



**Michael Lee Johnson
Jane Bhandari
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Dion de Souza**

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Michael Lee Johnson / Two Poems

Hookers on Archer Avenue

Late evening, early morning,
I search the night for whores,
young, bloody with desire.
Night streets are silent streets
except for hookers and their Johns.
One wants the dart of groins
the other green eyes in dollar
sacred treasures—
snatch the wallet, a consecrated craft.
Both hit the streets quickly
satisfy needs quickly.

I'm an old buck now rich with memories
more than movement, still talk, take porn shots,
with a peeking eye, snoop around
department store corners,
and dumpy old alleyways.
My hair is gray, my teeth eroding,
thoughts toward prayer
A.M. Catholic Mass,
then off in early morning
to the mailbox, a lethargic walk,
I pick up my social security check—
comforts my needs.

Evening settles into bed time
with a western romance novel,
ambushes, excitement,
old transgressions stretch
and relax.

No desires, homage
to the day, to the night.

Indolent Sun

In early March
an indolent sun
persists in tossing
volunteer rays of
soft flickering sun silk
through dark desolate
willow tree branches–
melting remnants
of snow diamond crystals
from weathered wooden planks
on my balcony.
I'm starting to think life
is an adjective exaggerated
by the sway of seasons.
It's normal feeding time.
Below two floors
wild Canadian geese
wait impatiently
for the tossing of morning feed;
the silent sound they hear-
no dropping of the seed.

Michael Lee Johnson is a poet and freelance writer and small business owner of custom imprinted promotional products and apparel: www.promoman.us, from Itasca, Illinois. He is heavily influenced by: Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen, and Allen Ginsberg. His new poetry chapbook with pictures, titled *From Which Place the Morning Rises*, and his new photo version of *The Lost American: from Exile to Freedom* are available at: <http://stores.lulu.com/promomanusa>

Julie Kovacs / One Poem

Inobtrusive

Siamese cat on top of the fridge
staring at the cormorant drying his wings
after a spin in the lake

no matter the

w
a
t
e
r

was chromium slippery
no luster

Christmas wrappings
adorning Chinese porcelain statues
in the glass cabinet

nothing shatters
as the feline jumps
from lily pad to lily pad

Julie Kovacs lives in Venice, Florida. Her poetry has been published in Children Churches and Daddies, Because We Write, Illogical Muse, Poems Niedergasse, Aquapolis, The Blotter, Danse Macabre, Silver Blade, The Camel Saloon, Falling Star, Veil, and Cherry Bleeds. She is the author of two poetry books: Silver Moonbeams, and The Emerald Grail. Her website is at <http://thebiographicalpoet.blogspot.com/>

Dion de Souza / One Poem

From the 'World as One' Exhibition

Crumbling façades
landscapes suffused with a heavy stillness
abandoned parks, parking lots
criss-crossed cables cutting through sky
a ruined church sagging under snow
dead barks, decaying flowers
vacant-eyed old men and women
in rooms with quickly fading grandeur
quickly rising shadows...

and children, stiff-lipped,
arms defiantly folded,
dwarfed by open roads, hills,
rectangular frames

Dion de Souza currently edits the research of others while pursuing his own research at Mumbai University. He attempts to craft both interesting short fiction and poetry. His work has been featured in Kavya Bharati.

Clyde D' Souza / One Story

Pulp

There are definitely more than 50 pastry shops in my neighborhood but we have to drive all the friggin' way down to Merwans Cake Shop in Andheri West, opposite the BEST Depot. It's as if it's the oasis in the Thar Desert; the only place with exotic belly dancers, juicy dates and sparkling water. Not still water, but sparkling water. Do you know what that means? My good friend Sanjay Narang has opened a Croissant's 5 minutes from home, but we still have to go all the way down to Merwans. Actually Sanjay Narang is no friend of mine, but his good friend and restaurant partner Sachin Tendulkar is. Truth be told, I don't know him either, but it gives me cold comfort to say that right now. Right now being a hot Sunday afternoon in May. It's worse actually coz my car a/c is broken and the man sitting next to me, the guy who had something to do with my birth is of the unflinching, illogical opinion that Black Forest pastries are made by God himself at Merwans. Right now I wish my car window were rolled up coz I don't really care too much for the bony hand sticking through it. The owner of the bony hand is a snotty little beggar kid who has enough work experience at this job to make him the Donald Trump of the begging business.

But this is nothing compared to what happens next. I drive into a pandu. He was standing right there in the middle of the traffic on the Andheri East-West flyover junction. You'd have to be bloody blind or incredibly dumb not to see him. Fact is, I was thinking about all this stuff and there really is no need for a cop to be standing in the middle of the road. Now is there? It just hit me: I hadn't renewed my PUC. This

meant I'd have to shell out another 100 bucks, especially since my Hindi sounds like I came straight out of the Queen's womb.

I don't like to think about the Queens' womb in that way, coz it gives a whole new meaning to that silly Pussycat Pussycat nursery rhyme. "I've been to London to look at the Queen" is the line, in case you were wondering. I end up paying the Pandu 200 bucks.

If things had to go really bad today, Merwans would be closed, but hey guess what, it's not. We park a mile away in a No Parking Zone and God himself gives us the Black Forest Eggless pastry.

On the way back to the car, dad has another wonderful idea: He wants to buy mangoes and of course the best mangoes in the whole friggin' universe are not the juicy ones staring at us on the street we're on, but the best mangoes in the world, plucked by God himself, can be bought for 300 rupees a dozen from the Sahakari Bhandar in Vile Parle East.

This is near the railway station - 3 kilometers from where we are, 9 kilometers if you're traveling by my Non A/C car. I'm wondering if this is a good time to tell my dad that I'm gay. At least it'd take his mind off the mangoes and we'd drive home in shocked silence.

I don't think Freud had enough years to live, or else he would have come out with many more sexy theories. As an aside - I know a girl who calls herself Freud's Bitch. I don't know why. Freud was a great man, but I liked his beard the most. A man with a good beard is a man with time on his hands. I think if Freud were clean-shaven we'd

at least have that Father-Son complex theory with us. Then I wouldn't have to think about this stuff.

I'm not gay. We're outside the Sahakari Bhandar in Vile Parle East. These guys fill up godowns with mangoes. I wanna say it looks like an orgy of mangoes, but then you'd think I have a one track mind. Wouldn't you?

I'll tell you who really has a one-track mind: Clinton. That's why I liked Bush as President. At press conferences they ask him tough questions like, 'Sir, Mr. President, did you find any weapons at all in Iraq?' and he replies, 'don't you think my daughters are really hot?'

'Sir, Mr. President, the United States has pumped 300 billion dollars in the fight against terror. Is this justified?' and he answers, 'My daughters and me enjoy the same weed.'

But of course Dubya never said any of that. The Sir, Mr. President only ever made statements at a press conference when a 9/11 happened or when he was actually elected President for the 2nd term in a row. Otherwise we only heard guys like Donald Rumsfeld or Condoleeza Rice make statements. I think Condoleeza Rice is a lovely name. For a Chinese dish sold in Mexico. Like Obama is some sort of Tamil mother-in-law of Osama.

The mangoes are 300 rupees a dozen and God pockets the money gleefully. On the way back I bump into a funeral procession. Not because I didn't see them coz you really have to be blind or incredibly dumb to miss a procession of crying, wailing people. I'll tell you one thing though: this man was loved by a lot of people. Imagine having to walk in the hot sun carrying a decomposing body on your shoulders. 450

people were following the pallbearers. The ones right at the back were grumbling a bit but most of them were talking about Aishwarya Rai.

The guys who drive the Indian Airlines buses are crazy. Even when they crash into a non a/c car they don't stop to see if the car is cut in half, if father and son are alive, if the pastry smashed is eggless or egg Black Forest or if the mangoes are the ones plucked by God himself.

Clyde used to write 'spoof' articles for JAM Magazine. Then he wrote scripts for MTV. Then he created caller ring back tones for mobile companies. Then he handled shows like Wassup, Style Check and created branded content for clients thinly disguised as shows for the ever-suspecting Indian youth. Now he handles his Twitter account.

Jane Bhandari / One Poem

Man in Rain

Rain, silently at first, suddenly
Laid shining spots across the paving
Veiled street lights with a chiffon haze
That hung down to the wet ground,
And cars grew dusty splashes; rain-stars
Clung to glass. Thunder milked applause,
A drum-roll for rough weather.

Walkers looked up at the sky.
One man stood with arms spread wide,
Face turned up like a plant praying,
Ecstatic, a desert drinking rain.
When it stopped he waited for more,
Wavering and dripping,
Drunk with rain.

Born in Edinburgh in 1944, Jane Bhandari has lived in India for 43 years. She has published two volumes of poetry, Single Bed, and Aquarius. Her poems have appeared in Rattapallax, Fulcrum, The Little Magazine, 60 Indian Poets (Anthology) and in 'We Speak in Changing Languages' (Sahitya Akademi Anthology)

Vineet Kaul / One Poem

Brainwave v/s Brain Freeze: A Comparative Study

**Standing dumbfounded
reeling under the inertia
of a thought that moved
in a direction opposite to
reality**

**An exultant gloat
'Exhibited'
in a holier-than-thou smirk
the eureka set in motion
"The thought hit me first"
Smug is a toad about to be kissed[c].**

**Searching frantically
for available stationary
to document the thought
eager to ___ fleet away
into another man's lap like a woman who left me...**

Drooling ingloriously
Floating
in zero gravity, [abandoned]
in the lingering scent
of her perfume dispersed
like the breadcrumbs of her swagger

The chagrin of self-dissent
a reaction too late to amend
that macabre sheepish grin
"Her beauty just took me in"
baffled is a cow stranded on the highway

Tidying up your hair
splashing breath on your palm
but it is too late to amend
the caricature she confounded
Strolling past you like a newfangled thought that left you...

**Standing dumbfounded
reeling under the inertia
of your reality that moved
in a direction opposite to a
thought**

Vineet 'the troubadour' Kaul is a conformist. A lethargic (wannabe) revolutionary who is mostly bored stiff or shitting bricks. The Troubadour, his alter ego, however, is the exact opposite. When in agreement they make music, write, do journalism, travel recklessly in search of something . He is currently working on three separate manuscripts, one of which needs help with artwork. More poems can be read at the blog:thetspeak.wordpress.com