

Collection of Winning Poems from *Wingword Poetry Prize*

Riding on the Summer Train



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First Edition



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O Cycle Man

Rishabh Yadav

Where to, O cycle man?
Why are you in such a hurry?
See that autumn leaf in the breeze,
Sit down, take a breath.

Where to, O cycle man?
Give that old friend some rest.
Grease that rusty chain,
Fix that broken stand.
She'll be there later too,
Pamper her a little,
She is your only friend.

Where to, O cycle man?
Why race with the big cars?
Let them honk away
And let them speed away,
You keep yourself on the edge of the road,
Where the tar ends and the sand begins.
You'll reach where you want to,
Don't worry, O cycle man.

Where to, O cycle man?
Where are those cloudy marbles fixed?
What do they see?
Do they see what they want to?
Or do they see what they have to?
The sun will be there to light your way,
You will find what you are looking for,
Don't worry, O cycle man.

Where to, O cycle man?
Your daughter is on the carrier,
her eyes are on the sweets in the corner,
And her heart is somewhere even I can't reach,
Only you can find out where,
Talk to her, O cycle man,
The school is still far away.

Where to, O cycle man?
You park your beat up friend
Against the wall and lock it twice,
And mop your brow with finality,
And move towards large sheds that
All look the same,
With people that all look the same,
Is that where you wanted to go
O cycle man?

You think it's a dead end, O cycle man
this ancient street, buried in footsteps
Go to the end,
take a left.
Between two sheds
A narrow lane exists,
with grass
which tickles your feet,
take it, slowly, feel the grass.
And feel the rust on the windows,
And feel the rust residing inside those windows.

Beyond the boundaries,
a stream flows,
Narrow,
hidden by trees,
bubbling with intent.

Follow it, collect your friend.
Do you feel free now, O cycle man?

The Tenant

Anu Geethanjali

There's a street on the west side of the city,
Where lives his old soul in a young body.
He is called Malek, but is seldom called that,
For there isn't anybody who'd call him that name.

In that city of yellow street lamps,
And brown worn down buildings,
A day comes, then becomes another,
Time has no time to stop and look.
But he has, and he does stop and look
At each passing bird and each falling feather.

(The road takes a turn to the left
Before reaching his yellowish brown apartment.
The lady downstairs sitting with a pipe
Would direct you upstairs.
Never knock on the door
For he hates knocking.
Call him by his name
In the softest voice you have
And wait for a few minutes
Before he yells "get the eff outa here")

Dosas

Ann Mary Alexander

In her kitchen factory,
she manufactures hand-made dosas-
hot and smooth,
soft as muslin,
round as the full moon,
customized to everyone's needs.
Father prefers the thick, small sort,
Brother craves for medium-sized, crispy ones,
I yearn for a big, paper-thin version.

She accumulates the leftovers-
crumpled, edge-burnt,
thick in the middle,
thin around contours
and feeds on the ragged ones,
Her mouth- a home for the abandoned.
At ten, her knuckles were caned
when dosas never took the perfect shape.
I still haven't mastered the art of perfect moon on plate.
But my knuckles are safe.
She says perfection is boring.
Imperfect is the new perfect.
I'm advised to go for the stars
or the meteors.
For whatever be the shape,
the teeth monster impartially disintegrates
all spatial dosas.

Dinner Table Conversations

Eshna Sharma

Glistening crockery,
the waft of chicken curry,
the radio begins to play,
We sit down for dinner.

Ma passes around rotis,
We make mundane conversation,
'How is work?'
'Do you know buaji
is visiting us next week?'
We smile and laugh.
Ma fusses over Papa's plate—
'Why do you eat so less?' she bemoans
Ma, why don't you ask him
why he drinks more alcohol than water?

Ma heaps a ladleful of
fragrant rice on my plate.
We talk about the weather,
about the coming elections.
We talk about Donald Trump
and the new maid—
'She puts too much oil in the food, no?'
But we don't talk about
why Ma is always running out of
painkillers, though she stocks
the medicine cabinet every four weeks.
We don't talk about
the scars on my sister's wrists,
too precise to be called an accident.
We don't talk about why

my cousin divorced
her husband last month.
But we do talk about
the Super Moon,
the 50 per cent off at the local mall
and the Modi government's policies.

For dessert we have
rice kheer, peppered
with cardamom and raisins.
The subject of my marriage is now broached—
'Sharma Ji's daughter is getting married next week,
Should we look for a boy for you too?'

This time, I smile.

'No ma, I've been in love with a girl
since I was fourteen.'

Zombie

Upasa Borah

More often than not, I feel like a fraud.
I want to go on big adventures
But I don't want to leave the house.
And when I do step out of the door,
I wish to return back almost immediately.
The 80 sq. ft. room where I live is like a dead box where inspiration
cannot reach,
Yet I never wish to leave the bed,
For in dreams I feel more alive than when I'm awake.
And it's not a metaphor.
In that box stuffed with oxygen,
I feel like I can shut the world out for good.
The world racing for gold and escaping from coal,
Or racing for coal and escaping the gold.
The world which is more sulphur dioxide than dihydrogen monoxide.

I have a tiny flower plant to call my own.
It was a gift to me and I've kept it near the sink,
Next to the door leading out to the balcony,
So that it gets the hint of sunlight but not direct sunlight.
I water it twice everyday-
Watered it thrice on the day I got it-
But I'm not sure if it's alive anymore.
If its leaves are green, it has to be, right?
I come from a place where it's more green than grey.
But there's something very similar about the two colours,
About how easily one bleeds into the other.
But I'm afraid I haven't learned to tell the difference yet.

The place where I live has a balcony 12 ft long and 2 ft wide.
From there I can see 22 buildings-

25, if I count the ones hidden behind other buildings
and the only thing visible are the water tanks glistening at the top.
Anyway,
25 houses containing scores many people,
People just like me,
Or maybe not like me,
Maybe more than me,
Maybe less of a fraud than me.
People on whom I want to write stories
But every time I think of doing it,
I realise I'm short on words.
Or maybe my language does not have enough words,
Maybe words from a dictionary cannot capture what it feels like to be
alive;
To live,
To have so many emotions you can't tell one from the other,
To have so many stories inside of you
You feel the only way to get them out is to rip open your skin.

See, I'm a storyteller,
a phoney one at that.
I speak of feelings I feel I've never felt,
I tell stories I feel I've never lived,
Hiding behind a pen and a microphone,
Using the loud voice I've been gifted at birth
To announce to the world that I'm living,
To tell myself that I'm living,
Making myself the biggest fraud, in the process;
Because see, I write sagas about life being full of life,
All the while feeling lifeless inside.

The Winds Will Answer For Me

Naina Kashyap

I've always been
rather afraid of rivers,
because I know that's where
my deceased father remains.
Particles negligible in water,
but inestimable in land.

The untamed and beloved
river that flows,
it's wave carries the
countless dreams shattered,
several souls that didn't know
it was the last time they'll
see their loved ones,
just like my father didn't.

I've always been rather
thankful to the rivers,
because I know that's where
my deceased father remains.

I know, now that my father
has ceased on land,
I'll be able to find him in the water
floating quietly and serene,
somewhere calling out my name.

I hope the winds will answer for me,
and tell him about the things
I wish I could, but I can't.

Winds, tell him that
I have a lot in common with him.
How I always tune in to
the radio at eleven at night,
or how I always fold the sleeves of my shirt.

But it's eerie to have something
in common with the dead.
To resemble something
that doesn't even exist.
To be so much like something,
yet be close to nothing.

The bed of the river,
that is now the bed of the dead,
take care of my father,
he was all I ever had

Reminiscence of an Unscientific Head

Tialila Kikon

I remember me, a shy schoolgirl
and then, there was an old Daniel
lean and tall, a science master.
A seasoned one, they said.

One not so fine day, standard nine
three decades ago,
a question fell upon my unprocessed head
timid me stood up to say,
'Sir, I don't know the answer.'
Within seconds a heavy science text
came flying to slap
my almost fainting face.
I stood confused, all red in tears.
Perhaps, a great scientist died that day,
for I never liked science anymore.
I became lost, a sheepish dreamer,
somehow I fell in love with words.
Words that heal my soul,
and fill my heart with new light,
more love, more acceptance.

And yes, whatever little science I carry
in my unscientific head
I owe it all to dear old Daniel.
I only wish we had
a more pleasant moment to remember.

Choice

Sukanya Shaji

I see an old man by the temple
with caged mynas.

One can buy the birds
and set them free,
it earns good karma,
I am told.

The old man smiles,
like an all knowing God
who sees where I ache.

I buy a myna,
the only one in the lot
with a yellow patch on its wings

I set her free.

On my return
I see her hopping
beside the old man

refusing to leave,
in denial of her freedom

I walk away in angst,
a tear rolling down my cheeks,
I know what she's done,
I feel it in my belly -
the choice of women
to go back to their keepers.

Strapped on Cash

Biju Reddy

I do the math,
it all adds upto nothing.
Rent, electricity and water.
For what?
The shared toilet has its waiting list-
tenants in their pyjamas
tightly pressed bladders
while the landlady snores upstairs.

I'm strapped on cash, changing jobs
like dull channels on a television remote.
Head to toe, I rebel against
the destiny of
being born the second child
to middle class parents.

I go to interviews,
make lists and a five year plan,
save, buy a mutual fund,
everything that's strictly legal.
I regret and
even write down my regrets.
Like my suffocating choice of college
and course.
I peel the potatoes
and envy software developers
with their fancy EMIs on home loans.

How many years spent scurrying
behind the dream?
How much futile searching

for a buried treasure?
No prophecy is required, palms sweaty
with the anticipation of future,
I give in.
Poverty shines.
The smell of Delhi rains
mixed with fresh mold,
dripping ceiling, clogged drains,
nylon nets keeping out the mosquito
and his distant two-winged relatives.

No privacy here, a neighbour peeps
in through the doorframe.
Last night's leftovers turns into today's trash
steadily turns into a wasted life.
It's okay, I say.

Such ugly things have their beauty too.

Room Number 3

Soorya Menon

The nurse is on a schedule,
like a witch at work,
she measures and mixes
powders and potions.
I glug down the bitterness
believing its Felix Felicis.

But the pains don't oblige;
Pulsating, throbbing, shooting,
like unwelcome guests,
they overstay.

My mum calls, for updates.
I tell her about the crisp laundry,
the brand of the mop liquid,
and the kindness of people.

My son calls,
He wants to know when I'll return,
He needs help with his tests.

My friend calls every day,
Asks me the same question,
'How are things?'
Hoping for some magic the next day.

Another one calls,
'Don't overthink Unnecessary things.'
Well I could try, but your actions
make it so conducive for them to thrive.

People call,
'Meditate your pain away,
Witness it.';
'Welcome your pain,
Embrace it.'
Have they done this?
Or are they just good with words?

The green walls of the room
Close in on me
As the meditation app
Keeps me awake.

Until the slow whirring fan,
And the loud hands of the clock
Lull me to sleep
Night after night.

The New Us

Vardaan Pandey

The new folk of Delhi,
Are a sight to behold.
They strut around the capital,
With their expressive expense,
And make me feel empty,
Because I cannot spend.

The new aunties of Delhi,
Sit in their verandahs.
Reading literature of the likes I can't possess,
Pickling all the salty words I said,
And creating inflammatory limericks out of them.
I see them at French film festivals, and American too
They have their crisp English with them.

The new uncles of Delhi,
Slide into life with their whiskey,
Their ego is staggering
For they have studied engineering.
They know what their kid has to do
Even before he/she/it is born.
Sharma Ji's son is a certified scoring machine.
Straight A's cannot become B's,
And if there isn't a 100 in Science and Maths,
Sharma Ji's belt would be out of the loops.

The new youth of Delhi,
Can't see anything.
Because the aimless existence is enveloping.
To fill that gap,
We have our means -

A Jaguar.

A party.

A sniff.

We can cheat in the exams,
With the wildest of methods,
We can beat up the new kid,
We don't care if he becomes a cadaver.

We can do everything,
But we can't get our life back on track.
For we want more than we need,
We want that extra sniff and that extra follower,
We can't see what's ahead.
Because the road has already diverged and we've reached a dead end.

My Mother's Memories

Cherime Winchi R Sangma

My Mother's magnificent memories of yonder years,
Builds bridges to a past, I'll never see;
Songs of Simsang¹, of mermaids and matchadu²,
On her raft, searching for fishes and bamboo shoots.
She sang the river's song, dreaming of what could be;
Songs of the earth, songs our forefathers sang before us;
Songs of elephants and tigers, and bears filled the air.

How she met a man, fell in love, and left her maternal home,
When her father's traditions demanded otherwise.
Vibrant and alive, flickers of past rippled in her eyes,
As flame of the forest in midst of green soaked forest;
Of thatched roofs that leaked in the monsoon,
And empty rongdik³ for empty bellies in harsh seasons,
And just a blanket to warm their hearts.

Hills of her memory held different meaning then,
And now, decay and death set in the land,
No traces of glory in barren hilltops or fallen trees,
No songs for dying rivers and withering flowers.

If only, her girlhood world could be saved,
But she has to stand and share in its shattering;
Her visions diminishing, in slow flashes, and sad array.

¹ Simsang is a river in Garo Hills, Meghalaya

² Garos are one of the major tribes in Meghalaya. Matchadu is the belief in the existence of tiger-people

³ Rongdik is an earthen ware used for storing rice; also signified the wealth of a household

The Story of a Yazidi Killing

Aiswarya Thara Bhai Anish

They hung me upside down in that butchery
The hooks had been emptied
The meat had rot, and in that iron
The chains had fallen tighter
The blood had dried, it smelled
Like how a butchery must smell
Of iron and rotting iron
Of pain and the fear of death
I am the Yazidi blood that polluted your screens
When you wept for me.

The knife is sharpened at our necks.
I will teach you now. Listen intently, take notes:
Take the knife in the first hand, your good one
Place it at my nape,
Do not cut the carotids, you need to hear the screams
Place your jagged blade a point below or a point above
Slide it down with so much love it tickles the hate below
There is nothing called a silent killing.
Remember we are Yazidi meat
Remember we are upside down, remember we will wriggle
Remember what you hear are neither grunts nor shrieks
But they're the fakir's cry for redemption.
You do us a favour
Because death becomes a caress,
The bruises bleed
Black blood
Remember we have to look good on camera
When the world sees, they have to weep
A little more than they wept for the Jews.

I could tell you a joke or two, from my place
On the Hook:
We are men on the line - get it, get it?
Do not shun my pun - I see more clearly,
The blood has rushed to my brain
The eyes are fired in the jelly
My veins tributaries to memory
Skin soft to the pain of misery

From here I see them drag her by the hair,
Swoop her to black hands, then from hand to hand
Into a black room.
They play a game called the merry-go-round
Or the musical chair.
It is time for Lucretia to be blamed for being woman,
Eve for the temptation
our crime is nothing but birth.
The shrieks have curdled at the throat and
Come like rasping sheets of the trumpet
At the cobbler's mouth.
The blood will drip like rain into the sea
Like pipelines feeding sewage.

Some deaths are far worse than a thousand deaths
Like death on the hook, it is definitely not a harsh death

For I am not the only one dying.

Au Revoir

Probal Basak

Hello, Jose. Do you hear me?
You are not alone.
Keeping pain at bay,
fight. We'll be back, don't moan.
World will raise voice in our plea,
may be, one day.

Jose, I saw your drawing.
The one published in paper.
Memory came back clawing;
Mom's long hair, my father
standing beneath the sunny sky
and my tiny sister with her
hair-band with butterfly.
Hey, Jose, Is it you,
smiling and holding my hand?
Did you ever come to my land?

Pain, may be our pain have
travelled thousands of miles:
to Ichamati bank, crossing the knoll,
resisting rulers' wiles,
united El Paso and Petropole.

May be, the solitary fates
stringing a garland of
our memoir.

Good byes, forced the state,
but, we said to our loved ones
au revoir.

A Wedding Invite

Divjot Kaur

Venue-

It was once a palace they say,
So we gave our guests a three night stay.
The décor was sculpted from literal ice,
Was it extravagant and grandiose?
Enough to make people stare and marvel twice,
And did it cost a heavy price?
Well, safe to say, now our bank balance doesn't feel so nice

Date-

A suitable date needs to be decided
So we consult an astrologer and are guided
by planets and stars that float light years away.
Turns out, the only auspicious day is a Tuesday.
But then guests can't make it to the three night stay.
So Pay an extra 100, the astrologer says,
And the stars will ensure the weekend becomes your wedding day.

Itinerary-

The baarat arrives after an hour of delay,
Presenting a 50 minute dance sequence in front of the hotel gateway,
With pomp and show the ceremonies commence,
Busy with the buffet, guests gaze at the proceedings
with interest that is pretense.

Then the bride and groom sit on throne like chairs,
Acting as a selfie booth for dolled up relatives that come in pairs.
Smiles are feigned,
And the couple is chained,
by societal expectations
that strain their marital unification.

Nightmares

Anuradha Goswami

I woke up today,
To a hyena laughing,
There were spiders on my bed
Crawling into the covers;
I jumped out to get a cup of coffee,
(thinking this is only a dream);
the floor had petals of rose spread

As my feet fell on the petals, each shrieked,
my steps now were a background score of a horror film;
'I seriously need help.'

I went to the kitchen, got a cup for myself—
looked down, saw
cockroaches swimming in my milk.

Fear And Other Promises

Chandrika Chandran

The nature of fear is a
gossamer wing,
floating still in an indigo pond,
It is the whiff of stale whiskey in a hallway
of jasmine,
The brush of a tear in the back of your
throat.

The nature of fear is
much like the voices of the long forgotten,
that call to you gently;
so aware of the soft folds in your heart.
It is the echo of a knock on locked mahogany doors,
and the dry cough of dust that haunts
the truly alone.

It is the faith
of the child left waiting long past the last bell, for
parents that will not come.
That is to say, that the nature of fear is
so hung with hope:
like mid-morning dew, the beginning of a play,
or the promises that remain once men have left
for war.

Flight to Kashmir

Tabish Ahmed

With the stillness,
Of a lizard resting near a fluorescent light
I sit on my armchair
And take a flight to Kashmir.

My only previous exposure,
Is through the thick alabaster
Of Shahid's imagery,
Or the accounts of pundits,
That I invoke for an academic acupuncture
To remind myself,
What rhetoric can do always does.

The clouds now,
Are fragile tier-1 toothed testicles
That rubs against the plane,
There is turbulence,
There has always been,
The attendant says,
'Unlike all the toys from Boyhood,
Kashmir wouldn't break.'

I see Chinar crushed below
By the ejaculated manhood
From the tip of my plane,
This plane, like Kashmir won't break.

And then I see a post office,
In the corner, full of letters,
From a century ahead and a century ago,
All written by Shahid,

With no address to be delivered to,
Like childhood in Kashmir.

Bridges of Separation

Karmishtha Krishna

Dear Dadi,
This is my truest apology.

For all the times I've heard your stories
But not listened.

While your wrinkled eyes wrinkled even more
And your tattered lips spoke
Words out of sheer abandonment
About how your family
Took pride in its nobility,
About how the partition of 1947 snatched it all,
Like wet clothes being squeezed,
Like soft cotton being shredded,

I'm sorry, I did not listen;

While your wrinkled eyes watered
And your mellowed lips spoke
Words out of sheer nostalgia
About the gratefulness for one chapati a day
In flooded refugee camps;
About the warmth of falling into your mother's arms
After months of living among strangers

I'm sorry, I did not listen;
While your misty eyes gleamed
And your riveted lips spoke
Words out of sheer strength;
About how new homes were built
More emotionally, than physically

More mindsets, than bricks
More hopes, than resources.

The naive me apologizes for blabbering -
'Wow, Dadi, aap toh partition ke hero nikle!'
I saw your tired eyes sigh,
And your tattered lips speak
'Voh bahaduri nahi, majboori thi beta.'

Bob Marley once said,
'You never know how strong you are
until being strong is your only choice.'
I'm truly sorry,
That your self-dependence emerged from involuntary loneliness.
That your independence was left behind
In a house that even Google Earth can't spot anymore.
That channels of freedom in your heart
Still echo - 'I am temporary.'

I'm sorry, I judged you
During an India Pakistan cricket match;
While your overwhelmed eyes raged
And your infuriated lips pressed against each other.
The rebellious teen in me
Poured out speeches of world peace and acceptance
Targeted towards the apparent intolerance;
Subconsciously drowning the tragedies of separation -
Separation of families, friends and professions
Separation of not just a country, but a homeland.

I'm sorry, I argued,
About life being tougher now.
About schools of thought being better now.
How did you silently let
The permanent estrangement from your loved ones
Lose to irrational immaturity?

While I fought for my generational ego
I forgot to fight for sensitivity,
I forgot to fight for the million martyrs of humanity,
Who were denied the right
To simply exist.

I'm ashamed -
That you gradually stopped telling me your stories
Because I heard, but barely listened
I'm guilty -
That memories in your mind
Making your forehead furrow
Serve valorous for minds like mine.

I'm afraid -
That though your strength inspires me,
I might never be bold enough
To show you this apology letter.
But I've told the world who my hero is
And someday, I hope
I gather the courage to tell you.

Yours always,
Your beloved granddaughter

Of Love & Lies

Shivani Anil

phase I •

my mother wouldn't tell me what love was;
she closed the windows, locked the doors
and told me I was safe standing where I was.
I needn't look any further.
I couldn't reach the cookie shelf on my own,
so I obeyed her when she said,
stay away from love.
because love, love can blind you.
drain every ounce of reason
until there is nothing left of you;
only bones, the hollow of your chest and an empty heart,
looking for the right pieces at all the wrong places,
losing your voice, forced to turn your head to the other side.
because love makes you lose yourself
and I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry,
but love is not for us.

phase II •

When I could reach the cookie shelf on my own
And didn't need my mother's help to tie my shoe laces,
I told her that I was leaving home
because these walls were no more than strangers to me.
Because Amma, I do not want to stay.
You told me to stay away from love and I did,
but you didn't tell me how I could be terrified of living in my own
house,
that I couldn't trust my own,
that love has not one but many ugly faces

and the worst of all,
the one used to sugarcoat dirty hands.
My mother didn't say a word
but she folded blankets that were home to my nightmares,
washed clothes until they no longer reeked of a past I want to bury.
her hands shook as she wiped my bloodied arms,
her eyes welled up as she washed me,
I looked up at her
and all my broken pieces shattered,
realization came to me like an uninvited guest,
like waves thrashing against boulders
and I said, 'Amma ... you knew.'

Summer Song

Anushka Nagarmath

do you ever think about the things left behind in the summer?

i.

i remember summer afternoons singing in the streets to sleep
once when i was seven,

i saw

a ghost

standing on the pavement,

its ugly bones poking out of its sides

pale feet hovering above the broken tiles

stained red with betel juice

i remember how still it was

at the end of the season

just the songs of dragonfly wings

treading the uneasy silence

how summer turns this neighborhood

into a ghost town

beating, breathing hearts lying in the ruins of an apocalypse

how in the fading light, the cigarette ashes on the walls

almost look like

gun-powder stains

i remember the end of the world

with the ghosts lining across the street

closing my eyes and murmuring prayers under my breath

pretending that this is our reckoning

when the streets are so, so silent

that even a tiny exhale

sounds
like a gunshot

ii.

we never knew why
the summer streets made our heart ache open
why the burn of the tiles beneath our feet
brew thunderstorms under our skin

the summer when i was eleven
you taught me how to trap butterflies
in matchboxes
to hold their tissue paper wings
in my flustered fingers

the day before that we had built sandcastles
in the park across the street
molding mountains with all the delicacy we could
muster

and yet there we stood, giggling at the crunch of the
wings
under our thumbs
isn't it funny how easy it is to be cruel,
when summer minutes come to a standstill?

there is nothing beautiful
about innocence like this

iii.

i remember when we dug out the ghosts of previous
summers
our muddied fingers clawing through the dirt
you showed me your treasure—
a tooth, a tire and a memory of the boy
you once were

i smiled and hid my fists in shame
because broken bones were all that remained

hollowed things like sparrow carcasses
littering the places i had already left behind
the only thing i had were words
that all sounded the same.

girl, ghost, bone, memory
in the end
they are all shattered alike
in summer's wake

iv.
did i leave you behind
in summer's uncertain tread?
some days i can hear you call out
when the world goes too still

but there are things i can only visit
in the footsteps of may~
like the street across my apartment
broken branches
lining the corner
i used to pretend it was driftwood
from some summer sea
leaving the neighborhood behind
like a wreckage of misplaced
memories

and here we are
just another concrete shipwreck
lured like the season's bait

for the things that summer leaves behind asleep
are the things only summer can wake

v.

did you know that there are angels here,
watching us from the shadows?
standing still in all their glory
bare feet
cutting open on soft-drink cans
broken halos
clutched in sun-scorched hands
holy hearts weeping for our bare-boned laughter
a hymn for the children
with sunsets
blooming across their knees
a hymn for the innocent
who shall never again be

vi.

summer is an ache echoing in these empty streets
in these empty hearts
split open in its light
blooming

The Last Chore

Deepali Tiwari

The frantic jingle of glass bangles
and the snip of the bolt,
the shift of the curtain,
and the creak of the bed's ply board,
The tick of the light switch
as it turns off
she heard everything,
her soul standing outside the bedroom door.
A ten-minute thing-
swift and clean,
The satisfied one slumps down
and the woman's body is freed.
She opens the door
allows the wind to pass through,
welcomes the soul back
the last chore is done too
time to rest at last.

Thank you, dear reader!

Hope you enjoyed reading this versatile electronic book 😊

This e-book is a sample from *Riding on the Summer Train*, a collection of 200 poems written by winners and commendable mentions of Wingword Poetry Prize.

If you would like to place an order of the book in paperback format, please write to us at info@wingword.in with your address.



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WINGWORD POETRY COMPETITION is a national level competition that awards persons with exceptional talent in writing poetry. A sum of 7 Lakh Rupees is distributed among the winning poets and their works were published and distributed nationwide. The competition aims to represent experiences and narratives of people coming from all backgrounds and forms of life. A platform solely dedicated to newcomers whose writing can evoke a myriad of emotions in the minds of the readers.



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