a poet with her work having been appeared in numerous national and international journals. Poetry for her is her stress buster, her flight of fancy and strangely, what keeps her rooted too.

## An Outsider

Vandana Kumar

Hadn't society  
Distanced itself already?  
From the cries for help  
From the neighbor at 3am

Hadn't we washed of?  
All responsibility  
For harvests  
Of rot

We kept the mandatory 6ft  
From reports  
Of daily crimes  
Of hate  
Of stratum  
And skin  
That looked different  
Of enemy state  
Infested with familiar sameness  
And yet . . .

Along came a virus  
Making it official  
Man for only  
One man  
Fed on 'Me love'  
'Social distancing'  
Just a hashtag

We were already  
Flawed souls  
In self-owned apartments  
Rented bodies

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

A society  
Looking at universe  
With an outsider's gaze

GRATIS ~ ICPI

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Born in a village of Bangladesh, the bilingual poet Rehanul Hoque is a worshipper of beauty and wants to promote beauty and truth together through the appreciation of beauty, by means of poetry. He dreams of a future ruled only by love.

## Nothing Makes Happy

Rehanul Hoque

Now a day nothing makes me happy  
Bunch of roses, sweet sunshine, water drops  
Grey desert, cold breeze and green land  
Beauty pageant, glistening stars----- nothing

Walking across the valley I met a peddler  
He said: Look over there  
Earlier hills were not like these  
They looked like brides wearing vermilion  
Music could be heard from that desolate heath  
At midnight there were meteor showers  
Breaking silence a bird used to shriek  
Now nothing makes the peddler happy

A bee buzzing around complained:  
The star has fallen from its orbit  
Long since there is no rain  
Flowers bloom in the arid desert  
Followers are decorating a coffin with flower  
Now nothing makes the bee happy

A bird was flying nearby  
The bird told:  
In the coming winter many princes will visit this place  
Some Houbara bustard live in those tall trees  
The locality will be developed  
There will be avenues, stadiums and large shopping malls  
Now nothing makes the bird happy

Few steps ahead  
A small stone on wayside looked sad  
'Stone, what caused you such pain?'  
The stone replied mournfully-

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

We are three siblings  
Now the older one resides in the White house  
People say she is happy  
The stair that His Excellency steps down every morning  
She enhances its glamour  
The middle one is in Aleppo  
Now she is too old to be recognized  
And the youngest stone herself is too lonely  
Now nothing makes the small stone happy

A gust of wind blew over  
The wind whispered:  
Do you know once wind and water were true lovers-  
'Single entity, single soul'  
Many nations, many civilizations through rise and fall  
Bear witness to their historic love,  
Today the age-old civilization declares  
The share of water is the hottest topic for politics  
Wind and water became separated  
Now nothing makes the wind happy.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Rosy Lidia Alosious, a professor, passionate thinker and writer, is an expert in Communicative English, Soft Skills Development, Public Speaking Skills training, for which she has conducted workshops. Many of her creative writings have appeared in renowned national and international publications. She is the recipient of the 2019-20 Best Researcher Award.

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## Hiatus

Rosy Lidia Alosious

The wheels of dawn and dusk  
keep churning  
through the paths of life.

To hold on to a break  
seemed quite impossible.

Part of routine,  
have things coursed in:  
to be the routine.

Work ceased not  
family time, however prearranged  
ended up a mess  
due to lining up work schedules.

Now, a forced time,  
to spend with family.  
Quantity, again a constraint  
as work from home presses.

Yet, some quality time assured  
if planning slides in,  
appropriately as it should be.

Hiatus,  
the break to rejuvenate,  
to recreate the lost moments  
and to feel afresh  
to face the future.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Tapas Dey, a teacher, has been living in India, West Bengal, Mathabhanga since his childhood. He takes interest in writing poems in English under the inspiration of his father. His first poetry book is titled *A Green Canvas*.

## An Unspoken Pain

Tapas Dey

Soldiers arrayed in unbound jungle apparels,  
armed to teeth,  
are confirmed standing army for their country.

A clear signal on the wire, armistice.

On the border, under a thatching beside a tree  
a certain time offered them earnest repose.

A little far, from across the border,  
seen was a little girl coming on gingerly steps  
with armful of red and white roses.

One soldier's sharp sight fell upon her,  
soon stood and a few steps ahead to her.  
Given one rose of peace to each one soldier  
each one gave her fond hug.

But the last one soldier noticed  
blood oozing from a cut on her pink palm.  
Then was her asked how happened.  
Pointed out by her is a pricking-wire-net behind.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Alicja Maria Kuberska, awarded Polish poet, novelist, journalist, and editor, is ICPI's Cultural Ambassador for Poland and Eastern Europe, member of the Polish Writers Associations, IWA Bogdani (Albania), Soflay Literature Foundation's Directors' Board, and Our Poetry Archive (India). Her poems have been translated into many languages and appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines.

## A Philosopher and a Poet

Alicja Maria Kuberska

They met between heaven and earth  
at the place where time and matter are irrelevant,  
at a higher level of abstraction.  
They overcame the barriers of the real world.

He brought a white canvas and philosophical maxims.  
She brought the paint brushes  
and a handful of dreams in words.  
They painted the picture in many shades of blue.  
They poured their thoughts and feelings into the ether.

He sketched the outlines of life with a bold navy blue line.  
She filled the background with gentle azure brushes.  
Together they added a few colorful spots of astonishment.  
His eyes are hazel and hers are green

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Gobinda Biswas, an Indian poet, has composed more than 435 poems between 2013 and October, 2020. He has four books to his credit, *The Sunny Poems* (86 poems), *The Universal Poems* (90 poems), *The Eternal Poems* (110 poems) and *The Global Poems* (114 poems).

## The Sapling Prays

Gobinda Biswas

I'm a very little sapling so uncared  
But I can make you really happy,  
If you protect me with a strong fence  
And take care of me like your baby.

Please kill me not, politely I pray  
For I want to live among you,  
I'm your true friend since long  
But you've forgotten me, so I rue.

If you love me a bit, O friend  
I'll return it in hundred times,  
At first I'll give you fresh oxygen  
Without it no animate survives.

Like the ladylove to her Wight  
I implore, please love me a bit,  
I will give you flowers and fruits  
Along with mother's shadow, I admit.

I will protect soil with my roots  
I'll provide food, clothing and shelter,  
When I will die like hermit Dadhichi  
I will give you fuel and furniture.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ajanta Paul, a widely-published poet, short story writer and critic from Kolkata, India, has been in academia for ages and has returned to her first love – writing. She earned her Ph.D. in English from Jadavpur University in the 1990s and is currently working at the Women's Christian College in Kolkata.

## The Lifting of the Curse

Ajanta Paul

When did the curse lift  
Like fog off a hazy vale,  
Revealing layers of settlement  
Lying clustered  
In the soul?

Was it a word  
That did the trick?  
A smile, perhaps, that played  
Around the lips of things cosmic?  
Which was the key that fitted the lock?

A gust of wind  
Knocked open the door of fate  
Freeing the prince  
From an eternity of entrapment  
In amphibian enchantment.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Nandita De nee Chatterjee is a writer and freelance journalist for *Ex-Economic Times*. She has contributed to 22 anthologies, including *30 Best Poets*, *Sea*, *Christmas in My Heart*, *Moonlight*, *ALS's Asia & Bilingual Anthology*, *Writers' Haven*, *Rewrite the Stars*, *Love Thy Mother*, *The Real Hero*, *Lockdown Diaries*, *Born to Dream* [ . . ].

## About Us

Nandita De nee Chatterjee

He strode down the silent  
empty road  
his stride firm  
steely-grey eyes stern  
looking straight on  
strong, striking  
handsome  
past the little girl  
and her smaller friend  
not a glance or nod  
toward their eager  
faces  
and childish hellos.

But the little girl looked on  
proud  
and on later  
as the girls around her grew  
as he with his aquiline looks  
and inscrutable aura  
went on his way  
impervious to childish admiration  
or the little girls' adulation.

He seldom spoke  
his voice never rose by a decibel  
his anger never worded  
but  
his stern calm  
volatile by its sheer intensity  
shattered into thousands of  
little bits  
her every budding waywardness  
and she knew she had to try  
harder  
and much harder

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

to be even a bit of him.

Oh! if only his unsurmountable  
strength  
the unfailing step in life  
unaffected  
by the murky wastage  
of greed, power, wealth,  
sickness, sin, strewn around  
the steely glance  
always way ahead  
unseeing, unknowing  
that it's a tough world  
he's been walking  
these seventy years up.

Unaccepting  
that there can be travails of life  
to falter the strong step.

If only a little  
of this sheer force  
of strength  
infused the air  
through which he walked.

The little girl couldn't  
remain little for long  
the childish joys  
of cuddling up in his  
armchair  
had to go  
but she knew  
she was the only one  
who could have done so.

Who could sit on his lap  
on a moon-drenched  
Laxmi Purnima night,

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

the holy full moon capturing their  
smiles  
in the dark balcony,  
keeping him company  
as he shied away  
from the festive friends  
and feasts at his place.

Who could walk through  
those silent dark roads  
in no-man's land  
learning lessons of life  
handed down,  
few words  
of kindness, correctness  
and valour  
which would see her through life.

He says little even now  
sometimes  
only to the boys in the house  
while  
she craves to know  
every detail  
every little bit of  
his pride and glory  
his Air Force days  
his unfaltering  
dedication to service  
his vision  
which served him right  
and those around him.

His steely glance is  
sometimes a little forgetful  
now  
the fast clasp on the  
little hand once  
somewhat weaker

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

one arm shakes incessantly  
and his lines are a little deeper.

She knows he is not  
feeling so strong  
she cries for he  
never says now  
those words of wisdom  
to steer her from  
the darkness around.

For she's a grown-up now,  
but his strong persona  
which cast life's most lasting  
influence on her  
still remains  
and though it's tough  
very tough  
to see him weaker  
in years.

He still gives  
support  
strength  
and silent love  
to all those he holds.

And she still derives  
a lot that she forgot  
to take  
those childish years.

For Dad, there's much  
more  
that she needs  
still from you.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Vidya Shankar, poet, writer, yoga practitioner, mandala artist, a Human Library “book”, and English teacher, is the author of two poetry books, *The Flautist of Brindaranyam* and *The Rise of Yogamaya*. A recipient of literary awards, Vidya is one of the editors of *Kavya-Adisakrit*, an imprint of Adisakrit Publishing House.

## The Moonlight Sonata

Vidya Shankar

Astride their motorbike, the lovebirds jaunted  
Along the promenade by the beach  
Her hero holding the handlebars of his vehicle  
And she him, her arms around his slender waist  
They rode through the perturbed traffic  
Blissfully unaffected by the rush.  
His eyes were on the road ahead  
And his mind very conscious of safe driving  
But his heart was upon his sleeve, his left one  
For it was upon his left shoulder  
She had placed her chin, and notwithstanding the solid helmet  
She was whispering love cajoles into his waiting ears.

Moon, he spotted them from up afar  
Through the branches of the trees that lined the pavement  
His heart skipping a beat, he raced up, and ahead too  
So he may see her better, and be seen . . . by her  
Alas! she didn't . . . so enveloped was she  
With the man she shared conjugal moments  
Not just on the motorbike but all her life with.

He, the celestial orb, was up there for all to see  
Glowing against a cerulean satin  
Of a balmy night of lunar fullness  
A luminous alluring seductive giant pearl  
That poets languished their versified thoughts upon.  
Oh! But to her, he came not at all within her ken  
Her entire attention orbiting her married love only  
As they wheeled through the traffic, a romantic earthen ride.

Yet once she did turn her eyes toward him  
Ever so briefly, but ever so disinterestedly  
A faint glance that meant, well, nothing at all—  
Dark desolation clouded his radiant full visage

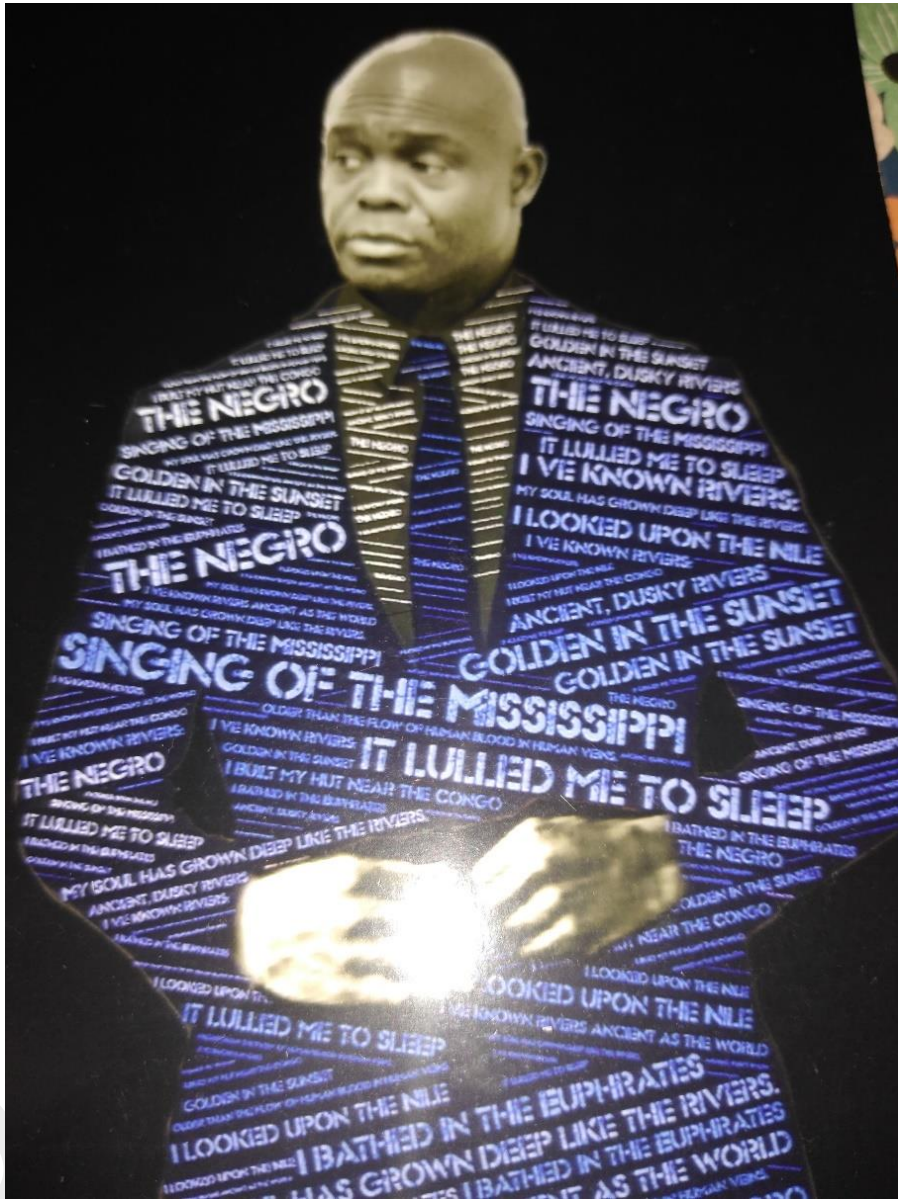
## Poetry . . . The Best of 2020

Darkened, he hid his bright self behind curtains grey  
Peeping yet not so, hoping against hope  
That she would reciprocate his lucent love for her.

Till he saw them turn into the road that led  
To the abode they called their heaven  
Out came he, beaming, from behind the clouds  
Presented himself in full view of her sight  
Putting on his best bright face with all his might—  
Not in vain were his efforts, for, as she got off the motorbike  
She looked ahead . . . and saw him, placed as he was  
At vantage.

It was just a minute, yet seemingly an eternity  
When eyes met eyes . . .  
A moment in which all the sounds of the moving world  
Around her came to a mute.  
Her iris held only the iridescence  
Of the heavenly light shining brighter now  
And her breath, a zephyr, calm and composed  
She knew there was a blessing to come  
So, with eyes locked still, she drew her husband to her  
Hand in hand they stood, in gratitude, receiving  
The luminous divine Love that embosomed them  
Hand in hand they stood, in prayerful solace  
Aroused by the Grace bestowed upon them  
Hand in hand they stood, not twain anymore, but as one  
Neither man nor woman, but as light  
An illumination meant to brighten  
Many a darkened souls to smile  
Hand in hand they stood, a conspiracy of eternity  
So the world may know that what makes it go around  
Are not its laws of motion and fixed notion  
Hand in hand they stood, a reflection, a celebration  
An eternal ethereal story of Love!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Robert Gibbons, a native Floridian, came to New York City in 2007. His first book, *Closeto the Tree*, was published by the New York-based Three Rooms Press in 2012. His recent work has been released by Expound, Promethean, Turtle Island Quarterly, KillerWhale, Inner Child Press International and Suisun Valley Review.

## Oh, the Ocean

Robert Gibbons

I heard the story. The man named John wanted to proselytize on a restricted island located off the coast of the Indian Ocean. And the people were called the Sentinelese a 55,000 years old civilization that refuse to conform.

They were not willing to modernize.

Not willing to gentrify into a world that is as fast and as long as it will last.

The people, the Sentinelese, considered tribal or primitive or any of those textbook phrases are not inhibited, are not limited to our idea of society and what is wrong with keeping your person close, they will not be coerced, to innovate, not the will of the people to invite a resort, a casino, a development, a cohort of island with miniature golf cars

to live beneath the radar, without car or airplane, without chaos or the insane, not the paved roads of our conquerors, not the blasphemous loads of steel or machinery, the Sentinelese, their animistic bodies are marvels for the curious, for the purity of Christendom, an art object for the museum cabinet, maybe a display for the zoo a crew of elephants domesticated

appropriate without social, or economic, or political, non- status seekers, cultural phonics and his name was John, he rented a boat to traverse the mighty waters, the restricted area of our histories, the Nicobar, the Andaman, the Indian, all the names we call, and tried to pay them, tried to pray for them, tried to anoint them into the New World, in the Old world

would travel by canoe with Bible in hand, a man of land of country, of privilege, of means in between this heaven we call hell, this Dante's purgatory, his Christian-missionary self came to tell them about Jesus, about the crucifix, as if Columbus is not in our thought bought and sold small pox, as if the Santa Maria, Nina, and the Pinta, did not arrive the Amerigo Vespucci in him, with all the self- regard for his nation, John-the-Conqueror John-on-the-Cross met them, the Sentinelese, a people, a warrior, a sect, a tribe, an animist, a blame, for the loot, for the booty, for the conspiracy, for the piracy, to tell them about God far from their island, a God that is a star, in this myriad planet, in this pantheon

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

of poly-god, and polytheism, a mob of them with bow and arrow, call him Roque, or her  
Crow- mother, call them devastation or destruction, John-the Conqueror, his Bible  
Shot him back to the ocean, back to the baptism of Pochantas,  
shot him back to the Crucified, like Calvary, a blood bath as communion,  
a blood bath as indigenous, a dragging

a hanging, an insurrection beyond border, beyond state of the union,  
a mutiny like Amistad  
his body a breach, a reach beyond latitude, beyond ship wreck,  
the tectonic plates will implode  
and the land will return Pangea. Will Gawanda, will glaciare,  
will ice over in the kingdom come  
will rain murder, and trial and tribulation,  
will be 40 days of Noah on the rainy tide,

when the ocean becomes land and the land become ocean, Oh, ocean, drown me  
Oh ocean, flood your gates, make me mud lotus, great fertilizer, great murderer  
My body will be like his a decomposition, great murderer, unction me to the great  
Beyond, transpose me into plankton, into amoeba, into keel, and then John saw

And number that no man could number, his body the great revelator, Oh, the  
Ocean is mother ocean her porous landscape, the ways she mates life and death  
The way breath suffocates, and the consulate wants his body back, but he is taken  
he is flight and elegy, when our body is baptized in Jesus's name, Oh, ocean, submerged  
in your liquid grave, the waves are contentious, the moon and tide roar back  
to God, Oh, ocean is the photosynthesis to mention when my body becomes  
ecosystem or am I a philistine as caverns of the body becomes sunshine, part  
pine needle, stymied energy, pent up in me, oh, ocean, the part of me to be

pure, water, pure whisper, and sound, Rumi's water wheel, my trajectory  
protected landscape. I can be so shallow as I follow hegemony. Ocean, feel  
the motion as I caracole your water, may I farrago, may I embargo in you. Oh,  
sacred space, O, Ocean, O, Soul, mold me of the amphibious and indigenous

humbled by you. O, Ocean, O, Soul, still in search of the old gold, will take back  
my nativism in your caverns of blue and infinite where we live only as tenement  
on earth, O, Ocean, only death, only death.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Tangirala Sree Latha, Associate Professor, a bilingual poet, short story writer and translator, writes in English and Telugu. Her poems have appeared in national and international publications. She regularly contributes to ICPI's anthologies, *Muse India*, *The Criterion*, Cape Comorin Publisher, GIPF-Guntur, and *Amaravati Poetic Prism*. She has authored *VOICED THOUGHTS* and 57 research papers.

## The Journey of the Virus from A To Z

Dr. Tangirala Sree Latha

An avalanche of apprehension and angst  
Bombarded the beautiful blue-ball's breath  
Causing calamity, commotion and chaos  
Devastating delight, dream and delectation  
Engulfing energy, ecstasy and exuberance  
Flooding with fear, fever and frightful frailty  
Governing the globe grumpily with grudge  
Haunting the hopeless with heinous and horrific hope  
Importing immigrants and intense impediments  
Jeopardizing their jittery jinxed lives  
Knocked down by knifelike knees and killing knuckles  
Lamenting at the lamely limping listless life  
Many mighty minds' mellowing motherliness  
Nurtured the numerous needy and the neglected  
Optimism originating from outstanding orbits  
Patience to persevere the piercing pain  
Quality life quenching the quantity in queue  
Readily recalled rulers' reasonable rationale  
Sensible subjects supported to sustain and soar  
Truly taught therapeutic tactics to thousands  
Ultimately united the Universe to unfold  
Valiant vibes to vanquish the villainous virus  
With warring will and wondrous weapons to win  
Xenophobia expelled by xenial expressions  
Yearning for yesteryears' yonder youthful yell  
Zestful and zealous to zip-up the zinged zones

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Padmini Janardhanan is rehabilitation psychologist, educational consultant, corporate consultant for Learning and Development, and counsellor for career, personal and family disquiets. She strongly believes that literature shapes and influences personality; so, she uses poetry, songs, quotes, and stories for counselling and training. She writes poetry and prose.

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## Born Free

Padmini Janardhanan

Born free, yet we live in chains.  
Powerless? Feeble? helpless?  
Indolence? or just habit?

Born free occurs – it's a gift from nature  
Living free emerges – with effort  
Conscious, steadfast, deliberate

Fear of oppression, victimization  
Fueled by helpless incompetence  
Dissolves with supportive confidence.

Freedom – political, gender, social  
And for all other faces of freedom  
First among them - personal freedom.

Born free, yet layered with bondage  
One doesn't achieve or obtain freedom  
Only chisels away the layers flung

The chisel too is born with us  
Potentially powerful  
Awaits its release from disuse

Let the divine grant us fortitude  
The ability and the strength too  
To work with the chisel diligently

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Elvirawati Pasila completed her education in the Department of French literature at Hasanuddin University in Makassar, South Sulawesi in Indonesia. Currently, she resides in Tana Toraja and works as a teacher at Junior High Schools. Her poems have appeared in numerous anthologies.

elvirpasila@gmail.com

## Light After the Storm

Elvirawati Pasila

I walk under the sun  
Greet the sky decorated with clouds  
Frolic with the wind that blew my hair

I walked following my shadow  
And your face is blocking my steps  
Why always be there when my feet step  
While your time is over  
Please go . . .  
So that the soles of my feet do not stumbled  
Don't block me with a mirage  
Love is no longer there for you  
My life has gone on without you

The storm was over  
The storm that you brought to ravage my ark  
And in confusion the rays come  
Show the direction where to go  
Even though I limped off  
But I was able to hold on and go on again.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



MTK resides in the South Bronx. She has been featured, hosted and produced events from 2010 to the present. Her first poetry book, *Eyez of the Sister*, was published in 2010. Monthly, she is the host at Landmark Nama Harlem; now virtually on zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Virgo's Breeze

Marilyn Thomas-King

Touches my soul  
Warm yet cool  
Comfortable  
That's what we (2×) do . . .

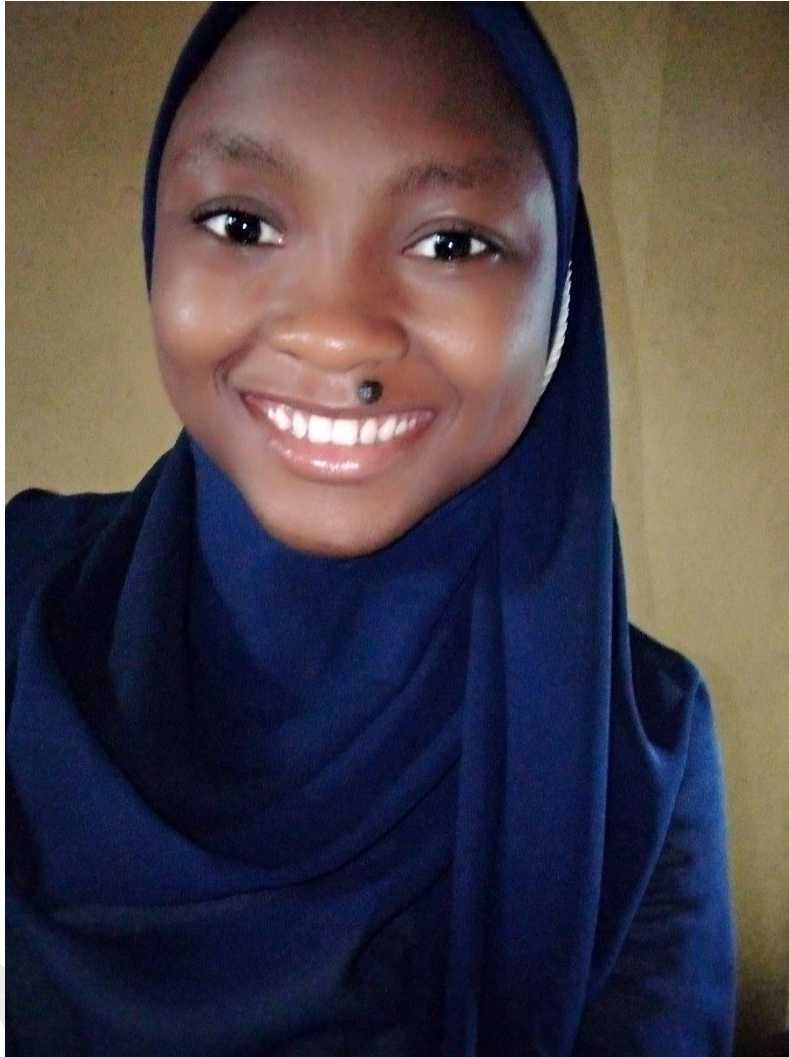
Summer's ending  
Covid-19 not slowing down  
Yet we are here . . .  
Continuing to fight  
Survival instincts are in charge . . .

This Virgo breezes is cooling  
All of us down  
Mr. Fall letting us feel  
He is back in town – town – town . . .

And my spirit & soul  
Dances and feeds  
Nutriments for your body and mind . . .

Close your eyes  
And let Virgo's breeze  
Calm you peacefully down . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Rofiat Omobolanle Kareem is a Nigerian writer, poet, and lover of language. She lives in the southwestern Nigeria, where she writes from. She currently studies English language at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

## Homeward

Rofiat Omobolanle Kareem

When a girl asks what home is  
I tell her home is many wagging tongues moulding clay . . .

Home is a cracked foot  
that beds us on uneven lines  
Mama's voice is a collage of haunting memories,  
shards of broken dreams that lodge in my body.  
I pack my bags to head home  
and My ears sing songs of fire  
that melt my tongue into tears.  
I look at my skin  
and try to peel the print of his name;  
But isn't home a place you wear an elephant's skin over dry bones?  
they once told me that home is the place a traveler packs from  
that home is also the place he lands  
they just didn't say that the flight is never mapped.  
So as i journey again to my father's lounge,  
i try to picture what home is like;  
i see that home is a blind woman  
and i, a broken road  
that home is a mute man  
i, a dejected abode of words  
Nobody leaves home  
unless home is a dwelling of snakes  
No, unless snakes do bite  
unless bites are deadly.

So when a girl asks me what home is  
I will tell her that home is a girl's place till death.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Divya Sinha hails from Delhi, India. After 30 years of service with the central government, she has retired in May, 2015. She has had many stories and poems running in her head for years which she has begun to put to paper now. These include poems for the disadvantaged children she teaches.

## Waiting for the Fireflies

Divya Sinha

Rain has ceased;  
The evening is coming on,  
Swarms of dragonflies in a merry- go -round,  
It is growing dark but the sky looks blue.

Luminescent, glowing moon,  
Wisp of cloud floating across;  
The comforting Venus,  
A few stars like French knots in the sky;  
It just needs a firefly or two to make it magical.

The season of rains has gone by.  
It is now eight months into the corona times;  
Of lockdowns, paused lives,  
Lived at subsistence level.

So many seasons have rolled into the past,  
Like whistle stops,  
Winter, spring, summer, rains and now autumn;  
Fleeting images from the train window.

Daylight stokes fears,  
But the night is calm, hiding them;  
Air fragrant with frangipani blooms  
The snug wrap of the dark;  
Jupiter and Mars dotted above.

As if one is back into childhood;  
On the threshold of life,  
The veil of future still to lift;  
The paths ahead still mesmerizing.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Helen Campbell is from Dublin. Her work has appeared in *The Sunday Tribune* and *The Blue Nib* as well as *RTE1* and *BBC Radio 4*. She has recently completed an M.A. in Creative Writing in Dublin City University.

## Encounter in Sorrento

Helen Campbell

Late for lunch, I take a turn  
down a shady side street  
overhung with washing lines  
like ragged bunting.  
Aromas of garlic, onion, oil,  
hang in the stagnant heat.  
Under an open window  
My gaze is caught by an eye  
that bulges over the rim of a dirty pail,  
a bulbous head whooshes up  
subsides back into scum.  
A flailing tentacle seeks purchase,  
succeeds - hauls up globular body.  
Warty tentacles slosh filthy water  
Onto the cobbles.  
The amorphous blob becomes  
two eyes that fix on mine,  
a smiling mouth.  
Transfixed  
I gape at this creature  
Who pulsates frantically to escape.  
For a moment I believe  
I could be a saviour,  
grab the bucket  
toss it over the wall  
observe it slide gracefully into the deep.  
Through the window, a racket,  
voices raised, plates clattering,  
knives sharpening.  
The door rattles,  
the moment passes. Craven,  
I hurry on up the gloomy street.  
They say it has a brain  
can solve problems.  
Not this one.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Lovelyn P. Eyo is a multi-award winning writer from Nigeria. She is a Life Coach and an Ambassador for Peace and Cultural creativity. She was appointed Guardian of the World Union of Poets and also honored for literary excellence by the Indian government on the occasion of the country's 74th Independence Day.

## Life Is Game

Lovelyn P. Eyo

Life is game  
Tis not always same  
It can go wild  
With the need to tame  
Till gets mild

It can play tricks  
With a simple flick  
And I am in it  
With a great aim  
To have my name  
Under the greats of life filed  
Keeping my focus  
In good nick  
To carve out a locus  
With wisdom-bricks

Life is on  
It keeps ticking  
Since I- living  
I will keep trying  
As it goes on

The game isn't over  
Not over for me  
Tis only over  
When GOD calls me over

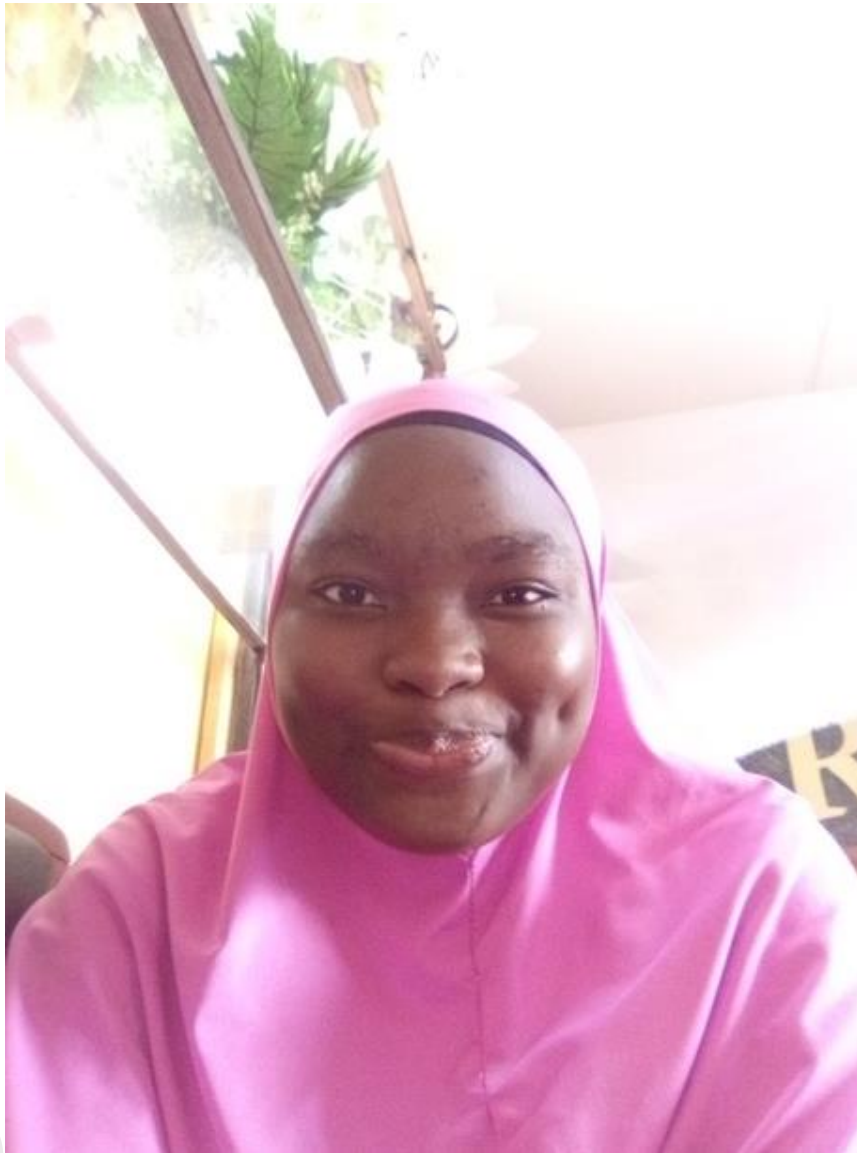
I am still in it  
The time still on  
I am still on it  
The time for me  
The chance for me to win  
- continues

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Tis not yet over  
Because GOD-given strength  
-renews

Day after day it hovers  
With blessed breath  
I am still in it  
I got life  
I got the game  
To reach my aim  
I got to keep playing  
Till I win  
And keep winning  
In this game called life

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Oyewole Barakat Tobiloba is currently a student of English language in Obafemi Awolowo University. Her love for reading and productivity attract her to poetry writing. She has her poems on “The speaking heart” blog, which include “Pride, Root of all Evils”, “Dead Hope” and many more.

## House of Memories

Oyewole Barakat Tobiloba

This golden house has birthed many children,  
But the fate of life has teared them apart –  
Far from home to different destinations.  
I paced through the house  
& the noisy silence draws  
Back my attention to those golden days:  
When the rooms were scattered;  
And the parlor was littered  
With loads of toys,  
When the house was noisy  
With the children's jokes and laughter;  
When the kitchen was left unkempt  
& kept with piles of plates.  
But now! clean & in order.  
Albeit their memories, can't ever be cleaned –  
They have left this house with album of pictures;  
The echoes of their laughter keep  
Revibrating in every angle of the rooms.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Julius Joy Oluwaseun is a sociable, smart and teachable person who is ready to unleash her potentials.

## Nipped Pride

Julius Joy Oluwaseun

Like a tender rose in petals- full bloom:  
Innocently dances to the rhythm of the breeze  
Tender buds hums perfect melody,  
The glory of the sun brings harmony,  
Because I was young.

Only half a dozen age was I  
Always run to Papa; graced with comfort and care,  
The angry face of Mama tells spank was near,  
Daily I tremble at this with fear  
Because I was young.

With Papa I find solace:  
Every morning with sweets and ties my lace,  
No wonder he always calls me grace,  
Whenever he sees my face  
Because I was young.

Mama never bothered at my withdrawal;  
She usually says ' Go and meet your Papa '  
I was only drawn to what gave me love  
Because I was young.

Papa did the unspeakable!  
Took away with him my Pride and Security,  
Exchanged it for affections and charity  
Because I was young.

Just like every other day;  
Mama never noticed I was going hay wire  
I am being violated daily!  
It was emotionally draining  
Because I was young.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Now I am grown, in sophomore,  
I still remember all in a flash back,  
He does too, says tell no one  
Am I a tramp not to expose Papa?  
I really want freedom.

I just want to be sane,  
So I can live like other bevies once again.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Mircea Dan Duta, poet, film scientist, translator, and cultural events organizer, writes in Czech. He has authored three poetry books, *Landscapes, Flights and Dictations* (2014), *Tin Quotes, Inferiority Complexes and Human Rights* (2015), and *Please Switch off Your Mobile Phones* (2020). Some of his work has been translated into more than 20 languages.

## jízdní řád

Mircea Dan Duta

vlak má deset minut zpoždění  
chce se mi spát  
ven už není vidět  
v kupé je hrozné vedro  
koukají ti kalhotky pššt to se neříká  
musíš spát  
vlak má dvacet minut zpoždění  
klimatizace nefunguje  
zkus si alespoň lehnout  
nemůžeme otevřít okno jsi nachlazený  
vlak má třicet minut zpoždění  
na chodbě je tma  
vleže na tvoje kalhotky vidím ještě líp pššt takhle nemluv  
kdyby tě slyšel průvodčí tak nás vyhodí z vlaku  
přece jsi mi řekla že ti nesmím nic tajit  
v Blansku budeme až po půlnoci  
že se před tebou nesmím vůbec skrývat  
vlak má půlhodinové zpoždění  
že jsi moje nejbližší bytost  
čím se dostaneme domů z nádraží  
že ti mám říct všechno  
pojedeme taxíkem  
všechno co vidím slyším cítím  
to si nemůžeme dovolit  
vše o čem přemýšlím  
vlak má hodinu zpoždění  
všechno po čem toužím  
hrozně se potím mám žízeň  
všechno co mě napadá  
máme jenom colu a tu nesmíš  
už žádné emhádečko nejezdí  
všechno co chci  
vlak má tříhodinové zpoždění

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

hoříš máš teplotu  
všechno o čem se mi zdá  
už téměř všechno vidím mlhavě  
ale tvoje kalhotky jsou vidět jasně  
všechno co si představuju  
říkala jsi vždycky že mezi námi funguje  
takové intimní osvětlení jako v tom starém filmu  
pššt pššt a proč stejně všichni spí  
vlak má čtyřhodinové zpoždění  
nikdo nevidí kam se dívám  
rachot vlaku slyším jako pod vodou  
to se nedělá ale říkalas že se ti mám vždycky zpovídat  
musíš spát  
ze všeho co nevidím neslyším necítím nechci  
točí se mi hlava  
o čem nepřemýšlím o čem se mi nezdá  
proboha snad nezastavíme i v Adamově  
po čem netoužím  
ani průvodčí už nepřijde  
všichni spí  
mám zavrát'  
světla zhasla i v kupé  
musíš spát  
už nejsme v Adamově  
ale vlak se do pohybu nedal  
už nic nevidím ani tvoje kalhotky  
a nevím proč  
ležím přece hlavou ve tvém klíně  
ještě vydržím  
musíš spát  
ještě nechci usnout  
musím ti to říct  
přece ti musím říct všechno  
chci to totiž vidět  
až se to stane  
až vlak znovu pojede

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

až klimatizace začne fungovat  
až se otevrou okna  
až se napiju coly  
až hlavou ve tvém klíně  
tvoje kalhotky uvidím tak zblízka  
že už nikdy neztratím zpáteční cestu  
už nikdy nebudu mít zpoždění  
už nikdy nezmeškám emhádečko  
už nikdy nebudu cestovat ničím jiným než sebou  
budeš navždy moje emhádečko  
z tebe už nikdy nevystoupím  
a žádný průvodčí mě nevyhodí  
a už ti o sobě nebudu muset nic říkat

protože o mně budeš všechno vědět  
stejně jako tehdy  
podle jízdního řádu

## timetable

Mircea Dan Duta

the train is ten minutes delayed  
i want to sleep  
one can no longer see anything outside  
it's dreadfully hot inside  
your panties peep out hush this should not be said  
you have to sleep  
the train is twenty minutes delayed  
air-conditioning does not work  
try at least to lie down  
we cannot open the window you're cold  
the train is thirty minutes delayed  
the corridor is dark  
lying down i can see your panties even better hush do not say that  
if the conductor heard you he'd kick us off the train  
didn't you tell me i must not withhold anything from you  
we will be in blansko only after midnight  
that i must not hide anything at all from you  
the train has a two-hour delay  
that you are my closest creature  
how do we get home from the station  
that i should tell you everything  
we'll go by taxi  
everything i see i hear i feel  
we cannot afford  
everything i'm thinking about  
the train is an hour delayed  
everything i desire  
i'm sweating like crazy and thirsty  
everything that occurs to me  
we have only a coke and you cannot drink it  
no public transport operates now  
all that i want  
the train is three hours delayed  
you burn you have a fever  
everything that i dream of  
almost everything i see dimly

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

but your panties are clearly visible  
everything i imagine  
you always said that it worked between us  
such intimate lighting as in that old film  
hush hush and why everyone sleeps anyway  
the train is four-hours delayed  
no one sees where i'm looking  
i hear the rumbling of the train as underwater  
that's should not be done but you said i always have to confess to you  
you have to sleep  
everything i cannot see i do not hear i do not feel i do not want  
makes my head spin  
what i'm not thinking about what i'm not dreaming about  
for god's sake we won't stop at adamov  
what i do not wish  
not even the conductor will come now  
everyone sleeps  
i have vertigo  
the lights went out also in the compartment  
you have to sleep  
we are no longer in adamov  
but the train did not start to move  
i cannot see anything not even your panties  
and i do not know why  
i lie with my head in your lap  
i still can resist  
you have to sleep  
i still do not want to fall asleep  
i have to tell you  
i do have to tell you everything  
i do want to see it  
when it happens  
when the train goes again  
when the air conditioning starts to work  
when the windows open  
when i drink coke  
when my head in your lap  
will see your panties so close  
that i will never lose my way back

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

i will never be late again  
i will never miss public transport  
i will never travel in anything else but you  
you will be my public transport forever  
i will never get out of you again  
and no conductor will kick me out  
and i will not have to say anything about myself to you

because you'll know everything about me  
just like then  
according to the timetable

*Translated by Tomáš Míka*

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Priyanka Tiwari had a poetic disposition from childhood on. Her first poem was published in a newspaper when she was 8. She has written many poems in English and Hindi, some of which appeared in local newspapers and magazines. A graduate in Biotechnology, she is currently associated with HR-Organizational Psychology. [. . .]

## Fire and Brimstone

Priyanka Tiwari

Ages and aeons have sung sagas of  
How from verdant wombs, took birth  
Civilizations great, grand and glorious  
Jewels of the Crown of Mother Earth

The bequest of the wise souls of yore  
Noblest of values imbibed and ingrained  
The mortals, into kinship, thus knit  
Humanity flourished, Grace reigned

With loving ardor, were raised  
The bastions of cultural development  
But none can but yield to  
The Dark Angel's advancement

Our bloodlust had them smothered  
Hatred triggered widespread ravage  
Oh, woe! How the "civilized" heart  
Made itself so unbelievably savage!

Unfettered passions, running amok  
Cities turned into funeral pyres  
Unbridled spread, the flames of Wrath  
Unquenchable like Hell's raging fires

The steed of avarice, galloping far and wide  
And trampling all that came their way  
Laid brutal siege over sanity and goodwill  
Bringing in, ever so often, a new Doomsday

Innumerable lives untimely snuffed out  
Grieving hearts profusely ached  
As Vengeance went on a gleeful rampage  
Our World with darkness plagued

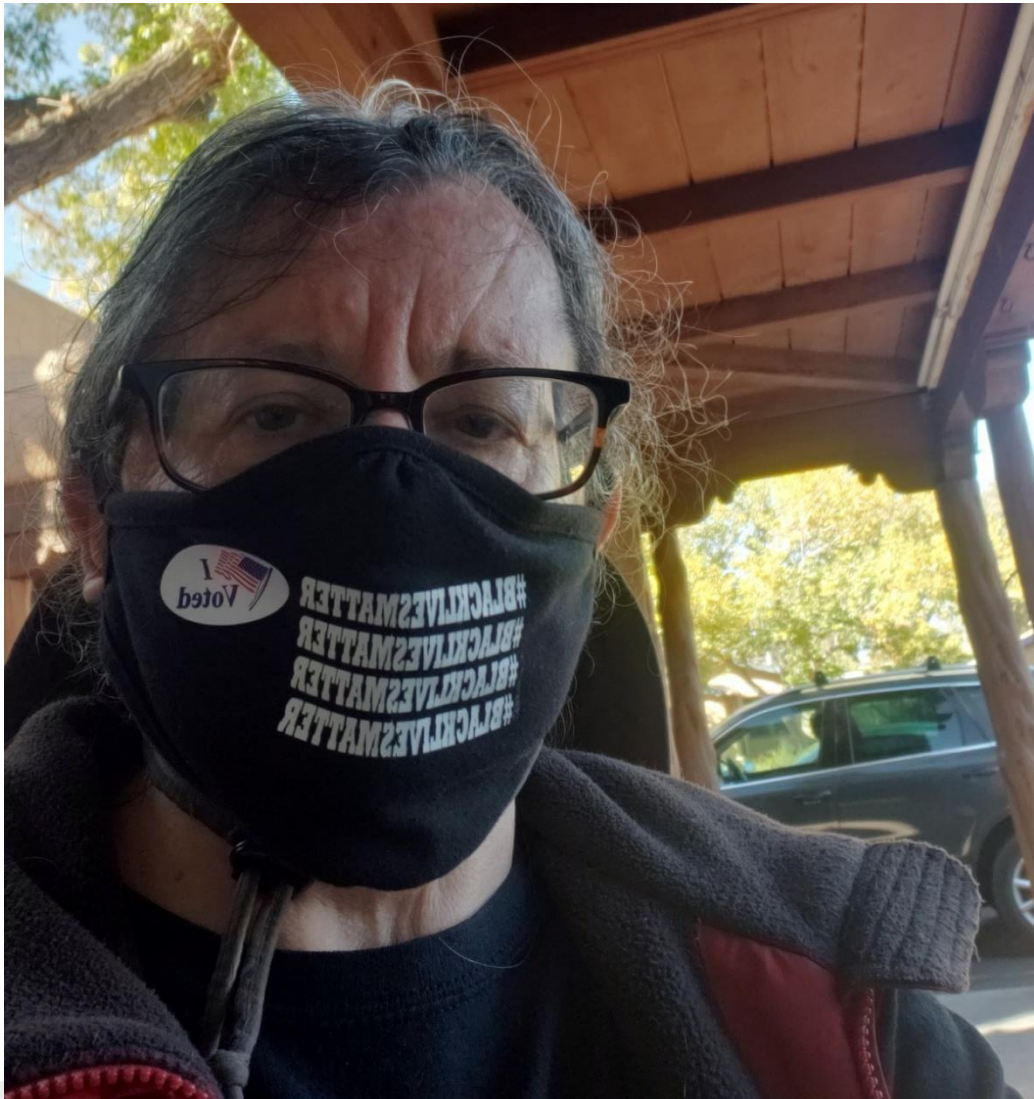
## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Battlefields soaked with sacrificial blood  
Every arsenal of destruction fervently tried  
While warfare “evolved” and “modernized“  
Witnessing its own desecration, Humanity cried

Era to era, generation to generation  
The Devil’s legacy, readily handed down  
Agents of Devastation, leading the way  
The world in agony, their minions drown!

Wounded empires, bleeding souls  
Civilizations’ death-knell shall forever ring  
Games of power, of malice and greed  
The world, to this fate, shall surely bring!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Colombe Mimi Leland – French for “dove of peace”. The poet says, “my mother named me after a piece by Picasso done in honor of the founding of the United Nations. My poems are often about the personal crossing with the political.”

## The Song of Sequestering

Colombe Mimi Leland

I was reading this story,  
Not a great one,  
but there was a line  
that struck me -  
I'm in pause mode, waiting  
for the next thing to happen.  
Chilling at my place.  
Not really thinking or initiating,  
just waiting  
for things to happen that require me.  
Groceries running out.  
Bills.  
People dying.  
Whatever.  
I'm just waiting.  
Not anxiously waiting.  
Just waiting.  
Breathing in. Breathing out.  
Waiting.  
Those also serve who sit  
and wait.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Glenn Johnson, a 69-years-old Cherokee from Tucson, Arizona, is a Sonoran Desert dweller. He graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor's Degree and a major in Inter-Disciplinary Studies: Literature, Sociology, and Psychology, followed by a Master's Degree in Counseling & Guidance.

## It's a Girl

Glenn Johnson

Mother's birth canal guided  
Out popped your head  
Hesitated  
Pros and cons weighed  
Decided this world to explore  
Announced cry of arrival  
Someone said:  
It's a Girl!

Cradled arms mother  
suckled  
love gaze embraced  
mutual bond begun  
never to be forgotten  
Mother entranced  
Her daughter  
world of sisters received  
Your place in heart sealed  
Declaration profound:  
It's a Girl!

Diaper change  
joyous wide eyes  
infant glorious smile  
glowing all good of life  
good ever be  
Pudgy arms  
pudgy legs  
heaven reaching  
fingers nimbly playing toes  
mound of life and wonder  
proudly proclaims:  
It's a Girl!

Where will you go?  
Who will you meet?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

What will you know?  
What will you accomplish?  
Journey of It's a Girl!

Small to tall are stories  
Not all lives a fairytale  
Truth must be told:  
Some terrifying  
All manners abuse  
Crazy men's swaths of rage  
ravage destruction through sisterhood  
Horrific paradox:  
Born of woman  
Becomes tyrant of woman  
Own sufferings no excuse!  
Despoiling  
Disrespecting  
Beauty of It's A Girl!

Still good in this world  
Many lives shared fulfilled  
Coupled together  
friendship lovers  
each other hold  
joy of each other's joy  
Time passing  
Love gathering  
Husband  
Father  
Knowing life blest  
Hearing first child's breath:  
It's A Girl!

With all done and said  
Must remove my mask  
And speak the truth I dread:  
I bare the sins of men  
Begun in youth  
Allowed lodging dining

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Heart thieves:  
Distortion of you  
Disrespect  
Discount

Heard you say:  
Pedestal you build  
I will not climb.  
No goddess  
Not hot  
Not sexy  
Fantasies contrived  
Never quench  
Those addicted desires.

Words I will not forget.  
You said:  
I will not buy  
Will not accept:  
You cannot live without me.  
Truth:  
Answer within you  
yourself must find.

You profoundly questioned  
My fevered romantic oaths.  
You whispered:  
Professed lover  
Do you truly know forever?  
In my body  
always carried  
responsibility  
knowledge  
my ova of forever love  
Do you know?  
Considered?  
You carry  
always carried

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

seeds for my forever love.  
Do you know?  
Considered?  
The meaning:  
Being with child

Ardent lover:  
What if I may?  
What if I may lay down?  
May take you in  
Do you know?  
Considered?  
Same as here:  
A child will be born?

Truly, Creator moves in mysterious ways  
Recalling your questions  
shaken  
awakened  
reflect  
Silence of meditation  
Transfixed  
Immersed  
Visions  
Again,  
lungs fluid filled  
nestled  
floating  
    You  
    I  
mother's ocean  
bathed  
warm  
safe  
Loved  
Revelation:  
Need see you true  
not as I want  
You are special

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

I know that now.  
May I say:  
today  
day to day  
hold image of you:  
Many virtues  
strength  
spirituality  
beauty  
intelligence unique

When I met you:  
infatuated  
admired  
time shared  
love for you began  
so did desire.

This time  
It must be right  
Love I offer  
No delusions  
Acceptance no expectation  
(although wished)

In my heart.  
I have learned to cradle  
This inner woman  
Her inner child  
Swaddled ever in my heart  
Promised to thrive  
Never to forget:  
There was a day  
A blessed moment  
When you entered this world  
And someone said:  
How wonderful!  
It's A Girl!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ayo Ayoola-Amale, author, creative director, poet and artist, uses art forms in peace building, in developing new thinking around economic and progressive social change issues, often including poetry and the arts as a transformational vehicle to create systemic positive change.

## Be Calm

Ayo Ayoola-Amale

Be calm, the calm within the storm, strengthens.  
Be calm, like the unruffled deep sea.  
Be a calm soul, a soul of calm, calming like the fountains of love  
Be a soul of calm, calming the body and mind. Be calm.  
I see god's face in a calm soul,  
from a timeless springtime,  
awakening a lifetime  
walking in patience, meekness, and peace.  
Be calm, be the still voice of calm waking to sing,  
to hold true to truth for life.  
Be calm, be a soul of calm gathering wondrous beauty like the heavenly sun, winds.  
Be a voice that calms as the sea breeze wings.  
Be a calm voice like the light's music, flourish  
with a heart as million flaming flowers.  
Be this mirth of paradise  
touching souls, awakening the true voice.  
Be calm, be a calm soul, calming.  
Those kind calm were  
gentle souls calm there,  
Bring a sacred calm over minds,  
the sacred calm of souls  
Be calm, be a calm soul, calming  
A calm soul, A calm in souls, putting order and purpose into life  
Be calm, be a calm soul, calming  
A sacred calm to be yourself, a sacred calm to be your best.  
An inner calm to be most in harmony, peaceful and free  
Be calm, be a calm soul calming.  
Calm, so you stand still like yourself.  
Be calm. Calm, the heart of light.  
Be calm, be a soul of calm.  
Be a calm soul, calming.  
Be a sacred calm of a soul.  
A sacred calm of a soul. A sacred calm of a soul. Be calm.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Smruti Ranjan Mohanty, O.F.S, son of Raj Kishore and Shantilata Mohanty, is from Padmapur, Jagatsingpur, Odisha. He writes extensively on life and its intricacies. He is a multi-lingual poet, writer and an essayist. His work appeared in various prestigious newspapers, journals, national and international magazines and anthologies across the world.

[smrutiweb.wordpress.com](http://smrutiweb.wordpress.com)  
[smrutitanuja.blogspot.com](http://smrutitanuja.blogspot.com)

## A Look at Life-142

Smruti Ranjan Mohanty

Let me forget  
Everything I have learned  
Let me exhaust  
All that I have earned  
Let me forget  
Who I am and where from  
Let me come out of  
All relationships and hangovers  
To visualize life in its true colour

Let me begin life once more  
With no past to lean upon  
No future to dream for  
No status to safeguard  
No relations to take care

Let me get out of the cage  
Where I have been long since  
The social clusters  
Caste, creed and colour  
Religion, dogmas and superstitions  
Pelf, power and accolades  
To be in fresh air  
Where truly breathes life  
In the serene oasis

Let me forget my name and identity  
To go beyond me and all  
That put limits  
Pride, anger and prejudice  
Ego, hatred and jealousy  
Let me forget history and geography

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Boundaries and territories  
Myths, parables and collective conscience  
To look at things in proper perspective

For the first time  
Let my eyes see  
Ears listen and heart speak  
Let reasons take a back seat  
Emotions and feelings  
Come out in the open  
For a change  
Let me be a free bird in the blue sky  
To have a romance  
With all that I fancy and love.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Basab Mondal, a teacher by profession, is from Kolkata. He is a bilingual poet and columnist who writes in English as well as Bengali. His poems, stories and translations have appeared in several anthologies and literary magazines. He writes to gratify his inner self, and the world around him serves as the cue.

## Moments Before Committing Suicide

Basab Mondal

I try to rehearse the names, i have been called,  
I remember Brutus and 'et tu Brute' reverberate,  
I chant the name of Osiris, and shuffle a pack of cards,  
to find if the Ace gets ticked,  
I switch off my mobile, and close my eyes  
to thank my true friends.

Then, I go to close the window  
a rusty nail, lying nonchalantly,  
cuts me open.

My silhouette dissolves  
within the penumbra of things around  
I can hear the dog's bark  
as does my conscience  
before the curtain falls.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Seena Sreevalson is a bilingual poet, editor and translator from Kerala, India. She has compiled and edited two international anthologies of English poems, *The Current* (2019) and *Global Poetry* (2020). She is the recipient of the Poonthanam Yuva Sahithya Puraskaram award.

## Her Name Is Yours

Seena Sreevalson

Honey . . .  
She was called.  
Drop by drop  
She served everyone.  
Slowly her veins dried up.  
No one is ashamed.  
None spoke anything,  
No wind, no shower reached there.  
She was left alone  
Bruised and swollen with hornets bites.  
She strangled a sob.  
Her feeble heart  
Not audible enough to decipher.  
Ants lined up waiting for a feast.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



An enthusiastic story writer for children and a poet, Padmapriya Karthik holds the eighth place in the 2020 Rabindranath Tagore International Poetry Contest and received the 2020 Certificate of Excellence from the Asian Literary Society's Sagar Memorial Award. She has contributed to numerous anthologies and e-zines. Her short stories for children were published in *The PCM*.

## And Away She Walks

Padmapriya Karthik

Her soul once white as cottony cloud,  
Turned graphite hue  
With many unshed tears.  
She drifted stacking burden.  
Sudden thought blow crashed.  
Crippled her feet. She stood still.  
Eyes drizzled cracking the rim of her burdened soul.  
Tiny drops rolled down her cheek,  
Up to the chin, grounded and disappeared.  
Promising comfort she sensed.  
She let cracks widen, poured her heart out.  
Sudden gush of drops  
Flushed all negate feelings and thoughts.  
Soulful tears drained her burden.  
And away she walks  
In search of sunshine . . .

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Madhumathi. H, a bilingual Indian poet and writer (Tamil and English), is an ardent lover of nature, poetry, photography and music. Her poems appeared in several anthologies and e-zines. She often writes on mental health to raise awareness and break the stigma, strongly believing in the therapeutic and transformational power of words.

madhumathi.poetry@gmail.com  
<https://multicoloredmoon.wordpress.com/>

## Prakriti – My All!

Madhumathi. H

Nature, is God's pseudonym . . .  
The divine, smiles through a myriad pattern  
Colors, textures, and scents of the universe  
Nature nurtures, nourishes, and heals our soul  
Like a doting parent, precious friend . . .  
The tall brown mountains, like heaps of caramel and cocoa  
The gentle wind, carrying Jasmine's whisper  
Silvery streams, like flowing glass

Milky cascades, rapturous river, and the Magnum opus ocean  
Nature is an artist with a magic palette  
Being the canvas, and the art too  
Heals our frail soul, waters our parched heart  
Gently hugs our quivering tears, and  
Transforms them into sunshine smiles, and laughter . . .

Love-scented oxygen from the gallery of green  
Colors on petals, sticking to my soul to bloom in my dreams  
Crisp blue sky, Parijat-kissed breeze  
Nectar from the flowers, drenching my heart  
Honeyed-joy treasured from everyday walks  
Solitude, sprouting from the womb of silence  
Nature heals, and restores hope . . .

Like a child my heart pauses, at  
The twigs the birds use to build their nests  
'A home is made of hearts', and  
I hear happy conversations, when I listen to the twigs . . .  
Those golden yellow blossoms, Peach, Majenta, white Bougainvillea  
Gulmohar, smiling at the sparrows, and squirrels  
Dreamy milky lilac, ochre leaves with crimson splashes

Half-bitten badam shell, in beetroot shades  
Clutching them, my palm blushes too, while eyes grin  
(Ssshhh! No! I can't share them, please . . .)  
None of the blossoms I carry home were plucked but picked

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

As they swirl from the branches, and  
Kiss the earth, sometimes  
Land on the vehicles that hibernate . . .

Pebbles, from the riverside walk  
Myriad leaves as fabrics of seasons  
The eucalyptus, soul's aroma therapy  
Oranges and lemon, intoxicating  
Pomegranates and mangoes, appetizing  
Deliciousness abound, in Nature's world . . .  
Some feathers are the resume of birds  
That carry stories of faraway Skies, and restored answers  
Reminding me, Nature is my nest, home, cradle and swing . . .

My Mitr Mentor shoulder and anchor, Nature  
Asks me to believe each day  
I belong to those emerald feathers  
Sunshine petals, Azure blue of the canopying sky, and  
To a million hues of the universe  
Its eternal patterns, and  
My soul camouflaged by Nature  
Am an obedient student, surrendering to Nature's immortal feet  
Observing with love, allowing myself to be absorbed . . .

Can I ever stop, from sharing  
What all my soul inhales in rapture, but  
Somewhere I have to, while Nature  
Will be gifting me bliss each day  
Sunsets and moon rises, butterflies bird songs to thunder  
Rhythm of rain, Petrichor, clouds and the taste of raindrops . . .  
Each day, my heart would expand and explode in joy  
Stacking up the treasures from Nature . . .  
At the break of dawn  
As a dewdrop kisses a blade of grass, and the earth melts

A brand new heart, gets ready  
For all the Euphoria!  
I elope with Nature every single day, and  
Come back home, with a blushing soul

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

A healed heart, stolen kisses from the flowers, and  
A mind as light as mist  
Like Wordsworth, Keats, Bharathi, and Shelley  
Nature never did betray me  
My last breath will smell of gratitude and love, settling on eternity's lake  
Please meet me in my poems, for  
My soul shall never leave my words  
That Metamorphose as Nature . . .

\*Prakriti (Sanskrit): “nature”; Badam: “almond”; Parijat: Indian night-flowering coral jasmine – a fragrant flower; Mitra: “friend”; Bharathi, “Mahakavi” Subramania Bharathi, was a Tamil writer, poet, journalist, an Indian independence activist, a social reformer and a polyglot. He was a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry and is considered one of the greatest Tamil literary figures of all time.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Orbindu Ganga is an Indian science post-graduate and the first recipient of Dr. Mitra Augustine Gold Medal for Academic Excellence. He is the founding director of the English literary journal, *INNSÆI*, author, poet, content writer, painter, researcher, and spiritual healer. He has published many poems, research papers, articles, and has a painting.

## Verisimilitude of Self

Orbindu Ganga

### Acceptance

Clouds were hovering  
Around the mountain,  
Waiting for the time  
To sprinkle the drops,  
Patiently looking  
At the cumulus  
To give a glance,  
Never did he realize  
The time was  
Never his master,  
Never did the time  
Gave him the hint,  
Being dry for ages  
He pleaded the time  
For respite knowing  
His act of kindness,  
Moving away from  
The thought to think,  
He obeyed the norms  
To cleave the weeds  
Seeing within him  
Accepting the flow.

### Realization

Fine drizzle captured  
The essence of being,  
Seeing the mizzle  
The realization to kiss  
The drizzle ricocheted,  
Waiting for the mizzle to  
Mist into the drizzle,  
The wait has become  
Longer than ever before,

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Testing the curves within  
Patience was watching  
Silently along the lane,  
Mizzle drained into  
Finer fragments,  
Giving the drizzle  
The thought to whisper,  
Looking into her for long  
She left the traces,  
Kissing the drops  
Realizing the essence.

### Uncondition

Vacuoles were opened  
To see the outside world,  
To be empty never  
Gave them the solace,  
Being emptied never  
Was the sign of zilch,  
Being living as vacuoles  
For the eternity was  
The assumption  
To be amarantine,  
Conditioned for generations  
Never had an iota of thought  
To stop the belief  
To stop the emotion  
To stop living,  
Did the thought surfaced  
Deep one day to take  
The decision  
To uncondition the form  
To cleave the existing  
To begin from nought.

### Unknown

To have layered

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

The ricocheted thoughts  
Leave from the sight,  
The traces were  
Finding the absence  
With the presence  
Of the unknown,  
The existing is absent  
With the beginning  
To nullify the presence,  
Absence is the beginning  
For the presence to  
Start from the unknown,  
Unconditioned plane  
Is left with thoughtlessness  
For the nothingness  
To thrive leaving  
Everything behind.

Flowing

The new beginning  
Without a thought  
Is the presence  
Of the absence,  
To let nothingness  
Stay still in the flow  
Of the absence,  
The formless being  
Shall exist for eternity  
In search of the truth  
To know the self.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Anwesha Paul is a UX designer and graphic artist from Kolkata, India who is also into writing, having contributed to various print and online publications. Anwesha is an animation filmmaker whose short films have been screened and awarded in various international film festivals.

## Death and Deathlessness

Anwasha Paul

The wordless poem  
The formless painting  
The soundless song  
The bottomless pit  
The emptiness which defies definition  
The crucible of dissolution.

Ah! The freedom of being ness  
The awareness of nothingness  
Watching the waves of creation  
Crash into the shores of non-existence,  
If this is death, then let me die to every moment  
For I AM.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Annapurna Sharma A. is Deputy Chief Editor of Muse India ([www.museindia.com](http://www.museindia.com)) and writes the column Life & Literature for the Muse India journal. Her works are forthcoming, or have appeared, among others, in *Westward Quarterly*, *Mad Swirl*, *Spark*, *Destine Literare*, *Reader's Digest*, *Women's Era*, *Assam Tribune*, and *Active Muse*.

## I Long to Sing You a Summer Song . . .

Annapurna Sharma A.

Resting in the shade of Babul  
I await your return  
the quietness of your footsteps  
the mellowness of your being

When you set out, the sun was bleeding  
redness from your veins  
limping across the bone-dry landscape  
you fetch three pitchers of water  
(one for me, two for your folks)

I long to sing you a summer song  
melding your ossified heart  
I desire to write endless poetries  
with the cracks in your feet and  
aches in your arms

I yearn to become the Prince of your dreams:  
unleashing my energies to dig a well in your backyard  
and threaten the sun crossing line at 50

I crave to plant orchids in your parched courtyard  
and rein the sand dunes from rolling over your cheeks  
sprinkling yellows of Babul on the roof  
licking echoes of contorted tongues  
driving away the perfidious creature in your bed . . .

This birth: I repay your summer love,  
in naked winter, with my fleece

You splash blue from your dupatta  
onto the dead skies of Churu  
into the silent waters . . .

I wish to be re-born  
as a verse from your womb

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Dr. Queen Sarkar is a multilingual poet, an academician, a reviewer and translator working as an Assistant Professor in the University Department of English, Ranchi University. She is an Academic counselor in IGNOU. Sarkar has a Ph.D. from IIT. Her review articles, poems, and research papers have been published internationally.

## Battle

Dr. Queen Sarkar

Demeaning stereotypes and labels,  
breaking portraits of delusional battles,  
I stand firm,  
to voice against the brazen misogynistic rattle.

Wading through the mysterious brook of hope I heal,  
transforming my pain into power,  
I refuse to kneel.

Messy hormonal results, sometimes,  
undesired 9 months struggle,  
I chose to break taboos,  
fighting till I create my own world,  
which can't be deliberately misconstrued and barreled.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Adesunwon Babatunde Habideen, from Lagos State, Nigeria, is an undergraduate student at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun. He is studying Education and Political Science. He is also a poet who loves teaching and writing poems and expresses his concerns and thoughts through poetry.

## Birth Day

Adesunwon Babatunde Habideen

The beautiful heart full of blessings  
Trinity entail with mercy  
Shining ideas of love, truth and joy,  
Filled our mouth with joy.

Mother blessed our days with adage;  
Father bathed us with courage.  
Beautifying our days with essence,  
Which we crave for his presence.

Yesterday was the day you're born;  
Today we celebrate you at one;  
Igniting you to our Parenthood.  
Filled with responsibility and price yet decision are made aboard.

Even with so much thought and laws;  
Here lies the happy hours of ours,  
When mother drives us safely to world,  
And father welcomes us with his word.

A happy moments of joy,  
Filled with laughter and love.  
Incision of praise and worship,  
Dawn with his welcome of lordship.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Zana Coven, born in Sarajevo (former Yugoslavia), resides in Italy. She writes poetry, short stories, travel diaries and haiku. She has authored 4 books. Her work has appeared in numerous international publications. She is the recipient of a large number of awards. In 2019, she received the unique award of Italian poetry critics in Milano, Italy.

## Too Tired

Zana Coven

Is this end of the world  
Or just warning of how small  
We are thinking we can all  
We believed we were gods  
Having under control  
we see and what  
We cannot see  
Changing the rules of nature  
Changing the normal going of things  
That not belong to us  
We thought we are immortal  
By changing our faces  
But all we achieve is a new  
Fake and artificial life

Is this the punishment  
We deserved with our greed  
Thinking some are better  
Or we wanted to combat somebody  
Making weapons that are  
Smarter than us  
And return to us as boomerangs  
We pay with the only thing we have  
Our lives sacrificed to our nonsense  
Empty of goodness  
Full of selfishness

Our souls, what is with our souls  
I feel as I lived for centuries  
Too old , too tired, too sick  
Empty soul, broken in sadness  
The old soul

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

That saw the worst, believing in the best  
And living like  
I am in a waiting room  
Waiting for mankind  
To change!

GRATIS ~ ICPI

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Tejaswini Patil, academic, poet, editor and social worker, is the founding director of *Innsæi*. She writes about nature, social issues, and feminist sensibilities. She has authored four collections of poetry (published by Boundless, USA), was included in 25 Women of Virtue, and has been awarded the Master of Creative Impulse prize.

## Leaf and the Window-pane

Tejaswini Patil

All windows of my abode  
Open towards rain . . .  
The gusts bring with them  
A colourful unperished leaf  
Floating from Fall.  
It's stuck on the window-pane  
Facing me.  
Drowned in its colours, I float back  
To its origin  
Passing through seasons.  
At certain time,  
I'm stuck in.  
Why did it come to me?  
How did it reach me?  
Why didn't it wither ?  
Was it searching for  
a fellow sufferer . . .?  
Now, I sail on the winds  
Like that leaf of foliage  
Searching for another window-pane.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Bozena Helena Mazur-Nowak, a Pole, resides in the UK since 2004. She has authored seven poetry collections. Her work may be found in more than 100 anthologies and magazines worldwide. She won numerous poetry competitions. Her poetry has been translated into 20 languages.

## It Might Be the Last Lesson

Bozena Helena Mazur-Nowak

just yesterday they believed it would be okay  
they fought for every breath, for every sip of life  
today rows of only empty chairs remind of them,  
the cat mewing in the armchair and dog in tears

loved ones should be close, but they were so far away  
there was no one to hold their hands and tightly hug  
now they lay lonely in rows of nameless coffins  
in the middle of nowhere waiting for the grave

where did it all start and how it happened, who knows?  
they say in China but are they really sure?  
if there would not be the pursuit of money and power  
there would not be so many hungry people in the world

there is enough money for bombs and space rockets  
the food drowns in the sea by some madmen creatures  
and their sick visions instead of feeding the hungry  
although tomorrow, our world may cease to exist

it is still not too late to shake off the madness  
to learn from this cruel and maybe last warning  
first of all, people must be treated equally  
the rest will slowly follow when you open your heart

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Jyotirmaya Thakur, a retired Principal, has authored 23 books with more waiting to be published and translated into 57 languages [ . . .]. She translates Hindi for the *ITHACA* magazine of Spain. Reviewer, columnist, editor, academic, motivational speaker, philanthropist, and spiritual and social activist, she has received multiple awards.

## Inner Peace

Jyotirmaya Thakur

A peaceful day is so hard to find  
When communication is unkind  
Commotion of others greed you find  
Infects your life with their corrupt mind.

You hear the wind whistle in your ears  
Closing your eyes you lose all fears  
Nothing is permanent you are sure  
This rays of hope makes it clear.

Sitting with serenity near riverside  
Waves crash into rocks mesmerized  
The cool breeze just calms my soul  
And guides me towards life's goal.

Sun shines through the grey clouds  
Golden halo around makes me proud  
I can feel God's grace draws near  
I feel the beauty of moment here .

The soothing twilight slowly brings  
An astonishing reality of sights  
Running wild after material things  
Is such a waste of sleepless nights.

I want right now to just go slow  
And let time go by as life will flow  
It's on days like these I truly treasure  
Amazing moments of beautiful weather.

I wonder and feel like life is a bliss  
The day draws near your worries cease  
It's enough for me to fade into the night  
Tranquility I feel helps me win the fight.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Ashok Kumar is a bilingual mystical poet from India. He is a principal in a reputed institution in India. He is an international peace activist. He believes in the philosophy of Dr. Nelson Mandela, R. N. Tagore and Gandhian thoughts. His poems have been translated into various languages, such as Greek, Spanish and Russian.

[sic] No Title

Ashok Kumar

Let me be a child,  
with wishes and care  
Not to be rich and renowned  
Let us bear the pain  
Listen the voice of the rain  
Vices and hypocrisy  
reside in the fame  
Humble heart has no place  
for hate  
Simplicity, generosity can  
change the fate  
None can hold time  
be man of word to shine  
let's love all colours  
to live valuable life  
let's think which left us behind  
Come, walk hand in hand  
for mankind  
let's not claim for superiority  
every heart has inner beauty  
let me be the preacher  
of equality  
the earth is a beautiful place  
to attain spirituality  
Let's be universal soul  
to reach our humanity goal  
Let's be fearless,  
stand firmly suffer heroically  
for our nations  
Love and hope should be  
our passions  
be true, sincere soul of his creation

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Olaiya Omodolapo Roseline is a Nigerian poet who through her writings has brought healings to the wounded and the voice to the voiceless.

## Di-voice

Olaifa Omodolapo Roseline

We were so much attached to each other  
I couldn't sleep without your thought roaming in my head as i was your heartbeat.

What happened?  
Did you listen to what they say?  
They do not want our happiness  
Do you not know?

Do you want our story to be like that of Lagbaja?

But why?

Do you want our story to be told like that of Tàmédo?

Oh! Ife mi  
So soon you've forgotten . . . You told me i look like Yemonja, the river goddess  
and I'll born you generations of nations.

Your promises were yay and now, nay.  
I still keep mine and clinches to them like the lizard on the wall.

You told me no death for us because love never dies and if it comes,  
We'll walk hand in hand to our maker

Have you not remembered?  
You told me you would love me till the end  
Come what may,  
But this is not the end  
And we're still in May.

Suddenly,  
You dislike my taste  
And throw me away like waste  
My presence disgust you  
Like used sawdust

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

If it is fate,  
I'll carry on with faith

Feel free to pressure me at your leisure  
I'll carry on with the seizure.

I may fall ill  
But will get healed.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Mahmoud Said Kawash, born in Palestine, resides in Denmark. A poet, writer and researcher, he holds two degrees in management and literature with experience in the fields of higher education, translation and written and audio media. He served as the director of an Arabic-speaking radio, and authored three books in politics and literature.

[kawashmahmoud@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kawashmahmoud@yahoo.co.uk)

## Eve, the Great!

Mahmoud Said Kawash

*(Dedicated to my youngest sister Rajaa who has just finished treatment from the cancer.  
May Allah bless her and her family!)*

Eve is Great  
How great she is  
Yes, she is great  
And the secret of her greatness is in her motherhood  
In her tenderness, kindness and femininity  
And in everything she has and does

Eve amazes me  
Yes, she amazes me  
She amazes me by attending her enduring passion  
She is the first to express her love and show sympathy  
She is the first to smile and to shed tears  
And often her smiles and tears mix together

She is the first to show tenderness  
To experience her tenderness, try when you are sick  
Or pretend to be sick  
Try and get sick  
Then you will see her fear for you  
And feel when she wipes your head with her warm hand  
Her hand is always warm!!

If you get sick and your temperature becomes high  
Ask Eve to put her hand on your forehead  
You will feel it's warmer than your forehead!!  
How can this be when your temperature is high?  
It is an amazing secret  
Eve's warmth does not emit from her blood as is the case for us  
Rather, it always rushes from the warmth of her present emotion!!

You see Eve asleep and her hand on her baby  
How to do that while she is sleeping?  
Doesn't she move her hand with feeling, as we do?

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

It seems that Eve does not sleep at all  
Rather, her passion always remains awake  
She is always alert and ready

You can put your head on her shoulder whenever you like  
Even if she is angry with you  
Put your head on her shoulder  
You find her hand wiping your head automatically  
Wonderful!!  
Why can't you do that?

Really, Eve is amazing  
No wonder God "Almighty" made her deserve the best company  
No wonder He made Paradise under her feet  
Amazing is Eve  
And great is she  
And great is Adam when he reads her better!!

Greetings and appreciation to you, dear Eve  
You are the mother, the sister, the wife and the daughter  
The auntie and the aunt  
The Sweetie and the girlfriend  
It is you whom "Prophet of Mercy" said: "Have pity on her"  
The Holy Prophet is truthful

Greetings and appreciation to you Eve,  
Everywhere and anytime  
Every moment and with every whisper!!  
May Allah bless you  
You are really great  
How great you are Eve!!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Keisha Ballentyne is a talented entrepreneur who is inspired by “Lifting Spirits Poetically” – the slogan for her poetry. She bases her poems on the reality of individuals' daily lives by connecting to them mentally, spiritually and emotionally. [. . .] She has over 30 audience-engaging poems, and currently works on having them published.

## Is It About the Color of My Skin or Is It the Melanin?

Keisha Ballentyne

From a thousand miles yet moments entwined,  
I'm drenched in your copious, Heavenly sweet high notes of tranquility,  
yet fierce gravity that only you have the Sovereignty and authority to unfold the captivity  
of my sacred soul . . .

The realms of my spirit are greatly under  
attack at this very moment . . .  
“Is it about the color of my skin?” “Or is it the Melanin?”  
Dry times seeps it's way through a hollow crack . . .  
The perpetual hills that I tried so hard to escape bows at your feet.

So then tell me, why do my adversaries  
gang up on me like a pack of wolves?  
“Is it about the color of my skin?” “Or is it the Melanin?”  
Why so often am I pushed aside, disregarded and hated?

Am I too special, exceedingly gifted, yet humble  
before your presence . . . Are we not from One God?  
One world? One race? One love? . . . Black Kings!  
Black Queens! Rise!! Emancipate your mind from mental slavery.

Elohim, Adonai The great I am is within.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



NRK Srikar has several poems on varied themes in English, some of which appeared in national and international anthologies. He likes participating in online contests. An ardent lover of nature and avid reader, his interests include photography, exploring technology, and drawing sketches. Presently, he is an Associate Consultant in Atos|Syntel, Pune.

[norisrikar@gmail.com](mailto:norisrikar@gmail.com)

## The Dance of the Night Beauty

NRK Srikar

The most mystifying of God's creation  
Preaches many exciting things in action  
Revelation of darkness always inspires  
Concealment of facts equally conspires  
It's the beautiful trait of the dark night!!

Many a nocturnal being deem it cordial  
They come out and operate in congenial  
The sea redoubles its beauty in the night  
The waves dancing to the echoes upright  
It's the fabulous dance of the dark night!!

The night lady clad in black robes glistens  
The necklace of silver stars forms margins  
The plait of milky-way with bright garnish  
All planets as circlet of flowers embellish  
It's the striking charm of the dark night!!

The enthralling silver-spread pleasant place  
Fills the exhausted mind with cheery grace  
Moving along the white frothy waves rolling  
A sudden meteor shines as the nice nose pin  
It's the cute twinkling soul of the dark night!!

The five elements as scented mystic bowers  
Tinkling hum by pebbles in melodic waters  
Cool breezes waft pleasant thoughts hearty  
Fills the ambiance with sweet scenic beauty  
It's the exceptional taste of the dark night!!

The luring musical notes of Nature's song  
In all varied manifestation across and along  
The divine dance of night beauty's elegance  
At the Universal garden of divine entrance  
It's the celestial wonder of the dark night!!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Shoma Bhowmick, regional director of Suryadaya Literary Foundation, was featured among 350 “Year’s” writers across the world and has received an award from the Gujarat Sahitya Akademi [ . . .]. She is an educator who resides in Kolkata, and is in the advisory board of *Namaste Ink*. She was awarded numerous prestigious prizes [ . . .].

## Humanity

Shoma Bhowmick

Be a lotus in the  
Filtch and dirty water of life  
Else diamond in the  
Dark and dirty coal mine.

Be a mountain when  
The cyclone come  
In all odds  
Maintain your decorum.

Like the majestic rain  
Clean all your surroundings  
In case of new relationship  
Don't forget your old bondings.

It is better to stand  
Bare feet  
Than to borrow  
Else's boot.

Like a banyan tree  
Don't forget your root.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Abhilipsa Kuanar, a budding dentist [ . . . ], is a poet, an avid reader and a literature enthusiast. Her poems reflect her sensitivity, emotions and [ . . . ] life experiences. [ . . . ] What else can a poet dream for, other than her poems in the people's heart and mind all over the world?

[abhilipsakuanar@gmail.com](mailto:abhilipsakuanar@gmail.com)

## The Fragility of Life

Abhilipsa Kuanar

Inhaling the memory of  
Smirked summer  
I remember  
How naively I accepted slavery  
To sleep yesteryear

I cupped my malar  
With fingers tender  
Didn't dance to the rain  
Only to realise later  
We don't get chances so often

The desires or  
Better referred  
Despair  
Agiled through my body  
Just to wane me faster

Now I walk past an expanse  
Of few meters  
Expecting bounty  
Earlier through the harsh roads  
I merrily suffered,  
With the forethought of plenty

The road never ended  
And here I am  
All tired, realized  
How I wasted all my years  
In the pursuit of nothing  
All my wishes battered

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

Remorse running in my sleeves  
Dandelions crashing choir  
Gaily yet cold heartedly  
I pretend and play parts  
But none mine

More my heart aches  
More I put the stones of melancholy  
On the ruins of my youth  
I play my favourite memory.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Shiv Raj Pradhan is a Gandhian poet and social activist. His poems have appeared in about 12 English and Spanish anthologies. Numerous national and international poetry organizations have honoured his work with accolades and certificates. He is a World Record Attempter and possesses World Record Certificates.

## I Will Ever Call You!

Shiv Raj Pradhan

I will call you, believe me, in a part of drumming cheer  
By contending riddle stripped bed etched in an inch ere  
Believe me, I'll call you, over dabbling track of absurd affair  
By consistently standing against score of hysteric blare.

Alluding trumpet text from dream of disillusioned alley  
Piling up muse surge from debris of debauched sway  
Hoarding smile acreage from sob note of wounded day  
Believe me, I'll call you, by cheering chant of soul, all on way.

Rolling by knee part through cone of bulged insipid ridge  
Faltering but steadily wielding kink of pulse by tricky hit  
Righting the dauntless chant yet timing with brisk tweet  
Even in ruined stage at lone lane, I'll call you in verse sweet

I'll call you, believe me, by waking up from stages of debacle  
Beckoning to lively lap of dream rush from core of fresh tale  
Resetting tumbling placidity of yours, to rhythmical sail  
At shaky dawn, toiling thru bouts, believe me, I'll quote my call.

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



Michelle Joan Barulich enjoys writing poetry and songs. She loves [. . .] animals, and has rescued birds – her pets now, bringing her much happiness. She studied Alternative Medicine [. . .] and is a part-time caregiver. Her interests include art, calligraphy, and wood-burning. She aspires to become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

## Make a Memory for Me

Michelle Joan Barulich

. . . Born on a snow flowing day  
They make a destiny for us to rely upon  
But nothing matters if you're not with me  
And they can't change that

. . . In the sunlight, moonlight  
The weather catches my smile  
Dazzling with gold and silver  
The memory comes alive

Today, the wind is pushing east  
Trying hard to tell you  
The thoughts that I felt  
When we kissed

In the candle light, dim-lit  
Shadows covered us whole  
I guess what I'm trying to say is  
Make a memory for me  
so when time passes  
I can at least say  
some parts of life were good

Make a memory for me  
And I'll make a memory for you  
In the lime light, ultralight  
You can say I was the one  
Who made you complete

Six years if still no approval  
Where would my future take me?  
well come on now,  
I need your exchange of words

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

In the highlight, firelight  
Our souls burned as one  
Make a memory for me  
And I'll sing you a song

... In the sunlight, moonlight  
The Heavens were kind  
Shimmering with china white stars  
The memory comes alive once again ...

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



D.L. Lang served as the poet laureate of Vallejo, California (2017-2019). She has performed hundreds of times since 2015 at protest rallies, county fairs, and literary events. She has authored 13 poetry books poetry and the editor of Verses, Voices, and Visions of Vallejo. Find her online at [poetrybook.com](http://poetrybook.com)

## Goals for a New Year

D. L. Lang

This year I will accept myself.  
This year I will love myself.  
This year I will recognize  
that I did my best.

This year I will choose a new direction.  
This year I will abandon unhealthy habits.  
This year I will follow my inner voice.  
This year I will put my needs first.

This year I will apologize to myself  
for all the previous years  
when I did not center my wellbeing.  
This year I will forgive myself.  
This year I will abstain from guilt.  
This year I will let go of shame.

This year I will not seek perfection.  
This year my shortcomings  
will not outweigh my successes.  
This year I will revel in gratitude.  
This year is my year to shine!

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



hülya n. yılmaz [sic] is Professor Emerita (PSU, USA), ICPI Co-Chair and Director of Editing Services, tri-lingual writer, and literary translator. She has authored five poetry books and co-authored another. Numerous anthologies of global endeavors featured her work. hülya finds it vital for everyone to understand a deeper sense of self, and writes creatively to attain a comprehensive awareness for humanity.

<https://hulyanyilmaz.com/>

lost . . . or?

hülya n. yılmaz

people  
in every corner of the fountain-square  
some seating is available close-by  
we walk toward one left-out spot  
and sit down in our wonderous awe  
under the watchful faces' curious eyes  
accompanied by what i assume to be  
a traditional Moroccan drum tune  
mesmerizing the clear night-sky  
competing with the vibrant Arabic sounds  
that rise higher and higher up  
from countless chats  
of those for us-undecodable voices

i want to dance to the enticing rhythm  
but i know this place is not mine to claim . . .

many families are promenading  
with their older children  
minding the safe navigations  
of their little ones' toddler-go-carts  
those beautiful small darlings  
are grinning from ear to ear  
overjoyed with their driving skills  
while they keep an eye on the passers-by  
their age-alike counterparts, that is  
who travel around the plaza  
donning many different car models  
of a variety of colors and sizes  
in that enviable-even-by adults  
modern day-invention

one blond boy  
about 2 years old  
discovers the fun of obstacle-jumping  
he steps his cute little feet atop a brick

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

among many that shelter a healthy tree  
he jumps down from it  
onto the plaza's floor-concrete  
while his parents talk eagerly on a bench

no boo boos  
none whatsoever  
he is so elated by his daring stunt  
that he repeats the same in reverse  
tummy-laughing in audible giggles

young couples also pass by  
some glance at us in subdued demeanors  
others stare bluntly and persistently  
we smile and mind our own business

there are many boys of different ages  
they play all kinds of outdoor games  
with their fathers or with each other  
girls strut their perhaps-newly-learned  
steps of awakening-femininity  
they look left, then right, then left again  
assessing on a scale of their own making  
the attention they get from the opposite sex

an almost deflated ball seems to be  
the biggest attraction for some of the boys  
several of them don complete soccer uniforms  
with barely-worn out shoes to match  
others among their team members  
stand out with their everyday clothes  
they make a serious effort  
to keep their bathroom slippers in place

one older boy  
joins the game with overt enthusiasm  
he is wearing a traditional male Hijab  
quite a talent this young man is

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

with all his rapid feet-moves and leg twists  
despite his neck-to-ankle-length-garb

nearest to our seats  
two women-groups gather up  
they sit in opposite ends  
from one another  
but their focus of interest  
appears to be the same: gossip  
their mimics and gestures are universal  
descriptions of female bodies and faces  
via finger-and-face-adjustments  
along with the uniquely fiery octaves  
of their voices, which yield to  
a large variety of enunciations  
flavored with laughter as well as snorts  
a sign-language of disapproval? aplenty!

the same drum-tune enters the open-air again  
the performers' break must be over

i want to dance to the enticing rhythm  
but i know this place is not mine to claim . . .

yet, i am made to feel as if it were

wherever i went and stayed this summer  
a sense of belonging has been gifted to me  
in . . .

Bethlehem  
Ramallah  
Amman  
Madaba  
Jericho  
Cairo  
Giza  
Kenitra  
Larache  
Assilah

# Poetry... The Best of 2020

Monastir  
Rahovec  
Prizren  
Skopje  
Strumica

i was embraced by the ultimate warmth of loving hearts  
all the dearest souls in these parts of the globe  
have abundantly demonstrated to me  
as to why their acts of hospitality  
oozing from their hometowns  
and cultural entities at large  
have long ago attained  
their worldwide fame

## Poetry... The Best of 2020



William S. Peters, Sr., aka 'Just Bill', is an award-winning global activist for humanity. His poetry and prowess have been acknowledged and translated across the world. He is the founder and chair of Inner Child Enterprises, Inner Child Press International and the World Healing, World Peace Foundation. He utilizes these vehicles along with his poetry and other writings to champion the cause of consciousness, peace, love, acceptance and compassion. His personal perspective is that 'life is a garden', and we must plant seeds of good intent, light and love that we all may harvest a sweet bountiful fruit. The 'by-line' Mr. Peters has coined for Inner Child Press International is 'building bridges of cultural understanding'. Achieving this vital connection is his inspiration.

## To Laugh Again

It has been some time  
Since I have laughed  
With the abandon  
I now embrace

The lunacy of the times  
The absence of human rhymes  
The lemons with the limes  
Have given rise  
As I surmise  
All the things  
We now say,  
Conceive,  
And believe

My laughter is the sugar  
That makes all the nonsense  
And the absence of sense  
Palatable,  
Yet never digestible

Isn't it all just one pisser?

I remember as a kid  
When my father tickled me  
Incessantly  
Because it brought us both  
A certain joy,  
Much like how I am tickled now  
By the things  
That come from the mouth  
Of babes of consciousness  
And fools

The word tools they employ  
To divide us from our joy  
Is no coy coincidence

## Poetry... The Best of 2020

As fences are erected  
At the borders  
Of our reason

The diseased season  
Is upon us,  
Where trust  
Is a questionable paradigm  
Much like those raw limes  
I mentioned earlier

So, I laugh  
That I may not be consumed  
By the rhetoric  
And misdirection,  
The inflection  
The selections  
That beg for correction  
Of the narratives

That is OK for some,  
The ignorant and the plain dumb  
But my friend,  
We must  
Learn to laugh  
And alter the collective sum  
With a light of insight  
That is your own,  
Seek out what is known  
Not the poisonous seeds  
That are sown  
Seek . . .  
And LEARN  
To laugh again!

# Epilogue

# Inner Child Press International



*'building bridges of cultural understanding'*

[www.innerchildpress.com](http://www.innerchildpress.com)

GA

## About Inner Child Press International

The U.S.-based Inner Child Press was founded in May, 2011 by William S. Peters, Sr. as a subsidiary of Inner Child Enterprises. The founder already had an extensive experience when his writings and publications are concerned. Mr. Peters' first book went into print without his awareness in 1972. In 2008, he self-published a collection of his own poems, *My Inner Garden*. Inner Child Press grew out of his desire to self-publish his own literary work, which subsequently led to assisting other writers in the publishing process.

From its early years on, Mr. Peters' writer-oriented vision and his staff of established writers have been embraced by novice authors as well as those who had been previously published. Inner Child Press has diligently preserved its original mission – writers for writers – as it grew into a globally distinguished publishing company, starting in September, 2011. A poetry contest resulted in the first edition of *World Healing World Peace* (published in April 2012). The call for submission was open to poets from all over the world. This anthology was a significant first step for the company to enter the paradigm of international recognition.

As time progressed and Inner Child Press began to publish more authors across the globe – individually and in anthologies, its international presence expanded. This growth also led to Mr. Peters and other board members making appearances at international poetry festivals, to include Kosovo, Macedonia, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine, and Canada. They also made multiple appearances across the United States. The founder's visionary tutelage, along with the company's dedicated board members, thus enabled Inner Child Press a formidable international image which led to Inner Child Press International.

Inner Child Press International, ICPI, is an integral instrument to empower the voices of writers from all regions of the world through literature and strives to leave an essential footnote in the history of humanity. William S.

Peters, Sr. and everyone at Inner Child Press International envision that literature, especially poetry, possesses a unique ability to bring people together. ICPI is very adamant with its stance and has therefore appointed cultural ambassadors from every region of our world. This all-inclusive approach epitomizes the company's motto, 'building bridges of cultural understanding'.

Thank you.

Inner Child Press International

*'building bridges of cultural understanding'*

# Inner Child Press International

*'building bridges of cultural understanding'*

## Meet the Board of Directors



**William S. Peters, Sr.**  
Chair Person  
Founder  
Inner Child Enterprises  
Inner Child Press



**Hülya N Yilmaz**  
Director  
Editing Services  
Co-Chair Person



**Fahredin B. Shehu**  
Director  
Cultural Affairs



**Elizabeth E. Castillo**  
Director  
Recording Secretary



**De'Andre Hawthorne**  
Director  
Performance Poetry



**Gail Weston Shazor**  
Director  
Anthologies



**Kimberly Burnham**  
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Cultural Ambassador  
Pacific Northwest  
USA



**Ashok K. Bhargava**  
Director  
WIN Awards



**Deborah Smart**  
Director  
Publicity  
Marketing

[www.innerchildpress.com](http://www.innerchildpress.com)

# Inner Child Press International

*'building bridges of cultural understanding'*

## Meet our Cultural Ambassadors



**Fahredin Shehu**  
Director of Cultural



**Faleha Hassan**  
Iraq ~ USA



**Elizabeth E. Castillo**  
Philippines



**Antoinette Coleman**  
Chicago  
Midwest USA



**Ananda Nepali**  
Nepal ~ Tibet  
Northern India



**Kimberly Burnham**  
Pacific Northwest  
USA



**Alicja Kuberska**  
Poland  
Eastern Europe



**Swapna Behera**  
India  
Southeast Asia



**Kolade O. Freedom**  
Nigeria  
West Africa



**Monsif Beroual**  
Morocco  
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**Ashok K. Bhargava**  
Canada



**Tzemin Ition Tsai**  
Republic of China  
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**Alicia M. Ramirez**  
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**Shareef Abdur-Rasheed**  
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**Hilary Mainga**  
Kenya  
Eastern Africa



**Josephus R. Johnson**  
Liberia

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Other

Socially Important Anthologies

by

Inner Child Press International

# Advisory Board

World Healing, World Peace Foundation  
*human beings for humanity*



[worldhealingworldpeacefoundation.org](http://worldhealingworldpeacefoundation.org)

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*presents*

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the **H**eart of a **P**oet



*words for a better tomorrow*

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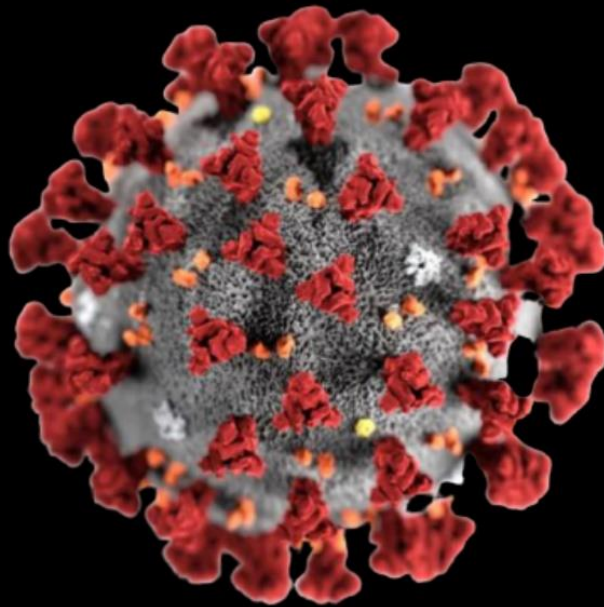
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# Corona

Social Distancing

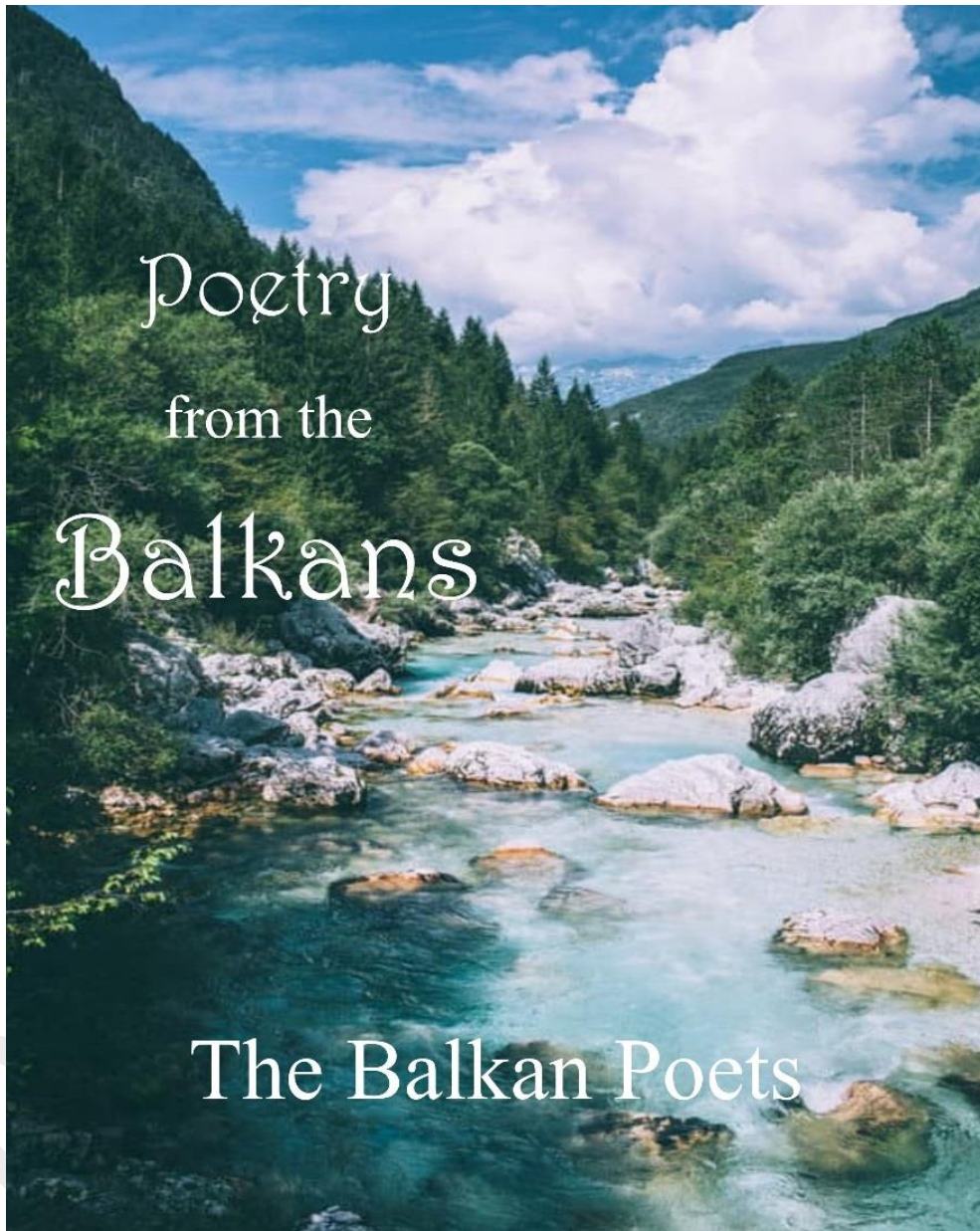


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from the  
Balkans

The Balkan Poets

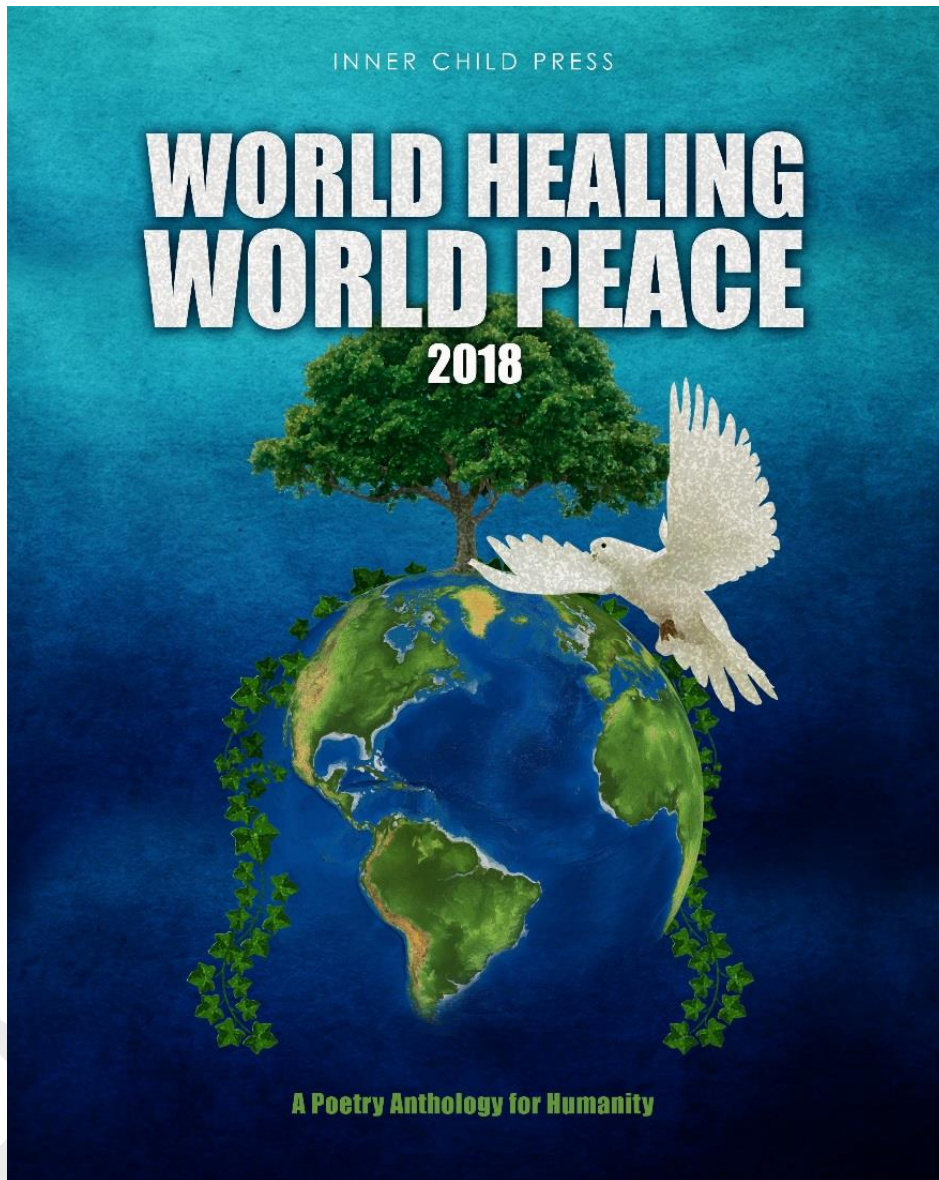
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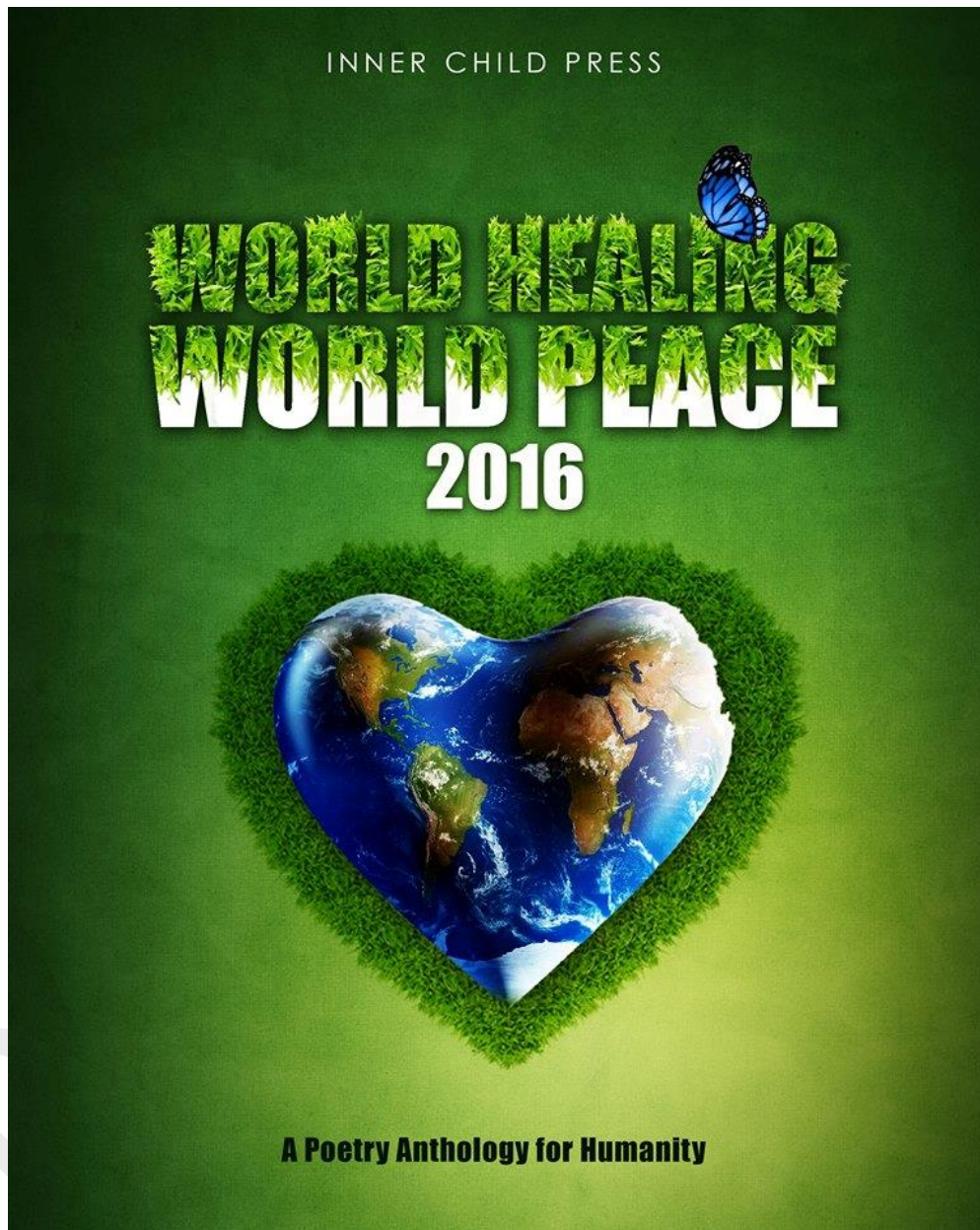
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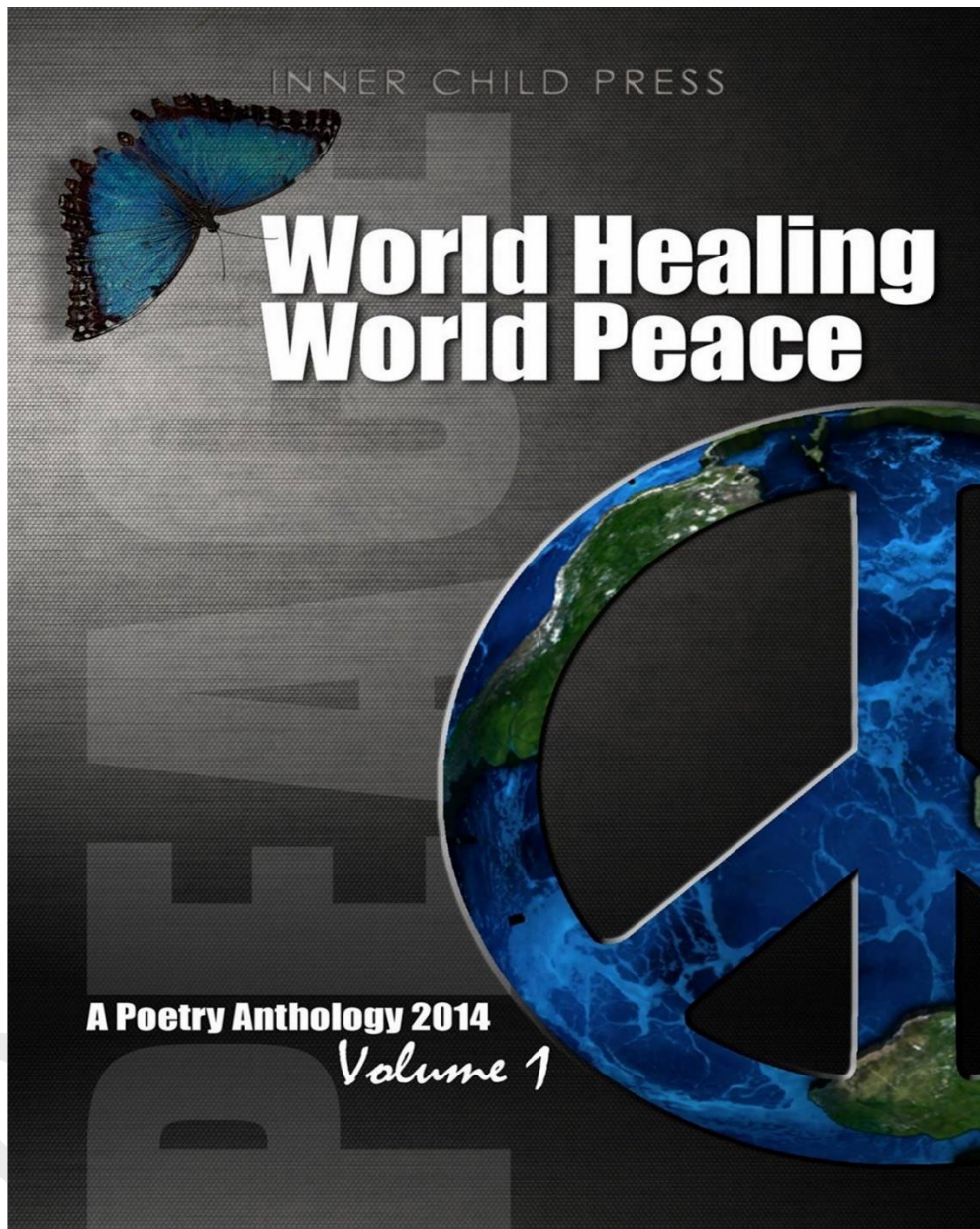
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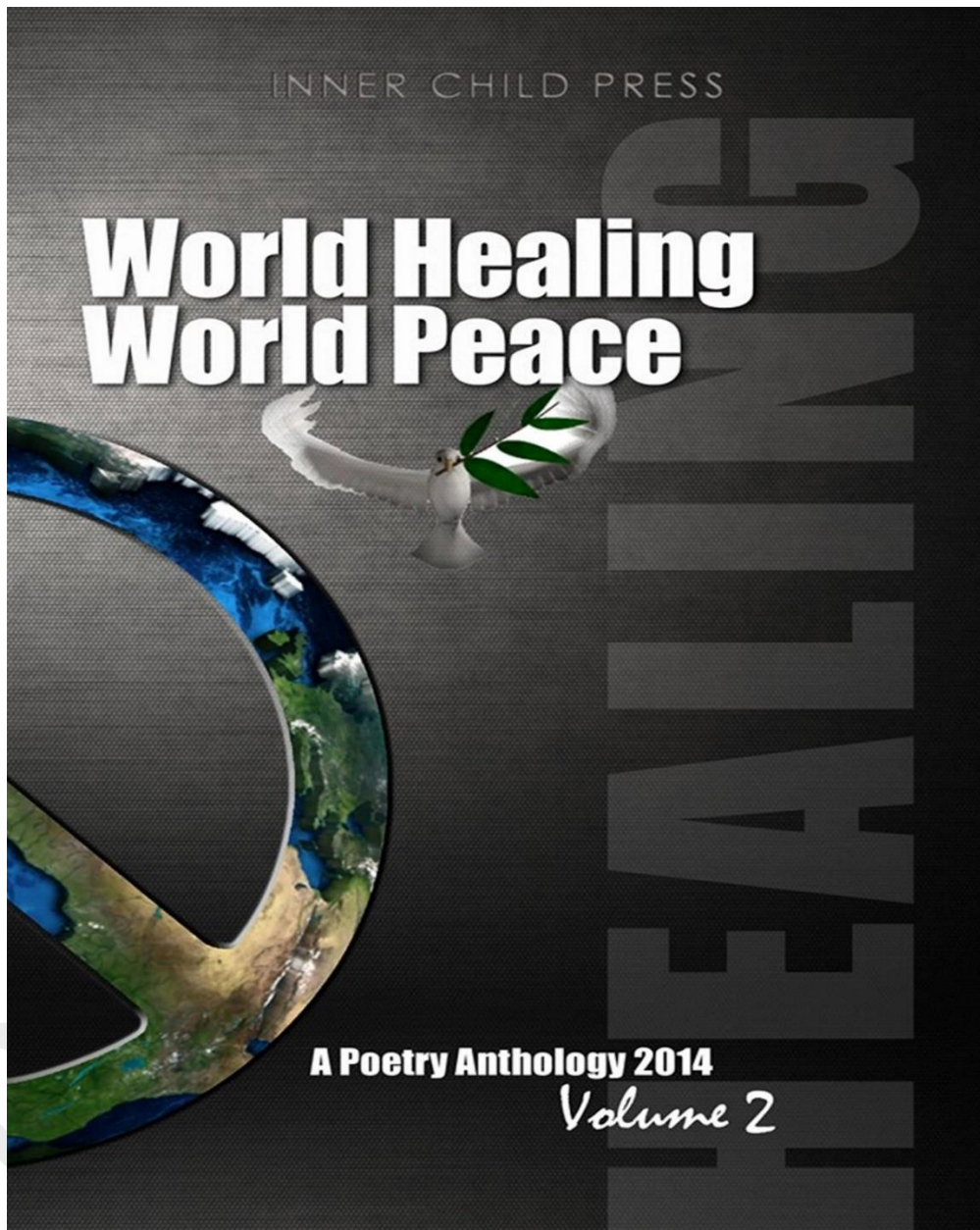
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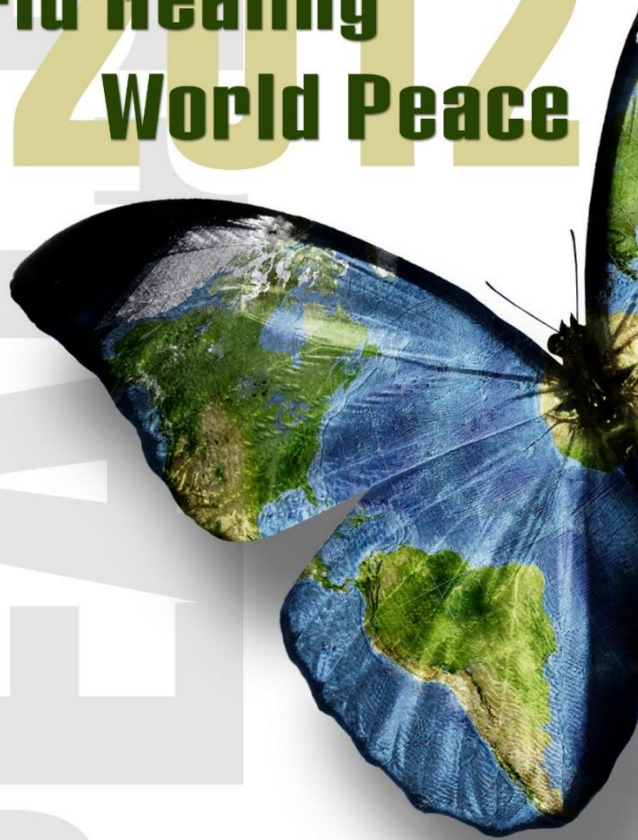
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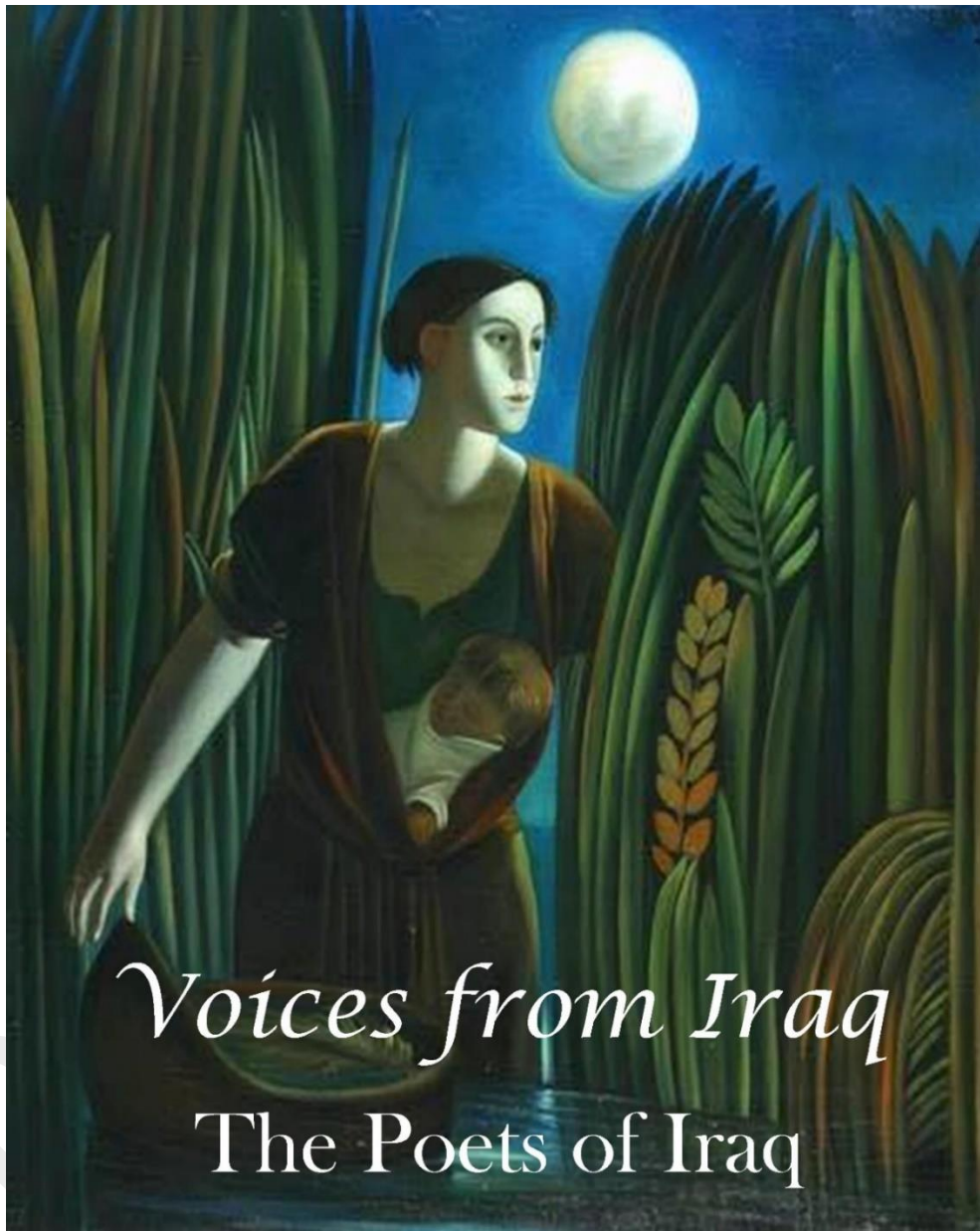


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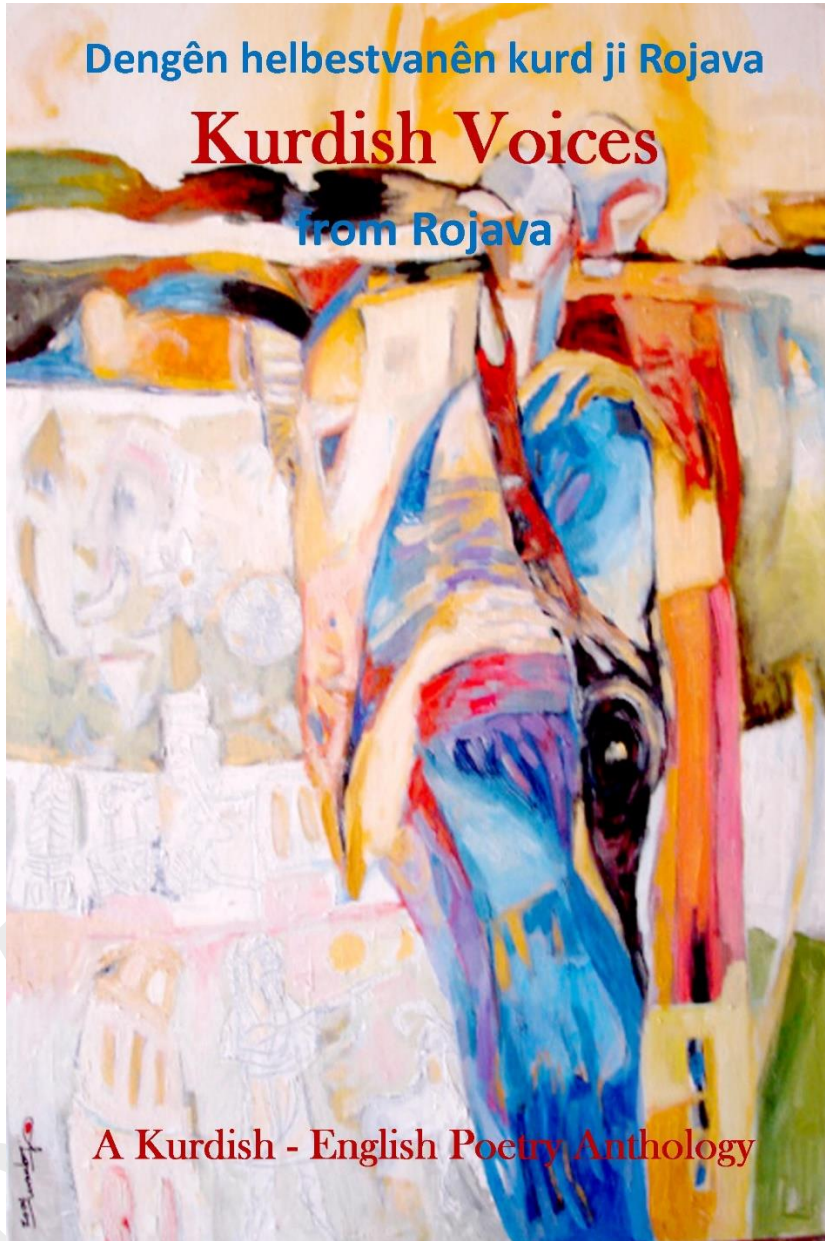
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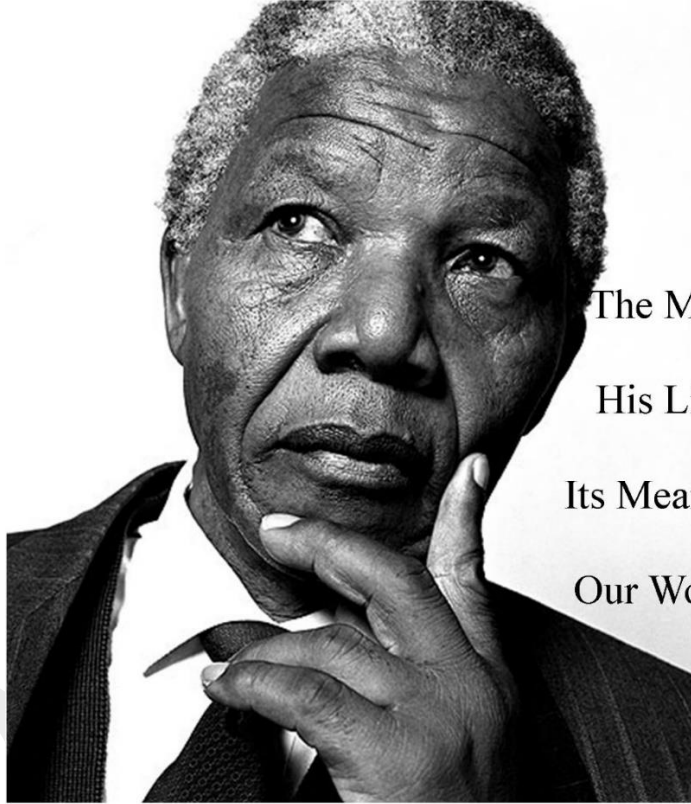


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# Mandela



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His Life

Its Meaning

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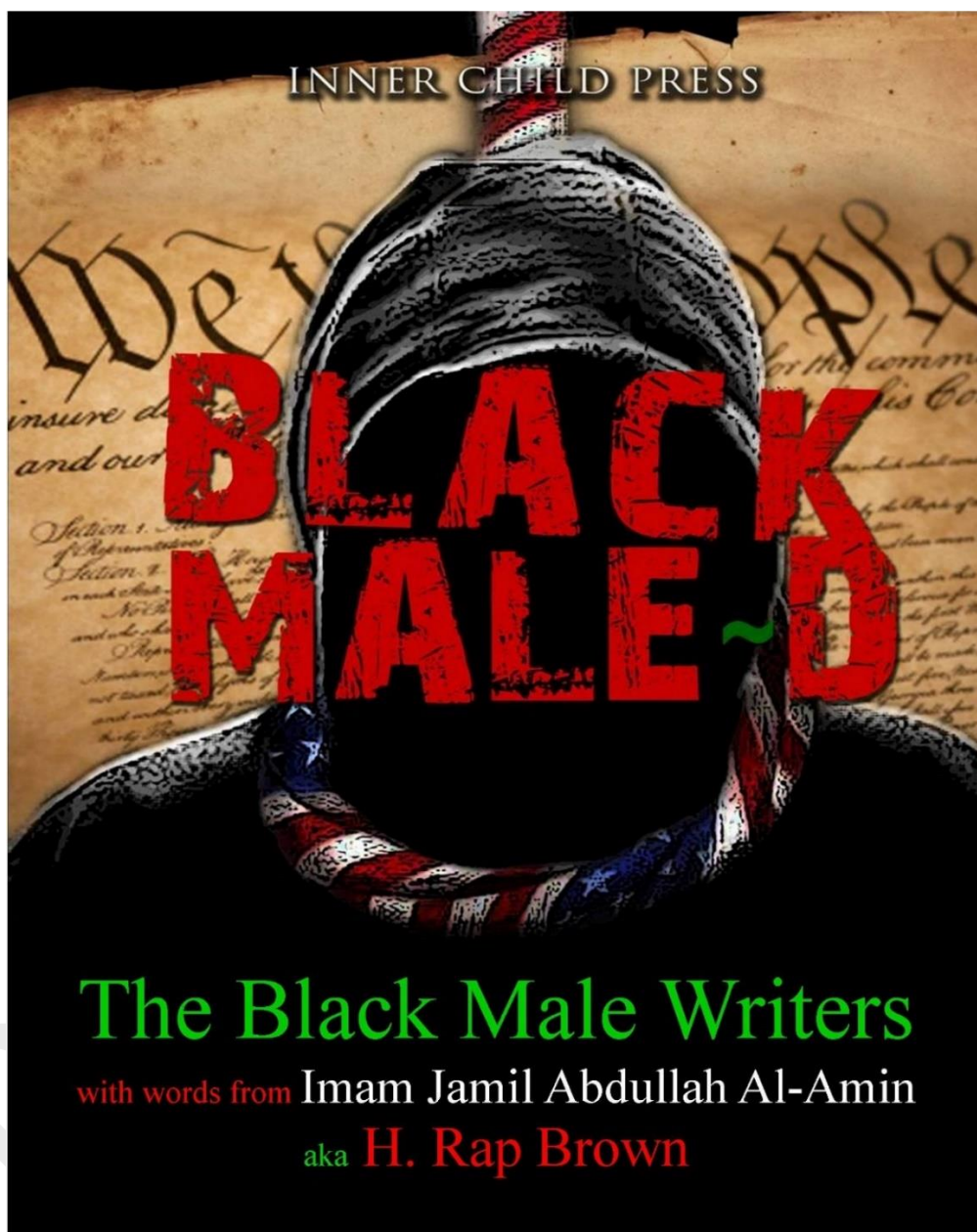
# **A GATHERING OF WORDS**



## **POETRY FOR TRAYVON MARTIN**

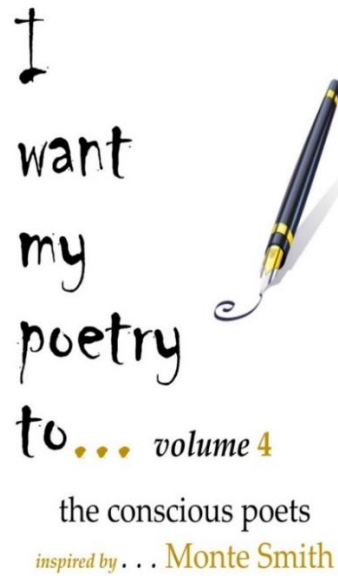
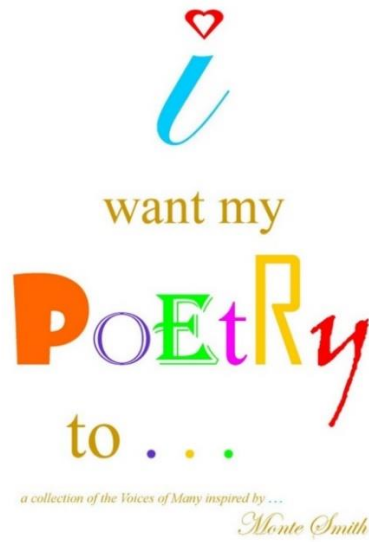
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet

### January 2014



*Carnation*

**The Poetry Posse**

Jamie Bond  
Gail Weston Shazor  
Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
June 'Bugg' Barefield  
Debbie M. Allen  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wali  
Shareef Abdur-Rasheed  
William S. Peters, Sr.

**Our January Feature**  
Terri L. Johnson

## the Year of the Poet

### February 2014



*violets*

**The Poetry Posse**

Jamie Bond  
Gail Weston Shazor  
Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
June 'Bugg' Barefield  
Debbie M. Allen  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wali  
Shareef Abdur-Rasheed  
William S. Peters, Sr.

**Our February Features**  
Teresa E. Gallion & Robert Gibson

## the Year of the Poet

### March 2014



*daffodil*

**The Poetry Posse**

Jamie Bond  
Gail Weston Shazor  
Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
June 'Bugg' Barefield  
Debbie M. Allen  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wali  
Shareef Abdur-Rasheed  
Kimberly Burrahann  
William S. Peters, Sr.

**Our March Featured Poets**  
Alicia C. Cooper & Htiya yilmaz

## the Year of the Poet

### April 2014



*Sweet Pea*

**The Poetry Posse**

Jamie Bond  
Gail Weston Shazor  
Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
June 'Bugg' Barefield  
Debbie M. Allen  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wali  
Shareef Abdur-Rasheed  
Kimberly Burrahann  
William S. Peters, Sr.

**Our April Featured Poets**  
Fahredin Shehu  
Martina Reisz Newbery  
Justin Blackburn  
Monte Smith

*celebrating International poetry month*

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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet

September 2014

Aster Morning-Glory



Wild Cucumber September Birthdays Flower

September Feature Poets  
Florence Malone • Keith Alan Hamilton

### The Poet's Pass

Jamie Bond • Gill Weston Shazor • Albert Infrin's Carrasco • Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell • June Bugg Barefield • Debbie M. Allen • Tony Henninger  
Joe DeVerbal Mindandancer • Robert Gibbons • Neetu Wolf • Shereef Abdul-Rasheed  
Kimberly Burkhann • William S. Peters, Sr.

## THE YEAR OF THE POET

October 2014

Red Poppy



### The Poet's Pass

Jamie Bond • Gill Weston Shazor • Albert Infrin's Carrasco • Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell • June Bugg Barefield • Debbie M. Allen • Tony Henninger  
Joe DeVerbal Mindandancer • Robert Gibbons • Neetu Wolf • Shereef Abdul-Rasheed  
Kimberly Burkhann • William S. Peters, Sr.

### October Feature Poets

Ceri Naz • Raşendra Padri • Elizabeth Castillo

## THE YEAR OF THE POET

November 2014

Chrysanthemum



### The Poet's Pass

Jamie Bond • Gill Weston Shazor • Albert Infrin's Carrasco • Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell • June Bugg Barefield • Debbie M. Allen • Tony Henninger  
Joe DeVerbal Mindandancer • Robert Gibbons • Neetu Wolf • Shereef Abdul-Rasheed  
Kimberly Burkhann • William S. Peters, Sr.

### November Feature Poets

Jocelyn Mosman • Jackie Allen • James Moore • Neville Hiatt

## THE YEAR OF THE POET

December 2014

Narcissus



### The Poet's Pass

Jamie Bond  
Gill Weston Shazor  
Albert Infrin's Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
June Bugg Barefield  
Debbie M. Allen  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DeVerbal Mindandancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wolf  
Shereef Abdul-Rasheed  
Kimberly Burkhann  
William S. Peters, Sr.


### December Feature Poets

Katherine Wyatt • WrittenInPoet • Santos Gallo • Justin Blake

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**THE YEAR OF THE POET III**  
January 2015

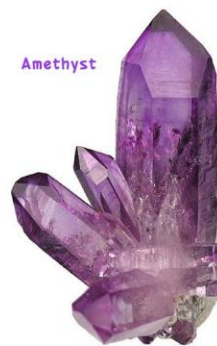


**Garnet**

*The Poetry Pesse*  
Jamie Bond  
Gail Weston Shazor  
Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DuVerbal Minddancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wali  
Shareef Abdul - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham  
Ann White  
Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt  
Fahredin Shelu  
Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion  
Jackie Allen  
William S. Peters, Sr.

**January Feature Poets**  
Bismay Mohantti \* Jen Walls \* Eric Judah

**THE YEAR OF THE POET II**  
February 2015



**Amethyst**

**THE POETRY PESSÉ**  
Jamie Bond  
Gail Weston Shazor  
Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce  
Janet P. Caldwell  
Tony Henninger  
Joe DuVerbal Minddancer  
Robert Gibbons  
Neetu Wali  
Shareef Abdul - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham  
Ann White  
Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt  
Fahredin Shelu  
Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion  
Jackie Allen  
William S. Peters, Sr.

**FEBRUARY FEATURE POETS**  
Iram Fatima \* Bob McNeil \* Kerstin Centervall

**The Year of the Poet II**  
March 2015

**Our Featured Poets**  
Heung Sook \* Anthony Arnold \* Alicia Poland



**The Poetry Pesse 2015**  
Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
Joe DuVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdul - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shelu \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet II**  
April 2015

Celebrating International Poetry Month

**Our Featured Poets**  
Raja Williams \* Dennis Ferado \* Laure Charazac



**The Poetry Pesse 2015**  
Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
Joe DuVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdul - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shelu \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.


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## The Year of the Poet II

May 2015

**May's Featured Poets**  
 Geri Algeri  
 Akin Mosi Chimere  
 Anna Jakubczak




**Emeralds**

**The Poetry Posse 2015**  
 Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
 Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet F. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
 Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
 Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shelu \* Hilya N. Yilmaz  
 Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet II

June 2015

**June's Featured Poets**  
 Anahit Arustamyan \* Yvette D. Murrell \* Regina A. Walker




**Pearl**

**The Poetry Posse 2015**  
 Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
 Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet F. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
 Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
 Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shelu \* Hilya N. Yilmaz  
 Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet II

July 2015

**The Featured Poets for July 2015**  
 Abhik Shome \* Christina Neal \* Robert Neal



**Rubies**


**The Poetry Posse 2015**  
 Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
 Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet F. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
 Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
 Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shelu \* Hilya N. Yilmaz  
 Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet II

August 2015

**Featured Poets**  
 Gayle Howell  
 Ann Chalasz  
 Christopher Schultz

**Peridot**




**The Poetry Posse 2015**  
 Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
 Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet F. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
 Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
 Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shelu \* Hilya N. Yilmaz  
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

**The Year of the Poet II**  
September 2015  
Featured Poets  
Alfreda Ghee \* Lonnice Weeks Badley \* Demetrios Trifatis



Sapphires

*The Poetry Posse 2015*  
Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shehu \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

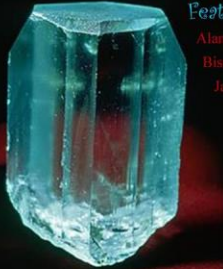
*The Year of the Poet II*  
October 2015  
Featured Poets  
Monte Smith \* Laura J. Wolfe \* William Washington



Opal

*The Poetry Posse 2015*  
Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shehu \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.


**The Year of the Poet II**  
November 2015  
Featured Poets  
Alan W. Jankowski  
Bismay Mohanty  
James Moore



Topaz

*The Poetry Posse 2015*  
Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shehu \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet II**  
December 2015  
Featured Poets  
Kerione Bryan \* Michelle Joan Barulich \* Neville Hiatt



Turquoise

*The Poetry Posse 2015*  
Jamie Bond \* Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert 'Infinite' Carrasco  
Siddhartha Beth Pierce \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Tony Henninger  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Neetu Wali \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Ann White \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Katherine Wyatt \* Fahredin Shehu \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

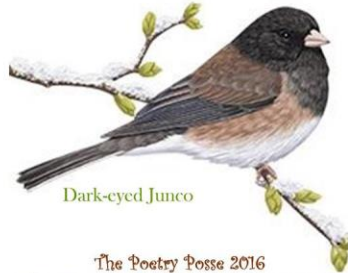
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## The Year of the Poet III January 2016

### Featured Poets

Lana Joseph \* Atom Cyrus Rush \* Christena Williams



Dark-eyed Junco

### The Poetry Posse 2016

Gail Weston Shazor \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratzynska \* Alana J. White  
Ehmedin Shehu \* Hrinukesh Padhye \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Joe DeVerbal \* Mubalancer \* Shareef Abdir - Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdham \* Keith Alan Hamilton  
Hulya N. Yilmaz \* Demetrios Triantaf \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet III February 2016

February 2016

### Featured Poets

Anthony Arnold  
Anna Chalas  
Dr. Andre Hawthorne



Puffin

### The Poetry Posse 2016

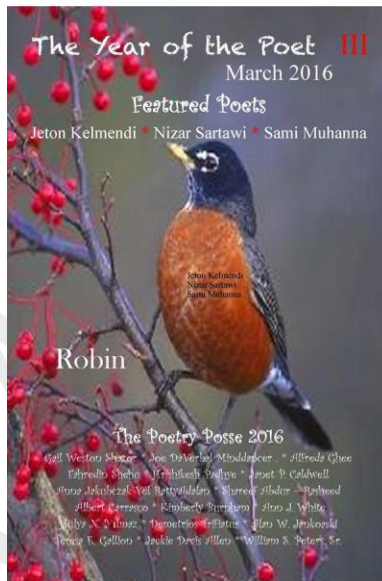
Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVerbal \* Mubalancer \* Alfreida Ghoe  
Ehmedin Shehu \* Hrinukesh Padhye \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratzynska \* Shareef Abdir - Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdham \* Alana J. White  
Hulya N. Yilmaz \* Demetrios Triantaf \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet III March 2016

March 2016

### Featured Poets

Jeton Kelmendi \* Nizar Sartawi \* Sami Muhanna



Robin

### The Poetry Posse 2016

Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVerbal \* Mubalancer \* Alfreida Ghoe  
Ehmedin Shehu \* Hrinukesh Padhye \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratzynska \* Shareef Abdir - Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdham \* Alana J. White  
Hulya N. Yilmaz \* Demetrios Triantaf \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet III

### Featured Poets

Ali Abdolrezaei  
Anna Chalas  
Agim Vinca  
Ceri Naz

Black Capped Chickadee

### The Poetry Posse 2016

Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVerbal \* Mubalancer \* Alfreida Ghoe  
Ehmedin Shehu \* Hrinukesh Padhye \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratzynska \* Shareef Abdir - Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdham \* Alana J. White  
Hulya N. Yilmaz \* Demetrios Triantaf \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

celebrating international poetry month

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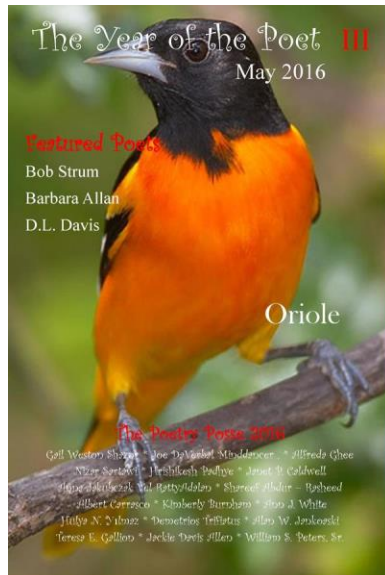
# Inner Child Press Anthologies

**The Year of the Poet III**  
May 2016

**Featured Poets**  
Bob Strum  
Barbara Allan  
D.L. Davis

**Oriole**

**The Poetry Posse 2016**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVierol Mbadaneer \* Alfredo Choe  
Nizar Sarteel \* Hishikesh Badigw \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Shaza Jalaluzzak Val Betty Siddons \* Shereef Alshar - Rashad  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdum \* Alan J. White  
Habya N. N'Amaz \* Demetrios Triflatos \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

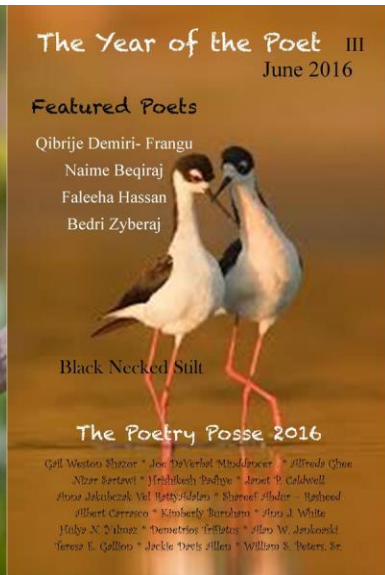


**The Year of the Poet III**  
June 2016

**Featured Poets**  
Qibrije Demiri- Frangu  
Naime Beqiraj  
Faleeha Hassan  
Bedri Zyberaj

**Black Necked Stilt**

**The Poetry Posse 2016**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVierol Mbadaneer \* Alfredo Choe  
Nizar Sarteel \* Hishikesh Badigw \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Shaza Jalaluzzak Val Betty Siddons \* Shereef Alshar - Rashad  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdum \* Alan J. White  
Habya N. N'Amaz \* Demetrios Triflatos \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

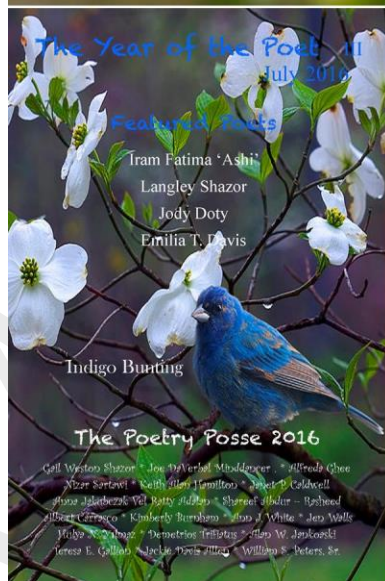


**The Year of the Poet III**  
July 2016

**Featured Poets**  
Iram Fatima 'Ashi'  
Langley Shazor  
Jody Doty  
Emilia T. Davis

**Indigo Bunting**

**The Poetry Posse 2016**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVierol Mbadaneer \* Alfredo Choe  
Nizar Sarteel \* Keith Alan Hamilton \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Shaza Jalaluzzak Val Betty Siddons \* Shereef Alshar - Rashad  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdum \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Alan Walls  
Habya N. N'Amaz \* Demetrios Triflatos \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

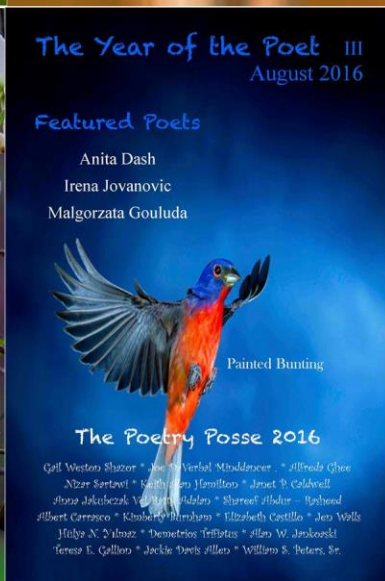


**The Year of the Poet III**  
August 2016

**Featured Poets**  
Anita Dash  
Irena Jovanovic  
Malgorzata Gouluda

**Painted Bunting**

**The Poetry Posse 2016**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVierol Mbadaneer \* Alfredo Choe  
Nizar Sarteel \* Keith Alan Hamilton \* Janet P. Caldwell  
Shaza Jalaluzzak Val Betty Siddons \* Shereef Alshar - Rashad  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burdum \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Alan Walls  
Habya N. N'Amaz \* Demetrios Triflatos \* Alan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.




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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

**The Year of the Poet III**  
September 2016

**Featured Poets**

Simone Weber  
Abhijit Sen  
Eunice Barbara C. Novilla



Long Billed Curlew

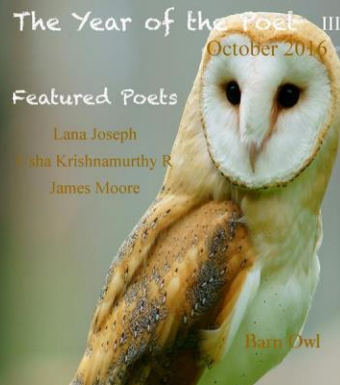
**The Poetry Posse 2016**

Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe DeVerbal Mbadugwe \* Jen Walls  
Nizar Sattari \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Alfredo Ghee  
Joe DeVerbal Mbadugwe \* Shareef Abdur - Rashid  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burroughs \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Julya N. N'Amazi \* Demetrios Trifatis \* Allan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallon \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet III**  
October 2016

**Featured Poets**

Lana Joseph  
Pasha Krishnamurthy R  
James Moore



Barn Owl

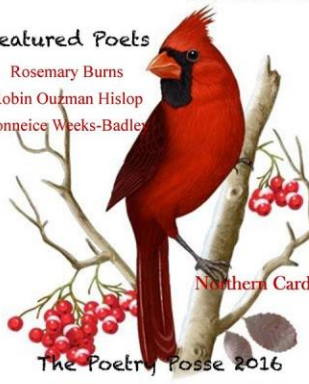
**The Poetry Posse 2016**

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazzareno \* Jen Walls  
Nizar Sattari \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Alfredo Ghee  
Joe DeVerbal Mbadugwe \* Shareef Abdur - Rashid  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burroughs \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Julya N. N'Amazi \* Demetrios Trifatis \* Allan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallon \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet III**  
November 2016

**Featured Poets**

Rosemary Burns  
Robin Ouzman Hislop  
Lonnie Weeks-Badley



Northern Cardinal


**The Poetry Posse 2016**

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazzareno \* Jen Walls  
Nizar Sattari \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Alfredo Ghee  
Joe DeVerbal Mbadugwe \* Shareef Abdur - Rashid  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burroughs \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Julya N. N'Amazi \* Demetrios Trifatis \* Allan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallon \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet III**  
December 2016

**Featured Poets**

Samih Masoud  
Mountassir Aziz Bien  
Abdulkadir Musa



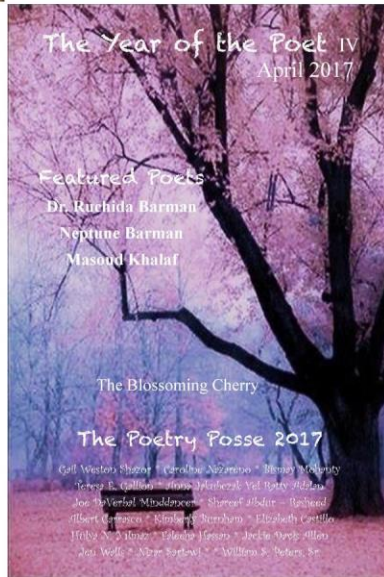
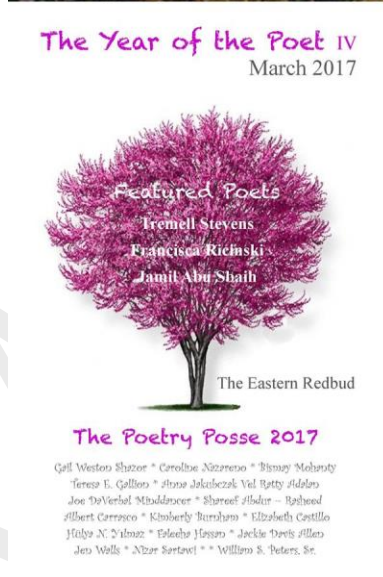
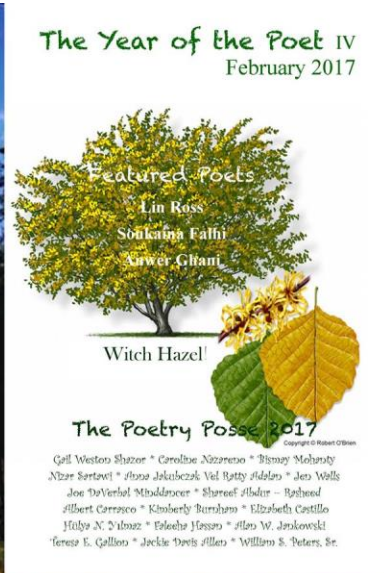
Rough Legged Hawk

**The Poetry Posse 2016**

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazzareno \* Jen Walls  
Nizar Sattari \* Janet P. Caldwell \* Alfredo Ghee  
Joe DeVerbal Mbadugwe \* Shareef Abdur - Rashid  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burroughs \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Julya N. N'Amazi \* Demetrios Trifatis \* Allan W. Jankowski  
Teresa E. Gallon \* Jackie Davis Allen \* William S. Peters, Sr.

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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet IV May 2017

The Flowering Dogwood Tree



### Featured Poets

Kallisa Powell  
Aličja Maria Kuberska  
Fethi Sassi

### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nizareno \* Birmy Mahanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Ansa Jakubczak Vel Betty Auldas  
Joe DeVerol Mbadonze \* Shereef Abdur - Basheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Bursham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hilby N. Yilmaz \* Faleha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Surtawi \* \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet IV June 2017

### Featured Poets

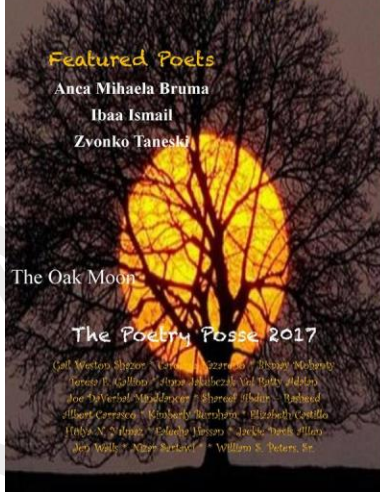
Eliza Segiet  
Tze-Min Tsai  
Abdulla Issa

The Linden Tree

### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nizareno \* Birmy Mahanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Ansa Jakubczak Vel Betty Auldas  
Joe DeVerol Mbadonze \* Shereef Abdur - Basheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Bursham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hilby N. Yilmaz \* Faleha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Surtawi \* \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet IV July 2017



### Featured Poets

Anca Mihaela Bruma  
Ibaa Ismail  
Zvonko Taneski

The Oak Moon

### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nizareno \* Birmy Mahanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Ansa Jakubczak Vel Betty Auldas  
Joe DeVerol Mbadonze \* Shereef Abdur - Basheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Bursham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hilby N. Yilmaz \* Faleha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Surtawi \* \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet IV August 2017

### Featured Poets

Jonathan Aquino  
Kitty Hsu  
Langley Shazor

The Hazelnut Tree

### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nizareno \* Birmy Mahanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Ansa Jakubczak Vel Betty Auldas  
Joe DeVerol Mbadonze \* Shereef Abdur - Basheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Bursham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hilby N. Yilmaz \* Faleha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Surtawi \* \* William S. Peters, Sr.

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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet IV September 2017

### Featured Poets

Martina Reisz Newberry  
Ameer Nassir  
Christine Fulco Neal  
Robert Neal



The Elm Tree

### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazareno \* Bismay Mohanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hülya N. Yilmaz \* Faleeha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Sartaawi \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet IV October 2017

### Featured Poets

Ahmed Abu Saleem  
Nedal Al-Qaeim  
Sadeddin Shafiq



The Black Walnut Tree

### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazareno \* Bismay Mohanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hülya N. Yilmaz \* Faleeha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Sartaawi \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet IV November 2017

### Featured Poets

Kay Peters  
Alfreda D. Ghee  
Gabriella Garofalo  
Rosemary Cappello



The Tree of Life

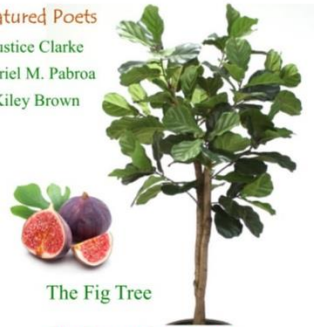
### The Poetry Posse 2017

Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazareno \* Bismay Mohanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hülya N. Yilmaz \* Faleeha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Sartaawi \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet IV December 2017

### Featured Poets

Justice Clarke  
Mariel M. Pabroa  
Kiley Brown



The Fig Tree

### The Poetry Posse 2017


Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazareno \* Bismay Mohanty  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan  
Joe DaVerbal Minddancer \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Albert Carrasco \* Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Hülya N. Yilmaz \* Faleeha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Jen Walls \* Nizar Sartaawi \* William S. Peters, Sr.

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**The Year of the Poet V**  
January 2018

**Featured Poets**  
Iyad Shamasnah  
Yasmeen Hamzeh  
Ali Abdolrezaei




**Aksum**

**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazareno \* Tezmin Ition Tsai  
Hülya N. Yilmaz \* Faleeha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Nizar Sartawi \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet V**  
February 2018


**Sabeen**



**Featured Poets**  
Muhammad Azram  
Anna Szawracka  
Abhilipsa Kuanar  
Aanika Aery

**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Caroline Nazareno \* Tezmin Ition Tsai  
Hülya N. Yilmaz \* Faleeha Hassan \* Jackie Davis Allen  
Teresa E. Gallion \* Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Nizar Sartawi \* William S. Peters, Sr.

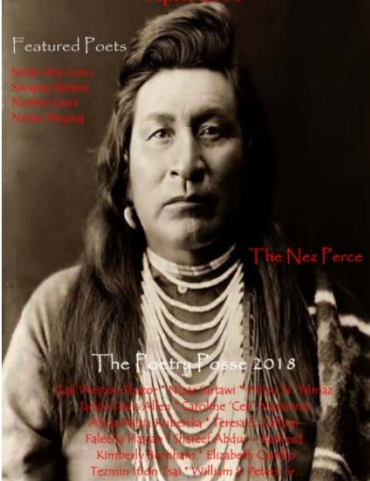
**The Year of the Poet V**  
March 2018



**Featured Poets**  
Iram Fatima 'Ashi'  
Cassandra Swan  
Jaleel Khazaal  
Shazia Zaman

**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sartawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Faleeha Hassan \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet V**  
April 2018



**Featured Poets**  
Suzie Ann Lewis  
Suzanne Boleyn  
Nathan Cross  
Nancy Whiting

**The Nez Perce**

**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sartawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
Anna Jakubczak Vel Ratty Adalan \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Faleeha Hassan \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Kimberly Burnham \* Elizabeth Castillo  
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

**The Year of the Poet V**  
**May 2018**

Featured Poets  
 Zaidy Carmon da Leon Jr.  
 Sylvia K. Malinowska  
 Linda Ahmeti  
 Ofelia Prodan

**The Sumerians**




**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
 Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sirtawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
 Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
 Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
 Faleeha Hassan \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
 Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet V**  
**June 2018**

Featured Poets  
 Bilal Maliqi \* Daim Miftari \* Gojko Božović \* Sofija Živković

**The Paleo Indians**



**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
 Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sirtawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
 Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
 Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
 Faleeha Hassan \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
 Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet V**  
**July 2018**

Featured Poets  
 Palnaja Iyengar-Eddy  
 Mohammad, Kibai Hash  
 Erika Segiet  
 Tom Higgins

**Oceania**




**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
 Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sirtawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
 Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
 Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
 Faleeha Hassan \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
 Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet V**  
**August 2018**

Featured Poets  
 Hussein Habasch \* Mircea Dan Duta \* Naida Mujkić \* Swagat Das

**The Lapita**



**The Poetry Posse 2018**  
 Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sirtawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
 Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
 Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
 Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet V September 2018

### The Aztecs & Incas



**Featured Poets**  
Kolade Olanrewaju Freedom  
Eliza Segiet  
Mazher Hussain Abdul Ghani  
Lily Swann

### The Poetry Posse 2018

Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sattawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behara  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet V October 2018

**Featured Poets**  
Alicia Minjarez \* Lonnice Weeks-Badley  
Lopamudra Mishra \* Abdelwahed Souayah



### The Poetry Posse 2018

Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sattawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behara  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet V November 2018

**Featured Poets**  
Michelle Joan Barulich \* Monsif Beroual  
Krystyna Konecka \* Nassira Nezzar

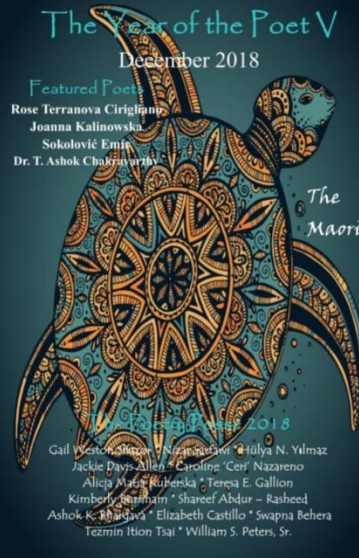


### The Poetry Posse 2018

Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sattawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behara  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet V December 2018

**Featured Poets**  
Rose Terranova Cirigliano  
Joanna Kalinowska  
Sokolović Emir  
Dr. T. Ashok Chakravarti



The  
Maori

### The Poetry Posse 2018

Gail Weston Shazor \* Nizar Sattawi \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline 'Ceri' Nazareno  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behara  
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet VI

January 2019

Indigenous North Americans



*Dream Catcher*

### Featured Poets

Houda Elfchali  
Anthony Briscoe  
Iram Fatima 'Ashi'  
Dr. K. K. Mathew

### The Poetry Posse 2019

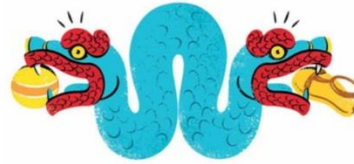
Gail Weston Shazor \* Joe Paire \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VI

February 2019

### Featured Poets

Marek Lukaszewicz \* Bharati Nayak  
Aida G. Roque \* Jean-Jacques Fournier



Meso-America

### The Poetry Posse 2019

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VI

March 2019

### Featured Poets

Enesa Mahmić \* Sylwia K. Malinowska  
Shurook Hammoud \* Anver Ghani



The Caribbean

### The Poetry Posse 2019

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VI

April 2019

### Featured Poets

DL Davis \* Michelle Joan Barulich  
Lulëzim Haziri \* Falecha Hassan



Central & West Africa

### The Poetry Posse 2019


Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
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**The Year of the Poet VI**  
May 2019

**Featured Poets**  
Emad Al-Haydary \* Hussein Nasser Jabr  
Wahab Sherif \* Abdul Razzaq Al Ameer




Asia Southeast Asia and Maritime Asia

**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
June 2019

**Featured Poets**  
Kate Gaudi Powiekszone \* Sahaj Sabharwal  
Twu Jeff \* Mohamed Abdel Aziz Shmeis




Arctic Circumpolar

**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
July 2019

**Featured Poets**  
Saadeddin Shahin \* Andy Scott  
Fahredin Shehu \* Alok Kumar Ray

**The Horn of Africa**




Ethiopia Djibouti  
Somalia Eritrea

**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
August 2019

**Featured Poets**  
Shola Balogun \* Bharati Nayak  
Monalisa Dash Dwibedy \* Mbizo Chirasha




Southwest Asia

**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur – Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
September 2019  
**Featured Poets**  
Elena Liliana Popescu \* Gobinda Biswas  
Iram Fatima 'Ashi' \* Joseph S. Spence, Sr.




**The Caucasus**  
**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rashied  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
October 2019  
**Featured Poets**  
Ngozi Olivia Osooha \* Denisa Kondic  
Pankhuri Sinha \* Christena AV Williams




**The Nile Valley**  
**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rashied  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
November 2019  
**Featured Poets**  
Rozalu Aleksandrova \* Orbindu Ganga  
Smruti Ranjan Mohanty \* Sofia Skleida



**Northern Asia**  
**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rashied  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

**The Year of the Poet VI**  
December 2019  
**Featured Poets**  
Bahim Karim (Karimov) \* Sujata Paul  
Bharati Nayak \* Kapardeli Edichia



**Oceania**  
**The Poetry Posse 2019**  
Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carrasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rashied  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet VII

January 2020

### Featured Poets

B S Tyagi \* Ashok Chakravarthy Tholana  
Andy Scott \* Anwer Ghani

1901 Jean Henry Dunant and Frédéric Passy



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasso \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

February 2020

### Featured Poets

Jennifer Ades \* Martina Reisz Newberry  
Ibrahim Honjo \* Claudia Piccinno

Henri La Fontaine ~ 1913



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasso \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

March 2020

### Featured Poets

Aziz Moutassir \* Krishna Paraisa  
Hannie Rouweler \* Rozalia Aleksandrova

Aristide Briand ~ 1926 ~ Gustav Stresemann



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasso \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

April 2020

### Featured Poets

Rohini Behera \* Mircea Dan Duta  
Monalisa Dash Dwibedy \* NilavroNil Shoovro

Carlos Saavedra Lamas ~ 1936



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasso \* Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet VII

May 2020

### Featured Poets

Alok Kumar Ray \* Eden S. Trinidad  
Franco Barbato \* Izabela Zubko

Ralph Bunche ~ 1950



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

June 2020

### Featured Poets

Elitichia Kapardeli \* Metin Cengiz  
Hussein Habasch \* Kosh K Mathew

Albert John Lutuli ~ 1960



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

July 2020

### Featured Poets

Mykola Martyniuk \* Orbindu Ganga  
Roula Pollard \* Karn Praktisha

Norman Ernest Borlaug ~ 1970



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai \* William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

August 2020

### Featured Poets

Dr Pragya Suman \* Chinh Nguyen  
Srinivas Vasudev \* Ugwu Leonard Ifeanyi, Jr.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel ~ 1980



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor \* Albert Carasco \* Hülya N. Yilmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen \* Caroline Nazareno \* Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska \* Teresa E. Gallion \* Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham \* Shareef Abdur - Rasheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava \* Elizabeth Castillo \* Swapna Behera  
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# Inner Child Press Anthologies

## The Year of the Poet VII

September 2020

### Featured Poets

Raed Anis Al-Jishi • Sotkonovici Snezana  
Dr. Brajesh Kumar Gupta • Umid Najari

Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev ~ 1990



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor • Albert Carasco • Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen • Caroline Nazareno • Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska • Teresa E. Gallion • Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham • Shareef Abdur – Rashheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava • Elizabeth Castillo • Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai • William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

October 2020

### Featured Poets

Mutawaf A. Shaheed • Galina Italyanskaya  
Nadeem Fraz • Avril Tanya Mealllem

Kim Dae-jung ~ 2000



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor • Albert Carasco • Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen • Caroline Nazareno • Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska • Teresa E. Gallion • Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham • Shareef Abdur – Rashheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava • Elizabeth Castillo • Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai • William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

November 2020

### Featured Poets

Elisa Mascia • Sue Lindenberg McClelland  
Hatif Janabi • Ivan Gasima

Liu Xiaobo ~ 2010



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor • Albert Carasco • Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen • Caroline Nazareno • Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska • Teresa E. Gallion • Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham • Shareef Abdur – Rashheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava • Elizabeth Castillo • Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai • William S. Peters, Sr.

## The Year of the Poet VII

December 2020

### Featured Poets

Ratan Ghosh • Jbtisam Ibrahim Al-Asady  
Brindha Vinodh • Selma Kopic

Abiy Ahmed Ali ~ 2019



The Year of Peace  
Celebrating past Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

### The Poetry Posse 2020

Gail Weston Shazor • Albert Carasco • Hülya N. Yılmaz  
Jackie Davis Allen • Caroline Nazareno • Eliza Segiet  
Alicja Maria Kuberska • Teresa E. Gallion • Joe Paire  
Kimberly Burnham • Shareef Abdur – Rashheed  
Ashok K. Bhargava • Elizabeth Castillo • Swapna Behera  
Tezmin Ition Tsai • William S. Peters, Sr.

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[www.worldhealingworldpeacepoetry.com](http://www.worldhealingworldpeacepoetry.com)

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# Inner Child Press International

Inner Child Press International is a publishing company founded and operated by writers. Our personal publishing experiences provide us an intimate understanding of the sometimes-daunting challenges writers, new and seasoned, may face in the business of publishing and marketing their creative “Written Work”.

**For more Information:**

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