

Wingword Poetry Prize 2018

A collection of winning poems



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An anthology of winning poems

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First Edition



www.wingword.in

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कागज़

दिग्विजय सिंघ

सतह पर तो सब लिखते हैं
क़लम जो कागज़ में डूब जाए
तो कभी ख़यालों के दरिया से गुज़रते
में कुछ तैरते सुर उठा के रख लूँ कश्ती में
में शायद हर्फ़ के जाल पर इक काँटा फँसा के
उसपे जो टाँग दूँ एहसास का चारा
क्या पता बीच दरिया के
मिल जाए कोई तनहा किनारा
जब हथेली में उठाऊँ मैं उस किनारे को
उससे रिसती कुछ बूँदे रिशतों की
में जमा कर लूँ अपनी मुट्ठी में
और धो लूँ अपने हाथों से मैल रंजिशों की
में आसमाँ से जलता सूरज उतार के
गर झोंक दूँ स्याह समंदर में
वो चाँद जो डूबा है दूर गहराई में
वो इसकी भीगी लपटों में जल जाएगा
सूरज भी कुछ देर आलसी हो जाएगा
फिर उठा के उसे मैं उसी तनहा किनारे की सीढ़ी
चढ़ा दूँगा दोबारा आसमान पे
लौट जाएगा फिर वो अपनी गर्म बस्ती में
सतह पर तो सब लिखते हैं
क़लम जो कागज़ में डूब जाए

तो कभी खयालों के दरिया से गुजरते
में कुछ तैरते सुर उठा के रख लूँ कश्ती में ।।

वीर अभिमन्यु पुरुषार्थ

पीयूष सुंदरियाल

एक बालक ही तो था,
अंतिम नींद अब वह सो गया है,
एक पत्ता ही तो था टूटा,
प्रकृति ने ना जाने क्या खो दिया है,
अब दोष किसका है की ऐसा क्यों हुआ,
उस वीर बालक ने गरल को क्यों छुआ,
क्यों बहाएं अश्रु उसकी याद में हम,
जाये भी क्यों हज़ारो वर्ष की उस बात में हम,

अरे आज भी क्या काम अभिमन्यु लड़ रहे हैं,
सरहदों पर बैठी मोत के संग बढ़ रहे हैं,
हज़ारो चक्रयव्यूह तोह आज जग में बन चुके हैं,
हज़ारो नरसमूह तोह आज खून में छान चुके हैं,

हज़ारो द्रौपदी चोराहो पर चीखती
हम कृष्णा कहा खो गए हैं ?
हज़ारो बेतिया तोह भ्रूण में भी चीखती,
अरे सब कर्ण कहा सो गए हैं ?

जरूरत हैं कि महाभारत दुबारा छिड़ जाए,
दुःशासन से कोई भी भीम आकर मिड़ जाए,
पुकारे द्रौपदी तोह कृष्णा वहा विधमान हों,
कटे शीश दुष्कर्मी का बस यही अंत परिणाम हों,

सेविका नहीं सहयोगी बनकर नारी साथ चले,
तभी समाज में वीर पुरुष की दिव्य ज्योत जले ,
फटे पाप की छाती, पुण्य प्रसून फिर से लहराए,
सत्य जयी फिर सदा और धर्म पताका फहराए
सत्य जयी फिर रहे सदा और धर्म पताका फहराए ।।

**Editor's Note: This poem has been abridged.*

मुत्तफ़कीर

प्रग्या दूबे

इस असंभव सी धारा पे
अपना भी कुछ नाम कर ले
कागज़ो के पैर पड़ ले
स्याहियों से प्यार कर ले ।

कर वही जो माँगती है
तेरी मंज़िल तेरी जाँ
पर यकीं कर,
केहनी होती है सभी को दास्तां ।

दास्तां ऐसी हो कि सुनकर
सभी वाह ! वाह ! करें,
दास्तां ऐसी हो कि
शब भी उजाले ओड ले,
दास्तां ऐसी हो जो
कायम रहे, ज़िंदा रहे,
दास्तां ऐसी हो कि
जन्नत भी कुर्बत में रहे ।

रंजिशें भी लाज़मीं हैं
रंजिशें स्वीकार कर ले
कागज़ो के पैर पड़ ले
स्याहियों से प्यार कर ले ।

डर नहीं कि भूल जा अब तू
वो हर शिकवा - गिला,
चल समर में कूद जा
धरती जकड़, अंबर हिला,
डर नहीं कि बिन ज़ियारत
कौन किसको कभी मिला ?
डर नहीं कि हारते हैं वो भी
जिनको सब मिला
जब मिला, तब सब मिला
पर चंद ही को रब मिला ।

रब के मिल जाने पे तू तो
वार जग, त्योहार कर ले
कागज़ों के पैर पड़ ले
स्याहियों से प्यार कर ले...

कायर वही जो तौलते हैं
तू इबादत, तू ज़फ़ा,
शायर वही जो बोलते
में ही इबादत, मैं ज़फ़ा ।
कायर वही जिनके लिए
दिन का फिसलना रात हो,
शायर वही जिनके लिए
ये रात ही शुरुआत हो ।
कायर ये हरदम सोचते
जो हो रहा सब कुछ लिखा
शायर बताएगा तुम्हें

किसने लिखा, और क्यूँ लिखा !

शायर के इस अंदाज़ पे
तू दाद दे, आगाज़ कर ले
कागज़ों के पैर पड़ ले
स्याहियों से प्यार कर ले
स्याहियों से प्यार कर ले....।

चाय की चुस्की

सिमरन रावत

बात है उन दिनों की
जब पीते थे चाय नहीं होती थी ग्रीन टी
हर जुबान पे होता था चाय का नाम
कोफ़ी भी थी बदनाम
चाय को था बहुत गुर्रु
उसका था कुछ अलग ही सूरुर
ठुमक ठुमक आती थी प्याली
सूडक सूडक पल भर में हो जाती थी खाली।।
इलाइची अदरक से थी बड़ी दोस्ती
पारले जी को थी वो कोसती
जब भी चाय के पास आता
खूबसूरती में उसकी वो डूब जाता
वो कहती कर देता है तू मेरी बदनामी
वो कहता माफ़ कर दे मेरी रानी
फिर मारी ग्रीन टी ने एंटरी
सब बोले इसे ही रखो इन दी पैंट्री
सब रखने लगे अपनी सेहत का हिसाब
कहने लगे चाय है खराब
ग्रीन टी चाय को चिढाती
सबको चाय के नुकसान बताती
चाय रहने लगी उदास
इलाइची अदरक भी ना रहे पास
सुबह सुबह ग्रीन टी आती

मगर चाय जैसा वो मजा ना लाती
ना वो चाह पूरी कर पाती
ग्रीन टी की कड़वाहट ज्यादा दिन ना भाई
सबको फिर याद आयी चाय
फिर से महकी चाय की खुस्बू ।
पारले जी बोला डार्लिंग नम्बर वन है तु ॥

शिकाएतें तुम्हारी

स्तुति झा

शायद मुझसे शिकायतें तुम्हारी
एक एक कर मैं कम कर पाऊँ ,
बीते यादों संग हमबिस्तर
हर सिलवट से मैं बढ़ पाऊँ ।

कोई शाम सुनेहरे यूँ भी तो हो
कि स्थिर हो ये मन चंचल,
किसी रोज़ मैं बिन कुछ सोचे
भर शब तुमको देखे जाऊँ ।

बातों से फिर बात निकलती
बिन मतलब की बातें सारी,
शायद नज़र- नज़र में तुमसे
बिन कह भी बातें कर पाऊँ ।

कभी तो ऐसी हँसी हो लब पर
जो बस तुमपे आ कर बिखरे,
तेरी चाहत को खोने से
शायद कभी तो मैं डर जाऊँ

मुड़ते- मुड़ते आगे बढ़ कर
फिर कुछ कदम जो पीछे खींचूँ,
हर अफ़सोस, कसक से खुद के

बिन डर शायद मैं लड़ पाऊँ ।

तेरे प्यार का कर्ज ये मुझपे
शायद कभी अदा हो पाये,
तुझ संग, दिल संग, ये कुछ पल जी
शायद रज़ा से मैं मर पाऊँ ।

यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए

अमोघ कांत मिश्रा

यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए।
कही ऊँची दीवार बने हैं।
किसी पार्टी के ये वोट बन गए।
यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए।

कहीं बने खुशियों का कारण।
कहीं ये कम्बख्त विस्फोट बन गए।
ज़ालिम ये लोगो की चोट बन गए।
यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए।

ईश्वर के आगे ये अरदास बन गए।
गरीब बिचारे की ये आखिरी आस बन गए।
आज ये अमीरों के सुनहरे होंठ बन गए।
यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए।

किसी के आँसू इस्से भाप बन गए।
दोस्त एक न बना सब आस्तीन के साँप बन गए।
तरक्की दूसरे की और ये आँखों में खोट बन गए।
यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए।

खुशी का इकलौता स्रोत बन गए।
कही ये गुस्से से प्रतिशोध बन गए।
कहीं बिछी चादर-कहीं लंगोट बन गए।
यही कुछ सिक्के नोट बन गए।

मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा

हिंदेश आकाश

मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा

सपाट धरती पर लेटा हुआ हूं,
नज़रें उठाता हूं तो ऊंचाइयां दिखती हैं,
उन्हें पाना चाहता हूं तो समाज की गहराइयां दिखती हैं,
फिर भी मैं ज़ोर लगाऊंगा,
मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा । ।

धरातल की जब गोद से उठा,
निराशा वादी कीचड़ में सना,
लाख कोशिशों के बावजूद मुस्कुराना पड़ता है किसी बिना,
अकेला इस दुनिया को हंसाऊंगा ,
मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा । ।

अब बैठ कर फिर नज़रें उठाई,
पर काले बादलों ने मंज़िल दिखती नहीं,
शायद जहां अंधेरा है मेरी मंज़िल है वहीं,
उस अंधेरे को रौशन कर के दिखाऊंगा,
मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा । ।

पर खड़े होने के लिए किसी का हाथ चाहिए,
ताकत बने वो मेरी ऐसा मुझे साथ चाहिए,
किन्तु युगों से ही जो खुद खड़ा हुआ,
इतिहास में उसी का तो नाम बड़ा हुआ,

खुद हिम्मत जुटाई और खड़े होकर फिर नज़रें उठाई,
सवाल मेरे मन के आया “क्या मैं उड़ पाऊंगा?”
दिल से तभी आवाज़ आई,
“मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा।।”

तोड़ कर सारे फिक्रों के बंधन,
छोड़ कर मोह माया भरा जीवन भर ली मैंने अपनी उड़ान,
निकल पड़ा एक नए रास्ते पर लिए एक नई पहचान,
दुनिया को ज़रूरत है जिस व्यक्तित्व की,
बनूंगा मैं वो इंसान,
पर तेरा शुक्रिया अदा करने ऐ मिट्टी,
लौट कर एक दिन फिर आऊंगा...
मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा...
मिट्टी से उठा हूं, आकाश तक जाऊंगा।।

धरती, धर्म और भूख : एक संकलन

अभय यादव

नभ में चहका लख लाल देख
लिखता बहता कंकाल देख
आप ही संहारता
आहिस्ता,
आहिस्ता हृदय निकाल फेंक
आहिस्ते हृदय निकाल फेंक ।

मायूस नैन जर्जर काया
ना आवे नजर किसी जमघट में
नह तृप्त करे कोहि मोह माया,
ख्याहिश तमाम रस्ते अनेक
हर ख्याहिश हिस्से एकहई स्वर
हर ख्याहिश हिस्से घाट एक,
नह हुआ हो पूर्ण जिसका बदन
क्या करे वो ख्याहिश पे रुदन।
टकटकी लगा चौंकन्ना दीखे
आज हूँ ऊपर धरती नीचे
कंकाल हूँ मैं, कंकाल है ये
बदहाल हूँ मैं, पाताल है ये ।।

धरती।

नह बसें हरि
नहि हरी पुजे

नालों में बहे-बसे गली कूचे
बुझि आग सि तू, लगे राख सी तू
रखी ताक पे तू, रही ताक पे तू
तुझी के जने दीपक जो बुझे
तुझी में जो समा रहे
वो रुह के वंचित,
ओ कपट के दूषित !
तेरी ही लॉ बुझा रहे
तेरी ही लॉ बुझा रहे ।।

धर्म।

ना गुलाब कहिं, है गुलाल मगर
सिकुड़ी श्वासों दम धर्म प्रखर !
बचा लाल किसी का रक्त अगर
रही विश्वास-श्वास मन के भीतर,
फिर होगा सँचार अंगारों में,
मुख से विष गतिमान होगा
बिछ पड़ेगा रीत शर-शय्या पर
जिसको अंतर ज्ञान ना होगा !

अंतर ज्ञान ? हाँ, अंतर ज्ञान,
महान अंतर ! महान ज्ञान !

फिर लगेगी अंध आँखों से दहाड़
"रहा बचा लाल अब्ब रक्त अगर
हो रही विश्वास-श्वास मन-भीतर

तो चुनो, लहू-खून में एक धार !
अन्यथा,
निश्चित गुँजेगा मौत मल्हार
निश्चित गुँजेगा मौत मल्हार !!"

भूख।

कुत्ते को कूड़ा खात देख
माला जपते भिख हाथ देख
आँखन कि सुने बीतीं सदियाँ
नैनन सँचार लाचार देख ।
माला जपते भिख हाथ देख,
माले से ऐंठी भात देख
वो पड़ा रहा
वो पड़ा रहेगा
कुछ शेष समय और अड़ा रहेगा
वो भूखा था वो सो गया
देख भूख को देते मात देख
अभिशाप को देते शाप देख । ।
है विकराल सभी हैं चश्मे कई
हैं सत्य कई, कई झूठ सही
ना देख सके कुछ और अगर
तो देख,
कागज़ पर मौन विलाप देख । ।

The Burial

Jane Mary Joseph

The pallbearers lowered the casket into the ground ...

With him they buried not just a Body, but a Culture itself.
He was the last of the generation in the family, a Herbalist
who had, in the prime of his life, restored to health many a
person and cured them of ailments rendered irremediable by
those the locals revered as
the English doctors.

He had not a formal education in the field, he deemed it
pointless
as it was an Art, not a Science
and Art came naturally, not with effort.
It was what one would call a family legacy,
traced back to four generations ago.

His clientèle came from far and wide
to palliate their ailments with concoctions,
the ingredients of which were known to him alone.
Myth had it that if a Herbalist revealed the elements of his
potions,
they ceased to be fruitful.

Grandpa's highbrow children were never convinced to uphold
the Art.
The dying, feeble call of Tradition was drained by the sound
of the prevailing, forceful voice of White-collar jobs.
The contempt and mockery of the young folks failed to deter
him,
he unabatedly kept alive the practice till the onset of senility.

Countless childhood tales of his grandchildren took form
in the space that once preserved bottles of magical mixtures,
but is now a storeroom of all things redundant.
His Art met its Death with his dotage, only to be recalled
when a child opens a dusty bottle in the corner,
emanating a foul smell.

Organ

Yashi Gupta

I found it beneath the dust,
that was frozen in the timelessness of our perpetual splendour,
beneath the memories that occupy the space between those
events unusual.

It was hidden, beneath the guilt that wasn't mine to bear,
beneath the heat of my belligerent anger,
beneath my habitual curiosity of knowing the unknown,
and beneath my natural wish to know the known!

The metaphor fails me and your
presence encourages me to breathe again,
breathe in the freshness that follows the rain,
breathe in the momentous occasion of fame.
breathe in spite of the caverns of truths untold,
breathe in spite of the abyss of the lies unsaid.

In the angst of doing everything right,
I thought I lost myself somewhere.
But you can never lose something that was never yours,
for it was all borrowed on interest.
From fire, let me light the lives,
From water, let me wet the grass,
From earth, let me support the needy,
From air, let me make you breezy.

And in all the self-speculation that I did,
I found it beneath the dust,
beneath the particles frozen in time,
beneath the memories stuck on the edges of my rhyme,

beneath the layers of pages that always remained unturned,
beneath the fine lines of frowns of sequences firm
I found it, my heart, the most ignored organ of my body.

Kannan and Unni

Vaidyanathapuram R Shankar

Papa Priest tells little Unni,
“Unni ,Unni, dear little sonny,
Do conduct the worship today
As some work takes me away.”

Unni bows to papa’s appeal,
Conducts the worship with zeal,
Though six only in years,
Does the puja without fears.

“Krishna Krishna ,sweet little kanna,
Do come down and accept my manna.
Else papa dear will be furious,
Will call my worship spurious.”

The compassion-filled Spirit of the Deity
Understands the little boy’s piety;
That his Innocence makes him believe really
Krishna would consume the pudding literally!

Seeing the child’s tear-jeweled face,
Krishna himself manifests apace.
Appearing before Unni as a little boy,
Krishna eats the pudding, to Unni’s joy.

Like a kid, the Lord plays with the priest’s son,
Unni forgets everything awhile in the Divine fun;
Till Krishna says, “Now I must leave,”
And, Lo! He disappears like water through a sieve!

When Unni relates the story to papa in joy,
The priest thunders, “You have eaten it, my boy!”
Unni’s pleas fall on deaf ears;
Papa thrashes Unni to tears.

Then both hear His Voice from above,
“Stop this beating right now!
Seeing Unni’s faith and love,
To his prayers I had to bow!”

pepper and salt

Ipsita Banerjee

My mother used to love pepper, my father
Teased her about it, said it made her dark
Dark she was, freshly ground on our lives
Emitting flavour and spice.

The bite that we bit into
And sometimes gagged. My sister
Saw the orangutang and announced
That it had become black eating pepper
“just like Ma”, everyone laughed.

I don't remember but the story
Lost nothing in the telling. I like to think
I remember; the zoo, the blue frock I wore..
Was it blue? How would I know?

In my mind sprinkles of black and white
Muddle with memories of tiny hands
Reaching out, asking to be picked up,
Is this then my first memory? I pick out
Whole pepper corns from my food
Even now, casting them aside
Like the seeds of a poisoned fruit.

Blackness sprinkled our lives like all others
Catechisms wailed outside the door
Asking to be let in. I leapt unhindered
By whatever waited outside. The darkest
Day was when father died. The light
Was cruel, daylight burned and the nights
Were blacker still. The memories I spawned

And stole from others (I liked to say
I was the one who screamed outside the cage
How could I when I was the one inside?)
Became truths, one by one, in black and in white
While with tiny feet encased in red boots
I remember clearly those black ants I stomped upon
As though my life depended on it
I thought I could stomp my way out of the cage
But fell as unseen chains breached my soul
I didn't ask for this, I asked for nothing.
I find myself returning to the cage where it all began,
Searching among abandoned shelves
For the pepper and salt of my life.

Dusty Old Book

Karishma D'Mello

I'm an open book
in a library nook
written in ink,
smudged and torn,
unturned and worn
these words, in Greek
and I reek,
of scotch and ale.
I tell no tales,
just a rhyme or quote
a limerick I wrote
a long time back.

When still intact
but they didn't deign to look
or take a second glance
though they had the chance.
They passed by the shelf
saw the pages all torn
so they left me alone
in the same old place.

They didn't look beneath the surface
or read between the lines
at the occasionally clumsy rhymes
sometimes badly timed,
and disjointed.

These words are too few
for those who do not care for

the charm of haiku

They don't hear of what I speak
in Japanese styling and Greek

My thoughts on the abyss,
Artemis and Nemesis
told in rhyme and limerick
pull an old vanishing trick
lost, like the city of Atlantis.

I suppose it doesn't matter
if I'm an open book or not
'cause now I just
gather dust.

Letter to my Lovely Furboy

Shriya Bhardwaj

To my Lovely Furboy,

I expected you to arrive in a brown basket with a red bow tied around your neck,
Instead, you were in a brown cardboard box with a red advertisement illustration.

You were a golden ball of fur lazing around in that hollow box,
And in an instant, you filled my life with that pixie dust.

The first time I held you tight I could smell that warmth and feel your breath,
You couldn't help but fall asleep, leaving my pants with a patch of drool.

Your belly would pop out like a child's pouting face whenever Mumma fed you,
Your tail would swing like a radar whenever we took you out for a walk.

I would often press my nose against your jet black snout and tell you that you're my favorite,
While you'd lick me to shake me off just to run away and chew on my slippers.

You and I would play catch; tug of war and; hide and seek,
There never was a dull moment when you were around.

A decade passed and we grew up like siblings,
Through all the chaos and turbulent times, I had your paw to

hold.

You were there to lick off all my tears and worries away,
You were also there to lick off every speck of food dropped on
the floor.

Your hazel eyes followed every morsel in my hand going inside
my mouth,
That puppy look on your face would melt anyone eating.

You grew old, day by day
Yet you did not stop being young inside that fluffy chest of
yours.

I expected you to be immortal and never leave me,
The night you went away on, was the most longest and restless
night for me.

There were no loud barks or stinky smells around the house,
No hair on the carpet, my pants or any black clothing I owned

There was this vacuum and deafening silence that I could not
bear with,
With each blink, my vision turned blurry and the house seemed
to be big and empty

I remembered then as to why I named you Sparky,
It was because you were my unicorn, majestic and mystical.
You gave me all the sparks I needed in every moment I felt
down

Not a moment goes by when you're not missed by Mumma and
I,
But I know, that you're rolling around in mud, eating fancy

chunks of meat and running with your ear flapping, in dog heaven.

I also know that you're looking out for me, keep doing so, Mumma shall always buy you a red collar on Valentine's Day.

Miss you loads,
Love.

A Raining House

Aahna Joshi

This one-

This day is the last of our first year's spring,
your unbraided lengths of hair I have converged
within my fingernails,
your leaf-like mouth glossed with a sheety cold rink,
what you know is what I know, is once you such liked to say.

This day, in our old leaky house,
cannot make our last,
what is the last day of a season, who can say,
or the first day of love, of we who loved-- we have?
Besides that lake, that we on muddy sunsets,
used to cross across the barren bridge, me e'er a barking loser,
you trying to pluck your wings and pelt away those feathers,
of yours into the marshy wet,
this is how you comfort me.

A crevasse or few I have cleft
through your shuddering unseasoned dreams,
your heart in a plate before me,
bloodless since boiled, of your inductive germs
you had salved from me, so to you.
I prod your favourite lake with eely long arms
to see if you've left your old ghost there,
someone ambitious you had mostly been,
not a thin-armed zombie, I slowly carve.

This is a nightmare I have not moulded,
the one I do not easily grow blank on,
as viscous dough adhering between my fingers,

as a traveller with less than one handful of anecdotes,
you, can catch dripping raindrops from the ceiling
with your capering tongue, I slowly dabble my toes
in the soily flood beneath my bed,
with needles and torn floral patterns of cloth,
circling around my feet, like floating modern fishes,
as if shipwrecked in my own personal pond.

You say I exaggerate these trivialities, a non-existent pain,
through words I do, you smack,
but you have never been with another poet.

Goodbye to the Student Life

Ritika Chandy

Five years ago we never thought about the dishes
or what to do in the evenings.

Never thought about the blank stare of the future,
the fast fire of professional framework
or that one day it would all drain away –

(passion love life hope) –

Never thought we'd see our batchmates scattered
married, dying, struggling
giving up and failing
giving birth and thriving
each foot on a different road
from the same spring we once loved
Each hand trained alike but now different
each life strained through a different load

We couldn't have asked for any more or any less
Either is illusion, and this is your reality

Six a.m. beginnings and head to pillow at midnight –
There will always be people to heal and hold
and now we are strong enough to pull the heaving mass of
helpless humanity
up the weary hillside of these hundred human years

And if there is anything left in the middle
of this inexhaustible ache
then it is a dream
But it is a dream, that we will never forget.

Focus

Silpa Anand S

My four year old
Complains of toothache.
The infection has reached the gums
A root canal and a couple of fillings will do
Focus on brushing and washing...it will help
I focus at the reproach (unintended)
In the doctor's eyes.

Eyes focus on me
Searching my unfocused ramblings
Focus, I tell the class
Focus on your reading...
My mind focus
On the dust coating my bookshelf.

Focus your thoughts
Relax your brain, says my therapist.
I focus on
My miss spelt words
The vocabulary box
that has sealed itself on me.
My memory mirror, once very focused
Now giving me unfocused images
The infection focusing on my brain.

Then ? What happened then?
My focus reels back
To the voice of the child
His focus enviably sharp
I try, desperately, to focus on the bed time tale.

Dental Affections

Mandar Mutalikdesai

I am your best friend.
You don't know it.
Or perhaps you don't care.
I care about you, and that matters.

When you rattle me non-stop
I know you are cold.
Sit near a fire
Wash us both warm with tea.

When you don't call on me at lunch
I know you're in a hurry.
Eat well, will you?
Look how weak you've grown!

When you smear me with chocolate
I can tell you're happy.
You bought it yourself, didn't you?
Careful, you're spoiling me!

I can also tell when you're sad.
Your chocolate barely registers me.
Your friend is kind, be grateful to her
But spare a thought for my decay.

You're angry with your co-worker.
Yes, I know for you hold me tight.
Shhh... there, there, you'll be fine.
Loosen your grip, let me breathe.

You beat yourself up in your mind

And jam me up with all your muscle.
I know you're anxious.
Your what-ifs are as real as my wisdom.

When you fight for your friends
Your fingernails and I are weapons.
And sometimes you lie to them
Right through me, I know.

I've been in pain because of you.
I've been broken for you.
But I'll always be there for you
A light yellow yet invisible.

And I'll nourish you.

Inhabiting my Skin

Karunya Srinivasan

My body
does not feel
like home
today.

I fumble
 at the door
 with the wrong keys,
 so I have to jump over the gate
 and break down
 the back door.

Like a thief
in my own house

 The inside
 has been redecorated,
 the furniture rearranged,
 so every time I walk into a room
I trip.

 Even the cutlery
 has been moved
 to the wrong cupboards
 so everytime I open one
when I need something
I am lost.

 I've forgotten
 which switches
 turn on

which lights,
so I put them all on only to find
the electricity is gone.

If I have to
live here again
 I have to relearn
my anatomy
 like architecture;
reconstruct my bones
 with a building plan;
rewire my veins
 so I do not have to live in darkness;
rediscover.
 what it feels like to
inhabit my skin.

Spring in New Delhi

Abhinav Bhardwaj

Spring
Has metamorphosed into
A season of sheer morbidity.

Nobody revels in the first blossoms
There are none, apparently detectable
To eyes, robed in painful illusions.

The gruesome assault of pollen
Floating in the air one sucks
Stifles the life out of one's browbeaten lungs.

Hearts beat like a squadron of horses
Riding roughshod on a dilapidated bridge
Hammering ribcages into fractious submissions.

Stomachs howl silently, like the screams
Of an apparition hiding in nightmares
To encumber laboured souls with bodily shackles

And yet,
Poetry shall tell you that spring is sweet
While you grieve for blissful winters.

Keywords

Kajol Hinduja

Everything that I am not

That I don't have

Is hurled at me.

These absences are never allowed to be forgotten.

These absences are more potent than the presences.

Keywords:

Confidence, Boldness, Assertiveness. Voice.

Voice?

I have lots of it. Stored.

Playing with itself inside me. Content in its own existence.

Why does it always have to be vocal, travel through sound waves to be legitimate?

How many times does a person break

Shatter

Disintegrate

Crash

Disappear

Before adhering to a standard?

Before filling the unforgotten absences?

How much is lost?

Cells, emotions, ideas.

Before you become the mirror image of a stranger?

Is that why there is so much emptiness around?

This emptiness

Brimming with what you could have been

Had you not learnt,

Been socialized, pressurized, caramelized, reduced

Into

Perfect images

Of obnoxious generalized bourgeoisie ideas

Prancing around in smug satisfaction

Of killing individuals
And glorifying collectivist identities.

If You Ever Forget Me

Jatin Patil

You,
Me,
You and I,
Us,
I love,
You love,
We love.
Sometimes.
Winter.
Rain.
Subtle.
Stars.

Margins

Moge Basar

Stand I upon the brink:
The ledge of life and all
That I have ever seen;
All that I ever knew,
With me shall perish they.
And I, with nothing else.

Far is the ground from here.
Stand I on a roof high.
Look below, I am afraid;
Feeble is my heart.
Jump or not? Jump or not?
I let the moment pass.

The wind has soon arrived.
I feel the breath of life.
I was resolved before,
To follow through the path.
All has left me now:
Afraid to live; afraid to die.

A-N-G-E-R

Saumya Lakshman

I break and destroy, I bleed and shatter;
growing inside fists, settling between eyebrows,
pushing through boundaries, searing through space;
breaking free of shackles of strained refinement.

I'm always noticed, but never observed,
always questioned, but never answered;
always hushed up, but never quietened.
They know to fear me,
but fear to know me.
They wish for me to go away,
but never question whence I sprung.

Hadn't you once built a castle in the air,
and abandoned it for the fear of society?
I am the ghost that now haunts that castle.
Hadn't you once torn your dream to bits,
and thrown it into the sacrificial fire?
I am the ashes that now lingers on the hearth.
Have you even once traced my family tree,
to track my ill-fated ancestry?
I'm a wolf displaced from my natural habitat,
that howls and whines and grunts away
in the city that now stands in its former dwelling place.
I'm the parent of destruction and oppression.
I'm anger, the neglected child of fear and suppression.

Oversized

Monica Coutinho

I pick up his shirt and wear it around me like a trophy.
It is oversized,
smells of his faint body sweat and makes
soft creases
as I tuck it under my high waist blue denims remind me of
him.
Habits, of never ironing shirts
of wearing round spectacles with half broken glass
of reading books from last page to first.

When we first kissed,
he carved his fingers through my chest
and drew my trivial heart
flickering.
Flickering and plunging across one wall to another
like an old lightbulb with wings.

Now
it's been three months since
I started to keep little photographs of him
tucked beneath my pillow.

And they say "You write too many poems
on the futility
of existence. And how dear,
there is no beauty in that."

If I could, surely
I would
listen.

Ruination

Upasa Borah

Yesterday I saw a mountain bleed.
It was nothing like I had ever seen before
It bled poison, grey poison
That hissed out of its raw cracks.
None saw the pain, none heard the cries
All simply worshipped it as the demon.

Today I see a mountain bleed.
It is nothing like I have ever seen before
It bleeds ichor, black ichor
That trickles down its bare torso.
None see the pain, none hear the cries
All simply worship it as the gold.

Tomorrow I will see a mountain bleed.
It will be nothing like I had ever seen before
It'll bleed suns, blistering suns
That'll burn out off its dying skin.
None will see the pain, none will hear the cries
All will simply worship it as the end.

Born Free

Siddhi Jayashree Uday

I am Swaradayini and I hold a Veena.
I impart knowledge and wisdom, in the form of Ira.
After the scorching summer I bring the rain,
I raise your spirits, Megha is my name.
Your hard work pays of, in the form of victory.
I bring it to you in the form of Jayashree.
I reside at every home which honours the woman.
I am Bhagyashree, encompassing fortune and luck.
I reside in your ambitions, for you to score higher,
I am Manisha, the intense form of desire.
In my Kindness and grace
You identify me as Anita.
I am the Shakti, the Kaali
And the fierce Taaraka.
I am the innocence, the consciousness and the intellect.
I am the form of the mother-in every aspect.

Have We Been Home For Too Long?

Cindy Felnehthiem

The long silky hairs that honoured our culture
Have we been home for too long?
That our hairs have become a thing to be grabbed
For you to manipulate the body that's carrying it?

The tight bellies that stretched far
Have we been home for too long?
That these bellies being your first home sink into oblivion
While the very sight of it makes you sexually conscious

The legs that opened wide to give life
Have we been home for too long?
That you have objectified this part of us
To cause more pain, trouble and death than birth itself

The breasts that fed the whole nation
Have we been home for too long?
That you've forgotten how you grew up
To be the great men you are today because of these breasts

The curvy backs and waists that once carried men
Have we been home for too long?
That you now only remember
How to hold these backs and waists with lust

The arms that lifted you up when you were little
Have we been home for too long?
That you know not how to care but only tie us up
And rape us while worshiping your goddesses

These hairs, these skins, these bodies

Have we been home for too long?
—bellies, waists, backs, thighs, hands, and breasts...
That gave you life, love and future

Have we been home for too long?
Have we been home for too long?

To a friend who lost his way

Eshan Manglani

Surd, most beginnings
are,

not yours, I thought.

Everytime you close your little blinking
eyes

the asterisks of the skies dethaw—
azure to ashes, that stale of.

One day I could still say
Those arms would be mine,
That you call home.
One day we'd live by the sea.

I cannot say, I cannot show.
Losing has never been,
neither you nor I.
If you give up,
so will I.

But it takes too much courage for that.
One day, we could instead just live by the sea.
I cannot promise there will be no storms
there

(lesser than here though)
And while you were gone, I'd heard,
rowing boats is a hobby of yours.

Wasted

Sana Khan

Last year it was Habanera,
this once, the road to Babylon.

My friend April has Marched
but with you again, June May live.

Fighting for Love

Lokesh Raj

Betrayal is not a syndrome
but a craft that some people master,
Red bulbs, green butterflies, dark sky.

He walks out that door,
not looking once into my eyes,
Smoke, frost, dark sky.

If you don't want me,
you shall not be bothered,
if sky was to fall,
you shall be safe
like you are in my heart,
And I -crushed
like I am under your betrayal.

I am a little autumnal twig, awaiting my burial

Ramya Iyer

Canto 1

Dampened shoes,
Fuzzy hair,
Eyes sore,
Lips hurt,
The crooked willow tree follows me
as I walk on streets with no streetlights,
They shone last night
but decided to take a slumber for this one,
This one is brutal, and it digs a wound right in the middle,
I can see the blood rushing down my chest
I am restlessly trying to wipe it off,
Aghast and Pained,
It is a premonition of death,
Death is dear but not a friend yet,
We need to have a coffee sometime
and get to know each other better,
And then I shall let it hold me across my waist,
Slowly it will run its frostbitten fingers on me,
Painlessly we shall kiss,
Softly,
In Quiet,
Under the naked willow tree,
The one that followed me in the dark,
It will cast a webbed shadow on our naked bodies,
Reminds me of that poem I read,
by the self-loathing poet-
" If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee"

It makes me cry,
I am reborn into this night,
Dampened shoes,
Fuzzy hair,
Eyes sore,
Lips hurt,
The tree follows, the streetlights slumber,
I pain,
I bleed.

Canto 2

They don't see me,
They see the purple jacket and denim jeans,
Occasionally they do notice a cigarette between
my cracked wintry lips,
That is all they see-
They say to me, how they like me for this
or for that
And a useless mouth is all I see,
Yapping endlessly
Into the black-hole of nothingness,
That is all I see,
That man I kissed last night saw me
But it was so dark that I must look different today,
I must look a red jacket and navy blue pants to him,
Of course that cigarette too, between my lips,
What I am trying to say is ingenious-
it is basic and straight,
What I am trying to say just needs a certain degree of
endurance,
Do not resist tonight
for I will be buried tomorrow at noon,
Under the naked willow tree,

My lover will feel coldness of my palm
He will draw the shroud on me, the wreath shall follow,
With his frostbitten fingers he shall touch me one las' time,
He will say my name and my dead body shall feel the quiver
of his throat,
I shall cease this poem of screeching and cry,
Draw a curtain to the dearth of all it is that I feel,
I shall cry sitting alone in the computer lab,
Grab a couple of beers on my way home,
Listen to Teresa Stratas and wonder what pains her,
And if I see you cross my path,
I shall wave a hello,
And you by my troth will say that you
like my purple jacket and denim jeans
and acknowledge my smoke regardless.

Smoke My Pain Away

Manyata Agarwal

Let me smoke away my pain
in soot let it be lost,
in melancholy let it be my only friend,

I burn myself to insanity,
I burn you to restore sanity,

let the river see,
and the bridge float and dwindle
as I smoke my pain away.



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WINGWORD POETRY PRIZE 2018

Wingword Poetry Prize is a national poetry competition that awards its winners upto 5 Lakh Rupees in cash prizes and book publishing. It is held on an annual basis. In 2018, Wingword Poetry Prize received over 1500 entries from nooks and corners of India. Wingword Poetry Prize accepted entries in multiple languages this year, such as Hindi, English and Urdu.

This anthology contains the winning poems, shortlisted by an expert jury. The poems have set a new benchmark for contemporary poetry; demonstrating a combination of aptitude and versatility. There is a certain grip which captures the attention of the readers, as we explore the diverse perspectives and life experiences offered by the poets.

Wingword Poetry Prize is sponsored by Delhi Poetry Slam.



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