

WHILE I SLEEP

Issue 15: December 2021

# OpenDoor magazine

YOUR WORDS MATTER.

**NEW  
AUTHORS**

**LIVING THE DREAM**

**WHILE  
I SLEEP**

**YOUNG**

**FEATURES**

**FINISH YOUR  
HOLIDAY  
SHOPPING!**



# Welcome to the OpenDoor Magazine December issue!

What happens while you sleep? Dreams are formed, enemies forgiven, lovers created, wars abated, fears realized, strength found, and kittens smack you in the face with their tails. What happens when we sleep? We dream about what we can do to continue to improve both this magazine and the community that surrounds it. The past few months have been a time of catch up – but we are so excited to jump into 2022 prepared and make our dreams a reality. Join us as we explore WHILE I SLEEP through the words and minds of the following writers and artists.

If you are looking for ways to continue to support OpenDoor Magazine – please consider becoming a Patron ([patreon.com/opendoormagazine](https://patreon.com/opendoormagazine)) with tiers as low as \$1 per month – and we are hoping to grow our Patreon page into something that is above and beyond your monthly subscription experience!

Thank you for continuing to share our magazine with your friends and family and allowing our audience to keep growing.

*- Kassie & Mel*



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CO-CREATORS





# IN THIS ISSUE

THE “WHILE I SLEEP” ISSUE

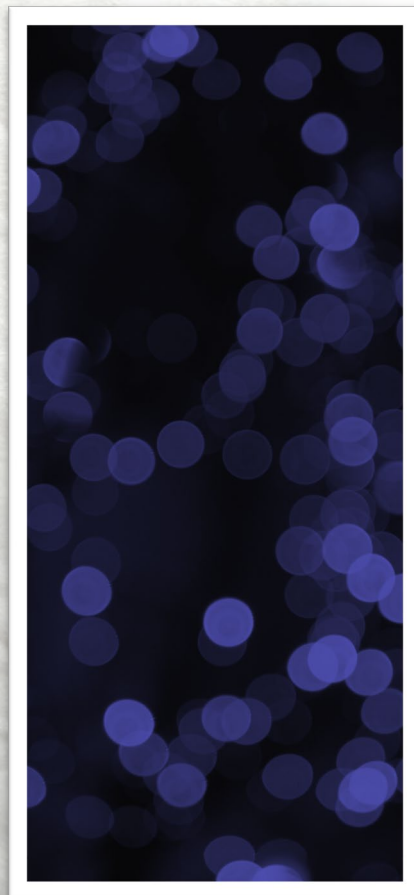
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What are  
our co-owners  
up to?





# KASSIE J RUNYAN

Co-Creator



<https://www.KassieJRunyan.com>

<https://www.Facebook.com/kassiejrunyan>

<https://www.Instagram.com/kjrunyan>

<https://www.Twitter.com/kassandrerunyan>

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE\\_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvSEcLEfE196OE_Ya2LNNN3kjFp82Ktt2)

## Watching:

I'm a sucker for Christmas movies... of all kinds. A few of my favorites for this time of year (in no particular order):

- Christmas Chronicles
- Gremlins
- While You Were Sleeping
- Christmas Vacation
- White Christmas
- Die Hard
- Anna and the Apocalypse
- Christmas in Connecticut
- Smokey Mountain Christmas
- The Holiday
- Last Christmas
- Just Friends
- Four Christmases
- Elf
- The Santa Claus
- The Family Man
- Scrooged
- The Family Stone
- Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street
- Office Christmas Party
- Four Christmases

Anything Hallmark, Netflix, etc – with the big city guy/gal that has to go home/to small town and falls for the local who is the town lawyer/doctor/handyman/hotel owner AND loves Christmas AND sometimes is a widow AND is nice to elderly people – they have a communication issue – but make up as the snow falls on Christmas Eve. Seriously – I love these movies.



## KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

### AS I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP...

Kassie Runyan

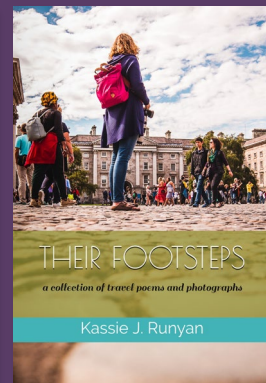
United States

<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com>

As I lay me down to sleep  
I wonder what my dreams will reap.  
Recently they've been rather bleak  
And I've fallen in so deep  
That I've only woken with a shriek  
When a ghastly hand sweeps  
Coldly across my cheek.  
I close my eyes and try not to peak  
Across the room, I hear a creak.  
In the darkness I wish for sheep,  
Imagine them forced to leap.  
I don't notice I've drifted asleep.  
A sheep opens her mouth to speak  
But all that emerges is a sound so weak  
It almost makes me weep.  
She's lost her voice, not a peep.  
Maybe from all the critique.  
Or feeling like a freak.  
Or thinking that her future's bleak.  
I hold her close and keep  
Reminding her that she's unique  
And the world is at her feet.  
And of the mountains she will leap.  
And there we stay until the sun begins to creep.



Purchase your  
copy of This is  
2020 [HERE!](#)



Purchase your copy  
of Their Footsteps  
[HERE!](#)



This is 2020 Part Two [HERE!](#)



## KASSIE J RUNYAN – CO-CREATOR

Walking out the door – January 25th

Pre-Order NOW

<https://www.kassiejrunyan.com/thedeathandlifeofjohndoe>

VIRTUAL LAUNCH PARTY January 25<sup>th</sup>! RSVP  
at [KassieJRunyan.com](https://www.kassiejrunyan.com)!

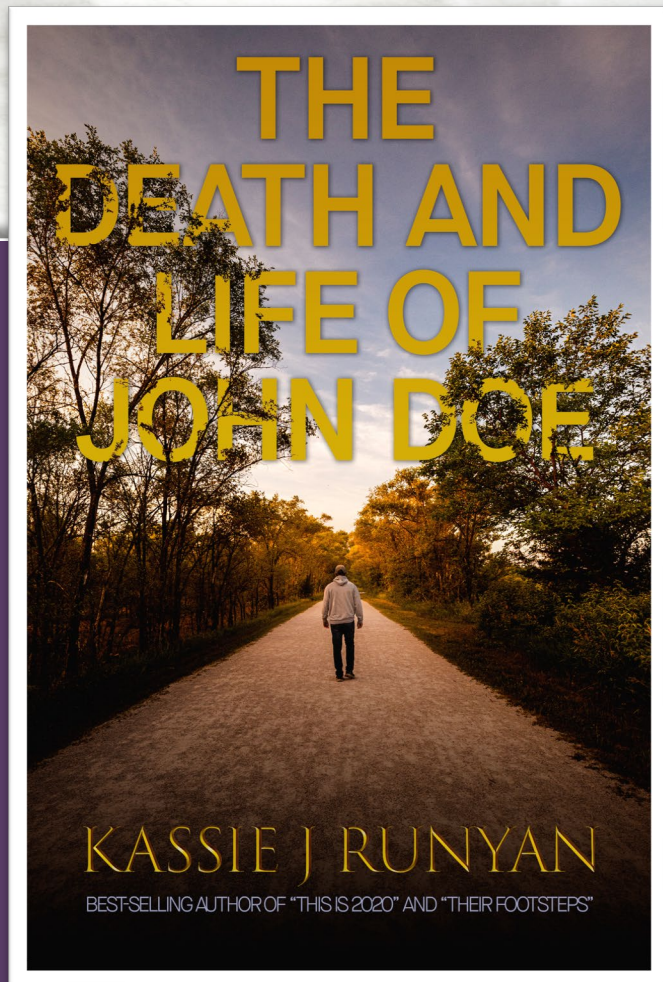
From best-selling poet of “This is 2020” and “Their Footsteps,” Kassie J Runyan, comes her debut novel, “The Death and Life of John Doe,” which takes a deep look into trauma, the human psyche, and the struggle of living on the street.

Our nameless nomad walks out the front door of his suburban home, leaving his life behind. Not knowing what it is he's looking for... or what it is he's running from. He closes the door and walks into a world full of the pain and joy that waits for him with each step. He keeps moving forward; driven by a desire to find a reason for his life and to discover his forgotten past. What he wasn't prepared for were the dreams.

*What is your name?*

*"The Death and Life of John Doe is a mesmerizing book that takes you on a cross-country journey and makes you question your own perception."*

*- Joni Rachell, Author*





# MEL HAAGMAN

Co-Creator

## Watching:

9-1-1

I have been completely hooked with this drama. It follows all the emergency first responders working together to help people who at times, get themselves into some extremely dramatic and horrific events! The characters are very likeable and as long as you don't binge it to the extent I have been - you won't get PTSD!

## Reading:

Book: Olive by Emma Gannon

The book follows Olive, a 33-year-old woman who has made the decision not to have children. This is the reason her relationship ended and now Olive needs to navigate herself through all the obstacles of adulthood as a single and childless woman. This story is told with great warmth exploring the 'taboo' of choosing not to have children.

## Listening:

Music: Red - Taylor Swift



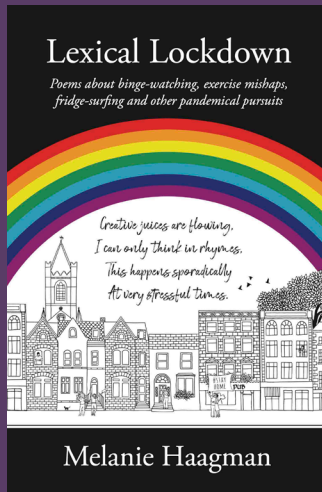
<https://www.Facebook.com/girlontheedg90>

<https://www.Instagram.com/girlontheedg90>

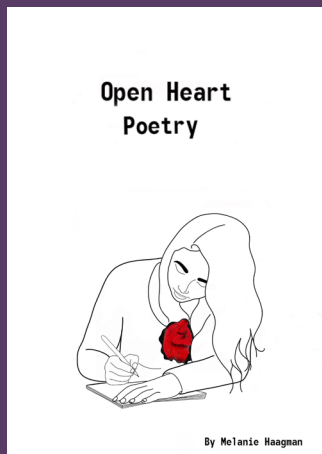
<https://www.Twitter.com/girlontheedg90>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjh8b4Y7gSFGKewzPKZH8lw>





Purchase your copy of  
**Lexical Lockdown** [HERE!](#)



Purchase your copy of Open  
Heart Poetry [HERE!](#)

## PANDEMIC PHRASES

Mel Haagman

United Kingdom

<https://www.facebook.com/girlontheedge90>

Like a river they keep flowing,  
Neologisms they procreate,  
The dictionary will be too full  
If it continues at this rate...  
Contact tracing and furlough,  
Coronacoaster is a fave,  
Zoom-fatigue and maskne,  
First, second and third wave.  
Asymptomatic superspreader,  
Coronacation, pod and bubble,  
Vaccination status queried  
Single, boosted or double?  
Viral load, herd immunity,  
Infodemic everywhere,  
The question that hangs in the air -  
Was it biological warfare?  
Quarantine, frontliner,  
Social distancing and track,  
But soon they will be obsolete,  
And they'll be gladly given back!

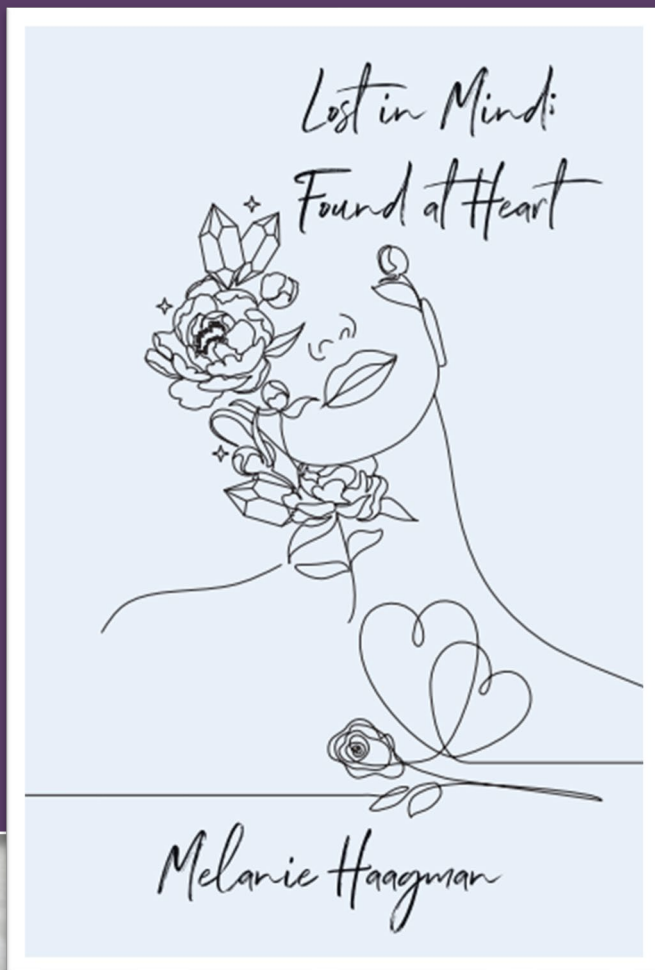


Available on Amazon from the beginning of January and available to purchase from Mel directly right now! Head over to FB to find out how: <https://www.facebook.com/Girlontheedge90/>

Lost in Mind; Found at Heart really did write itself. Every time I feel a strong emotion, whether it be a negative or a positive one, I find nothing more therapeutic and satisfying than writing a poem about it and of course they have always got to rhyme!

Poetry for me is an innate coping mechanism to deal with whatever life throws at me. I do my best to try and write honestly and always aim to end with an uplifting line. This book reflects that no matter how hard things get, when we are truthful and transparent with our emotions, we can make meaningful connections with others who will in turn help us to get through. As well as learning how to get back up when we fall and realising that this is how we learn, develop, and grow.

It has never been more important to speak out about mental health and the similar struggles that we are facing. I hope that these poems can help others to know that they aren't alone with their feelings. This book is divided into subsections to quickly help you find the perfect poem to get you through the day. Whether you need advice, a little injection of humour, a poem about feelings, down-days, or even friendship! I hope that you can laugh, cry, smile, relate to and most importantly enjoy this book.





# Young Poet Feature





# Gina Johnson

United States - AGE 9

**I love writing.**

**Every day I wish I could write poetry but my school would probably not like it. I hope to someday make a difference with my words.**

**I hope you like my poem about dreaming**

## **I SLEEP AND DREAM**

Every night I lay down my head  
After I say my prayers  
By the foot of my bed

I close my eyes  
To dream all night  
Hoping my brain complies

I dream of what the future will bring  
And hope it comes true  
Wanting to be everything

I hope the world gets better  
For me and other kids  
That we don't end in the gutter

I dream of the adults making change  
So we aren't left alone  
In a place we find strange

I wake in the morning  
Still wanting the dream  
Hoping real life isn't the warning



# LIVING THE DREAM

BY SHANE O'SULLIVAN - IRELAND

I have been a light sleeper for as long as I can recall and, consequently, I'm interested in aids that deepen the sleep experience.

I took to wearing a humble eye mask in recent times, the type that used to be given out on overnight flights.

I wore it nightly with some success, until a 'know it all' friend advised me that most masks prevent the eyelids from flickering, a key step in the REM or dream-making part of sleep.

On hearing this it struck me that I had not been dreaming (in as far as I can consciously recall) for some time so I took to sleeping commando, at least from an eye mask perspective!

I've been rewarded in good and bad measure for the change in approach.

Curiously, a childhood nightmare has returned. It's one where I'm being chased by an ambulance, making good my escape, until suddenly I'm not. For no apparent reason my sprinting, cartoon-style legs begin to slow with the inevitability of a decelerating treadmill. The more I try to run, the lesser my legs respond. Resistance is simply futile. Trampus, our sheepdog, my protector and friend, is within sight but out of reach, as always was the case with this now age-old nightmare.

Shane O'Sullivan is a new writer, having taken up the pen in his spare time this year. Based in Dublin, and aged in his early fifties, Shane has a particular interest in short, non-fiction essays.



The dream never develops beyond this point. No person in a white coat alights from the vehicle to complete the capture. Instead, I remain in suspended animation, as was the case all those years ago. There is one difference this time round though. Back then I could hear the sirens a long way off, before I caught sight of the ambulance itself on our countryside road, whereas this time there are no sirens, just the flashing lights fast approaching from a distance. There is something more sinister about this silent, flashing ambulance that chooses not to forewarn of its arrival or purpose.

There is a theme of slow-motion and silence about the good dream too, but it is altogether more cathartic, if not as recurrent as its bedfellow.

Picture this: It’s a weekend morning, early, the hinterland between night and day, the half-sleep before awakening. The wispy curtains are drawn, and the window ajar. A light breeze blows the page of an open book on a bedside table. I am resting but not about to stay put. A slow, gentle levitation commences up, up and up still. Morning becomes afternoon and I am high in the atmosphere now. There is an embalming warmth, the sizzle of heat. It’s a perfectly pitched existence, until it isn’t.

A misty veil begins to form. There is an anticipation of something impending. It engenders the same sense of helplessness that the silent white ambulance generates. It is visceral, certain and beyond anticipation.

Then, thankfully, the point of inflection. There remains a sense of something approaching, never before experienced, but a certainty now that this is a force for good. The silence becomes omnipresent. This must be what outer space feels like. Or what it sounds like inside a very inflated balloon.

My attention, on high alert, is brought to one single pore on my skin, where there emerges a searing yellow light, a tremendous, overpowering bolt of purifying energy. It spreads at pace to all other pores of the skin, a honeycomb effect, combined with, of all things, a fit of the giggles. A cranial burst follows, an implosion, a thought of hemorrhage, but instead a calm, overpowering serenity. The dream continues, in that decelerating treadmill fashion until, slowly and surely, the wispy curtains return. I am re-born.

So, what does this all mean and where to from here? Should I invite or ignore the advice of ‘know it all’ friends? Or seek to understand better the doors of my mind? Or maybe I should just concede and give myself up to simply ‘living the dream’.



# *While I Sleep*





# DECEMBER: WHILE I SLEEP

BY MULTIPLE AUTHORS

## IMPRESSIONISM AT 6AM

Cynthia Storrs  
United Kingdom

Morning mist has smudged the edges of suburbia  
softening squares of sidewalks  
and trapezoidal siding into watercolor wash.  
The fog muffles sharp sounds of birds.

Wrapped in this silent softness  
recondite rabbits dare emerge,  
taupe ellipsicals scrambling across muted greens.

A horizon of parallelograms hang in grey  
waiting delineation by the sun.

## ON THE WINDOSILL

Abigail Yardimci  
United Kingdom

<https://www.facebook.com/AbigailYardimci>  
<https://www.instagram.com/abigailyardimciauthor/>  
<https://dl.bookfunnel.com/5aomukdas8>

Trudging up the bank in  
blue night snow,  
tracks churn from their boots.

Streetlights hum  
all the way home.  
The men rub their eyes and  
roar up into the sky.

Cats scarper and hiss across the snow.  
Birds blink into blackness  
from wiry branches.  
But the men clap gloved hands  
and belly-laugh across the village.

They trip into homes  
tucked up in stars;  
laughter gone and  
tracks softened by  
silent snow.

Everything rests.

Hugging myself with my knees drawn tight,  
I wait on the windowsill.

The outside  
is in  
my  
sleep.



## LUCID DREAMSCAPE

Laura Ferries

United Kingdom

<https://www.instagram.com/lauraferrieswriter/>

in twilight turnings  
thoughts beyond discerning  
lucid dreams wash over me like the long  
lost waves of a fragrant sea

fragments and pageants of  
myriad imaginings that climb  
like vines from a memory abyss  
buried time capsules

treasure chests I  
no longer miss  
traced images of faces  
& long-lost places

I feel history's touch  
I feel it so much

graspable, laughable

in kaleidoscopic visions  
I see it all: the joys and derisions  
seismic decisions  
heartfelt admissions

but what taunts me the most  
is what haunts me the most

a ghost ship that not only sailed but sank  
lodged in the sands of my memory bank

phantoms of fantasy and ghouls of gold  
tease me, lead me, into believing a mirage  
of ancient reel tape in playback montage

5am feelings  
slumber beneath the ceiling  
the sky sends me signals  
in silky sleep symbols

of what was, what's not, what could have  
maybe been  
doubts and gladness and all that's in between  
sadness and growth  
the kindness and the mean

and as the sun starts to creep  
through my black veiled windows, in shallow  
grief  
illusions and fantasies still run in me deep

I battle to pry open these eyes of mine  
and I spend some time, trying to define  
if it's the devil or if it's the divine

then I shake off the dream  
reborn this morning, it's all now re-  
forgotten and newly unseen.



## THE COUNTERPOINT TO MAYHEM IS DEATH

Kenneth Baker  
United States

He remembers glass fibers  
Like the perky topknot on a chipper cheerleader,  
That splayed from the whirring black box  
Casting a whirlwind of colors upon the walls,  
A possible promise of gifts to come.

Posters hung on those walls crafted  
From what the future held  
Pledges blithely made  
And gazed upon fondly as he  
Drifted off to meet purple flying sheep.

He counts the sheep in patient seconds,

Waiting while the gold lame clad dancers  
And the bands in their leather jackets  
Electric guitars slung casually across their backs  
Lay out the smorgasbord.

He becomes a drooling, whining, howling dog  
Pacing hungrily at the door marked "The Future".

Expectations arise,  
The colors whirl,  
Painted so lovingly, tenderly,  
And hung on the walls,  
Synchronized with waves of desires.

He finds himself collared and chained  
Restrained from the feast  
His longings  
Echoing

In the dusty halls of memory.

## SLEEP

Tomas Reynolds  
Canada

The only truly good  
person is asleep,  
not saying (the wrong things) (hateful things) (lies)  
not making (garbage) (work) (enemies)  
not eating (too quickly) (too much) (other creatures)  
not buying (more and more) (junk) (it)  
not driving (up demand) (aimlessly) (too fast)  
not standing (for a long time) (alone) (on a ledge)  
not (envious) (sad) (wistful)  
not (scared) (resentful) (angry)  
just asleep.

The goddamn dawn ruins everything.



## WISHES

Bharti Bansal  
India

Barren home and broken bodies  
I dream of a land  
Where I am not a raging river  
Or a dying moth  
Where the light is not too faraway  
And sun is at the tip of my thumb  
Where my lover doesn't hold pillows for comfort but me  
Where time doesn't fly  
Like a bird in a burning forest  
Waiting to escape  
Where the dark doesn't scare me  
And this lonely world doesn't convince me to find a dream  
Big enough to weigh me down  
Keep me grounded on earth  
And doesn't let me shoot from the earth at escape  
velocity  
All I am saying is that I am just trying to stay  
As long as I can  
Without making it sound like a complaint  
Because you see, sometimes the best moments should be  
kept at one hand distance  
And best memories are better off without heart  
So, all I am trying to do is detach myself  
From this world  
A rope being cut  
A taut thread hanging loose  
For there is no way to heal loneliness  
But to believe that we after all aren't even lonely alone  
That somewhere someone feels exactly like us  
Tucked in my bed  
I am waving everyone off in my dream  
And running to a land  
Where nobody knows that I, in fact, am so sad  
I might break down on being asked simple questions  
And know perfectly the answers I can never admit.

## THE FOREST NEVER SLEEPS

Jenna K. Funkhouser  
United States  
<https://jennakfunkhouser.wordpress.com>

But don't you think  
the trees nod off,  
just a little, now and then

the river finds itself  
sleep-traveling  
down those slow,  
mossy slimes,  
as water-bugs roll  
in silent ice capades  
across their dreams?

The ferns open  
their ten thousand eyelashes  
each morning

and the damp earth  
rears its head  
like a great bear of light.

And the paws of the fox  
and the grey-haired bobcat  
remember.

When the river wakes  
it carries only their negatives  
clasped like a reversed prophecy  
against its beating heart.

And the earth wakes  
with the scent of the night  
upon her skin.



## NIGHT LIGHT

Christian Ward  
United Kingdom

[https://www.instagram.com/christian\\_ward\\_writes/](https://www.instagram.com/christian_ward_writes/)

Can't sleep. The moon  
is redrafting outside  
my window: Joker's grin,  
biscuit dipped in tea,  
copper penny, cracked egg,  
the burlesque reveal...  
More costume changes  
than the Super Bowl halftime  
show, than the world's  
entire butterfly population. I jest.  
Is this insomnia or the final walk  
in the park where you expect  
Michael Aspel to show a film  
of your life? It's a bit boring  
now. Thanks for the entertainment  
I'd say if it could hear me,  
while I peel like an onion  
and turn into a paper glider,  
a 747, a flying squirrel.

## CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS IN ARREARS

Renee Cronley  
Canada

<https://www.instagram.com/reneecronley/>  
<https://twitter.com/ReneeCronley>  
<https://www.facebook.com/renee.cronley>

We toil around the 24-hour clock until  
hopelessly coiled around the harmonic oscillator  
that swings counter to our circadian rhythms.

Out of phase; out of mind.

Silencing alarms that caution accelerated living,  
tick-tocking with overstimulation—  
wearing weariness as a badge of honor.

If we stop moving, we'll fall behind.

Society chimes forty winks low on the hierarchy  
as the waking world ignores the internal clock—  
operating in a fog as we lag behind REM cycles.

Barely standing but running on borrowed time.

Abusing stimulants to combat rebound fatigue—  
scraping by as we sprint alongside the minute hand  
as the hours pull our minds and bodies into a recession.

We can sleep when we're dead.

An hourglass of ignorance containing grains of truth  
as we measure success with chronic self-neglect  
until the cumulative effect puts us on the stopwatch.

The productive insomniac files wellness bankruptcy.

The cost is high when culture shapes sleeping habits,

Circadian Rhythms in Arrears, page 2, continue stanza

so, we replace dysfunctional beliefs with healthy ones—  
time spent in the land of the nod is constructive.

The slumbering soul is hard at work.



# THE TALE OF THE TELEVISION GIRL

BY WILLIAM WREN – CANADA <https://billwren.com/>

You stepped out of the TV, ravenous and demanding pizza. “Extra cheese,” you said. “Extra, extra cheese.”

I had a coupon and ordered two.

Freed from the borders of television, you soon found the pleasures of stretching and speech that was your own. You discovered the charms of cloth and colour and understood perfectly the purring of cats.

Your smile was pearl white; your lips and eyes, moist when seen up close.

You were loved by light. It showed you to your best advantage.

Music shadowed you; your voice was always pleasing. We all loved you; everyone hoped you would look their way. You fell in love with everything tactile and the surprises of unscripted conversation.

You loved our love. You could not get enough. To please us, you stopped eating. “No cheese,” you said. “No pizza.” My coupons piled one upon another like magazines no one would read, received monthly.

In time, you were no longer new. Your skin paled and you became repetitious. You bored us and we looked straight through you for newer girls who told the old stories more quickly. And there were people who never saw you.

Your limbs grew weak and could not hold your feather weight.

One day you were gone and there was nothing remaining to show you had ever been. No one cried. You became trivia, then forgotten.

My father was ash and lived in an urn. He came to me as I slept. He said he remembered you and in remembering caused me to remember. He said, “You dreamed her to be, then dreamed a new dream and she died.”

I woke in a sweat of guilt and fright, coupons piled by my side like unread magazines.



## INSOMNIA

Rachel R. Baum  
United States

Head in hands shudder among shredded waves  
On the rocky coast between night and light  
Passenger trains screech past  
Lifting gum wrappers from mesh bins

Head in hands parse the lists  
From the day before and the day ahead  
Cicadas shrill in Chicago trees  
Molecules that spin in the dark

Head in hands a bridge a hall to traverse  
The sparse lit canyons from kitchen to bathroom  
Swim the riptide on this parallel sea  
Lie face up as though you are already gone

## TO SEE WITH SLEEPING EYES

Cristina M. R. Norcross  
United States

<https://www.cristinanorcross.com/>  
<https://twitter.com/FirkinFiction>

While I sleep the house settles,  
small breaths, the cadence of exhales,  
the shape and imprint of daily hours.  
Tomorrow runs in circles  
around the house,  
waiting on the other side of the door.

While they sleep,  
my sons grow taller, cells repairing.  
They absorb every moment,  
conversation, sensation,  
math problem,  
French vocabulary,  
the motion of running on the track.

While we sleep, as parents,  
we anticipate our family  
expanding and contracting over time,  
like a balloon of memory.  
I see us rise and float,  
being carried away by the years,  
noticing the arc of fall's golden sun,  
the shadow of winter's early evening,  
the newness of the next generation  
bringing spring to our doorstep,  
genetic blueprints for tomorrow.



## ZAMAN FARKI

Lorelei Bacht

<https://twitter.com/bachtlorelei>

<https://www.instagram.com/lorelei.bacht.writer>

I blink and you begin your day, grabbing  
my last red ribbons of sunlight, weaving  
them into your morning coffee.

Longing at long range, I picture routines:  
slippers, bathrobe, Turkish angora purrs  
himself out of your pillow, yawns.

You look so frail before makeup, your  
Berlin winter worries me. You froth  
your coffee twice, pour it in porcelain.

Important voices in the transistor recite  
their daily litanies of ups and downs,  
percentages. Where will you go today?

Which old friend will you elect to visit?  
Will you carry an umbrella? Anneanne,  
I really cannot sleep without orange

blossom water, and I am tired of looking  
for your dry, solar hands, for your crinkled  
smile on the wrong side of the map.

*"Zaman Farki" means time difference in Turkish.*

*"Anneanne" is a word for maternal grandmother.*

## PEACEFUL SLUMBER

Zaneta Varnado Johns

United States

<https://www.zanexpressions.com/>

I pray . . . I lie down. . . I snuggle  
I close my eyes and submit.  
While I sleep, safely and comfortably,  
the world turns.

I rest all night, a sacred gift,  
not taken for granted.

Trusting that all is well—  
for eight hours—nightly I dream

Uninterrupted

Unencumbered

Unbothered

No rushing

No seeking

No worrying

No regrets!

Peaceful slumber, one of my most  
coveted blessings in life!





## DREAMING

Daya Jaggers

United States

<https://www.instagram.com/freedom5979/>

<https://www.centerandempower.org/>

I say I never dream  
I've said it  
many times  
It has a way of being  
that I feel  
I do not  
know  
But now I realize  
somewhere  
very  
deep  
things are whisking  
me around  
while I sleep  
I woke before the sun  
looking at the moon  
I thought for just a  
moment  
Am I dreaming?

## STARS AND SPILLED INK

Richa Sharma

Singapore

A longer dream is meant to stretch  
It cannot tear, it cannot spill  
The stars will shine till  
the darkness peaks  
even when their muses go to sleep  
and while the sleeping muse's dream  
may be made of shining sheets of stars  
they may break and fall to ground  
in dust to mix and never be found  
While I sleep, the inky spill  
above my head, dark and still  
my breath to reach the blots it holds  
like twinkling stains in its folds  
in wisps my air rises above  
to meet the stars in a forbidden love  
While I am lulled to the lack of light  
what burns inside is hot and white  
Its nearness seems like an impossible far  
this heat inside me from that burning star  
While I sleep, I fear, someone may steal  
My fire bright, my sky dark teal  
Stretched across the velvet night  
a banner illusory and white  
a promise of several burning stars  
perhaps a lie from those that far  
and while I sleep, they play these games  
of Ursa and Orion, Oh, such fanciful names!  
For all I know, their promises won't last  
they burn to ground as night goes past



## SKYLINES

Marion Price  
United Kingdom

alone while I sleep  
the air holds its breath  
the curtains move softly through  
the window ajar  
the cats snore their wishes  
warmed by embers burned low  
my hair tumbles pillows as my  
arms catch the throw

but I...while I sleep  
am illusion in mists  
just a body, a picture  
looked down on from high

a scene set in timeless as a  
nighttime ticks through  
while I walk the skylines  
of heaven  
with you

## AFTER THE STORM...

Michael H. Brownstein  
United States

I need to stretch my breath a minute or more,  
let the broken branch of rain fall away from me,  
the filament of hail move forward a Fionn's step or two,  
gather my dogs from their hiding places in the stone:  
I will be back soon to be with you.

The anvil sparks, the great hammer falls,  
the welder flings its fire, the plasma cutter breaks free.

The aquifer fills itself until it can no longer eat,  
Waters sprawl over the Missouri banks,  
the flood of retribution the revival of our lacking--  
then the color of sky colors the clouds and some days  
we do not need the myth of rainbow, just peace, just  
love,

you, always you, our small house, our smaller garden,  
my hope for you, safe at the end of this storm



## INSOMNIA, REDUX

Nicole Bird

United States

<https://www.nicolebirdthewriter.com/>

It is firmly day  
so solidified in its day-ness  
that it feels like an affront  
a slap in the face  
to the night I spent  
trying to be human.  
I took another melatonin at 5am thinking  
it would make a difference  
but it never does.  
What is meant to be awake  
will be stark eyes and concentrated pupils  
finding a way through the dark  
and fighting a burgeoning aversion to the light.

## PARAMOUR

Danni B. Martin

United States

<https://www.instagram.com/dannibmartin/>

While I sleep  
Fear sneaks into my room  
Slithers on my floor  
And crawls into my bed  
It caresses me with misgivings  
Kisses me with anxiety  
And whispers worry in my ear  
It massages my body with despair  
Rubs my hair with hopelessness  
And removes my clothing with unfulfilled dreams

While I sleep  
Fear makes love to me  
And I wake up afraid

## FIRST CHRISTMAS

D. R. James

United States

<https://www.amazon.com/D.-R.-James/e/BoolW6KT3W>

Never up first, he was always  
downstairs first, his four little boys  
aligned like ascending angels  
up the polished staircase, already  
dressed, eager to see the tree,  
their piles of presents, when he gave  
the word. But *this* – his first since  
moving out, holed up in a grayed  
box on a slab with a stoop just  
blocks away: Christmas Eve with  
him, a canned ham, and trifles  
stuffed into four new matching  
stockings; Christmas day with her.  
At forty-four, he'd never spent  
this morning alone with its luxury  
of infomercials, happy-holiday sales  
inserts, fried eggs and left-over ham.  
A nice woman stopped to exchange  
commiseration, gifts meant to flatter,  
their festive fronts. Later, the phone  
said what everyone had gotten –  
what he already knew. That night,  
back at the rental after kissing four  
happy foreheads through their front  
porch door, he watched winter turn  
his wine black, fell asleep weeping,  
Miles Davis playing *Blue in Green*.



## SLEEPY SEA OF TEARS

Phyliss Merion Shanken

<https://www.facebook.com/phylliss.shanken>

I'm a drowning nine-year-old.

In sync with frantic kicks, head back,  
my puckered lips protrude the surface of the sea.

I crave the scanty breeze, but  
forced to suck through airless straws.

A shark swishes by:  
his human face glows through wavy foam.  
I am Tinker Bell  
spinning on his giant hand.

A stingray puffs fire, drying up nostalgic tears.  
At his command, I leap atop his diamond back.

He tosses me onto parched, crew-cut grass  
to my funereal home.

*Look for me on the beach*, the slivered dragon  
spouts.

No, Daddy:  
For years, I searched but never found—

*I'll reappear whenever you demand.*

No, you won't. You lie.

*Yes, reluctantly, I do...*

Moistened cheeks on my pillow.

Remember when Daddy taught me to swim?

*I'll never let you drown*, he promised.  
*I'll never let you down.*

But then he swam away.

## LET ME SLEEP

Duane Anderson

United States

If I fall asleep watching the movie,  
it only means my sleep has more importance  
than what is on the screen,  
no matter how many millions it cost to film it,  
or how many favorable reviews it received.  
Let me sleep.

My sleep is well worth the price  
of the movie ticket, knowing my dreams  
will more than make up for its cost,  
and if I fall asleep when I am at work,  
fire my ass,  
my sleep is well worth the price.

Sleep, a precious commodity,  
and a scarcity at night,  
most welcomed with open arms when it comes,  
no matter how steep the cost,  
the movies I may have missed,  
the jobs I may have lost.

Don't wake me up,  
just let me sleep.  
My dreams will keep me contented.



## MY LOVER, MY SPHINX

Jessica Palmquist  
United States

Leaping through the night air  
She landed gracefully on her paws.  
Sinking into the pillows  
Kneading the dough of sheets.  
Her lips emitting a humming purr  
She drooled happily.

Upon my chest she lied happily  
Breathing in my air.  
I felt her vibrate and purr  
As she crossed her paws.  
Curling farther into the sheets  
She moved up to the pillows.

Stretching along the pillows  
She gazed at me happily.  
When I pulled away the sheets  
That she had kept warm from the cool air,  
She extended her claws from her paws  
And pulled me back in, resuming her purr.

When I finally got up, interrupting her purr  
She leapt to the floor from the pillows.  
Calling me back she reached her paws  
And followed me unhappily.  
As the sun brought on the morning air  
It was time to leave the sheets.

Leaving unmade sheets  
I left behind her purr.  
As I entered the frigid winter air.  
How I missed my bed and pillows.  
My day went unhappily  
I longed for my love and her paws.

Upon my return, I heard her paws  
As she left my bedroom and our sheets.  
I came inside with a smile, and she growled happily  
My presence made her purr.  
Sitting together with my pillows  
We snuggled away the icy air.

That night, she hummed her passionate purr.  
As we slept in our sheets.  
And our bonded love had warmed the air.



## DETRITUS BECOMES A DREAM

Nina Carroll MD

United States

<https://ninacarrollmd.com/>

The parrot caged in her prim dining room  
appears as quintuplets perched  
on the railing of the balcony  
where I sit. It crumbles. They fly. I freeze.  
A hand grabs mine just before  
the  
steep  
fall.

I fall in love again with violet eyes smiling at me  
single slim and twenty-five  
I walk cocky in boots and leathers my black hair loose  
he turns around shirtless  
claw  
grabs me with crab  
arms.

My father and I rarely hug  
but he was a kind and charming man with a gentle smile.  
He morphs alive forty years younger than when he died.  
Now just in time  
he shakes up liquor & rocks pours cocktails for my friends.

Nat Geo images of the leopard napping in a tree  
and the Afghani girl's blue eyes widen  
as the spotted hyena laughs then growls  
digs fangs into the sleeping man's skull  
crimson spills  
over  
his  
pillow.

Scarlet pools on my sheets—  
I awaken late again for the final exam  
a slow elephant - my only ride there  
I wear khakis navy blazer crew-cut  
afraid I will never become  
what I already am.



## A NIGHTTIME MENAGERIE

Ken Gosse

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/ken.gosse>

I see foxes in soxes,  
a small, twinkly bat,  
a walrus and carpenter,  
cats in a hat.  
Kittens on keyboards  
use me as a mat  
which they all like to knead  
though I tell them to scat!

Awakened abruptly  
by Cheshire grin  
face-to-face as it tickles  
my nose, lips, and chin,  
my kitten's claws penetrate  
sheets, thick and thin—  
I count sheep, hoping sleep,  
once again, will begin.

## SOARING HIGH WHILE I SLEEP

Shail Raghuvanshi

India

<https://www.instagram.com/shailraghuvanshi/>

<https://musenmotivation.wordpress.com/>

“Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words  
And never stops at all.”

while I sleep, exhausted, I am unaware  
that the day I shall rise to will bring with it  
a leaking wall, a flooded room and hours of  
unexplainable desperation having to fall prey  
to an ageing building's pipeline that decides  
to go berserk, having put in years of service  
to ungrateful human life and yet,  
hope is the thing with feathers

flying where you see it, invisible to the eyes  
of the gloom-monger, lost as he is  
in the killjoy emotions of an individual  
willing to let go off the present if only  
to lose sleep in disquietude which I do  
at times, I won't deny it but then, faith  
in a tomorrow that could bring with it solitude  
that perches in the soul

transforms me into a person better than the one  
yesterday so, even as I swab the water away  
that threatens to moisten the cardboard boxes  
filled with books, written references, kept near my table  
last week, I know, there could be a reason for all this  
tampering, me, amenable to a positive change  
stemming from loss, one who is disposed to dance,  
and sings the tune without the words

sending vibes of embracing acceptance to  
the universe like an affirmation destined  
to change my immediate world, like a switch word  
which when written or chanted changes my outlook  
towards my present, for the better if only  
I let go off my grudges, tear off my unwarranted expectations  
floating on a cloud that gets me sailing with a smile  
and never stops at all.



## WHILE I SLEEP

Mignon Ariel King  
United States

<https://makingbooksrock.wordpress.com/>

The three mountains come crumbling down  
Tremont Street to fill in the Back Bay again.

Blue Hill Avenue runs a dismounted stream  
rapidly to the Harbor, turrets from Castle

Island leaping to their doom, all caught up  
in the bluing of things. And all the bodies

dumped in the Quarry by the old Whitey  
Bulger hoodlums tattle as they float on.

Asleep, I cannot hear the slights of slant,  
broad alliteration mocking our blue collars.

## ON A BED OF BANANA LEAVES

Peuo Tuy  
United States

<https://www.facebook.com/khmergirlpeuo/>

Mak, we travel with you crossing dark blue  
oceans, returning to our ancestral birthland.

We hold your hands,  
walking through vibrant green rice fields,  
hearing drums beat for your return.

Mak, we shower you with white pka champas -  
We can't wait to see your radiant smile!

At the pagoda, we pray you  
will meet Phouk in your afterlife.

On a bed of banana leaves,  
we place your ashes with Phouk,  
let you and Phouk ride with the currents down  
to the Mekong River.

## INCREASED

LaVan Robinson  
United States

<https://www.instagram.com/lalathepoet/>

<https://twitter.com/robinsonlavan1>

<https://lavanrobinson1968.wixsite.com/lalathepoet>

On the sea of the unconscious binding of broken dreams. My ship of self purpose was just sailing blindly. The compass of life in which I tried to navigate and plot my course had me drifting about. The winds of turbulence many ships I seen it had caused to crash among the rocks. I was hungry and thirsty, and my soul was at its wits end. The darkness of the clouds above made it totally impossible to see what was waiting just around the bend. The flares I shot into the air couldn't and didn't fully illuminate the sky. I was in the grips of fear and on my knees, I fell and cried. It was then that I felt a power greater than I. It had righted the ship and set it on a course of calmer waters and then I realized that he , God was superiority more equipped, and I made him captain of my life and ship. Now I am totally at peace and my riches and blessings have been immensely increased.



## **“NO THANK YOU”**

**Carl “Papa” Palmer  
United States**

<https://www.facebook.com/carlpapa.palmer.1>

I don’t remember who I was talking to  
or what I was talking about, but  
it was my voice I heard  
and I remember saying it.  
That’s what woke me up,  
“No thank you.”

Had I said it on the telephone  
to a telephone salesperson  
persistently selling telephones or  
a cellular telephone service plan,  
that kind of “No thank you.”?  
A dismissive, condescending, agitated,  
“No thank you,”  
voiced toward the slamming handset?

Or was it said to a person or persons in mass,  
handing out blue and pink flyers downtown  
almost blocking pedestrian passage,  
thrusting their advertised wares  
as I verbally elbow past  
avoiding eye contact?  
“No thank you,”  
barely slowing down.

Or to the red headed waitress  
as she asks on the brink of pouring,  
if I need a warm-up just after  
I’ve added the right amounts  
of milk for color and sugar for taste.  
“No thank you,”  
with a smiling shake of my head  
and a blocking hand over the cup.

Or maybe a singing retort  
at the sticky faced toddler  
in the waiting room, ripe diaper,  
crawling toward my seat,  
offering gooey green gummy bears  
from his fuzzy little open hands.  
“No thank you,”  
quite loud, backing into my chair  
trying to get the parents’ attention  
to keep their odorous brat at bay.

Perhaps a polite refusal,  
though to an offer  
of something I actually desire,  
like another slice of hot blueberry pie  
topped with vanilla ice cream,  
the unconvincing sort,  
that if asked again,  
may not be that vague, unmeant  
“No thank you,”  
that was automatically voiced.  
whereas, if offered again,  
“Are you sure?”  
just surely might be accepted.

My ponderings now abruptly curtailed  
by yet another question  
from the other side of my bed.  
“Still wanna get up early?”  
“No thank you”.  
Now I’m asking myself,  
“Who was that?”



## SO LONG, APPA

Vidya Shankar  
India

<https://www.instagram.com/vidya.shankar.author/>

I wonder  
what your last thoughts were  
before you died  
I was told you moved on in your sleep  
But what if you had been awake  
with eyes merely closed  
as the little girl in me remembers  
you often would lie?

When age caught up with you  
O, how many times you would call me  
to say you thought you were going away!  
Those calls —  
Fears!  
Yours? Mine.  
And when the time came  
You left  
No sleeping with eyes merely closed!  
No drama! No calls!  
No fear!  
Only silence

*\*Appa: Father (in Tamil)*

## No Man's Land

Carolyn Chilton Casas  
United States

[https://www.instagram.com/mindfulpoet\\_/](https://www.instagram.com/mindfulpoet_/)

In the deepest dark before daylight,  
in that no man's land  
between there and here,  
I find myself behind the wheel,  
driving in the right-hand lane,  
Highway 101 north,  
coming up on the exit to Avila.

Around the corner bend,  
cars come speeding toward me.  
I careen wildly between them  
to prevent getting hit,  
like a fish laboring to swim  
upstream against the current.

I am late to an appointment,  
have forgotten the address,  
have no number to call, and  
finally understand the place  
I am looking for is south, not north,  
of the direction the car is headed.  
There is no hope of arriving on time.

So, I give in to the pandemonium,  
let go of my carefully made plans.  
Somehow, I am able to escape  
unscathed but wake up with whiplash.  
No need for a dream reader to interpret—  
the wide-awake nightmares  
imprinted on my subconscious soul.



# A YOUNG ADULT SEARCHES FOR HIS MOTHER

BY SIVAKAMI VELLIANGIRI – INDIA

Not yet midnight. Express chugging passengers  
to or away from homes; the train sleeps  
underneath the blankets.

In her sleep, someone shakes my daughter's feet;  
bolt upright she sits – forming a right angle.  
I yell, "I will hit you."

A raincoat and a hood, midget beggar  
comes to pinch our luggage,  
while my daughter says, "put on the lights ma."

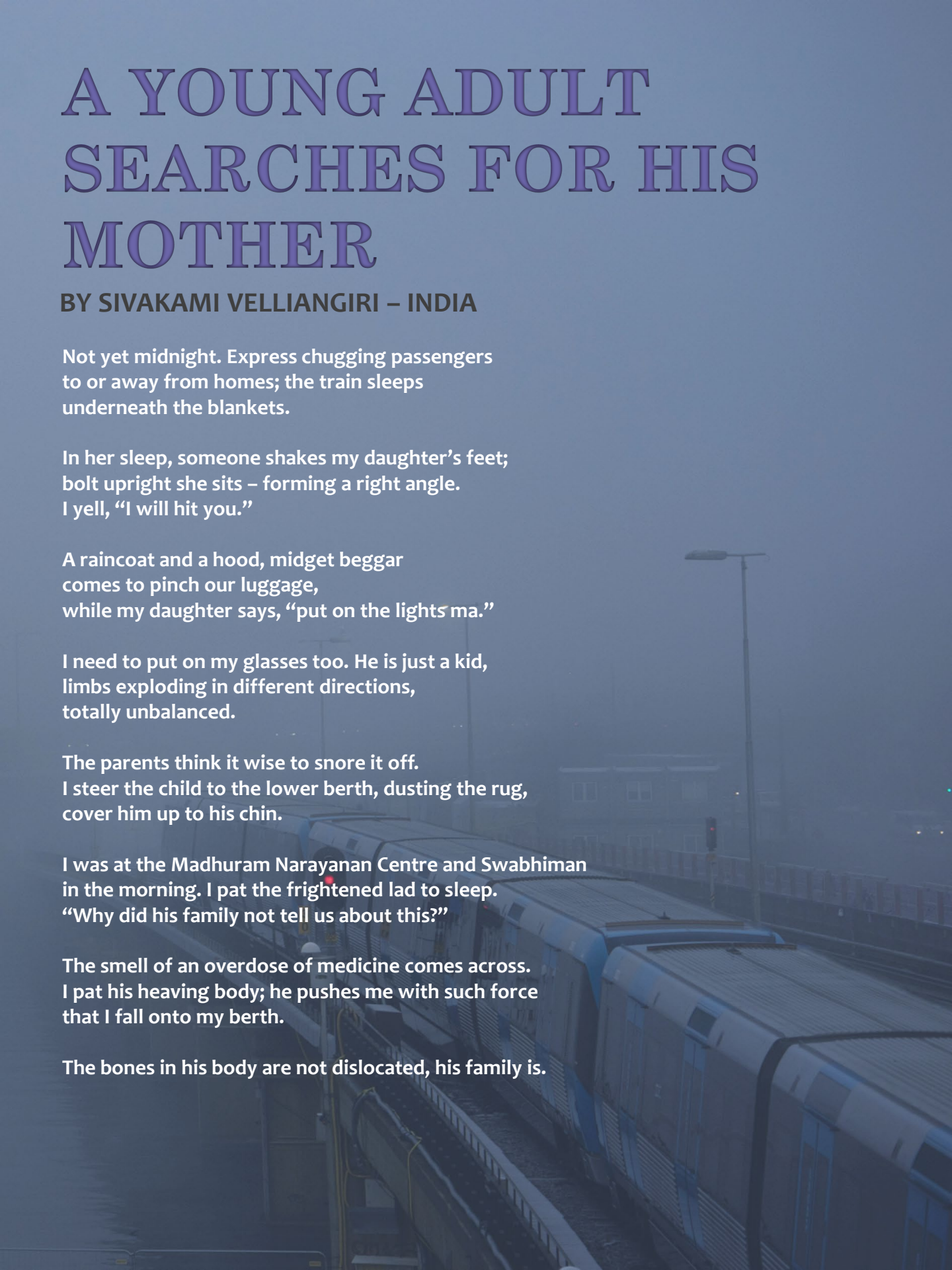
I need to put on my glasses too. He is just a kid,  
limbs exploding in different directions,  
totally unbalanced.

The parents think it wise to snore it off.  
I steer the child to the lower berth, dusting the rug,  
cover him up to his chin.

I was at the Madhuras Narayanan Centre and Swabhimani  
in the morning. I pat the frightened lad to sleep.  
"Why did his family not tell us about this?"

The smell of an overdose of medicine comes across.  
I pat his heaving body; he pushes me with such force  
that I fall onto my berth.

The bones in his body are not dislocated, his family is.





**Claudette Martinez**

**Canada**

<https://www.facebook.com/claudettemartinezdesign/>

<https://www.instagram.com/claudette.martinez.92/?hl=en>

**#claudettemartinezartist**

It grows like mold,  
unwelcome, black, deadly, cold  
Devouring my soul,  
Gorging on me demanding to be fed,  
the continuous spread,  
satisfied only with the dead.  
You can no longer recognize what was once there,  
so unwanted,  
and so sadly unfair.  
Once a special soul,  
Unique, bursting to love,  
wanting only to be held,  
to care.  
Once glowing gold,  
unsold.  
It's taken my shine,  
no longer brilliant,  
no longer mine.  
It needs to be starved,  
I know what needs to be done,  
end the feed,  
it's infinite greed.  
Courage, Superman strength,  
that's what we need,  
paths laden with kindness,  
with love to spare.  
Release its grasp,  
heal the grief,  
stay open and willing to share.  
Find the real,  
release the past,  
allow it to wash over you,  
and finally pass.  
Cleanse the soul,  
become whole,  
exterminate the mold,  
and return to gold.  
Stand tall,  
smile and move fast,  
hand to heart,  
strong brilliant and bold.  
A new start,  
a reboot of the heart.





## A BETTER TOMORROW TO WAKE TO

Linda M. Crate  
United States

<https://www.facebook.com/Linda-M-Crate-129813357119547>

my mother has already  
started her day  
while i sleep,  
i don't sleep in late but  
to some i probably  
don't rise early enough;

i am always pushing myself  
to keep going and to get up  
early enough that i can  
accomplish something—

some days the motivation  
is hard to find,  
and other days the words  
slip from my fingers  
like honey from the comb;

& while i sleep i keep on wishing  
for a better tomorrow to wake to.

## BORING MYSELF TO SLEEP

Mark Hudson  
United States

<http://www.illinoispoets.org/bio.htm>

My computer did not work for a week,  
I got a helper that I did seek.  
I got another party involved,  
and the computer problem was solved.

I sit here in the wi-fi room,  
in my apartment, just like a womb.  
It took a week to get back on-line,  
writing just to pass the time.

My head starts nodding, I'm asleep,  
this computer is making me count sheep.  
Should I shut it off and go to bed?  
I think I should finish the poem instead.

As I sit here, with blood-shot eyes,  
I know that I am hypnotized.  
What you see is what you get,  
my best friend, the internet.



## THE SLEEPWALKERS

Nolo Segundo  
United States

I know I am asleep,  
I want to awaken  
But I don't know  
How... so I sleep  
With eyes open  
And brain turning,  
Trying to wake,  
Myself, you, all  
The sleepers as  
They dream an  
Endless dream  
We call life.

We sleep and dream  
Dream and sleep, but  
We never awaken, not  
Even if we win medals  
Of gold and silver or  
Purple hearts in war—  
We sleep and dream,  
Dream and sleep all  
Between the moment  
We are born and the  
Time when we die—  
Then we awaken....

## I SEE YOU

Lakshman Bulusu  
United States

[https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/127227.Bulusu\\_Lakshman](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/127227.Bulusu_Lakshman)

*To my brother who passed away at age twenty-five in 1996*

I still see you through the lens of tears  
that wet my eyes as I remember you.  
I remember the many rides  
you took me on your motorbike without saying 'no' even once.  
Your whistle rendered a lilt to the breeze as we rode along.  
I see you in triumph as you made it  
through the interview for a graduate teacher.  
You shine in the highlight as I reflect on our past:  
the jokes we shared at teatime;  
the rules of play you stressed,  
no matter who won or lost;  
the ideas you put forth as we discussed poetry;  
the encouragement you gave  
to turn Sundays into leisure days and take it easy.  
The last smile of yours  
twenty-five years ago, as you waved goodbye,  
still floats in my memory.  
The flame of your life continues to glow,  
its warmth comforting my heart;  
reminding me, you are as near to me as you were,  
twenty-five years ago—  
your image apparent as a metaphor.  
My grief of your sudden end no longer stands out.



## WHILE I SLEEP

Dimithri Wijerathna  
Sri Lanka

Silently, softly the dew drops  
Falls on the green leaves  
Humming the cool breeze  
Dancing to and fro the big trees

Slowly, secretly my soft pillow  
Carries me to a " LAND OF GOLDEN  
SCRIBBLINGS "  
The voices of Keats, Shakespeare  
Echoes me with delight

Iago in his act with Othello  
Shylock in terror  
My eyes felt as dramatic  
Whole audience with wide mouths open

Soon, my golden scribblings  
All over the global platforms  
Audience with cheering voices  
Me; glistening as a " poetic star "

Alas !! No sooner I felt my pillow  
You painted my dream  
While I was in sleeping with inspiration  
You took "wings of poetry"

## PILLOW DATES

Mike Ball  
United States

<https://www.facebook.com/harrumph>  
<https://twitter.com/whirred>

Point and laugh, which I deserve.  
I depended on my fantasies,  
never realizing they could  
slip or stride away at will.

Missing misty mistresses  
long and frequently visited  
at twilight or pre-sleep and  
they performed to my script.

I cannot, even in fantasy,  
couple with potentialities.  
In self-guided pillow visions,  
teasing shadows blow away.

Once, always in sight and touch,  
love and lust objects are gone.  
When intimacies might be fatal  
even thoughts scream, "Peril!"

When tipsy, tired or loose, I  
directed tiny thrills to play.  
Now I cannot override the real  
to command performance.

Love and lust become impossible.  
Dreamed-of liaisons fade to sheer.  
Could-be flings leap quickly  
months, perhaps years, away.

The simple-minded joys  
of pretend cannot survive plagues.  
Where can the joy be if we never  
know the next possible when.



## NOCTURNE

Emily Thomas / Not Much Rhymes with Cancer  
United Kingdom

<https://www.instagram.com/notmuchrhymeswithcancer/>

I'm asleep  
but you're awake  
You're awake  
in my body  
when I'm awake and  
when I'm asleep  
Really you should  
be asleep  
when I'm asleep and  
when I'm awake

You're partying  
pretty hard,  
but the party  
ain't pretty  
in fact, it's  
pretty hard  
to understand  
how the party is  
still hankering  
after hard

You must be  
tired?  
Tired of the broken record  
buzz  
buzz  
buzzing around my brain  
and my body,  
my body is tired  
of no golden silent  
shut eye  
or serenity

Are you afraid  
of the dark?  
Does darkness falling  
make you move  
into molasses darkness  
or falter your move?

Know there's lightness  
creeping in behind you  
to show you  
the way out

Why don't you  
soak up the stillness  
Why don't you  
surrender to the night  
Why don't you  
Sleep.



## A STILL POINT

Judy DeCroce

United States

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/judydecroce/>

a change scribbles across  
clean pages in a vacuum,

fragments slide by  
then recombine with a chill

there is no dependable weather  
in dreams as stories break away

gray wind errs  
to a still point

a dreamscape of fugitive passages  
forgetting as we go

## LOST DREAM

Jane Fitzgerald

United States

<https://www.facebook.com/JanesPoetry>

[https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-](https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/B01MSW2FLO)

[Fitzgerald/e/B01MSW2FLO](https://www.amazon.com/Jane-H-Fitzgerald/e/B01MSW2FLO)

I woke up suddenly  
Half conscious with dread  
The dream had returned  
Plunging me into  
The horrifying abyss  
Where you left me  
Stunned and lonely  
Feeling like a lost animal  
Terrified by emptiness  
Knowing it wasn't true  
But shaken by the vision  
Afraid to sleep again  
Clouded in an eternal  
vigil until dawn  
The dream is gone  
Fear hides inside  
Longing to eradicate  
The overwhelming  
sinking sensation  
of loss



## SLEEP

Genevieve Ray  
England

<https://linktr.ee/GenevieveRayPoet>

The distance,  
until tomorrow,  
fades gently,  
as warm materials.  
Hold the vessel,  
will hold the vehicle,  
that flies away in dreams.

As I lay sleeping

Other mortals,  
other creatures,  
continue their daily activities.  
Engagements that,  
bustle and bolster,  
ever onward.  
While my body is distant.

As I lay sleeping

The hours will march,  
as silent soldiers,  
monitoring the whirl,  
of a planet on its axis.  
A steady spin,  
forever forward.  
Without much need of participation.

As I lay sleeping

The refreshment,  
of internal organs,  
resetting of systems.  
A day's worth of debris,  
emotional detritus,  
will float away.  
Leaving peace in its place.

## IN LATE SEPTEMBER

John Muro  
United States

<https://www.instagram.com/johntmuro/>

Near wakefulness beneath a grove of milk-  
Blue pines, needle-dripping boughs cuffed  
By wind, the scent of balsam settling deep  
Within my lungs, while a crescent moon  
Severs the horizon, parting stars that are not  
Stars, their light's origin coming from somewhere  
Beyond these meandering valleys where  
Colors burn aloud and dusky foot-hills bend  
Back from the horizon, weighing the tiny  
Pieces of ore or solder gleam I culled from  
Pools of quiet water and placed them deep  
Inside my pockets where they will stay, like  
Tokens, to buy-back this day and whatever else  
Is left of a season that's slowly moving away from us.



## HALF ASLEEP

Sarfraz Ahmed  
United Kingdom

<https://twitter.com/Sarfraz76194745>

<https://www.instagram.com/sarfrazahmedpoet>

Her fingers caressed his body,  
As he lay entangled,  
Half awake,  
Half asleep,  
Spilled emotions run so deep,

Masculinity put on hold,  
As his muscles tensed and released,  
As he began to let go,  
As he responded to each touch,

Each touch that brought him much pleasure,  
Fragmented each emotion,  
Brought it back to life,  
With each touch her fingers,  
Untied the tangles and knots,  
That were buried deep inside,

Propelled him to let go,  
To breathe in and breathe out,  
Gently as he lay half awake,  
Half asleep,  
He finally began to let go,  
Of spilled emotions that ran so deep.

## THE PERHAPS

Julie A. Dickson  
United States

Bruise is a memory,  
imprint, injustice,  
an indentation -  
not quite a puncturing  
of hope but a punctuation  
complacent resignation.

Quiet clothing cover  
the past, blanketed over  
where recollections fade,  
actions add to uncertainty,  
dreams masquerade  
as monsters, pressuring  
realities into the perhaps.



## A-WAKENING

Neal Whitman  
United States

on a feather pillow  
I rise through layers of clouds  
floating past baby goblins  
who blow kisses as I pass by  
surges of bliss arise in me

ahead the Sun  
sphere of essence  
source of all Life  
touches the tip of a mountain  
slowly melting a frozen lake

under its sheet of ice  
muffled voices could be heard  
gurgling as it goes  
a stream descends  
in search of its ocean-home

in the distance  
a fire-breathing dragon  
scorches the skies  
and thunders a great voice  
threatening hail, but I loop

around the mountain  
and return to bed  
where outside my window  
morning mist had crept in unseen  
to find me awake and ready to rise

in lush forests  
mango trees are in full bloom  
their ripe fruit ready to drop  
What joys there are in this world!  
May the glorious sun of omniscience shine!

## SLEEPING SWEETLY

Kathy Jo Bryant  
United States

Dreams of treasures

Fill their heads  
As they're sweetly sleeping

Treats abounding  
Taste divine  
Gifts are hard, at keeping!

Spending time  
With family, friends  
Tops the art of sharing!

Acts of kindness  
For those in need  
Spread the joy of caring!



## DRIFTING...

Pratibha Savani  
United Kingdom

<https://www.facebook.com/pratibhapoetryart>  
<https://www.instagram.com/pratibhapoetryart/>

Drifting in and out of dreams  
Like I am in some place else  
My vision is blurred  
As my conscious mind  
Recovers  
But my subconscious mind  
Continues  
Lying in state  
As I fall into that place  
That some place else  
Only my mind can reach  
And switch off  
For me to sleep  
And I stop drifting in and out  
I stay in one place  
And remember  
Vividly  
What I have seen  
Seemed so real  
My mind is rested  
I start a new  
Catching my thoughts  
My dream  
Whilst drifting in and out  
Of sleep

## A DREAM PLACE

Antoni Ooto  
United States

<http://www.ooto.org/blog/>  
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/antoniooto>

On waking,  
long after the death of my mother,  
I realized I had never  
dreamed of her...

of her generous laugh,  
of her precise pinpointing of a bargain.

Or of how she told, us, her children,  
on that small porch in a farming town,  
she would not repeat the chemo.

There she sat smoking her last pack of  
cigarettes,  
head down, twisting her ring  
around and around  
never needing more than what she always had.

And without so much as a goodbye.

*~for Aley Neoma Finley DeCroke ~*



Gary Wosk was raised in the Bronx and Los Angeles. Since graduating from California State University, Northridge with a journalism degree he has been newspaper reporter, organization spokesperson and a media relations manager. *My Gym, They Are Here, Bezillgo Versus the Allerton Theatre, Bubbe to the Rescue, Flameout, On the Cover of the Rolling Stones, The Violation, Best Intentions, Sugar, Full Bladder, Typecast, Adrenalin Rush, Big Frank, Infirmary 909, Pearl, The Recliner, The Cabbie, Trini, The Raid, Executive Material, Tick-Tock, Scare Tactics, Bon Appetit*, and many of his other short stories have been featured in anthologies. Gary is member of the California Writers Club. He lives in North Hills, California with his wife, Mina, and Australian Cattle Dog named Shelley.

# THE ATTIC

BY GARY WOSK - UNITED STATES

Herman Boswell noticed that the door to his bedroom was open soon after he awakened one morning. He was perplexed because he always kept it shut except when he walked to the bathroom in the middle of the night.

He thought to himself that maybe he'd absent-mindedly forgot to close it after returning to his bedroom. Another possibility entered his mind. Perhaps his wife, Claire, opened the door as a hint that she needed some whoopee.

Scratching his head, Herman decided he would bring up the subject of the closed bedroom door in the kitchen with wife as they prepared their breakfast.

They hadn't seen each other in hours. The recently retired Boswells slept in separate bedrooms across the hall from each other because they both snored. They'd close the doors to their bedrooms to block out the sounds of each other's nasal symphonies. They also wore earplugs to keep out the white noise of the nearby traffic.



Their lives weren't exactly exciting. Other than his visits to the gym and her running some errands, they were pretty much a stay-at-home couple. Even when they moved into their new two-bedroom, two-bathroom suburban home several months earlier, instead of hosting a housewarming party, the celebration consisted of going out to dinner at a local coffee shop with their best friends Stanley and Patricia. He ordered his usual turkey burger and she her usual Cobb salad. And of course, they had to be home by 9:30 for bed.

The mornings obviously didn't get off to a rip-roaring start. They'd greet each other with the perfunctory "good morning" and that was about it except for maybe, "anything new?" which was a foolish question to begin with.

At least now they had something to talk about over their breakfast which usually consisted of his egg whites served on an English muffin and her bowl of Honey Bunches of Oats and milk. Typically, they'd settle down afterwards in the living room to watch cable television. Depending on who possessed the remote control, they'd watch either CNN, MSNBC, the Home Shopping Network or HBO from their living room's his-and-her recliners.

"Okay, did you open my bedroom door last night?" Herman asked his wife after washing down his daily fish oil vitamin with cranberry juice.

"What are you talking about?" answered Claire as she waited for the Keurig to complete brewing her Hazelnut blend.

"You left my bedroom door open, didn't you?"

"No, it wasn't me," she insisted.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course, I'm sure. What's the big deal?"

"It's not a big deal. It's just that I keep my bedroom door closed at night as you know.' A former deputy district attorney, Herman searched for more evidence that would implicate her as the culprit of this shenanigan. The cross-examination of his wife continued. A former librarian, the mellow Claire did not appreciate her husband's prosecutorial tone.

"Back off, Herman. I'm tired of being accused of this and that."

"Claire, you can't fool me. You were in the mood for a little intimacy, right?"



“Yeah, keep telling yourself that.”

“Come on Claire. Why didn’t you wake me up if you were in the mood?”

“I wasn’t. And if I was, I know better than you awaken you from a sound sleep. You’d just lay there anyway, and I’d have to do all the work.”

“Tell me the truth, dear. Do you want me back in the sack so we can have more fun?”

“Sure, but I want you to see a specialist first about your snoring.”

“My snoring? How about yours?”

“My snoring doesn’t keep you up.”

“That’s what you think.”

It was now her turn to cross-examine him.

“I noticed this morning that there’s a trail of dusty footprints throughout the house,” she said.

“There’s even dust on the couch.”

“And as usual I’m the suspect, right?” said Herman defensively.

“Turnaround is fair play.”

“I suppose.”

“Did you track in the dust from your daily walk?” she asked.

“Absolutely not. I swear on the bible.”

“Look me in the eyes.”

“It wasn’t me.”

“And it wasn’t me.”



“Do you want me to take a polygraph?” he asked.

“Don’t be silly, of course not. Let’s not argue about this. You probably just don’t remember stepping in dirt. Can you please vacuum the house?”

Herman put his heart and soul into vacuuming and even worked up a little sweat. Not a speck of dust was left until the next morning when the dusty footprints reappeared. His bedroom door was also open.

So, he vacuumed again, and again, and each time the dust returned.

“It’s time we told someone about the mystery,” said Herman.

“Who’s going to believe us?” said Claire. “They’ll place us in an institution.”

“Paul Kramer will believe us. He’s our friend and he sold us the house. I’m sure we can confide in him. And we won’t have to worry about being labeled as lunatics.”

-----

“How do you like living in your home?” Paul asked Herman over lunch at a local Italian restaurant.

“Something strange is going on. That’s why I wanted to meet with you.”

“What’s happening?”

Uh-oh, I bet I can guess, Paul thought. Maybe I should have told them. I needed the commission from the sale of the house to pay the outlandish utility bill and didn’t want to scare them away. Better later than never, he figured. I probably should tell him now.

“It’s interesting you should bring up your open bedroom door and the dust,” said Paul. “The real estate agent of the family that previously lived in your house told me the same story about an open bedroom door and dust. I thought he was just pulling my leg.”

“And you didn’t share that with us?”

“Their real estate agent thought they were a bunch of kooks. I agreed. “Obviously, we were wrong. By the way, and this is getting kind of personal, but do you and your wife snore.”



“Well, yeah. Why?”

“The former residents also snored. It might just be a coincidence.”

“That would seem to be a fact that would neither here or there,” said Herman.

“Yes, on the surface it wouldn’t seem that relevant,” said Paul, reluctant to share all the details.

“Is there something else you want to share with me about the house?”

“No.” There was actually something, but the restaurant was not the place to discuss the subject. Paul didn’t want to ruin Herman’s appetite.

“Claire and I are thinking of selling the house. We’ll let you know.”

“I definitely understand. I would probably do the same if it was my house. If you and Claire want to stay at my house, let me know. You’re both more than welcome.”

-----

That night, Herman awoke after his shoulders were shaken.

“No, please, Claire some other time,” he pleaded.

“She’s not in the mood either, buddy,” said a wiry man in singed blue overalls hovering over him. His face appeared to have been placed in a meat grinder. The air was very musty and somewhat smoky. “When I last checked, she was sound asleep.”

“Please don’t hurt me. I’ll give you money. Take the jewelry,” Herman implored the ghastly man between coughs.

“I’m not a burglar,” the man said in a raspy voice.

“I can hardly hear you.”

“Sorry about that. My vocal chords were scorched.”

“By what?”



“Didn’t Paul tell you?”

“No, actually he didn’t.”

“I’m Barney Greenjeans. I’m an electrician. The people that lived here were remodeling their kitchen and I had to climb into the attic to check out some of the wiring. I was electrocuted up there six years ago. The fire burnt me pretty badly. I’ve recently started coming down. And just in case you were about to ask me why I’m still in your attic, you can probably figure it out?”

“Sorry. I can’t.”

“I’m in purgatory.”

“Why are you in purgatory?”

“I still haven’t finished the job on your kitchen. There’s still some dangling wires in the attic. The big boss doesn’t like unfinished earthly business especially when it involves electricians, so I’m being denied entrance until the job is done. And I’m serving extra time in this state of limbo because I didn’t have a license.”

“When are you planning to finish the job?”

“I have to admit that I’ve been taking my sweet time. I’m a contractor. There’s no rush.”

There was silence for several moments until Barney said, “Here, put this on.”

“What is that grotesque apparatus?”

“It’s called a CPAP. A sleeping device. Wear it. I’m tired of sleeping on the couch because of your snoring.”

“I’m not wearing that.”

“After what I went through to find this device, I’ll have to insist.”

“You stole it?”

“I borrowed it from Kaiser Permanente.”



Using his skinless gooey hands, Barney shoved the mask onto Herman's face. As the exposed ligaments and tissue rubbed against his face, Herman screamed, but his wife was sound asleep behind her closed bedroom door. And she was wearing ear plugs.

Barney reached down onto the floor for the rope he had found in the garage.

"I'm sorry I have to do this. You're just going to take the mask off and I need a good night's sleep."

Surprisingly, even though Herman was tied up and forced to wear a creepy mask that Hannibal Lector might like, he calmed down. He didn't go into shock because he realized that there would be something exciting to talk about with Claire in the morning.





# Our December Features

**LET HER SLEEP,  
FOR WHEN SHE  
WAKES, SHE WILL  
SHAKE THE WORLD.**

*- Napoleon Bonaparte*



# ABIGAIL YARDIMCI

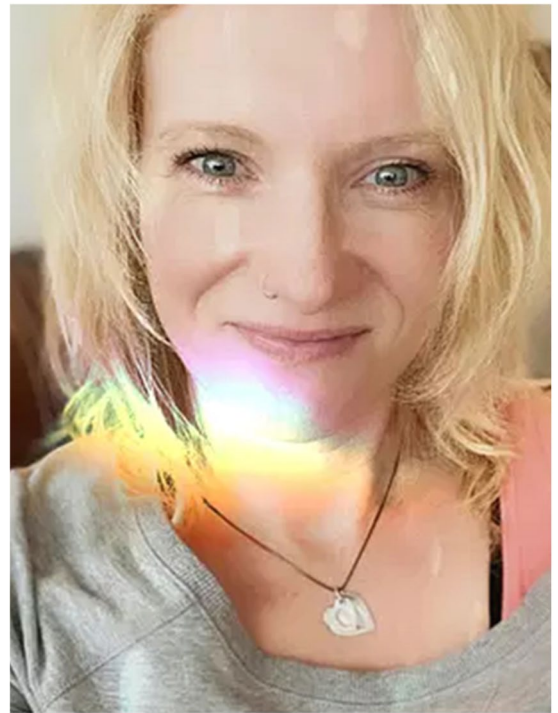
## Author Feature

ABIGAIL YARDIMCI is an author of uplifting fiction with a little bit of romance and a whole lot of soul.

She is also a painter and mindfulness practitioner - a Geordie girl living by the sea in South Devon with her Turkish husband and two terrifying kids. She loves to blog and gets her kicks through mindful parenting styles, creative living and chocolate.

Abigail's writing inspiration comes from scratching the surface of everyday life to find the underlying magic that connects us all. The fire beneath the frustration, the creativity beneath the boredom, the stillness beneath the chaos.

The Life Is Yours trilogy is the ultimate in feel good fiction – telling the story of how one woman unwittingly transforms the grief and torment of heartbreak into the most magical time of her life. All three books are now available on Amazon: Life Is Yours (Book 1), Destiny Is Yours (Book 2) and Everything Is Yours (Book 3).

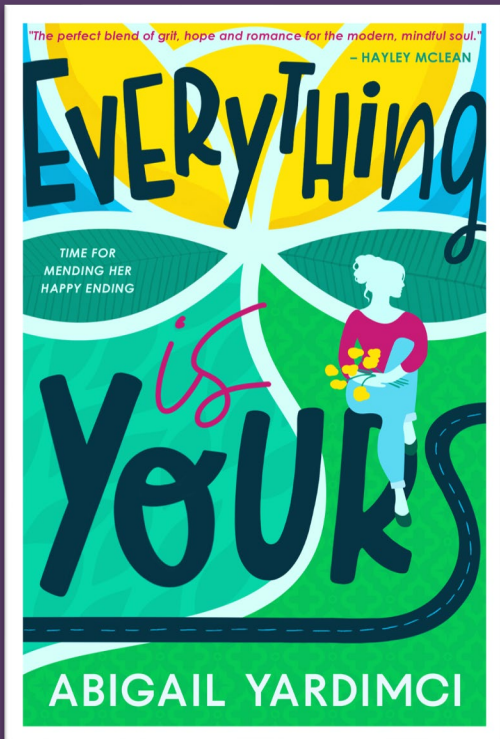


<https://www.abigailyardimci.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AbigailYardimci>

<https://twitter.com/AbigailYardimci>





<https://www.amazon.com.au/dp/B09G32VPZ1>

### EVERYTHING IS YOURS

*Book 3 in the #LifelsYoursTrilogy*

**New Year's Eve is in full swing. Jess and Lindy have met by chance and already they're sharing a bottle of wine in a cosy Turkish restaurant. Lindy is hooked on a story Jess is telling, but midnight is coming and happy endings aren't always guaranteed . . .**

After Jess returns from the trip of a lifetime high on hope, ambition and new love, she's ready to take on the world. She shuts down her business, cuts ties with her ex and announces to everyone the old her is gone.

But a violent encounter rocks her world and her past comes crashing back to haunt her. With a childhood demon to forgive, a long-distance relationship to navigate and that final layer of self-love to uncover, can Jess dig deep and put the final pieces in place before midnight comes knocking?



## ABIGAIL YARDIMCI – AUTHOR FEATURE

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Excerpt from *Everything Is Yours*

Chapter 5 – The Pub

I was met by worried expressions and dead stares and a few beats of silence, so I asked Jack about how he was, I asked Dean about his shopping trip with Vicky as it seemed nobody else was capable of starting an actual conversation. What did they expect me to do? Spontaneously combust? Then I saw Jack's eyes flit upwards and behind me and his expression changed from mild worry to downright panic. I knew before I even turned around who was standing there.

Katy.

Right. This was it.

A genuine smile rose up from somewhere deep inside and I turned my head to see her standing there. "Hi Katy!" Her hair was gleaming and golden. Her cheeks as pink and rounded as I remembered them. I stood up to hug her as I would anybody else whose pub I had been to a thousand times.

But when I hugged her, I noticed something I had most definitely not been expecting. Trembling. I mean she was properly shaking like a leaf. I could have never, in a million years, predicted that Katy would be the one to show vulnerability right now. We were on her patch. In her pub. She had her man there and her friends and I think even her dad was sat close by supping a pint. Out of all the scenarios I could have conjured in my head to imagine this moment, this would not have been one of them.

Wasn't I the one who should have been shaking?

Shouldn't I have been the one unable to speak?

I checked in with my body and found a different story there. A story where compassion and acceptance and wisdom took the leads. A story where my body softened and my heart slowed and my willingness to hold another woman in need overwhelmed everything else.

So I held Katy for far longer than I would have done otherwise. I held her long enough to hear the breath rattling in her body and feel the tremor rumbling from inside, and long enough for me to whisper the only words that felt right, "It's okay, Katy. It's okay."



# MOWMITA SUR

## Author Feature



<https://www.facebook.com/mou.sur>

Mowmita Sur is a freelance writer, poet and a blogger from India. She thinks that she possesses the trait of a beautiful fairy while trying to hide her unicorn friend from the savage world. She has garnered much acclaim for her poems and has received many accolades for her writings at both the National and International levels.

She writes sweet and witty fiction, non-fiction, horror and mysteries. Her characters are clever and fearless, putting her own characteristics into them. Fantasy is her favourite genre, often inspired by real world. Mowmita spends most of her time reading, cooking, painting, dancing and traveling the world and catching her favourite shows.

She is the rhyming queen. Her latest work is an anthology of poems. From her predominant hues, this whimsical fairy conjures up an eclectic, even eccentric image through the diverse collection of endeavors she is experiencing. As she proclaims - "glittering dust on my fairy wings...I fly to fairyland in jings!" Quirky is what you might expect from this author.



### SOMETIMES, EVEN THE SIMPLEST OF THINGS GIVE ME PLEASURE

Sometimes, even the simplest of things give me pleasure.

Like observing a hummingbird flying backward,

Like catching a butterfly under the starry sky,

Like watching a Siberian crane by the shallow marshland.

Sometimes, even the simplest of things give me pleasure,

Like the kingfisher swoops off, fish in beak,

Back to its vantage point as it peeks,

Like staring at the wondrous marine life,

The colourful corals and reefs.

Sometimes, even the simplest of things give me pleasure,

Like when raindrops dripped off my face,

Like the earthy aroma after a rain shower,

Like the incredibly sensual scent of jasmine flower.

Sometimes, even the simplest of things give me pleasure,

Like seeing honeybees collecting nectar,

That entices the bees to the flower,

Like looking sunshine on the wings of the dragonflies,

Like grabbing a glimpse of magical fireflies,

Like rippling sound of waterfalls under the moonlit night,

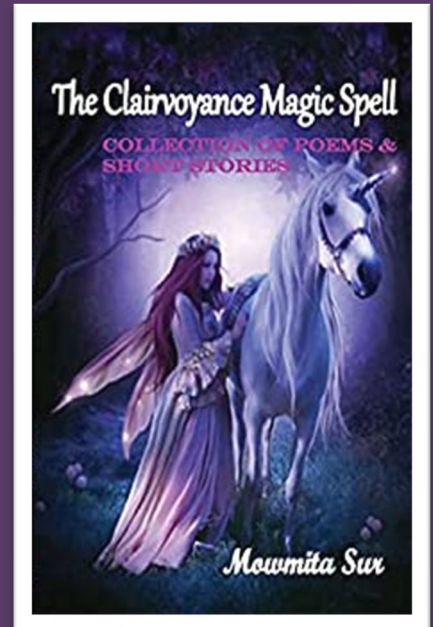
Like birds feeding the nestlings is a beautiful sight.

Sometimes, even the simplest of things give me pleasure,

Ponies galloping on the green meadows,

Daffodils swinging in the air,

When I see love and peace everywhere.



Her latest work is an anthology of poems. From her predominant hues, this whimsical fairy conjures up an eclectic, even eccentric image through the diverse collection of endeavours, she is experiencing. She loves horror and sci-fi fiction stories and movies. As she proclaims - “glittering dust on my fairy wings... I fly to fairyland in jings!” quirky is what you might expect from this author, which inspires the reader to go check out her book.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09CH6MQFK>



### WHILE I SLEEP

I still count down the days of December  
and go to sleep on Christmas eve  
Anticipating a gift waking up next morning  
My inner child does exist  
While I sleep, I wished in my dreams  
I prayed Saint Nicholas to hear  
Wellbeing for everyone  
Peace, love and harmony for my family  
And a charitable year  
Even in the gloomiest of winters  
London is positively sparkling  
And spreading its love in every corner  
As they kiss under sprigs of mistletoe  
White flurries falls from the sky  
I see the white Christmas of London  
Awestruck by its beauty  
It's like a winter wonderland  
And I ended up singing  
Let it snow... let it snow... let it snow  
The brilliant sight  
That made my eyes sparkle and face glow  
While I sleep, I wished in my dreams  
I prayed Saint Nicholas to hear  
Well-being for everyone  
Peace, love and harmony for my family  
And a charitable year  
As I witness the magical affair in my dreams  
The mulled wine began flowing  
And the carols start chiming  
When Hogwarts wizards makes snow  
That never melts  
Create flames without fire  
Thus, how magic brought to life  
Making it spectacular  
'Twas the night before Christmas  
I hear the jingle bells ring afar  
The reindeer-driven cart, bringing the gifts

Santa will always be real  
And Christmas is a magical affair  
There are few things  
That can't stop me in any predicament  
And I believe doing good deeds  
Without any reward  
As it's the greatest contentment of the heart  
While I sleep, I wished in my dreams  
I prayed Saint Nicholas to hear  
My hopes, my dreams, my fears  
And everything that I can leer  
My subconscious so keen  
Or so it seems as I believe  
Happiness often come  
As a by-product of doing good deeds  
As I wish blessings, much happiness, and even more love  
While I sleep, I wished in my dreams  
I prayed Saint Nicholas to hear  
Well-being for everyone  
Peace, love and harmony for my family  
And a charitable year  
Oh, the magical Christmas  
It's always interesting, fascinating and adventurous  
The snowshoe hare hides under the Christmas tree  
She is invisible because of her white coat  
This is the time to grin with glee  
And the wine to toast  
And there are stories hidden under the snow  
About some other places or countries around the world  
While I sleep, I wished in my dreams  
I prayed Saint Nicholas to hear  
Well-being for everyone  
Peace, love and harmony for my family  
And a charitable year



The background of the image is a dark, textured surface covered with numerous out-of-focus, circular light spots in shades of gray, creating a bokeh effect.

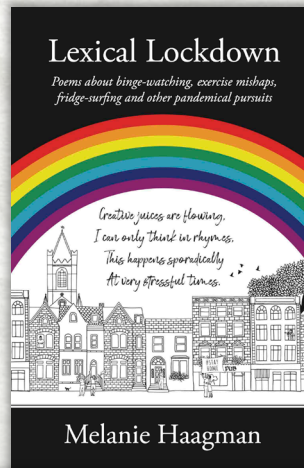
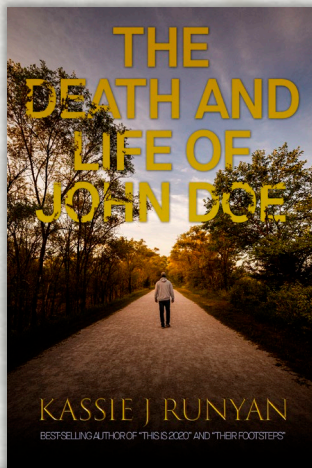
*start your*  
**HOLIDAY**  
*shopping today!*



# FILL YOUR STOCKINGS WITH BOOKS!

On the following pages – please find our recommended books by our featured writers for the current quarter. All previous book recommendations are available on our website. Join us in supporting these amazing authors!

Below you can also find the current books out by our co-creators, Mel & Kassie, and find purchase links on <https://www.opendoorpoetrymagazine.com>

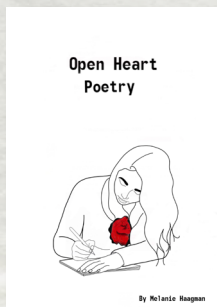




## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

### OPEN HEART POETRY

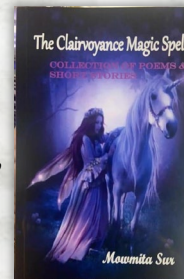
Open Heart Poetry is filled with poems about pain, determination, hope, anxiety and humour. Part One delves into my daily battle with OCD and the impact this has on my life. It encourages others to speak out about invisible pain and spread the word. Part Two contains light-hearted, humorous poems about relatable experiences.



[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Open-Heart-Poetry-Melanie-Haagman/dp/1527238407/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=open+heart+poetry+melanie&qid=1599401368&s=digital-text&sr=1-1-catcorr](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Open-Heart-Poetry-Melanie-Haagman/dp/1527238407/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=open+heart+poetry+melanie&qid=1599401368&s=digital-text&sr=1-1-catcorr)

### THE CLAIRVOYANCE MAGIC SPELL

Her latest work is an anthology of poems. From her predominant hues, this whimsical fairy conjures up an eclectic, even eccentric image through the diverse collection of endeavours, she is experiencing. She loves horror and sci-fi fiction stories and movies. As she proclaims - “glittering dust on my fairy wings... I fly to fairyland in jings!” quirky is what you might expect from this author, which inspires the reader to go check out her book.



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### EVERYTHING IS YOURS

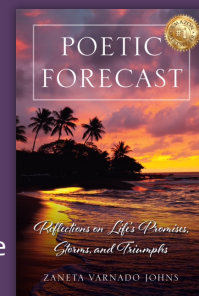
New Year's Eve is in full swing. Jess and Lindy have met by chance and already they're sharing a bottle of wine in a cosy Turkish restaurant. Lindy is hooked on a story Jess is telling, but midnight is coming and happy endings aren't always guaranteed . . .



[https://www.amazon.com/Heart-Beats-Anthology-Lisa-Tomey/dp/1736562002/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=heart+beats+anthology&qid=1631734395&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Heart-Beats-Anthology-Lisa-Tomey/dp/1736562002/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=heart+beats+anthology&qid=1631734395&sr=8-1)

### POETIC FORECAST: REFLECTIONS ON LIFE'S PROMISES, STORMS, AND TRIUMPHS

This inspirational book of poetry was written over a span of forty-five years. Zan's hope is for people to learn that joy and pain can be beautifully expressed and can touch and inspire others in a positive way. You will learn that it is okay to be vulnerable and it is important to question our own way of thinking. Like our feelings, poetic expressions have no boundaries.



<https://www.zanexpressions.com/books>



# RECOMMENDED BOOKS

## KAILANI

Kailani word means sea and sky which implies the theme of the poems included in the book. The broad elements covered in the book is about Nature - reflected in and outside. Both are vital ingredients to live by. The turmoil urging chance to change, the new beginning pressure, dubiousness, female entity, family, pandemic are the few themes.

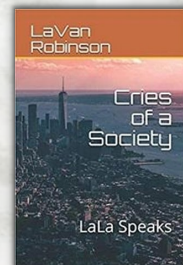
[https://www.amazon.in/Kailani-Anila-Arun-Pillai/dp/B0994KGJ47/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=Kailani+Anila+Arun&qid=1628863879&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.in/Kailani-Anila-Arun-Pillai/dp/B0994KGJ47/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Kailani+Anila+Arun&qid=1628863879&s=books&sr=1-1)



## CRIES OF A SOCIETY

Step into the world of LaLa as he speaks of society from his poet mind's eye. Analytical, yet down to the basics of understanding the human condition in a society which is sometimes daunting. Yet, LaLa sees awareness as the path to understanding, leading to peaceful living.

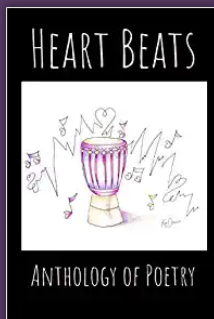
[https://www.amazon.com/Cries-Society-Speaks-LaVan-Robinson/dp/B08MSLXJ47/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?dchild=1&keywords=lavan+robinson&qid=1631735281&s=books&sr=1-4](https://www.amazon.com/Cries-Society-Speaks-LaVan-Robinson/dp/B08MSLXJ47/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=lavan+robinson&qid=1631735281&s=books&sr=1-4)



## HEART BEATS

Heart Beats is an anthology of poetry about the various aspects of what makes us tick or makes a heart-beat. This is about love, life, happiness, anything that makes life more joyful or tolerable. Let's face it. These are tough times and there have been many events in 2020 which have many of us shaking our heads. Heart Beats is about working through and maybe even overcoming these challenges.

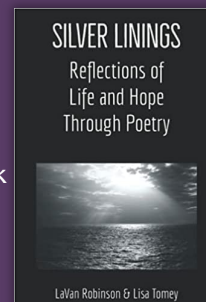
[https://www.amazon.com/Heart-Beats-Anthology-Lisa-Tomey/dp/1736562002/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=heart+beats+anthology&qid=1631734395&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Heart-Beats-Anthology-Lisa-Tomey/dp/1736562002/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=heart+beats+anthology&qid=1631734395&sr=8-1)



## SILVER LININGS

Silver Linings is dedicated to expressing hope through poetry. LaVan Robinson and Lisa Tomey took their two different poetry styles and both combined and responded to expressions. Ending with individual writings of each poet, Silver Linings is a portrayal of perspectives as each writer strives to express their hope for this world.

[https://www.amazon.com/Silver-Linings-Reflections-Through-Poetry/dp/1736562010/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?dchild=1&qid=1631734510&refinements=p\\_27%3ALisa+Tomey&s=books&sr=1-2&text=Lisa+Tomey](https://www.amazon.com/Silver-Linings-Reflections-Through-Poetry/dp/1736562010/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&qid=1631734510&refinements=p_27%3ALisa+Tomey&s=books&sr=1-2&text=Lisa+Tomey)





## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

### THE RAMBLING RHYMES OF AN IMPERFECT MIND

A matter of fact observation of modern day life, depicted in poetry, by a scatty 40 something year old woman. From heartfelt rhymes inspired by loved ones, to a sideways view of lockdown, this book covers many different themes.

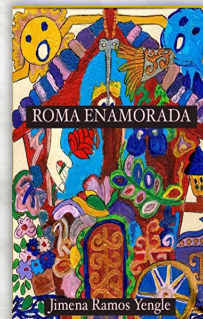


[https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/Bo8ZHHG67Q/ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_cp\\_awdb\\_GR8PS9oMJHEHRJS1DV87](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/Bo8ZHHG67Q/ref=cm_sw_r_cp_awdb_GR8PS9oMJHEHRJS1DV87)

### ROMA ENAMORADA: RETRATO DE LA EXPERIENCIA HUMANA

Hay princesas que deciden creer. Pragmáticos incurables y duquesas empoderadas en el ajedrez.

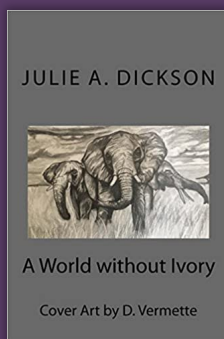
Trovadores que no entienden del querer, acquarelistas con dilemas y estrés. Pianistas italianos con el alma en alquiler. Roma es como la ves



<https://www.amazon.com/Jimena-Sofia-Ramos-Yengle-ebook/dp/Bo8VQDDWQ4>

### A WORLD WITHOUT IVORY

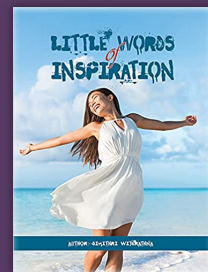
N.H. Poet Julie A. Dickson presents a short collection of poems, poignantly written in support of wild elephants, as well as captive circus and zoo elephants. Proceeds benefit SAVE NOSEY NOW, Inc. [a non-profit Elephant education/rescue organization]



[https://www.amazon.com/World-without-Ivory-Julie-Dickson/dp/1986323803/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=julie+a+dickson+Elephants+%2C+A+World+Without+Ivory&qid=1625104431&s=digital-text&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/World-without-Ivory-Julie-Dickson/dp/1986323803/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=julie+a+dickson+Elephants+%2C+A+World+Without+Ivory&qid=1625104431&s=digital-text&sr=1-1)

### LITTLE WORDS OF INSPIRATION

Dimithri Wijerathna is a young upcoming poet from Sri Lanka, living in Kegalle District. Since her childhood, she showed much interest in poetry, drama and short stories. She is an alumna of Royal International School Kegalle and St. Joseph's Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Kegalle.



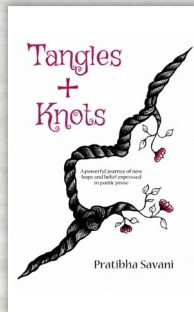
[https://www.amazon.in/dp/9391103510/ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_wa\\_apa\\_glt\\_i\\_EPFYAVGCYQCCWFEETH8F](https://www.amazon.in/dp/9391103510/ref=cm_sw_r_wa_apa_glt_i_EPFYAVGCYQCCWFEETH8F)



# RECOMMENDED BOOKS

## TANGLES + KNOTS

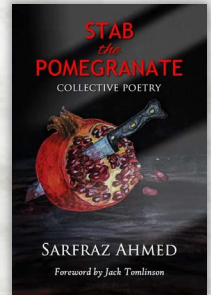
My journey begins as a teenager struggling with eczema and experiencing mental illness. Expressed in poetic prose in its original form, giving a real insight, conveyed across five themes: What a Nightmare it has been, If Only I could, some Hope to change it all, Complete Faith for my spiritual needs and to escape into my Unreality.



[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tangles-Knots-Pratibha-Savani/dp/1916276695/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=1POA7J5OFID1D&dchild=1&keywords=pratibha+savani&qid=1628627995&srefix=pratibha%2Caps%2C149&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tangles-Knots-Pratibha-Savani/dp/1916276695/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1POA7J5OFID1D&dchild=1&keywords=pratibha+savani&qid=1628627995&srefix=pratibha%2Caps%2C149&sr=8-1)

## STAB THE POMEGRANATE

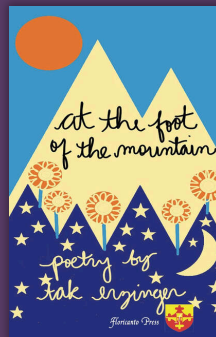
Stab the Pomegranate, is split into two parts; This is then, the first ten years, and 'This is now, where I am now at as a writer and poet, essentially both chapters brings together the first twenty years of a journey to a full circle, the first twenty years of a poet.



[https://www.amazon.com/Stab-Pomegranate-Collective-Sarfraz-Ahmed/dp/B09CRNQ5W3/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=sarfraz+ahmed&qid=1630461834&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Stab-Pomegranate-Collective-Sarfraz-Ahmed/dp/B09CRNQ5W3/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=sarfraz+ahmed&qid=1630461834&sr=8-1)

## AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN

TAK Erzinger brings to radiant life the feelings of solitude, trauma, and healing in her poetry collection *At the Foot of the Mountain*. With deft precision, Erzinger puts tangible sensation to events and emotions that often exist only in the ephemeral space.



[https://www.amazon.de/-/en/TAK-Erzinger/dp/1951088255/ref=zg\\_bsnr\\_14167075031\\_15?\\_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=BV7ZoNDHoP7QGVMWM3KA](https://www.amazon.de/-/en/TAK-Erzinger/dp/1951088255/ref=zg_bsnr_14167075031_15?_encoding=UTF8&psc=1&refRID=BV7ZoNDHoP7QGVMWM3KA)

## FLIP REQUIEM

Poetry. "In this deft and prescient collection, D. R. James has both diagnosed our 'dizzy symptom' and scratched out the vital prescription: holistic poems that enact a rigorous mind's engagement with this tenuous age, or what James calls, with his wink-light touch, 'the more sober / though no less precarious rest of our lives'..." - Chris Dombrowski



[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1948017768/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_taft\\_p1\\_io](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1948017768/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_taft_p1_io)

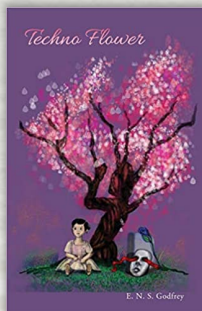


## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

### TECHNO FLOWER

Techno Flower is a collection of poetry that is as vivid and as colorful as the title implies. From alcohol, to love, to the dangers of greed, Techno Flower covers all walks of life. Without holding any punches, Techno Flower is a collection of some of the most interesting poetry to come out this decade.

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/162838283X/ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_cp\\_apg\\_glc\\_fabc\\_1MDNF5YS8WFD4SPCDRG](https://www.amazon.com/dp/162838283X/ref=cm_sw_r_cp_apg_glc_fabc_1MDNF5YS8WFD4SPCDRG)



### RISING

RISING reveals flashes of life's most intimate moments filled with love, hope, remorse, longing, and anguish. We root for the one who reaches for happiness but is not yet able to grasp it. We wince for the one who picks at festering wounds that never quite heal. We are breathless as we run alongside those who chase after a thirst that can never be quenched.

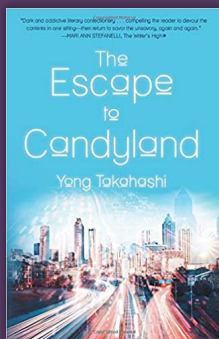
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0985NSD1Q/ref=dbs\\_a\\_def\\_rwt\\_hsch\\_vapi\\_tkin\\_p1\\_i1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0985NSD1Q/ref=dbs_a_def_rwt_hsch_vapi_tkin_p1_i1)



### THE ESCAPE TO CANDYLAND

In Yong Takahashi's Atlanta, the immigrants, preacher's wives, strippers, and shopkeepers who pass each other on the street all have a secret story to tell. Caught between generations of family, regrets from their pasts, conflicting cultures, and even countries, each character has a reason to fiercely guard their secret lives, even as they learn that the truth must escape.

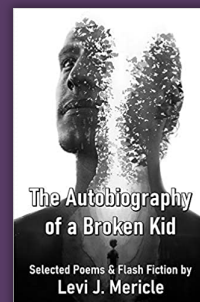
<https://www.amazon.com/Escape-Candyland-Yong-Takahashi/dp/1970137878>



### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BROKEN KID

We find here an immense variety of poems. Most important from the literary point of view, the style of the poet has a richness of effect that creates an enduring fascination.

[https://www.amazon.com/Autobiography-Broken-Selected-Poems-Fiction/dp/9390202159/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=Levi+Mericle&qid=1620354747&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Autobiography-Broken-Selected-Poems-Fiction/dp/9390202159/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Levi+Mericle&qid=1620354747&sr=8-1)



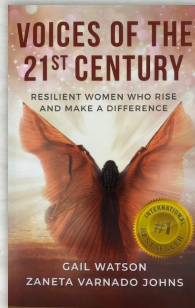


# RECOMMENDED BOOKS

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## VOICES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Voices of the 21st Century: Resilient Women Who Rise and Make a Difference is a collaborative book written by 40 amazing women from across the globe. This 4th Edition of the Voices series includes my chapter entitled, " Invisible No More." In addition, my poem, " What Matters" is featured on the dedication page at the front of the book! "What Matters" appears in Poetic Forecast, also available for purchase. You may meet my co-authors at [www.voicesofthe21stcenturybook.com](http://www.voicesofthe21stcenturybook.com).



<https://www.zanexpressions.com/voices-of-the-21st-century>



The background of the entire image is a close-up of a butterfly, likely a monarch, with its wings spread. The wings are a mix of orange, black, and white. Overlaid on the wings are several thin, circular slices of wood, which appear to be part of the butterfly's body or a decorative element. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

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