

ASHVAMEGH

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(dedicated poetry edition)

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Ashvamegh is an online international journal of literary and creative writing. Publishing monthly, Ashvamegh has successfully launched its 28th issue in May 2017 (this issue). Submission is open every day of the year. Please visit <http://ashvamegh.net> for more details.

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There are no many days of happiness in life if we go by the readings of John Keats. Nevertheless, he is the same person who doesn't fail to tell us that life is beautiful for what it is and living it to the full should be our motive. John Keats, for most of us, was a wonderful poet and most of us agree that he should have lived some more! Suddenly I remembered John Keats because I am going to tell me readers about something very impressive, related to book and library. If you haven't already heard, we have been in latest partnership with India Book Club and their regional associates. India Book Club is a pan-India movement dedicated to serious reading and they are looking for their reach across the country. Anyone who is serious about reading books can become a member of the club depending on the availability of the regional branches. If it's not already there, anyone can desire to start one in his or her location. For more details on the book club and regional information, please visit [India Book Club](#). Currently, they are operating in Patna, Kolkata, Delhi and Bodhgaya. I am also a member of the Patna Book Club! Discussing books and various of their aspects with the like-minded fellows is something wonderful which I always aspire for!

Moreover, the May 2017 issue of Ashvamegh is a dedicated poetry edition. We are feeling enthusiastic to announce that we have published poets from various regions in this issue. India and other locations' poets have registered their presence. We have published Duane Locke, the celebrated USA poet as one of our featured poets along with Felino Soriano. We have also introduced some of the younger talents. I hope you will like what we have done. From the next issue, things will be normal with short stories back on the board.

I also got a chance to interview pj johnson, the first official poet laureate appointed by the Canada Government (Yukon). You can read her interview, along with Duane Locke, on my special platform dedicated to literary conversations only - [Author Interviews](#).

Enjoy the summer, dear readers, wherever it has come! Keep writing and keep reading.

With wishes & love,

Alok Mishra

May 15, 2017

(connect directly with Alok on [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Website](#))

Poets selected and the featured Poet

- Duane Locke
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Duane Locke

About the Poet:



A Doctor of Philosophy, Duane has taught renaissance literature as a professor emeritus of the humanities, and has been a former poet in residence at the University of Tampa for over 20 years. He has 1000s of poems published in places such as American poetry review, nation, bitter oleander; and online in many ezines. published 14 books and 3 e-books, the squids dark ink, from a tiny room, and the death of daphne.

CORPOREAL VISIONS NO. 1

An old, regal-red bantam rooster sat on my termite-chewed

Window sill when I was tossed into the world.

He crowed loudly, and was an oracle.

I felt his crow ooze though my new-born skull.

Moved in, to live in my new-born brain.

Many times I inwardly again heard the crow,

Much louder, very loud, when people

Tried to speak their beliefs and values into me.

Duane Locke

His loud crow returning, erased their voices,
Erased their presence. I was saved from
Living by the lies by which our world lives by.
I did not learn to laugh at their trivial, unfunny jokes
That they laughed at. I did not want
The life-styles they worked so hard to maintain.

I learned from a news broadcast the city politicians
Had passed a law that barred roosters
From living with the city limits.

CORPOREAL VISIONS NO. 2

When Blake saw a tree, he saw leaves
as the green songs of green angels.
He saw, felt an authentic reality, an earth reality,
When the human slave mentality
Sees a tree, he imposes a man-made falsity,
He sees saleable lumber, his mortgaged house,
A fence or a gambling casino copied
From a Gothic Cathedral.

I saw in fork of a tree, a golden snake.
I wanted to trade my BMW
For his golden foot tracks.

Duane Locke

I gazed at gold and green,
The snake surrounded by lichen.
I saw spirals that refused to become circles
Lassoos, or crowns. When
The green sea of the grass opens
For the golden snake to crawl,
His body touches the earth.
Harmonizes with the earth,
His scales hear the authentic wisdom
Spoken underground by pearly savant worms.

CORPOREAL VISIONS NO. 3

Under a clock, a replica of a knight
Lance-knocking off another knight
In the Grand Square of Munich,
A platform built to protest a war.
There is much joy in the protest
About this war that no seems
To understand what is about
Or that their life-style and beliefs
Were the real cause of the war.
Much guitar playing, people shaking,
Much marijuana smoke.
I far away hear the joyous noise.

Duane Locke

I gaze at rainbow streaked water
Rippled by wind in a marble fountain
Designed for short German dogs
To drink from. I listen to the sounds
Of dogs lapping water. The sounds
are strange sounds, sounds
Never heard before—mystic sounds.
The sounds fill my inwardness
With a color, a color that resembles
A bizarre Matisse sea color—
A color not of an actual sea,
But a color that expresses
The sea better than the actual sea.
I am standing by a sea, a sea
That is not a sea, but a hyper-sea.
The dogs lapping water go away.
I am cast back into the unreality
Of the man-created world.

CORPOREAL VISIONS NO. 4

Sipping by Trajan column in Rome, Campari
The west wind compose rain drops atop
Plate glass—composition shaped
Like crystal orchid. I gaze at the art work

Duane Locke

Through my Campari. The whiteness changes to
The color of lips that float in a Magritte painting.
I gaze at reflection at glass-covered pink marble.
Now two pinks, pink above pink.
The scene erased the sounds of horns and motors
Of the small cars and shouting drivers.
I was living in a double pinkness.
Something never experienced before.
Everything was pianissimo.
I was feeling an intense rapture,
And the reality of this rapture
Made me wonder what number Pythagoras
Would use to diminish my intense reality.

CORPOREAL VISIONS NO. 5

Circa 4 Am I was dreaming of a girl
Who called her umbrella a "parasol."
Then my dream shifted from a moon
That was shaped like a dog and barked
Another shift: the scene resembled
A B movie made during the "30's"
About Colonial Africa. Spears,
Whose shafts were bird-feather
Decorated pointed at my eyes.

Duane Locke

I saw no one was holding the spears,
Then the faces Levinas talks about
Came into view. Levinas alterity faces
Were spotted with white commas.
White dashes. The faces spit,
Growled, threatened ostracism.
Then a Chief appeared, I think
He was African, but might have been
Native American. He raised his tomahawk
Blade toward my nose.
I wanted to cancel this unsound night sleep.
So I told the Chief, a joke
I had heard on a late night show.
The Chief laughed and laughed,
Repeated the joke several times,
High-fived me, and said "Cool,"
Handed me my pardon from my life sentence.

Felino Soriano

Felino Soriano's Poems

Introduction to the Poet:



Felino A. Soriano's poetry appears in *CHURN*, *BlazeVOX*, *3:AM Magazine*, *The National Poetry Review*, *Small Po[r]tions*, and elsewhere. His books of poetry include *Between these Rhythms: Bone & Ash* (2016), *Vocal Apparitions: New & Selected Poems: 2012 – 2016* (2016), *sparse anatomies of single antecedents* (2015), *Of isolated limning* (2014), *Pathos |particular invocation* (2013), *Of language |s| the rain speaks* (2012), *Intentions of Aligned Demarcations* (2011), *In Praise of Absolute Interpretation* (2010), *Construed Implications* (2009), and *Among the Interrogated* (2008). His collaborative collection *Quintet Dialogues: translating introspection*, which features visual art from David Allen Reed is forthcoming from Howling Dog Press.

Visit [Of the poetry this jazz portends](#) for more information.

Felino Soriano

Sedentary Fathoms

| section twenty-seven |

Music on this table of movement—
continuity containing
clarity

Of sound and a rhythm of devoted asymmetry;
turned in
on a self of motivated differences,
dialect we've done so
in diameter of a language's
FULL sized theoretical

silence-

s

Sedentary Fathoms

| section twenty-eight |

Secrets these solitary
teachings. A philosophy. A nothing.
A purpose in knowing neither. A pleasure.

Sudden is the hand
in knowing a brand of holding. Having.
Curtains reveal a moment's
unknowingness. Collaged
courage in *the* reveal. Introspective
diligence a

sudden occurrence of mobile creativity

Felino Soriano

Sedentary Fathoms

| section twenty-nine |

What watches us, a
solitary self |
body, a
whereabouts

finder, promising and devoted to
an altruistic hibernation of
dual or pluralized grouped

infatuations
watching of

introspective dialogues

Sedentary Fathoms

| section thirty |

Heard
what it was when
color as speech
wrote timeframe
inward from an existence of

tonal acclimation. (Of)
devotion, too
of memory and rhythm. Toward
song this is, is and prophecy
fit melody somewhere
above or higher than intimation's

abstract
collocation. (Of)
harmony, too
of remembering
upon the seamless
desire to devote
reflections and
unscathed/unbroken
skin or like-skin

monumental
infatuation

Felino Soriano

Sedentary Fathoms

| section thirty-one |

Angles welcome then
obtain silence

when/or

a watcher
designs daydreaming
around
architecture of a momentary fade-in/out

toward what distance
builds with

-in

openings our interior

Shefali SK

Shefali SK, is currently working as Asst. Professor of Psychology at SDM Postgraduate College, Ujire, Karnataka. Having writing as her passion and travelling as her hobby, Shefali has published many articles and travel stories in various newspapers. She has published a book titled “Krithika”, in the year 2016. She is an introspective writer yet conveys her thoughts in a very simple language.

Sensation!

In the depth of darkness,

I see my scattered dreams.

In the roar of oceans,

I hear my faded laughter.

In the bouquet of flowers,

I smell my rotten love.

In the basket of cherries and chocolates,

I taste my bitter memories.

In the world of endearment,

I touch my broken heart.

In the pursuit of happiness,

I sense my ripped trust.

Shefali SK

Lost

In the darkness of night,
In the fuzz of holding you tight,
I lost you

In the madness of love,
In the emptiness of life,
I lost you

In the fear of losing,
In the anxiety of missing,
I lost you

I lost you,
To the devil of misunderstanding
To the witch of contemplating

I lost you,
To the distance and time
To make a possession to be mine

Shefali SK

Bride by my side

Today is the day, she has dreamed of all her life.

But you too have dreamed the same for her.

The dream has come true.

She is standing as a beautiful bride by your side.

When you look at her,

Time rewinds.

The day you first saw her,

Held her hand,

Walked with her,

The caring, the cuddling, the fights

Memories block your eyes.

But when you come to reality,

She is standing as a beautiful bride by your side.

You see her, packing her bags.

Wondering!

Wondering! What is she packing?

May be-

She is packing the memories of her life.

Memories of the day you first saw her,

Held her hand,

Walked with her,

The caring, the cuddling and the fights.

Gary Beck

Introduction to the poet:

Gary Beck has spent most of his adult life as a theater director, and as an art dealer when he couldn't make a living in theater. He has 11 published chapbooks and 3 more accepted for publication. His poetry collections include: *Days of Destruction* (Skive Press), *Expectations* (Rogue Scholars Press). *Dawn in Cities*, *Assault on Nature*, *Songs of a Clerk*, *Civilized Ways*, *Displays*, *Perceptions*, *Fault Lines & Tremors* (Winter Goose Publishing). *Perturbations*, *Rude Awakenings* and *The Remission of Order* will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. *Conditioned Response* (Nazar Look). *Resonance* (Dreaming Big Publications). *Virtual Living* will be published by Thurston Howl Publications. His novels include: *Extreme Change* (Cogwheel Press), *Flawed Connections* (Black Rose Writing) and *Call to Valor* (Gnome on Pigs Productions). *Sudden Conflicts* will be published by Lillicat Publishers and *State of Rage* by Rainy Day Reads Publishing. His short story collection, *A Glimpse of Youth* (Sweatshoppe Publications). *Now I Accuse* and other stories will be published by Winter Goose Publishing. His original plays and translations of Moliere, Aristophanes and Sophocles have been produced Off Broadway. His poetry, fiction and essays have appeared in hundreds of literary magazines. He currently lives in New York City.

Aging

Old age creeping up on me,
so many limitations,
elaborate preparations
for going outside
where I huddle in the park
in jacket and sweater,
while passersby stroll past
in t-shirts and shorts.

Gary Beck

Trial Separation

The leaves are still green
aesthetically refusing
to give in to the coming cold,
even as my feeble skin
loses its color
in the absence of the sun,
reminding me brusquely
of my linkage to nature,
so easily forgotten
by so many of us
overwhelmed by concrete,
dangerously enthralled
by electronic devices,
cultural substitute
for outdoor activities.

Vector

Culture spreads like plague
across America
weakening the fiber
of a liberal arts country
festering with more poets
than scientists.

C. Radhika

C. Radhika is a teacher, soft skill trainer and a writer residing in Secunderabad. She writes about social issues that concern women in particular. She is a member of Vatayan, a forum for women writers who regularly meet up and share their writings. Her articles and poems have appeared in Woman's Era, Me, Teacher plus, Deccan chronicle, Central chronicle, The Hindu etc. Presently she divides her time between her students, home and her poetry.

Pilgrimage

After a decade,
Of hectic schedules
I have retired.
I planned for a visit
To holy places,
To pay my respects
To the divine.
I packed my luggage,
Commenced my journey,
Sometimes by train or by bus,
Marveling at my ancestors
Who journeyed by foot.
I am shocked to see
The transformation.
Pilgrims can hop
Into a helicopter
Or take a ropeway
Or be carried in a basket
And have special darshans
With the power of money.
Beggars make a living
Beseeching the pilgrims
Pickpockets make their day
From the unsuspecting.

C. Radhika

The photographers flock
For one who wants to flaunt
With the temple
Delegated to the background.
The business, thrive,
Selling memento and trivia
As the pilgrims, throng.
Some new age temples
Have combo offers
With parks and rides;
Shops and restaurants;
Trying to combine,
Pleasure with devotion.
As I seek for a vision;
I see the true devotion
Of craftsmen and sculptors
Whose dedicated work
Beckons the pilgrims
From far and near,
To have a glimpse,
Where the divinity exist.

The Train

The platform is crowded
Some to see off
Some embarking
On a journey
To places distant.
Some in search

C. Radhika

Of their destiny

Some returning home

Lost in the memory lane.

A few on a trip

To attend

A social gathering

The occasion, happy or sad.

As the train gathers

Momentum

The platform is left behind.

The passengers settle

Taking stock

Of their belongings

Some brooding over

Happenings, past and recent

Anticipating the future

Some look out

As the villages,

Towns and cities,

Pass by,

With people busy

Minding their business.

Not to miss,

The fields and rivers,

Mountains and forests

Giving a glimpse

Of the life pulse

That throbs through India.

Amrutha Raj

Introduction to the Poet:

Amrutha Raj is a student of M. A. English Literature at Sree Sankara College, Kalady, Kerala. She tries to explore and talk about human conditions and emotions through poetic composition. Other than literature, the poet keeps a sense of admiration towards nature, music and almost all kinds of artistic performances.

Time

Restless thin rods running over numbers

Rhythmically – ain't time.

It flows with the breaths,

Walks with the steps,

And leaps with the mind at work.

Sometimes, a snail- paced driver

With a loner in the backseat;

Or Schumacher with his F1 haste –

Never going back to the finished laps.

The prompter of hesitant 'hi's

And gloomy 'goodbye's.

The planner of unplanned reunions.

The deceiver –

Prompting to procrastinate

In promise of infinite collection

Of infinities.

Amrutha Raj

Still,

The healer of deep cut wounds

And maker of cross-knitted souls.

Time –

Whether a hero or a villain –

To be measured with old photographs

And new insights;

To be lived in that moment

Between fading lines and question marks.

Taylor L. Stacey

Taylor L. Stacey, from Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, is new to poetry, but is steadily building a body of work that she looks forward to publishing. She has always been an avid writer and is excited to share her work with others. She will be graduating with her first associates degree this summer and will be continuing her education and her writing.

The Human View

On and on
The questions come
In a vast array of light and sound
The inquest for knowledge starts to hum...
The synapses that fire my mind abound...

To analyze the universe through my human eye...
To marvel at the wonders that lay beyond the sky...

Are there other inquisitive creatures in the
Stars beyond my limited sight...
Do they stare across the void and ponder the
Same questions until their mind and soul ignite...

Are they mortal in their time...
To question and seek the answers yet to be found...
Is their life defined by survival and
Narrowed to the ground...

Do they seek us out in hopes of
Quelling the feeling of despair...
At the thought of a lonely universe...
Or are they even aware...

That we in turn long to converse...
Across the great expanse...
To transverse...
Across that lonely universe...

Taylor L. Stacey

Do they even care?

Do they sail the endless ocean
Of stardust and rock...
Do they know the secrets of cosmic travel
That we have yet to unlock...

Are their minds so advanced that we
Could not comprehend...
All the wonders they could show us...
Could our animal minds transcend...
From all the fantastical ideas...
All that we would discuss...

Is it so implausible a thought...
That other creatures roam freely in
The sea of space...
Are we so narrow in our thinking that no
Other life could tour this lot...
Are we so delusional in our pride that we
Believe we are the only cosmic race...

Oh if it were only in my lifetime that
I could meet another being beyond my star...
Would you take me with you...
To the land of faraway...
To the world of the never seen again...

Gone from all this mess we are...
Off this misguided rock of hope astray...
To no longer be a destructive force
Of humanities campaign...

I dream of a world more civil,
And less civilized...
Where knowledge and love coexist...
Where nature isn't agonized...
Where the concept of harmony isn't
So conveniently dismissed...

Taylor L. Stacey

Do you cherish your people
Over coin?
Is the concept of currency absurd...
Or are the ways of enlightenment
What you enjoin...
Are greed and war unheard...

Does cosmic travel birth a
Cosmic understanding for all creation...
How does it feel to witness
The unbelievable...
And be made to believe...
To look upon the mighty pillars of causation...

Are you liberated from your organic body?
Is your conscience displayed on
Martian technology?
Does my living form seem crude
And gaudy?
Can you flutter with feeling anymore,
Now that you are disembodied?

What would it be like to look upon
A face so foreign?
To gaze at another creature created by
Ageless stardust...
Would we embrace as galactic cousins...
Or would we as foolish humans
Immediately distrust...

Would we throw our sticks
And stones?
Would we cry out in fear?
Would we brand them with
Barbaric names?
Would we try to conquer them
With sword and spear?

Or would they come to make
War upon us?

Taylor L. Stacey

Are all the galaxies creatures
So opposed...
Would they ravage the Earth till
Nothing was left?
Conquer all until the kings
And queens of humans are deposed...

Could we meet on common ground?
Could our beings touch one another
And create a parlay profound...
That we all come from the universal mother...

Do you hear us call out to you
Through the obsidian cloak of space...
Can you find us, will you break through
And welcome the human race...

Your phantasmal captivation
Lures us beyond our primeval worth...
The quest for existence develops illumination
Augments our scientific birth...

Kaymon Smith

Kaymon is the 21-year-old North American author of over 200 poems and songs, a forthcoming debutant chapbook and the Grounded Guide travel and lifestyle blog. Kaymon started writing as a creative outlet as a child. As he edged into his adolescent years, his writings naturally turned into an emotional outlet. Now in his adult years, after learning to harmonize creativity and emotion, Kaymon seeks to show others the natural wonder of being one with yourself, with the planet, and what that means for us individually. He is an artist, a guitarist, a Sagittarius, a vegetarian, a cook, a traveler, a wonderer, a dreamer, a doer, a human.

Last Memories

Drowning in the depths

You stand on the shore

And only idly look on.

I sputter your name,

Calling out for your hand.

The waves wash over me,

Over and over.

My lungs begin to fill.

Every time my head

Breaks through the water

I see your blurred silhouette

Standing:

Motionless.

An overwhelming swell

Takes me under

And I see nothing but black.

I resurface one more time,

By the grace of God,

Kaymon Smith

So I think,
Only to see your back
Fading into the grey mist.

I'm pulled under again
And accept my fate
As I return my soul
To God

MMXIV

The grueling days
And early morning
Put me into a thirteen year daze,
Full of my mind and sanity's mourning.

Many years have passed,
But this is the last one,
As I reflect on this long past,
I realize, I've finally won.

The end is here,
And I can't wait to wave goodbye
Maybe soon, my words they will hear,
Written across these years that have gone by.

India Book Club

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