

POETRY PLANETARIAT

Kathmandu/Medellin

Volume 8, July 2023



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Editor

Keshab Sigdel

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9th Issue Submission Notice:

For the 9th issue of *Poetry Planetariat*, please send us your poems, criticism on poetry, and reviews of poetry books by 30th November 2023 to our email address: poetryplanetariat@gmail.com

Table of Contents

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| EDITORIAL | 3 | CRITICISM/REVIEW | |
| | | Fernando Rendon (Colombia) | 6 |
| WPM WORLD CONGRESS MANIFESTO | | Shivani Sivagurunathan (Malaysia) | 46 |
| Migration from Death to Life | 4 | Daya Disanayake (Sri Lanka) | 51 |
| | | Bal Bahadur Thapa (Nepal) | 55 |
| TRIBUTE: JACK HIRSCHMAN | | | |
| Jack Hirschman (USA) | 13 | INTERVIEWS | |
| Agnetta Falk (Sweden/USA) | 13 | Ana María Oviedo (Venezuela) | 8 |
| Sue Zhu (China) | 20 | Ammaraj Joshi (Nepal) | 31 |
| Luis Flípe Sarmento (Portugal) | 14 | Peter Semolic (Slovenia) | 57 |
| | | | |
| POETRY | | MESSAGE | |
| Alex Pausides (Cuba) | 21 | Alexix Bernaut (France) | 42 |
| Ataol Behramoglu (Türkiye) | 21 | Andrés Uribe (Colombia) | 42 |
| Ayo Ayoola-Amale (Ghana/Nigeria) | 22 | Anna Lombardo (Italy) | 42 |
| Dalila Hiaoui (Morocco) | 23 | Ashraf Aboul-Yazid (Egypt) | 43 |
| Francis Combes (France) | 24 | Cao Shui (China) | 43 |
| Freddy Nández (Venezuela) | 24 | Gerry Loose (Scotland) | 43 |
| Hanan Awwad (Palestine) | 25 | Koukis Christos (Greece) | 43 |
| Hani Nadeem (Syria) | 26 | Luis Luna (Spain) | 44 |
| Ismaël Diadié Haïdara (Mali) | 29 | Melissa Merlo (Honduras) | 44 |
| Jidi Majia (China) | 29 | Neşe Yaşın (Cyprus) | 44 |
| Keshab Sigdel (Nepal) | 35 | Nigar Hasan Zadeh (Azerbaijan) | 44 |
| Mpessa Géraldin (Cameroon) | 36 | Nimrod Bena (Chad) | 44 |
| Nurduran Duman (Türkiye) | 36 | Paul Liam (Nigeria) | 45 |
| Oscar Saavedra Villarroel (Chile) | 37 | Shirani Rajapakse (Sri Lanka) | 45 |
| Rati Saxena (India) | 38 | Siphiwe Nzima (Lesotho) | 45 |
| Sever Leonid Yurievich (Russia) | 39 | HRH Zolani Mkiva (South Africa) | 45 |
| Shreedhar Lohani (Nepal) | 40 | | |
| Soad Alkuwari (Qatar) | 40 | WPM REPORT | 64 |
| Svetlana Makarova (Russia) | 41 | | |
| Vadim Terekhin (Russia) | 54 | | |

Life, Love, and Liberty

This issue of the *Poetry Planetariat* comes out at the time when the poet-delegates from around the world are meeting in Medellin on 13-15 July and in Caracas on 17-19 July 2023 for the First World Congress of the World Poetry Movement (WPM). We take this opportunity to welcome all the poet delegates from across the continents.

After its inception in July 2011, in the last twelve years, WPM has invested its effort to galvanize individual poets, poetry festivals, and poetry organizations in all parts of the continents and consolidate them for a common cause of justice, dignity, and human rights through poetic actions. WPM has expanded to all the continents and most countries and territories in those continents with an increasing capacity to intervene in the humanitarian cause through poetry. And we hope that the first Congress will provide a strategic direction for our future works with a clearly charted vision, mission, values, and action plan.

The theme of this Congress is "Migration from Death to Life." It corroborates with our mission to work for world peace through creative dialogue and the reconstruction of the human spirit using the tool of poetry. We come together for the love of poetry and love of people. So, one of our aims is to foster the creativity and artistic expression of poets. But as poets, we believe we have responsibilities towards our societies and people. So, we need the unity of the world's poets and artists and the progressive and humanist forces. We believe "the loving and ardent struggle of the peoples will make possible the transformation of this adverse history, from the process of disintegration that we are living, towards the change of life, configuring a higher unity of humanity, to undo the steps again, from death, towards radiant and liberated life."

WPM COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Migration from Death to Life

The last million years of evolution and more than 7,000 years of civilization on Earth have not been enough for human beings to understand the self-destructive nature of war and plunder and the fatal consequences of material and spiritual misery. Many rulers have opposed building agreements necessary for our species and all living forms, so we can survive the threat posed by a deadly rift. The probability of extinction of all life is not unknown to anyone.

Despite the efforts made in many places, the visible deterioration of nature progresses, and the desert slowly invades places populated by fresh and bright vegetation. Animal species are decreasing in number, and many have disappeared. The deterioration of human life is also evident. Extreme poverty figures

are growing, as are the rates of insufficient health coverage, education, and housing services. Budgets for culture are falling in many countries. The global situation has become more serious due to the effects of the recent pandemic in a world already inhabited by eight billion people. Faced with this accumulation of problems originating from capitalism, there is no solution in sight. But we must try everything.

This is a time when the diversity of peoples and ethnicities, beliefs, convictions, and genders is recognized. When the extreme difference between humans becomes more visible, it is necessary for humanity to say enough in its obsessive race toward death. The world is dying. The Earth is reacting to the chaos and

throws a constant warning to this species that is facing the mirror of its own end. There is no god that can save us from ourselves.

We cannot continue solving differences by tearing the enemy to pieces.

It is time to return to the time of unity in essential similarities. We must return to profound thought and action in search of peace and reconciliation so that the survival of life becomes possible on the planet.

And for this, it will be necessary to appeal to the most forgotten resource: poetry, language, and the renewing action of love, which is the restart, the return to the original Earth, the return to the root and the beginning of all living things, discarding the vain illusion of annihilation.

The World Poetry Movement -WPM- calls for its first Congress to be held in Medellin and Caracas in July 2023. We are calling all the poets of the world to create committees of the Movement in each country, in each city, in each municipality, in each village, and to bring together artists, thinkers, fighters for the defense of the Earth and life, human rights defenders,

pacifists, to unite and fight together, with love and responsibility until recovering life, to call the energies of existence to surround and embrace the recovery of the human spirit, of its thirst for living; to unity in the solidarity of social justice fulfilled in the twinning of nations and peoples, of men and women, all made of differences but also of similarities and deep identities.

The World Poetry Movement will develop preparatory congresses in Africa in January, in Asia in February, in March in Europe, and in April in Latin America. These congresses will be held virtually and will be organized by the coordinating committees on the various continents.

The unity of the poets and artists of the world, of the progressive and humanist anti-capitalist forces, the immense energies of the planetariat, and the loving and ardent struggle of the peoples will make possible the transformation of this adverse history, from the process of disintegration that we are living, towards the change of life, configuring a higher unity of humanity to undo the steps from death again, towards radiant and liberated life.



Presentation of the First Congress of the World Poetry Movement

FERNANDO RENDON

The poem "Six August" by the Japanese poet Toge Sankishi, a survivor of the Hiroshima genocide, reflects the terror experienced by the victims of the first American nuclear bomb dropped on the civilian population of a country on 6th August 1944.

The poet reveals the destruction and death in the city while asking whether humanity will learn from the tragedy accumulated over the centuries and avoid using nuclear weapons to resolve political conflicts.

"Can we forget that flash?
suddenly 30,000 in the streets disappeared
in the crushed depths of darkness
the shrieks of 50,000 died out
when the swirling yellow smoke thinned
buildings split, bridges collapsed
packed trains rested singed
and a shoreless accumulation of rubble
and embers - Hiroshima
before long, a line of naked bodies walking
in groups, crying
with skin hanging down like rags..."

Poetry is a powerful medium for expressing feelings and thoughts that emerge at the prospect of nuclear war. We need to reflect on the need to preserve life. The peace

and security of the world, like existence, are fragile.

Today we can be at peace in our home or in a park. But a final war could break out and destroy the known world at any moment. Do human beings love life enough to defend it? Poetry comes to their aid.

The possibility of nuclear war and its potential to wipe out life on Earth has been brought into sharp focus once again by the events in Ukraine. As we understand the horrors of radiation and fire, we cling to the hope of a final settlement between mortal enemies. Poetry is a powerful tool to raise awareness of the need to avoid total conflagration and to work for a peaceful present and future.

But it is not only extreme and violent nuclear radiation that can end human life. There are other modalities, such as the unstoppable increase in the earth's temperature due to greenhouse gas emissions, which can alter ecosystems and make species extinct, and the process of uncontrollable growth of the desert.

The contamination of the elements by chemicals seriously affects the quality of ecosystems and reduces the ability of species to survive and reproduce.

These looming catastrophes, coupled with the likelihood of the emergence of new direct and deadly pandemics, the malevolent use of biotechnology, or a planet-shattering response to continued human aggression, may bring an end to life on Earth.

The unity of poets is necessary to achieve world peace and defend life. Poetry has the power to connect people by creating empathy and understanding between different peoples, cultures, and languages.

Through thousands of pedagogical processes, poetry influences human beings to learn a new language and a new relationship with the environment and each other. Poets use language to break down barriers and promote unity in the world to give new meaning to the value of existence.

Poetry also fights for the realization of social justice and human rights. Poets express their outrage at violence and oppression and call on the world to stand up to the powers that be.

Finally, poetry is a manifest and powerful form of connection to the beauty and vitality of the natural world. Poets contribute through their organizational forms and poetic actions to protect the environment and defend life in all its forms.

The alliance between poets is essential to achieve a peaceful, just, and sustainable

world. When poets work together in harmony, they can create a vigorous and transformative movement that will have a lasting impact on the world and awaken peoples' mutual and ultimate solidarity.

It is for these reasons that for twelve years' poets from many countries have scaled a process to found and develop the World Poetry Movement, a global community of poets that will hold its first Congress in Medellin and Caracas between 13 and 18 July 2023, attended by delegates from all continents, where it will approve its Strategic Plan 2023-2028. se of the planet to the constant aggression of human beings, may bring an end to life on Earth.

[RENDÓN was born in Medellín, Colombia, in 1951. His poetry books include *Contrahistoria*, *Bajo otros soles*, *Canción en los campos de Marte*, *Los motivos del salmón*, *La cuestión radiante*, and *La rama roja*. He is the General Coordinator of the World Poetry Movement and director of the International Poetry Festival of Medellin, which received the Alternative Nobel Prize in 2006. He has received several awards, including the Arabian Bahrahill Foundation Prize (Saudi Arabia), Rafael Alberti Poetry Prize, Cuba, and Medal Homero for Literature and Art, Belgium.]

Poetry should nurture the sensitivity to dialogue

ANA MARÍA OVIEDO (Venezuela)

in conversation with Bal Bahadur Thapa



*Ana María Oviedo was born in Valera, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on September 29, 1964. She is a poet, musician, and cultural promoter. She is the founder member of the directive group of the Red Nacional de Escritoras y Escritores of Socialist Writers of Venezuela (2007-2010). She has coordinated the National Biennial of Literature Orlando Araujo's nine editions. She was the president of the Association of Writers of Barinas (2000-2005). She has also directed reading and creative writing workshops for young people. Coordinator of the World Poetry Movement in her country, her published books include *De fuego o de ceniza* (1997); *Dominio oscuro* (1977); *Flor de sal* (2003); *Ruegos* (2004); and *De fuego o**

fuego o de ceniza (2019). Her poems also appear in several anthologies and have been translated into Arabic, Italian, and Portuguese. **Bal Bahadur Thapa** talks to **Oviedo** about life, poetry, society, and activism.

*[Thapa is a poet and an assistant professor of English at Tribhuvan University. His poems and short stories are published in *Of Nepalese Clay and Bengal Lights*, among others.]*

Q.1 What is poetry to you? Does it have to be at the service of humanity? Or is it sufficient for poetry to be beautiful in itself?

Poetry is a way of being in the world. A form of dazzle and totality, like full freedom. I don't think poetry "has" to be at the service of humanity. Nevertheless, it is. Poetry, being beautiful in itself, is already at the service of humanity. It doesn't need anything else.

Q.2 Sometimes, your poems seem to burst into emotions in such a way that they go beyond the conventional poetic forms. For example, in your poem "Bitter Bread," you vividly portray the pathetic lives of the Palestinian people under the hegemony of Israel. Do you really mean to prioritize activism or pathos to the beauty of art?

I do not intend to prioritize activism over the beauty of art. Instead of it, I intend to prioritize activism as a luminous way of assuming life, permanently taking a position and banishing indifference. We can't just be witnesses of what is happening around us. That's why this kind of poetry that deals with social issues and stands on the side of peace and justice *must be beautiful*. It has to be especially well done. Otherwise, it's not poetry. On the other hand, I know wonderful activist poets whose poetry never deals with these issues. That is also perfectly valid.

Q. 3 Like Sylvia Plath, you tend to start with banal things from everyday life. Your poems are filled with tenderness, love, and humor. Then you end up critiquing the social evil. How do you maintain a balance between these two things (which sound like cheese and chalk) in your poems?

It's the same effort we make to maintain balance day by day in an essentially unbalanced world. We poets are in this world in a never-ending dialogue. No issue is forbidden territory for poetry, even less in the time that we lived. It would be unbalanced to deny the chalk or yield entirely to the cheese. So you have to work so that neither of them stands out. I mean, in the "social" poems. But a good part of my poetry is of another type, absolutely lyrical. And therefore unbalanced.



Q.4 In one of your short bios, you have introduced yourself as a promoter of books among young people. You are also the Coordinator of the "Orlando Araujo" National Biennial of Literature. What really inspired you to promote reading literature among people, especially young ones?

I have been inspired by my own experience as a reader. I know very well the power of words to build a soul. The possibilities that open up, the refuge that words can be. We need a new generation that looks deeply into all kinds of



issues. We need urgently to conform to that kind of sensitivity capable of dialogue. And for that, reading, especially poetry, is fantastic, irreplaceable.

Q. 5 Let's move on to your people and your country Venezuela. Could you shed light on the situation of the Venezuelan people at the moment?

Our people, we, Venezuelan people, have lived in recent decades a constant and multifaceted aggression by US imperialism. A blockade and more than 900 unilateral coercive measures, which include the seizure of millions of dollars abroad, gold, assets, freezing of assets, and the impossibility of dealing with our affairs with the country that we choose to deal with. Fortunately, nowadays a multipolar world is taking shape, and thanks to allied peoples and governments we have been able to overcome some of the difficulties we have. Venezuelan people want to build their own path to be sovereign in their decisions. For this reason, despite the fact that we cannot deny that we are suffering various problems precisely derived from what I am proposing, we resist with dignity. And besides, everybody knows that part of the current wars are fought in non-geographical territories. The international media, above all, constantly lie about our Venezuelan reality.

Q. 6 How, as a poet, do you look at the transition your country is making with the end of the era of Hugo Chavez?

Oh, there is no such thing as "the end of the Chávez era." In the heart of most of our people, the Hugo Chávez era is really just

beginning. Everything is yet to be achieved; it's a very young process.

Q. 7 As a scholar/poet/ teacher, what should be the role of an intellectual in society?

Regarding this old problem, I am old-fashioned. I still believe in Gramsci's organic intellectual, perhaps with an outlook slightly more flexible. An intellectual must be critical of his time and, at the same time, contribute to improving it. I remember an article by Umberto Eco, very intelligent, of course, and writing just like an intellectual, in which he made fun of all this, especially the political ties of intellectuals. And claiming, above all, freedom of thought. I believe in freedom of thought as long as it helps create a better world for everyone.

Q.8 You are also the founder of the National Network of Socialist Writers of Venezuela. Would you mind discussing the mission and activities of the National Network of Socialist Writers of Venezuela?

The National Network of Socialist Writers of Venezuela (Red Nacional de Escritores Socialistas de Venezuela) was an extraordinary organizational experience with several objectives well defined. It was created to promote a historical block of support for the social and cultural changes that the Bolivarian revolution began, with constant analysis of what was happening not only in Venezuela but in the whole region, and public pronouncements in this regard, forming editorial teams throughout the country, the organization of events and meetings, training and participation

in the design of public policies. At this time, "The National Network of Socialist Writers of Venezuela" is no longer active. Still, it left important organizational balances that continue to impact the literary exercise in the country, such as linking its former members to the recently created National School of Poetry.

Q.9 Some intellectuals from South America have argued in favor of international solidarity among the people, who, despite differences, care for socialism in one form or another. What is your take on this?

If these peoples have in common "to take care" of socialism, then they must be united around that objective. As long as, of course, the differences are not greater than the coincidences. Because unusual phenomena occur in our time, such as the "Socialist" Party named PSOE in Spain, which is socialist only on the name. Of course, the scenario is different in South America, fortunately for us. Progressive forces begin to reorganize.

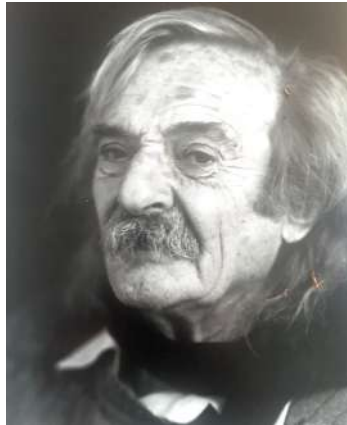
Q.10 What message do you have for the poets/artists/intellectuals who care for fighting for freedom, justice, and equality worldwide in these times of turbulence?

We must affirm ourselves in beauty, solidarity, and spirituality in turbulent times. Right now, it is like the reality of the possibility of the extinction of human life on the planet. So I can only recognize all as brothers and say thanks to them.

Jack Hirschman (1933–2021)

Jack Hirschman, born in New York City and raised in the Bronx, had a remarkable life as a poet and political activist. He received early fame from a letter Ernest Hemingway wrote to him, published after Hemingway's death as "A Letter to a Young Writer." Hirschman pursued his education, earning degrees in comparative literature from City College of New York and Indiana University. He was a professor at UCLA in the 1970s but was fired due to his anti-war activities.

Hirschman moved to San Francisco and found his artistic and political home in the North Beach district. He was an active member of the Union of Street Poets, a group that distributed poems to people on the streets, and played a role in forming the Union of Left Writers of San Francisco. Hirschman's poetry, often compared to the likes of Walt Whitman, Hart Crane, Dylan Thomas, Allen Ginsberg, Vachel Lindsay, and Pablo Neruda, exhibited a strong commitment to leftist politics. Despite rejecting mainstream success, Hirschman published over 50 volumes of poetry, primarily through small, independent presses. His most notable work, *The Arcanes* (2006), a 1,000-page masterpiece, was praised as historically significant. His other works include *All That's*



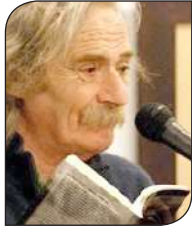
Left (2008), *Front Lines: Selected Poems* (2002), *Lyrilopol* (1976), and *A Correspondence of Americans* (1960).

In addition to his poetic endeavors, Hirschman edited the collection *Art on the Line: Essays by Artists about the Point Where Their Art and Activism Intersect* (2003) and remained actively engaged in political events and poetry readings until his death in August 2021. Hirschman's work exemplified a deep

connection between art and politics throughout his life, advocating for collectivization, socialism, and working-class cultural internationalism. His passion for poetry and his unwavering commitment to political activism impacted the literary and political spheres.

Hirschman was one of the founding members of the World Poetry Movement.

In his final years, he fully dedicated himself to the cause of poetry and social justice through direct involvement with the World Poetry Movement. I personally have many fond memories of working with "Jack." I consider him a great humanist and a true poetry bard. I would also like to acknowledge that it was Jack's idea to name our magazine Poetry Planetariat. Here we publish one of his poems as a tribute to him. –Editor



JACK HIRSCHMAN (USA)

Path

Go to your broken heart.
If you think you don't have one, get one.
To get one, be sincere.
Learn sincerity of intent by letting
life enter, because you're helpless, really,
to do otherwise.
Even as you try escaping, let it take you
and tear you open
like a letter sent,
like a sentence inside
you've waited for all your life
though you've committed nothing.
Let it send you up.
Let it break you, heart.
Broken-heartedness is the beginning
of all real reception.
The ear of humility hears beyond the gates.
See the gates opening.
Feel your hands going akimbo on your hips,
your mouth opening like a womb
giving birth to your voice for the first time.
Go singing whirling into the glory
of being ecstatically simple.
Write the poem.



AGNETA FALK (Sweden/USA)

Autumn Song*

Time has passed,
gentle beast.
What remains
is the silhouette
of your laughter,
the deep joy
slowly gathering in the vestibule
for the final kiss.

*(*An extract from Agneta Falk's book of love poems for Jack Hirschman)*

[FALK was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1946. She is a poet, visual artist, translator, and editor. She lived in England for thirty years, where she taught drama and creative writing. She was also a co-director of Word Hoard, a literature development agency promoting writing in the community. She's lived in San Francisco, USA, for the past twenty-four years. She has four volumes of poetry and is represented in numerous anthologies worldwide. Also a coordinating committee member of the World Poetry Movement, she received the Regina Coppola Award (Italy) in 2018.]

Jack Hirshman, Sempre!

LUÍS FILIPE SARMENTO (Portugal)



You died on me, and this is not a tombstone. Not a prayer. Nor a farewell. Let us not return to the caves to prepare the revolutions necessary for love. The poet works under the lamp of the multiple bayonet poem while pregnant women and young mothers look at us with hope. You already wrote this in 1964, my mad and lucid poet, and you were outlawed because in your future Planetariat there was no room for Vietnam at war, Angola at war, enslaved Africa, the Asia of perverse chess, or Latin America impoverished to the bone. A poet cannot teach, and they kicked you out. And you came into the street, in every corner of the world, and the sound of howls spread in all dimensions and latitudes of the burning globe through the fissures of a war produced by the international fascisms that did not die at the end of World War II, and you were not the speech of man alone, but of unknowing multitudes who fed you the words that you would give the next day for the rebirth of the planet.

You were Inca and Maya until death, Indian and black in the blood of your poem, gypsy and Berber in the lung and rhizome of the syllables of all languages, and you always smiled under that enormous coat that protected your lips; you always smiled like a fraternal hymn to the anonymous and homeless being that passed by you and collected himself as if he recognized that corner as the beach of the

world or Paris or Lisbon or San Francisco or Buenos Aires or London or Rome or the small town lost in Alaska or Antarctica. There, in your voice, the breath and the glow of what was to be. In the torn curtains of houses destroyed by the filthy wars of the lords of stolen capital; in the hands extended to the precarious alms of starving skeletons in the cities of sovereign and perverse wealth; in the wretched matinées in the slums of the deserts; in the prisons that muted men with thought; in the clandestine streets against the tyranny of the pimps of high finance; in the crumbs of hard bread picked up by the dark hands of a child; in the beheaded on the threshold of infamous wealth; in the women gutted by napalm bombs; in the horrors of torture of millions of brothers and sisters; in the dry mouth of the African girl's future; in the blood dripping at dusk; in the forests set on fire by organized crime; in the putrid air of arms industries; in the deafening sound of wars; in gas chambers and garrotes; in every nook and cranny of the planet infected by the virus of prepotency; the danger of your sonorous voice raised like a fist from a burning battle, calling for civil disobedience; your poem as the superior arcane of human existence in the common home, Jack Hirschman, figure, shadow, ghost, idea, illusion, hope, revolution, poet, your omnipresence in the libertarian movements, your historical legacy for the human consciousness that only through the

freedom of the beautiful is life without fetters possible in its endless struggle against the death of those who one day wanted to love on an anonymous street.

The cities you hate and love are your bread and your bitterness. They are expensive and inaccessible to those you fight for and so open to the language you proclaim. They are accidents and walking bombs, meeting houses, and labyrinths of revolting kisses at the late hour or early morning when the verse reverses. In the letters of all revolutions, you discover the forges of your cursed destiny. Literature is your curse and spiritual communion with the rockets, with the lightning, with the transforming volcanoes of destinies and beds; your literature is the blood of a banner sustained by the coming flowers of art to be had in the sinister fields of the machine guns spat out by assassins trapped in the sumptuous offices of the multinationals. They are poems left there, and not at random, like seeds of red fruits so that the dithyrambic celebration may be the nakedness of the juvenile will be bombed from the wombs of mothers who believed. And in the slow wandering of the hours, the others, always the others, on the horizon of the word to be added.

The immense sea of freedom in the hands that beckon you to the arrival of the decamped. The roads drift like enigmas of destinies full of minotaurs and their epigones like obstacles at each treacherous curve. They are centuries of streets walked among nocturnal mists, incalculable distances of love and belief, exposed to social viruses, to the bacilli of death, in body-to-body fights in universities against the destruction of the Orient, against the embezzlement of knowledge in the name of absurd wars, they are pages and pages as

the substance of the cry on lawns of hope. The nocturnal garbage of obese molecules, swollen with fat captured from the lost peoples at the crossroads of cemeteries; and, in all the parks filled with pestilent fears, your voice against the power of the black winds that conceal the putrid condition of tyrants; your voice like a delirious thunder of love. The poem is not neutral, nor is the word a comfort mattress for oblivion, as if the apocalypse were inevitable. No, it is not! Against all the apathies of the silenced doomed to tragic fates, the energetic impulse of revolutionary poetry to return, side by side with the poets, to the superior human condition of art for the full existence of freedom.

Whoever fights for the freedom of this world must be of this world. And not let them step on us, my brother. Whoever is of this world, of this collective consciousness, will be on the front line of confrontation. Honoring the mothers of those who have fallen in wars that never end; walking hand in hand with passion for the wisdom of encounters; celebrating the life of the young in search of the new that resides in the future; singing the hymns that at dawn awaken the hidden loves; walking all the paths of the traditions that differentiate and fascinate us; knowing that in diversities lies the epicenter of the curiosity that feeds us; so that the toxic fogs dissipate in the history of anguish; and we recover the liquid taste of laughter in the forests that welcome us in celebration; and so that the oppressed are freed from the false invincibility of the impostors; we, the ones who plow words in the plains of libertarian desire, continue your artistic and poetic legacy in the belief that a dawn will awaken us from the capitalist hells and that the globe will cross the expanding universe in the

fullness of its eternal blue and will no longer be the morgue of the innocent; we are of this world, we want to be of this world because no other knows the full reason for our existence.

We anticipate the ultimate victory by the light of the last candle in the hiding places. Let us reconcile storms and anticyclones, gale and tide, let us accept the unknown so that we confront it with the curious mission of art and knowledge, and let us know how to bet on the mouths of all differences so that in unison, we awaken the language of fraternal blood under the only possible banner of humanity. A woman with a full belly passes by, and a man stolen from the dung of cardboard and domestic garbage infesting dream cities; there goes my son with a smiling saxophone and a living poem in the pockets of his jeans; they are all joined at a street corner by drunkards of ancestral sadness and madmen who, in the nocturnal light of fireflies, remake speeches that only their lucidity understands; the prostitutes stripped of aristocratic modesty arrive, appealing to the conscience of those who respect the right to love among the free rivers of the world; there is only one destiny for the dead space consumed by the worms of money: to garden it with the ideas of all ethnicities so that the rainbow may be revealed in all its primordial manifestation; and your poem, Hirschman, as a flag in San Francisco, illuminating this Lisbon from which I write to you with nostalgia that eternity will immortalize.

Let us leave the crystals for the elaboration of the light that will illuminate us in the forgotten nights of wine, and let us elaborate a plan without the perverse symptoms of the old grammars and launch the poetic idea of hugs and intertwined fingers in the party

you have named, my big brother, with the inspired name of Planetariat. Let us behead the hydra of social poisons and proclaim the antithesis of the synthetic deadness of contaminated institutions with the sound and solidarity appeal that will intersperse us with the voices of all the oceans. And sparkle in the clear memory of our firmament Neruda and Maiakovsky, Whitman and Kerouac, Brecht and Marquez, Ferlinghetti and Rosa, Allen and Diane, William and Williams, Gregory and Frida, Clarice, and Pessoa; and so many other galaxies that have printed on the typographical sheets the star-words that guide us in all directions of the cardinal points where every landscape is resistance to global normalization. And now, you, Jack Hirschman, riding novels of ancestral memories, spreading your arcana of freedom and fraternity. I have you in this sound image, my brother, my blood, my plasma. They are Gardenias, Hydrangeas, Carnations, and Roses.

The brilliance of the jungle that registers you in the bowels of the earth roars, and you respond to the interim echoes with arcana, the rumble of your mouth rumbling between corners like a libertarian hypertext. One day, in the future, the trees will be the lit voices of clouds, and, at dusk, in the pale ivory-white, they will let your long poem shine like an anthology of the struggle you embraced in the tundra of misery. They will vibrate between the clothes and the body, the very strong step of the drums in the march of the heat of the elevated embraces where everything is written as in the early times was believed at the table of all the cafés in revolt. One day, the bombs defended convictions and passed the baton to the words that, in unison, wrote the fraternity of our Planetariat. And so the children are

freed from the dogmas of the powers that be, and one day they will be able to observe the new fields at sunset.

The sensual plasticity of ecstasy without the mists of clandestinity is yet to be written like a gospel of news in the torrent of days to come. It is these words with the meaning of the human universe, between love and sleep, in the awakening of the colorful dawns as in the early days of desire, that will write the poem of tastes and touches that bodies understand in their ancestral language. Tell me about the syllables of the perfumes, the sitars that sing them among strings that vibrate, tell me about the dance and the counter-dance in each territory of the blue. No blank sheikhs are accepted here, and only the flag of blood is the white card for a new humanity free of the impostors of the primordial race. I know, Jack, you're having a hard time with the text, but emotions dance wildly on this chaotic news stage, and we want no substitutes for nothing. I watch, in the distance, the hatchling turtles in a mad, slow, balmy race toward the sea as a metaphor for my liquid universe of freedom.

How many more days before closing this commitment that I have established with you? There is so much to say, and only in the silence that separates our bodies can we discover in what has been said what is yet to be said. I live with permanent fascinations, and one of them is to know exactly how to live in freedom in the bosom of the human language of solidarity as a categorical imperative.

I saw you, at dusk, in the center of the rain, on that New York street, as if a war had passed by, looking around at the homeless dying, gathered at the margins of existence, hiding their eyes from the strong gas-filled neon of the big brands, with cardboard blankets and

fire drums, drifting through the hours, with no news of a meal, giving up, for whom the future was limited to the next minute, without the strength to extend a hand to the yuppies who passed by indifferent to the sequential catastrophe of Wall Street that its hideousness had provoked and that had thrown those men and women to the anonymous frontier of those who don't count in a city indifferent to the human condition.

And I hear you shouting the poem filled with cement pillows as the last place of a day of failed begging on top of the failure of those already born at the gates of the icy hell of the oppressive night. Fists clenched with fear and cold until death takes them to the common grave of the unwanted city chosen by demons. And in your poem report, the memory of dogs sniffing the dead without news was inscribed, the lit testimony of an alien nation, insensitive and indifferent to the inhuman ghettos of the city that neither sleeps nor let us sleep those condemned to the purge of vampires, in the multitude of lights of the infamous towers of the assault on the population, luxury displayed over the absurd. And the poets against the fear of the barbs and technological bayonets, moving from neighborhood to neighborhood, plowing banners in all directions so that the world happens to them before the stupefied audience that says it doesn't know what daily enters its eyes, blinded by the automatic routine of contempt.

You have assumed since the bombings in Vietnam that your steps would be against the silence imposed by the scoundrel of weapons. This is the free show of savage capitalism whose circus of unbridled beasts you showed, decade after decade, to the young romantics who wanted to make poetry

a secular imitation. After the circuit of shit and snot, of vomit and viscera expelled by tumors, after the rottenness of the arteries infected by the viruses of finance, you taught the young poets that the ethical and aesthetic combat is carried out in the trenches of the great avenues where secret cloisters hide the spoils of war against humanity. So that the cold would not penetrate the bones of those on the verge of the end, the poem pointed to the sound of the voice in the city's loudspeakers that replicated the demand that the night be opened to the hope of those who lived in darkness with no hours to count.

I read you, bent over the poem, holding you in the intimate revolt that awakens and numbs me while on the world's televisions, the money stolen from the basic conditions of all peoples is squandered in an insistent production of entertainment that lulls the petty bourgeoisie to sleep until the day they wake up outside the talk show and in the middle of the epicenter of overwhelming misery. I see you, in the center of the rain, in the center of the sun, with all the voices of revolt raised to the infinite universe of freedom that humanizes us.

I never saw you near the end, my brother. Every conversation with you was the continuation of something we both knew was infinite. This struggle of armed poetry for the liberation of humanity, for the family of differences at the table of our Planetariat, for the redemption of literature as the engine of freedom of thought and joint action for access to knowledge, for the curiosity that animates us in the face of what reaches us and nourishes us, for the joy of the embrace that brings us together in mutual respect, for our survival, full of affection, and against all kinds of hatred and contempt. Everything belongs to us from

the first minute, the mother who freed us from the waters of birth, the father she loved on an anonymous day that history has not recorded, the air of this mysterious planet that unconscious greed is turning putrid, the land where the first tears fell in celebration of yet another life, the trees where we hid in the shadow of the freedom to play, the rivers where we stripped naked for love, the beaches that welcomed us without moons, the roads we traveled without end to the sound of songs that eternalized our youth and our first revolt, the books where we learned that others live like us and full of differences that attract us like magnets of fraternity, everything belongs to us even if they want to spoil our diversity, everything belongs to us even if we are constantly expelled from the dignity that we demand with our combat literature so that history does not forget us at the frontier of human existence. There is no power that eats away at the history that, word for word, we construct so that the edifice of freedom and passion may be built through the centuries that will follow us. We don't want archeological threats but the right to the name that authenticates us in this unrelenting battle. Together, yes, Jack, together in the genetic spiral to the alchemical sublimation of freedom. We will not be statues of salt and love destroying homophobic bibles with the poetic force of voices aloft in all the wastelands of terror and fear. And we are winning this war, Jack. And your memory will preside over the celebration of a new social orthography of love.

In books, I realized that I always looked for people to meet me, chaining surprises without pretentious laconisms, as a poetic and philosophical experience, in a speleology of emotions that brought me closer to distant

latitudes that nourished the structure of knowledge.

We talked about these things on a temperate afternoon in the east, and you told me that everything begins in the next neighborhood. How many unfair spelunks on the next block and a fragment of a dangerous mirror reflecting the innocence of desire in all its beauty without the makeup of money. In the thickness of the cards of cities in want within cities of cipher paper, two young people feed inside their bodies, sighing for a dawn that will enliven their hope. Not far from the rifles are financial laws that suffocate, like the barbarity of a gas chamber, those who get up to build the same prison where their grandparents were condemned every morning. An old lady insists on talking about beautiful things of an unknown future with the poetic desire that one day her grandson will free her from the memory of hell. Meanwhile, computers monitor the candidates for the common ditches of poverty and rejoice brilliantly, to the delight of those who squander the planet's condition of existential possibility at the table of waste. I know that on every corner, the name of the innocent is added to the anguish of my name exploding. That is the struggle of the poets, you tell me when we celebrated the revolt of the red carnations. And red carnations were the hands that said goodbye on the 22nd of August 2021, and it was still on that day that you told me to wait for you at the hour of the last courage to say no to hypocrites. It was in the spiral of all the questions that I found in your smiling voice the greater part of this mission that words eternalize in the flavor of storms and in the lull of bonanza. In movement, we will be hard targets to shoot down.

We will never know how to translate the secret language of the soul when the kiss touches it in its deepest intimacy. In that pact, the lucidity for the common edification of love. After the struggle, because we were inconvenient at birth, the aesthetic ecstasy of the embrace on the tongue. In that youthful awakening, even after decades of resistance, is the strength of the revolution, transparent in the permanence of the ideas we mold in the rose of paper. In all directions, people sing the conscience of their dignity without buckles of tightening until the suffocation of hunger is instituted in the palaces of organized crime in the institutions that have soiled the buildings of democracy. We will fight, my brother.

When I saw you with a long staff in hand and smile far from any resemblance to old Moses, and we snapped our fingers wordlessly between teeth, the autumn equinox was approaching, we established the brotherly protocol that death does not separate, Jack. In those Chengdu days, I saw, in the distance, the living body of the revolution that bled in your veins of a fighter without infinity. We raised mountains and dispensed with ancient strategies. The poem is the order of the day and every night that forgets the subjugation of the living. Seeds of ideas were thrown into the combustion of the earth so that red carnations would be raised by all the peoples of the world, as you wrote in your final arcane. We shared the last twenty-four hours of a journey with no return and, hand in hand in the silence at ten thousand meters altitude, the unknown promise of being here face to face with the difficult words for a destination that we do not know. I know that we live together, comrade, for artistic dignity in the struggle for human subsistence in this land of would-be masters



SUE ZHU (China/New Zealand)

An Audio Poetry Collection

(Dedicated to Jack Hirschman)

All your great power, magnetic voice
from a torrent of your bloodstream
raising the lowest parts up, out of the river of life

Marching with leaping flames
Igniting the drunk night, the souls trapped in

Holding a major shield
Intercepted the bullet shower, shooting towards
freedom and peace

Repeating the strongest chorus
Gave the explanatory note

petrified in their oil. In every poem, you sent
me the radiant glow of insurrection. My name
is enriched by you, my deep gratitude to the
history of the days that happened to us. And
I will return to you, Jack, every day to say
goodbye to you. Always. Sempre!

[SARMENTO was born in Lisbon in
1956. A journalist, writer, translator, and film

the beautiful Ode to Joy
of Beethoven's ninth movement

An audio poetry collection, your vivid lyricism
from the title page to the end
"all your poems are love poems,
the nicest thing is
to propagandize for love."

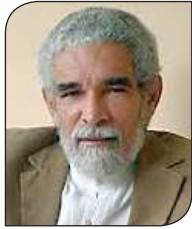
Ink trace, pure water, moisturizing
every withered soul

Melody, light of gospel, embracing
the earthly world

Carrying the warmth, your wings, never close
Passed through the thunderstorm, left us behind
Sadly, our loss, another world's gain

[Zhu is a New Zealander Chinese poet,
artist, Vice president of the New Zealand
Poetry/Art Association, Honorary director
of the US-China Culture/Art Center, and
Vice president of the Singapore International
Poetry/Art Festival. She is an editor of some
Chinese poetry magazines. Her poems have
been translated into more than 30 languages.
She has published two poetry collections,
three books in a children's education series,
and a translation book.]

director, he has published over thirty poetry,
fiction, and essays books. Some of his books
and texts have been translated into English,
Spanish, French, Italian, Greek, Arabic,
Mandarin, and Russian, among others. He has
received the Balsa de Piedra and Águila de Oro
prizes for the entirety of his work "AoRubro"
(Opera on the Fire), Award Ulysses 2021, and
Award Cesar Vallejo.]



ALEX PAUSIDES (Cuba)

The Lighthouse Keeper's Speech

In the middle of the night, I spend my hours
Only the noise of the waters accompanies me
But I never felt fear before the monotony of the stars
nor of the large insects that collide with the light
My job is simple as a wheel
My job, signal the break, indicate the danger
But don't ask me to change the course of the waters
I conjure shipwrecks whenever the navigator
spot my lonely sign in the dark.
The loneliness of the tower is relentless
Syrup of the sea on clear days
it's a feast for the eye and my only fortune
As the darkness readies its onrush
I gaze with relish at the splendor of the horizon

[PAUSIDES, born in Cuba in 1950, is a poet and editor. He directed the monthly cultural magazine *El Caimán Barbudo* and currently serves as president of the Writer's Association and general coordinator of the Havana International Poetry Festival. Some of his published works include *Ah mundo amormío* (1978), *Malo de magia* (1990), *Palabras a la innumerable* (1992), *Elogio de la utopía* (1998), and *La extensión de la inocencia* (2006).]



ATAOL BEHRAMOGLU (Türkiye)

Babies Don't Have Nations

Babies don't have nations
I felt this for the first time
far from my homeland
Babies don't have nations
The way they hold their heads is the same
They gaze with the same curiosity in their eyes
When they cry,
the tone of their voices is the same
Babies are the blossoms of humankind
Of roses the most pure, most the buds of roses
Some are fair fragments of light
Some are dusky-dark grapes
Fathers, do not let them slip your minds
Mothers, protect your babies
Silence them, silence them,
don't let them speak
Who would talk of war and destruction
Let us leave them to grow up with passion
May they sprout and burgeon like saplings
They are not yours, nor mine, nor anybody's
They belong to the whole world
They are the apple of all humanity's eye
I felt this for the first time
far from my homeland

Babies don't have nations
Babies are the blossoms of humankind
And our future's one and only hope
(Translated by W. G. Andrews)

[BEHRAMOĞLU is a Turkish poet. He co-published *Militan* and worked as a dramaturg at Istanbul City Theaters. His poetry books like *Ne Yağmur... Ne Şiirler*, *Kuşatmada*, and *Dörtlükler* published in the 70s, were banned by the military junta in 1982, and he was imprisoned for ten months. He served as a Russian language and literature professor at Istanbul University, Beykent University, and Istanbul-Aydın University. He was awarded the international Pushkin Medal (Russia, 2007), the Eminescu Medal and "Opera Omnia" (Romania, 2016), the European Homeric Literature Prize (2016), and was nominated for the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature.]



AYO AYOOLA-AMALE
(Ghana/Nigeria)

Peace of a Deep Spirit

We've tried the world, crooked
directly above a blurred crowd.
As it brightens, freeing minds with one heart,
swords become plowshares, sowed
We become a lamp for others, whole-souled

And for ourselves in the heart, a happy mind.
Until we take our light, our innermost true soul
sunlit into beautiful tulips
into the peace of the best that we are,
until the song in us is Moonlight
in one humanity stuck together like the stones
of the pyramids,
until we are souls that sing the weight of love,
with a heart that sings a morning with peace
of mind,
of the peace that supports everyone
so we can be whole, *like whole* grain kernels,

Until we reject the armaments,
just as a serpent sheds its worn-out skin.
Until we take our fingers off nukes
a giant firestorm on every breath,
Until we drop giant shockwave rifles from our
shoulders
as a water bead on a lotus leaf
Then, in our eternal thinking, peace of earth
away from bruised souls and bleeding soil
perfumed by the incense of burning flesh.
Until our palms are olive branches waving gaily
in the just, clean breeze stretching to the
rising sun like perfume charioted by the wind.

until our only weapon is boundless love
like a mother who would protect her only
child with her life

Until hate becomes a graveyard, war will no
longer rake us
Until our minds are scrubbed clean of racism
we are a broken-winged bird
and like arrows shot from bows all around
Until we become eternal beauty like the
gardens of Babylon

and souls that sing the heartwood of love,
 and the song in us, peace of heart
 then we will find the world's true strength,
 a life to the soul, freeing like doves in the sky.
 In peace, in the peace of a deep spirit where all
 good begins
 In the peace of a deep, deep spirit.

[AYOOLA-AMALE is a Nigerian poet who was born in Ghana in 1970. A spoken-word and performance poet, she has published volumes of poetry, short stories, and plays. Her poems and other literary works have appeared in several international and national anthologies, magazines, and journals. She teaches law at Wisconsin International University and is an ADR Practitioner. She is also the Founder and President of Splendors of Dawn Poetry Foundation.]



DALILA HIAOUI (Morocco)

Constitution

(Dedicated to each society that does not hear women's voices!)

Create for me
 In your Constitution an article...
 Which makes me a lady exactly there,
 where my city is.
 Which will guarantee me all rights possible

So that the members of my tribe don't
 lacerate my wounds!
 Otherwise, I won't come back to you!
 I won't come back to be locked up
 Against my will in my absence.
 I won't come back to be marked with the
 whip of the sinkholes
 Or with tongues that only like chewing torture
 I won't return to you!

I won't come back to dry my fountains
 from the source...

Rip up my lands.

Devour my hills,

Prevent my tongues from expressing
 themselves

or protect my punishment from the moss.

I won't return

I won't return

If you don't create a whole article for me

In your Constitution

I won't return. I won't return to you!

[HIAOUI, is a Morocco-Italian poet and novelist. Born in Marrakech, she now lives in Rome, Italy. She is the secretary assistant of the Arab World at the Movimiento Poetas Del Mundo. She has published forty-five books of novels, poetry, literary translations, plays, and stories for children. She has been the director of the multilingual cultural salon "J'nan Argana" since 2002. She is the co-organizer of the humanitarian and cultural caravans around the rural communities in the South East of the Mediterranean Sea and the sub-Saharan migrants resident in the South coast of Italy since 2016.]



FRANCIS COMBES (France)

A Poppy

In the shopping area
 among the cars and the advertising signs,
 in that spot where no one pays attention to it
 near the sidewalk,
 sprouting from a crack in the tar
 a poppy
 fragile and alone
 stands
 tall,
 courageous,
 scarlet.

How can we not be optimistic?

[COMBES was born in 1953 in the South of France. An activist and a poet, he founded the publishing company Le Temps des Cerises in 1993. He has authored thirty poetry books, including *Cause Commune*; *La Fabrique du bonheur*; *L'Aubépine*; *Poèmes du nouveau monde*; and *La France aux quatre vents*. He has also been the director of the International poetry festival of Val-de-Marne for seven years. He is the International Coordinating Committee Member of the World Poetry Movement.]



FREDDY NÁÑEZ (Venezuela)

Llover*

1

Cae entera

y le dices
 a tu hijo
 que la lluvia

está llena de voces
 y que el verbo
 es oír

Que dura lo que
 debe durar un secreto
 y se calla de a poco

palabra
 por
 palabra.

2

Supongamos
 que es cierto:

acabas de escuchar
 una canción
 Lo que procede es
 salir a caminar:

respirar
 su humedad,

memorizar
la partitura.

3

Pero la lluvia cesa

Se guarda
en su cuarto
al verte salir

Y con ella
desaparece
la brisa

que también
te pareció
eterna

Por incalculable
que parezca,
su voz amaina,
se seca.

*(*The poem is published in its original
Spanish version.)*

[ÑÁÑEZ was born in Petare, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in 1976. He is a poet, philosopher, university professor, and editor. He was the director of the magazine Sujeto Almado and the literary supplement Letras Caracas. He is a founding member of the publishing house Acirema. From 2010 to 2017, he chaired the Fundación para la Cultura y las Artes (Fundarte). He was Minister of Culture in 2016. He is currently the Minister of Communication and Information. Some of his published poetry books include *Un resto de sombra* (2022), *En otra tierra* (2021), *Pequeña*

tierra (2019), *Del diario hastío* (2017), *Viraje* (2017), and *Sombra bajo tierra* (2010). He received National Book Award (2005) and the José Antonio Ramos Sucre Poetry Award for his book *Postal de sequía* in 2009. He is also a professor of Philosophy at Católica Santa Rosa University, Caracas.]



HANAN AWWAD (Palestine)

Belonging

(To the Homeland)

I love belonging to you,
Love it when my blood pulses and pulses
And goes through hardship and miracles
And grows between your hands
I love belonging to you

I'm from you, where I begin my life and my
song;
My anthem's from me to you
And from you to you
I fear for you
I love belonging to you
My longing sustains me.

On my lips, there are words
That hug the pulse of life
And the whisper on your lips
And your love soothes me;
In my eyes lie tears embraced
By your sadness.

I love you, moon
 That lights the darkness over me,
 And the fire of words on my lips.
 I love belonging to you
 And rejoice when the rills of a creek
 Fondle your hands
 And a breeze blow purely
 And that a star walks with us
 And that flowers embrace us constantly
 And the dew from your brow slowly develops
 At night.

My love, whom I've waited so long for
 My love, who's fought all the wars
 and ignited me
 My love, who resisted the waves aggressively
 And patiently destroyed the walls of my prison
 And brought light to my home

At the border of your sea, the voyage ends
 At the border of your patience, fate bends
 If you only knew, my love,
 That the voyage to you is a brief one,
 I'm waiting for our promised reunion:
 My love trees have blossomed
 My love, clouds have rained
 My love, all that's in the universe—
 You're the universe
 You are life
 You're the sun and the moon.

*(Translated from Palestinian
 Arabic by Fady Zoubi)*

[AWWAD was born in Tulkarm, Palestine, on 13 August 1949. She is a poet, academic, storyteller, researcher, and pacifist teacher.

She was Yasser Arafat's secretary to the United Nations in Geneva. She has represented Palestine in several international forums for peace. She is a member of the Middle East Commission, whose goal is to establish peace in the Middle East.

She is the coordinator of the World Poetry Movement in Palestine. Some of her published books of poetry are: *I Write with my Blood* (1983), *The Promised Return* (1988), and *I Choose Danger* (1988). Her other works include *Arab Causes in Ghādah al-Sammān's Fiction: 1961-1975* (1983) and *Episodes of the Siege* (2014).



HANI NADEEM (Syria)

The Great Escape

"A wolf being a prey"

I should have been a true poet
 To bear your beauty as it flies
 like a flock of flamingos over the lake of
 my sorrows

I should have been a poet
 To collect my heartbreaks to go without you
 on this gloomy path

I had to be...
 To see you and convey your beauty to the world
 whose evil has gone so far from you

I had to be
To "turn" your love into a tent and sleep under it
and I love you...

I love you a lot
To bear again all these rudenesses, depravities,
and ugliness

I had to be
And still
+++

If,
You did not take off your shoes in "Bab Sharqi"
to touch Damascus!
Even if
You were just a little taller
or a little shorter
To get over thinking of my lonely sofa

and if,
You didn't like Al-Mutanabbi, Fellini,
Louis Armstrong, and Mohamed
Sadiq Hadid together

And if you hadn't changed the black and
white coffee shop in "Sarouja" because
he didn't know "Faiza Ahmed"

"Fairuz" as she calls it, and her song
"My Weakness", which you hum as you plant
your bobby pins in your hair, and my heart...

and then...
What if your mother did not give birth to you
And the clouds did not make you
You did not like the poems
And you didn't like the stories
Songs did not make you happy in wars

If
God did not tighten the tent of this body
of hearts

If
Your dress was less free and more metaphorical
And he doesn't like rapture!

If
Your steps on the street were not on
trotting rhyme
Do it... do it; let's melt like steel
We become mothers
knock
on
the wood
and if;
Your breasts did not interfere with the issue
and the dialogue
And your lips in memories, poems, and day
And your eyes in my long night
And your hands in the bracelet

Even if your braid wasn't
_ on the libra _ scheduled
Your quotes were confusing
And it wasn't like a busy post

If you
You didn't raise your eyebrows in surprise
Not all of our letters pulled prepositions

Even if..even
We did not navigate this labyrinth
And we remained on the mainland
And we heard "Amr Diab"
oh house...
"Be save from evil"

+++

The wolf is all over you
Go without your shadow
no...
Like you, he has no confidence,
and people gather that their life is a wolf
in killing you

Good morning
The morning of porcelain and poplin
The morning of your footsteps
Chisels clicked in the copper market
The morning of your spotless mole back
As an Isfahan miniature,
A city with its hustle and bustle
And the two mobile phones sold it
The morning of honey hidden in every inch;
In every inch
buried
and guess...
The morning of...
oh who
Made the juice of
figs!
+++

Your beauty hurts me
Your beauty is like a song sailing
on the sea of silence
And the folded
Like a bright bridal quilt in the yoke.

Your busy features hurt me
with the scalpel of tyranny
Your splendor that shines like
a dagger set with sapphires hurts me

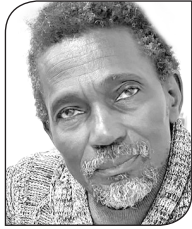
It sends me pain that I survived
a thousand loves
I am fleeing from the belly of a whale
for a whale
No gourd to survive
Nor cotton at the towering rocks
of your goodness
No sail, no sea.
No sparkle
There is no dawn at night,
and your long hair is carried by roosters

Your eyes hurt
Your eyes are a kingdom
where there are no slaves
Even her eyebrows...
Kings!

*(Translated from Arabic by
Ashraf Aboul-Yazid)*

** (This poem is an extract of a longer poem of
the same title)*

[NADEEM was born in 1972 in Syria. He is a poet, lyricist, critic, and journalist. He has published two poetry books and won a Poetry Award at Bin Ghazem Festival Tunisia in 1998. He was an art critic for Oman's official newspaper and a cultural consultant for Muscat Festival (1999-2000). He is currently a senior editor at GBC Riyadh, a publishing company.]



ISMAËL DIADIÉ HAÏDARA (Mali)

Old Tombo's Lamentations*

1

The wine remains.
Naked and drunk, I see the world.

2

The gods, the homeland, all the dreams of
mankind
Better a glass of wine.

3

Before a girl in bloom, raise your glass
bless life.

4

Every day, the world and history kill me.
Every night I rise between the beloved and the
wine.

5

I do not enter any temple.
A glass of wine: the shortest way to heaven.

6

Men seek Truth, Beauty, the Good.
A handful of rice is enough for me.

* These are extracts from *Maremoto* (2006)
written in the form called Tebrae (singular:

Tebra). It is a poetic genre of two lines
composed by women of the Sahara desert.

[HAIDARA, born in Mali in 1957, is a historian,
philosopher, and poet living in Spain. He is
currently the president of the Kati Foundation
in Spain. Haidara had gone into exile in Spain
from Mali after the Tuareg rebellion of 2012.
He is the author of several books, including
*Le statut du monde. Nécessité, possibilité
et contingence chez Ibn Arabi, Cordoue*
(1992); *Les Juifs à Tombouctou* (1999);
Las lamentaciones del viejo Tombo (2006);
Monólogo de un carnero (2012); *Une cabane
au bord de l'eau* (2015), and *De la Sobriedad*
(2020). He has lectured on history, poetry,
and medieval sciences at several universities,
including Rabat University, Complutense
Madrid University, Granada University,
Genova University, and Turin University.]



JIDI MAJIA (China)

Give Back to the World

We demand too much from the world,
we must give back to the world.

César Vallejo said that he had eaten
that which belonged to someone else.
He was filled with pain because of it.
Not every person
is so aware.

We are exhausting the earth,
encouraged by the masses
we pull the fish from the sea,
making news out of the lucky ones who escape.
We open the mouths of the earth's wounds
and make them bite down on rocks.
Only rocks can withstand such a heavy bite,
but the rocks' legs tremble,
and their eyes fill with muddy tears.

Today, for their own benefit, people seek out
ample reasons

to prove the legitimacy of this overdraw.

Lungs gobble up forests

and in other animals' homes

we turn solid steel bars and cement
into an infertile womb for the earth.

It isn't correct proclamations
that stands on the highest moral ground,
allowing the injured and weak to sink
into silence.

There is no other choice,
the snowline is rising,
and the ice is disappearing
the hawks let fall from the sky
eggs exterminated by anger.

We come in throngs, more than one person.
We open our mouths, more than one person.
The distant man who hasn't been born,
we have already eaten his portion.
We have already secretly carved up
their myriad things
and tricked them out of their property.
It isn't theoretical, and it isn't
just a possibility drawn from the data.
Perhaps we can create new wealth,

but we do not have the right! We do not
have the right to deprive another
generation of people and lives
of the spiritual inheritance
that should belong to them.

We should give something back
to the earth.

It doesn't belong to us,
it is theirs, even if they have no way
to take the case to today's courts.

[Jidi Majia is an eminent poet and writer of the Yi nationality born in 1961 in Sichuan. He was mentored by the renowned poet Ai Qing and gained national attention when his collection *Song of Love* won the Third China National Poetry Prize in 1986. His work has been translated into many European languages, and he has been awarded numerous international prizes, including the Sholokhov Memorial Medal for Literature in 2006 from the Russian Writers' Association and a Certificate for Outstanding Contributions in Poetry from the Bulgarian Writers' Association the same year. Books of his poetry have been published in English, French, Spanish, Czech, Serbian, Korean, Polish, German, and other languages. He is the permanent vice president of the China Poetry Association.]

Poetry Has the Power to Transform the World

AMMARAJ JOSHI (Nepal)
in conversation with Jeebesh Rayamajhi



*AMMARAJ JOSHI is a Nepali poet, short story writer, literary critic, translator, and academic. His literary publications include Deuda Songs: Poetry and Performance, A Night's Drama (short stories), and Man and River (a poetry collection). He is a Professor of English and currently serves as the Vice Chancellor of Far-Western University, Nepal. A former president of the Society of Nepali Writers in English, he is now the president of Mahakavi Laxmi Prasad Devkota Study and Research Centre. **Jeebesh Rayamajhi** talks to poet and professor Joshi surrounding his understanding of life, evolution, the future of Nepali poetry, and the transformative power of poetry.*

[Rayamajhi is an art critic by vocation and an anthropologist by academic training. He currently works as an editor at RedPanda Books, Kathmandu.]

Life and Poetry

How do you look at the relationship between life and poetry?

For me, poetry is the expression of feelings, emotions, and understanding based on perception, observation, and life experience. Life's lived experiences get reflected in it; some experiences are elusive, indescribable, yet absorbing; some are more explicit and easily perceivable. Poetry in indifferent forms presents life in myriads of colors; it softly and inconceivably, like the cat's paws, touches the human heart and makes it a thrill. The world is merely the larger expansion of life, and poetry is the window that makes us peep into life and the world at large to understand them.

Is poetry essential for people in general? Why? Why not?

Poetry is and has been the best medium of expression of experiences for every human being, irrespective of their status. The forms of refinement of poetry might differ, ranging from folk to elitist and pedantic. The question of indispensability relates to the question of food and flower. Poetry is like a flower, not food, to us. Food helps us survive, and poetry gives us joy and adds happiness to our life.

Poetry in the Academic Curriculum

With its power to purge human emotions, poetry gives joy to the human heart and knowledge about the world and life to every individual—young or old—in a subtle way. Poetry is pleasing to the ear, soothing to the heart, and appealing to the mind. Whatever little space poetry acquires in academia will have a cathartic impact on the learners and

give learners a remarkable opportunity to learn about the world, life, and living.

Why is it important to include poetry in the academic curriculum?

Poetry helps learners traverse through the contours of life, leading from playful hilarity to pedantic contemplation. A little poetry during the academic journey may give respite from our limitless engagement in the mundane technicality and sophistication of the consumerist world.

It acts like a breather to the ailing lungs and a gust of fresh air in the wilderness after the wildfire.

What benefits does it offer to students?

Poetry provides students with language and communication skills. It enhances contemplative faculty, develops their creativity and critical insights, and makes them expressive. It also broadens their understanding, artistic taste, and cultural awareness. Most importantly, poetry develops a sense of humility and compassion for broader humanity. Poetry promotes self-reflection and self-questioning, and such reflection makes individuals think of their own values, beliefs, actions, and the world in a broader spectrum.

What are the motivations for Writing Poetry?

Keen observation and experience of the world, taste for art, love for life, language, and expression, and self-reflective individual instincts are motivations for writing.

What drives individuals to express themselves through this art form?

I think the taste for artistic verbal expression, the desire to speak to the world from a self-made cocoon, and the individual's

delicate, emotional impulse urge a writer to engage in this art form.

Would you mind sharing your creative process, including any rituals, routines, or sources of inspiration you rely on?

I am divided between my professional engagement and creative act. Creative work is an episodic impulsive outpouring than a routine plan for me. Whenever something I see, feel, or experience touches me, when the world around me attracts and distracts me, I get to writing. I write and leave it there for days. After a long time, I revisit it and rework it. I regularly maintain my diary where my perceptions, observations, and experiences find space. Whenever I am in a mood, I sit to write, at times a poem and at times a story.

On a Personal Note

Man and the River (2012), an anthology of your poems, consists of poems like "Shared Passions" and "Biography of a Leaf," which foreground the connection between nature and human beings. Not only do you pick up imageries from nature, but you also seem to defend nature in one way or the other. Is this ecological awareness a result of your deliberate effort or just a byproduct of engaging yourself with nature?

Poems like "Shared Passions" and "Biography of a Leaf" are expressions resulting from my intimate observation of the world. I have seen things happening around me the way I have described. I have put my observations without much artistic embellishment, a bit evocatively, though. I am not deliberately fabricating or exaggerating anything there. The passions of all beings in nature are shared passions; we all depend on others for our life

and livelihood. That is how the world runs. There is nothing to hide. Is a human being purely human, independent, and self-sufficient? No. There is something of an animal in him, something of a plant in him, something of a fruit in him, something of a food grain, and more.

In a similar way, "Biography of a leaf" is another observation of the life cycle beginning with the birth, leading through the youth, and ending with the death of a leaf. The stages a leaf goes through are similar to the stages a man goes through from childhood to youth to old age to death and afterward. It is a realistic expression of the nature of Nature put forth as naturally as it came to my mind without any deliberate fabrication.

Your short stories, which appeared in your short story collection A Night's Drama (2007), portray hidden layers of Nepali society in a realistic way. As a writer of both poems and short stories, what difference have you observed between these two in terms of the creative process?

Both creative acts are equally beguiling. The subtlety of poetry requires greater contemplative engagement to express precisely, whereas stories allow more time and space. Perceptions and observations must be truthfully put forth in both genres to give a realistic impression and touching effect on the reader. Both genres need artistic refinement to leave lasting resonance—a mark of good writing—on the human heart.

Evolution of Nepali poetry

How would you assess the current state of Nepali poetry?

I think there is greater growth in fictional writing than in poetry in amount and in terms of form, style, artistic expression, and literary

expressivity. I see much of the politics in the air; class politics, identity politics, gender politics, and the like. Nothing is bad about it as long as the long-lasting humanistic appeal and poetic ethos survive.

How has it evolved over the years, and which themes and styles dominate the contemporary poetry landscape?

The poetic landscape of Nepal has been remarkable. We have seen poets like Lekhnath, Laxmi Prasad, Siddhicharan, and Bhupi Sherchan who elevated poetry in Nepali Literature. Poetry that began with the employment of mythic resources for creative production traveled through independent, original thematic domains, at times exhibiting astounding poetic creativity, poetic emotions, forms, styles, and rhyming patterns. What has basically attracted me is the deliberate effort of Nepali poets to write epics and short poems in rhymed verse forms. Over time, I see a thematic shift toward topical identity issues crusading for a cause that I feel will harm the longevity of poetry as a work of art, no matter how fascinating they appear now. Yet, promising young poets are seen in the poetic landscape, and I hope we will see more poetic refinement in the landscape.

Future of Nepali Poetry

How do you envision the future of Nepali poetry?

The innovation in information technology and the development of artificial intelligence (AI) has drawn human attention in a different direction. I see reading culture is gradually disappearing, particularly in Nepal. Physical libraries are going to be obsolete gradually. At such a time of the victory of technology over

human emotions, there is a threat to poetry, the vocation of heart and mind. Yet, I hope young poets will continue peddling through the poetic corridors, and poetry will continue to make an appeal as long as the human heart continues to beat with felt emotions.

Are there any emerging trends or directions that you find particularly exciting or promising?

The trend of dwelling upon native and indigenous resources, including the language, culture, traditions, and setting prosaic, free verse forms of expression are typically interesting.

Transformative Potential of Poetry

In your opinion, what makes poetry hold transformative potential?

Poetry, I trust, has persuasive power. This persuasive element is the result of its artistic make, subtle expression, apt diction, resonant figuration, directly appealing analogies, and the truthful revelation of life and the world. The prophetic voice of the poet has, to some extent, the power to move the mind and transform the world.

How can poetry contribute to social justice and awareness building?

Poetry, music, fine art, and performative art forms possess the power to immensely and immediately move. Though I do not believe that poetry should be written for a cause to create social awareness and contribute to social justice, it can be the best medium if used. Yet the joy that poetry gives as an art form is more than we should expect. What more than a smile, happiness of the heart, peace of mind, and a journey from joy to joy does a man need?



KESHAB SIGDEL (Nepal)

An Un-ended Story

In the beginning
We feared and froze in the Dark.
What was it that we feared?
 Maybe the Dark itself.
Refugees of the Dark, we had no choice
But to take refuge in the Dark.
Covert, we quivered.
Conscience in the casket,
 living was self-annihilating;
But choices were limited.
Freedom from social suppressions?
The peanut-crunching crowd
Are simply a part of the design; Freedom
Came to them in a mirage reflection.
Freedom from the body?
It was pre-destined; And
You could not make a choice.
What good is it to live—
To live without a choice?
A bare, mere reflection comes with a revelation:
Choice, after all, is the mother of Anarchy—
Fights, fissures, and fouts.
We waited for the warmth, the Light
But we never knew where and
 how it was coming to us.
For the Light, all you need to do is,
Uncover the Dark.

But what is uncovering? Doing or undoing?
Like a systemic error
Uncovering the Dark brought greater darkness—
Not something we expected or waited for.
The story had to move,
And we witnessed a transition, from
The Dark to the Dark;
 from something we feared
To something that turned out to be our destiny.
Even toward the end,
 we continued to wait, until
Nothing happened, even after
Everything happened.
The real end is yet to be
Constructed, reconstructed.

[SIGDEL, born in 1979 in Bardiya, Nepal, is the author of two poetry books, *Samaya Bighatan* (2007) and *Colour of the Sun* (2017). He has edited *Madness: An Anthology of World Poetry* (RedPanda, 2023) and *An Anthology of Contemporary Nepali Poetry* (digital volume, Big Bridge, 2016). His work of translation, *Shades of Color* (2021), is a collection of indigenous Nepali poetry published by Nepal Academy. He co-edited thirteen issues of the literary magazine *Of Nepalese Clay*, published by the Society of Nepali Writers in English. He is currently the editor of *Poetry Planetariat*, the poetry magazine of the World Poetry Movement. He also received the literary awards Bhanubhakta Gold Medal (Culture Ministry of Nepal, 2014) and the Youth Year Moti Award for literature (National Youth Fund, 2018). Sigdel teaches Poetry and Cultural Studies at Tribhuvan University.]



MPESSE G ERALDIN (Cameroon)

les bras enchain s du ciel*

vous qui dormez dans les bras enchain s du ciel
la terre clopine, tombe et se r veille
sur l' pais nuage du temps
faites le guet   travers les ouvertures de vos c urs
vous verrez nos m moires tanguer dans l'utopie
que clame le peuple devant les pots-de-vin

ce cri que tu ignores
est la voix du village qui essaie de se d faire
des serrures de l'homme obscur
qui traîne dans sa besace mensonges et malheurs

ce village avec ses mille sourires
et ses  charpes de gait 
ce village qui n'a pas appris   ses enfants
   couter le regard des masques
s'en va   vau-l'eau dans les vagues du temps
pour offrir au monde sa d ch ance

* *Published in the original French version.*

[G ERALDIN was born on May 31, 1991 in Evoudoula. He is a poet, writer, photographer, translator, Spanish teacher, and founder and editor of the cultural heritage magazine Lepad Africa. Author of two books of poetry, El grito

de dolor (2016) and El silencio de tus olas, Sanaga (2021), his poems and stories have been published in several literary journals and anthologies, including Revista Prometeo, Jalada Africa, and Bakwa Magazine. He is the coordinator of the World Poetry Movement in Cameroon.]



NURDURAN DUMAN (T rkiye)

the sky settled on the lake

the sky settled on the lake,
the clouds a flying carpet
we prepare to step on the moon, its walk
and pass over the moon's dance,
its water and time

rustling hydrogen skirts float
passing by our sides by our heads. daybreak.
we spread and are spread from cinnamon to
blue from diamond from bee
we're graced with fields and gardens on the
earth's silk

we, too, are learning to cultivate: the light
(Translated by Andrew Wessels)

[DUMAN is a poet, playwright, editor, and translator living in Istanbul. She is a columnist

in the newspaper Cumhuriyet and the national coordinator of the World Poetry Movement. Her books include *Yenilgi Oyunu*, *Istanbul'la Bakışmak*, *Mi Bemol*, *Semi Circle* (2016, US), *Selected Poems* (2017, Macedonia), *Selected Poems* (2019, Belgium), and *Steps of Istanbul* (2019, China). She received several literary recognitions, including the Golden Camel Award of 2020.]



OSCAR SAAVEDRA VILLARROEL
(Chile)

**I woke up so much that I was touching
the sun with the tip of my fingers without
feeling any pain:**

I locked myself up in a *ruca*¹ room.

I called some
girls from space/city and left written
in their bodies:

I don't want descendants.

*I don't want my suns rotting along
with the capitalist
poem- I told them- For that I have my own sea.*

And like a yonky, I went out there to walk
through the territory encaged by glass,
to stumble into every espunka-mannequin²
possible.

And I forgot about the hills, and I crossed
with-out-exile
that country of mine,
but my country is a heart that is devastated,
a zone that bones the marrow of my nerves.

The tribe started to voyeur- as in Perec-
my memories
my eyes of Euro-royalty conquest;
to reveal Mr. America,
seen by the all too stupid,
to psychopath me out of so much retina,
so much skin.

I had to call my lawyer again. I said to him:
here is the one and only deal, my cursed
ethos, inverted like a cross.
And he responded- like a mantra-: exile
yourself, fucker, exile yourself.
I have already done it, I said;
I am a constant exile.
And your foundation? He asked.
Don't you see those Western brains? I replied.

We went to get a good drink at the club/
alternative to the race
and I fucked my people;
I jerked them off the origin.
My lawyer said to me: France, England,
Sweden, Cuba. No!, I said,
the sixth world of my sentiments.

(Translated by Daniela Johannes)

¹ Ruca is the name of the traditional Mapuche house type, originally round with a conical roof built communally.

² Lyric neologism that links the denotation of *espuma* (foam) and *punk* to create an ethnic character linked to the landscape of Chilean coastal geography. Since it ends in /a/(grapheme that indicates a feminine name in Spanish), it indicates a mix of tough but feminized natures.

[Villarroel is a poet, videopoemist, and professor of poetic creativity. He has published *Tecnopacha* (Editorial Zignos, 2008. Desbordes, 2016-2018), *Entre Montparnasse la Victoria, una familia y Asia* (Editorial Casa de La Poesía, Costa Rica, 2018), and *La primera calle* (Ed Municipalidad de Lima, 2020). Director of the publishing house Andesground of the Schools of Poetry, he is also a member of the Coordinating Committee of the World Poetry Movement.]



RATI SAXENA (India)

My Sheet

That morning when I woke, I saw
a small hole in my sheet,
the result of being lost in sleep.
So I struggled with a silken thread throughout
the day
and by night, had stitched a window

for glimpsing a few new dreams.
The next day I woke to a new hole
and, this time, added paint to the thread.
Before dark, I'd built a door.
My dreams could leave now and wander
instead of gazing out a window,
dreams freed to roam the entirety of the night.
Each morning brought new holes;
each day bustled with thread and paint.
Today my sheet is an enormous courtyard
with a banyan tree filled with birds with beaks
like red stars,
though both sun and moon remain absent.
So I spend my mornings searching for holes
where the sun and moon might be woven,
not only in this galaxy
but also across
the many, layered others,
knowing at the end, there's a final hole
through which to exit
and join the seamless realm of light.

(Translated by Seth Michelson)

[SAXENA is a poet, editor, and translator based in Trivandrum, Kerala, India. She is also the Director of Kritiya International Poetry Festival since 2005. An editor of the bilingual poetry web journal www.kriya.in, she has a dozen of poetry books and several other works of translation and literary criticism. Her poetry extensively draws from the Vedic philosophy and remolds it to appropriate them to contemporary literary taste. She has traveled extensively and is honored with many prestigious literary awards at home and abroad.]



SEVER LEONID YURIEVICH (Russia)

Autumn is coming

The dawn wizard has lifted the dark curtain
from the horizon,
inviting the cranes' chicks to take flight,
And summer frightenedly hid
its beach umbrellas
From the first, ungentle, but still autumn rains.

The stubble is blazing,
and the sunflowers are bowed down,
The fog has descended
over the fast-cooled river,
And autumn is knocking
at the warmth of summer,
and frightening with coolness
and little yellowed leaves.

Parents are busy collecting their
children to study,
"They'd like their children to be
as well off as anyone else,
But the school bazaar leaves
an uneasy look on their faces
And time is short,
with only two weekends left.

Convoys of cars in "traffic jams"
Slowly moving from the south,

The combine harvesters are on the road;
the fields are in full swing,
Drivers swear at each other loudly,
not childishly,
Though the Saviour's day before reminded me
of mortal sins.

Tender sunbeams dance
with glee and cheerfulness,
And to the summer sun,
I quietly whisper: "Goodbye..."
It's a normal Friday... Morning...
In the breath of August
The sadness of autumn motifs
rushes towards us...

[YURIEVICH is a poet, translator, member of the Supreme Creative Council of the Writers' Union of Russia, and the Chairman of the Coordination Council of the International Youth Festival-Contest of Poetry and Poetic Translations "Shores of Friendship." He is the author of the anthem of Neklinovsky District of the Rostov Region and the anthem of the Union of Don Writers, and laureate of the International literary prize named after Narbut, "Five Hymns." He is also the winner of the International Literary Award named after K. Turovsky and the All Ukrainian Literary Award named after Taras Shevchenko.]



SHREEDHAR LOHANI (Nepal)

Art

Fingers squishing clay
 dancing on a dough of mud
 hallowed by soil's proximity
 shape a form,
 fingers smudged with rainbows
 paint the hills after rain,
 fingers stained with color
 dazzled by bright eyes
 snapshot the mind,
 all liberating and spiritual
 emotions express the self
 winks divinity unaware of itself.

Not a masterpiece
 never placed in any art gallery
 lopsided and ill-formed
 not useful like making money
 never makes anything happen,
 yet in forging a shape
 the outside worlds disappear
 perfection resides in the heart
 in the binaries of anguish and ecstasy
 winks a silent moment of epiphany.

Absolutes are mirages
 like the moon in water
 avoid the ultimates
 explore the mind

sit still and be present
 live, not exist
 slow down to see
 solitude nurtures
 life's a twinkle in a baby's eye
 winks in the depthless sky.

[LOHANI is a Nepali poet, literary critic, and academic. He retired as a professor of English from Tribhuvan University. He is one of the founding members of Literary Association of Nepal and the Society of Nepali Writers in English.]



SOAD ALKUWARI (Qatar)

Shadows

The door
 Meticulously drawn
 I get out
 From the courtyard
 Leaving my heart inside.
 The fish will breathe
 In salty rocks
 And the poisoned dagger is tied
 With the palm
 Of the thunderbolt
 And I insert the poisoned dagger
 In the sick body to sleep.

+++

This conflict may be over.
 Two mysterious eyes

Take me far away.
 The sea strengthens me.
 I take away my isolation
 Shaking the door of nothingness
 I throw myself
 In the stillness of the universe
 Then, I scream
 When scared reefs howl
 A drowned statue
 Rises in the middle of the waves.
 +++

[AL-KUWARI is a poet and the Cultural Advisor at the Ministry of Culture, Qatar. Her published works include *It Wasn't My Soul* (2000), *Desert Heiress* (2001), *Searching for the Age* (2001), *A New Door For Entry* (2001), and *The Queen of the Mountains* (2004). She has participated in several poetry festivals like Doha Cultural Festival (2002), Al Khansa Festival in the Sultanate of Oman (2002), Bejrawiya Festival in Sudan (2002), Al Mutanabbi Festival - Switzerland (2004), and Colombia Cultural Festival (2005).]



SVETLANA MAKAROVA (Russia)

Interflow of souls

My tear has joined the rain
 That will run down your face,
 And you will feel the stain –

Both its smell and its taste
 In a tasteless wet trace.

My shadow will enter your room
 With the darkness of night,
 I will let it go soon
 To hold your shadow tight
 When you switch off the light.

My breathing has joined the wind
 That will kiss you on cheek,
 When you let air in
 Before falling asleep,
 Languid, tired and weak.

My whisper will join your sigh
 For the night. No one peeps
 With inquisitive eye
 Into dreams, into sleep –

So, feel perfectly free
 With your wish and with me?
 When you switch off the light
 For the dream, for the night.

(Translated by Liudmila Murashova)

[MAKAROVA is a poet, novelist, and the Secretary of the Union of Writers of Russia and the coordinator of the project "World without Walls" in the Southern Federal District. She has been the head of the Krasnodar Writers ' Organization since 2004 and is editor-in-chief of the Krasnodar Literary magazine. She is the winner of the Russian Orthodox literary prize of the Holy Prince Alexander Nevsky. She also received the "Golden Order of Service to Art" and many other awards. Her published books include *In the Deaf Years*, *Leap of the Leopard*, *Domes*, *Rain in a Large Cage*, and *Birds from a Flock of Turmans*.]

Message to the WPM World Congress

ALEXIX BERNAUT

(National Coordinator, WPM France)

We poets know and experience once again that totalitarianism first seeps in through language. The rest is easy when people's tales and myths are replaced with fixed narratives. Language becomes contaminated just as air, water, and food. On the other hand, poetry blows like the wind in the leaves of oracular trees. Restores play in language, dance in bodies, and song in words. That language is beautiful and not just a propaganda tool, and children have always known it. We will all hear each other's poetry in translation, like pebbles ricocheting on water, like blind kisses. Let us hand a language of love over to the generations to be.

ANDRÉS URIBE BOTERO

(Poet, Colombia)

Desde las montañas de Santa Elena, Corregimiento de Medellín, comparto mi fraternal abrazo a los poetas del mundo que participaran en el primer Congreso del Movimiento Poético Mundial, a realizarse entre el 13 y el 15 de julio del presente año en el marco del 33 Festival Internacional de Poesía de Medellín. Es esta una gran oportunidad para celebrar y reflexionar sobre el poder de la poesía en el tejido social, en beneficio de un mundo más digno, justo y amoroso.

ANNA LOMBARDO

(National Coordinator, WPM Italy)

As a recent member of the WPM, I congratulate you on your willingness to publish another issue of Poetry Planetariat. Jack Hirschman's vision was what attracted me to WPM. Like him, I believe that poetry's strength, beauty, and clarity may still have something to say to this wild world, where everything is weighed and considered only for one's profit. Poetry is a seed to be planted everywhere. A wind that blows around. It is our stage, theatre, school, street, and platform. It is the free space to express our vision of a new world: a world where atrocities such as wars, inequalities, injustices, dehumanization, destruction of our planet, restriction of freedom, and cancellation of the fundamental rights of every human being cease to exist. Our commitment, as members of the WPM, is not only a testimony of our times but, like the oracle of Delphi, to be able to raise questions around this apparent status quo and to arouse a more vital critical awareness among people who have suffered the iniquities of this system. Our weapons will always and only be our poetic words, and we will always remain faithful to those words in harmony with this land that hosts us all. Peace and harmony are our goals for us and everybody, regardless of their political views, their faith, their sex, and their country.

ASHRAF ABOUL-YAZID

(National Coordinator, WPM Egypt)

In writing poetry, we dream. Our dreams are the trees to give the shadows of peace, the fruits of hope, and the strength of roots. In the first World Congress of the World Poetry Movement, our dreams are invited to communicate. We all seek ways to grow our noble dreams to help our suffering societies. The World Congress is our chance to support these dreams, to let them come true. Different languages will not stop our mutual understanding. Varied cultures will not obstacle our cooperation, and differences of opinion will not keep us silent. We are here to give voices to our dreams, to make them real and human.

CAO SHUI

(Secretary General, Boao International Poetry Festival, China)

Since the great German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe proposed the concept of World Literature in 1827, poets of all languages worldwide have been striving towards the great goal of world poetry. In 2011, the establishment of the World Poetry Movement by Fernando Rendon and his colleagues had revolutionary significance, allowing poets from various languages worldwide to unite. The world of poetry today requires the integration of sacred and secular cultures, the integration of ancient and modern cultures, the integration of Eastern and Western cultures, and to create Great Poetry. The first World Poetry Congress in 2023 will undoubtedly become a new milestone in the history of the World Poetry Movement!

GERRY LOOSE

(National Coordinator, WPM Scotland)

Peace is not the opposite of war. Peace is the natural state of human beings, whatever politicians may say. It is that resting place where mothers walk the streets with their children without fear. That place where people across the world have a friendly disposition to their neighbors, without envy, greed, or covetousness. Although poems do not stop bullets, they are the words of peace in a total diversity of tongues that stand in opposition to war. By using the words of peace of love, a dove comes to lodge in the heart. The World Poetry Movement, bringing together thousands of poets across all continents of this green globe, consciously raises a chorus of great peace that it may be heard – and acted upon – by all people of good intention, drowning the words of war and madness.

KOUKIS CHRISTOS

(Poet, Greece)

The poet, in the near future of this world, in a world that is rapidly rising, will be the most useful citizen of our society. It will be an ark of memory and human existence. It will have collected boldness, ingenuity, humanity, courage, lamentation, happiness, solidarity, and conscience. It will have saved oral tradition, writing, and the meaning of our culture. It will be able to tell us about the past, the global concept of the world, and resist with knowledge as a key ally. To resist anything inhuman and artificial, let us salute the poet as the first citizen of a more humane future.

LUIS LUNA

(National Coordinator, WPM Spain)

"Bravo WPM, bravo Movimiento Poético Mundial que se abre a la renovación, al pensamiento sobre la poesía y el mundo. ¿Qué sería del mundo sin el pensamiento poético, sin la poesía?: un mundo sin símbolos, un mundo convertido en un desierto intelectual y agónico en todas sus vertientes. Un mundo en agonía convertido en un campo de esclavos. Los poetas reconocen esas cadenas que ciñen las muñecas del mundo y se reúnen para señalarlas y cercenarlas. La poesía es el mundo de la libertad y de la vida frente a la muerte y la esclavitud de lo robotizado por el poder".

MELISSA MERLO

(National Coordinator, WPM Honduras)

My being fervently yearns for poetry, a sublime manifestation of the human spirit, to show itself as a propelling force towards the yearned-for world peace. With honor from the National Coordination of the World Poetry Movement in Honduras, Central America, we announce our participation in the first World Poetry Congress, whose epicenter will be in Medellín and Caracas. From all corners of this marvelous planet, we will weave our words into a multicolored tapestry of languages and desires for peace, plans and battles, love and empathy, on the collective path toward the incandescent brilliance of poetry.

NEŞE YAŞIN

(National Coordinator, WPM Cyprus)

Cyprus, the island of love, sends greetings to the Congress of the World Poetry Movement.

World poets coming together and taking stands against the crucial problems of our wounded world is a hope in our quest for better days. Our small country has suffered a lot because of its strategic position on the Mediterranean Sea and has been ethnically divided in the last 49 years. Animosity and the culture of conflict prevailed on our island. Poets have been the pioneers in establishing a culture of peace. During the times of zero communication policy, they were the ones who tried to reach beyond the dividing line. Poetry acts with empathy and heals!

NIGAR HASAN ZADEH

(National Coordinator, WPM Azerbaijan)

In today's world, with raging wars, diseases, political strife, and mute fairness, creating such a large-scale poetic movement as the WPM has an important social and cultural significance for the entire literary and cultural world of the planet. I wish the organizers a bright and fruitful journey. I wish you true and necessary goals for humanity. From the bottom of my heart, I congratulate all participants of the Congress and see you in Medellín.

NIMROD BENA

(National Coordinator, WPM Chad)

Les puissants de ce monde ont ravalé les pauvres à n'être plus que des *migrants*. Ils ont privatisé la vie en s'exonérant du destin commun, car la vie est migration. C'est la méconnaissance que d'y cantonner les pauvres. Ils n'ont pas le monopole de la survie, sinon l'espèce humaine n'aurait pas peuplé

l'univers. Au commencement était la mort, car de nos ancêtres chasseurs-cueilleurs, nous avons appris à préserver la vie hors de toute frontière possible et imaginable. Migrer est un prodigieux hommage à la vie qui nous projette par-delà l'horizon.

PAUL TERKHIMBI LIAM

(National Coordinator, WPM Nigeria)

The World Poetry Movement Nigeria Chapter is delighted to be part of this epochal first world congress of the World Poetry Movement being held in Medellin and Caracas. Because we believe in the spiritual power of poetry to enhance human emotions and connections, engineer empathy, and create social change, we are gratified by the invitation to be a part of this agenda-setting initiative. Therefore, we heartily congratulate the WPM family and our colleagues from all over the world who are participating in this event. We hope that the resolutions that will be arrived at during this Congress will help redefine and institutionalize poetry as a powerful tool for social justice and egalitarianism worldwide. Congratulations and happy deliberations.

SHIRANI RAJAPAKSE

(National Coordinator, WPM Sri Lanka)

As poets and writers, we can't stop wars or prevent businessmen and politicians from taking actions that hurt this planet and all living beings. However, we can use our words to draw attention to the injustices done against us. We should think globally because what happens in one part of the world affects all of

us. When one is suffering, we all feel the pain. The first Congress of WPM is an opportunity to create stronger bonds between poets around the world and share sentiments for peace, justice, and dignity for all living beings that call this earth home.

SIPHIWE NZIMA

(Lesotho)

It is without a doubt that the world is finding its voice and that the vessel to resonate the message is the poet. It is not a coincidence that we are to gather. There has never been a more appropriate time to unleash the power of the spoken word than now. Our livelihoods, our survival, and our freedom literally depend on it. Our truth, pain, and sadness can only be eased by impressing on it.

HRH ZOLANI MKIVA

(WPM Coordinating Committee Member, South Africa)

Poetry is the foremost established art expression in the universe. Poetry has been there from time immemorial. It is the bank of historiography. It is the fountain of knowledge. A vehicle of civilization. An injection of consciousness. A pageant of language. A beacon of hope and an inspiration to the people. Poetry is love. Love for nature. Poetry is life. Life in its entirety. Poetry is an instrument of social cohesion. Poetry unites humanity. It's the therapy that heals society. Poetry is about our livelihood. Poetry is our inheritance. Poetry is a human expression for the good of humanity.



Poetry and Ecology in Asia

SHIVANI SIVAGURUNATHAN

(Malaysia)

The linguist and public intellectual Noam Chomsky has reiterated this on numerous occasions and famously in his book co-authored with Laray Polk.¹ that the two central issues of our time are the threats of nuclear war and environmental devastation, we can also add a third: the looming proliferation of artificial intelligence that some thinkers have assigned as the death knell of the human race. All three are crucial—in their own ways, of course, but ultimately they necessitate discourse and action based on survival. Some environmentalists, however, put it in crude and urgent terms: if there's no earth for us to inhabit, there's nothing else to upkeep or defend. In other words, our human-made ventures and experiments in realms like AI and nuclear sophistication will be rendered moot.

Undeniably, the need to save the earth is vital and has its own meaning in each continent. Biodiversity in many parts of Asia remains vulnerable. Forests are being stripped down in places like Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Myanmar and replaced with oil

palm plantations that effectively destroy soil health. It is interesting to note that although these are pressing environmental issues and have made their way into poetic depictions in the Asian region as a whole, a glaring gap remains in ecopoetic and ecocritical discourse with regard to the place of Asian ecopoetry, particularly Southeast Asian ecopoetry.

This becomes an important area of consideration when we look at the role of poets across the ages as mouthpieces of truth. Human history itself is littered with poets and scribes who act as the voice and mirror of social groups and shared realities. Poets sing, holler, emote, and proclaim the deepest truths of the human condition and of topical ones too. While environmental poetry is something that has only consciously emerged in recent decades, the natural world has always featured in the oldest scriptures and literature. In Asia, texts like the Vedas, the Tao Te Ching, and the I-Ching are rife not merely with environmental references but with the inevitability of human and non-human relationships. In his study of the Vedas, M. Vannucci writes that "Vedic people were one with nature: one is that which manifests in all, which in contemporary

1 Noam Chomsky and Laray Polk. *Nuclear War and Environmental Catastrophe*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2013.

ecological terms is expressed as 'everything is related to everything else.'²” This type of eco-consciousness pervades the ancient Asian imagination and intellect, from “the valley spirit [that] never dies;/ it is the woman, primal mother³” in the *Tao Te Ching* to the numerous wise animals equipped with an agency in the hikayat or epic narratives of classical Malaysian literature. Yet, the trajectory of ecopoetics from ancient to contemporary times in the Asian context is often overshadowed by the development of the field, which is, for the most part, Western-centric. The editor of *Southeast Asian Ecocriticism* highlights this issue in his introduction to the anthology: “Despite the persistence of the environment as a subject of creative discourse, however, there remains an uncanny ecocritical lacuna in Southeast Asia—a gap rendered more noticeable by the proliferation of English language-based scholarship on Indian (South Asian) and Chinese (East Asian) environmental literature and culture in recent years....recognizing Asia's long-standing history of cultural expression denouncing ecological degradation, Thornber observes that ecocriticism has focused disproportionately on Western writing and art.”⁴ Although they mention that more emphasis has been placed

on South Asian and East Asian eco-literature, at the neglect of Southeast Asian output, they also mention Karen Laura Thornber’s observation that more attention has been paid to the ecological writings of poets and writers from the Western world as a whole.

This does not mean, however, that this region lacks ecopoetry, merely that it has not been excavated and examined in the way that many Western ecopoems have. Seminal works of criticism in the field, such *Postcolonial Ecologies*, edited by Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley, and Karen Laura Thornber’s *Ecoambiguity: Environmental Crises and East Asian Literatures*, are indicators that discourse has bloomed and continues to grow. But the lens of looking needs to shift further and zoom in on the way poetry in the region has dealt with environmental issues and depictions of the natural world.

Ecopoetry, as a term, is new enough. Poets and scholars do not necessarily agree on a single definition for what the term means, but, in general, an orientation towards the ecological is a necessary component of the genre. John Shoptaw writes that “however self-aware and self-reflexive it may be, an ecopoem must be tethered to the natural world... an ecopoem is environmental in that it is ecocentric, not anthropocentric. Human interests cannot be the be-all and end-all of an ecopoem.”⁵ An ecopoem, therefore, drifts away from the perspective that human beings are at the gravitational center of a poem, and

2 M. Vannucci. *Ecological Readings in the Veda*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1994. p.67.

3 Lao Tsu. *Tao Te Ching*. Translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English with Toinette Lippe. New York: Vintage, 2011. Verse 6.

4 *Southeast Asian Ecocriticism: Theories, Practices, Prospects*. Edited by John Charles Ryan. London: Lexington Books, 2018. pp.12-13.

5 John Shoptaw. “Why Ecopoetry?” *Poetry*, Vol. 207, No. 4. JANUARY 2016, p.396.

indeed, also of life. An ecopoem's movement, then, is towards the ecological and is "tethered to the natural world." This is the foundational premise of an ecopoem—that it has at its center, at its heart, an ecological theme. Forrest Gander, another prominent writer in the field, writes, "'eco-logic' is not focused on binaries and isn't dialectical but questions "the whole of subjectivity" and rethinks the self as "a collective singularity."⁶ The logic used in ecopoetry—the 'ecologic'—is one that transcends or goes beyond dualistic thinking. Although the term itself may be relatively new, its essence is something that can be traced back to the days when poets wrote about nature in ways that surpassed colonial-capitalist binary thinking of us versus nature.

In the Vedas, for example, equilibrium between humans and non-humans is emphasized, as is the sacredness of the earth with its multitudinous life forms. The interconnectedness between human beings and the natural world is expressed in prayers, chants, and rituals, as in this Rig Veda invocation: "We claim protection from the Hills, we claim protection of the Floods,

Of him who stands by Viṣṇu's side."⁷ This type of ecological tapestry is found in much of ancient Indic literature, which has gone on to influence many other cultures, particularly in

Southeast Asian countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, and Myanmar, where elements of epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, for instance, are found in various artistic and literary imaginings.

This rather advanced eco-consciousness became diluted through the process of European colonization that brought with it a language of separation, power, and domination which has become normalized in today's neocolonial-capitalist world. The postcolonial scholar Edward Said speaks of exploitation of the natural world and imperialism as coterminous since the colonialists' descriptions of nature were part of the process of dominating it; in claiming knowledge of it, they were also claiming power over it, and the people that inhabited it. Therefore, the exploitation of nature and exploitation of colonized peoples is founded upon this same story of separation: human versus non-human, civilization versus wildness, and is premised on a hierarchy with human beings at the peak of this so-called hierarchy. This means privileging human beings over other species and forms of life on the planet and goes back to Aristotle's "The Great Chain of Being" that places human beings on top of the ladder of existence, with larger animals in the next rung, and plants below but above rocks and minerals, which is, of course, antithetical to the depictions of the natural world in ancient literature in this region.

Fast forward to postcolonial times, and poets are recovering these older, seamless notions of human and non-human relationships while drawing attention to the environmental

6 Forrest Gander. *The Future of the Past: The Carboniferous & Eco-poetics*. Chicago Review, AUTUMN 2011, Vol. 56, No. 2/3. AUTUMN 2011, p.218.

7 Rig Veda, VIII; 31, 10. <https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/rigveda/rv08031.htm>

injustices afflicting lives across species. Indian poet Sudeep Sen's *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation* bears witness to the environmental crisis with poems like "Climate Change," where "we stare starkly/ at the climate change/ we've helped create."⁸, and to the need for spiritual strength in "Om: A Cerement": "Yet we chant in hope,/ for peace: Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih."⁹ Shifting our gaze to the Southeast Asian context where ecopoetry is often underrepresented, we find poets like Ricardo M. de Ungria from the Philippines and Muhammad Haji Salleh from Malaysia, whose gaze on nature often highlights the beauty, wisdom, and majesty of the natural world. Ungria, for example, writes by way of a preface to his two poems published in "Cordite Poetry Review" that "My concerns here are countrified and rural, more natural and airier, and unwilling to prove anything to the world out there of social media...Therefore, The poems are about death and life, art and woman and creation, and the energies of natural elements around us that will outlive our shining human moments—themes that continue to fascinate me."¹⁰

Similarly, Haji Salleh's poems capture the magnificence of nature as a means to alert

us to the importance of preservation. Here he writes about an important freshwater lake in peninsular Malaysia, Tasik Chini: "Slow is a luxury/ On riverine branches.../Slow is the movement of nature/ The light rhythm/ Under the water's melody."¹¹ There are also, of course, eco-poems that are more overtly political in nature, such as Charlene Rajendran's "RE: Construction To Whom It May Concern."¹² formatted as an angry letter to developers who are destroying natural spaces and creating concrete jungles, and Latiff Mohidin's "To the Turtle"¹³ that depicts the threat to the turtles that live on the east coast of peninsular Malaysia. Then there are activist poets from Myanmar, such as Rohingya poet Mayyu Ali who takes to social media to express the injustices to his community and to the displacement they suffer, such as in this effort to collect the voices of Rohingya youth via poetry: "Nothing left, burnt buildings, villages./ The sky is smoke./ The earth smells of burning./ The Arakan, isolated, a brand-new inferno—AR, 27."¹⁴

8 Sudeep Sen. *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation*. London: Pippa Rann Books & Media, 2021. p.33

9 Ibid. p. 175.

10 Ricardo M. de Ungria, "Two Poems by Ricardo M. de Ungria" <http://cordite.org.au/chapbooks-features/centrehold/two-poems-by-ricardo-m-de-ungria/>

11 Muhammad Haji Salleh. "Slow is Beautiful" in *Living Landscapes, Connected Communities: Culture, Environment, and Change Across Asia*. Edited by Justine Vaz and Narumol Aphinives. Penang: Areca Books, 2014. P.158.

12 Charlene Rajendran. "RE: Construction To Whom It May Concern" in *In-Sights: Malaysian Poems*. Edited by Malachi Edwin Vethamani. Petaling Jaya: Maya Press, 2003.

13 Latiff Mohidin. "To the Turtle" translated by Mansor Ahmad Saman in *ibid*.

14 "Rohingya Collective Voices" <https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2019/spring/rohingya-collective-voices>

In Indonesia, Khairani Barokka published a book-length poem, *Indigenous Species*.¹⁵, that captures issues of ecojustice that affect communities in Indonesia as well as countless species that suffer from environmental degradation and exploitation.

There are, of course, many more poets and poems in Asia, and Southeast Asia in particular, that give voice to environmental concerns and that emphasize an ecological lens as a means of looking at the world. The ecocritical gaze not only needs to turn towards the region, but it also needs to emerge from within, where the discourse can continue to grow.

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15 Barokka, Khairani. *Indigenous Species*. London: Tilted Axis, 2016.



South Asian Kavya

DAYA DISANAYAKE

(Sri Lanka)

In South Asia, we have *Kavya*, which belongs to South Asia *Sahitya*, which had been unfortunately anglicized into literature and poetry. We need to share our *Kavya* with all the people across all physical and man-made barriers to create our *Vishva Sahitya*. Before going out to embrace the whole world, we could make a start in South Asia with South Asian *Sahitya*. This sense of togetherness and transcending boundaries is visible in Rabindranath's own words: "The word '*Sahitya*' is derived from the word 'sahita'. Thus etymologically, a sense of unity is inherent in the word '*Sahitya*'. It is not merely the unity of thoughts of language or books. Nothing but '*Sahitya*' can create an intimate link between peoples, between past and present, between far and near." The South Asian *Kavyakara* received their creative inspiration from nature and from *Sanathan Dharma*, with which they grew up.

All our poets, from Rabindranath, Jibananda, Devkota, and Parijat in the East to Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī in the West, are all South Asian poets. Whether today they are claimed to belong to Bangladesh, India, Nepal, or Afghanistan is not of any relevance to those who love their poetry. We have *Chathurpada*, which spread from Bangladesh through West

Bengal to Odisha, and Assam, to Nepal, and flowed down to Lanka as *Satharapada*.

Over two billion people in South Asia live on a land area of 5.2 million km². We are one family with one culture, and almost all of us are descendants of early migrants, probably from Africa. We must get together and live as one family. Yet we are divided into eight countries by political barriers, though geographically, only Sri Lanka and Maldives are separated by the sea. We have several major religions in the region, but due to cultural and social intermingling, each has borrowed and adapted practices from the others, enabling peaceful coexistence. Literature of the region enables the sharing and understanding of the religious and cultural traditions of the various peoples in South Asia.

Language would not have been a barrier in the past; even today, it is not a major barrier in the subcontinent. Traders and Religieux traveled everywhere, communicating with people irrespective of language differences. People in Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and even Afghanistan can communicate with the majority in India or Pakistan because they have so many words in common, even with 13 major languages within four major language families

and altogether several hundred languages and dialects. English as the link language has been helpful since the British occupation of most countries except Nepal and Bhutan.

We cannot make the world a 'Global Village' overnight. We need to do it one step at a time. Our contribution, however small, has to make South Asia into one nation, irrespective of all the political barriers, because the progress of transport and digital communications has brought down geographical and physical barriers. Let us learn about our people, culture, and traditions through our literature and promote them throughout South Asia first. Let us first use the literature in English that exists in all the South Asian countries. The next step would be to translate writings in other native languages into English and other major languages.

A major barrier in South Asia today is the Partition of the subcontinent. We still find new literature, films, and documentaries about the partition and about those who suffered and are still suffering in regions now labeled as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kashmir (parts of which are controlled by India, Pakistan, and China). Even the diaspora writers, who are so far removed from the country and the people by distance and time, are still writing about them. We need to study humane creative works to break down the partitions, literally, socially, and culturally, and to avoid any further partitions. The British should never have created the 'Partitions.' After almost all of South Asia had been formed into one country by the British, they undid what they had achieved, murdering millions and displacing more millions, as their parting curse. The tragedy still lives in our minds seven decades later.

We also have unnecessary labels to identify writers within political borders. This creates issues. Bangla writers are divided between Bangladesh and West Bengal, and Urdu and Panjabi writers are between India and Pakistan. There are Tamil writers in Sri Lanka and South India. Rabindranath wrote that nationalism is "the organized self-interest of a people, where it is least human and least spiritual" (Nationalism, 1916).

We have writers now labeled as 'Diaspora Writers,' by which we mean those who have left their homeland to settle down in another country. Even if they write about their country of birth, they would often describe their 'imaginary homeland,' a homeland as they wish it would have been or as the readers of their adopted country would like to read about.

We also have writers from other countries who have settled down or have lived for many years in South Asia. Rudyard Kipling was born in India but is considered an English journalist and writer. Parijat (Vishnu Kumari Waiba) was born in Darjeeling and is considered one of the most famous Nepali poets today. Speaking of Sri Lankan writers, Anne Ranasinghe, was born in Germany to Jewish parents. She married a Sri Lankan doctor, settled in Sri Lanka as a Sri Lankan citizen, and wrote her poems in English. She won the Sahitya Rathana, the most prestigious State Award as a Sri Lankan writer. Ven. S. Mahinda Thera was a Buddhist monk who was a very famous poet writing in Sinhala to rouse feelings of patriotism among the Sri Lankans. He called himself a Tibetan, born in Sikkim. Today it is not easy to give him a nationality because Sikkim, at the time of his birth, was not a part of India, and Tibet may

not have accepted him either, but people in Sri Lanka have accepted him as Sri Lankan. British writer Leonard Woolf is also remembered as a poet, better known as the author of the great Sri Lankan novel 'The Village in the Jungle.'

Sufi poetry was written not only in Persian by Rumi but in Sindhi by Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, and we can read Rabindranath's Bangla poetry, Mahagama Sekara's Sinhala too as Sufi poetry. All poets think, see, and hear the same thoughts. Had Sekara from Sri Lanka been translated into English, then we could have compared his,

*"i can hear
i can feel
i can smell*

*and i can taste
through the four senses*

i can see"

with the lines of Devkota of Nepal,

*"I see sounds
hear sights
taste smells"*

and Nazrul of Bangladesh,

*"I am the rebel eternal,
I raise my head beyond this world,
High, ever erect and alone!"*

Inherited from the West, in South Asia too, we have a category called Women Writers, even though in the past, no one would have bothered about the gender of the writer. Yet unfortunately, society had compelled some female writers to hide their gender and use a male pseudonym, while today, it is imposed by the publishers. We need to talk about Dalit Feminism, about those females who are twice

oppressed in the households of the oppressed people.

We also talk about Postcolonial Literature, which in a way, is a hangover of colonialism because, till recent times, many of the Postcolonial writers had received their English education during the colonial times or in educational institutes which continued the colonial traditions. It is not always easy to draw a line between colonial and postcolonial literature. Even if poets who write in English need to cling to colonial and postcolonial poetry, let us shed this unwanted burden from our minds when we think, write or read our poetry in our own languages.

When we read today the literature that evolved during the freedom struggle, we have to keep in mind the situation in colonial South Asia, which the young generation has to read-with an open mind to understand the past as sometimes, there is danger in trying to act in a similar manner today. This would lead to conflicts around nations, nation-states, nationalism, and anti-nationalism. It would also give rise to temptations for further struggles for separation, which may not be in the best interest of anyone.

We are confined to our own country or region and are not aware of the great literature of our neighbors. In India, universities teach South Asian Literature. Though we have so many social and cultural links with India, in South Asian Literature studies, probably the students are aware of only diaspora writers from other South Asian countries.

We need more anthologies, literary reviews, conferences, and online discussions about all literature published in South Asia.

To enable online discussions and webinars, we need to go online with our literature as e-books and, wherever possible, by publishing them in the public domain to be shared with all.

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, *Sahitya* (Vishva-Bharati 2004) p. 112

² *ibid* p. xxii



VADIM TEREKHIN (Russia)

Apocalypse

Carrying a terrible infection.
Like a pretentious evil eye –
I am in the vastness of being
I will be Lord of everyone for a long time,
Invisible, domineering, wayward,
And I'm not the Lord either!

Colorless, odorless, volatile,
I am omnipresent and powerful,
And I was strong enough,
When with worldwide publicity
On the holiday of holy days, Easter
I even canceled God.

Having a full sense of ownership,
I will immediately bring clarity to life,

[DISSANAYAKE is the only writer to have won thrice the State Literary Award of Sri Lanka for English Novel. He won it for the first time for *Kat Bitha*, his first novel. To date, he has published eight novels and a collection of poems. He is also a columnist for Sri Lankan national daily papers, including *Daily News*.]

What is a person - a person,
Not a friend and brother, but just anyone,
Direct bitterness and danger,
As someone from below predicted to us!

There will be a lot of me everywhere.
I am a power not given by God,
I will accuse the Earth tribe
Of all sins rotting in the community,
And using a simple mask
I will divide this world!

[TEREKHIN, born in 1963, is a Russian poet. He is the co-chairman of the Union of Writers of Russia and the coordinating committee member of the World Poetry Movement. He is also a member of the Academy of Russian Literature (Moscow) and Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Culture of Kaluga region (2009 - 2014). He is the recipient of literary awards such as "Poet of the Year" (China, 2021), Kirill Turovsky International Literary Award (Belarus, 2021), and the "Orpheus on the Danube" (Serbia, 2021), among others.]



Shades of Madness in *Madness*: *An Anthology of World Poetry*

Bal Bahadur Thapa (Nepal)

Madness: An Anthology of World Poetry, a collection of poems by 297 poets from 110 countries, was launched in Kathmandu in June 2023. Edited by Keshab Sigdel, a well-known Nepali poet in his own right, this ambitious anthology brings the poetic voices from the world together in their respective tones and pitches. Tracing out the trajectory of the conception of this anthology, Sigdel, in his editorial entitled "Poetry and Madness," locates the nationwide lockdown imposed by the Government of Nepal in an attempt to curb Coronavirus from spreading across the country. He reflects, "For the first time [in my life], I was terrorized by silence." As things got chaotic with the daily mis(communication) about the Corona pandemic, "[t]he entire world struggled to make sense of things . . ." Sigdel seems to take the chaos as madness. His attempt to make sense of things amidst chaos led him to the conception of this anthology. However, as one starts reading poem after poem from page 1 to page 587, one feels that madness does not have to be confined to the chaos resulting from global crises like the Corona pandemic. Madness, as portrayed by the poems of this anthology, is as old as human civilization is. Crises like the Corona pandemic expose this dark part of human civilization. Therefore, this age-old madness has developed

several shades. Resistance emerges as the most dominant hue. This anthology showcases poems that, directly or indirectly, challenge power manifested in human relations across gender, race, religion, state, and whatnot. Madness is another name for resistance. Mohammed Abid, a Moroccan poet, in his poem "Upheavals." Ponders over resistance:

*What if,
a stray chair dosing in a café
Rebelle against a very elegant costumer
And the contagion
Spread to all chairs*

Likewise, Xhemil Bytyci from Kosovo, in his poem "Burial in glacier," paints the marginalized people's anger and frustration in these words:

*People in angst
Powerless, voiceless, and soundless,
Awaited for their turn
To be buried in glacier*

This determination to choose communal suicide is their final attempt to have their voice heard. Meanwhile, Lana Derkac from Croatia, in his poem "Poem for a refugee," portrays the madness unleashed by one's exile. He calls each refugee "an island," which "is a *scar* on water" (my emphasis). Paul Catafago from Palestine, in his poem "The madness of exile,"

chimes in: "[E]xile is perpetual/ grief:/ grief causes madness." In the diaspora, the speaker is asked to forget Palestine. However, madness is dearer to him than common sense as he decides to remember rather than forget: "There is a madness in choosing to/ go against the flow/ to refuse to forget." As an exile, he finds "home/ in this madness."

However, Hussain Habasch from Kurdistan, in his poem "A Rose for the heart of life," portrays the two types of madness: madness of creativity and madness of fighting and winning. Though the madness of killing will win, the poet appeals to the creative souls to leave "[a] rose for the heart of life" than "[a] bullet to the heart of life." Here, obsession emerges as madness. Right here, it is quite relevant to bring in striking lines from "Not to go mad" by Hungary's Sandor Halmosi: "In order not to go mad, you have to go/ mad each day." One can glean a complex interplay between madness and sanity in these lines. Halmosi is not for building a watertight wall between these two. Instead, he is for letting "vulgarity flow through you because "[w]hile flowing, you can be cleansed." Madness turning into sanity! What can be more beautiful than this!

Meanwhile, Shreedhar Lohani from Nepal, in "Tapestry: images of our times," sees madness in the recurrence of life's cycle. Suffocated by the recurrence, the speaker asks in desperation: "When will life's cycle of mad recurrence end?" Melissa Lerlo from Honduras, in her "Ignorance," portrays



ignorance as madness, which has permeated the institutions like the Congress and the Court of Justice. Institutional ignorance is the root of the suffering of people all across the world. Unfortunately, "[i]gnorance resides/ dyed in colors/ in the seats of Congress."

All the people- who suffer because of the violence/ ignorance/ indifference of the mortal rulers and the suffocating recurrence of the immortal ruler- become exiles within their homes. To borrow from Paul Catafago, all these exiles, at least creative ones, "found a home in the madness of poetry." The exiles must applaud the madness of Keshab Sigdel, who, as the editor, tirelessly worked to bring together poetic embers from all over the world to build a warm house for the exiles, who know the currency of poetry only in this age of crude consumerism and capitalism. One must applaud Red Panda, the publisher of this anthology, for helping Sigdel to get his vision materialized without any compromise whatsoever.

[THAPA is an assistant professor of English Studies, Cultural Studies, and Academic Writing at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. He writes stories and poems. His poems and stories have been published in literary journals like *Bengal Lights* and *Of Nepalese Clay*. His poems have appeared in *Six Strings* (2011), a joint anthology of six poets from Nepal.]

A Poet Has the Responsibility to Support the Fight for Justice

PETER SEMOLIČ (Slovenia)
in conversation with Gregor Preaci



PETER SEMOLIČ, born in Ljubljana in 1967, is the author of sixteen poetry books, including Tamarisk (1991), The Roses of Byzantium (1994), House Made of Words (1996), The Milky Way (2009), Poems and Letters (2009), Night in the Middle of the Day (2012), The Second Shore (2015), and The Edges (2020). He has received Jenko's Poetry Prize and the Prešeren Foundation Award (the National Award for Literature and Arts). He is the co-founder and chief editor of the first Slovenian online poetry magazine, Poiesis.

Gregor Preac talks to Semolič about his poetic odyssey, poetry and society in the changing regime of technology and power, and cross-cultural transactions of words and ideas.

[Preac is a Slovenian traveler, journalist, writer, and photographer, author of ten books of poetry, short stories, and riddles for children, born in 1968 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.]

In your 2015 poetry collection, The Other Shore, you write about death a lot, at least indirectly: the poems Navje, Hamlet, and Hades. We listen to the blackbird singing in the nearby bush and another one responding from behind the wall that divides the world of the dead from the world of the living. A cloud blocks the sun, or perhaps it's suddenly evening. Is this the time of proxy wars, financial crises, great migrations, refugees, pandemics, disorientations, censorship, propaganda, one-worldism, the decline of democracy, and new and new clouds?

The Other Shore is my only thematic poetry collection, and its theme is, indeed,



death. It is also the only collection in which I have used a dramatic monologue or persona in all poems: the personae are mostly literary characters or historical figures. With them, the various social, cultural, and political contexts in which these characters lived and died enter the poems. However, since history is not the past, but the story of the past, which also has a lot to say about the present, these poems are also not only about the past but also about the present. However, they do not want to demonize the present, not least because of the awareness that cruelty and death have been with man from the beginning - genocide, as perhaps the most extreme form of evil, is unfortunately not an invention of the 20th century.

You are somehow tied to ancient Greece, ancient Rome, antiquity, and Shakespeare, who was attracted by a similar lost ancient knowledge of antiquity. How would you describe the ancient Greek gods sitting on Mount Olympus in Greece, watching all these things that people are doing down below, having fun with it, quarreling over it, or competing over people, creating conflicts, wars, interfering in them, creating demigods or heroes? Where, how do you see the gods of war today?

Unfortunately, war is also a constant companion of humanity. Wars have complex political, economic, and cultural backgrounds, and many times even those who are in charge of the parties/sides involved in the war are just peasants on the chessboard of history. There are no gods of war, but there are complex events that, unfortunately, all too often lead to war.

A major war is raging in Europe, and it is still growing. How can we not feel war? How should we feel war? Can we end the war if we take sides in the ambiguity of war, or should the poet seek the ways of peace, for which he must remain above, outside, neutral?

In war, there is always an aggressor and the victim. My personal choice is always to take the side of the victim. I am also trying to help the attacked side as much as I can, in the case of the war in Ukraine, by translating and publishing Ukrainian poetry, especially Ukrainian war poetry; I am also planning a larger presentation/publication on Poiesis of poems and texts dedicated to the Iranian movement Women, Freedom, Life. As a poet, I am a public figure, and I feel that as a public figure, I should also take a public stand against social injustice.

How much do time and society influence poetry, the poet? How much can the poet influence society and time? Is poetry and thought clouded by an unfriendly time, by the system, by violence in society, or by aging itself, the approach of death? What would cheer it up?

Poetry is a reality sui generis, with its history and laws. But it is also connected to the everyday reality, the society, and the culture in which it is created. That is why it is also marked by current events, even when it tries to be self/auto-referential. Hugo Ball's famous sound poem *Gadji beri bimba* is indeed meaningless, it is pure sound, but it is also a deeply political poem at the same time. Poetry is public by definition and, therefore, also political in the

Old Greek sense of the word "polis."

Poets are most often described by society as emotionally unbalanced, unbalanced, freaks, and unrealistic dreamers!?! Is this true? Or does society need culprits for its irrationality, mistakes, and nonsense? Or do they accuse poets and thinkers of being something they are?

Oh, there are sinners and saints, fools and geniuses, and even, at least outwardly, dull clerks among the poets. What I am saying is that we poets are humans and, therefore, different from one another. Of course, as with other social groups and professions, a lot of prejudices have accumulated around us. And society's opinion is built on simplifications and prejudices.

To what extent is the poet concerned with society, the system, and social relations, or does he prefer to withdraw, to escape into the bucolic and classical poetic phrases of 'eros and thanatos,' 'love and death,' which he treats purely from human nature, or hormonally, and not from political reality?

It is not only because he or she is a poet that a poet is obliged to care for society, to inscribe it in his poems. It is the poet's duty to write poems and, if possible, good poems. If poetry leads him or her in the direction of hermeticism, then that is the right direction for him or her. But I think it is essential that he or she is also aware of the political dimension of his/her writing that I described earlier.

In the poem Don Quixote, you write: 'Sancho likes to accuse me of drawing the line under heroism. He points to North America and revels in the image of the cowboy. 'Look

who's running the world. Look at these beautiful bodies that run the world. These mythical bodies that run the world," and he glances at my sad figure.' Is this the world you want? Where are the poets? Have you given up? Do you think you're fighting windmills like Don Quixote? How to be a happy citizen, cosmopolitan, and poet in 21st-century Europe?

The poem ironizes the relationship between Europe and the USA. We forget that the USA is founded in myth, not history. In this, it is similar to religious communities. Part of this myth is that the USA is the chosen nation to lead the world. Today, that part of the myth is being shattered, with at least China and India as the new superpowers and, at the same time, a growing tendency towards isolationism in the US. But until recently, the US really did lead the world, and that is the time to which this poem refers: the time when we were looking on in amazement at the beautiful bodies on the beaches of California, transformed by exercise and surgery. To be happy was to live a life similar to those mythical creatures, that is, to live in Coca-Cola commercials. The poem, like much of my poetry, is ironic.

How do you feel in the 21st century about the words 'hero,' 'heroism,' 'sacrifice for the homeland,' 'fallen in war,' 'martyrs,' 'territory,' 'frontier,' 'nation,' 'decoration,' 'flag,' 'modern weapons,' 'armorers'?

I will refer to my previous answer. Europe has gone through the experience of existentialism, and it has called into question much that is understood in a literal way by communities founded in myth. In such

communities, the hero is indeed a hero, but not so in Europe. Europe does not have a Captain America, but it does have Švejk of Karel Čapek, Ferdinand Bardamu from the novel of Ferdinand Celine, Antoine Roquentin, from the novel of Jean Paul Sartre, Nausea, etc..

How does war affect a poet? Why is it that we don't notice the war that is far away, don't feel it, and yet the wars are so similar, the consequences almost the same? (The poet should live in timelessness and not on censorship or propaganda, geographical distance or proximity?)

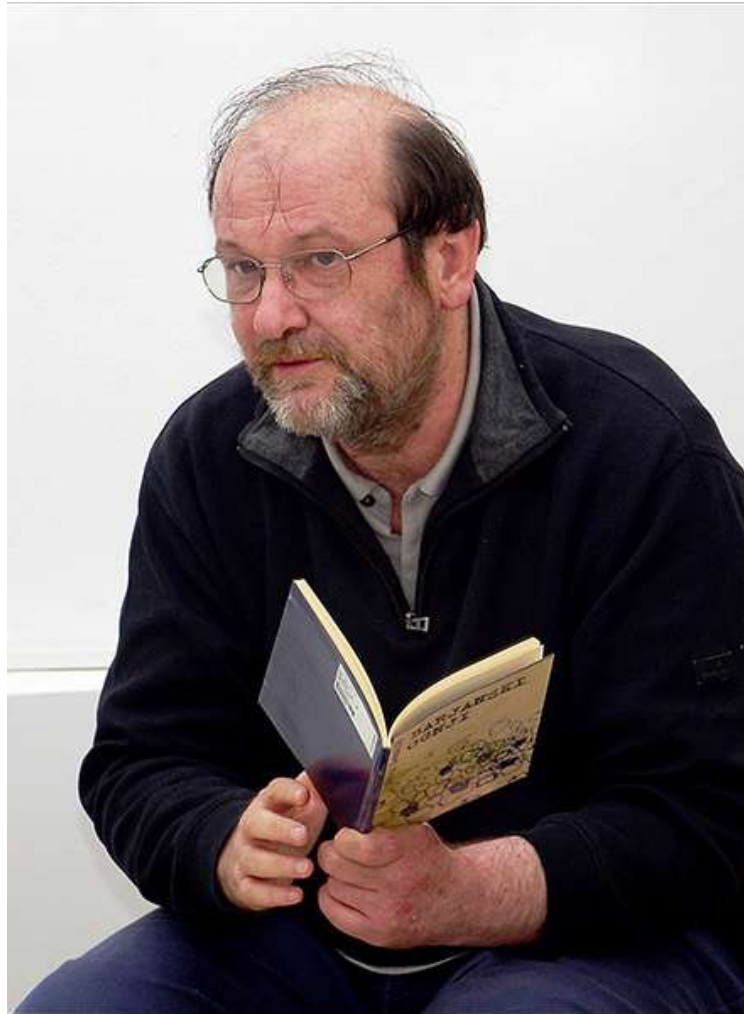
The Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert wrote somewhere that compassion decreases in proportion to distance. It is normal that a war in our neighborhood affects us more than a war somewhere far away. And we poets are human. But poets are also intellectuals, and as intellectuals, we should also respond to wars far away. So the question is why intellectuals do not do this anymore. One possible answer is that they may react, but because they are excluded from the public sphere, we do not notice.

Hinduism and Buddhism describe our time as Kali Yuga, the black age, predicted, and predictable according to the usual historical, social, and economic cycles. What to offer to society, humanity, the gods, the spirits, and the Earth, instead of the blood of humans in war? What and how should drive us instead of the gods (war)? How do you imagine the human of the 22nd century if humanity manages to survive until then? What kind of world do you want? What kind of society?

I would not be so fatalistic: today's man is not so different from the man of thousands and thousands of years ago. Like our ancestors, we are capable of creating immense beauty and, unfortunately, of causing endless suffering. Throughout history, we find attempts to reduce suffering, but we are clearly failing. We remain as frightened and as violent as the people of Altamira. And I bet they, too, have spoken of a golden age of humanity that has passed and hoped it would return. We, humans, will one day become extinct as a species, maybe soon. After all, there is already another great extinction, but we may also survive. In this case, our descendants in the 22nd century will be just like us: for better or worse.

To what extent is the ignorance of society linked to consumerism, to not reading poetry and philosophy, which seem to be in perfect correlation? How to return poetry to humanity, humanity to poetry? It would be somehow logical that in times of no time, i.e., of all kinds of overwork, man would turn to short texts: a poem is supposed to be beauty, where the fewest words say the most, teach the most, give the most insights, questions, philosophy, psychology?

A question I often ask myself is whether there is a link between poetry and ethics. But again and again, I find that there is not. Bad people can be good poets, but good people do not necessarily make good poets. And even worse, some of the greatest atrocities in



history have been committed by poetry lovers. Poetry is marked by the culture in which it is produced, but at the same time, it is a reality sui generis. We must never forget that. The Slovenian poet Tomaž Šalamun wrote that the poet is a monster because he destroys the language of the community. Through poetry, the community is renewed, but it is also disintegrated: poetry is a form of eroticism (G. Bataille), and, as such, it could also be destructive.

In the poem "The Lion," you write: 'Back in Paradise he lies like any stray cat in the shade of an apple tree, a baby antelope licks his forehead.' As a poet, a thinker, a traveler through literature, cultures, and worlds, what do you feel a poet has to do to bring the broken social relations back to a certain equilibrium, a nirvana?

I don't think that the poet or poetry has the power to do such a thing. Culture is simply too complex to be changed just like that. We know that changes in culture happen very slowly. Centuries and centuries have to pass before the social paradigm changes. But poetry has another power, the power to create collective visions. Culture follows these and such visions.

In the poem "Snow White," you say: 'Snow White as a kitschy image on a Facebook wall? If this is a punishment, then I don't know what I'm being punished for and why'. Has social media defeated the book, propaganda, and advertisements defeated rationality and curiosity? Snow White is a kitsch product of the early 19th century and the dwarfs long before it: does society's aesthetics remain at the level of the 19th century and before? How are supermarkets, social media, film for the masses, entertainment killing aesthetics, beauty, subtlety, exploration, creativity, and poem?

The internet and social media have a profound impact on cultures around the world. And just as we are beginning to understand the impact of social media, AI like Chatgpt has already emerged and may cut even deeper into societies and cultures. Poetry as a form of eroticism seems to have no place in the age of

simulacrum, but I don't think that's quite the case. Poetry is one of the oldest human skills, it has survived many changes, and I believe it will survive this last one too. But it will certainly change to some extent, just as its social role is already changing. At the moment, it is perceived mainly as a leisure activity, as a somewhat nostalgic form of entertainment. Still, poetry is - as Octavio Paz pointed out - revolutionary, and not even AI can take that power away from it.

What advice would you give to the masses of misfits, zombies, modern slaves, robots, addicted shoppers, and digital addicts to regain happiness, peace, and meaning? How does the poet see happiness, peace, and meaning today? Does it change over time, or does it remain?

Different cultures and different periods have different values of concepts such as peace, happiness, etc. Today the concept of individual happiness is the most highly valued, at least in the West, and it is understood in a very consumerist way. It is closely linked to the understanding of the human being as one of the resources to be exploited. It is essentially a psychopathic understanding of people and nature. I have no advice, but I hope that this conception will change as soon as possible.

How do traveling, meeting poets from other cultures, and reading and translating poetry from other languages, nations, and cultures influence your poetry? Is your latest collection ROBOVI mainly a mountain-travel reflection?

They have a very strong impact. I translate good poets, and therefore I learn to write poetry through translation. That's why I think I write

better poems today than I did decades ago. If I hadn't translated Keshab Sigdel, Immanuel Mifsud, or Lyuba Yakimchuk, I would never have written, for example, the collection *The Edges*. The poem "The Forest" resonates with the translation of Keshab's poems.

Is multiculturalism the settling of people of other cultures, religions, languages, and nations in completely different environments, mass migration, or is the essence of it all the exchange of knowledge, experience, and knowledge without violent intervention in space? Is there not then always the imposition of the stronger, the melting pot, violent defenses such as hate speech, civil wars, and genocide? Isn't the melting pot then a kind of zombiism, a watered-downness without roots, without memory, the beauty of language disappearing, everything being simplified? For example, China, Russia, Turkey, Nepal, African countries, and Latin American countries are countries where many small languages, vocabularies, cultures, customs, and different ways of feeling, of thinking, are disappearing en masse. Everything is melting into one, perhaps like liquid ice cream, which then has no real shape, meaning, taste, color, or charm...?

I have mixed feelings about globalization: I welcome it because it brings different cultures closer together, but I am also aware of the melting pot effect, as you point out. The issue of multiculturalism is so far beyond me that I am unable to take a position on it.

In your online poetry magazine POIESIS you present many Slovenian and foreign poets, writers, their poetry, novels, stories, thoughts,

and cultures: including the Ukrainian poet Lyuba Yakimchuk from the Donbas, where there has been a civil war since 2014, and her war poetry, including a very sad poem 'Caterpillar' about the brutality of war, rape, revenge, animalism. And the Iranian poet in Canadian exile Mansour Noorbakhshhi and his short story 'And still burning', in which each of the three Iranian protagonists in Rome hopes for something different from the West, but all are disappointed. What is it that the West does not even give to its own citizens? What is the myth of the West, and how much of it is false?

I spent three years in Paris in the 1990s. I interviewed painters and sculptors there. I asked a Slovenian sculptor who had lived and worked there for years what Paris had given him. He said, "Everybody asks me that, but nobody asks me what Paris has taken away from me." The West promises a lot, it gives something for sure, but it also takes a lot away. And I am not only thinking of the bloody history of colonialism but also of the present, of the masses of refugees who are dying on the borders of the West. The West, as a myth, lives precisely on the production of refugees: today, refugees from the Middle East and Africa, a few decades ago, refugees from Eastern Europe and South America. I am a privileged citizen of a privileged part of the world, the West, but incidentally, I may also find myself on the run. After all, I am a descendant of refugees. My grandparents were refugees during the First World War. The West gives me a lot, but my family experience tells me that it can suddenly also take everything away from me.

Report of the Coordinating Committee to the First Congress of the World Poetry Movement

World Context

We live in a wonderful and terrible world.

Wonderful because humanity demonstrates every day that it is capable of miracles. Miracles of science, of technology, of art. But also miracles of the courage of the billions of women, men, and children who, by dint of mutual aid, often live or survive in the most difficult conditions.

But this world is also terrible because it shows us that humanity, capable of the best, is also capable of the worst.

The greater our capacity to produce, the greater our capacity for destruction, even self-destruction. The greater our power over nature, the greater must be our sense of its limits and our responsibility.

It is becoming increasingly clear that if we allow capitalist greed and the will to power of the few to be at ease, we will give free rein to endanger the living conditions of the many and even the living conditions on Earth.

We know that we are threatened by several factors. We know that we are threatened not only by the risk of war, of nuclear holocaust but also by the risk of climate catastrophe and by the consequences of growing global inequality.

What is endangered is not only nature but also the culture that makes us fully human. What

distinguishes human beings is their capacity for imagination. The ability to dream and to make dreams come true. We do not want a world of apartheid and violence where we are reduced to being slaves of machines and screens, individuals and people deprived of a future.

Everywhere in the world today, we see people claiming their right to exist and questioning the old balances. Hence the desperate attempts of those who want to maintain their domination at all costs through the power of their money, their weapons, and their control of images and information.

In this context, what good is poetry to us? It has neither the power of weapons nor the power of money. But it is essential to our lives.

Poetry has been present from the beginning until today in all peoples, all cultures, and all languages because it is the only way to live.

The shared word is necessary and even indispensable, that form of sensitive consciousness that connects us with ourselves and others, our past, our present, and our future, and nature and the cosmos.

It is the means of inhabiting the world with our knowledge and imagination. It is our way of giving life all the names and all the words. It is the way to call the world by its original name and to make this outer world, sometimes strange and hostile, an inner, intimate, and friendly world that always welcomes us.

We need poetry to accelerate the emergence of humanity, conscious of itself and its possible future. Humanity connected with itself and with its common dream. That "planetariat" that our friend Jack Hirschman called for and whose appearance he foresaw.

For us, poetry is not the private property of poets. The revolutionary idea we have of it aims, as he said, to liberate the poet in every human being.

That is why the poets gathered in the World Poetry Movement do not conceive of their art as independent of each other or their art as poets independently from a common work to make poetry as popular as possible so that it may be shared and realized by all.

Trajectory Of Wpm

For these and all the other objective and subjective reasons, which oppress human life and living species on Earth created, at the initiative of the International Poetry Festival of Medellin, in that Colombian city, in July 2011, the World Poetry Movement (WPM), with the presence and commitment of directors of 37 international poetry festivals on four continents, Among them were Rati Saxena, Alex Pausides, Ataol Behramoglu and Fernando Rendón (current coordinator), founding poets who have given continuity to the Movement, as an instance of the confluence of several thousand poets from all regions of the Earth, to develop different manifestations of unity of action from the language and acts of poetry.

Since then, once a stable Coordinating Committee was formed, WPM has experienced different moments and processes of

transformation. Its leadership has established a series of guidelines for the stability and continuity of its tasks through a process of constant virtual meetings and face-to-face meetings in Medellin (Colombia), Zigong and Chengdu (People's Republic of China), Caracas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), and Istanbul (Türkiye).

WPM works for a worldwide poetic revolution that brings poetry to all peoples since "poetry must be made by all human beings," as it is destined to transform their lives. Our Movement has developed several thousands of poetry readings through 21 international poetic actions in more than 150 countries since its origins to accompany human society in its struggle for deep peace with social justice, for a world without walls, for the cultural, social, and political transformations that are required, and for the irreducible defense of nature, our vital environment, without whose complete recovery we will not be able to survive for long.

WPM's two most recent international actions were developed under the slogans "poetry is the path to peace" and "in solidarity with the original peoples of the Earth in resistance ."WPM has maintained active since its foundation and, under the responsibility of its office in Medellin, a web page (www.worldpoetrymovement.org) in which it expands the spirit of poetry and a luminous imagination about the human future, as well as through its social networks on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and gradually influences at the same time in mass and alternative media.

At the same time, the CC of WPM has appointed four continental directions and a high number of leaders and national committees

(106), with an outstanding participation of women and young poets, in the countries where it has deployed its organizational work.

As a preparation for the World Congress of the Word Poetry Movement to be held in Medellín between July 12 and 15, with a second stage in Caracas between July 17 and 19, the Coordinating Committee (CC) and the continental committees of the WPM successfully organized virtual continental congresses in Africa (January 2023), Asia (February 2023), Europe (March 2023) and America (April 2023), with the support of the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Those continental congresses elected the respective continental committees and also elected the delegates to the World Congress.

The World Congress will discuss the reports presented by the General Coordinator on behalf of the WPM CC and the continental coordinators. It will also discuss and approve a Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 and elect the new WPM International Coordinating Committee. The Congress will be financed by the International Poetry Festival of Medellín, the Ministries of Culture of Colombia and Venezuela, and the Ministry of Communications of Venezuela.

We will be ready in 2023 to discuss and structure a new stage of the World Poetry Movement through a redefinition of our objectives and work plans and an organic renewal of our leadership and our Movement, so that it can trigger a deeper action through multiple initiatives of poets in different regions of the world, which gives a more impactful dimension to the relationship of poets and poetry with human society.

Poetry appeared on Earth before the creation of the word language. Poetry was not made for chosen spirits. The destiny of poetry, as its primordial source, is the soul of the people. Poetry is a mobilizing force of the spirit and of human society.

WPM must be able to create mechanisms to ensure that poetry, with the help of technology and the most advanced means of communication, reaches young people, children, women, older people, and all human beings. Only in this way can a profound and decisive change be guaranteed in a dehumanized world whose drive for self-destruction is being encouraged by the forces of dissolution in history.

Wpm's Proposals

For a long time, there has been a debate about the usefulness or uselessness of poetry, about whether or not it can have an essential influence on the life and destiny of human beings. And although it cannot change society, poetry will always change people's conscience, feelings, sensibility, and perception in the darkest hour of history, nourishing their hope and resistance when it seems that the triumph of death, announced by military and politicians, philosophers, writers and artists of defeat for centuries, is already imminent.

The peoples of the world already know that they have very few years to press with unstoppable actions the realization of treaties for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Everyone knows that time is short before nature does justice and cancels the subscription and the right of human beings to remain on Earth.

We are at the limit of the final deadline to take urgent and definitive measures to eliminate the lethal threats to the air, water, forests, fauna, and flora. That is, on humans, because we are the Earth.

Everyone knows that we have little time to stop the process of deterioration of human life, subjected to distressing pressures and shortages, and that the only possible way to rebalance human life, the world, and the Earth, and to achieve social justice in the world, peace and harmony, is the mobilization of all spiritual and cultural, political and social energies, to stop the power of fascism and militarism, which have put their stamp on the destruction of life and the planet.

We poets have remained for many centuries on the margins of society, and we must now intervene through the proliferation of powerful processes of formation and communication alongside powerful processes of social mobilization, which are emerging as a reaction to the manifestations of the disintegration of life and the belligerence of the insane forces prone to annihilation.

It is love and not death that must win at the top of history. The World Poetry Movement, from the realization of its Congress, in the month of July, must initiate its own cycle of restorative actions and of accompaniment to the vigorous social mobilizations, acting as much in the closed enclosures as in the streets, flooding with poetry, through its activists, the walls, the demonstrators' banners, and placards, taking its voice and all the songs to all the human beings that mobilize for freedom and for the radiant future of life.

The World Poetry Movement will use all possible means of communication to develop a multiplying World Poetry School, a network of

WPM National Committees in 200 countries, an instance of dialogue with all human beings, in factories, in offices, in universities, in schools and colleges, in neighborhoods and sidewalks, inside popular organizations, in the intimacy of silence and in the intimacy of the crowd, to ensure that the ancient voice of poetry lives on the lips and in the ears of every human soul.

A next migratory movement without shores of poetry, convened and organized by the World Poetry Movement, populated by acts, songs and voices, meetings and publications, face-to-face and virtual poetry readings, and public and private events, will emerge from the south of the African continent, country by country, and will spread simultaneously to the center and north of the continent and to the gates and depths of the Asian continent, and it will extend to Oceania and head to the south of Europe, country after country, a growing movement, like a great unknown river of poetry in the rainiest season, will refresh Europe and reach America across the Atlantic and the Bering Strait, a magna, multitudinous and powerful expression of the poets of the world, unified, to call for the inauguration of a new epoch, of a new cycle of humanity. A river of poets, of musicians, of dancers, of visual artists, of filmmakers, of thinkers, of humanists will cross the world geography of disaster and will rush from North America to Patagonia, country by country, until the world understands the message of the ancient poets, of the contemporary poets and of the future poets, the millenary call of the poetry of the past, of the present and of the future TO LIFE.

We wish the grand success of the historic First World Congress of **World Poetry Movement**

13-15 July 2023, Medellin, Colombia
17-19 July 2023, Caracas, Venezuela



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