

SAUTI
POEMS OF HEALING
VOLUME 2



UNITED NATIONS
SYSTEM WORKPLACE MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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SAUTI
Poems Of Healing

Foreward

The Secretary-General launched the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy in 2018, affirming the importance of the mental health and well-being of UN personnel. As the Chair of the Strategy Implementation Board, I am proud of the work being undertaken across the UN system to promote workplace mental health and well-being.

Through this volume, UN personnel from all around the world have expressed themselves through poetry and shared this with us. I would like to express my gratitude to each and every one of our colleagues who have shared something so deep and personal. These poems are a testament to the skills, talent and creativity of UN personnel, and it is with great delight that I offer my support to this poetry initiative.

The publication of Sauti Poems of Healing Vol. 2 is an opportunity not just to promote the art of poetry, but to connect and re-connect with one another, raise awareness about mental health and celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity in a way that only an organization as large and diverse as ours can. Let's continue



Martha Helena Lopez
Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources
Department of Management, Strategy, Policy and Compliance
United Nations

Dear reader,

Welcome to the second UN poetry book, Sauti: Volume 2.

Poetry has been used for centuries, in many different culture and languages, as a tool for expressing our feelings, longings and sufferings. Reading and writing poetry is often a mindful and meditative experience that is a way of connecting with others. It can provide healing and hope and offer a moment to pause and reflect on our experiences.

Based on the success of our 2020 poetry series, Sauti: Poems of Healing, we decided to continue our exploration of poetry as a path to dialogue about mental health and well-being. We asked colleagues throughout the UN system to share their poems - in any language, form, or style. Our overarching purpose is to raise awareness about mental health, convey the message that it is okay not to feel okay all the time, and that we can be open to embracing all of our internal experiences.

Poetry gives language to the topic of mental health and well-being. Reading and writing poetry can be a way of accessing what may otherwise be left unsaid.

The poetry initiative provides an opportunity to contribute to an organizational culture that celebrates multilingualism and cultural diversity. For our second poetry series we received forty-seven submissions in 12 different languages: English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Croatian, Filipino, Italian, Hindi, Montenegrin, and Portuguese. These poems were received from 21 UN organizations and from 23 countries. We have compiled their words into the second publication of Sauti which means “voice” in Swahili. Poems are included in their original language, accompanied by English translation by the author.

These poems offer unique insights into the minds, emotions and souls of our colleagues across the world. Our colleagues shared their creativity and passion to help raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma, and to support a healthier workplace.

We hope that this book will take you on a journey both inward and outward, and help you to find solace, hope, and admiration for the power of human resilience and perseverance. As you browse through these pages, we hope that you will feel connected to a greater sense of community.

Like the United Nations itself, poetry lends itself as a borderless country where each one of us can find a home and a sense of belonging.

Mental health matters, and together we can make mental health and well-being for all a global priority.

*Danijela Milić project leader
October 2022*

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Thank you to Marta Helena Lopez (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources and Chair of the UN System Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being Strategy Implementation Board) for her leadership.

Last, but not least, thank you to all mental health and well-being champions for joining us as we continue to challenge and break the stigma related to mental health.

Content Warning

These poems feature a wide range of topics, and some may be difficult to read. Select poems inhabit topics related to mental illness, trauma, self-harm, and violence. If you or a loved one needs help, please reach out for support. A list of resources for UN personnel is available at: <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/mental-health-and-well-being>. For more information about the UN System's Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, and how to support someone you are concerned about, please visit: <https://www.un.org/en/healthy-workforce/>.

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Positive person

I like to read, I like to write,
I want to be in house of white.
I like to read myriad of book,
As of a poet, I want to look.
I like to wear a comfortable shoes
At COVID time use mask and gloves.
I like the nature, I like the lands,
Strongest people with helping hands.
To sleep early, to get up late
Some of people dislike and hate.
I like to think, I like to dream,
To have my own airstream, (Airstream-Travel trailer)
I like the train and metropolis' noise,
Children should have, a lot of toy's
Appreciate, the airplanes flight,
It doesn't matter, day or night.
Delicious foods I like to eat,
At hunger time all food is sweet.
I like to see rain in summer,
How it is good sound of drummer.
The beautiful flowers at early spring,
For our mothers we want to bring.
Snow in winter, we like to see,
Strong as fathers, we want to be.
We need to listen than to talk,
The bad character you should to block.
I cannot sleep until mid-night.
It is so good to see moon-light,
I like to see morning sunrise,
I want to be in Paradise.
To feel and smell the oceans wind,
The thankful heart you need to find.
I like the people and, their laugh.
Be positive, it is enough.

Akbarjoni Emomali

Hommage à l'amour

Qui d'autre que l'Amour personnifié peut parler de l'Amour ?
Qui mieux qu'un Aimé peut parler d'Amour ?
C'est avec émotion que je voudrais vous parler de ma passion : l'Amour.
J'aime l'Amour, j'aime manger l'Amour, j'aime sentir l'Amour, j'aime donner de l'Amour.... J'aime....
Ce n'est pas une prétention,
J'ai plutôt l'ambition de réveiller en vous des sensations,
Et je sais que vous me donnerez votre onction.
Je n'ai pas envie de semer en vous de la confusion,
Car la seule évocation de l'amour peut être à l'origine de
Folles imaginations, de sérieuses réflexions ou de la simple jubilation.
L'Amour n'est pas une punition. C'est plutôt une bénédiction.
Dans les Eglises, dans les mosquées, dans les synagogues, dans les écoles,
dans les universités, à la maison, au boulot, même en politique,
On parle de l'Amour.
L'amour de Dieu pour les hommes,
L'amour d'un père ou d'une mère pour ses enfants,
L'amour d'un enfant pour ses parents,
L'amour d'un frère pour sa sœur et vice-versa,
L'amour d'un homme pour un homme,
L'amour d'une femme pour une femme etc...
Alors, qu'est-ce que l'Amour ?
Pour moi l'Amour est un je-ne-sais quoi, qui vient de je-ne-sais-où,
Qui s'empare de je-ne-sais-qui, qui finit je-ne sais-quand et je-ne-sais-comment.
Pour vous c'est quoi l'Amour ?
Pour moi l'amour est Tout.
Pour l'être aimé, je veux tout donner
Pour elle,
Je sens sourdre de mon tréfonds un magma d'Amour aux senteurs volcaniques,
Je tressaillis de joie en sentant qu'elle vient à moi, elle la Fleur aux mille senteurs boisées, aux effluves irrésistibles,
Je sens venir l'électricité d'un Amour carbonisant aux effets foudroyants,
Je sens ce sentiment sucré-salé qui me propulse vers le ciel étoilé aux limites infinies.
Ô Amour, donne-moi ce champagne de campagne qui n'a d'autre goût que celui éternel de ton Amour !

Aimé Hessou

Tribute to love

Who else but personified Love can speak of Love?
Who better than a Beloved can speak of Love?
It is with emotion that I would like to talk to you about my passion: Love.
I love Love, I love to eat Love, I love to feel Love, I love to give Love.... I love....
It is not a claim.
Rather, I have the ambition to awaken sensations in you.
And I know that you will give me your anointing.
I don't want to confuse you,
Because the only evocation of love can be at the origin of
Wild imaginations, serious thoughts or simple jubilation.
Love is not a punishment. It is rather a blessing.
In churches, in mosques, in synagogues, in schools, in universities, at home, at work, even in politics,
We talk about love.
God's love for people
The love of a father or a mother for his children,
The love of a child for his parents,
The love of a brother for his sister and vice versa,
The love of a man for a man,
The love of a woman for a woman.
So, what is love?
For me Love is a I-don't know what, which comes from I-don't-know-where
Which seizes I-don't-know-who, which ends I-don't-know-when and I-don't-know how.
For you, what is love?
For me love is everything
For the loved one, I want to give everything
For her...
I feel rising from my depths a magma of Love with volcanic scents,
I quivered with joy when I felt that she was coming to me, she, the Flower with a thousand woody
scents, with irresistible scents,
I feel the electricity coming from a charring Love with lightning effects,
I feel this sweet-salty feeling that propels me towards the starry sky with infinite limits
O Love, give me this country champagne which has no other taste than the eternal taste of your Love!

Aimé Hessou

Worried LOVE

Worried about you,
Worried in a wrong and good way
Just worried...
Embarrassed to keep along
And trust those who believe in my dreams
But nothing will be the same;

Worried about you,
While finding inspiration through
Different touches
Just touching,
Not easy but... it will be like that
Walking in a difficult road
Giving myself a gift
Coupled along with;

Worried about you,
Trying misaligned feelings
That took me by surprise
And faithfully carried it over,
To flag my own voice around
To shine their voices somewhere
To keep it going
Nothing else... just trying to survive.

Alda de Barros

Frozen feelings

Silent crying,
Feelings of rejection, frozen feelings
The pain is unexplainable, indescribable
A walk through sunrise, through sunset
The feelings do not go away
Self-worth means nothing, there is no worth

It is more painful,
Feelings of rejection, frozen feelings
Family is guilty, friends are guilty
It is deep, and only gets deeper
There is a way, looking perfect
To end it all seems sweeter

See!
There is another way
Talk the pain, express the emotion
Goodbye to negative energy
Self-love and renewed hope
Forward, ahead ahead

Amaraizu Genius

* * *

Я мечтаю о том, что однажды
Найду гармонию снаружи и внутри.
И научусь не думая дважды,
Принять что-то, а что-то легко отпустить.

Я мечтаю о мире, добрых семьях, воде
Для каждого дома, любви и заботы,
Чтоб не было места лютой нужде,
Чтоб путь к диалогу не занимал годы.

Когда вокруг меняется все быстро,
Былые правила теперь уж неверны
Нам легче стало вдруг открыться
Поняв, что горизонты новые нам тоже не видны.

Мы неопределенностью назвали
Этот момент на сломе меж времен,
Сначала сильно запаниковали,
Потом болели, дрались, что потом?

Нет больше «победитель -проигравший»
Если страдает кто-то, то страдают все...
Нет больше «их проблем» и проблем «наших»,
Ведь колокол всегда звонит и по тебе.

Теперь мы вместе больше, чем раздельно.
Мы научились праздновать различья,
В культуре, расе, гендере и языке,
В способностях, талантах и обычаях.

Объединившись мы выходим в космос,
Учимся, строим, создаем и лечим,
И каждый привнося свою возможность,
Среди людей добротной почвой обеспечен.

Когда нам кажется, что больше нет просвета,
Когда совсем не верится в мечты,
Не забывая, что семена растут без света,
А что сегодня на земле посадишь ты?

Алина Хабибова

* * *

I have a dream that I'll find harmony in this world
Inside and out,
I have a dream that I'll learn
To live with and live without.

I have a dream about peace,
About water, food for every home,
About loving families,
And let the violence be unknown.

When changes happen every day,
There is no use in rules we had,
It's easier to say "okay"
To things like: there is no future you have planned.

Uncertainty is middle name,
Of this epoch, as endless test,
We cope, we hurt, we lose and gain,
We panic, fight...So what is next?

There is no "win-and-lose" today,
'Cause any loss is not for free
There is "no their" and "our" pain
As 'the bell is always tolls for thee'.

We are more together, than apart,
Diversity is celebrated,
We've made our life an art,
And life itself is appreciated.

And when it seems there's no light ahead,
When it becomes too hard to dream,
Remember, darkness is the place we plant,
What would you like to seed?

Alina Khabibova



Sometimes

Sometimes I'm up
 Sometimes I'm down
 Sometimes I feel
 I want no one around

Sometimes I smile
 Sometimes I sigh
 Sometimes I feel
 All I want to do is cry

Sometimes I'm lonely
 Sometimes I'm sad
 Sometimes I feel
 Like I'm going to go mad

Sometimes I feel strong
 Sometimes I feel weak
 Sometimes I feel like
 I'm at the end of our peak

Sometimes I move
 Sometimes I stay in bed
 Sometimes I just
 Want to forget what lies ahead

Despite the struggles
 Sometimes losing hope
 My inner strength
 Finds a way to cope

And in those hard times
 When I sometimes want to hide
 I have a great colleague
 With whom I can confide

Allison Pizzolato

A sonata of two nomads

- to baby Seagull Jonathan Jr.

On a gloomy winter morning in Istanbul,
Apple cinnamon tea slowly brewing on the stove,
Ocean wind flapping my kitchen window,
Winter blues burning mildly in my chest.

‘Poof’ a big snowy figure - not Thor in exile from Asgard, or CatWoman cruising by;
Jonathan Livingston, the proud and curious Seagull,
He and I, for a forever moment, staring at each other, purely, in awe!

The moment grew, as did the unexpected romance at every noon.
While I prepared his lunch, nuts of sorts, he brought the magic kisses of the morning dew,
We shared small talks about the weather, occasionally about the pranks life play on us;
And the one thousand and one nights of stories from the Bosphorus.

Then on Valentine’s Day, Jonathan didn’t show up. I guess he preferred “Red” more than the
Sauvignon Blanc I prepared.
Yet, I am happy, and wish him a romantic date with his new Gulfriend,,
I hope they share bites of seabreams gliding through the last winter drizzle;
I hope they share secret laughter hovering above evening prayers from mosques.

And maybe soon we will welcome baby Jonathan Jr., so I want to write this poem for his lullaby:

It is a story about anticipating an unexpected visitor.
It is about a whispering sonata that forever warmed up winter mornings for two nomads, one on land
and one in the sky.

Ao Kōng

How to Deal

I’ve got my shots—
booster, vaccine,
yet, truthfully
I’m impressed with the Queen,
at 95, all peaches and cream.

Yes, okay,
there’s the royal medical team
but despite all that talk,
I’m thinking corgis
and her brisk daily walk.

Still, for me,
raising canines
a bit much to do
so for animal therapy
I’ve pencilled in The Bronx Zoo.

And on those days
everything’s a tall order,
back to the basics—
plenty of water.

Bhikshuni Weisbrot

Hope

In a world that is bleeding
In a world that has not always been kind
Be the person who cares
Be the person who loves.

Have the courage to bare your soul
Have the courage to feel
To never shy away from depths of feelings
And the courage to never give up hope.

Be the person who believes in the softness of the world
Be the person who believes in the goodness of other beings
Because there is nothing stronger than someone who remains soft
In a world that has not always been kind.

In a world that is bleeding
In a world that has seen cruelty
Continue to give love
While be gentle with your healing.

Embrace and open your heart
Embrace with souls who make you feel deeply
Embrace with the moments that bring tears to your eyes
Because life is beautiful yet precious.

At the end of the day
Beyond the end of our human story
We all want to be good ancestors
And strive to have profound meaning in our lives.

To help the poorest of the poor
To help play a role in making the world a better and safer place
To make an impact in the lives of our future generations
To love and respect the dignity of every human.

At the end of the day
We want to leave this world
With a heart that aches from loving and caring with our complete souls
Pouring and crashing your soul into each day.

And at the end of the day
We want to heal the tender pain in this world
To see the love that exists around our lives.
And to never lose hope.

Brenda Vongova



I veri Eroi.

Onore a voi emissari di pace
Voi, che avete scelto di servire il prossimo
di lottare contro la sofferenza e difendere i più vulnerabili.

Soldati di pace,
il vostro sguardo vigile, verso l'orizzonte di una terra straniera
ma con la mente e il cuore lontani, a casa, dai vostri cari.
Forza! presto tornerete da loro,
più integri e gratificati per il lavoro svolto
e con una nuova medaglia al petto
la più grande delle onorificenze! Quella della pace.

Costruttori di pace
Coraggio! la vostra è la più difficile delle missioni
con professionalità e dedizione,
la svolgete, senza indugio,
fieri del color azzurro che portate
l'azzurro del cielo che vi sovrasta,
lo stesso cielo che avvolge tutti i popoli, senza eccezioni
l'azzurro, il colore di tutti.

Colleghi ed amici
quali sofferenze e pericoli siete pronti a fronteggiare?
Per contribuire attivamente a creare un mondo migliore, di pace!
Che ammirazione e quanto onore!
Questo momento, quest'attimo della vostra vita offerta agli altri
Resterà scolpito nelle pagine della storia per l'eternità.
Il mondo vi sarà riconoscente e sarete stati partecipi
della costruzione di un miglior domani

Siete Voi, i veri Eroi di oggi.

Con rispetto, io vi saluto.

Cristian Mazzei

True Heroes.

Honor to you, messengers of peace
You, who have chosen to serve others,
fighting against suffering and defending the most vulnerable.

Soldiers of peace,
Your vigilant eyes, guarding the horizon of a foreign land
while your mind and heart are far away, back home with your family.
Keep it up! Soon you will return to them,
gratified for a job well done
with a new medal on your chest
The greatest of honors, that of peace.

Builders of peace,
Courage! Yours is the most difficult of the mission
With professionalism and devotion,
you execute it, tirelessly,
Proud of the blue color that you wear,
the blue of the sky that hangs above you,
the same sky above everyone, without exception,
Blue, the color of all.

Colleagues and friends,
What suffering and dangers are you ready to face?
to create a better world of peace!
What admiration and honor!
This moment, this instant of your life offered to others
will stay engraved in the pages of the history for eternity.
The world will be thankful and You will have been part
of building a better tomorrow.

You are the true Heroes of today.

With respect, I salute you.

Cristian Mazzei

Hopefulness

As the river flows through the rocky terrain,
Keep moving towards your goal in the journey of life.
As the sun shines after the rain,
Glitter like a star in the firmament of life.

Challenges can be tough, ordeals can be tiring,
Always fly like a cheerful dove.
Time can be rough, Turmoil can be demanding,
Keep a guard over the flame of hope.

Setbacks can make the character feeble,
Hold on to the nerve.
Honesty may be become instable
Embrace the principles you serve.

Room can be closed, room can be dark,
Keep looking for the source of light.
The map can be complex without a mark,
Explore the only direction that is right.

Life is akin to a maze,
The choices are given at every phase.
But your ultimate goal shimmers with a unique glaze,
Nurture the focus to finish the race.

Energy may drain; the boost may be rare,
All you need is a valiant dare.
For a while all endeavors may go in vain,
But stand up to try, try and try again.

Deepak Goel



Vinograd

Odlazi zimo,
prehladjuju se moji vinogradi.
Vinogradi iz snova budućih.

Drhti moja smokva
a limun ti prkosi tiho,
žutozlatno da ni ne osjetiš.

Odlazi zimo
volim te kad ti je vakat
kad stud zatvori prozore
pa po unutrašnjoj njivi orema
gajeći u duši mir.

Znam da naučili nismo
žet ćemo ono što smo posijali,
a mir je biljka sporog rasta
mnogima neisplativa.

Odlazi zimo.
Odlazi tmino.

Samo bih da pišem
da u miru udišem vazduh slan,
da gajim paradajz i limun
i mirišem ruzmarim uglaćanog krša mog.

Sanjam o mom vinogradu
sa pogledom na zore skadarske
i zatone jadranske.

Njedra siromaštva
gozbu spremaju
biće vina dok je krvi moje plavoslane.

U vodi je borba
u vodi su i mir i prkos
u vodi je sloboda.

Odlazi zima
u martu se prelamaju
tmina i svjetlost.
Iz tuge izranja dúga.

U proljeće počinje pokretanje
okaca i pupoljaka
- presudan trenutak.

Grozđ se radja onda
kad su mu čokotu stopala u snijegu
dok sanja žutozlatno sunce ljeta.

Vjeruj u svjetlost i kada misliš da je nema.
Otvori oči - šta u duši vidiš?
Ne može se žeti sto gajeno nije.

Odlazi zimo,
ne daj da prolječni mraz uništiti pupoljke,
pokrivaču ih bar mislima toplim.

Vinograd se budi,
ništa ga spriječiti neće,
ni stud ni virus ni kob ljudska.

Ozdraviće moj vinograd iz snova budućih
vodeno-martovskih
tigrovski branjenih,
još ne dosanjanih.

Cvjetovi vinove loze samooplodni su,
ne trebaju nam vaše pčele olovne.

Oproštaj i ljubav su sve što vam mogu dati.
Ljubav sve podnosi i svemu se nada
ne traži odgovor, već se samo nudi.

Poljubi il' ostavi, izbor tvoj nek' bude.

Tebi izbori, meni izvori.
Ja ću uvijek birati ljubav
pa i kad mi izvor zalediti žele.

Dokle god ljubav pupi
iz krhotine mira
lastariće moji vinogradi
još ne dosanjani.

Danijela Milić

Vineyard

Time to go winter, leave,
my vineyards are catching cold,
vineyards from the dreams not yet dreamt.

My fig tree is trembling
and the lemon tree defies you quietly
with golden-yellow light so you barely notice.

Time to go winter, leave,
I love you when it is your time,
when the cold closes the windows
so we can plow our inner soil
cultivating peace within.

I know that we haven't learned
And we will reap what we sowed.
But peace is a slow-growing plant,
unprofitable to many.

Time to go winter, leave.
You too, darkness, leave.

I just want to write,
to breathe the salty sea air in peace,
to grow tomatoes and lemons
and smell rosemary of my native karst landscape.

I dream of my vineyard
overlooking the dawns of Lake Skadar
and the sunsets of the Adriatic.

From the bosom of poverty
a feast is emerging.
There will be wine as long as my salty-blue blood flows.

In water there is strength and struggle.
In water there is both peace and defiance.
In water there is freedom.

Winter is leaving.
With the arrival of March
darkness and light refract.

From sadness a rainbow emerges.
In spring nature awakens,
Fresh buds bursting,
- a decisive moment.

Grape clusters are born,
the vine's feet still in the snow,
dreaming yet of the golden-yellow summer sun.

Believe in light even when you think it is gone.
Open your senses - what do you see in your soul?
You can't reap what you didn't grow.

Time to go winter, leave.
Don't let the spring frost destroy the buds,
I'll cover them if only in my thoughts.

The vineyard is awakening.
Nothing will prevent it,
Not frost, not virus, not human fate.

My vineyard will heal
watered by March,
defended by a tiger,
my vineyard from the dreams not yet dreamt.

Grape flowers self-pollinate.
Your leaden bees are unnecessary.

Forgiveness and love are all I can offer you.
Love endures all things and is eternally hopeful.
It does not seek an answer, it offers only itself.

Embrace it or leave it, the choice is yours.

Choices for you, water sources for me.
I will always choose love,
even when others want to freeze my source.

As long as love buds
from the shards of peace
my vineyard will bud,
my vineyard from the dreams not yet dreamt.

Danijela Milić

Last Desert Sound

- (Dedicated to the people of the desert in Mali)

They are all there, but it is unusually quiet
Rare children's chuckle takes him back long time ago
He remembers sisters, brothers, and a lamb
Father's hands, grandfather, like he is so.

All braveness and happiness that was following..
Reminds him, now, of his mother smile.
The smell, of loving woman
Motivated to push it, as much, while!

So many rains, he has seen
After the longest, he managed to swim
With all his animals. His weakness, his power
With his loving kids, laughing and jumping with him!

So many times, he was sweating
From the hard work or seriously ill.
Up to now, was never about to die
Who's going to pass them the skill?

Now, not much time left. The end of all his ways
Big tear in his eye, for all not done in passed days!
Hiding happiness that all beloved, healthy, are just around

By singing in self, the melody, of his Last Desert Sound!

Darko Djorić



Au pays de tous les enfants

Forêt de chiffres dans tes branches
Le soleil brille sur l'écran
Rayon d'un sourire d'enfant

Mon rapport tremble dans le vent
S'envole comme un grand oiseau blanc
Au pays de tous les enfants

Est-ce le Henu est-ce le Phénix
Qui renaît dès qu'un monde meurt
Dès qu'un enfant a trop de pleurs

Est-ce l'Anzû est-ce le Griffon
Qui se fit un moment voleur
Pour quelque pouvoir créateur

L'oiseau sirène de la Grèce
Le Rokh de Perse oiseau savant
Grand vautour chasseur d'éléphant

Quetzalcoatl l'oiseau serpent
L'Esprit Saint venu dans ce monde
Qui a la forme d'une colombe

Dans mon bureau avec mes chiffres
Je fais des jeux pour les enfants
Au pays de tous les enfants

David Semerian

In the land of all children

Forest of numbers in your branches
The sun shines on the screen
Ray of a child's smile

My report is shaking in the wind
Fly away like a big white bird
In the land of all children

Is it the Henu is it the Phoenix
Who is reborn as soon as a world dies
As soon as a child cries too much

Is it the Anzû is it the Griffon
Who made himself a thief for a moment
For some creative power

The Mermaid Bird of Greece
The Rokh of Persia, learned bird
Large elephant hunter vulture

Quetzalcoatl the snake bird
The Holy Spirit who came into this world
Who has the shape of a dove

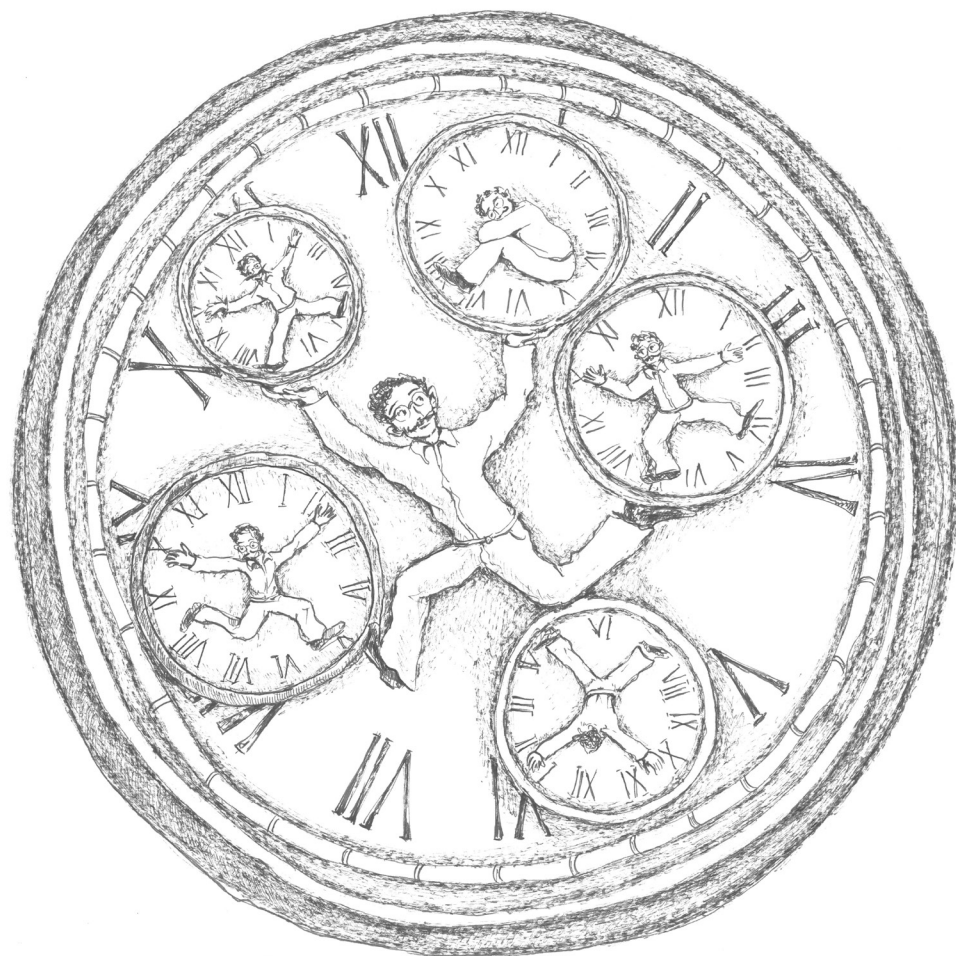
In my office with my numbers
I make games for children
In the land of all children

David Semerian

* * *

It's raining outside
I'm pouring my heart out here
I need a refill

Felix Romero



Vivre pour faire vivre les autres

J'entends souvent dire,
 Fais ce que doit, advienne que pourra !
 Mais je sais aux dires
 Que prendre soin de soi, convient à qui voudra
 Au jour le jour, pour le pain quotidien
 Je cherche à plaire, à faire ce qui convient
 Sans crier gare pour ma santé physique
 Métro-boulot-dodo, le temps se fait la fripe
 Je marche au pas, les règles encore des règles,
 Toujours des règles, me règlent et me dérèglent
 Que faire dans ce chaos quand le monde s'en va
 Quand le temps s'enfuit, saura qui vivra
 Je cours je me perds
 Je nage sans repère
 Je tacle la folie, j'suis fou mais j'm'en fous
 Quand le stress s'installe tout le monde devient fou
 Mais à quand le bout' tunnel ? A quand le vrai repos
 Est-ce donc vrai que la vie rien ne vaut ?
 Même pas mon travail, même pas ce qu'il faut ?
 On dit le travail libère
 Le faire (et) en être fier
 Mais pourquoi je meurs
 Même si j'en suis être fier ?
 J'entends des bruits, des bruits qui s'enfuient
 Mais personne ne vient, ne vient quand j'm'enfuis
 Pour les enfants du monde, j'ferai le sacrifice
 Et pour mon honneur je vaincrai les vices
 La vie ne vaut rien, mais vis ta vie !
 Car mon frère ma sœur, rien ne vaut la vie
 Souviens-toi de ceci quand tu te crois indispensable
 Les cimetières sont pleins des gens indispensables.

AGLEE K. Didier

Living to make others live

I often hear,
Do what must, happen what may!
But I know from what people say
That taking care of oneself, suits whoever wants
Day by day, for daily bread
I seek to please, to do what is right
Without warning for my physical health
Metro-work-sleep, time is the thrift
I walk in step, rules and rules again,
Always rules, regulate me and disturb me
What to do in this chaos when the world goes away
When time flees, will know who will live
I run, I get lost
I swim without a landmark
I tackle madness, I'm crazy but I don't care
When stress sets in, everyone goes crazy
But when is the end of the tunnel? When's the real rest?
Is it true, then, that life is worthless?
Not even my job, not even what it takes?
It is said that work liberates
Do it (and) be proud of it
But why I die
Even if I'm proud of it?
I hear noises, noises that run away
But no one comes, no one comes when I run away
For the children of the world, I will make the sacrifice
And for my honor I will overcome vices
Life is worthless but live your life!
For my brother my sister, nothing is worth living
Remember this when you think you are indispensable
The cemeteries are full of indispensable people.

AGLEE K. Didier

Was somebody there?

Was somebody there
By your side
When you breathed your last
Gave up this life
and departed from this world?

Was somebody there
With you
A doctor
a nurse
Or a priest
Perhaps?

Was somebody there
To hold your hand
To hold you
Stroke your hair
Kiss your forehead

To anoint you with oil
Pray for your body-mind-soul...

I wanted so badly
To be there
We wanted to be there
We
Your loved ones
To hold you
Hold your hand
Stroke your hair
Kiss your forehead
Whisper in your ear

You are Loved
You are Loved
You are Loved

We thought you were coming home
Healing

Recovering
Getting off the ventilator...
Getting better...
Getting out...

...And coming home

I sent a card
Stickers and all
My very best stickers
(the ones saved for special occasions)

I sent it home
For you
I thought you were coming home
You were supposed to come home

... but you never came ...

... and you never got out...

... and you never woke up...

Your death
Stole our breath away
Your death
Which stole your breath away
Your breath
Taken away
Your breath
Your death
Your breath ...
Still takes our breath away...

And yet
I have to believe
Have to
Have to
Have to
Believe...

Someone was there...
To hold you
Hold your hand
Stroke your hair
Kiss your forehead

And I know
That you know
That you knew
You were Loved

For all your boundless suffering
Endless agony
In this world
In this life
Still...
You knew
You were Loved

And I have to believe
Have to
Have to
Have to
That someone was there
That you felt their presence
That you felt God's presence
Holding you
Loving you
Calling you...
...Home

Erin Anastasi

Slow death of summertime

Ever increasing appetite
As darkness eats the day
Starting at both ends
Weakening each ray
Slowly strangling the sunshine
Spreading its velvet cloak
As summertime is extinguished
Painfully, choke by choke
Green leaves in the trees
Wither and turn brown
As Autumn winds whip round them
Forcing the leaves to drop down
Until the trees are naked
Vulnerable, stripped bare
As Autumn continues relentlessly
Emotionless, without care
As we mourn for summertime
Those carefree joyful days
As Autumn fulfils its duty
And poor summertime it slays

Fiona Jane Walker

The round marbles

A little kid
Was carrying a bowl of marble ball
Perfect in shape
Except one that was a broken a little at the edge
Very round was each ...

The kid stumbled on something
The marble balls got scattered, dispersed
Ran to the nearby ditch.

The broken one did not run
Remained on the road fallen
All the perfect balls got lost in the ditch!

Who knows, I am saved because
I am not perfect!
And the perfect one is not moving fast
Towards the ditch ahead?

Do not get frustrated
That you are not flawless and perfect.

Firoj Alam

I can see clearly now

Il sit alone and think about many things lately
About things in my life that impact me greatly
Am I really weak or am I tough?
Is my work important or barely enough?

Can I make a difference in this world?
Despite the obstacles that are being unfurled
Global warming, disease and hunger
My heart aches for those older and younger

When will we realize that this world is ours
And we are all really ONE with ONE great power
Let's stop differentiating between ourselves
Based on color, creed or monetary worth

At the end of the day, aren't we all really the same?
With feelings and cravings, with honor and shame?
Beauty surrounds us everyday
And we have the capacity to enjoy it our own way

Even in hardship there is beauty, very raw
And our future is before us, as our ancestors foresaw
To those gentle souls who have touched my life,
Despite their own battles and strife –I am grateful to you forever
You have taught me patience and perseverance beyond measure

And to those who are pained and lash out at others
I say to you, time is precious to forsake your sisters and brothers
Stay strong and be patient –time heals every wound
Surround yourself with beauty, and you will feel peace very soon

Remember that life is short, if you can do good, then do so
Even a kind word, a lending hand, will surely make goodness grow
So life is harsh, yes indeed
But don't ever stop sowing seeds

Don't fret over things that are not in your control
Instead, accept what you can –it's good for your soul
That speck of happiness, within us lies deep
Go ahead and ignite it, no matter how steep!

Gihan M. Aboulezz

Penthouse

If we all lived in Penthouses
Would people still look down ?
How can money allow pain to be passed around
And still it's what so many dream about
There's a them when the word should be us
Half hanged masks covering the smile within
As we survive to live

When I saw the blind lending a hand
And the deaf hearing our pain
I thought how can those flying above
Not rush to ease the pain

I'm fine I say
As the one shoe'd man waddles along
Subway smoke trancing his past
I always wonder who in his past
Wonders gasping their trance

Is it the not same when living and not knowing where to go

The here and there style
Walking up to the invisible push
A hot coffee pushing us through the cold wind

Hesitant glances at the clock
Pop
Weaving through the beauty of the island
To take care of whatever's next
The brightest smiles awaits us at home
Only to be reached under the shine of la luna
In order to really find we must all really look
Like it was the first time
Seeing our first love
Eyes and heart connected
I remember the stranger in the Caribbean
Who taught
We smile while we survive
And you all must attain for the same

Giovanni Lauretta

Solidarity Confinement

I do not wish this upon anyone.

No one deserves to lose their freedom.

But aloneness, abandonment, alienation, exile, self-imposed or not, can be moments of sweet solidarity confinement.

When all the dust is settled, when all the chaos descends into its natural order, when all the background noises slowly fade away, when you realise nothing, not a single one of your own judgements which is based on your own inescapable self-righteousness, pride and prejudice...is actually sound...

Then you start to experience an unprecedented quietness, calmness, self-soothing compassion, comfort which stream out from your deep consciousness.

There lies your strength; your flexibility.

There lies your strength to face your fears, your future, your foes and yourself. There lies your strength to forgive, forgo phantoms of the past.

There lies your flexibility to stretch yourself, your horizon, your worldview, your perspective from black and white to colours, from portrait to landscape, from near to far, short to long.

With some sense and sensibility, through songs and stories of timelessness, you start to lose yourself once again in the wonder, the wonder of books, literature, little things, little kids, little kindness, kisses, and the little kicks you get by being curious.

Yes, being curious again about life, for nothing else, simply for the sake of curiosity.

In your aloneness, in your sweet solidarity confinement, you found the reason to be alive, once again.

There you reconnect with your humanness. There you become, a little more, human and humane, and have little bit less judgement.

Jacky Tong

Las Disculpas

Las disculpas no siempre saben cómo encontrarnos. A veces tomará 48 años. A veces tocan una pequeña ventana para darte la mano. En el mundo moderno vendrán en forma de un texto, enmascaradas con un número desconocido. A veces se pierden en el laberinto confuso de una dirección de tercer mundo: allá por el árbol de mango enfrente de la casa blanca con un farol. Quizás el árbol de mango ya no existe. La casa tiene un nuevo estilo. La ignorancia va apagando el farol. Las disculpas se pierden en la oscuridad de los resentimientos.

A veces se van lejos, en un avión sin boleto de retorno. Porque es más barato que liberar el ego. La espera se tarda y se vuelve pesada, como un cántaro de agua fría, con sabor a despedidas sin adiós, y un olor de una larga lista de críticas que embriagan el alma. No importa si el cántaro pesa una onza. Los brazos no resistieran el dolor de sostenerlo por media docena de años.

Admiro como los árboles, dejan ir sus hojas cada otoño. Con aceptación y sin expectativas. Abro las ventanas, escucho los pájaros, siento el viento. Esta vez no me quedare perdida en el agujero negro de alguna galaxia. Donde el alma revive lo que hubiese sido, en la oscuridad pesada y pegajosa que dilata el tiempo y contrae la vida. Esa aventura ya me la sé.

A veces las disculpas no llegan. Mis manos vacías alcanzan la metamorfosis que arma de experiencias mi alma; para transformar la ansiedad y la depresión en obra de arte como el follaje del otoño. Con aceptación y sin expectativas. Me gusta coleccionar hojas de los otoños, como experiencias de todos colores. Las abraso, admiro y aprendo de sus colores y madurez, de soltarse sin miedo y a vivir la vida sin resistencia, bailando en el aire al caer al suelo.

A veces solo son recuerdos, y como las hojas, los dejo ir con el viento. El viento se lleva las hojas a la orilla del mar. Veo las grandes olas ir y venir tomando las hojas hasta que las veo flotando en la distancia. Como recuerdos flotando en pequeñas olas. Se desaparecen en el horizonte mientras el crepúsculo brillante, perdona sin rencor los días de invierno, sin esperar las disculpas del vórtice polar qué congeló el sol.

Cuando las olas en la orilla del mar tocan mis pies, el agua fría pero amable me regresa al presente y sonrió porque pasó.

Josselyn Portillo

Apologies

Apologies will not always find their way to you. Sometimes they will take 48 years. Sometimes they knock on a small window to shake your hand. In the modern world they will come in the form of a text, masked with an unknown number. Sometimes they get lost in the confusing labyrinth of a third world address: over there by the mango tree in front of the white house with a lamp post. Perhaps the mango tree no longer exists. The house has a new look. Ignorance dims the light of the lamp. Apologies are lost in the darkness of resentments.

Sometimes they go faraway via one-way plane ticket, because it is cheaper than freeing the ego. The wait takes time and becomes heavy, like a pitcher of cold water, flavored with departures without goodbyes, and a smell of a long list of criticism that intoxicates the soul. It doesn't matter if the pitcher weighs an ounce. The arms would not resist the pain of holding it for half a dozen years.

I admire how trees let go of their leaves every fall. With acceptance and without expectations. I open the windows, I listen to the birds, I feel the wind. This time I will not get lost in the black hole of some galaxy. Where the soul relives what could have been, in the heavy and sticky darkness that dilates time, while life contracts. I already know that adventure.

Sometimes apologies don't come. My empty hands reach the metamorphosis that arms my soul with experiences; to transform anxiety and depression into artwork, like fall foliage. With acceptance and without expectations. I like to collect autumn leaves, like experiences of all colors. I embrace them, I learn from their colors, and I observe how much they have seasoned and let go without fear. I learn from them of living life without resistance, dancing in the air as they fall to the ground.

Sometimes memories are like the leaves, I let them go with the wind. The wind carries them to the seashore. I see the great waves come and go taking the leaves until I see them floating in the distance. Like memories floating on small waves. They fade away on the horizon while the sunset forgives the cold winter days without rancor, without waiting for an apology from the polar vortex that froze the sun.

When the waves on the seashore touch my feet, the cold but kind water brings me back to the present moment and I smile because it is over.

Josselyn Portillo

irl

It was satirical
a bingo card for a lockdown
“existential dread” available for blotting out
adjacent to
“unnatural longing for office birthday cake.”¹

But when I could no longer
smell the shower gel
or taste the cheese in my sandwich
I thought of the square which read
meaning
losing all meaning.

How flat life on a very round earth
is when

people crushed together at rush hour / live music vibrating up through the soles of your feet / jet
lag / the smell of spring in your un-masked nostrils / a smile involving both mouth and eyes

all of the chaotic joyous colorful odiferous things
are extinct
or at least temporarily out of service.

I hope to see you
some time
some place
soon and again and
more than anything
in real life.

Lauren M. Phillips

¹
“Working from home from a global pandemic bingo,” by Kimberly Harrington. McSweeney’s Internet Tendencies. December 30, 2020.



Abuelita Tota

Tú has sido mi salvación en tantos momentos difíciles

Con tus 93 años de sabiduría siempre has tenido la solución a cualquier dilema

No hay nada que tú no sepas afrontar

Sabiendo que siempre supiste reponerte a pesar de haber sufrido mucho en la vida me das la fuerza necesaria para triunfar todos los días

Unas de las maneras más gratas que tuviste para consolarme fueron tus ricas comidas caseras

Cuando hoy siento que estoy en dificultad solo cierro los ojos, te imagino en la cocina y empiezo a oler el perfume de tortillas de maíz y frijoles recién hechos de la olla

Esta imagen es un abrazo tuyo que me aprieta fuerte y me empuja a enfrentar el miedo que tengo

Abro los ojos y sin darme cuenta he superado el temor que tenía

Gracias abuelita por ser el sol de mi vida que me ilumina todos los días

Lily Luna

Grandma Tota

You have been my salvation in so many difficult moments

With your 93 years of wisdom, you have always had the solution to any dilemma

There is nothing that you do not know how to face

Knowing that you always knew how to recover despite having suffered immensely in life gives me the necessary strength to succeed every day

One of the most pleasant ways you knew how to comfort me was with your delicious homemade meals

Today when I feel that I am in difficulty, I just close my eyes, I imagine you in the kitchen and I begin to smell the perfume of corn tortillas and freshly made beans

This image is a hug from you that squeezes me so tight and pushes me to face my fears

I then open my eyes and without realizing it, I have overcome the fear I had

Thank you grandma for being the sun of my life that enlightens me every day

Lily Luna

Good Things / Bad Things

Tapping in my memory
on this quiet morning
enjoying the serene peacefulness
that helps me keep on going.

Good things, bad things or any things
can clatter our mind
whichever ones are coming in
is based on how we are aligned.

Forgive the bad things and allow the mind
to let them go
cherish and appreciate the good things
so they can fulfil your soul.

Look ahead and do not fear
for any things that may come to you
since now you know how to treat them
even if they try to bother you.

And if some good things are needed
to be let go off,
it is hard my friend, that is true.
But please, do not mourn them,
as they are an important reminder
about what has been
and what has become of you.

So once again
look ahead and do not fear
for any things which may come to you
they are all an enrichment
of your soul and you.

Zuzana Vrbova

Araw, buhay

Puyat
Pagod
Nahihilo
Nagmamadali
Mabigat
Malamig...

Hindi ako makahinga
Hindi ako makakita
Malabo ang pupuntahan
Malabo ang daan

Masaya
Mainit
Nagmamahal
Nakangiti
Paalala
Paaanyaya...

Araw, araw gumagalaw
Habang lumilipas ang panahon
Sumayaw sa buong buhay
Magpasalamat sa lahat
Ipagdasal ang kapwa tao.

Marienette Abadilla

Day and life

Sleep deprived
Tired
Dizzy
In a hurry
Heavy
It's cold...

Can't breathe
Can't see
Destination unknown
Path unclear

Fun
Heat
Love
Smile
Note
Invitation...

Days pass
As time goes by
Dance for life
Thank everyone
Pray for fellow human beings.

Marienette Abadilla

阳光总在风雨后

忽如一夜疫情来，
不问青红和皂白。
历来高级轻低等，
而今上演格斗赛。
谁说人类最强悍？
有形却被无形踩。
几番较量尚无果，
昔日喧哗已不再。
世上从来多舛事，
何必苦恼把命猜。
悲欢离合总是情，
诸事发生天安排。
自古人生多磨难，
须将每日过精彩。
阳光总在风雨后，
洒向人间都是爱。
待到疫魔降伏时，
雨过天晴百花开。

杨学仑

Sunshine always after the rain

The epidemic appeared overnight,
For no reason at all.
Superior despises inferior all the time,
Now it's diamond cut diamond.
Who says humans are the toughest?
Visible but trampled by invisible.
The winner is still up in the air,
The usual hubbub was gone.
The world is full of adversity,
Why bother about fate?
Joys and sorrows are all feelings,
Everything is arranged by God.
Life has suffered a lot from of old,
Make every day the best.
Sunshine always after the rain,
Sprinkled on the earth is love.
By the time the pandemic is over,
All flowers will be in full bloom.

Xuelun YANG

Love and disappointment

Listen to me brother
We all get appointment
One day or another
With love and disappointment

Either younger or older
Once or multiple times
When the looks start to smolder
We all shift our paradigms

There once was a young girl I knew
She made me feel something new
She talked so sweetly
And charmed completely
And then she told me “No thank you!”

She was funny and smart
Enticing me with her wits
She melted my heart
then shredded it into bits

Another girl came my way
Telling she loved me dearly
That was such a happy day
I thought I could see things clearly

And this was a girl from foreign land
Her beauty and poise so fine and grand
She took me to heaven
And to hell number seven
I was exiled by her express command

So, listen to me brother
We all get appointment
One day or another
With love and disappointment

Mikko Lampila

The Seeker

I've heard it said, “Seek and you shall find.”
I think it uniquely applies to me alone.
Why do I constantly seek?
What am I seeking for?
And if I seek, why have I not found?
I have seen much, read much, felt much.
But I have not found. I have not understood.
I am full of knowledge but void of the reassurance I seek.
I love but am shy. I pray but I stop.
Lost and found. What does it really mean? Where do I fall short?
What does it mean to find?
I seek the beauty that is out in the world
But always just out of reach.
I often think – how can I live like this, when I know that such a place as
Beautiful as Urbino exists,
Or the Duomo's cupola that gives shade and succor to men and gods alike?
Why am I not there, absorbing the rarefied beauty that god and men have created?
But I myself am the masterpiece,
I see in my finer moments.
I need not seek without, when I am more beautiful and more divine
Than the Mona Lisa and the Colosseum combined.
I have been seeking I knew not what.
I was seeking myself, of course –
God's greatest creation that has more life, more power, more beauty
In one stray fingernail than I could ever find
In all the world's museums or palette's wheels with colors rich.
Seek. But do not seek long. Do not seek far.
Once found, dive headlong forward into your life.
Having been found, never lose hold.

Nancy Snyder



حنين إلى موطني

وحيثما ينزل المساء..
من السماء..
تنتابني رعشة الشتاء..
تقول لي ابنتي الصغيرة..
ذات الضفائر الجميلة القصيرة..
أبتاه يا أبتاه! انظر! هذا القمر!
مسافر كما الطيارة..
لا بد أنه كمثلها مغادر إلى الوطن.

في لحظة قصيرة.. قصيرة..
شعرت بارتعاش..
هذي فتاتي.. حلوتي الصغيرة..
ينتابها الحبور والحنين..
لوطن زارته ذات يوم.. مرتين..
فما الذي يقوله أبوك.. يا حلوتي الصغيرة..
وهو الذي فارقه سنين..
من بعد أن قضى على ترابه من السنين أربعين..
من بعد موت الياسمين..

في هذه المدينة..
لا وريدة جورية... لا فلة.. لا زنبق.. يعيش..
في هذه المدينة..
لا شيء غير البرد والأمطار والضجيج..
في هذه المدينة..
يعيش كل شيء.. يموت كل شيء.. ليعيش..
في هذه المدينة..
لا نعرف الأسماء.. لا نعرف الأشياء.. لا نسمع سوى النشيج..
في هذه المدينة..
ساقية كبيرة تدور بالبشر..
في هذه المدينة..
تتعلق الأشياء بالإنسان.. تحيله إلى حجر..
هذي المدينة..
دوامة كبيرة.. طاحونة البشر..

بقلم: محمد مازن شبيب

Homesick

As the evening descends from heavens ...
I feel the winter chill ...
Then I hear my little girl,
with her short beautiful ponytails, shouting:
“O daddy, daddy, look up! It’s the moon!
It looks like it’s going away soon!
It’s sure, like we did, back home travelling!”

For a very short moment, I felt a chill going down my spine...
This is my girl ... the little child I call mine...
Feeling homesick for a country that she visited only once...
Or maybe twice.
So, I wondered what could I, her father, say...
O my little sweetheart! For being away...
From my homeland for years on end...
I spent forty years of my life there;
on that land that’s home for me.
I only left when all the Jasmine there,
Have ceased to be!

In this city... you won’t find a Damask Rose blooming..
Nor an Arabian Jasmine nor a lily blossoming..
There’s nothing here except cold weather, noise and rain...
In this city, everything lives to die... and again...
everything dies in living
No names are familiar to us here ...
In this city..
The only thing we hear...
Is the sobbing
In this city..
People, in a huge watermill, are turning around..
In this city..
Things grow on man ... turning him into a stone ...
This big city is but a mill of humans, a huge merry-go-round!

Mohammad Shabeeb

pu d d i n g

I fell into a bowl of pudding.

Yes, I like my dessert.

I take a bite but I do not swallow. No one knows how horrible it really is.

I swim around but I do not move. This pool of pudding pulls me down, deep into a dark pit. I am drowning.

Get a spoon, they said; Eat your way out.

“But I am not hungry!” I cry out. The weight of the pudding makes me weak. No one else is in this bowl. It is just me and I am alone and it feels eerily empty. What a sticky mess to clean up.

Sticky, soft, and “sweet”. Malleable, moist, and.....repulsive.

I pull up on the edge of the bowl. I fall back in, farther this time.

Slow, slow, slow.

Angry at everything. Angry at nothing. Angry at you. Angry at me. Angry at the pudding.

I keep swimming, but my heavy thoughts weigh me down and I am weak.

Too soft to chew yet I ruminate on how I got here.

Who knows if I will ever leave this bowl.

Mary Mervine

Lamentation Abroad

Travel the world, they said.
Explore parts unknown.
Live in another country other
other than yours
and liberate your mind
from the dogmas dictated
by culture and birthrights.
Grow, inherit the world, it is your oyster.
Away from mothers, and fathers,
sisters and brothers,
friends and relatives,
who live in your childhood memories
more than they do in your present day.
You will see them again they said,
every year or two.
You will sit down with them
and have a drink or two.
And then the incoming call,
another life gone too soon.
And in the end, all I have learned
Is how to mourn alone,
In land far far away.
And pour one out for another life well lived.

Nosipho Dhladhla

Life unfolds

The curtain is drawn
Darkness either side
Is it keeping it on
Or shutting it out
I close my eyes, why
There is darkness anyway
Breath, breath
Slowly lids soften
Forehead relaxes
Temples still
There is light and lightness
A giving and givenness
There is a hum
A humming
It reverberates deep
The curtain is pulling back
Dawn is creeping
It is within and without
There is light and lightness
A giving and givenness
A reawakening

Nyambici Macharia

Connection

Flowers decided to turn themselves off,

I have got one, on my palm, egg, white,
an untold story,
I want wings, the fragrance.

A movie connects us, watching a game on the TV too,
flesh inside, doesn't connect anything.

Petals hold the dew,
a dawn,
the new page of a dream.

Quazi Johirul Islam

Keep Walking

In the recesses of the mind
Somewhere I've left behind
My life as I knew it once.
Into a cocoon for nine months
I look to recede once in a while.
Tracing the skein of a smile
My song wanders the wilderness
And returns, free of all harness.
Yet I do not scrounge for a goal
Nor for redemption as a whole.
One day I win, one day I lose
It is not always what I choose
My life cobbles its own way
I don't spectate, I just play.

Raja Karthikeya Gundu

At the Helm of Healers

So far away still is the sighting of that morning sun,
Declared so by the lyrics of thy native Filipino song.
Starving are we indeed for the remedies for days gone by...
Days that took away lungsful of life from families, friends, and foes alike.

Even the Kings of Navies had nowhere else to go to,
No place to escape away to, nor hide into:
The remains of ruins were unforgiving, relentless.
So, I pray –

Cajole my Spirit, God of Spring Waters
Cradle my Heart, God of Summer Nights
Cuddle my Soul, God of Autumn Winds
Caress my Skin, God of Winter Suns, keep me warm.

Coax and preserve my dwindling courage!
Clinch, entice and conserve the charisma of my youth!

For the Etiquettes of Hearts, and for
The Protocol of Sentiments: I tried to say “Paalam,” – Farewell,
Even after you’ve already been long gone: away, for far too long –
Just like, as in: Forever...
Never to come back Home ever again...

Although I remain unscathed,
Unharmd thus far,
By the invisible and invincible invaders:
The Specter of Illnesses,
The Shadow of Sicknesses,
the Deliverer of Demises,
Here I am still –
 and I thank the Holiest of Holies for this rarity amongst fortunes!
Because
Here I am, still... indeed
Standing still, at times...
Sitting still, sometimes...
Kneeling still, on occasions...
Lying down, to rest, sometimes... many times
Crying, clamoring for calmer climates.

Today, I hoped for many more soothing sunrises:
To be able to gaze more at many, unstoppable, comforting sunsets.
And yet, I was not ready for your own Paralysis
Followed by your Silent Absence...
I never was.

I guess, the Queen of Mercies, never really taught me how to accept it?
I never was ready.

Tonight, the Silent Souvenirs never returned,
Although I wished for many more to come,
The Thieves of Lyrics took away a bit more...
And a little more...
Of the scattered, aimless libations, and tears:

Cure yourself; heal thyself!

Tonight, the evening began with slices of stunning sonatas,
Only to end with fragments of soft-spoken sonnets:
Reigniting within me: tones and tunes of Homelife!
A cycle of Homecomings...
Tonight, more oil from the pan of knowledge spilt:
Building upon recipes derived and devoured
From the Book of Living and Passing:

And so, I proclaim:

You are now just but a mere memory –
A shamelessly shimmering reminder,
At least, for those who would, and could still remember...
to evoke and provoke that glitter.

Like myself. Just like me.

And so, I inquire yet again, like a Pilgrim:

Epigenesis of Cures,
Where art thou?
Found can you be:
Only at the Rudder of Strange Vessels,
Captained by Nomadic and Nameless Champions?
And so, I ask, this time around:

When, in turn, I am no longer bound by Earth’s Gravity...

Tomorrow, shall you be there again with Me, by my side?
Able to hear, finally, once more
the reincarnation of that voice of yours
greeting me – willingly –
with the freshness of a new “Hello?” (Kumusta ka?)
or the reborn aura of your “How are you?” (Kumusta ka na?)

Yes, please do wait for my arrival, my own Homecoming,
to where you are now, my dear “Maharlika” –
to be with you, oh, my beloved Noble One:
When I am ready to be Homebound,
with a firm grip of the promised Housewarming,
at the Home of our Heroes,
and the Realm of our Heroines,
finally, welcomed, at the Sacred Helm, by our Healers...

A return to that Special Dwelling-Place
...Where daybreaks, noons, midafternoons,
and nighttimes are never again swarmed by greeting lamenters
...Where Peace, and the Proverbs
of Poet Balagtas are forever undapplied by cloudbursts
or by deafening thunderclaps!

Roderick Darwin Papa Santos

The Refugee

Run run!...the bomb is here.
Run run!...the wound is there.
Run run!...cross the fears
Do you know that behind the frontiers
The door will welcome your tears.

...oh...run...run...n...oh...
Not that door!!
Run run!...run again!
In this direction there is no pain,
Surround your heart with invincible rocks,
Faster, faster before the clock,
Conspires with the unbearable blocks,

.... oh...no...not again!
That was not the right train...
You will be wet under the rain!
Run run...find your shelter...
Find your boundless centre,
Run run...take my hand
Together we will find the land.

Roula El Derbas

The Silence

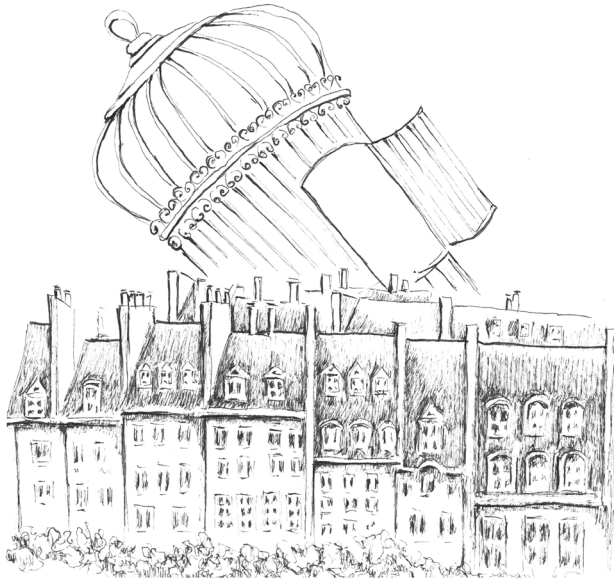
The silence that is,
Is the me within me,
Is in the air that passes by,
Without expression,
with peace of the swaying trees
Is the sleep that catches up,
without knowing,
with peace unknown
Is all that is natural, and true.
With every breath ;
Silence that is, is the me within me.

Teckla Esapur ALWALA

You and I, why the difference

the way you were born, I born the same
the dream that you had in your childhood, I had the same
the dream of your mom and the dream of my mom was the same
then why the difference
the paddy fields, the mountains, the river, the ocean that you have crossed and grow, I grew the same
my city is your city, my people is your people
my village is your village,
your thinking is my thinking
then why the difference
you made the best friend, I made the same
you fall in love, I fallen too
and your first kiss, you made it to
then why the difference
why the richest and poorest persists
why the colour exists
why, tell me why
let us you and I, then pray and tie, to make the world same for us, same for everyone,
just the way that we were born the same!

Umme Halima



पिंजरे की चिड़िया

पिंजरे की चिड़िया पिंजरे में बैठी चिड़िया, जब आसमान पे नज़र उठाती है
उड़ने की चाहत में हर बार, सलाखों से टकराती है

नहीं छूटती हिम्मत उसकी, बस उड़ने की चाहत है
पार सलाखों के जाना है फिर राहत ही राहत है

मिले हैं पंख तो उड़ने का सपना है
सलाखों के पार सारा आसमान अपना है

कोई तो होगा ऐसा सवेरा, सारा आसमान जब होगा मेरा
नीला अम्बर फूल-फल और हर तरफ खुशियों का डेरा

इस चाहत में जी लेती है, सारे आंसू पी लेती है
बस रहती एक ज़िद सवार, जाना है पिंजरे के पार

मिले हैं पंख तो उड़ान भी मेरी है
इस पिंजरे को तोड़ने की जंग भी मेरी है

पिंजरा मानो एक बेदर्द दरिदा है
जो पिंजरे के बाहर है, वही ज़िंदा है

है यकीन की एक दिन ऐसा आएगा, टूटेगा पिंजरा, या खुल जायेगा
हार नहीं मानेगी तब तक, जब तक आसमान उसे नहीं मिल जायेगा

Shailza Taneja

The sparrow in the cage

When a sparrow in the cage, looks up to the sky...she aspires to fly higher

So, she collects all her strength and strikes her wings against the cage's bar
With her aspirations to fly, she gets wounded, but never gives-up on her desire is to go far

She believes that God has gifted her wings and so the aspirations are there to fly
She keeps her thirst alive to break the cage, only then her soul would be free to soar up in the sky.

She has the wings, the courage, the dreams, the strong will, and the desire
So, a force comes from within to open/break the cage and continue to aspire

Certainly, there will be a dawn....
When the entire sky would belong to her, and she would only belong to the sky
When she will be embraced by the blue sky, her heart would chirp with delight, and she may cry

She believes...
Since the wings & aspirations are mine, I will fight and indeed take my flight
Then the seed of life will sprout, and my soul would then sing with all might

She is determined, not-giving-up and fully convinced that...
There will be a dawn when she would flutter free in the vast blue sky
And her soul would rejoice the dance of freedom with eternal joy

Shailza Taneja

Be my dopamine

A game my mind has played for long & it does still,
to make 'mountain of a mole-hill'!

How and where to begin?
It's the same story over and over again
Posts floating on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
Keep surfing aimlessly without knowing what I am looking for!

'They would judge me' an unpleasant thought occurs
But then I recall that 'we are not living to please others'

We become disillusioned as we grow
To me, the rampant red-tapism at work is such a garbage to throw
I think to myself 'did I sign up for this as I joined my organization'
Feels trapped in papers, meetings, processes- does my work even reach children?
Trust is elusive, wary of talking to colleagues,
Most of us find 'writing' emails' more conclusive

I fear they'll throw me out as they read these lines
But I have learnt that there is no shame in speaking one's mind
And many times, it bothers
then I recall "Anxiety, stress, depression are caused when we are living to please others!" *

I am the better half of a soldier
Where loneliness is life's order
Strangely, I happily lived alone for long, before taking the vow
So, is it the expectation of togetherness that often makes me feel so low?
I doubt myself as weak 'how can I complain while he is protecting the country from a mountain peak?'

I doubt if its fine to confess that it bothers
But I recall "Anxiety, stress, depression are caused when we are living to please others!"

Hard to assess whether these are tough circumstances or my illusion
but my feeling of overwhelm is genuine
I choose to share & OPINE

Feeling restless, overwhelmed, lonely are all fine
Let's bring on More kindness &

Hey, why don't you also be my Dopamine

Veena Singh

* quoting Paulo Coelho

Nada Za Mirna Jutra

Moja bol se spusti navečer kao noć i teška je kao očaj jer su moje želje veće od stvarnosti
Čekam novo svanuće drhteći od brige
Novo sutra dolazi sporo a nebo je plavo i crveno
Slaveći novi dan moja nada se budi
Budi se nada
Za Mirna Jutra!

Vlasta Grabovac

Hope for Peaceful Mornings

My pain descends in the evening like night and is as heavy as despair because my wishes are bigger than reality
I am waiting for a new dawn trembling with worry
The new tomorrow comes slowly, and the sky is blue and red
Celebrating a new day my hope awakens
Awaken hope
For Peaceful Mornings!

Vlasta Grabovac

A vida é curta

A vida é curta
Não espere pelo amanhã
Viva hoje
Ame
A vida é curta
Sonhe
Mas viva
Pois a vida é curta
Viaje para novos horizontes
Aprenda uma nova língua
A vida é curta
Desfrute todos os momentos
Pois a vida é muito curta
Para vive-la só de esperança e sonhos

Wagner Santiago

Life is short

Life is short
Don't wait until tomorrow
Live today
Love
Life is short
Dream
But live
'Cause life is short
Travel to new horizons
Learn a new language
Life is short
Enjoy every moment
'Cause life is very short
To live it only of hope and dreams

Wagner Santiago



Otro día en el supermercado

Había belleza en la verdad de las palabras que compartieron,
aunque la música en el supermercado estaba alta y chirriaba,
aunque otros individuos estaban discutiendo sobre quien iba antes en la cola,
discutiendo si llevaban la mascarilla demasiado alta o demasiado baja,
aunque la tensión y el estrés los rodeaba y
era sólido y crujiente
y podrían tocarlo con la punta de sus dedos si quisieran.

Ese silencio compartido y las palabras,
cuando el cajero no la miró y dijo robóticamente:
"¿Bienvenida, como esta?"
Y ella respondió: "No muy bien, pero gracias por preguntar. ¿Cómo estás tu?"
Un momento de silencio,
una mirada a los ojos,
una sonrisa rota..
una respuesta honesta,
"Tampoco muy bien. Gracias por preguntar"

Y la vida siguió... como siguen las cosas que no tienen mucho sentido...
Pero ese día, había belleza en la verdad de las palabras que compartieron dos extraños.

Marta Lorenzo Fernández

Another day at the grocery store

There was beauty in the truth of the words they shared,
although the music in the grocery store was loud and breaking up,
although other individuals were arguing about places in the queue,
arguing about the mask being to high or too low,
although tension and stress was around them and
was solid and crisp
and you could touch it with your fingers tips if you wanted to.

That shared silence and the words,
when the cashier didn't look at her and said robotically:
"Welcome, how are you?"
And she responded: "Not so good, but thanks for asking. How are you?"
A moment of silence,
a look in the eyes,
a broken smile..
an honest answer,
"Not so good either. Thanks for asking"

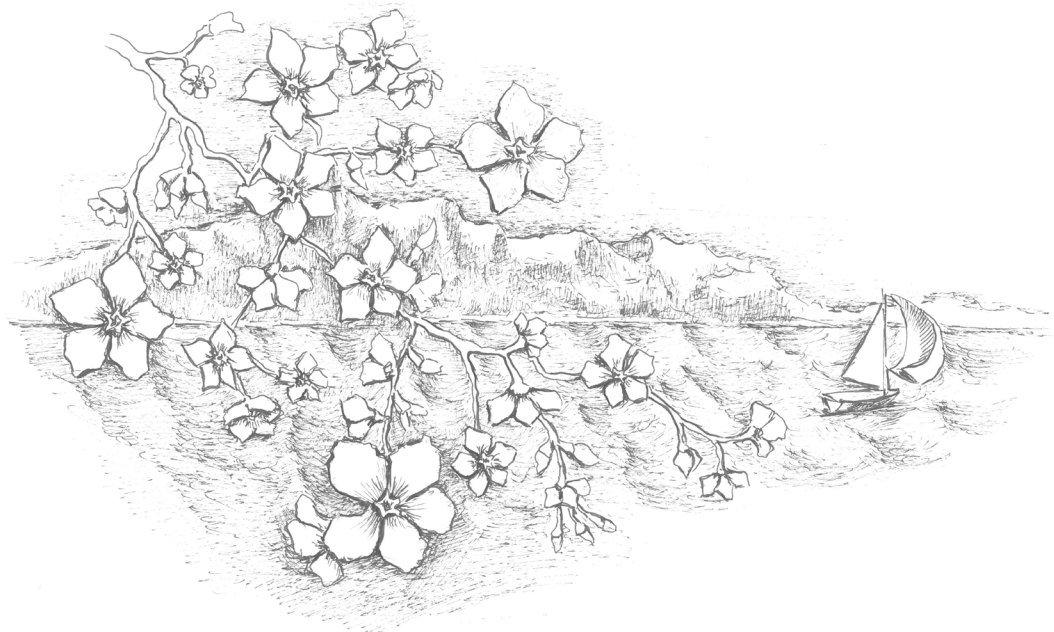
And life continued... like things that do not make much sense continue...
But that day there was beauty in the truth of the words two strangers shared.

Marta Lorenzo Fernández

Healthy lifestyle

H-ere I am, telling you to think deep,
E-at well and sleep early.
A-ll of us should be healthy.
L-oving our entire body is looking wealthy.
T-hough sometimes stress may come,
H-ealth might have an issue due to worrisome.
Y-ou may neglect but please never wait,
L-ife is so short before it's too late.
I-am not the right person to remind everyone,
F-riendly mnemonic that sickness will not exempt anyone.
E-mpathizing and spreading awareness should continue,
S-tart being conscious and fast response will become our virtue.
T-hink and live a healthy lifestyle,
Y-ield the health information,
L-everage our action,
E-nding diseases is our mitigation and notion.

Maria Julwin De Guzman



Printemps

Je me réveille dans le matin naissant,

Tu es là, pourtant bien timide cette année face à un hiver envahissant.

Lui aussi est là, tapis sur les montagnes,

Recouvrant de son manteau blanc les sommets autour de moi,

Guettant une faiblesse de ta part pour venir s'étendre à nouveau sur la plaine.

J'aperçois les fleurs blanche et fragile du cerisier de ma chambre,

Tel des êtres sans défense face à un envahisseur rusé et sans merci.

Printemps, chasse d'un souffle cet hiver !

Pour ne faire paraître que ta robe verdoyantes et pleine de couleur sur laquelle les oiseaux viendront chanter en chœur l'espoir.

Michel Ciampi

Spring

I wake up in the dawning morning,

You are here, yet very timid this year in the face of an invasive winter.

Winter too is here, lurking on the mountains,

Covering the peaks around me with its white cape,

Looking for your weak spot so it can spread out again on the plain.

I see the white and fragile cherry blossoms from the bedroom,

Like defenseless beings facing a cunning and merciless invader.

Spring, blow away this winter!

Let appear your verdant dress full of colors on which a choir of birds will sing of hope.

Michel Ciampi

