

Kafla

Intercontinental

(The International Literary Journal), No. 36, January-April 2008

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Printed, Published & Edited by Dev Bhardwaj, Director India,
Intercontinental Cultural Association, 3437 Sector 46-C, Chandigarh-160047 .

Printed at : : R. K. Offset Press, Shahdara, Delhi- 110006

Annual subscription : Rs. 100 (Abroad \$ 10 by Airmail)

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RNI No. CHA-ENG/1994/235

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In this world where life has been torn into smithereens innumerable and the flow of crime, violence and warfare is incessant the human urge to grope for the light of love and peace grows fervently and hands come out magnanimously in the hope of engineering new castles of peace. The last few decades have brought the world to the brink of near disaster and the manifold growth of the anti-human mind-clusters bring the formidability of the darkness into sight. In such a sorrow state of affairs it is but satisfying and soothing when we come across the olive leaves and the roses ever smiling to give us just happiness and happiness only. The human gallantry towards this objectives takes many a shape and one among them, of course the most noble one, is the bringing together of the people of different hue under one roof beneath the flag of peace.

On 29th of September 2007, India Inter-Continental Cultural Association (IICCA), Chandigarh organized its third International Writers meet in the city of the first wonder of the world, 'The Taj'. The conference had a nice and jubilant start with the lighting of the lamp by none other than Padamshri Dr. Shyam Singh Shashi, a name not so unknown to the Indian literary world. The other dignitaries who adorned the event were Dr. B. K. Singh, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Agra, Mr. C. R. Modgil, Director, Haryana Punjabi Sahitya Academy, R. P. Tiwari, Shri Raamaa Chandra Mouli, a famous Telgu writer, Mr. Manohan Singh Mohan, an NRI writer from U. K. Dr. Shyam Shashi was the Chief Guest of the event and Dr. Raamaa Mouli delivered the keynote address. Dr. Shashi stressed the need to adhere to the path of love and peace shown by Mahatama Gandhi Ji and only the noble ones on earth, the thinkers, poets and writers could realize this.

Prof. B.K. Singh remarked that writers should try to produce such literature as could develop the feeling of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam* – the whole world is a family. Dr. R. P. Tiwari, in his presidential address felt the requirement that the soldiers of pen should have the ink of nationalism. He emphasized the need of not going merely after imagination but deal with the questions of realism and existentialism. The festival was made glorious by the presence of Mr. Kasum Cana from Croatia, Kama Sywor Kamanda from Luxemburg, Mr. Legiti from Hungry, Mr. Valery

Novoselsky (Roma Network, Israel), Mr. Basri Capriqi from Kosovo, Prof. Rafique Ullah Khan & Prof. Mustafizur Rahman from Bangladesh and Mr. Manmohan Singh an NRI from England.

Dr. Swatantra, Assistant Professor, G.L.A. Institute of Technology and Management extended the welcome note. On this occasion more than a dozen of books from various regions of the country were also released. Dev Bhardwaj, Director IICCA while addressing the delegates said, "The Festival aims at spreading the feeling of brotherhood, peace and trying to make harmony between man and man." The local organizer Dr. R.S. Tiwari, popularly known as 'Shikhresh' anchored the meet under the valuable guidance of Mr. Dev Bhardwaj.

In the evening session five papers were presented which was followed by the session of poetry recitation and cultural presentations. Mr. Manmohan Mohan while expressing his indebtedness to the IICCA, its mission and the noble work being done by Mr. Dev Bhardwaj, announced a financial help of Rs. One Lakh for the future arrangements. On 30th of September besides the sessions of poetry recitation an 'Inter-Language Translation Group' was formed which would be working over the bringing together of the poetry compositions of different languages into a single volume. The most novel and worth appreciating element about the event was the purely academic and non-political appearance where there was no place for politics, the ever-expanding flatulent culture in India and abroad. The academic and intellectual conglomerate together made the occasion thought-rich and conducive for the fostering of brilliance in creativity. Over one hundred and fifty poets, fiction-writers and academicians attended the conference. There were people from 8 countries and about 25 states of India and this made the occasion a mega-event in every sense of the term. The delegates also visited the 7th wonder of the world – the Taj Mahal. The event received a wide media coverage and thus paved the way for the furtherance of the cause of love and peace at the global level. The participants as well as the observant audience gave a heartfelt compliment to Mr. Dev Bhardwaj for the magnificent conduct of the event.

(Kafila Bureau)

1st INDO-ROMA WRITERS CARAVAN

India Inter-Continental Cultural Association (IICCA), is engaged in the objective of bringing the Indo-Roma people together for about a decade. In October-November 2007, IICCA and Romani Federation, Belgrade organised first ever Indo-Roma Writers Caravan in Serbia in which a delegation of seven prominent Indian writers participated. Famous Punjabi writer Dev Bhardwaj led the Indian delegation. The other members of the delegation were Dr. Shyam Singh Shashi from Delhi, Dr. Mrs. Lipikusap Nayak from Orissa, R. Mohan Kumar from Tamilnadu, Mr. Philipose & Shreedharan from Kerala and Prof. Harish Kumar Thakur from Himachal Pradesh.

Mr. Jovan Damjanovic, President of Romani Federation, Serbia and Mr. Bajram Haliti, an eminent Romani poet received the delegation in Belgrade with great warmth and open heart. The first meeting of the Caravan was held at National Writers Club Building in Belgrade. The Caravan that was joined by about 15 Roma writers and scholars from Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Palestine and Macedonia also visited 5 other cities during a weeklong span. During these days several meetings, public contact movements and cultural programmes were held in different cities. Poetry recitation, seminars and lectures marked the meetings and programmes organised by different literary organizations and local municipalities at Belgrade, Zemun, Novi Sad, Nis & Leskovac.

Indian delegation that visited different cities and Roma-settlements was taken aback by the physical features of the Roma people and their life-style that resembled with the Indian one. A whole Indian scene came to life as Roma children were found playing *gulli-danda* in streets adorned by small vendors (*Chhabe wale*) selling *Bhuttas (Chhali)*, Indian Sarees and music CDs and DVDs. The houses were built in Indian style and in almost every courtyard washed clothes hanged down the wires. One could also see the Gypsy women lighting wood-fire in their kitchens. The Roma people thronged into streets and gathered in balconies to greet their Indian brethren. One

bad aspect of the Roma life was its economic backwardness. People mostly were ill-clad atleast when compared to their European counterparts.

On the last day of this Writers Caravan Mr. Jovan Damjanovic announced that a huge five storied complex in the city of Zemun, which was earlier proposed to be a shopping centre, would be turned into an international Indo-Roma Centre where Indian writers, scholars, researchers and artists will teach Roma children Indian Art, Culture and Literature, besides Indian languages like Punjabi & Hindi.

WE WELCOME INDIAN WRITERS

Jovan Damjanovic, BELGRADE

<tvamaro@scnet.yu>

At the First Caravan of Indo-Romany Writers, which was held in Serbia from 27th October to 5th November 2007, seven writers from India led by Dev Bhardwaj, Director, IICCA, and President of Writers Club International had meetings with Romany writers, intellectuals, and officials of municipal structures from Zemun, Novi Sad, Nis and Leskovac. The Indian delegation received warm hospitality from the Roma people, in literal, lingual and cultural manner. Indian delegation was received by Dragan Bojkovic, President of Crveni Krst borough from Nis. A press conference was also organized on the occasion. Zoran Vucevic, President of City Assembly, Goran Cvetanovic, President of Pcinjsko-Jablanicki, District for SRS, and Gordana Pop-Lazic, President of Zemun Borough, also participated in the Conference. An invitation on behalf of the Mayor of Chandigarh was also conveyed to the participating Mayors to attend the international Mayors' Conference at Chandigarh from 8th to 9th December 2007. During the conference, it was decided that an Indo-Romany Cultural Center should be found in Belgrade. It would be the first center of the kind where writers and artists would be working on joint cultural, social, economic and historical accounts. This center will promote Roms and non-Roms to

study Hindi language, and Indian history. The exchange of Romany and Indian students and the opening of a computer center with hi-tech equipment to train Romani youth would be the prime objectives of the centre.

There has been some serious discussions with this delegation about the restoration of contacts with higher political representatives of India and about recognition of Romany nation from its motherland India. This is an extension of the thread and earlier contacts from Sait Balic, Esma Redzepova, and our other representatives of Romany community with Indira Gandhi in 1983 when she said: "Welcome, dear brothers and sisters, to your motherland". Indira Gandhi accepted that the Romany nation should be recognized as a separate nation abroad. However, because of the sudden demise of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, there was some stagnation which we are trying break.

Being Vice-President of World Roma Parliament, I suggested that 7th World Roma Congress should be held India (in New Delhi or Chandigarh), and after unanimous decision by all it was decided that Mr. Dev Bhardwaj and Dr Shyam Singh Shashi will engage some political corners in India for the realization of this proposal. We have also received support from Mr. Veerendra Rishi, member of World Roma Parliament and he will be engaged for the same when the World Roma Congress will be held in India.

MY SALUTE TO DELEGATION FROM INDIA

Bajram Haliti

Lawyer, Journalist and Publicist
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Respected participants of the First Caravan of Indo-Romany Writers, Dear guests, friends, ladies and gentleman,

It is my honor to most-cordially salute you all on behalf of the organizers and the Association of the Citizens Romany Federation of Serbia. I am glad that I can salute the representatives of the government of the Republic of Serbia,

representatives of diplomatic core in our country, representatives of government and non-government organizations, representatives of World Romany Organization, journalists, and the media men.

Roms are primarily Indian nationals who are settled in areas of Eastern and Western Europe and in other areas of the world, with all attributes which make them special national entity. They have their own history, culture, religion, tradition, literature, language, psychology, national heredity, or to state otherwise – Roms have their own past, present and future very much like the other nations of the world.

Romany Federation Serbia, which is the organizer of the First Caravan of Indo-Romany writers in world, is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental and non-political association, established in 2000 AD in Zemun. The chief objectives of this association are affirmation of language, literature and culture of our region in Europe and world, as well as un-hindered flow of literature, values and ideas from European regions and world into this area. The major activities of the association imply freedom of literary world, freedom of policy makers and their independence from ideologies and political regimes, realization of equality of literary people, understanding amongst people and nations.

Romany Federation Serbia will strive to give necessary support to writers who want to be engaged in flow of ideas based on multi-cultural, international context and cooperation between writers from all meridians.

Association of Writers of the Republic of Serbia, today in Belgrade, for the first time, is hosting the Caravan of Indo-Romany Writers, who will during the next few days "reflect over the joint ventures in the future" from South to North of Serbia, all under one motto "Peace and freedom – whole world is one family".

Seven eminent scholars from the Federal Republic of India (theoreticians, academics, journalists, analysts, political Scientists), few writers from the republics of ex-Yugoslavia, and writers from some Balkan states will organize meetings.

The publication of the books, journals, papers and other such editions will be encouraged in India, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. For the next seven days, there will be discussions on different social and political themes and on modern Indian and Romany literary scene. The aim of the First Caravan of Indo-Romany Writers is contribution to affirmation of veritable artistic values, "stimulation of population and further cultural development of positive relationships in culture and society".

Fundamental idea of the Caravan is a civil dialogue of literates of Romany and Indian qualification with citizens, in a spirit of tolerance, culture of peace and inter-cultural dialogue. Their participation in a Caravan will help their development as future citizens of democratic society in new democratic Serbia, Europe, and whole world.

20th century was a century marked by evil, corruption, and violence which people failed to foresee. However, the duty of a writer is to testify about his times. Don't forget that the role of writers is undoubtedly to tell the truth. They should express unique matters, which belong only to them and it is of little importance what is it good or what is worthless. Writers don't speak of morals rather they themselves are living morals.

(Kafla Bureau)

Roma Day Celebrations in Chandigarh (India) April 8, 2008

India Inter-Continental Cultural Association Chandigarh in collaboration with Writers Club, Chandigarh, and Government Model Senior Secondary School, Sector 47-D, Chandigarh organized a Roma Day Festival in Chandigarh on 8th April, 2008. This Festival was also supported by Indo-Roma Centre, Belgrade (Serbia) whose President Mr. Jovan Damjanovic sent warm greetings and best wishes for the success of this Festival. These events were the result of continuous efforts made by Mr. Dev Bhardwaj, Director, IICCA, who is also the first Vice-President of Indo-Roma Centre, Belgrade (Serbia).

On the occasion were present the convenors of Writers Club, Chandigarh - Mr. Sham Singh Angsang and Saathi Balwinder Singh. Dr. Suresh Pillai, incharge Indian Diaspora Section of Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Delhi was the special Guest of honour. Mr. Pillai assured all help for the conduct of such events in future. Mr. Janardhan Pathania, Advisor IICCA surprised all by speaking in Romani language. He held that the Romani language is the off-shoot of Punjabi, Hindi and Rajasthani languages and any Indian can learn it easily. Prominent poets, writers, artists, journalists and intellectuals like Prof. P. S. Nirola, Ms. Manjit Indira, Malkit Singh, Devinder Daman, Kashmir Singh Pannu, Prof. Ajmer Singh, Amar Giri, Hardev Chauhan, Jatinder Pajni, Raj Kumar, Artist, Sabita Dass, were also present on the occasion. Mr. C. R. Modgil, Director Haryana Punjabi Sahit Academi was also present on the occasion.

On this Occasion two major events were organized:

I. Exhibition of paintings by Roma (Gypsy) children from Slovak Republic (54), Bulgaria (20), Croatia (5) Australia (2) and Ukraine (1)

The Exhibition was held at Government Senior Secondary School, Sector 47-D, Chandigarh and was inaugurated by Mr. S. K. Setia, H.C.S. Director of Public Instruction (Schools), Chandigarh on 8 April, 2008 at 11.00 A.M. The Chief Guest was so impressed by the paintings displayed in the exhibition that he immediately issued orders to all the Government Schools in the city to depute children of their schools to visit exhibition. The exhibition remained open for three days from 8th to 10th April, 2008. The display of paintings was done in a very impressive manner by the art-teacher of the school Mr. Vishal Bhatnagar and his team. Mr. J. S. Basota, Principal of the school and Mr. Jan Sajko <sajko.jan@post.sk>, art teacher of a school in Slovak Republic were the main force behind the event.

Results of the Competition

Out of 82 paintings from 5 countries displayed in the exhibition, overall best entry award went to Slovak Republic. Country-wise 1st, 2nd 3rd positions were also declared. A jury of prominent artists from Chandigarh passed the judgement.

Here are the paintings which bagged awards:

Overall Best Entry

DUZDOVA DASA (Slovak Republic)

Best three from Slovak Republic

1. BILY LUKAS (1st)
2. BILY STANISLAV (2nd)
3. BILA IVETA (3rd)

Best four from Bulgaria

1. Asparuh Iaroslavov (1st)
2. Iana Angelova Ivanova (2nd)
3. Tsvetina Hristova (3rd)
4. Adelina Ivajlova Burova (Consolation)

Best two from Croatia

1. Patricia Cana (1st)
2. Viktor Cana (2nd)

No painting was awarded from Ukraine and Australia because there was single entry each.

Congratulations to all the children who got prizes and who participated in the exhibition and wish they could ever visit India to see their ancestor's land, its art, culture and people.

II. Romani Music & Dance by Miss Fruzsina Hanna Perjes (from Hungary)

In the evening, well known Roma-gypsy singer Miss Fruzsina Hanna Perjes from Budapest (Hungary) presented Romani songs. She mesmerized the audience with her melodious voice. She was accompanied by three local musicians who gave her nice company on the podium as enough rehearsal of the last two days made the things excellent.

Miss Fruzsina Hanna Perjes, popularly known as Guru Jina, was born in Budapest, the capital of Hungary. She is daughter of Dr. Zoltan Perjes, a theoretical physicist, who also worked with Stephen Hawking "Brief History of Time", (Cambridge, U.K.), Roy Kerr, discoverer of the "Black Hole Theory" (Christchurch, New Zealand) and the Penrose Couple (London). In maternal side she is descendent of the royal Kalderash Gypsies of Transylvania (now in Romania).

After completion of her formal education from the Department of Anglo-American Studies, ELTE Stage Theatre, Central European University: Department of Social Anthropology and the American University in Bulgaria: Department of Performing Arts, and Life Reform Foundation for Nature Therapies (Bio-energy and Hatha yoga) she decided to travel and trace her Romani roots all the way back to the East. She started her journey from Westward to the East. After visiting her grandfather's place in Herefordshire, with the Scotland-based band, she performed in Budapest Suns of Arqa. Later on she performed lead role in Niall R. Walsh, Irish playwright's play "The Wind" and got her poems published in Dublin-based literary magazine called "College Green" founded by students of the famous poet, Seamus Heaney.

In 2004 she was Editor-in-Chief for major Romani poet, Sali Ibrahim's "Romani Mitologia", the only published and concise mythology collection of the Bulgarian Gypsies, with extracts from the Bhagavadgita.

(Kafila Bureau)

LITERATURE & WORLD PEACE

Abha Khetarpal

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When we rise in the morning and listen to the radio or read the newspaper, we are confronted with the same sad news: violence, crime, wars, and disasters. Even in these modern times it is clear that one's precious life is not safe. No former generation has had to experience so much bad news as we face today; this constant awareness of fear and tension should make any sensitive and compassionate person question seriously the progress of our modern world. It is ironic that the more serious problems emanate from the more industrially advanced societies. Science and technology have worked wonders in many fields, but the basic human problems remain. There is unprecedented literacy, yet this universal education does not seem to have fostered goodness, but only mental restlessness and discontent instead. There is no doubt about the increase in our material progress and technology, but somehow this is not sufficient as we have not yet succeeded in bringing about peace and happiness or in overcoming suffering.

Science and technology have contributed immensely to the overall experience of humankind; to our material comfort and well-being and to our greater understanding of the world we live in. But if we give too much emphasis to science and technology we are in danger of losing touch with those aspects of human knowledge and understanding that aspire towards honesty and altruism. Thus it is only logical to try to strike a balance between material developments on the one hand and the development of spiritual, human values on the other. In order to bring about this great adjustment, we need to revive our humanitarian values. We must realize that:-

1. Universal humanitarianism is essential to solve global problems;
2. Compassion is the pillar of world peace;

3. All world religions are already for world peace in this way, as are all humanitarians of whatever ideology;
4. Each individual has a universal responsibility to shape institutions to serve human needs.

Solving Human Problems through Transforming Human Attitudes

Of the many problems we face today, some are natural calamities and must be accepted and faced with equanimity. Others, however, are of our own making, created by misunderstanding, and can be corrected. One such type arises from the conflict of ideologies, political or religious, when people fight each other for petty ends, losing sight of the basic humanity that binds us all together as a single human family.

By far the greatest single danger facing humankind - in fact, all living beings on our planet - is the threat of nuclear destruction. It is an appeal to all the leaders of the nuclear powers who literally hold the future of the world in their hands, to the scientists and technicians who continue to create these awesome weapons of destruction, and to all the people at large who are in a position to influence their leaders to exercise their sanity to work at dismantling and destroying all the nuclear weapons.

Broadly speaking there are two types of happiness and suffering, mental and physical and happiness is a combination of inner peace, economic development, and, above all, world peace. To achieve such goals it is necessary to develop a sense of universal responsibility, a deep concern for all irrespective of creed, colour, sex, or nationality. The premise behind this idea of universal responsibility is the simple fact that, in general terms, all others' desires are the same as mine. Every being wants happiness and does not want suffering. If we, as intelligent human beings, do not accept this fact, there will be more and more suffering on this planet. If we adopt a self-centred approach to life and constantly try to use others for our own self-interest, we may gain temporary benefits, but in the long run we will not succeed in achieving even personal

happiness, and world peace will be completely out of the question.

All this calls for a new approach to global problems. The world is becoming smaller and smaller - and more and more interdependent - as a result of rapid technological advances and international trade as well as increasing trans-national relations. We now depend very much on each other. In ancient times problems were mostly family-size, and they were naturally tackled at the family level, but the situation has changed. Today we are so interdependent, so closely interconnected with each other, that without a sense of universal responsibility, a feeling of universal brotherhood and sisterhood, and an understanding and belief that we really are part of one big human family, we cannot hope to overcome the dangers to our very existence - let alone bring about peace and happiness. One nation's problems can no longer be satisfactorily solved by itself alone; too much depends on the interest, attitude, and cooperation of other nations. A universal humanitarian approach to world problems seems the only sound basis for world peace.

Although the increasing interdependence among nations might be expected to generate more sympathetic cooperation, it is difficult to achieve a spirit of genuine cooperation as long as people remain indifferent to the feelings and happiness of others. When people are motivated mostly by greed and jealousy, it is not possible for them to live in harmony. A spiritual approach may not solve all the political problems that have been caused by the existing self-centered approach, but in the long run it will overcome the very basis of the problems that we face today.

On the other hand, if humankind continues to approach its problems considering only temporary expediency, future generations will have to face tremendous difficulties. The global population is increasing, and our resources are being rapidly depleted. Look at the trees, for example. No one knows exactly what adverse effects massive deforestation will have on the climate, the soil, and global ecology as a whole. We are facing problems because people are concentrating only on their short-term, selfish interests, not thinking of the entire human family.

According to Buddhist psychology, most of our troubles are

due to our passionate desire for and attachment to things that we misapprehend as enduring entities. The pursuit of the objects of our desire and attachment involves the use of aggression and competitiveness as supposedly efficacious instruments. Undiscriminating, spontaneous, and unlimited compassion for all sentient beings is obviously not the usual love that one has for friends or family, which is alloyed with ignorance, desire, and attachment. The kind of love we should advocate is this wider love that you can have even for someone who has done harm to you: your enemy.

The rationale for compassion is that every one of us wants to avoid suffering and gain happiness. This, in turn, is based on the valid feeling of 'I', which determines the universal desire for happiness. Indeed, all beings are born with similar desires and should have an equal right to fulfill them. Whether one believes in religion or not, there is no one who does not appreciate love and compassion. Right from the moment of our birth, we are under the care and kindness of our parents; later in life, when facing the sufferings of disease and old age, we are again dependent on the kindness of others. If at the beginning and end of our lives we depend upon others' kindness, why then in the middle should we not act kindly towards others?

The development of a kind heart (a feeling of closeness for all human beings) does not involve the religiosity we normally associate with conventional religious practice. It is not only for people who believe in religion, but is for everyone regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation. It is for anyone who considers himself or herself, above all, a member of the human family and who sees things from this larger and longer perspective. This is a powerful feeling that we should develop and apply; instead, we often neglect it, particularly in our prime years when we experience a false sense of security.

When we take into account a longer perspective, the fact that all wish to gain happiness and avoid suffering, and keep in mind our relative unimportance in relation to countless others, we can conclude that it is worthwhile to share our possessions with others. When you train in this sort of outlook, a true sense of compassion - a true sense of love and respect for others - becomes possible. Individual

happiness ceases to be a conscious self-seeking effort; it becomes an automatic and far superior by-product of the whole process of loving and serving others.

Another result of spiritual development, most useful in day-to-day life, is that it gives a calmness and presence of mind. Our lives are in constant flux, bringing many difficulties. When faced with a calm and clear mind, problems can be successfully resolved. When, instead, we lose control over our minds through hatred, selfishness, jealousy, and anger, we lose our sense of judgement. Our minds are blinded and at those wild moments anything can happen, including war. Thus, the practice of compassion and wisdom is useful to all, especially to those responsible for running national affairs, in whose hands lie the power and opportunity to create the structure of world peace.

There are two primary tasks facing religious practitioners who are concerned with world peace. First, we must promote better interfaith understanding so as to create a workable degree of unity among all religions. This may be achieved in part by respecting each other's beliefs and by emphasizing our common concern for human well-being. Second, we must bring about a viable consensus on basic spiritual values that touch every human heart and enhance general human happiness. This means we must emphasize the common denominator of all world religions – humanitarian ideals. These two steps will enable us to act both individually and together to create the necessary spiritual conditions for world peace.

Despite the progressive secularization brought about by worldwide modernization and despite systematic attempts in some parts of the world to destroy spiritual values, the vast majority of humanity continues to believe in one religion or another. The undying faith in religion, evident even under irreligious political systems, clearly demonstrates the potency of religion as such. This spiritual energy and power can be purposefully used to bring about the spiritual conditions necessary for world peace. Religious leaders and humanitarians all over the world have a special role to play in this respect.

Whether we will be able to achieve world peace or not, we

have no choice but to work towards that goal. If our minds are dominated by anger, we will lose the best part of human intelligence - wisdom, the ability to decide between right and wrong. Anger is one of the most serious problems facing the world today. It plays no small role in current conflicts such as those in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the North-South problem, and so forth. These conflicts arise from a failure to understand one another's humanness. The answer is not the development and use of greater military force, nor an arms race. Nor is it purely political or purely technological. Basically it is spiritual, in the sense that what is required is a sensitive understanding of our common human situation. Hatred and fighting cannot bring happiness to anyone, even to the winners of battles. Violence always produces misery and thus is essentially counterproductive. It is, therefore, time for world leaders to learn to transcend the differences of race, culture, and ideology and to regard one another through eyes that see the common human situation. To do so would benefit individuals, communities, nations, and the world at large.

The greater part of present world tension seems to stem from the 'Eastern bloc' versus 'Western bloc' conflict that has been going on since World War II. These two blocs tend to describe and view each other in a totally unfavorable light. This continuing, unreasonable struggle is due to a lack of mutual affection and respect for each other as fellow human beings. If, for example, the leader of the United States of America and the leader of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics suddenly met each other in the middle of a desolate island, I am sure they would respond to each other spontaneously as fellow human beings. But a wall of mutual suspicion and misunderstanding separates them the moment they are identified as the 'President of the USA' and the 'Secretary-General of the USSR'.

To improve person-to-person contact in the world at large, there should be greater encouragement of international tourism. Also, mass media, particularly in democratic societies, can make a considerable contribution to world peace by giving greater coverage to human interest items that reflect the ultimate oneness of humanity. With

the rise of a few big powers in the international arena, the humanitarian role of international organizations is being bypassed and neglected. I hope that this will be corrected and that all international organizations, especially the United Nations, will be more active and effective in ensuring maximum benefit to humanity and promoting international understanding. As all nations are economically dependent upon one another more than ever before, human understanding must go beyond national boundaries and embrace the international community at large. Indeed, unless we can create an atmosphere of genuine cooperation, gained not by threatened or actual use of force but by heartfelt understanding, world problems will only increase. If people in poorer countries are denied the happiness they desire and deserve, they will naturally be dissatisfied and pose problems for the rich. If unwanted social, political, and cultural forms continue to be imposed upon unwilling people, the attainment of world peace is doubtful. However, if we satisfy people at a heart-to-heart level, peace will surely come. Within each nation, the individual ought to be given the right to happiness, and among nations, there must be equal concern for the welfare of even the smallest nations.

Under present conditions, there is definitely a growing need for human understanding and a sense of universal responsibility. In order to achieve such ideas, we must generate a good and kind heart, for without this, we can achieve neither universal happiness nor lasting world peace. We cannot create peace on paper. While advocating universal responsibility and universal brotherhood and sisterhood, the facts are that humanity is organized in separate entities in the form of national societies. Thus, in a realistic sense, these societies that must act as the building-blocks for world peace

I question the popular assumption that religion and ethics have no place in politics and that religious persons should seclude themselves as hermits. Such a view of religion is too one-sided; it lacks a proper perspective on the individual's relation to society and the role of religion in our lives. Ethics is as crucial to a politician as it is to a religious practitioner. Dangerous consequences will follow when politicians and rulers forget moral principles. Whether we

believe in God or Karma, ethics is the foundation of every religion.

Such human qualities as morality, compassion, decency, wisdom, and so forth have been the foundations of all civilizations. These qualities must be cultivated and sustained through systematic moral education in a conducive social environment so that a more humane world may emerge. The qualities required to create such a world must be inculcated right from the beginning, from childhood. We cannot wait for the next generation to make this change; the present generation must attempt a renewal of basic human values. If there is any hope, it is in the future generations, but not unless we institute major change on a worldwide scale in our present educational system. We need a revolution in our commitment to and practice of universal humanitarian values. It is not enough to make noisy calls to halt moral degeneration; we must do something about it. Since present-day governments do not shoulder such 'religious' responsibilities, humanitarian and religious leaders must strengthen the existing civic, social, cultural, educational, and religious organizations to revive human and spiritual values. Where necessary, we must create new organizations to achieve these goals. Only in so doing can we hope to create a more stable basis for world peace.

Whenever I meet even a 'foreigner',
I have always the same feeling:
'I am meeting another member of the human family.,
This attitude has deepened
My affection and respect for all beings.
May this natural wish be
My small contribution to world peace.
I pray for a more friendly,
More caring, and more understanding
Human family on this planet.
To all who dislike suffering,
Who cherish lasting happiness -
This is my heartfelt appeal.

Communication Training in the Global Contexts: Use of Short Stories as a Linguistic Resource in Professional Communication Classrooms

Dr. Kumkum Bhardwaj

Stories are an ideal means of educating and inspiring. They are powerful teaching paraphernalia because of their potential to kindle the imagination of students and engage them with the material. They are fun, conceptual and time efficient. Maintaining this in view my paper is an attempt to reinforce the pedagogical value of short stories and to explain the approach in teaching English language i.e. vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax etc. through the use of it as a platform in B.TECH. Stimulating dialogues look for making a better sense by exploring a range of theoretical tensions and differences embedded within it. Emergence of an appreciation of the significance of narrative within literature has made it significant in the course of professional communication (English) taught to these students.

The present paper aims to introduce methods for affective use of short stories as a linguistic resource in Business/Professional Communication classrooms. The discussion on literary traits is initiated by focusing on fundamental elements of short story-the point of view, character and characterization, setting plot and action. Our teaching methodology is based on the most recent ideas in language and teaching. Sometimes the focus is on communication skills by activating all four language skills-reading; writing, speaking and listening, and sometimes it will be on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and learning.

Narrative Technique:

Professional storyteller Susan Strauss says “A good story shows what it wants to tell.” They set scenes, describe events, and provide characters, circumstances, tension and resolution—all of which help bring abstract concepts to life. While the humane messages we

want to convey are often abstract, stories drive home the meaning of concepts through descriptive details, emotion, and suspense. Even then before teaching it one has to work out on various points regarding its narration. It includes

- How one organizes to teach the prescribed story.
- Can some visual aids be used
- What passages in particular develops interest in the students. What can be sometimes boring or more philosophical to them? Can some care be taken to explain them the same with easier references.
- Interpretation of certain key events and issues in the story.
- Biographical or contextual information should be included.
- What students may like about the stories.
- Do stories only serve the purpose of language embellishment or have moral purpose also coated in it. If yes, what's it?

Class Activities

One of the greatest challenges facing language teachers in professional courses is that of creating new and more productive ways to help them develop communication skills. Real communication involves ideas, emotions, feeling appropriateness and adaptability. The conventional English class hardly gives the students an opportunity to use language in this fashion and develop fluency in it. An attractive alternative is teaching language through short stories as it gives a context for meaningful language production, forcing the learner to use their language resources and enhancing their linguistic abilities. Depending on the story the strategy to teach it may vary. Different alternatives can be-

- Open the discussion by asking students what they think might be meant by the title.
- Tell the students to write similar kind of story based on the title and concept of the session.
- Reading independently followed by a discussion.
- Listening to the teacher read them and making queries regarding various issues of the story.
- Taking turns reading them aloud and finally discussing and summarizing it up. For ex- the story “The Gift of Magi” by O’Henry’s

can be summarized in following points:

- ? Jim and Della are poor couple.
- ? Della had hair which would put queen Sheba to shame and Jim's ancestral watch could be the envy of king Solomon
- ? Both of them sell their only possessions to buy Christmas gifts for the other.
- ? Della sells her hair to buy a platinum fob chain for golden watch of Jim .On the other hand Jim sells his watch to buy set of tortoise shell combs for Della
- ? Even though their acts were foolish in this practical world, the writer calls them Magi.
- ? The story glorifies Della and Jim's love for each other.
- Starting a classroom presentation with a brief story about oneself, for example, is a great method to create an instant bond between the teacher and the students.
- Short anecdotes throughout a presentation will help illustrate points and keep them focused.
- Memorize the story and practice telling it aloud to ensure it flows well and one doesn't leave out important details.

While using any of these methods there are definitely certain points that are part and parcel of every teaching session of short story. One has to be as descriptive as possible. Being animated and making eye contacts with students will help them adapt to the teaching content more .

Post- teaching activities:

Delivering a lecture or making them read is just not sufficient when it comes to teach in these professional courses. The main objective remains developing their communication skills which involves lot of post reading activities in which teacher is a mere facilitator. This includes-

- Develop a character sketch generally verbal.
- Some times also making Venn diagrams that lists similarities and differences between characters. To give an instance in the story "The Renunciation" by Rabindra Nath Tagore two characters present two different conditions in Indian society. Harihar

Mukherjee, the, the father represents orthodox India but his son, Hemanta, is true pioneer of modern India.

- Use a statement that prompts them to get convinced with story in various ways.

For example- In" The Lament" a short story by Antony P. Chekov the protagonist i.e. Iona Potapav has lost his son. So he wants to express his grief to somebody. He finds none and at last narrates his story of son's death to his horse. A statement like "Animals are morally superior to human beings" may stimulate students not only in understanding the linguistic fashion of the story but also helping them develop their insight towards man and mankind. It will help them understand what kind of society they are living in and how can they bless their society.

- Offering them various exercises concentrating on syntax and vocabulary.
- Assessment is more than giving a test or even giving a grade so an assessment of all students is a must.

Thus, post-teaching session not only strengthens their communication skills but also enhances their critical thinking and judgmental abilities.

Language in literature

Langer states, " Literature allows students to reflect on their lives, learning, and language. It can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore"

According to Fitzgerald "Literature can be the vehicle to improve students' overall language skills. It can "expose students to a wide variety of styles and genres" It is in literature that "the resources of the language are most fully and skillfully used" . Thus, teachers should use the best literature available as a model of masterful language usage. In other words, language and literature cannot be separated. "Teaching language in isolation from literature will not move students toward mastery of the four language

Literature provides a window into various cultures, helping students understand how people live and think in country other than theirs. It indeed helps them to expand their "linguistic and cognitive skills, cultural knowledge and sensitivity (quoted in Shanahan, 1997,)" .

Short story as a rich literary text can help the student to appreciate more fully the nature of literature and learn about it as a communication.

Hence one can conclude by thinking of literature teaching a promotional step in simultaneous learning of academic content, cultures, English language skills, and critical thinking abilities.

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World Peace & Literature

Peace is the most important and urgent aspect of life required everywhere. Peace fetches us happiness and harmonious existence. Even a small family needs peaceful living. If that were the condition, can a village, town, district, state and country live without it (peace)? Peace may not be available in 'malls' and 'supermarkets'. It has to be brought out by every citizen. It is not somebody's contribution or gift to somebody else. It is everybody's contribution to a happy state. It is the duty of any government to see that peace exists everywhere.

If there is hatred between any two communities, can we expect peaceful co-existence? Can *Vasudaiv Katumbakam* (The Whole World is Our Family) possible? There were days when the members of a particular community were not allowed to walk through the streets of another community wearing slippers. They were not even permitted to carry their deads through their streets. They were not served tea / coffee in the same tumbler / cups meant for other community people in the tea-shops. These conditions have changed today. The social set up of the 19th century or pre - Independence era is no more existent. Great social changes have taken place, whether they are good or bad, is debatable.

Even today in some villages, because of misunderstanding or hatred, people belonging to one community mix poison in the wells / water tanks that belongs to other community; bum their houses; set fire to the paddy / corn / wheat fields. Much damage is done to their property and lives. History is also replete with such incidences as the wax-palace of a Pandavas was set to fire by their opponents.

The epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* also speak of lack of patience and non-maintenance of peace by people. Ravana abducted Sita, which created a havoc in both the states. Similarly the *Mahabharata* too delineates between the lack of patience and

peace (understanding) among Pandavas and Kauravas. There are differences between the Tamils and the Kannadas over sharing of the Cauvery water. Does peace exist in the minds of the people, especially farmers of these states? Though, Rabindranath Tagore through his play *Muktha-Dhara* stressed the need for sharing of river waters among the neighboring states amicably, yet it seems that no body has learnt a lesson from this. If these are the conditions, how can we expect happiness and peace in the society? A section of Maharashtrians wants 'Vidarbha state to be formed. Similarly, in Karnataka a section of people wants to form 'Telungana' state. Are these demands rational? Only time can answer.

All know that literature is the mirror of life. Poetry, drama and fiction reflect the dirth of peace in any society. Nissim Ezekiel in his poem 'Very Indian Poem in Indian English' asserts, "I am standing for peace and non-violence." He expresses his doubt,

"Why world is fighting
Why all people of world
Are not following Mahatma Gandhi..."
"How one goonda fellow
Threw stone at Indira behan
Must be student unrest fellow." (p.10)

It is the era of violence. That is why we lost M.K. Gandhi, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Rajeev Gandhi in this land of peace and love. Ezekiel shows much concern for peace:

"What you think of prospects of world peace?
Pakistan behaving like this,
China behaving like that
It is making me very sad.....
All men are brothers, no?
In India also
Gujaraties, Maharashtrians, Hindiwallahs,
All brothers
Though some are having funny habits.
Still, you tolerate me,
I tolerate you,

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One day, Ram Rajya is surely coming (p. 11).

In the poem 'The Night of the Scorpion', he portrays another slice of peace. When the poet's mother was stung by a scorpion, all the villagers collected in his house and each one tries to lessen her pain by chanting of hymns or mantras. Can the scorpion's poison purify her flesh of desire and spirit of ambition?

"May the poison purify your flesh
Of desire, and your spirit of ambition,
They said and they sat around
on the floor with my mother in the centre,
the peace of understanding on each faces"

(Night of the Scorpion, p. 16)

What kind of peace they have? Ironically he says that they have peace of understanding on each face but the (the poet's) mother did not have peace because of the excruciating pain.

K.M. Kole, a poet from Maharashtra is much concerned about the present way of living of the people. He asks:

"Has God sent us
To this bounteous earth
That we may kill each other
As of right from birth?
We should not kill each other but love each other".

He further enquires,

"Had God given us
A heart, to fill with hate
Instead of making it
Of divine kingdom a gate?"

There will be many blemishes and harms and yet the world retains its beauty and charms. He argues that erring and forgetting are human nature.

"Dull would be our world
And intensely boring

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If no one ever erred
Nor forgot anything" ('Our World', p. 6).

He writes that one should never look at parts but the whole mind and heart.

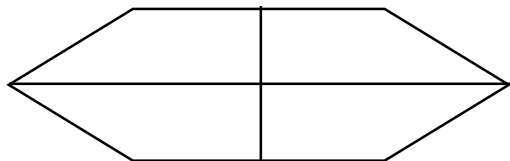
"What kind of love is that
which only looks at parts
And never takes in its ken
Whole minds and whole hearts?"

Now listen to the voice of a poet who prescribes a bomb less world for peaceful co-existence. Nuclear weapons and atomic bombs are not for society's advancement but for destruction.

"Not only destruction they wrought
But also the terrifying after-effects,
Malfunction of the marrow, weakening
Of the eyesight, cancer in the vital
Organs, leukemia too and pollutions.
Can't the world leaders ponder ever
Of a bomb - proof world for amity ever? ('Hazard' in For a Future and Heart's Chair, K. Balachandran, p. 18).

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How I write

Sibelan Forrester

There are three ways (speaking of the experience and how I analyze it now -- perhaps it was different before). First, a phrase or an idea zings into my mind, seems to waken an echo. I sit, or lie, or walk along, holding it in my mental palm, letting it send out its echo, its little sonar, like a bat or a whale calling the other bats or whales (or -- to bugs and plankton). What else accrues to it? Sometimes I can lift the idea, twist it like the paper cone that structures a serving of cotton candy. The melting sugar of whatever else the mind holds flies into spun strands, they can move in several directions. Sometimes it wants to be a multi-part poem; other times the strands seem to fold around the stick in a single direction. (The others would be -- conjoined at the head? Like bunches of baby carrots at a farmer's market.) So then I have this rough and sticky idea: to amount to anything, it has to be written down before the strands melt or congeal, or gather too much dust and lose their attractive stickiness. Often a version at this stage gives a false feeling of satisfaction and completeness -- and once it hits paper and ink looks extremely sketchy, needing lots more stick-twirling to create links and integuments. With a written draft (usually in a notebook: the journal is a perfect place for maybe-drafts, though the back of an opened envelope can be even better, more properly provisional) I go to the computer, with its promise of provisionality even greater than a used envelope temporarily reprieved from the recycling can, and continue to spin. Often this makes a good draft -- sometimes, it even takes shape at this point (rarely, the good draft, then stored in the folder labeled "good," is almost the same as the original scribble: this is usually a reward for discipline, recognizing the import of the snakes who bite their tails in my dream). Sometimes the draft withers, and nothing comes of it -- or one or two living strands (animated sugar!) will reemerge later in another piece.

Contemporary Poetry: Unsteady Dynamics in Essence

Prof. Rafique Ullah Khan

The consciousness or spirit of the society of Bangladesh advances through complex and conflicting experiences from the beginning. Democracy, liberty and the progressive characteristics of the state are the preconditions for the development and advancement of an innovative spirit of a society. But the Bengali had to go through subsequent struggle to achieve these. The basic feature of a struggling human-existence is its spirit of collectivity, or adjacency to its own totality. Even considering the condition of self-dependence for the individualistic development, it can be asserted that the collective spirit is more significant than individualism in Bengali poetry. But basic attribute of the modern poetry is expression of self-dependent individual consciousness. The complex reality in development of middle class in this land, we observe, has various internal inconsistencies. Here in the inconsistency and instability, the poets also have to be active with the whole in the struggle for rights in different times. So, the context of individualistic poetry like Europe has not been created here. The mindset of middle-class shaped within the colonial and dependent economic and production system is basically collective, but indecisive in the question of self-centricity and confronting various difficulties on the way to be self-sufficient or self-dependent.

It was naturally expected that there would open an epoch-making opportunity for Bengali poetry after the magnificent 1971, the sensitive sensibility of poets would be inquisitive to find newer essence of poetry from the experiences of the enormous blood shed in the long struggle, standing on freed and hoisting own flag. Moreover, there were potentials for qualitative changes in the society. But we had to see with surprise that a complex dynamics is introduced in the nature of our poetry; Experiencing the war, the groups of poets representing different ages and streams had arrived at a point in the question of constituents of poetry. This time, the poetry had also attained a collective nature. The

situation got almost the same just after the Language Movement in 1952, but assuming the possibility of emergence of Individualism, many poets then emphasized their own taste in case of articulating his stand on social questions. But the bloodstained consciousness of the liberation war along with individual's sky-scraping dreams, within the newborn state-entity that was anticipated to be brought up under democratization and industrialization, expressed itself with collective feature. So, sometimes, a resemblance as well as unity of consciousness is observed between many poets in the late 60s and budding poets in the socio-political context of that time. The bloodstained impression of life among the young poets immediately after the liberation war, excess expectation and ultimate frustration in the reality of a newly independent country, tendency to leave the usual stream of passion and nature etc coincided. As if many 60s poets shaped the same essence in different forms. They themselves could create their own form and style more matured than the young could, so the distinct verse of the young poets remains unuttered. Even, Shamsur Rahman, Al Mahmud, Saheed Qadree of 50s and most of the 60s had illustrated the same consciousness in their own form. Several number of poets who emerged in late 60s could stir in creating patriotic poetry with dream for smooth collective life and intensity of expression. Among them Sikder Aminul Haque, Asad Chowdhury, Al Muzahidee, Mahadev Saha, Mahmud Al Zaman, Humayun Kabir, Humayun Azad, Sanaul Haque Khan, Mahbub Sadik, Habibullah Sirazee, Zahidul Haque, Aseem Saha, Helal Hafiz are prominent. Though main feature of most of their poems is the struggling desire for life, we observe the warp and woof between the individual entity and collective entity, alien delight of self-centricity, self-conceit, boasting, and alienation ignoring personality. But the inherited consciousness gets insignificant post-liberation war..

Expression without hesitation, contentment from the material change in society and state detached many of the poets among those who came out after the liberation war from the reality. Unlike some of their predecessors, love and struggle simultaneously could not influence them. Rather in a few years disaster in national life, decaying consciousness of liberation war, revolve of the defeated pro- Pakistan outlook, ugly martial law, establishment of autocracy instead of

democracy, reorganization of defeated communality, elimination of the pillars from constitution threw the nation with all its values into dark and uncertainty. In this situation, reaction from the sensitive poets is important to understand the core of the time and the society.

We have to find out characteristics of 70s poetry in relation to the social condition and state-management portrayed above. The prominent characteristic of the poetry of that days is that the experience of the bloody war and competition for self-establishment and expression going parallel. In the meantime, the consciousness at a massive sacrifice had been exhausted. Frustration fast spread as a result of the vision-imagination overlapping the reality. This frustration is not of the 60s' individual but about the collective then - the fresh character of expectations, dream, and its shattering. It is a dimension of class-consciousness, desire for struggle, and a preparation in progress. The ease and linearity with which it is explained here, the transformation of these into poetry had not been done with that degree, rather cumbersome. Few examples can be represented here to clarify. It is worth-mentioning the names of the poets who were introduced next to liberation war, namely, Daoud Hayder, Abid Azad, Shihab Sarkar, Abid Anwar, Bimal Guha, Muneer Siraj, Mahbub Barea, Abu Karim, Mustafa Meer, Hasan Hafeez, Saikat Haider, Syeed Hayder, Saikat Asgar, Rabindra Gop, Shamim Azad, Abu Kaysar, Asad Mannan, Muzibul Haque Kabir, Mayukh Chowdhury. They didn't come into the scene with any particular denial to the preceding stream; even then their world is different. This is not only about the material circumstances, but also psychological. Like-

1. *Flooded away my very village, summer to burn it
Moving from door to door yields no job
Now time to see whether the urban shelters me
Thy hath left the country to live
Come leaving thee, loosing thee. [Daoud Hayder]*
2. *You never get me, only lifeless end of the day
Always illusion of the right of horizon
Twisty dry tongue of your path drop off
Thirsty River misleads you [Abid Azad]*

3. *Universal sun arrives here in this house to set
Gloomy dancing-girl of moon dances on reversed feet
Blood come out of the wall , rust covers glasses
Tire sparrow throws its wings itself at rage.
Some Rimbaud seeks satisfaction in funeral song,
When do I infuse life to this house? [Abid Anwar]*
4. *Unrest Rush in the dance room, fire on the entire stage
The snatched my manuscripts all of a sudden
Sentry to and fro
Later some of intelligence claims the history of my tongue
Why not better cutting my vain? [Shihab Sarkar]*
5. *My homeland crawls in the darkness,
In a new manner, moving the heavy head
This side that side
Walk towards the locality. [Bimal Guha]*

The disordered picture of the uncertainty and adversity of individual mind and the society after the war can be derived from the stanza. Here the frustration from devastated dreams is more intense than dreams. "It is my very sin to be born since the birth" or "Still I get smell of dead-body in the air" are same in terms of pain in spite of the difference in words. The intensity of emotion and pain is realized in the works of the poets of first phase, but the blood stained consciousness of the near past is interestingly absent

Like the 60s poets, the 70s poets knowingly didn't want to give up the positive attachment of life rather incessant appearance the negative aspects defeated their spirit- individual, totality, people, country added the connotation to the frustration:

1. *Veiled the glory of struggle, the cruel sharp teeth of wolves
No joy in life, cultivation in the infertile land
No yearning hope to be hopeful
The aimless age under burning and fierce hood
Our uncertain habitat our burning flicker
[Hasan Hafiz]*

This vulnerability is not personal; rather there is unity among the poets in this aspect- and this is the basic character of 70s poetry. Conspiracy, hostility, bloodsheds starts to happen in the middle of this

decade. Retreat from the history and consecutive elimination of the signs of the liberation war from the ideologies of state threw the social life into continuous darkness. The frustration of poets touches the clouds.

1. *Handfuls of blood shed*
Whose kid die shot?
Hostile homeland, send me in exile. [Kamal Chowdhury]
2. *No need that many flowers*
Quiet, humble life
No need- No need
Need some violent mutiny some strike
Need some heat in blood, some warmth
Need some fire red. [Rudra Muhammad Sahidullah]
3. *As if thunder in blood and sense*
Somebody in the history
Prepare arms
Himself [Mahmood Shafiq]

This protest begets a new consciousness in many poets of the time. They extended the realization in localities- some added the frustration of love to it. The poets budded in the mid 70s are namely- Nasir Ahmed, Halim Azad, Shishir Dutt, Absar Habib, Iqbal Aziz, Sohrab Hasan, Faruk Mahmud, Zahid Hayder, Tushar Dash, Ashraf Ahmad, Taslima Nasrin, Jafar Wajed, Ahmad Aziz, Nasima Sultana, Saifullah Mahmud Dulal, Muhammad Samad, Aneek Mahmood, Mohan Rayhaan, Abu Hasan Shahriar Syeed Al Faruq and so on. Being in the midst of grabbing frustration, the poets of this generation intend to stand and appeal for the heal. The context with content spread for the unbeaten fascination for love by the poets-

1. *The Baul still sleeps in me*
At least once if he were awoken,
As if kissing its own cheeks told like an elderly:
You bathed in mistaken water, Mr.
Sometimes it is worthy washing mistakes in tears.
 [Nasir ahmed]
2. *As if a pure world-peace is grabbing all*
A yellow man sees it standing
Now he feels sleepy

Once again the yellow man would have awoken
before he goes to bed. [Iqbal Aziz]

3. *Now I feel hungry sleepy*
Sweat and blood soak the map in hand
You assured the map would be mine, Why?
 [Nasima Sultana]
4. *Ma is just beside you and me*
Exhausted , Seeks warmth at kid's sorrow
 [Tridiv Dastidar]

We can realize the poetry of this time from the above-mentioned stanzas from different poems. A hesitation and apathy to evaluate 70's poetry is seen in the critics. At the time of arising of this generation, the preceding poets dominated the realm of Bengali poetry. In spite of gravity about the ground of their poetry, denial to the predecessors, gradual sophistication of the poetic language, moreover the collective spirit, competition for self-establishment make the poems of this generation alien, to an extent. But still it should be remembered that they are the representative poets of the brightest and the darkest days of our national life

There is always an admired stream in poetry, with the time attraction for it diminishes. There is a same spontaneous stream here from the time of Michael Madhusudan Dutt to the beginning of the 21st century. Sometimes this type of poetry bearing many components of superstructure may become socially significant. So poems of many popular poets of the first half of 20th century become a matter of research in the question of socio-political commitment. The enthusiasm for knowledge, philosophy, and aesthetics multiplied many times in the mean time in spite of the self- centricity among modern educated middle class distant from state in parallel. So like the refutation to the conventional society and state system, the young mindset starts to loose reliance on the usual pattern of poetry. Magnificent development of science and technology could stir the other underdeveloped stagnant lands though in a negligible pace. The expansion of the western capital in the name of globalization bound the structure of economy and production of dependent countries increasingly. The denial to the practice and beliefs of the predecessors in the long absence of democracy is clear in the feeling and creation of the 80s poets.

These 80s poet expressed the denial explicitly about the characteristics, values, and aesthetics of the forerunners. They got the basis that the inquisition can wound the interior and form of the poem from the poets of 70s. We observe universal thought and latest inventions in sciences than thought and perception from society, new dimensions of using myths, and obligation towards metaphysics, even declaration of spiritual belief simultaneous to pure aesthetics.

We know poem has been the means of intelligence, intellect since the First World War. Initiative to find out psychophysical inconsistency within the society in accordance with the epoch-making findings of Marx-Freud has been the basic feature of Bengali poetry for last three decades, as well. Most of the 80s poets passed through experiences of a bloody war in their childhood and adolescence. Before the blood-signs getting permanence in their sub-conscious, a number of unexpected occurrences happened all the post-war decade. The joy of the victory in the adolescent sensitivity and curiosity, dream for democracy, the aspiration of building the nation altogether faded at this. Mentioning the current national and international affairs often comes inevitably as the background of the poem. This assessment of the experiences normally made the 80s poets search for new content. Khondker Ashraf Hossain, Rezauddin Stalin, Mohammad Sadik, Farid Kabir, Masud Khan, Moyeen Chowdhury, Maruf Raihan, Badrul Hayder, Samresh Devnath, Sarkar Masud, Muheebul Aziz, Mohammad Kamal, Dara Mahmud, Kajal Shahnewaz, Bishwajit Chowdhury, Sajjad Sharif, Shoyeb Adab, Shantnu Chowdhury, Rifaat Chowdhury, Qamrul Hasan, Khaled Hossain, Syeed Tariq, Golam Qibriyaa PInu, Aminur Rahman Sultan, Abdul Hi Shikder, Suhita Sultana are worth-mentioning among those who composed poems exercising philosophy, science and mythology, denying the forerunner's severely, being proud of own new creation. But that there was no poet of popular stream cannot be declared. We can proceed on to realize the philosophy and aesthetics of their poetry walking along conscious analysis of array and classification of their content. At first stage we see philosophy partly, introversion, a peculiar dynamics of science and metaphysics, using from sources of mythology in the poems. For example-

1. *Human being is self-destroying blue creature*

*Once it built the world with its bones from torso
Once it itself would destroy it,
Not God, neither any god nor any stone statuette, not the girl
in the dawn or midnight, neither the fountain nor the vagina,
not any deep sleep, nothing can.
Only human being can break itself.*
[Khondker Ashraf Hossain]

2. *I heard a lot of stories about wall
Now I tell you some story of horizon,
In spite of the by-born tendency
I extended my hands towards horizon.* [Rezauddin Stalin]

We get a touch of their philosophy from these short parts of their poems. The effective component of transformation of modern poetry is Myth (now Post-modern Attribute is added here). Myth is always used in the poems. To create new poem Myth is to be reshaped, there lies the potential of rebirth in every new shaping. A fabrication of Universal Myth and a Native Myth is seen in 40s poetry. Gradually shaping subconscious, horizontal boundless travel of mindset opposing the present, application of heritage according to consciousness, dispersion of the components creates a different wave in the content and language in the composition of these poets:

1. *Alien a rough way of thorns
Who walks along that path- but Radha?*
[Sajjad Sharif]

2. *A dog Leading dog to Yudishthir
Ah, the splendid third harmonics in its twisty tail!*
[Masud Khan]

These poets construct multistory of consciousness in parallel to partial representation from mythical source. The intensity of self discovering and destroying led them to the core of the earth. Basically making context is not important rather representing self defined truth in different contexts. Khondker Ashraf Hossain, Rezauddin Stalin, Mohammad Sadik, Farid Kabir, Moyeen Chowdhury, Shantnu Chowdhury of first stage tends to mature.

First three emphasizes more on heritage, self and philosophy than

form. Spheres of postmodern aesthetics, expansion of self-array, postmortem of traditional belief, unhesitant exposition of human relation, new definition of metaphysics even sometime innovative poetic representation from science, truth and theory is found in the work of the rest. Like-

1. *In the mid night sleeping Kudigram*
Gradually detaches from our usual Earth
Violates all gravity
Then along with its entire little kingdom
Flies toward some distant space [Masud Khan]
2. *Don't kill chromosome of trees*
We wait with a brave triangle
A few cuckoos in the sea beach
Open page of creations [Moin Chowdhury]

The application of scientific context can be regarded as one of the basic features of the poetry of this generation. Not the materiality or the theories, but poets have made relevance between the life-pattern and science. In this respect, science rules the poet, poetry, form and content of Masud Khan. Sometime science enters there in the poet's own nature, sky, space, native, nostalgia, and makes it mechanical. Most of the poets who come into the scene with sufficient confidence in the last decade of twentieth century were introduced basically in the last phase of 80s. The art of the time itself gave these poets a distinct impression. We would find them autonomous, self-conceit at own creation, an intense poetic pride that is little different from the preceding decade. As usual, they bear denial to the usual language, style, symbol, form, depiction and paradigm of early poets; change the contexts in search of new characters. They conserve inherited consciousness in the question of science and philosophy. There are introversion and self-centricity in them as well.

The individual life and mindset is shaped within the society. An interesting change has been introduced in the arena of creativity here in Bangladesh due to the various ups and downs in social life. The instability at the passage of a millennium, external pressure of global capitalism political and cultural hegemony, and internal pressure from native politics economy culture makes the young's mindset introvert. The interior of

the generation is wounded and blooded for apathy to traditional belief, disbelief on shrewdness of the politics and state, disbelief on the traditional values, disrespect to the deeds of the predecessors. Hatred and rage grow at the bloodshed inside instead of tire. This hatred is to the social system, to belief in early life, to the type of disorganization in the social institution. So their self-seeking gets limited within a microscopic periphery. Bratya Raisu, Tokon Tagore, Chanchal Ashraf, Alfred Khokon, Genes Mahmum, Baytullah Qaderi, Zafar Ahmad Rashed, Tushar Gayen, Mahbub Kabir, Masudul Haque, Tapan Bagchee, Sarker Amin, Abu Sayed Obaydullah, Shanaz Munnee, Alaka Nandita, Ayesha Zharna, Kabir Humayun, Pablo Shahee, Khalil Mazid, Qamruzzaman Qamu, Mujib Irm, Mihir Musakee, Rahman Henry, Hezaz Yusufee, Shamim Kabir, Shamim Reza, Siddharth Haque, Shamsul Arefin, Shoaib Zibran, Pratyasa Jasim, Rawshan Zhunu, Henry Swapan can be mentioned from this generation. They are still dynamic in the quest of new form of question-frustration-grief-cry of their own. A big portion of 80s poets takes ancient- history, base land of folk heritage, native and overseas features of the poetry, domain of their nature, search of the existence from womb, wander in mystic art-heritage for the self-seeking and expansion of their thought. Like-

1. *This bird bears message of winter*
The earth's little sister [Mahmud Kabir]
2. *Lamp of shed off, scared bride*
Flies fly away stealing honey
Suddenly a picnic bus holds
Near to an old cave [Qamruzzaman Qamu]

This journey in the ancient memories inevitably brings change in the language of the poem. They strike the artificial urban lifestyle in urban society with the urban intellectuals. They have an intention from the beginning to deny present civilization, urban culture, and arts by formers etc for a sort of outsider perception. Poems of this generation have a mystic appearance also. This is certainly very significant in the dilemma of worldwide spread of fundamentalism and extremism. Also the going together of mystic idealism of The Bengal and articulation of spiritual belief creates a new aspect of poetry. For example-

1. *It was very well known*

We have born from grave to dig it again. [Sarkar Amin]
 2. *The song I sing in every birth-carrying funeral cot*
Alluvial sphere takes away the very body- the flower
Even then the flower blooms again tonight at the funeral song
Petals convey the life
The story is same of the living and non-living.
[Abu Sayeed Obaidullah]

More examples of this type are found from the poetry of this time. It is doubtless that the intensity of self-assessment has changed the content of the poetry in a good extent.

Poems of all ages have particular style; as we know, the language is dynamic like the time. Even then the poets of new generation cannot avoid experiences and style the poets preceding generation. As the human beings have to return to its root, for existence- sometime poets also have to go the source of mythology and formers' collection of experiences. Perhaps still we have to wait a few more in search of new content and form for widespread evaluation of the contemporary poetry.

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A Noiseless Patient Spider

A noiseless patient spider,
 I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated,
 Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,
 It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,
 Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.
 And you O my soul where you stand,
 Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,
 Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to
 connect them,
 Till the bridge you will need be form'd, till the ductile anchor hold,
 Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Muesser Yeniay

Anatomy of Waiting

Godot is a symbolic object of waiting. He is lack of identity and ambiguity.. But here it does not matter at all what/who is waited but rather the act itself. Actually, the object always emphasizes the verb. Waiting is in its own structure is a heavy ,chaotic and a pregnant word. It is towards future and that's why its second meaning is 'to hope'. Waiting by itself reflects a pessimist static atmosphere but with an object it becomes more purposeful and optimistic. In other words it lies from nothing to everything. It is a distance and step which will reach to what is in the future. Perhaps it is the only example of positive-passive act.

It is to make meaningful oneself with those who are waited, to devote time, to fill the gap again with the 'gap'. Waiting is a bit paranoiac and altruist –never a kind of Narcist. It is the way love makes use of. Both is the devotion to an unknown feeling or person without knowing the end. The root of 'patience' is stemmed from that act: waiting. Perhaps the first half is hope and the other is patience. After all, they are taken to be as relatives in semiotics for they are rooted from 'waiting'.

As known, it has various objects: a person waits firstly his own death as a massive reality. One sage says humans are the only creatures who know that they will die and despite that they have to live. Waiting does not have any quantity, it has an open end. It is like to lose oneself in an organized and orderly city or like finding oneself inside the open sea. Everything waits for its own end, as a harsh reality. Perhaps life is a prolonged act of waiting. However, Kafka regard life and death as the same.

Again waiting is a social act, an answer of attitude, in addition it is an intellectual storm a kind of brainstorming. It is a centre of motion where body is silenced and mind is tormented. In a different aspect, waiting is a proof of the senses and that people are quite much sensual creatures for it is always directed to a something outside. it may be eternal but never is it hopeless for a part of waiting is hope. Waiting is to have a helix structure with the thing outside.

Waiting is a consciousness, for example, animals and plants do not wait but just live. The image of waiting mostly looks good on trees and deserts perhaps as the best examples of stability and monotony. But for me, the image of a tree is the most appropriate one since it always looks forward and is upright as if it is waiting for someone/thing thus always standing. It seems to be watching the distance awhile. Therefore, Beckett's tree image is a coherent usage. It is like to be suspended in the air and cannot be torn apart from the ground- a state of waiting, a good metaphor. Waiting is a lack of free will or rather a fate or compulsion and the opposite of suicide if life is waiting.

As to the play, *Waiting for Godot* is the most stingy, melancholic, traumatic, problematic writing I have ever read. *Waiting*, for it does not give any precision, is a state of confusion and anxiety. Kafka, Beckett's favorite writer suggests that certainty is more important than hope. So this is what makes waiting an agony.

The play is an enormous critical work, a philosophical essay in quality. But as we know that literature is the art of symbolic philosophy, all the characters have great importance. Godot for example, the unknown, mystery of the play and of the humanity, is a key personality who/which will solve all the problems at once. He is a persona impossible or improbable. But waiting inhabits in human life, his hometown becomes that point in which he stands and expects from then on. Our eyes are designed not only to see the around but also the distance, far away places, horizons etc. Just like that together with knowing, we expect something. We can say that the source of hope is that knowledge. And hope is the most painful one of those knowledge. In Kafka's *Aforizmalar*, he likens men to Robinson Crusoe in terms of waiting:

"Robinson Crusoe adanýn en yüksek, daha dođrusu en iyi görünebilecek noktasýný, inatçýlýktan ya da alçak gönüllülükten, ya da korkudan, ya da bilmezlikten, ya da özlemden terk etmemiş olsaydı, kısa sürede mahvolup giderdi, ama gemilere ve onların güçsüz dürbünlerine bel bađlamayıp adasýný bapıtan sona kepfetmeye ve onun zevkini çýkarmaya bapladıđýndan bu yana sađ kalabildi ve sonunda, mantýksal açıdan zorunlu bir sonuđ olmasa da, bulunup kurtarıldý"(96).

There is no end. Hope, expectation is endless. This demonic

knowledge, this insolent will to power, this instinct to know more and this consequent downfall of the soul is all connected to Godot. Godot is neither death nor god nor anything but it is the answer why we exist and to the meaning of life. In this important lines Beckett reveals:

E: We are happy. (silence) what do we do now, now that we are happy?
V: Wait for Godot (39).

We think, just like Epicurus, that happiness is the summit and aim of life. But Beckett still opposes and in this time of night, in this darkness, something should be prophesied to humanity: an answer so that we do not starve to death. But one thing that Beckett does not guess is that we are the sole answer, sole light that came to the world. We are both looking for reality and are a reality ourselves.

V: In an instant, all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness!

P: (suddenly furious) Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It is abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we will go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (calmer) they give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it is night once more (57).

The play is a deep philosophic investigation into the ignored nightmares of humanity: nothingness in other words Nihilism, which is to digest that there is nothing real and thus build our own world and reality over. To declare it in Kafka's words: *"Ben yoksunluđumu yoksunluk olarak alýkoyuyorum, bataklýklarý kurutmuyor, onun sýtmalý buharý içinde yaşıyorum"*, (*Aforizmalar*, 97) but basically 'nothing' must be taken just like Beckett states that nothing is more real than nothing which is in paralell with Estragon's statement: "I don't know why I don't know!" (43) *"Geceyarısınýn ýssýzlyđýnda yaşıyoruz, gündođumunu ve günbatımıny dođuya ve batýya dönerek hissediyoruz."* (*Aforizmalar*, 89) The night is a relevant and fitful metaphor for our circumstance and nothingness both in Kafka and Beckett. Night darkens and thus annihilates everything to a nothingness. And our life in this world is an instant light and in Shakespeare's words "The rest is silence" (*Hamlet*, V. ii. 359)

Godot will never come. We should not think so that we wait, he

will come. Nihilism is this world unlike our expectations. We expect because we are in need of a saviour, while this world is a cruel murderer. In Schopenhauer's words: "*natura non contristatur (nature does not know sorrow)*" (Varolmanýn Acýsý, 138)

As to the name Godot, the French name Godillot for slang boot is again a metaphysical metaphor. My idea which I got from the book is that boots signify the effort to survive inside life. All efforts of Estragon's wearing them and off is a strife for life.

E: (turning to look at the boots) I am leaving them there. (pause) Another will come, just as ...as ... as me, but with smaller feet, and they will make him happy.

The boots he wears are those he uses to walk on the paths of life. He claims that since he has more expectations from life, he couldn't be happy as people with smaller feet, smaller wishes. The symbols are chosen so subtly in the play.

P: What is your name?

E: Adam (25)

P: (of the song) Do you know what he calls it?

E: The scapegoats agony. (27)

In other words, Adam is a scapegoat of an unknown power and this life and his waiting is an agony.

E: I am asking you if we are tied

V: Tied?

Beckett personally likes Schopenhauer, Kafka and Leopardi by whom I have included a poem at the beginning. So it is inevitable here not to mention those sage's names. And I often come across, the play is a summary of those writer's works, even the symbols used are similar with Kafka and philosophy with Schopenhauer. A nihilism in common:

E: Nothing to be done. (7)

E: Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful. (27)

E: No, nothing is certain. (35)

This nihilism is what matters. Kafka suggests in this sense: "*Dünya ondan el çekilerek dedi, sonuna dek yapanarak yok edilebilir.*" (Aforizmalar, 21) So in my philosophy, this world is the only answer and chance to us, there is no other. This world is the voice of an echo, body of a shadow. Liberty of mind and soul is Godot himself just as Melbranche's words: "*la liberte est un mystere.*" (Varolmanýn Acýsý, 104)

Shall we go or shall we wait? Shall we commit suicide or shall we live? Shall we refrain from death or shall we...? Let us have an idea what Kafka thinks about this matter again: "*Kimseyi aldatmamaly; hatta dünyayý da aldatýp onu bir zafer olanađýndan yoksun býrakmamaly.*" (Aforizmalar, 36)

V: Let's wait and see what he says.

E: Who?

V: Godot

E: Good idea

V: Let's wait till we know exactly how we stand.

E: On the other hand it might be better to strike the iron before it freezes.

V: I am curious to hear what he has to offer. Then we will take it or leave it.

Like Calderon, Beckett also thinks that men's greatest sin is to be born. And of this sin and breakdown, the German Critic summarizes as follows:

(a) Absence of God, (b) Shrinking of man, (c) World as chaos. So in consequence, hope is a bridge to the external world so that we are sensual and intelligent creatures. Waiting is a walking hope and hope is a knowledge where nothing is known. Life/Waiting can be an extended suicide in Nietzsche's ideology as it is in Beckett's. But for me, life is meaningful more than suicide, than death for it is a means of meanings...

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Stephen Gill on his writings and Diaspora

An Interview by
Dr. Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal

Multiple award-winning author Stephen Gill was born in Pakistan, grew in India and has settled in Canada after staying in Ethiopia and England for a while. He has authored more than twenty books, including books of fiction, collections of poems and literary criticism. His poetry and prose have appeared in more than five hundred publications. He often receives doctoral dissertations from different universities to examine.. He writes mostly about peace and social concerns.

Q. Wordsworth defined poetry as spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Whereas T.S. Eliot went against the emotions and exclaimed: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotions, but an escape from emotions". What is the best way?

A: Poetry is a spiritual and psychic experience. To give shape to this experience, poets need special knowledge in order to use images, tone, economy of words and other techniques. To weave a rainbow of beauty poets select and adjust words in different combinations.

Poetry is neither "emotions recollected in tranquility," nor is it "turning loose of emotions." Poetry is experience that can happen any time with or without reason. One element that is common in both definitions, and in most others, is the presence of emotions. I will call these emotions airy beings. With their tools poets catch the airy beings in the net of their words.

I call these airy beings the robins of my art in my preface to *The Flame*. There I say that these robins are not meant to be caged. They are the birds of freedom. They enjoy their freedom when poets send them to publications or present them in a book for the

enjoyment of the reader.

In my poem *Oars*, I call them "naked creatures of waves." A poet, "clothes them with images /stitched with words" (p. 32, *Songs Before Shrine*). Poets are wordsmiths, who have knowledge and education about the tools that are used to cloth these airy beings in a graceful way. This is an art. A person may be born with a propensity to be a poet, but that is not enough. Propensity or talent is like a raw diamond that has to be chiseled and polished into a beautiful form. In order to acquire the knowledge of chiseling and polishing a poet needs work that I call perspiration. To me poetry is seventy-five percent perspiration and twenty-five percent inspiration or talent.

Q. What are the major themes of your poetry?

A: The major theme of my poetry is peace. Peace is the absence of war or fear of war and bloodshed. My poems about peace are about the definition of peace, in favour of harmony, against war and bloodshed, and to condemn terrorisms. I believe that peace is the legitimate child of peaceful means. I deal with subjects such as war, bloodshed, harmony, human rights, and democracy.

I have written and published poems also in Urdu and Panjabi against terrorism. I have a number of poems on other social concerns, including Aids, children and discriminations.

We are breathing in an exceedingly perilous atmosphere that is deteriorating at an alarming speed. One single factor that is responsible for this impending peril is nuclear warfare, hanging over our heads like the sword of Damocles to destroy us all. Scientists so far have not been able to discover any other civilization anywhere else in the universe. If by any chance the nuclear giant is out, even this single civilization of ours will be wiped out, leaving the sun, the moon and the stars to appear and disappear without any being to enjoy their sight.

I have also tackled the problem of war and peace in my prose. There are several articles to condemn war and bloodshed. I have given talks and interviews on radio and television. Some of these interviews have been collected in a DVD, titled *Interviews of Stephen Gill*.

Poets are involved with many aspects of life, like writing lyrics for songs and speeches for politicians and business executives. Lorca and

Byron gave their lives for the cause of liberation. Among the written documents, *the Vedas*, *the Bible*, and *the Koran* have a great impact on the minds of people. Lately, Pentagon papers concerning the Vietnam War have changed the thinking of several Americans, and a book titled *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stow was partly responsible for the liberation of the slaves in the USA. I hope that my writings about peace will cause change in the thinking of my readers.

Writing is also therapeutic to me. In order to give light, a candle burns itself. That is what a poet does. I write to disseminate my message in an art form. This is a process of burning oneself or going through the pains of a pregnant mother.

I try to use fresh language and images, cautious to use allusions that are hackneyed. Trite expressions are often used in Indian English Literature, such as Ram Rajya, apple's eyes, at a stone throw, a faithful friend, Mother Nature, leave no stone unturned, wear and tear, axe to grind, nip in the bud and many more. These are worn out phrases. Sometimes, original expressions may be obscure to the reader and may prove enigmatic.

I also pay a special attention to tone. Tone is the voice of a speaker that tells if the speaker is angry, preachy, scornful, and so on. Just a simple sentence "I need you," may have different meaning to different listeners, depending on the tone of the voice and if the speaker has a smile or any other expression on his voice. The tone can be understood but difficult to interpret. It can be soft, loud, whispering and even scornful. Tone is the prevailing spirit, or the moral attitude, of the poet towards his reader. A poet conveys the tone in his poems through words and expressions. It is difficult to express it in a poem. In order to convey the right tone, a poet needs revision to select the right expressions.

Art is a way of expression that can assume the shape of visual, performing or literary art. All these arts express culture that can be personal or collective. Expression is life—breath—the palpitation of a nation or an individual. Poetry is an art of expression and expression differs as does the appearance of individuals. When a person perceives an object—beautiful or ugly—it produces a reaction or feelings. Those feelings, reactions or sentiments, are formless. A poet expresses those formless objects in a sensible form. One can use a cliché that is easy

and needs no effort, but there is no inventiveness in its use. One can find new ways and modes to express the object. That needs real effort. That is called individual approach—a distinctive element—fresh memorable piece of art. Such a treatment needs intellectual exercise. A poet has to manage an unmanageable horse of emotions that needs skills, guidance and control to be able to achieve smooth efficient operation of a poem. In order to achieve this object, a poet needs time to work in different ways to bring those feelings out. In other words, it needs revisions. Let me also emphasize that poetry as demanding as any art is. It demands devotion, skill and professionalism.

Q. You have authored a haiku collection entitled Flashes. What are your views about this type of poetry?

A: I became interested in haiku in 1988, when I began to study poets from the point of their form and style. Some of them had been haiku writers. Haiku enamored me as I went deeper in its study, savoring its delightful simple presence though its simplicity is deceptive. By its very nature a haiku is an unfinished poem, written in telegraphic language. A traditional haiku is of three lines, and has definite syllables of five, seven and five respectively. It also suggests a season. All that I can say is that haiku is mostly the bones of an experience or revelation.

For the writers of haiku, the well of imagination never goes dry. They do not have to go to a library in search of material, nor do they have to shut themselves in their rooms to explore the chambers of their minds. This is because the material is right in front of them, even when they look into the mirror.

To illustrate how easy it is to catch these ideas from daily life, I will quote my two haikus: "***Dishes clutter the table / light smiles from above / house is silent***" The above three lines sketch an ordinary scene from ordinary life. This scene from a kitchen suggests a family get-together, when all the guests have gone, leaving the dishes on the table to be picked up for washing. It is late evening, suggested by a light, and the silence indicates that the hosts have gone to bed because they may be tired. They may do the dishes the next day. Here is another haiku of mine:

"Without you / I am a leafless tree / love is the sap"

For haiku writers material is everywhere. They find material even

in the most mundane situations. To them style is a dress as it is for humans. A poet may say that he or she has no problem finding material; it is the choice of words or diction they have to struggle with. For haiku poets such distinctions do not exist.

Haiku entices the poets who dislike original limitations, particularly concerning the use of syllabic versification, reference to season, and terse language. Temperamentally, I cannot develop a love for something that is chained. I like to be free like nature itself. That may be why the wind and dove in various shapes appear in my poetry. Moreover, I do not perceive much creativity in a work in which the poet has to struggle to conform to the established norms. Haiku offers freedom to freedom-loving poets. For them, there are vast possibilities for adopting new techniques.

Distractions do not pose serious problems for haiku poets, though all writers hate them no matter how deeply they are in love with writing. Interruptions are unable to irritate haiku poets because they only need a few minutes to jot down three lines, anywhere, any time. The novelists and poets of other genres may envy haiku writers for this very reason. Even if writers inform the other members of their families not to interrupt them at certain hours, the family may not know what this means because distraction or interruption has different connotations for different people. One way for a poet to make the best possible use of any available time is to get hold of a pocket-sized tape recorder. Inspiration comes as a flash, a revelation. A poet should put it into words immediately. Otherwise, it will fade or evaporate sooner than water does in a tropical country. Such flashes happen seldom. I have lost many gems. In my long drives, I keep a tape recorder within reach to pick up for recording. It is small enough to fit in any coat pocket, and is easy to operate, without even looking at it. Anything recorded can be revised and polished later.

Everyone likes short cuts, no matter where he or she goes. So do writers, to save time. Fortunately, haiku poets do not need these short cuts. Haiku itself is a short cut to writing full poems of several lines. Haiku is one of the oldest forms of poetry and therefore it has had a long time to mature, going through several stages of experimentation not only in Japan, where it was born, but also in the West. Readers can benefit my introduction to *Flashes*, a collection of my haiku and my

web site: www.stephengill.ca

Q. A number of Indian students, pursuing even post-graduation in English fail to comprehend English language properly. This proliferation of ignorance about English language is creating a sort of digital divide, as most of the researches in the field of Information Technology are done in English language. The gulf between the computer literates and computer illiterates is widening because of this ignorance about the intricacies of language. So, should not we fill this gap by teaching the students the minutest details of English language in place of lecturing on a number of irrelevant colonial texts of England?

A: Answer to this relevant question is easy, but the Czars in India will not like to solve it. They are likely to agree with it. The answer would slip their power into the hands of millions of others who aspire to touch the pinnacle of progress. These Czars have studied in English-speaking schools and have the means to send their children to these schools. These schools provide an environment to children in which they can develop self-confidence in early years. They fare much better in universities because of their early education and also compete easily at the examinations for top positions. Because these czars do not want those positions to be made available to everyone, they will not do anything to improve the situation. They may come up with theories. For example, they may say that the economically backward classes have sinned in their previous lives and therefore are being punished. I have discussed the question of English in my introduction to *The Flame*. I am from the government run schools where English is touched at the minimum level. Such schools are useless for India if she wants to compete in the global village of today.

Let me bring out a recent incident. I had a problem with my computer here in Canada. When I phoned Microsoft, I was connected with an assistant in Bangalore, India. When he was not able to solve the problem, he gave me Wednesday to discuss the problem further. I told the assistant that the coming Wednesday was a bad day for me. He could not understand why that day was bad for me. He thought that I was superstitious. It is a North American expression that meant I was busy that Wednesday. But he took it in a different sense. I have

discussed such problems in my novel *Immigrant*. I am sure researchers would find this novel useful. I have the following suggestions:

1. The government run schools should have one or two periods exclusively devoted to the speaking of the English language.
2. At the university level, there should be fifty percent marks set aside for participation in seminar classes. Students should write term papers and present them to the class for discussion.
3. I would suggest that every university should hire at least one foreign teacher for the subject of English.
4. The concept of hiring a poet or writer from an English-speaking nation every year for at least a few months should be encouraged. These writers are available for the students and professors for consultation for their writing and publishing problems. Colleges and universities in Canada, the USA and UK have such programs. These programs not only help students and teachers, but also bring name to the institutions.

Q.What are the psychological problems of Indian diaspora in Canada? Like Ruth in Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale', Indian diaspora must be "in tears amid the alien corn", as they harbour the memories of Indian past and are not completely acclimatized to new culture.What are your ideas about this traumatic experience of Indian diaspora in Canada?

A: The story of Ruth that John Keats mentions is from the Old Testament in the Bible. Ruth married a man from Judea, more or less Israel now, in her homeland Moab where he moved when his country was attacked by a famine. After the death of her husband, Ruth, still childless, moved to Judea with her mother-in-law Naomi. The days of famine were over. The story of Ruth has been recorded in the Bible because of her unsurpassed loyalty to her mother-in-law who was Jewish. Ruth told her mother-in-law, "I want to go where you go and live where you live. I want your people to be my people and your God to be my God."

In Judea, while gleaning the barley harvest, Ruth met a man named Boaz, a relative of Naomi, who owned that field. He was captivated by the beauty, modesty and piety of Ruth. They fell in love and in due course of time got married. She bore a son that Naomi took

care of. That child was the progenitor of Christ and great grandfather of King David. This happened about three thousand years ago. In that field Ruth thought of Moab, her homeland. It is notable that it was her devotion to her mother-in-law that was the ruling factor in her decision to migrate to Judea.

There was another diaspora before Ruth and that was soon after God created the world. That was the first Diaspora in the recorded history of the Bible. In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve and gave them a beautiful place to live, called the Garden of Eden. He allowed them sovereignty over everything, except over a particular tree. They violated the commandment of God and tasted the forbidden fruit of that tree. As a result, they were forced out of that garden to work hard for their living.

Diaspora in Hebrew means exile (*Jeremiah: 24:5*) that is "expulsion of a national from his country by the government or voluntary removal of a citizen, usually in order to escape punishment." (*The Columbia Encyclopedia*). Diaspora has been mentioned in the Old Testament also as punishment. In Deuteronomy xxviii; xxx11, dispersion of the Jews among nations is foretold as punishment for their apostasy. In the book of Deuteronomy (28:25) it is written: "thou shall be a diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth." The Jews were exiled from Judea in 586 BCE by Babylonians and Jerusalem in 135 CE by the Roman Empire. They travelled with their own luggage. Their dislocation, homelessness and memories of their homeland were part of the Diasporic sensibility. Sufferings in a new land under a new rule and geographical conditions and inability to go back were the important features of the Diaspora of the Jews.

Jews suffered in the 20th century when the Nazis came to power in Germany and set up concentration camps for their torture. Around seven million Jews were killed. Even after their homeland was formed, their sufferings did not come to an end. It is estimated that around 90,000 Jews from Arab countries dispersed to different parts of the world, mostly to Europe and North America. The present use of the word Diaspora about Canadian writers who were not born in India is loaded with confusions. Its overuse or loose use conflicts with words like immigrant, refugee, visitor, racial minorities, ethnic groups and so

on. Some writers include nearly every one who was born outside the country and talks about the country of origin. If diaspora is analyzed in the light of its original use that was for the Jews and even the major diasporas of non-Jews, it becomes necessary to include the elements of alienation, loss, forced migration, memories of the past and a dream to return to the land of birth. It may include also the unwilling acceptance of the host country.

An important factor has been brought out by *Food and Culture Encyclopaedia* that says, "A key characteristic of diaspora is that a strong sense of connection to a homeland is maintained through cultural practices and ways of life. Among these culinary culture has an important part to play in diasporic identifications." Any immigrant group from any nation who uses neither Indian dresses nor enjoy any Indian food on a routine basis should not be identified as Indian diaspora. Food habit and language are the key constituents of diaspora. Some immigrant writers cry over discrimination in Canada, whereas the fact is that there was no discrimination in the country of their birth that forced them to settle abroad. They had no problem as forced exiled people have. Their tears in Canada are of a political nature. They enjoy shedding tears because there are sympathetic ears to listen to them. Sometimes, it helps to receive awards from governments on the basis of sympathy.

Book publishers are in business to make money. They look for sensational material that is available in India at every corner. They also guide their authors how to sensationalize particular stories. The authors of such books are not there as prophets or on any mercy or peace mission. They also want to exploit situations. The result is exaggeration in the novels of such fiction writers to make them interesting. Such descriptions should not be confused with memories of their past in India. Diasporans in history had diaries in which they recorded the hard life in the lands of their birth. They often talked and wrote against the laws and prejudices in the land of their birth. Because those factors were responsible for their exile, they attacked them. Being from the majority or financially and educationally stronger groups in the countries of their birth, these Canadian ethnic groups did not experience discrimination in their homelands. That is why there is nothing worth noting about discrimination in the writings of these Canadian immigrant writers.

They hardly know India and therefore cannot write, except about the caste system and things like that in general.

Second generation children should not be included in the category of diaspora. The new generation cannot be nostalgic about the country they only hear, read or see on the tv screens like any other country and any person. If their children are the outcome of mixed marriages between different ethnic groups, they should not be called diasporans. Such children cannot stay in the country of their parents more than a couple of weeks. Ruth was a diasporan also because of her affectionate memories. But her son who was born and brought up in Jodea was not a diasporan. He had nothing to be nostalgic about. He may have had soft corner for the country of his mother, and nothing more than that.

The immigrants who go abroad in search of green pastures cannot be Diasporans, because they are free to go back. Suffering from the mania of petrodollars, they search for an El Dorado of prosperity for themselves and their children in Europe and North America. Inability to go back and unwilling acceptance of the new country were also important factors that constituted the original diaspora in the history of humankind. The diaspora of the Jews, Armenians and African slaves have set criterion that these ethnic newcomers to Canada do not meet.

Under a close examination of the definition and origin of Diaspora, most ethnic writers of Canada are not diasporans, because their knowledge of India is based on the movies and news items from the media. Their knowledge is not better than the knowledge of several whites who for one reason or the other are interested in India. Considering the barometer that is used here, most immigrant writers of Canada should not be classified as diasporans and their literary output as diaspora. Moreover, they are not "in tears amid alien corn". Modern India is an awakening giant after a long slumber. Some AfroAsian or AfroIndian writers of Canada want to be associated with India that has a long tradition to welcome everyone. Association is one thing and to be diaspora or a diasporan another.

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Bruce Adkins

Short Story

CHOIR BOY

Alvin Frisco was still celebrating his graduation from high school when his National Guard Unit was activated and ordered to report for duty.

“You mean I’m in the army now!” Alvin asked his mother. “But Mother, I don’t want to be in the real army. I’m going to college. I don’t want to go to Iraq. I only joined the National Guard because Chuck Davis did.”

Indeed, the news shocked Alvin so bad that late that night he packed his bags, wrote his mother a farewell note and went next door to Chuck’s house to tell him goodbye.

Chuck, short and muscular, just the opposite of Alvin who was tall and skinny, couldn’t stop laughing. “Are you going to Canada, Choir Boy?” Chuck asked.

“I don’t know, man. It’s just that I don’t want to be in the real army. I’m not cut out to be a soldier, you know?” Alvin said.

“You scared, Choir Boy?” Chuck asked, standing on the steps of his front porch.

“Like, yeah, a little bit, I guess.” Alvin said.

“You quit your high school football team. You quit running the marathon last year. Now you want to quit the Guard because there’s a war going on,” Chuck said. “Now you want to run away and hide.”

It’s true that he quit the football team because he never got to play in a game, Alvin thought. It’s also true that he dropped out of the City Marathon last winter because he didn’t train to run a 26.2 mile race. For those reasons, Alvin thought, he didn’t deserve to be called a quitter. Moreover, he didn’t like being called Choir Boy, even though it was widely known that he was a Christian and a singer in his church choir.

Alvin got as far as the bus station that night before he changed his mind about leaving. God has a plan for my life and I guess I’m meant to be in the National Guard, Alvin concluded. He went back home ashamed of his behavior and resigned himself like Chuck, to be a soldier in the

33004 Infantry Battalion of the U. S. Army. Ten days later he reported with his unit to Fort Geronimo, Texas for active duty.

At Fort Geronimo, a large artillery training center, Alvin didn’t see much of Chuck, who had been promoted to the rank of sergeant and assigned to another regiment. The training, while grueling, was for the most part uneventful. Alvin was on the go from sunup until sundown. His days and nights flew by and before Alvin knew it his worst fear was realized. He was headed for Iraq.

Like most of the men in his unit Alvin had a hard time adjusting to the hot desert land called Iraq. The summer time heat registered 130 degrees. It was so hot Alvin sometimes worked up a sweat lacing up his boots or brushing his teeth. He wondered why God would allow him to be sent to this disgusting place.

But on his third day there he was reunited with Chuck and being with his long time friend again boosted his morale and made his life bearable. Unfortunately, it was only a few short weeks later when Alvin, Chuck, and Staff Sergeant Calvin Turner while on patrol duty got lost from their unit and their truck was hit by some type of explosive.

Alvin awoke in a ditch about 20 yards from the road. He lay face down on the hot earth. His nose dripped a steady stream of blood, his head ached, his knee burned and his mouth stung with the taste of sour vomit.

It was dark, but a bright moon illuminated the ground around him. Where am I, he wondered, while coughing and spitting gook out of his mouth. I’m not dead, he thought, holding his head. Where’s Chuck? How long have I been lying here? Alvin asked himself.

In the distance he could see flickering flames like that of a trash fire in the process of burning out. It was the remains of their truck, Alvin thought. What happened to my gun, and helmet, Alvin wondered. He tried to get up, but fell back down. He staggered to his feet, dizzy, panic stricken, searching for reality.

“Where’s everybody? Is anybody out here? Alvin called out. He hadn’t walked very far until he ran into Sergeant Turner. His face was covered with blood, his eyes were wide open and his tongue was hanging out the corner of his mouth. Alvin reached down and shook Sergeant Turner’s shoulder. “Sergeant Turner, are you alive?” Alvin asked. “You can’t die out here all by yourself.” Alvin sat there with his head down trying to stop the flow of blood and tears that ran down his face. Alvin

had never seen a dead person before except at the funeral of his grandfather when he was eleven years old.

Alvin took off his fatigue jacket and used it to stop the flow of blood. He thought he was all alone, but as he staggered around in the dark he heard moaning that sounded like a frog croaking. Before he knew it he almost stumbled on a body that was crawling on the ground in front of him.

“Chuck, is that you!” Alvin exclaimed. “Thank God you’re alive, man. Are you badly hurt?”

“I can’t move my left leg and my back is killing me,” Chuck said. “Have you seen Turner?”

“He’s dead I think,” Alvin said. “I don’t know what happened to us. Do you know, Chuck?”

“I think,” Chuck said between groans, “we must have been hit by some type of mortar or maybe ran over a mine.”

“Really, man,” Alvin said, holding his head again.

“You better get out of here before the insurgents find us,” said Chuck. “They’re around here somewhere.”

“They are,” said Alvin.

“I think it’s less than 20 miles back to the unit. Just head down that road,” Chuck said, motioning in the direction behind him. “Hurry and you might make it before it gets daylight.”

“I can’t leave without you. You’ll die in this heat if they don’t shoot you first,” said Alvin. “I’m not leaving without you.”

“Don’t try to be a hero, Choir Boy. Go on, get out of here. I can’t walk and there’s no way you can carry me 20 miles.”

Alvin took off his boots, rolled up his pants leg and examined his burning bloody knee. He squeezed the back of his head hoping to ease the pain. Finally, he removed all his sweaty upper garments and sat there with his bare chest shining trying to decide what to do.

With a super effort Alvin removed Chuck’s excess baggage and hoisted him up on his good leg. He then locked Chuck’s arm around his neck and slowly they began to move in the direction of the road. “Leave me here, Pvt. Frisco. That’s an order,” Chuck said, but his voice was weak and Alvin paid little attention.

They soon reached the smooth surface of the road where the remains of their truck were scattered in every direction. They paused to survey the damage and wondered how they survived such a disaster. Alvin,

barefooted and bare-chested, had to feel his way at first, but with the aid of the moonlight, he soon got acclimated to the lay of the road.

The land before them was flat, desolate and without a sign of life. While leaning heavy on Alvin for support, Chuck managed to hobble along, dragging his limp leg as they went. Mile after mile they staggered and stumbled down the long desert road. Their journey was slowed only when they encountered a pot hole in the road or when Alvin paused to switch shoulders for Chuck to lean on.

Oh, what I’d give for a cool drink of water, Alvin thought time and time again. In an effort to divert himself he began singing. “*Onward Christian soldiers, marching off to war.*” Alvin sang. “Come on, Chuck, sing with me,” Alvin demanded.

Arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder and with Alvin leading him, Chuck joined in and their voices rang out together.

*Onward Christian soldiers, marching off to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before!
Christ, the royal Master, Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle, See his banner go!*

“You sing great,” Alvin said. “Keep it up,” but Chuck wouldn’t sing anymore.

“I hope we’re going in the right direction,” Alvin said, but Chuck made no response. “How much further do you think we have to go?” Alvin asked, but again Chuck wouldn’t answer him. “When your leg gets well are you going to run the City Marathon again next year?” Alvin asked.

Finally, after a long silence Chuck raised his head. “Sure I am,” he whispered.

After that all conversation ceased. The only sounds were the occasional groans of Alvin and the steady moans of Chuck. It seem like time was suspended as they continued their long struggle on and on through the night. But at one point Chuck slumped forward and became dead weight in Alvin’s arms. “Shoot me, Alvin,” Chuck said. “I can’t go on. I can’t stand this pain.”

“I can’t. I don’t have a gun,” Alvin said, and they both managed to smile.

After a brief rest, Chuck’s moaning stopped and his body gave up its last bit of resistance. “Are you dead?” Alvin asked, bending over him.

Chuck, flat on his back, opened one eye and tried to smile. “Almost,”

he whispered.

Alvin's pants leg kept rubbing against his sore knee and was a constant source of irritation. Standing up Alvin took off his pants and flung them aside. Tall and skinny, with only his shorts and dog tags covering his body, Alvin picked up all 140 pounds of Chuck and carried him in his arms.

With Chuck in his arms Alvin struggled forward about 50 yards at a time before he had to rest. "Chuck, are you ok?" Alvin asked at every rest break, but Chuck never responded. But still, he knew Chuck was alive because he could feel him breathing.

Alvin's skinny legs remained steady, but his feet were lined with blisters, his head and arms ached and he wondered how much longer he could keep going. Sometimes, he thought it would be better to just lie down and die.

"Lord Jesus," Alvin began. "You said you'd never leave me or forsake me. Well, me and Chuck could sure use your help right now if you're willing?" Alvin pleaded. He wondered what heaven would be like. He wanted old Chuck to go there with him. He loved old Chuck and always did, he decided.

"Come on," Alvin yelled, grasping Chuck in his arms with renewed energy. "We're in a marathon and I'm not going to quit this time. We're going all the way back to the outfit. We're going all the way to the finish line. Come on, Sergeant Davis," Alvin said, slapping the face of Chuck's limp body. "You can't quit on me now. Where's all that bravado you're so proud of?"

With tears gushing down his cheeks Alvin kept up his pep talk. "We're not quitting. We're not quitting. WE'RE AMERICANS AND WE DON'T GIVE UP,"

Alvin cried aloud.

His shorts, wet with sweat, slipped down over his buttocks. The stench of his sweaty body made him want to throw up and he could hardly maintain his balance. That's when he discovered he was no longer on the road. He had wandered off in a barren field. I'm lost in the desert, he thought. Then, he lost his grip and Chuck slipped out of his arms and they both fell headlong on the ground a few yards below the opening of a small bridge.

Alvin awoke sometime later when a convoy of trucks was passing on the road above him. It was daylight and the sun was shining in his

face as he raised his aching head towards the sky. He heard voices, but he couldn't make out what they were saying. As the voices became louder he realized they were speaking English.

"I still can't believe the Red Socks beat the Yankees and won the World Series," he heard a man say.

"Hey," Alvin yelled. "HEY," Alvin yelled again, while trying to negotiate the small incline that led to the road. The convoy stopped and three Americans fell out of the back of a truck with their guns drawn.

"Don't shoot! I'm an American," Alvin screamed, raising both hands while exposing his nearly nude body. "My buddy, Chuck, is down there," Alvin said as he was rendered first aid. "He needs your help more than I do."

That was the last thing Alvin remembered until he woke up in a hospital in Germany. Besides being dehydrated, he was diagnosed with a slight concussion, a dislocated shoulder, a broken nose and badly damaged feet.

Chuck, with a blood pressure reading of 62 over 42 was barely alive when he was rescued. He had a broken back, some damaged vertebrates, six missing teeth and other multiple bruises. It took 48 hours before the doctors decided he would live.

Alvin and Chuck were congratulated after it was determined how they survived their 15 mile hike back to their unit. But it was a week later before Alvin saw Chuck again. Chuck's face was bandaged, his neck was immobilized and he had tubes running down his nose.

"Is that you, Choir Boy?" Chuck asked. "Can't I ever get rid of you?"

Alvin was sitting in a wheel chair in front of Chuck's bed. His hair was combed neatly in place, his face was all scrubbed up and shiny and he couldn't stop smiling. "When are you going to get out of that bed and start training to run the marathon?" Alvin asked.

"We already run a marathon, Alvin," Chuck said, trying to keep the emotion out of his voice. "I didn't think we'd ever make it to the finish line, but you wouldn't quit and thanks to you, it looks to me like we won the race. I guess I ought to take back all those things I said about you being a quitter," Chuck said.

"That's all right, Chuck," Alvin said. "I never did hold it against you."

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Kama Sywor KAMANDA

Short Story

The Celestial Wife

Many years have gone by since the events of this story. . .

It's the story of an ambitious man who longed to find a wife who would be different from all others: his wife had to be holy. So he wandered the world looking for such a woman, taking with him huge chests full of brocades, of pagnes, and of perfumes in order to convince the woman he found to be his bride.

To tell the truth, there were plenty of women, but he could never be sure that they were holy. And besides, there was always some detail or other that made them seem ordinary. Finally he had to give up and return home, deeply saddened not to bring back the wife he wanted.

As he was crossing an unpopulated region, the wind began to rise, whipping up a blinding sandstorm. The path was obliterated in an instant, the countryside disappeared under a black dust in which hundreds of leaves were spinning madly about, and the sky and the earth became as one.

The young man tried vainly to find his path. He walked on blindly, pushing aside the thick dust with his hands. The gusts did not abate, and sky stayed dark. Anguish gripped his heart as he struggled along. There was no end to the deserted countryside, and no shelter was within sight. It was terrible!

So he continued for a long time to walk through the sandy wind that moaned continuously all around him. But finally, in the distance, a dark mass stood out and he headed toward it. Soon he made out a small solitary house with a fire in the hearth. He was much relieved and decided to ask for help in the house in which someone apparently lived. So he walked up and knocked at the door, and an old woman came quickly to open the door for him. Dust covered his hair and his clothing. The helpful woman proposed immediately that he take a bath, and he wasn't slow to accept. Then he was served a copious meal.

Scarcely had he finished eating than the door of one of the bedrooms, closed up until then, opened slowly. A girl appeared, and she

was ravishing. But as lovely as she was, she was equally unusual. Her hair was as black as the night of the ages; her soft velvety skin was like a violet petal; her eyes shone like diamonds in sunlight. The young stranger thought she was splendid, her garments embroidered with fine pearls and her hair wrapped in a veil of sky blue silk.

"This is my daughter," his hostess said. And she continued, "We are waiting for the storm to end so that we can return to our land, where no humans can follow. So once calm has returned, we will leave you."

Already smitten with love for the girl, our friend immediately asked for her hand in marriage.

"Since you are so insistent," said her mother, "I'll give you my daughter for life. She will take such good care of you that you will never want for anything. But in no case must you ever make her do manual labour. A shooting star shines only once. As for my daughter, she can give her love to a mortal only once. If you are willing to respect these conditions, I agree to give you my child."

"I will respect them!" he exclaimed in a strong voice, thinking about the happiness he would enjoy with his ravishing companion.

"But remember," the mother repeated. "The day she undertakes the slightest manual labour, her heart will crumble, and all that will remain will be a little sand on the surface of this immense earth. Never will you be able to find her again."

The suitor promised everything she required, for he was overjoyed at having finally found the spouse he was seeking. And for years the exceptional young woman thought of everything her husband could desire and he never wanted for anything. Indeed, even all his whims were satisfied. Thanks to her, he became rich and lived a fulfilled life.

But things never stay as they are. One fine day the couple went to visit the husband's parents. And there things began to go downhill. His in-laws weren't pleased to see the young woman spend all her time doing nothing. So they quickly came to hate her. Complaints, criticisms and mockery were widespread in the village and the gossips didn't hesitate to proclaim to everyone that the fellow was an idiot to keep a wife who wasn't useful for anything and spent all her time preserving her beauty.

So, one day, her eldest sister-in-law asked her to do the dishes.

The poor misunderstood woman begged her not to insist, but her sister-in-law was furious and began to insult her:

“You lazy bum, you are good for nothing but to be taken care of by others. You can’t even wash a plate. I wonder what use an idiot like you could be!”

Hurt to the quick, the poor woman began to weep. Her pain was real and deep, for she knew that the day that she would yield to the demands of those ignorant people would be the day she would leave her beloved husband forever. She knew however that she had no reason to blame herself. In her quiet modest way, she had brought him happiness and wealth. So it pained her to see her in-laws mistreat her this way. After all, she had obtained the largest fortune in the region for them. For the first time, she began to feel that her end was near. In despair, she begged her husband to bring an end to the misunderstanding, but because he was under the influence of his family, he begged off. Indeed, what was more serious, he even took their part, strangely forgetful of the promise he had made to her mother long before. From then on she knew that she would soon be leaving the earthly pleasures of her peaceful life as a wife.

Her suffering was especially keen when she realized that the person she had devoted herself to no longer believed in her or in his vow.

Evening came. It pained her heart to think that it might be the last evening of her wonderful married life. She scarcely felt alive and began secretly saying her goodbyes to everyone and everything around her. Deeply grieving, she sat down at the table for the evening meal. Her heart began to beat loudly when in her trembling voice she announced that she wasn’t hungry. She took leave of her parents-in-law and nearly burst into tears at the sight of their stern faces. When she got to her room, she collapsed on her bed and her tears began to flood.

Outside the wind was whistling forebodingly. Soon all was quiet in the house and everyone was sleeping except the lovely bride who was wanted to breathe in one last time the perfumes of forest under the starlit sky. An eternal night, a night without dreams and without hope. The next morning the provocations continued and became even harsher. The mother-in-law, who was sifting grains of corn in a sifter to separate out the dust, had called each of her daughters in turn to come and help

her. But they had all refused, insisting that their lazy sister-in-law needed to do the work.

Her husband wasn’t there, and the lady hesitated. But since the mocking and the discord were unceasing, she resigned herself to the task:

“Dear mother, since your daughters no longer are willing to help you because of me, give me the corn and I will pound it.”

Her mother-in-law gave her the grain and pointed out the place where the mortar and pestle were kept. The young woman set to work. She pounded the corn in the mortar to the rhythm of her own breathing, sighing at each blow. It didn’t take long for hot sweat to stream down her face and for her graceful hands to be covered with pearls of blood. And as she crushed the grain, she sang a strange melody:

“Of sacred lineage am I;

One of the goddesses

Damned by earthly union.

My hands are sweet, slender flowers

To be caressed with love and tenderness;

But they wilt under servile tasks. .

My soul is dying, victim of my pain.

May cruel fate quickly come

To accomplish my deliverance!”

Her lovely voice was so filled with melancholy that even the earth quaked and the sun disappeared beneath the horizon. An eclipse suddenly plunged the whole world into terrifying blackness. At this the villagers were truly afraid and hurriedly took refuge in their homes. Even the birds stopped chirping. The only sound vibrating across the sky was the bitter lament of the immortal bride. When she wept, the storm thundered and her abundant tears dug out the beds where our rivers flow to this day.

She stopped singing her sacred song for a moment. Her body had already sunken into the earth up to her waist and was turning to dust. Her haunting refrain reminded her of the man for whom she had left her family and her world, sacrificing her high station and undergoing unheard of torments. Then, she resumed inexorably her sad melody:

“I am of a sacred line

belonging to the family of goddesses

Whose blood is drying up, disappointed in love.

My hands are sweet and fragile flowers
destroyed by roughness
And faded by unskilled loving...
My soul is dying, victim of my pain
May cruel fate quickly come
To accomplish my deliverance!

By now, the earth had swallowed her up to her neck. Sadly, her ebony skin, so fine and diaphanous, was changing into blackish clumps of earth as she disappeared. Just as her husband returned, she began her song for the third time.

But when he rushed up to the scene of the tragedy, her incantation was over and nothing was left of his lovely wife but a small mound of dust. Like a shooting star, she could only shine once. And so she was scattered as fine sand. At that moment, the sun reappeared. Its colourful warmth caressed the red earth that now included the dispersed remains of the vanished beauty. The husband wept hot tears at losing his wife like that, but his tears were in vain.

The unfortunate woman had vanished for ever.

But tomorrow, go look at the ripples in our streams and rivers, the most crystalline ripples, the ripples that shimmer with sadness in the sunshine. For they are the tears of all those goddesses whom love has disappointed..

(translated by Lauren YODER)

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I'm nobody, who are you?
Are you nobody too?
There's a pair of us, don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know!
How dreary to be somebody!
How public like a frog,
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Short Story

Anu Rani Devi

The Setting Sun

“Hello, 9954289560?” “Is it Aparajita Goswami speaking ?”

“Yes, Aparajita here... who is it ?”

“I'm Abinash. Remember we met while returning from Dibrugarh?”

“Yes, of course I remember.”

“How are you? Where are you at present?”

“I'm fine.... Where are you now?”

“I am at Christianbasti. It would be better if you can come early... Ma will be worried if I am late.”

“O.K. I will be coming just now. I will be grateful if you wait for sometime.”

Switching off her mobile, Aparajita glanced at her watch... it was 6.30. Did she make a mistake asking Abinash to meet her? She had met him on the train while coming back from her sister's place in Dibrugarh. She had gone to Dibrugarh after a long time at her sister's insistence. She had first met Abinash at the station, on her way to Guwahati. They were sitting in the same compartment facing each other. Abinash's eyes compelled her to introduce herself. On a sudden impulse she had even given him her mobile number.

Suddenly, a motor bike came and stopped near her... Aparajita lifted her head to see Abinash. She could immediately feel a sweet sensation running through her body. He looked extremely handsome in a white shirt and a black trouser. After talking for a few minutes, she invited Abinash to her house and he readily agreed to go. Coming home, she introduced Abinash as a good friend of hers, to her parents, brothers, and her sister-in-law. She did not feel bored talking to him even after two hours; in fact she couldn't even realize how time flowed.

As days passed by, Abinash's phone calls and SMSs to Aparajita

began to come frequently. Abinash's interest in her gave her a new lease of life. The girl who had lost interest in life and had depression as her only companion, now eagerly waits for Abinash's call. What was happening to her? She had never felt like this before. Abinash's job at a certain medicine company didn't leave him much time for love. But he still managed to send SMS or ring her up and sometimes to irritate her even sent missed calls. Aparajita, who used to switch off her mobile at 10 O' clock at night, was compelled to keep it on the whole night, in anticipation for Abinash's call. Aparajita felt thrilled when he rang up at twelve or one at night. She used to spend sleepless nights, dreaming of Abinash. She found something special in Abinash. Was it love? The question arose in her mind. She was deeply attracted by his eyes and his words too. But would Abinash accept her as his own?

The phone was ringing; looking at the number Aparajita knew it was Abinash's call. The next day being Shivratri, Abinash had nothing special to do, so he wanted to go to Kalakshetra with her. She readily agreed. She had not visited Kalakshetra for a long time. She had heard from her friend Nita about the new things there. Nita had asked her several times to go to Kalakshetra, but she had never felt like going. But now she readily accepted Abinash's proposal.

Next day, wearing Abinash's favorite blue colored salwar suit, Aparajita went to Kalakshetra on Abinash's bike. To Aparajita, Abinash seemed to be more romantic that day. She clung to him as if she was in need of security in her life. After reaching Kalakshetra she got off the bike, smoothed down her hair and approached the gate holding Abinash's hand. Walking along the road for some distance Abinash suggested that they should sit down. Aparajita too agreed.

The day had been damp since morning. It might rain... the cool wind made Aparajita shiver. She was sitting quite close to Abinash. Abinash took her hands in his and asked, "Aparajita, don't you want to know about my past?" Aparajita looked at him and smiled, "What is there in your life that I should know?"

With a damp smile he went on talking about his first love Rupali. But he said that relationship did not last long. After getting a job at a reputed company in Guwahati, Rupali went away leaving Abinash

behind. The day she left for Guwahati, Rupali embraced him, made many promises with tears flowing her eyes. But she didn't keep her promises. After a year, Abinash too got a job in Guwahati. He was overjoyed at the thought of meeting Rupali. But Abinash was perhaps too late in coming to Guwahati. During his absence Rupali had changed a lot. She started moving around with her boss till late at night. Abinash tried to stop her but he was insulted for interfering with her personal life. Soon Rupali went out of his life and Abinash became extremely lonely. After meeting Aparajita he once again started to take interest in life, hoping that Aparajita would take Rupali's place.

Aparajita heaved a sigh after hearing him and consoled him by saying that it was nothing as every one has some sad experience in life. "you have told me about your sad experience, now listen to me and try to feel what my life went through", she said to Abinash, "if we had met five years ago my life would have taken a different turn. Then there would have been no need to this talk. Five years ago I got married to Prabal..." Aparajita continued.

She couldn't even think of the terrible life she had with Prabal. She thought she would have a happy married life with Prabal who had been her parent's choice. But all her dreams shattered when she married Prabal, who was a total stranger to her. She had never imagined that an ever-smiling and bubbly girl like her would thus lose her smile after her marriage to Prabal. Aparajita, who was doted upon by her parents and brothers could never think that Prabal would deceive her in such a manner. What would Prabal, who had weighed life in material terms, understand the dreams of her life? After five years of bitter experience with him Aparajita almost made up her mind to leave him but she could not do it.

Many of her well wishers advised her to divorce him but Aparajita kept hoping that Prabal would turn over a new life. "man makes mistakes," Aparajita thought, "he would be God if he doesn't make any mistake." But her hope was not fulfilled. On the other hand, Prabal obsessed with metros, mobiles, automobiles and cigarettes never tried to understand her feelings and emotions.

While lying with Prabal on the same bed in the same room, Aparajita spent sleepless nights crying bitterly, praying to God for justice.

God finally gave justice to Aparā—Prabal left her for ever. Sudden attack of high fever took Prabal away from her. Aparā cried bitterly not for losing Prabal but for losing five valuable years of her life. Since then no one from Prabal's family tried to contact her. Aparā looked at Abinash wiping her tear-filled eyes.

Abinash remained silent. Shaking him by holding his shoulders Aparā said, "Abinash, please say something."

But Abinash still remained silent ... the expression in his eyes reveals his unwillingness to accept her. Aparā could understand everything from his expression. She felt that she had made a mistake telling him about her past.

Abinash repulsed her after he had heard about her past whereas after hearing his past she felt like loving him more. How cruel he could be, probably more than Prabal.... Abinash, who had come quite close to her without knowing anything about her life, now chose to remain far behind. Aparā removed her hand from Abinash clasp and went staggeringly towards the gate.

The sun was about to set then. She felt as if the setting sun was beckoning her and was saying, "Aparā, come to me." But she whispered with a lopsided smile, "I have no desire to be a second Kunti."

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Aunt Helen

Miss Helen Slingsby was my maiden aunt,
and lived in a small house near a fashionable square
Cared for by servants to the number of four.

Now when she died there was a silence in heaven
And silence at the end of her street.

The shutters were drawn and the undertaker wiped his feet-
He was aware that this sort of thing had occurred before.

The dogs were handsomely provided for,
But shortly afterwards the parrot died too.

The Dresden clock continued ticking on the mantelpiece,
And the footman sat upon the dining-table
Holding the second housemaid on his knees-

Who had always been so careful while her mistress lived.

T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)

Errol Scott

Short-Story

The Well- Mannered Thief

After his parents died, Hiro took over the thundering tofu home business and instantly it burst into flames. He had been unable to parlay his rust-removing skills into tofu-making success during the three interim days between their deaths and his own economic disaster. On that third day, he stood amidst the fiery ruins of a spectacular failure. Even his medicine had been melted in its case by the sink. He had nothing left, except mice and last memories, both clasped to himself.

Hiro's final purchase before the fire had been a glittering ring, a ring of longing. After the tofu inferno, however, his treasure was nowhere to be found. The last remnants of the sunlit medication eddied and receded from his bloodstream; Hiro's fog wrapped about him again – and he saw instantly that she had taken it.

Though he had never mentioned it to anyone, there was no doubt that the untrustworthy neighbour-woman next door had bewitched his beloved into her home. He could hear it calling him. He went to it directly.

The blue gem set in yellow had reflected all light in Heaven it had seemed. Of earthly wonders that snare the soul, surely none can dispute how unbearably beautiful plastic can be. Hiro had spent two days' earnings to own such a beauty. It took much negotiation to persuade the curbside gemologist to part with it. In the end, Hiro must have charmed the cart jeweller's defences away: the reluctant beauty was his. To this shining ring Hiro had transposed all the medicated joys and blurred bumps of a stunted, infinite childhood. To find his ring would be to recover the life he had lost.

Hiro had been raised in a good family. He knew to bow to

elders lower than they bowed back; to take his shoes off at the front door before the little entry-way step-up, to kneel like a jack-knife, and to pound soy beans very, very hard. Hiro's special job in the good family business had been to find the rust sports—locate and eradicate—all evidence of grime; for thirty years no dirt in their home-kitchen 'factory' had escaped him. The father had said little, but he had always ruffled Hiro's hair and let him choose a flower from the back garden for his pocket.

Though the rust-bits had quaked in Hiro-terror, not so the well-fed mice who adored him. Cleansed vermin-free tofu factories are mandatory, as reputation is everything. One mouse rumour guarantees extended loss. Their tofu-kitchen had held the new poisonous peanut butter-flavoured glue strips that stuck rodents to paper, where they slowly starved to death. Hiro had dumped rust scrapings onto the strips, just as he used to accidentally kick pebbles into the old metal snapping traps. The grey mice had trailed him ecstatically throughout each day. The father's myopia had grown worse. Life before the inferno had been good.

Hiro now went straight up the stairs of the next-door neighbour's house that he found on the other side of town. He knew his beauty was under a futon in the closet. Futons live in closets during the day and are just the place to store missing jewellery. How foolish she was to have picked such an obvious place. He blinked disbelief and rummaged in blankets.

He didn't hate her; he just wanted his ring back. A well brought up thief would return a ring that did not belong to her. But not this one; this one had kept it. She couldn't wear it or she would have been caught. It had to be here in her house. There was simply nowhere else to put it. Hiro stiffened as he heard her footsteps re-enter the house and pause at the bottom of the stairs' he heard a child's voice entreating from the garden, and more footsteps away. He exhaled and rummaged faster.

If he was caught, accused, and his innocence unheard, he could always apologize. He remembered a man who killed a bosozoku, a type of moped-riding gang member that blasted along streets. The grey man had gone into the streets pre-dawn, lulled by silencer-free

mopeds and knocked a boy off his bike with a two by four plank; the boy had died instantly. The man apologized to police who did not charge him. In truth, they understood, there was bosozoku in their neighbourhoods too. Furthermore, the old man had apologized—with remorse.

Hiro reasoned his ring search was hardly as serious as murder, or even murder for such an honourable and defensible reason as this. He could say he was sorry, and the police would free him to return to his still-smoking tofu remains. (The neighbour called the child back from the stairs to her unfinished garden chores.) But no, he concluded, he would not, could not apologize.

It was his ring (that he hadn't found) he would insist. The next-door neighbour should apologize to him! Look at her guilt—sneaking her house around on the other side of town. He was rightfully regaining his own ring, and with it, the remains of his heart.

But no such devices would be necessary. Hiro's fumbblings rewarded him. There, snoozing in a blanket corner was his beauty, and more radiant than ever. The stone was white, the band had become heavy with exiled sorrow, but a soft golden heat revealed its identity.

Beneath Hiro rose cries of bowing cavalry at the door. Their socks threatened the stairs. He laid a pale pocket flower in the blanket's hollow, flickered out along the roof tiles and, treasure in mouth, thudded to earth. He strode gloriously back to his tofu coils and his mice.

The lady in question had called the police when she realized there was an intruder. She had found one extra pair of shoes at the front door and knew at once, knew with all certainty, that a well-mannered thief had entered her home.

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The Death Defying Water Escape

By Gary Lehmann

His mother, Cecilia, knew him as Ehrich Weiss, her impatient middle son, a boy who was deathly afraid of the water after nearly drowning as a child. The world knew him as Harry Houdini, the man who escaped from a locked box chained and lowered into a watery grave. Each time he made the stunt more dangerous.

Houdini sent his mother a train ticket so she could watch him do the water escape. He put her up in the best Rochester hotel. She held her hands over her mouth the whole time.

After being strapped into a straight jacket, he was nailed inside a coffin and lowered slowly into the Genesee River. The crowd held its breath for almost 3 minutes.

With a dramatic splash, Houdini floated effortlessly to the surface with a smile. He emerged from the freezing water and ran over to give his mother a kiss.

Reporters rushed in to ask how he felt having conquered the dead defying water escape. I'm just glad Ma was here to see it, Harry said, but there was something missing.

To his adoring public, he represented the America that gave them all a narrow escape.

By the boatload they came from poverty, prejudice, punishment, and deprivation.

But Harry felt empty, I felt like a child taken to the railroad station by mother. Mother manages to get aboard, but before my eyes the train leaves with mother on board.

The day he got word of her death, he fainted dead away and cancelled the rest of his tour. He hurried home to sit by her grave, until the urge to tempt fate overwhelmed him again.

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Poetry

AAMIR AZIZ

An Outcry upon Determined Human Supplications

What are these sounds in these wild dunes?
Where man moans along several shadows of his
On being fettered by invincible strings of fate.
His surrender is a quasi-self abuse here
His improvisations; childish self deceit.
Here only sad lullabies greet, amuse
And stay prone at the peaceful threshold of calm.
Better thousand folds those celibate pleasures
Than marriage to a whore of varied smiles and faces
Whose qualified avowals of love mock our trust.
But this yoke of flesh and soul is destined
To dart together despite native hostilities
Till men shall be eccentric critics
Of notorious pyramid of being, nemesis and revival
And pronounce themselves as no man or every man
To inspire awesome laughers
At the denouement of their tragedy.
Men's masculine gaities, women's feminine charms
Both wither in hoary infest of depletion and decay.
Scorn is for tradition of this sarcastic fable
The personae of which pour mud on themselves and laugh
And often invite classic brawls to pretend ignorance
From the estranged aura of their world
Which offers nothing for the fruition of human fantasies.
True, vulnerable were we being human, but
Suicidal silence will rule on these stoic lips
Until guillotine of fate swerves uninformed
To furnish an honourable exit
From this enduring farce of the best Playwrit.
July 2006

[Address : PhD Student, Department of English Literature, Pallas Institute of Art
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BHAGYALAXMI LENKA

VOID

I am a stump of a tree
My feet stuck to the ground
as always;
My gigantic boughs
and foliage
kiss the sky.
I am powerless
So as to generate
even a tender leaf;
I pity myself,
Life's moments are
as though my tattered parasols
Made of palm-leaf card boards.

I am a stump of a tree
Inefficiencies my wealth
Flowers, fruits,
leaves and
the cacophony of birds,
Are all things of the past;
I know;
But the past was felling
But now it is a void.

Hopes, dreams, possibilities
The irrepressible thirst to live;
After all these are over –
Some thing remains
Which is the stump,
Void is whose sole hope.

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CHRISTINA LOUISA BINNS

Clean

Poe,
I did know,
In yonks gone bye,
And hee would never
Blackem my
Eye,
Because his aim was clean,
And never obscene.

[Address 8 Westerly Rise, Armley, Leeds LS12 2LW, England]

CHRISTOPHER BARNES

On an otherwiselent Night

This peace camp's backwoods,
The fold-away bunk's
A patchwork
Or a dream.
Game-preserve thistles shudder
And tow know-nothing men.
My thumbs stranglehold
A time-lost issue of Spare Rib.

On Brenkly St.

An element given as Adrian
Rakes up the eternal feminine.
The bathroom filament pops
Owing lustre to the porch.
A cobwebbed brothel-creeper soughs its struck dumb mouth;
A walloping cuss of suede.
There are no tabbies
Hissing on the wall's arc.
Nightfall is not musical,
Cosmic dust an unromantic pulse.
In half a mo,
As chatterers now and then say

(bearing the potency of circumstantial time)
Jimmy
(whose clan is good-for-nothing)
Emerges dazzling,
His excellent crotch
Gives heart to his wish-washed jeans.
As he airs along summer flagstones
A just-out adventure
Is spun in the stars.

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DENIS KOULENTIANOS (Greece)

The Baptism

Nobody asked me
if I like be a Christian
even of the Greek Orthodox Church.
A right decision may be.
The only thing which annoys me
Is that way.... Nobody asked me !

When

Full of mistakes
My day-program
My night-program
A sinful, too.
When should – I dare,
O my Lord, face life
In a simple, natural
And without a program way ?

Together

God lives inside us all,
His beloved creatures.
We may some day
Die with Him....

HARISH THAKUR

The Unrest

At four
there is a flurry of steps
on the zebra crossing
the dead veins of the granite road
become live.

Tall shadows
of this city
darken the limed path
the forayed ways
that direct the rush of wheels
towards the halts
of nothingness.

There is a new speed
that the fire of passion
and the heat of starvation
has evolved,
wheeled legs
and couched hips
broil in unrest
and the moist arms of this city
the breakers and zebras
raise humble resistance
but to fall.

Life sticks to rites
under the whirls of death.

[Thakur Building, New Totu, Shimla-171011]

HRUDANANDA PANIGRAHI

Fallen Tree

Sinks down
on the pavement;
The tree,
once agog
with green charms,
Manya chirping
of golden birds,
Could silence
the throbbing hearts;
Tree or a feast for
soul's lust !
Ah,
A corpse today
Being silently metamorphosed
Justifies car-wheels cacophony
Over the mute,
Silent heart's cover.

[Translated from original Oriya by Prof. Nimain Charan Patnaik]
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JAMES M. NORDLUND

Living Sylvan

As "The Rainbow Phoenix Waterfall",
I rise, seeing it, painter, life.
A palette, the heart of her art,
Given, Gyokka, "Jeweled Flower",
Gleaning in the eternal stream,
Is alive in our being.

Her brush is so, flowing as ague,
Filling, uplifting, releaser,
Released, blood of earth and us;
Freeing, freed, phenomena universe.
She arises from her lack of ash.

Rivers of rock speak of a slower
Ascent to sky, Diamond Mountains,
Korea; her canvass moving this pen.
Umbra and verdure, fecund,
Enlivening, is love, balance,
Compassion, source; the rainbow'
Gift, rounding cliffs, for,
We do not know the whole
(Inspired by Lillian May Miller's paintings.)

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JOHN BINNS, the Bearded Bard

To Tesco

I will go
Out again,
To tesco,
By mi sen

[[8, Westerly Rise, Armley, Leeds LS12 2LW, England]

KAVITA JINDEL (U. K.)

Patina

I have wrapped up the hurt
like a betel nut in a betel leaf
sugared it
tucked it under a stone
Thereâ•™s no weeping to show for it
Under the stone
the sugar melts
runs red with betel juice
Stripping and polishing the core
Giving it patina
to be appreciated
by a collector of antiques.

Exploding Happiness

No flashes of yellow
slashes of purple
or dashes of blue
No dizzy fainting
no black spots
allowed
No rashes of red
splashes of green
clashes of orange
No simpering
no pink blushes
allowed
If you say the word
What would I do?
Amazement
not allowed
to show inside or out.

[email kavita@jindals.net; scribbler@jindals.net]

LJILJANA MILOSAVLJEVIC (Belgrade-Serbia)

Holidays

We sit by the window
The time has elapsed
Days gifted
from secrets
at the bottom of the pocket
Full moon
The life rolls
I'm leaving a candy
on your soft palm
We comprehend in silence
I have nothing to add
Everything's in your eye

Don't Smother the Fire

Crickets
have eaten the moon
halfway
Through leaves
the wind moves furtively
My soul wavers
I wish
I could scream
to the sky
To wake up
from the numbness
To break
the flat platter
of life
Stop
Turn around
Don't lock, your heart
Don't smother the fire
I've been waiting
for you
<mis05@verat.net>

MICHAEL LEE JOHNSON

Willow Tree Night and Snowy Visitors

Winter is tapping
on the hollow willow tree's trunk—
a four month visitor is about to move in
and unload his messy clothing
and be windy about it—
bark is grayish white as coming night with snow
fragments the seasons.
The chill of frost lies a deceitful blanket
over the courtyard greens and coats a
ghostly white mist over yellowed willow
leave's widely spaced teeth-
you can hear them clicking

like false teeth
or chattering like chipmunks
threatened in a distant burrow.
The willow tree knows the old man
approaching has showed up again,
in early November with an
ice packed cheeks and brutal
puffy wind whistling with a sting. (2007)

Mindful, Mindless, October Date

Mindful of my lover
running late, as common
as tying your shoestrings;
I'm battered as an armadillos shell;
I put my bands around my emotional body
armor native to myself and walk like a stud
in darkness.
Everything in October has a shade of orange you know—
a hint of witch and goblin.
In the leaves between my naked feet
and toes, as I pace my walk in the parking lot,
I count them—
I count them color chart fragments and bites:
oranges, reds, still mostly greens.
Barefooted the time of the tears, the year fragmented.
I am male battered in a relationship
tested without my testosterone
no sexual rectification or recharging
of my batteries needed.
I lie limp.
Native to myself—
mindless of my lover running late.
Then she arrives. (2007)

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MARYSE SCHOUELLA (Brazil)

Escrita

Writing is a respectful communication,
A fabulous space,
An encounter with oneself,
A deep knowledge of the,
Inner-Mind and the pleasure,
To communicate heartily.

Life

“Life is a game,
Rules don't make the game dull,
They make the game possible”
Life is a constant growth,
Life is a blessing, taste it,
Life is a challenge, face it,
Life is dynamic and a pleasant duty,
Life is a gift, live it,
Life is luck, make it,
Life is precious,
Life is a struggle, accept it,
Life shows its' talents,
Life is life: fight it.

Diplomacy

The strategy of diplomacy,
Is a long process of knowledge,
Involving,
Its' affect,
The hearing,
Flexibility,
Generosity,
Sense of humor,
Liberty,
Its' models,
The programmes,
The qualities,
And above all the,

Patience,
To transmit,
The Power and the,
"Savoir-faire",
For all kinds of,
Relationships necessary,
In the Self-Growth,
Following a universal alliance.

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01224-020 - São Paulo, , Brazil] <maryse@osite.com.br>

SWETLA DOVRAMADGIEVA (Bulgaria)

1. Resonance

When souls
 lead the way,
it is but they
 that first may skin
their knees.
 But then the pain
 will breed an aim
 and make our gait
 more daring.

2. Insight

Not often human souls
 are so alike
as to feel suddenly attracted
 at first sight –
 no sooner have they met
 than they are setting off
along a common path.

3. Reflection

While the body is clumsily walking
the soul is soaring high
 searching for the answer –
 struggling to arrange
 a short-lived harmony.

[email : swetlatod@abv.bg]

TATJANA DEBELJACKI (Serbia)

TO FORGIVENESS

This is not a puzzle,
A tree of life,
A model of virtue,
A diary of a chronicle,
A harsh neighbour,
A drizzle,
A flower of oblivion,
A tall willow.
Wake up,
Sleepy butterfly
Aroused by urge,
Coward!
You left me with a bird of paradise,
like an arrow, right in my heart.
With a glass - half-filled with wine,
With a storm of words not said...
I gave you the night,
The verse gave you a bud.
Oh, you, bitter and sweet
Ecstasy.

IS THERE

Somebody is breaking branches?!
From midnight till dawn.
A forest is trembling inside of me.
My trees are innocent,
longing for milk, firm hands and
the smell of boiling heat.
I am drinking up mint tea.
I bring over aimless serenity
and flowers for the vase.
When I look at it, it is never the same.
I tend to believe in the breeding of wonders.
Is there a flame to turn the sky
into ashes?
Are there any hands to pick up my ripe apples?

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