

MELBOURNE CULTURE CORNER

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ISSUE THIRTEEN



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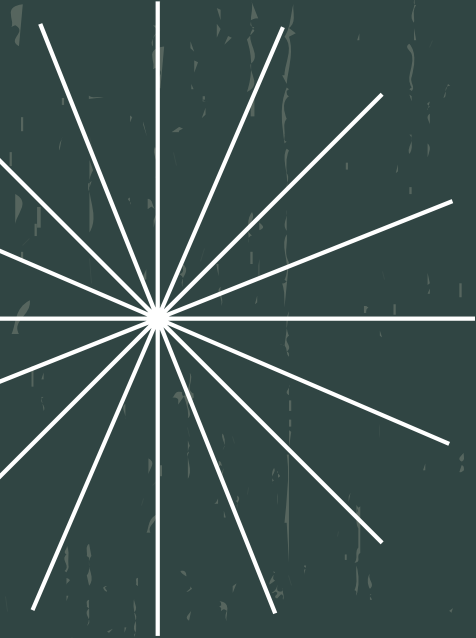
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# Chitra T. Nair

## Magic of Poetry

Poetry creates rhythm  
In the souls searching for harmony.

Poetry distributes harmony  
In the dissociated minds.

Poetry sets language  
In the sentiments of our being.

Poetry upholds truth  
In the weird collocations of life.

Poetry spreads compassion  
In the complexities of existence.

Life is odd at times  
Filled with inconsistent surprises.  
She's caught in the mad rush of life  
Unaware of its intricacies.

As one rushes ahead  
Poetry breaks barriers  
In the map of life.



Dr Chitra Thrivikraman Nair b.1976 is an academic and bilingual poet anchored in Kerala, India. Her poems in English have been published in various journals and anthologies. Her maiden anthology of poems in English titled 'Shades of Life' has been published in 2021 by the Third Eye Butterfly Press, Florida, USA. She is awaiting the publication of her second anthology of poems titled 'Rhythmic Retreats' with the Foreword by the famous Sri Lankan writer Daya Dissanayake.

# Dave Clark

## Desert Rain

A rinsing,  
a cleansing,  
a wild wet-washing.

Life-scented rains of early summer  
a respite,  
a reminder to fading plants  
and human folk  
that they have not been consigned  
to witherdom.

Cicadas drone timbal weather reports.  
Larks sing the rainfall tally.  
10 mls, 10 mls is what the sky spills.

The soil's eyes darken  
after quaffing its fill,  
an all night bender  
before the clouds announced last call.

Cockatoos sip warily from the splash  
of water tank overflow.  
Butterflies jostling  
around the thorny bougainvillea vines.  
Thick breezes amble by.

Reflections of brightened faces  
in roadside puddles.  
Thongs squelching in mud holes.  
Gutters flow with more than dead leaves.  
Chests flow with more than parched dreams.

Dave Clark is a writer-poet with CFS who lives and breathes in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). He works as a counsellor and enjoys reading, photography and giving voice to quieter stories. His works have been published in Mascara, Verdant, Adelaide Lit, Quillopia, Slippage Lit, Melbourne Culture Corner and Right Now.

# John Drudge

## Residue

Chasing  
Fundamental concerns  
In the world as I find it  
In art  
In history  
In small towns  
And the human values  
Of living in tune  
Slipping into uncertainty  
As time slows  
And hope expires  
With nothing stirring  
Beyond the sunset  
Of light receding  
Over the sloping horizon  
Of our periphery  
With the residue of me  
Still me  
In the shadow  
Of a resilient moon



John is a social worker working in the field of disability management and holds degrees in social work, rehabilitation services, and psychology. He is the author of four books of poetry: "March" (2019), "The Seasons of Us" (2019), New Days (2020), and Fragments (2021).

His work has appeared widely in numerous literary journals, magazines, and anthologies internationally. John is also a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee and lives in Caledon Ontario, Canada with his wife and two children.

# Alo Ayodeji

## The Mighty Weakling

Oh no!  
Oh no no!  
the birds now  
tweets melodies to  
mock my fall, but they  
just reecho like laments  
to my already laden ear.

What more have I to bear?  
for the harder I try, the  
more waned I b'come  
before ordeals I  
try so hard to  
overcome,  
on my  
own.

I hone  
after falls  
and my lungs  
sucks in air of slump  
like a dying leaf, slowly  
withering into a great abyss.  
what more have I to bear? For  
my might is only but an illusion.

One thing breeding confusion  
is how I prevail not by my  
power but of the Eagle's,  
soarin' on its wings  
when I surrender  
like a sucklin'  
to mother's  
breastfed  
milk.

Alo Ayodeji is an ambitious poet who aims at being prolific.

He writes from the sururb of Lagos, in Nigeria, and studied Architecture at the Federal University of Technology Akure.

He hopes to leave his word prints on the sands of time as 'The Drained Brain' and 'I Died Not,' his published pieces are leading the pace. He loves music and His Maker, when he isn't writing he can be found reading, watching movies and learning new things.



# John Barlett

These days

These days  
in the penumbra  
of this semi-permanent eclipse  
of light  
butcher birds surrender  
their songs, go home to  
roost, wait out this  
artificial night

These days pirates  
in Dolce & Gabbana suits  
have hijacked the halls  
of power

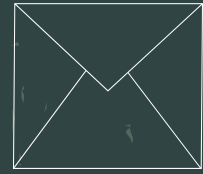
Rapists from the suburbs  
take oaths of office  
on mildewed bibles  
these days

These days men  
with I-pad eyes  
stalk the S & P 500  
doing deals in arms  
while texting "thoughts & prayers"  
to families of children  
eviscerated by IUDs

These days  
all we like sheep  
have gone astray

Will we live to see  
the tumbrils of karma  
rumble,  
crowds shouting  
"burn motherfuckers, burn"?

Will we ever emerge again  
to see the stars?



John Bartlett is the author of eight books including two poetry Chapbooks and a full collection *Awake at 3am* just released by Ginninderra Press. He was the winner of the 2020 Ada Cambridge Poetry Prize.

He reviews and blogs at:  
<https://beyondtheestuary.com/>




# Yuu Ikeda

She was born

She was born  
from the ghost  
that has bloodless face,  
piercing eyes,  
and rotten smile

Under the moonlight,  
she draws the ghost  
to hate her lunatic destiny

Under the sunlight,  
she writes about the ghost  
to ridicule her beginning like a nightmare



A Puddle

A puddle in the bottom of loneliness  
reflects a rainbow to the sky

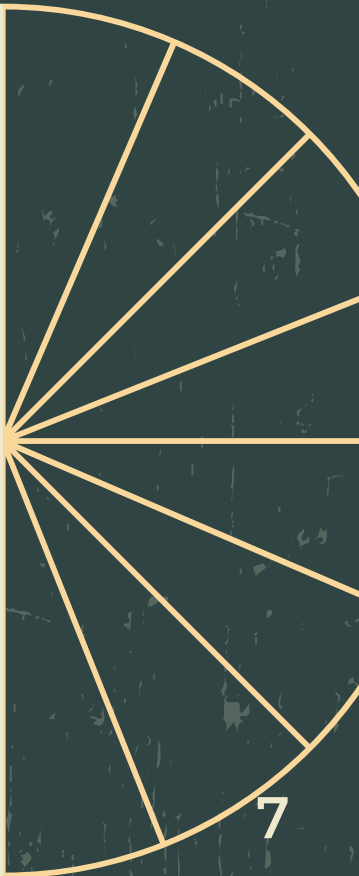
If I reach to the rainbow,  
this puddle vanishes eternally

If I don't reach to the rainbow,  
this puddle shows me the rainbow  
eternally...



## 【Bio】

Yuu Ikeda is a Japan based poet.  
She loves writing, drawing,  
and reading mystery novels.  
She writes poetry on her website.  
<https://poetryandcoffeedays.wordpress.com/>  
Her published poems are  
"On the Bed" in <Nymphs>,  
"Pressure" in <Selcouth Station Press>,  
"Dawn" in <Poetry and Covid>,  
"The Mirror That I Broke" in <vulnerable  
magazine>,  
and more.  
Her Twitter and Instagram :  
@yuunnnn77





# Osazuwa Cynthia

## A MILLION DREAM

A million dreams dance  
and sing within me,  
All pushing out to become a reality,  
They flow through me like a fountain of water.

Bubbling in my inner mind,  
One never ceases to fight  
oppression,  
striving for a single chance,  
To explore their potential.

Flipping my thinking like pages,  
Searching for answers.  
I hunger to give each dream its due,  
But all needs my attention.

I stare up to the sky,  
I see them shining and smiling at me,  
The thought of their beautiful energy stares within,  
Inspired I allow my pen to bleed.

The vision of the world I see,  
Be it big or small,  
Let me be a part of it all.

Osazuwa Cynthia is an inspiring poet, from Nigeria. In Orhionwom L.G.A, Edo state. She had her secondary school education in Axxess foundation group of school, she is currently pursuing her National Diploma degree in mass communication, in the prestigious federal polytechnic Auchi.

After her secondary school, she improved her intellect through private reading and deep thinking, she started poetry writing at the age of seventeen. She won her first poetry contest with her poem titled: "celebration of life." She is concerned in healing the heart of men globally through her pen, the nature of her writing is centered on love, hope, life, beauty, pains, culture, history romance.

Her works includes: "My Muse," "The Will of My Heart," "Celebration of Life," "My soul mate," "Who Am I?" "knowledge," "Beyond My Sight."

# Shaurya Arya-Kanojia

## The Awful, the Wonderful

“Why would you believe in something awful when you could believe in something wonderful?” she asked.

“Now you’re just quoting the priest from Fleabag,” I replied.

“Maybe I am. But I’m right, you know.”

Although I won’t admit it to her, she was right. But I could never let her believe that, no matter the closeness we shared. We’d had an argument last night over how, in high school, a physical confrontation between my best friend and myself had caused an irreversible damage to our friendship; and that she was the instigator, who had egged him on. The memories of being smacked and kicked around and the fracture I had sustained to my leg following the incident not only still live inside my head but also irk me. Oh, how many times I’ve fantasised winding the clocks back all those years and... done something instead of just taking the beating.

“Maybe you are,” I started, unsure where I was going with this. “But you did...”

“How many times have we gone through this? What do you want, a confession?”

“For starters, yes.”

“Fine. You got whacked around...”

“I didn’t get whac...” I interrupted her, indignantly so.

“All right, all right. You got a beating. How does that make it any different?”

I couldn’t say anything to that.

“You got a beating because of me,” she said. “There you go, I’ve admitted it. Are you happy now?”

Was I? I wasn’t sure anymore. I only nodded.

“But, come on,” she started, the trickle of exasperation in her voice now a steady stream, “that was twenty years...”

“Twenty two,” I butted in.

“Wow, you really haven’t been able to let it go, have you?”

Truthfully, I hadn’t. And she knew it. The two of us had been over this subject a gazillion times. Even if we didn’t verbally discuss it, she knew that beating was a pivotal event for me. My friendship with the guy I had been friends with since the fifth grade had severed.

"I don't think I need to tell you what happened after that," I said, attempting to swing the discussion in my favour.

"I do know. That... mistake..."

"It wasn't a mistake..."

"Will you let me finish?" she lashed.

I nodded.

"Good," she continued. "It was a mistake. A foolish, regrettable one. But a mistake nevertheless. I wish I could take it back. That phone call with him, when I accidentally let it slip..."

"That I called his sister..."

"Yes. YES! It was wrong, okay? I'm sorry. I was just... Mad at you. You had the entire class believe we made out in the cafeteria."

"I did no such thing!"

"I'm not convinced," she said, shaking her head. "But I guess I get it. Boys will be boys, right?" Then, before I could try to persuade her, she started again,

"Anyhow, even if you didn't, someone did. And I didn't want people talking trash about me behind my back. So I..."

"Turned my friend against me..."

"Yeah. I wasn't sure he'd believe my story. It was a cheap, farfetched shot. But it worked. He was always possessive about his sister. And when she flunked her seventh grade, it..."

"Served as the perfect fodder for your scheme."


"You're completing my sentences now?" she retorted, but shame soon dawned on her. "But, yes."

There was a moment – maybe a few seconds or maybe a minute, it didn't matter – of silence. I was revisiting all the trips I had to make to the hospital after the beating. One of his smacks had broken my nose. Also, my leg sustained a fracture; which still lives in the form of a residual limp.

When she started this time, the shade of aggression in her voice had been reduced to what I want to say was perhaps sympathy, but not the condescending kind. "You still haven't moved on from it?"

I could argue the statement sounded provocative, but her face said otherwise. I shook my head.

"Why, though?" she pleaded. "Why are you still thinking about that awful incident? Everyone's moved on since then. You should too!" And, as an afterthought, "I bet that friend of yours doesn't even recall the incident." Oh, how much I do not want that to be right.

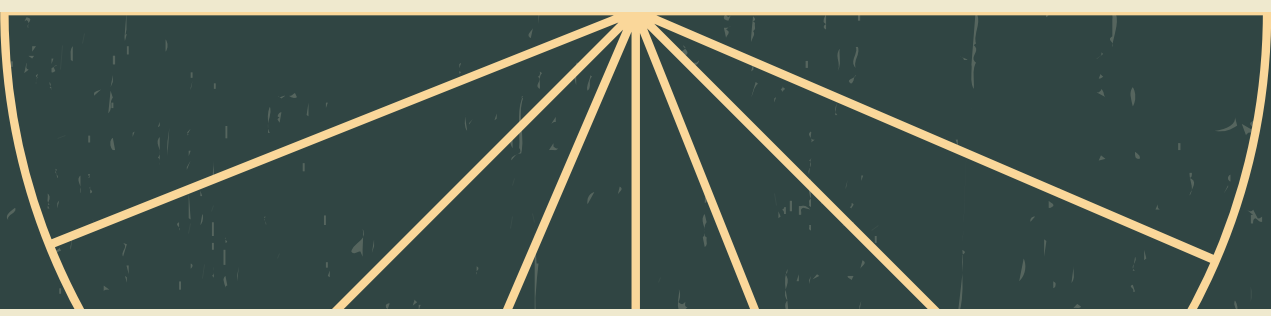


“I’m sorry,” she said. And maybe – just maybe – the resentment I’ve held onto all these years was starting to evaporate. The physical therapy I had to endure for weeks afterwards, the brace I had had to wear, the looks of pity I’d get from everyone (and, mind you, high school kids aren’t particularly merciful), and the exams I couldn’t give because of which I had to repeat the same year. “But,” she continued, “Can’t you try to... get over it? Forget it? I’m pretty sure those two – the brother and sister – are over it. Why don’t you find them on Facebook and drop them a message? For yourself, if not for them.”

What she was saying did make sense. Would the ex-best friend of mine really be obsessed over that incident – no matter the significance of it in my life – as much as I was? Part of me knew he wouldn’t; after all, he didn’t have to deal with the physical and emotional ordeal that followed. Another part of me – the hopeful part, you can say – wished he was still going to bed each night feeling remorseful over what he caused me.

And then she spoke, her voice originating from the trenches of my mind but loud and clear as a bell. “You need to let it go. And, more importantly, you need to let me go. Till when can you keep torturing yourself by keeping me in your head?”  
The mist lifted.

With it, she vanished. But only temporarily. I knew she’ll make a reappearance. People like me can’t let go of things that easily.



Shaurya Arya-Kanojia authored his debut novella, *End of the Rope*, in 2019. He likes sports (cricket, mostly), eating out, and watching reruns of *The Office* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. His social media handles include @shauryaticks (Twitter) and @main.hoon.ek.sharara (Instagram), and more about him can be found at [www.shauryaak.weebly.com](http://www.shauryaak.weebly.com)



# Damien Posterino

Just carry on

I am tired of being resilient.

A boy at school is teased  
and shredded into saw dust,  
until one day the winds turn  
him into a hurricane.  
Of course they all gasp.

Teens dripping anger hang onto a long branch  
over a river, before the bough bends  
and explodes, hurling them  
like hail onto the rocks.

A man beats his chest and brags  
about not being sick for 20 years.  
He drops dead,  
working alone in his office.

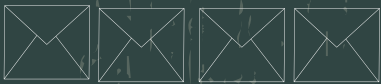
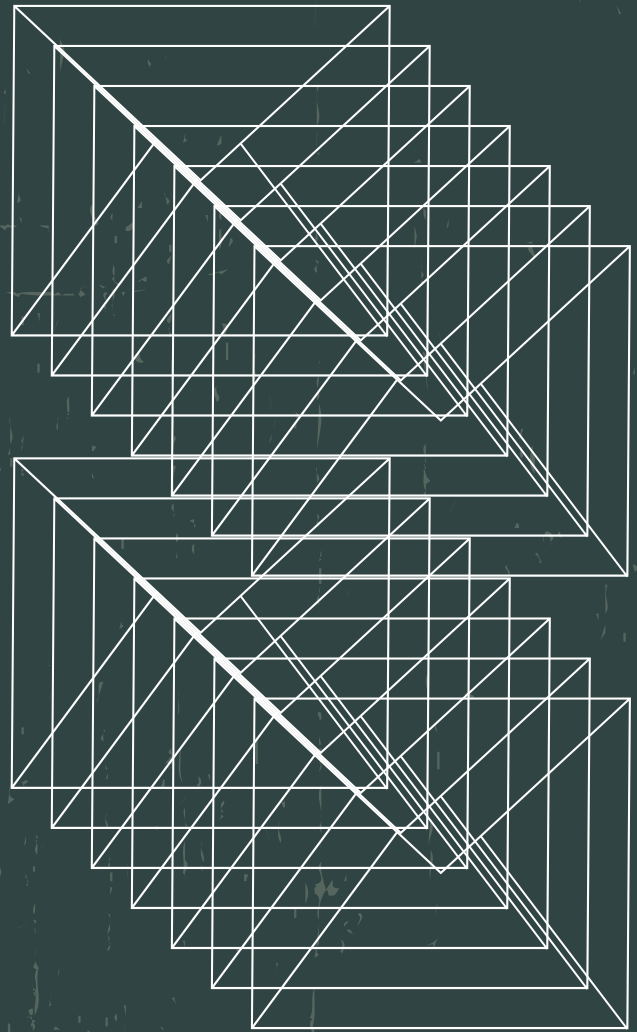
A nation howls over a princess who is gone,  
flowers and cards are hurled  
like hard soil  
over their own living coffins  
and stiff upper lips.

Camels refuse to carry any more straw;  
They spit in the face of their masters  
then kneel in protest.  
No smack from any stick will make them move.


Keep going they say. Just carry on.

## After the rain


It's time to dry your eyes.  
and arise from ashen slumber.  
Rub the smudges of sadness,  
feel warm smiles floating again  
from winds that blew cold kisses.  
Smell the steam of soil at our feet,  
pierced by rusty nails from the sky.  
Halos of humidity drift laconically  
as ghosts rising from concrete  
like lost relatives at a séance.  
Grey curtains part teasingly above us,  
their chords pulled hard with hope.  
Young lovers lips open in ecstasy,  
tactile organs meet strangers again  
within the sparks of kindling relit.  
Reborn again in the blue heavens  
golden flames embrace wild angels.



Damien Posterino (he/him) is a Melbourne born poet in London. His poetry explores themes of characters, commentary and capturing moments in time. He has been published in recent editions of Fiery Scribe Review, Neuro Logical, Analogies & Allegories Literary Magazine, Abergavenny Small Press, BOMBFIRE, Jupiter Review, Fairy Piece Magazine, Poetic Sun Journal, Green Ink Poetry and Zero Readers. More are due to be published up until January 2022. You can find him on Twitter at [twitter.com/damienposterino](https://twitter.com/damienposterino)



Thank you to all our lovely contributors for their support and submissions, and to everyone taking the time to read all these amazing poems and stories we receive!



We hope all our readers going through lockdowns are safe and looking after each other



*meal*

As always we would like to acknowledge the original custodians of the land we live and work upon, and pay our respect to all indigenous peoples past and present.