

A red circular logo with a white square in the center containing the text "Literary Cocktail Magazine".

Literary
Cocktail
Magazine

LITERARY COCKTAIL MAGAZINE

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO
CREATIVE WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING, ART, AND PHOTOGRAPHY

A white circular graphic containing the text "SPRING ISSUE 2023".

SPRING
ISSUE
2023

Volume II
Issue I

Find a sanctuary for your
creative soul

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About Us

Hey folks! Let the creativity spill . . .

Let us be intoxicated by the uninhibited creative energy and let it overflow . . .

Life is a cocktail of emotions and we are here at the *Literary Cocktail Magazine* to let you all spill forth those deep feelings, emotions, deliberations or observations. Realistic, abstract, imaginative . . .

anything that has touched your soul or made you think/ write or click/sketch/paint, we encourage you to submit.

We publish two issues of the *Literary Cocktail Magazine* every year- the spring and the fall. WE VALUE DIVERSITY and are open to submissions from ANYONE, from ANY PART OF THE WORLD.

Editorial Team

Megha Katoria

Megha Katoria is a creative writer, a content/video creator, an editor, and an educator. Her writings have been published in various print and online platforms. She has been associated with various institutes and organizations as an Assistant Professor of English/Communication Skills/Soft Skills. In the media industry, she served as an Assistant Editor for newspapers. A liberal thinker, bibliophile, nature lover, and YouTuber, she is in love with all creative pursuits.

Anil Sharma

Anil Sharma has been associated with many Multinational Corporations and has held various leadership roles. Though his work keeps him occupied, he has never severed his passion for photography and reading. His knowledge of Indian mythology is vast and he is an enthusiastic technology freak.

From the Editor's Desk



Dear Readers,

Greetings to you all!

The balmy breeze,
The buzzing of bees,
The merry chirping of birds,
The seamless antics of butterflies,
The lush green landscapes,
And blooming flowers . . .
The symphony of spring,
Brings us together . . .
Yet again, to revel in the joys of spring . . .



The Spring Issue 2023 of the *Literary Cocktail Magazine* is out in this wonderful time of the year. We are indeed excited to share with you all the thought-provoking and contemplative works of talented creative souls from around the world.

This issue features a plethora of themes exploring the simple yet intricate patterns of human existence and nature. We hope that each piece stirs your emotions and makes you appreciate the creative spirit of our valuable contributors.

We truly value our contributors and readers. Any deliberations or comments can be shared with us through the mail (editor@literarycocktailmagazine.com). We also encourage you to submit for our upcoming issues.

Megha Katoria



W Roger Carlisle

W Roger Carlisle is a 75-year-old, semi-retired physician. He currently volunteers and works in a free medical clinic for patients living in poverty in Alabama, USA. He is on a journey of returning home to better understand himself through poetry. He hopes he is becoming humbler in the process.

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After the Pandemic

Many older actors and artists who had created
so much were dying. I went for walks and read books.
I was a man without a routine or a place to begin.

The weather was hotter
and more extreme, just like my inner landscape.
A good friend stopped calling. My wife became distant.
A woman I hardly knew called and made amends.
The obituaries revealed more deaths from suicide and alcohol.
The culture seemed to be spinning out of control.

An unending argument began,
which might have meant an important shift
in the zeitgeist was about to occur.
No one seemed to be paying attention
or ready to hear the message.





Lynn White

Lynn White lives in North Wales. Her work is influenced by issues of social justice and events, places and people she has known or imagined. She is especially interested in exploring the boundaries of dream, fantasy, and reality.

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Spirits

All that is solid
melts away
in death
consumed by fire
or worms
transformed
into so much dust.
Only memories remain.
And the spirits,
of course,
the ghosts
of what we were.





Petrouchka Alexieva

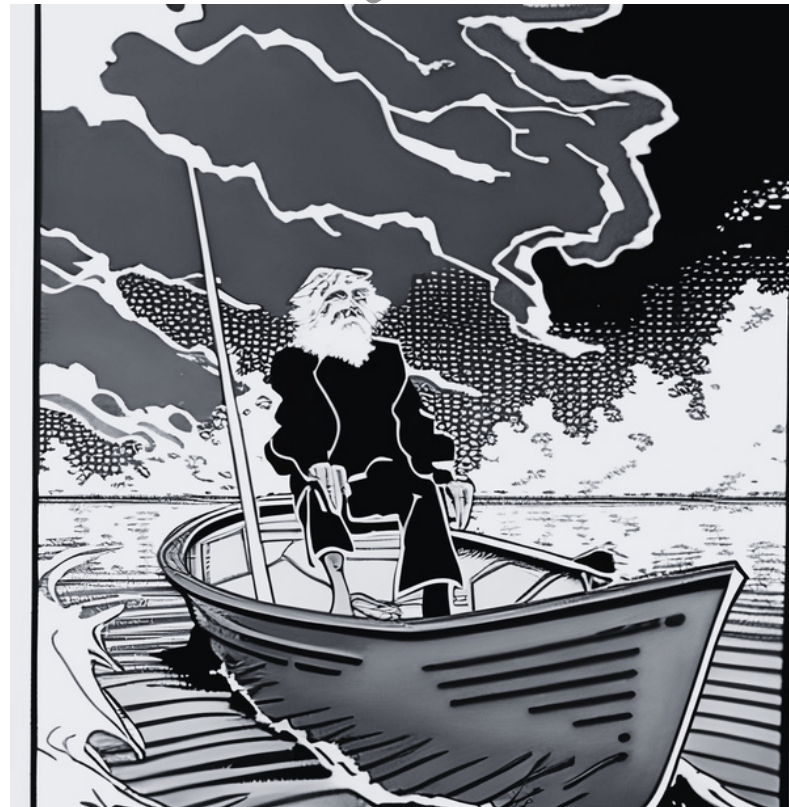
Ms. Petrouchka Alexieva is well-known as a love poet, distinguished scholar and TV persona. Her first poem was published when she was in high school. She is a socio-cultural anthropologist, with emphases in ethnomusicology. Her poetry works are published broadly in UK, India, Germany, Bulgaria and USA, as well.

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"Most of my publications, open mics and other social issues are mentioned on FB under my name."

Father's Heart

Black warning flags wave on the wind
Sirens sound loud on the shore.
Big thunders roar far in the sea.
All fisher boats are rushing back home
Only one is sailing towards the storm.
The old fisher man stares with hope
That he will get just on time,
To help his son and pull the trawl
Before the clouds bring the dark.
No storm can scare the father's heart.





Evie Groch

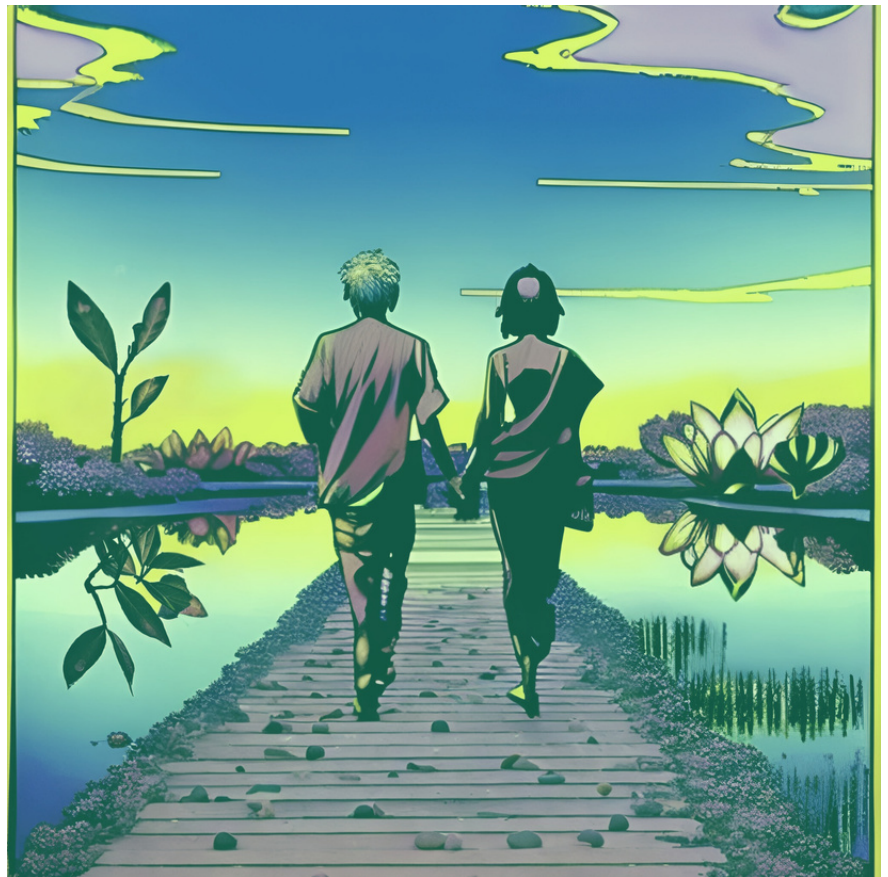
Evie Groch writes opinion pieces, humor, poems, short stories, and memoirs, which have been published in the New York Times, The SF Chronicle, anthologies and online magazines with the themes of justice, travel, and immigration. She says, "I am an immigrant to the USA, having come from Eastern Europe."

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Where Learning Lies

Off the main road
in the pockets of slopes
between seams in fields
we tread with caution
on uneven paths
pounding gravel
with soles of sturdy sandals
We seek not the din
but the deserted decibel
not the force
but the fictive footnotes
We avoid crushing fauna
swerve around the lounging lizard
let lotuses lie on peaceful ponds
We inhale succulent scents
exhale warm breath
spot camouflaged chameleons
bask on sunlit stone slabs
Wildflowers welcome us,
birdsongs greet us.
We saunter back to the road home
enter into evening
with a renewed sense
of belonging, recognizing
a new tenor in our being,
knowing better who we are





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library

books
for free
and access
to the whole world

~~~~~

beholden to dreams  
as community we share  
it is a place to go where  
we can dignify

~~~~~

desires for
everyone
to have
hopes
making
this shared
planet of ours

~~~~~

a much better place  
than trendy dystopias  
or foolish utopias  
that could never be

~~~~~

cause people ain't
any point
perfect
works



Mark A. Fisher

Mark A. Fisher is a writer, poet, and playwright living in Tehachapi, CA.

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antibiotic

it
was poison
yet they found a way
to prosper in deadly ground
their mycelium spread out
dragging the poison
along with
them

Scott Thomas Outlar



Scott Thomas Outlar is originally from Atlanta, Georgia. He now lives and writes in Frederick, Maryland. His work has been nominated multiple times for both the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net. He guest-edited the Hope Anthology of Poetry from CultureCult Press as well as the 2019-2023 Western Voices editions of Setu Mag. He is the author of seven books, including *Songs of a Dissident* (2015), *Abstract Visions of Light* (2018), *Of Sand and Sugar* (2019), and *Evermore* (2021 - written with co-author Mihaela Melnic). Selections of his poetry have been translated and published in 14 languages. He has been a weekly contributor at *Dissident Voice* for the past eight and a half years.

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More about Outlar's work can be found at 17Numa.com

Manic Adoration

O God, I want to be overwhelmed
by something sweeter than
the sour grapes
of harvests past
by a symphony sung
from the lips of a choir
that has cast out all sirens
by a single shot
of adrenaline
not manufactured in a lab
O Lord, I wish to be consumed
by the maddened cry
that heralds laughter
beyond sorrow's edge
by the howling scream
of a righteous wind
come fiercely
by the final plunge
into a vast expanse
promising vistas unparalleled





Erin Jamieson

Erin Jamieson holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Miami University of Ohio. Her writing has appeared in over 80 literary magazines, and a poetry collection. Her latest chapbook, *Fairytales*, was published by Bottlecap Press.

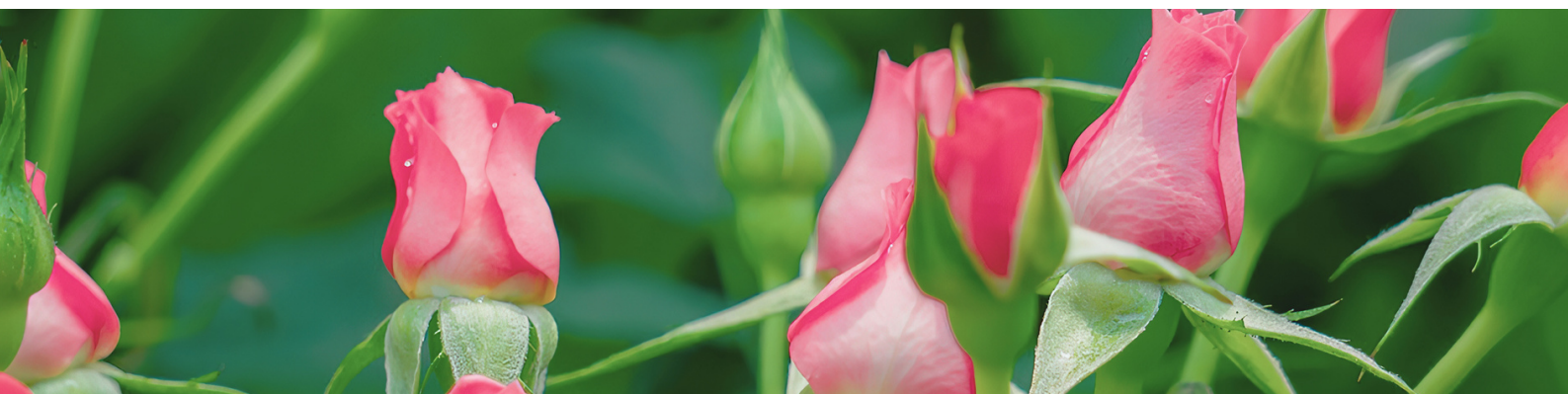
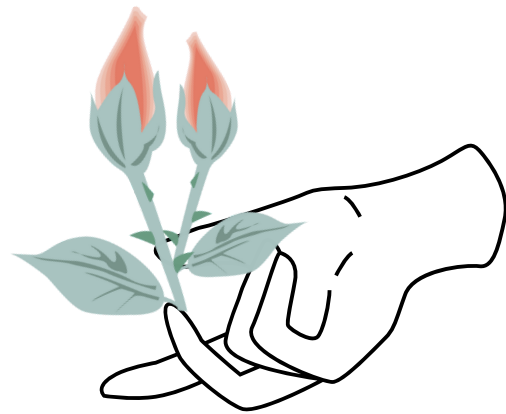
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Pluck

I pluck rose buds
from your garden
careful to ruin
every little trace
of your beauty
in full bloom
before I noticed
the chill in the air
the subtle way
you glanced past
as if I was a leaf
soon to blow away
and leave you
& your garden
Immaculate





R. Gerry Fabian

R. Gerry Fabian is a poet and novelist. He has published four books of his published poems, *Parallels*, *Coming Out Of The Atlantic*, *Electronic Forecasts* and *Wildflower Women* as well as his poetry baseball book, *Ball On The Mound*. He lives in Doylestown, PA.

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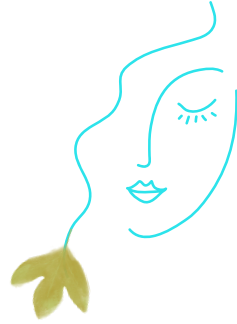
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Sassafras Leaves

Her smile is a waterfall
in the midsummer heat.
It splashes and sprays
from her inner current.

Always refreshing
in constant intensity,
she is never a marker of weather.

Totally natural,
she could be hydroelectric.





Larry Schug

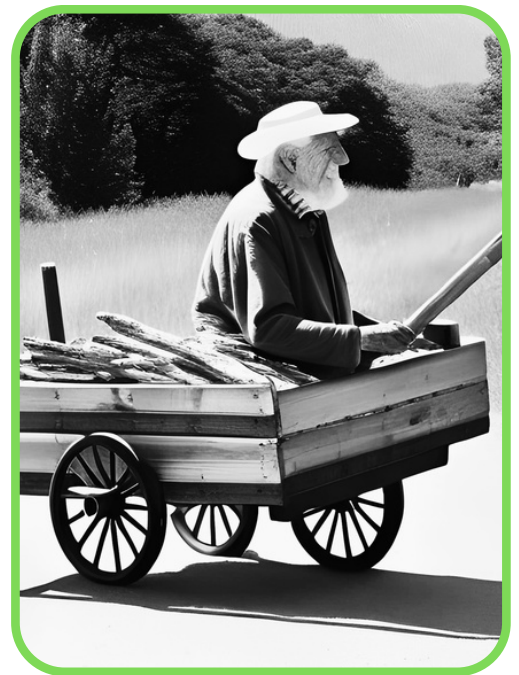
Larry Schug, author of eight books of poems, lives with his slim wife and fat cat beside a preserved tamarack bog in St. Wendel Township, Minnesota.

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Crone

My hair, white as wizened milkweed fluff,
and still I know nothing of value to anyone
Born like everyone into a televised world,
old songs in my bones cry to be sung
inside the song that is the only song,
the song that hums within a blade of grass,
a drop of dew clinging to a spider web,
the song left when a wolf's paw sinks in soft snow.
My skin, the color of a shifting sand dune,
eyes the color of blue jay feathers,
I leave my cardboard nest and walk the streets,
pushing a shopping cart full of driftwood,
offering a piece of flotsam to each passerby,
though few accept my gift.
I leave them to find their own treasure.





Judge Santiago Burdon

Judge Santiago Burdon is a Chicago native, now living in Costa Rica. He is the author of six books published by three different presses and has had his short stories along with poetry published in over two hundred online zines, magazines, anthologies, and podcasts.

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Laughter Trapped in a Scream

The diamond in her wedding ring has lost its glimmer
Gone is the sparkle that once danced in her eyes
Left with a basket overflowing with laundry
Every memory a thief that has robbed her smile
A hostage of irresistible misfortune
She keeps telling herself it's a bad dream
The sink full of dirty dishes
her laughter trapped in a scream
She stares out the kitchen window
sees a future of muffled thunder in broken skies
Her conversation with silence disrupted
By the sound of the baby's demanding cry





Jean Hackett

Jean Hackett lives and writes in San Antonio and the Texas Hill Country in the USA. Her Chapbook *Masked/Unmuted* was published in March, 2022.

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Conceived among Forgotten Flowers

Memory is a daisy
flattened between my mind's pages,
too precious to momentarily savor,
so plucked from context,
archived and forgotten
to fade into crumpled nothingness,
unless unbidden it should surface,
demanding I layer it
within tissue paper similes
torn from other half-remembered truths,
creating depth and perspective enough
to give birth to art.



Genevieve Aguinaldo

Genevieve S. Aguinaldo lives in Los Banos, Philippines with her husband and four children. She enjoys nature walks and coffee time. Some of her works appeared in *Shot Glass Journal*, *Scarlet Dragonfly*, *Cold Moon Journal*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, and *The Fib Review*.

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Scents

That morning after
they called to say
that they could finally visit
My nose started to itch
I longed to smell them
and to remember how
when I was a child
It was a game to sniff
and try not to laugh
I tried to remember
so I could mask the months
that we were not together
My father
smells of cigarettes
which he used to ask us to buy
from the sari-sari store
in secret
"Just six sticks will do,
and here's five pesos
for your chocolate Stick-O"
My mother
sprays perfume
on every item she owns
on her fan, on the tangles of her hair
on her pillow
on my pillow
"A lady should always
smell of flowers," she says,
"no matter how cheap
her perfume is"
I remember our trips
to the mall to buy imitations
of her favorite brand
exchanging empty bottles
for a discount
As I hug them tightly
I finally knew
what forgiveness smells like:

the last three puffs of cigarettes,
and a bouquet of lilies and lavenders,
enveloped
in the saltiness of the sea





Allison Grayhurst

Allison Grayhurst is a member of the League of Canadian Poets. Five times nominated for “Best of the Net,” she has over 1375 poems published in over 525 international journals. She has 25 published books of poetry and 6 chapbooks. She lives in Toronto with her family. She also sculpts, working with clay.

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Immersed

This shift is gracious
like a runaway found and comforted.
Disguised as an axe-lop,
as a callous reduction of earned respect,
this shift is permission
for exploration, expansion into
clear waters, tickled by the fish seen
circling below.

I can greet those fish,
each one as an individual, bend my body
and enjoy the details of their scales,
the space between their fins, and their lips,
thick and sometimes scarred
by hooks or other near-disasters.

I can give up my burden, my self-attention
and observe, appreciate their maneuvering
between my calves and shins, over my toes,
curious at these fleshy stumps of mine,
appearing in their home.

I can tell them I am friendly,
a friend, not here to make a disturbance.
I can be motionless for a while, because of the shift.
Because of the shift I am opened, receiving gladly
each delicate undulating swerve,
each nibble, sway.





Tekisui RC

Tekisui RC is a poet currently based in Kozhikode, India. He writes under M.A. Ramachandran as well. Tekisui's poetry has appeared in *Lion and Lilac Magazine*, *Stripes Literary Magazine*, *Rat's Ass Review*, *Too Well Away Literary Journal*, *Arc Magazine*, *Setu Magazine* and elsewhere. Additionally, his poems have been published in three anthologies.

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Yellows

In the corner
of the room
chrysanthemum,
memory
of yellows
in the backyard,
by the brook clear
after the rain
a violet,
but the wind shut
the window,
in the cracked mirror
I am aged.



Sreelekha Chatterjee



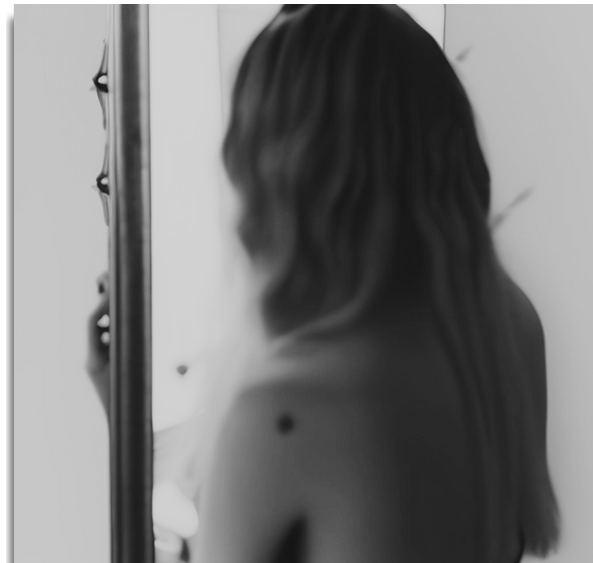
Sreelekha Chatterjee's short stories have been published in various magazines and journals like *Borderless*, *The Green Shoe Sanctuary*, *Storizen*, *Indian Periodical*, *Bulb Culture Collective*, *Femina*, *Indian Short Fiction*, *eFiction India*, *The Criterion*, *The Literary Voyage*, *Writer's Ezine*, and *Estuary*, and have been included in numerous print and online anthologies such as *Chicken Soup for the Indian Soul* series (Westland Ltd, India), *Wisdom of Our Mothers* (Familia Books, USA), and several others. She lives in New Delhi, India.

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The Fairest of All

Rita stared at the pallid mirror—"Who'd be this time?"
A chronic habit of 50 years burdened her—a burning desire to reach the top.
The first time she read the story of Snow White in school, she'd asked the mirror, "Who's the fairest of all?" The face of the best student appeared. Following that, the girl lost her notebooks, was caught cheating in an examination. Rita became the best. Next image was of a woman who loved the man of her dreams. Their relationship was spoilt by misunderstanding, fueling suspicion, hatred. Rita won over the man. The third scheme was against the best employee who was framed and sacked. Rita got promoted.
But now, it was her daughter's content face.
Rita was devastated.
A never-ending game of supremacy, or self-deception?
Raised from a wakeful-slumber, pangs of conscience overpowered twinge of jealousy.
Better delayed than never!



Rp Verlaine

Rp Verlaine lives in New York City. He has an MFA in creative writing from City College. He taught in New York Public schools for many years. His first volume of poetry- *Damaged by Dames & Drinking* was published in 2017 and another – *Femme Fatales Movie Starlets & Rockers* in 2018. A set of three e-books titled *Lies from The Autobiography* vol 1-3 were published from 2018 to 2020. His newest book, *Imagined Indecencies*, was published in February of 2022. He was nominated for a pushcart prize in poetry in 2021 and 2022.

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Lost Continuations

The sweet dark side of your mouth that I kissed so often walking away from you forever, I wonder was it all imagination or a mere failed lost continuation of a one-night stand. Meeting by accident, sans a wreck at a wedding with the bride visibly pregnant and the groom ghastly drunk. The reception a farce until your smile hinting of recent sorrows came close tall drinks were ordered but denied yet no one bothered to tell us why. Alone we danced until the morning long after the band had gone. In drunken foolishness I proposed but you were leaving in 24 hours. Final moment of us together gone when I saw trains make that lie true our lives incomplete, continued anew.





Duane Anderson

Duane Anderson currently lives in La Vista, NE. He has had poems published in *Fine Lines*, *Cholla Needles*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, and several other publications. He is the author of 'On the Corner of Walk and Don't Walk,' 'The Blood Drives: One Pint Down,' and 'Conquer the Mountains.'

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Revelation

When I first
looked
into your caring
eyes,
a new dawn
arose,
the meaning of
life
revealed the first
time.



Lawrence Miles

Lawrence Miles is a poet living in White Plains, NY.

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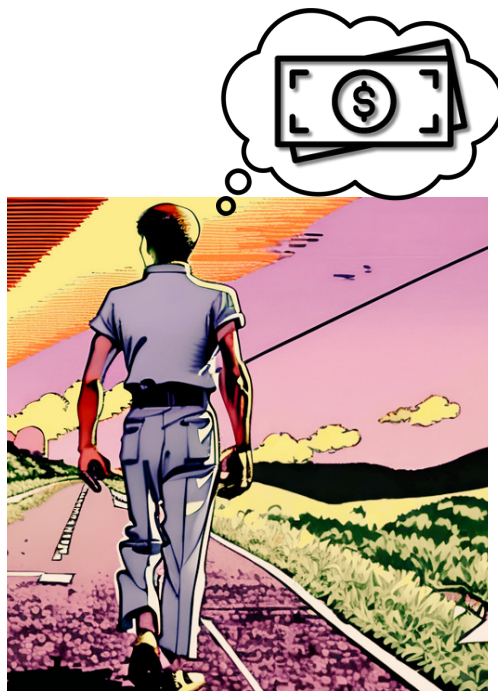
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One Dollar

I only had one dollar and I wanted to buy a soda, but I knew I would have to spend more than a dollar to do so. I didn't have access to any money, and I didn't want to use any credit cards for such a small purchase. So I began walking the streets examining the asphalt looking for any change that may be lying around. I walked for about five minutes or so before I decided I was not going to find any change on the ground, so I gave up and walked back to my office.

Now what if I was in a situation where I did not have a steady income, with no real access to any help, without a comfort zone of knowing where my next meal was coming from. Suppose I was overwrought with hunger and believed that I had nowhere to turn. How hard would I look on the ground for loose change or the miracle of a stray dollar bill? Would I stop and stand against the side of a building and hope for compassion from a passerby?

We rarely, if ever, step out our box and realize how lucky and how fortunate we truly are.





Glen Armstrong

Glen Armstrong (he/him) holds an MFA in English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and edits a poetry journal called *Cruel Garters*. His latest book is *Night School: Selected Early Poems*. He currently writes and teaches just a bit north of Detroit, Michigan in the US.

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Signs of Life (A.M. Radio)

She sips brandy by the potbellied stove,
wrapped in a blanket as Alex Chilton
sings “The Letter” on the oldies station.
It has been a most disastrous year,

but she is singing along, soft and low.
Perhaps a few birds break down in song
before sunrise as well, (beak out in song?)
At any rate, a song gets released

on top of a song that was released
years ago (or yesterday.) The sunrise
scatters the shadows and cold like a foot,
bare, unaware of the time or season.

Today might not bring the revival she needs,
but The Zombies seem so sure of themselves.





Steve Anc

Steve Anc is the son of Ajuzie Nwaorisa, a Nigerian poet. A Pushcart Prize Nominee. He is a poet with a searching knowledge and deep meditation on universal themes. He is quite a modern poet in his adherence to language and his use of metaphor is soul-searching. Anc's works have been published in *Prolific Pulse Press LLC*, *Open-door Poetry Magazine*, *Poetrysoup*, *Goodlitcompany*, *Voice from The Void*, *Our Poetry Archive*, *I Become the Beast*, *Fire Magazine Phoenix Z publishing*, *South Broadway Press*.

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Just a Little Light

Do not add insult to injury,
Since hearts feed on words;
Others live on fairytales.

Do not sneer at slippery feet,
Since knees bowl when mouth chatter;
Others break when hope slides.

Do not add salt to the bud,
Since growth starts when night falls ;
Others start when bud falls.

Do not stand atop and spit beneath,
Since lots feed on the field;
Others toil on the soil.

Instead, let the brotherly light divinely glow,
Since light and words guide a man;
When life's darkest moments come.



Jessica Orozco

Jessica Orozco is a professor of Spanish at SUNY New Paltz with a deep love of poetry. She currently lives in Haverstraw, NY and is a Colombian.

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The Award

Come to me
 my fellow audience...
Subtle yet loud
 are my cries
 for attention.
Give thy prize
 to me
 and see...
Who I came to be.
Our mouths laughing,
 teeth shattering against the wind.
Flowing applause...
the deepest win.
 And the greatest sin.





Tim Kahl

Tim Kahl [<http://www.timkahl.com>] [<https://soundcloud.com/tnklnbny>] is the author of five books of poems, most recently *Omnishambles* (Bald Trickster, 2019) and *California Sijo* (Bald Trickster, 2022). He is also an editor of *Clade Song* [<http://www.cladesong.com>]. He builds flutes, plays them and plays guitars, ukuleles, charangos and cavaquinhos as well. He currently teaches at California State University, Sacramento, where he sings lieder while walking on campus between classes.

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The Commands

High winds and a scatter of leaves. The sycamores have lost their marbles. Their pods lie like gutter balls in the gulleys of the street. A child's toy is living there too, an old plastic woman who was once part of a Fisher-Price set. She pines for the toy box indoors the way the overworked clerk pines for a stay in the islands. Once in a while a sea goddess appears there and reminds folks the infinite is calling. It whispers; it roars. Finally, it falls off into laughter. In the spring the tree buds amuse the enterprising birds and squirrels who understand by autumn the wind will be giving the commands.





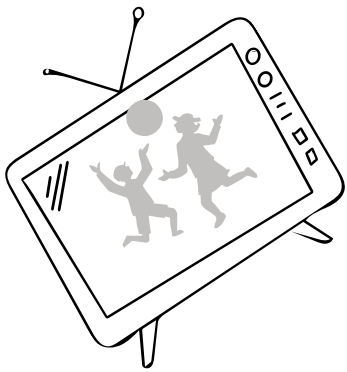
Ingrid Bruck

Ingrid Bruck lives in US Amish country where she grows wildflowers, makes jam, and writes poetry.

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Yeah, Team!

kick fumble dog-pile
catch tackle touchdown
television game fever
men call the shots
players toss and pass the ball
girls talk in the kitchen
thumps, bellows rise from the man cave
on football Sunday
sports devotion
high stakes
NFL, beer, betting pools
neighbors plan drives
around stadium game times
the fans cheer playoffs
fireworks shake the night
on super bowl wins
Point Pleasant Beach
by the sea





Mubarak Said

Mubarak Said TPC XII is a Nigerian writer and the 3rd runner-up, poetry category of the 2022 Bill Ward Prize for Emerging Writers. He is a member of Gombe jewel writers association and Hilltop creative arts foundation. His works are forthcoming and published in *World Voices Magazine*, *Icefloe Press*, *Literary Yard*, *Beatnik Cowboy*, *Wellerism*, *Teen Literary Journal*, *New Feathers anthology*, *ILA magazine*, *the Yellow Magazine*, *Ariel Chart*, *Afrihill*, *Arts Lounge*, *Icreative*, *Piker Press*, *Madswirl*, *Inspired Magazine*, *Pine Cone Review*, *Double Speak Magazine*, *Memory House Magazine*, *Synchronized Chaos*, *Susa Africa*, *South Broadway Press*, *the Bezine Magazine*, *Williwash*, *Applied Worldwide*, *Opinion Nigeria*, *Today Post*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Companion* and elsewhere.

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What to Tell My Children about This Home

and today, the colour is not what an eye sees,
what a skin feels or what live longer on our face
feeding the malnourished night. they raised a boy
by peeling his flesh with a dream of a bitch
and called an old man an indolent when they see what
the nature nurtured his farm with.
still, with all the homelessness,
boys seek love on the streets
by dying and rising again with hands kissing the sands.
let me tell you a story of Kushewa
where breakfasts are eaten with a burial shrouds,
where a mother sings not to be heard
but to find a living companion for her grief.
this isn't all, young girls too know how to sing
for boys; a funeral song, a song with a bitter taste.



Meenakshi Gogoi

Meenakshi Gogoi holds a PhD from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, India. Besides research papers, she writes short stories and fiction. She also loves to read non-fiction and biographies. Her fiction works have been published in *The Mocking Owl Roost Web Magazine*, *The Wild Word Magazine*, *Otherwise Engaged: The Literary and Arts Journal*. She is passionate about nature photography. She lives in Guwahati (Assam), India.

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Token of Love

Aditi felt ecstatic on the arrival of spring, with colorful blooming flowers fluttering in gay in her home garden. She sat in her garden and remembered her dead sister, Prerna, who was passionately in love with nature and gardening. Prerna died in an accident a few months back. Aditi lovingly remembered her conversation with Prerna last spring when she thanked Prerna for growing beautiful flowers in their garden. Aditi said, “I wish to see more flowers next spring.” Prerna smiled and replied, “Sure, my dear sister. How could I not fulfil your wish?” Aditi lovingly remembered that Prerna used to nourish her flower plants with water and organic pests and remove wild bushes to keep their garden beautiful, like raising little children. Aditi felt her parents were slowly recovering from Prerna’s death. She remembered her father saying, “I miss Prerna terribly as days passed. How beautifully she kept our garden and home! Why did fate snatch her away from us?” Her mother replied, “I know it will be difficult for us to live without her. But we are helpless in destiny’s hands.” Handing the evening tea cups to her parents, Aditi said, “Ma and Papa, we will always keep Prerna’s memories alive. I want to name our garden ‘Prerna’s Paradise’. What do you say?” Her parents happily agreed. The next day Aditi printed a wooden board with bold letters, “Prerna’s Paradise.” Aditi bestowed it as a token of love in memory of Prerna.





Joel Aparecio Bernasor

Joel Aparecio Bernasor is a corporate consultant and he writes poems and articles. He has a hobby of participating in local and international online quiz competitions.

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THE DAWN

10-10-8-8-6-6-4-4-6-6-8-8-10-10

As the night meet the day in horizon,
Light breaking the long solitary dark
From lengthy cold and dark limbo
To the moment when the lightrays,
Expand the rays and chill
Calmly fading, supplant
By the sun's heat,
And the mildew
Slowly dried as desert,
The flora, creation
Yearn for the life that once given
By the dusk in a chilly night
For life was given despite the darkness
Into the challenging world we live in





Emma Gladstone

Emma Elizabeth Gladstone is from Haverhill Massachusetts. She believes that love and kindness are angels in others' lives and in our own.

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Blazing Guns in the Perspective of a Soldier from WW1

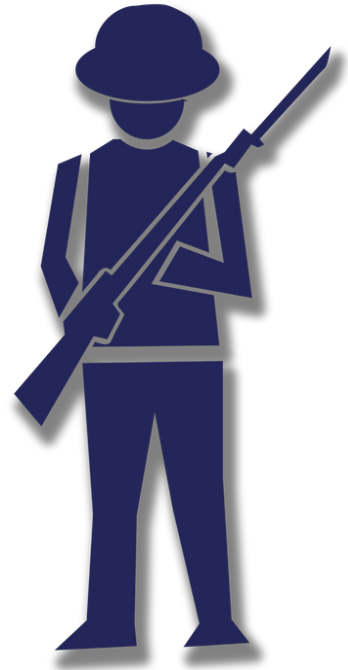
Smoke fumes
Marching
All these tears
May never see my family again
Scared but proud to serve my country
I'm still human
I still feel
The trauma that I'm enduring is so real
The pain of losing my friends in battle is so so real it's unreal
What's the point of doing all this hating we
We could create peace and love, not violence

March hold on
Is this the only life worth living?
Am I standing up for what I believe?
There's a war outside our doors
Isn't that a conversational bomb

So many deaths it's sickening
I killed a man and felt nothing
Smash my consciousness against the grain of society and conformity
I was buried in the mindset of freedom

Did you see that woman and her baby?
The light and in their eyes died
so did my hatred and my heart heaved a sigh

Rather die than live so hateful
without peace
For the land of free
BANG nothingness





Abhijit Sinha

Abhijit Sinha is an Indian Actor, director, and producer. He works in the Indian entertainment industry. He is also a script writer, poet, and lyricist. He writes poetry in Hindi and English. He has been doing creative writing (a few columns articles and poetry) for various portals and magazines. His Hindi Poetry book - *ज़िन्दगी के ताने – बाने* has been released. Short Story, *Twisted Tales* has been published with co-author Melvyn Varghese. His poetry is a part of anthologies like *Polygon of Women's Odyssey*, *Anthology by Asian Literary Society*, and more.

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Expectation

There has been always a certain difference of opinion,
Difference of thoughts and beliefs in every new generation,
The Values keeps on changing with passing time,
We always see the life in different vision,
We will always have a different Expectation.

What was right and working for many in the past,
May not be working anymore and now not be relevant,
Time has Changed, Society has changed,
So, there are now change in views and perception.
We just can't question and blame our Expectation.

There is no doubt in our Culture and Tradition,
There is no debate in the thoughts of our earlier generation,
They may be right in their position,
But we are also not wrong in current situation.
The only thing to realize and accept is our different Expectation.

We are part of the developing society and we must believe in equality,
We must accept the different sexuality,
We must be able to see the different ways our struggle of life is leading,
We can't afford to impose on anyone our failures and frustration,
We are indeed different in appearance, existence, views and communication,
We can't have with anyone else have the similar Expectation.





Linda M. Crate

Linda M. Crate is a Pennsylvanian writer whose works have been published widely both online and in print. She has twelve published poetry chapbooks, the latest being, *Searching Stained Glass Windows For An Answer* (Alien Buddha Press, December 2022).

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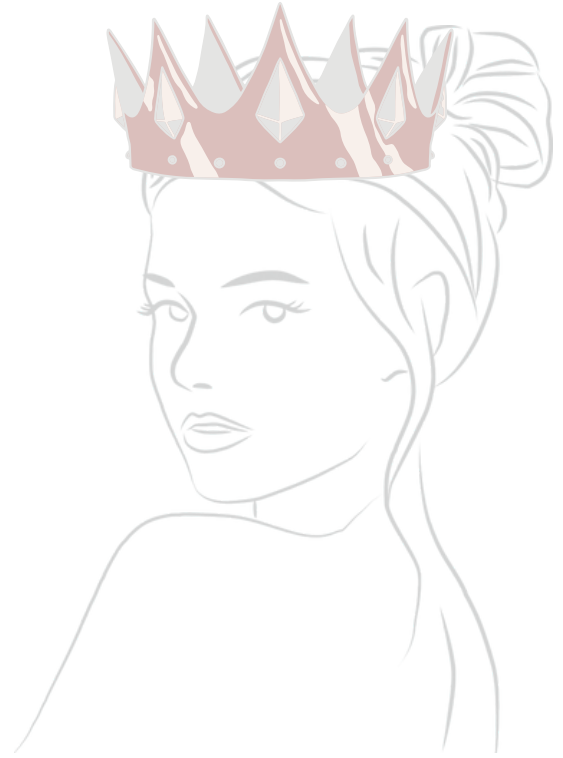
They've Abandoned Themselves

they always wanted me to be
different from who I was,
and even if they had good intentions it
hurt and felt like malice;
because I never understood why I
wasn't worthy of love
as I was—

now I recognize that I was always worthy,
even if they were never willing to recognize
my crown;

but every queen witch has probably faced
discrimination because people hate what they
refuse to understand and they refused to
understand that my path may not be the same
as theirs—

I used to hate myself because of what they said,
now I just pity them because they'll never know
the full experience of themselves as they've
abandoned their dreams and themselves a long time ago.





Richard Oyama

Richard Oyama's work has appeared in *Premonitions: The Kaya Anthology of New Asian North American Poetry*, *The NuyorAsian Anthology*, *Breaking Silence*, *Dissident Song*, *A Gift of Tongues*, *About Place*, *Konch Magazine*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Buddhist Poetry Review* and other journals. He has a Master's degree in English: Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. Oyama taught at California College of Arts in Oakland, University of California at Berkeley and University of New Mexico. His first novel in a trilogy, *A Riot Goin' On*, is forthcoming.

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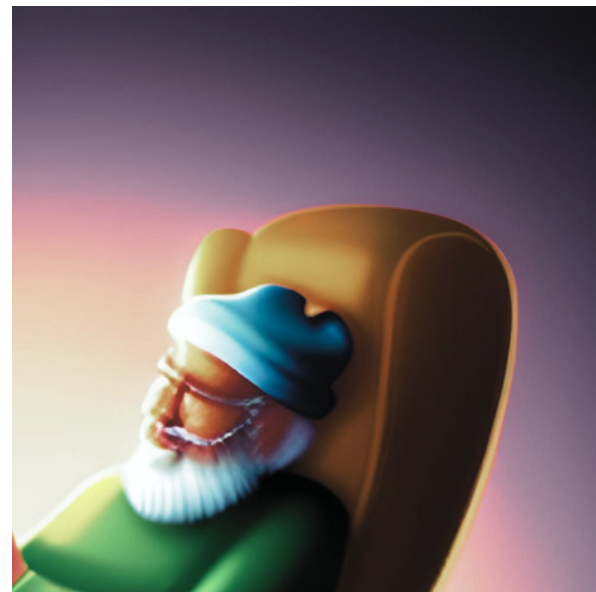
Bottom's Bottom Dollar

Who could love an ass's head?
The older I am, the more
Hangdog my countenance.
I'm transported to a nightwood.

A puckish boy drops a potion on
My eyes. I'm transposed to
Another key. The Bottom is the hollow.
Poor folk reside there, drinkin' home brew.

Monstrous, strange. I'm haunted
By the fierce vexation of a dream.

My artificer wakes me, making
Straight the conventions. It's
All airy nothing. I
Begin to discern shapes.





Guna Moran

Guna Moran is an internationally acclaimed Assamese poet and book reviewer. His poems have been published in 200 hundred international magazines, journals, webzines, blogs, newspapers, anthologies . Some of them are *Indian Literature*, *Indian Poetry Review*, *Indian Review*, *Indian Periodical* , *Muse India*, *Outlook*, *International Writer's Journal*, *International Times Magazine*, *AZAHAR Revista Poetica* , *The Poet Magazine*, *Indiana University Press* , *The California Times Newspaper*, *Poetry Hall* , *The Piker Press* , *Bario Blues Press*, and more. He has won Creator Of Justice Award 2020 by International Human Right Art Festival and got a chance for reading poetry in Frankfurt Book Fair 2020 (Digital edition). His poems have already been translated into Croatian, Tagalog (Philippines) , Burmese, Swahili (Kenya) , Indonesian, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Macedonian, Chinese, Ukrainian, Russian, Hebrew, Turkish, Hindi,Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Urdu, Gujrati, Arabic, Bengali . He has been invited to join poetry programs organized by different countries.

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Ember*

It was a split of firewood
Fire
burnt me
like anything
I've turned into a fire sapling
Now
I can flare up
at the touch of a hand
and
burn up



*Translated from Assamese into English by Nirendra Nath Thakuria



Dibyasree Nandy

Dibyasree Nandy, an Indian, began writing in 2020, after completing the final semester of her second Master's degree. She has authored poetry and short-story collections as well as full-length fiction. Her individual pieces have been published in several anthologies and literary journals. She is from Kolkata, West Bengal, and lives with her parents and grandma.

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By the Window

He sits by the window with bread and cheese
The azure outside speckled with pristine clouds that serenely drift
Sweeps of farmyards stretch along the vale
Stacks of hay, golden at noon, flanked by wheat and corn, fields of jade.
He sits by the window with a pipe, choking fumes curling, a grim haze
The mustard almost dark, the yellow cloyed by an incoming gale
Upended roots, the harvest reaped by the ominous storm
The sky turns gloomy and grey.
He sits by the window with a chipped glass of tasteless wine
The jarring noise, ravens crowding
Carrion birds like locusts swooping down from the heavens of murk
Rotting bales left behind, scythes rusted.



Douglas Colston

Douglas Colston hails from Australia, has played in Ska bands and picked up university degrees, supported his parents during terminal illnesses, developed chronic mental and physical illnesses pursuant to sustained workplace harassment, married his love, fathered two great children, had his inheritance embezzled and among other things, he is pursuing a PhD he hopes will provide a positive contribution to the zeitgeist. His fiction, nonfiction, and poetry have appeared in various anthologies and magazines, including: *POETiCA REViEW*; *Impspired*; *New Note Poetry*; *Rue Scribe*; *Inlandia: A Literary Journey*; and *Revue {R}évolution*.

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Duḡkhá (sorrow, suffering, misery or pain)? A foolish, senseless, obsessed or ignorant weapon, home or existence.

Ancient times, the past, history, the old-fashioned
or the simple, unaffected and unsophisticated?

A pond, lake, moat
or an object used for storage . . .
spokes on a wheel.

A frog or the Noh mask representing a drowned person?

Rapid, extreme, unexpected, beautiful, tiny, swaying,
preparation, obsequious and the end –
crowding nothing, dreams, illusions or the military.

That which flows?

That which is bright, clear or the target –
the aim, standard and criterion,
the optimal potential in each emerging moment,
me
and you . . .

sounds, voices, tidings, news, words, fame, responses, timbre and music.



Josephine Florens

Josephine Florens is a professional oil painter. She was born in Odessa, Ukraine and now lives in Bad Grönenbach, Germany. She graduated from Odessa National Academy of Law and received a Master's degree in Civil Law, graduated from Odessa International Humanitarian University and received a Master's degree in International Law. She started painting in 2017 and studied individually at the Art-Ra school of painting. Josephine is a member of the National Association of Artists and Sculptors of Ukraine, member of the Odessa Marine Union, Ukraine, honorary member of the Union of World's Poets and Writers. She creates oil paintings in various genres, such as portrait, landscape, still life, genre painting, animal painting, marina. Josephine works with oil paints and calls her direction of painting as modern vintage.

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Judas Tree: City Garden, Odessa



(40 cm x 50 cm, oil on canvas)



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The Last Piece of Bread



(40 cm x 50 cm, oil on canvas)



Alexander Limarev

Alexander Limarev is a freelance artist, mail art artist, poet, visual poet and curator from Russia/Siberia. He has participated in more than 1000 international projects and exhibitions. His artworks are part of private and museum collections of 72 countries. His artworks as well as poetry have been featured in various online publications including *Bukowski Erasure Poetry Anthology* (Silver Birch Press), *Briller Magazine*, *Iconic Lit*, *Caravel Literary Arts Journal*, *Maintenant*, *The Gambler Mag*, *Tuck Magazine*, *Ekphrastick Review*, *Angry Old Man Magazine* and more.

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Female Portrait





Alexander Limarev

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Abstract Composition





Cynthia Yatchman

Cynthia Yatchman is a Seattle based artist and art instructor who shows extensively in the Pacific Northwest. Past shows have included Seattle University, the Tacoma and Seattle Convention Centers and the Pacific Science Center.

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Three Black and White Trees





Lee Hammerschmidt

Lee Hammerschmidt is a visual artist/writer/troubadour who lives in Oregon. He is the author of the short story collections, *A Hole of My Own*, *It's Noir O'clock Somewhere*, *For Richer or Noirer*, and *Flash Wounds*. Check out his hit parade on YouTube!

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Resistance is Futile





Sidhant Nanda

Sidhant Nanda is a software professional from India. He is passionate about gaming, photography, and travelling. Exploring new places and cultures is what his travel expeditions are all about.

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Cuith-rang



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Portree Harbour



Meenakshi Gogoi

Meenakshi Gogoi holds a PhD from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, India. Besides research papers, she writes short stories and fiction. She also loves to read non-fiction and biographies. Her fiction works have been published in *The Mocking Owl Roost Web Magazine*, *The Wild Word Magazine*, *Otherwise Engaged: The Literary and Arts Journal*. She is passionate about nature photography. She lives in Guwahati (Assam), India.

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Sunrise Hues



Shubham Vatsyayan

Shubham Vatsyayan is a creative/content writer, travel and food vlogger, as well as blogger residing in the northern part of India in a beautiful place "Shimla, the queen of hill stations and the capital of Himachal Pradesh." He is an MBA and has written numerous articles, fiction, and non-fiction for online platforms. An intelligent, open minded, and independent guy, he is always looking at the glass half full and sees the world very differently than most.

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Beauty Untouched

"An unforgettable place hidden from the world with beauty is so pure and pleasing."



shubyan

"The sunset, the forest, the lake, and the peace, that's truly the best thing in the world. The picture is clicked at "TANI JUBBAR LAKE" near Narkanda, a small town in Shimla district in Himachal Pradesh, India."



Shubham Vatsyayan

Shubham Vatsyayan is a creative/content writer, travel and food vlogger, as well as blogger residing in the northern part of India in a beautiful place "Shimla, the queen of hill stations and the capital of Himachal Pradesh." He is an MBA and has written numerous articles, fiction, and non-fiction for online platforms. An intelligent, open minded, and independent guy, he is always looking at the glass half full and sees the world very differently than most.

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Road to Heaven "A place to find your soul."



"Barren mountains, harsh climate, unbelievable views, snowy peaks. All these words cannot describe this magnificent place. I clicked this picture while travelling to Kaza, the headquarters of Lahaul & Spiti district in Himachal Pradesh, India. "



Anil Sharma

Anil is a leadership professional who loves to capture the shades of life and nature in his camera.

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Dressed in Royalty





Megha Katoria

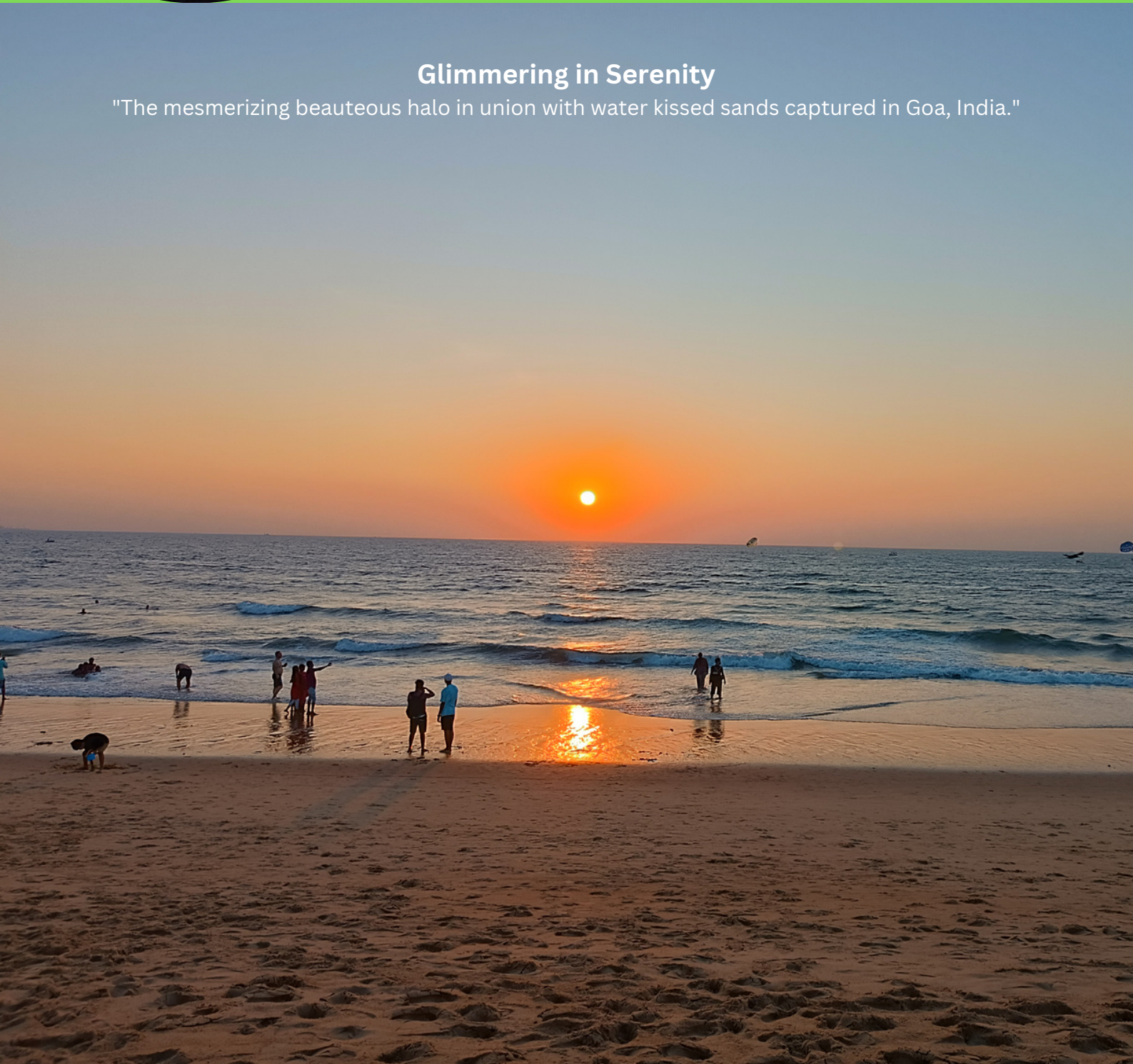
Megha is a creative writer and an educator from India. She has been associated with various institutions as an Assistant Professor of English and Communication Skills.

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Glimmering in Serenity

"The mesmerizing beautiful halo in union with water kissed sands captured in Goa, India."



**Submissions opening soon for Fall Issue 2023
of the
*Literary Cocktail Magazine***

Literary
Cocktail
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A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO
CREATIVE WRITING,
CRITICAL THINKING,
ART
&
PHOTOGRAPHY

