SAUTI

POEMS OF HEALING

UNITED NATIONS
SYSTEM WORKPLACE MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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Printed in the United States of America

SAUTI

Poems Of Healing

Foreward

Nurturing our mental health and well-being is more important than ever. United Nations personnel are committed to endlessly making a positive impact in our world. While this can be rewarding, it can take a toll on our mental health and well-being.

As the Chair of the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Implementation Board, I am proud of the work undertaken across the UN System to raise awareness about workplace mental health and well-being and the efforts to implement the Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy. These actions are making a real difference for our workforce.

The poems featured in this book are a testament to how many of our personnel are feeling. I am grateful to each of them for expressing themselves through poetry and sharing their work. I hope these poems can help nurture the mental health and well-being of others.

Upholding our goals and values strongly depends on the mental and physical well-being of our Organization, colleagues, loved ones, and ourselves.

Let's continue to take care of each other. Let's continue to work together to ensure a healthy workplace for a better world.

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

Dear reader,

Poetry has been used throughout the centuries, in many different cultures and languages, as a medium for expressing some of our most beautiful feelings and some of our troubles, longings and sufferings. Writing and reading poetry, through expression of feelings and words, can have highly therapeutic effects on the mind.

In October 2020, as part of the World Mental Health Month at the United Nations, we launched a poetry series and asked colleagues throughout the system to share their work in any language, any form, any style, any topic to help us raise awareness about mental health, convey the message that it is okay not to feel okay all the time, and that we should embrace our internal experiences. Acceptance is a pathway to healing.

Poetry lends language to the topic of mental health and also gives a gateway to heal from suffering. Reading and writing poetry, is often a mindful and meditative experience; it can be a way of connecting with others. It can allow us to say what may otherwise be left unsaid.

We received some fifty submissions from all corners of the world – from Abyei, Banjul, Beirut, Damascus, Entebbe, Geneva, London, Mopti, New Delhi, New York, Nairobi, Vienna, Zalingei - to name but a few; and from colleagues in UN, IAEA, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, IMO among others. In addition to championing mental health and well-being, this initiative provides an opportunity to celebrate our cultural diversity and multilingualism. Submissions poured in in English, French, Chinese, Farsi, Italian, Hindi and Arabic.

These poems offer unique insights into the minds, emotions and souls of our colleagues dispersed throughout the world, united by experiences of love and loss, joy and pain, hope and despair. Poems are included in their original language, accompanied by English translation.

An old adage holds that joy shared is doubled and grief shared is halved. We hope that this book will take you on a journey, inward and outward, and help you to find solace, restore hope, and admire the power of human resilience and perseverance. As you browse through these pages, we hope that you will feel connected to a greater sense of being and community, which is so needed in the tumult of our time.

We are grateful you have this book in your hands now in these challenging times. You are holding a whole new world of thoughts and feelings. Reading it will make this world yours, a world in which you are not alone, invisible or unheard. Like the United Nations itself, poetry invites us to live among each other in a borderless country, where each one of us can find a home - a home in which each brick has a story and contributes to our shared humanity.

Mental health matters, and together we can change what is possible and necessary.

Danijela Milić and Jack Davis, project leaders
March 2021

Content Warning

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

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As the snow

Slowly fall the snow
Peaceful as the silence
Protective as a coat
Soft as a pillow
Bright and shiny as a sword
Happy when it plays with the sun
Melancholic when the clouds cover the sky
Noises away
All temporarily frozen for a new, coming soon, rebirth.

Silvia Massardi

Chaque fois!

Chaque fois que le ciel et la terre
annoncent un nouveau jour,
je découvre et redécouvre mon parcours.
La nuit est là.
N'importe,
tant qu'il y a l'Amour.
J'y plante mes souvenirs.
J'y sème des chagrins,
qui ne sont pas les miens.
Pour fleurir.
J'appelle mon cœur,
Mon esprit.
Si le corps ne veut pas guérir.
J'évoque mon peu de vouloir,
Mon petit pouvoir,
mais aussi mon grand devenir.
J'allume des cœurs sans lumière.
Je balaie des scènes de guerre.
Je cours vers la mer.
Sois douce pour lui dire:
Fais passer sur les vagues,
mon navire.
J'arrose les jardins de haine,
que des fleurs,
puissent grandir.
Je réchauffe les cités de glaces,
que demain puissent
S'ouvrir.
Je me confie à mes souffrances.
Elles se font écrire,
sur les pages de l'humanité,
des récits de beauté sans début.
Et, à non plus finir.

Nidale Y Noun

Translation on next page

Every Time!

Discovery
Every new day,
I discover my renewed journey.
Dark is the night,
But never mind,
As long as love will make it
bright.
I plant memories of mine.
I sow sorrows that are not mine.
All is brought in line.
I call my heart,
my spirit to heal,
a body that sinks in real.
With little power,
a will that is lower,
my dream is higher.
I bring together hearts from afar,
I sweep away seeds of war.
I run to the see:
be softer and let me sea.
Your gentle waves.
Don't lead astray the boat that I have.
I water the gardens of terror.
Flowers can thus grow.
I warm the cities of ice.
Tomorrow will blow.
I take refuge in suffering,
to voice itself and sing,
melodies of light and beauty,
turning the page,
and opening for humanity,
a new path for light.

Nidale Y Noun

海边的孩子

日出，
沙滩上，
一个孩子，一把伞，
面朝宽阔平静的大海，
爸爸妈妈在身旁。

过了不久，
太阳升上头顶，
起风了，伞飞了，海动了，
孩子晒黑了。

午后，
阳光洒在浪花上，
看渔船归来，熙熙攘攘，
手上的沙子有点烫，
爸爸妈妈睡着了。

远处的天边渐渐红了，
海水亲吻着脚丫，
冰冰凉凉，却有孩子的体温，
爸爸妈妈不见了。

回家了，
明天带上孩子，
来海边一起看日出，
海风拂面，听涛声依旧。

何君

Translation on next page

Children By The Sea

Sunrise,
On the beach,
A child, an umbrella,
Facing the broad and calm sea,
Mom and Dad are by my side.

Not long after,
The sun rises overhead,
The wind is blowing, the umbrella is flying, and the sea is moving,
The child gets a tan.

Afternoon,
The sun shines on the spray,
Look at the return of the fishing boat, bustling and lively,
The sand on my hand is a little hot,
Mom and dad are asleep.

The horizon in the distance is getting red,
The sea kisses my feet,
It's cold and cool, but it has the body temperature of a child,
Mom and dad are gone.

I'm home,
Will take my kids tomorrow,
Come to the seaside and watch the sunrise together,
The sea breeze blows my face, the sound of the waves is still the same.

HE, Jun 何君

Deep Sad Feeling

Deep sad feelings
Sometimes part of life we take them,
Being undercover with curtains closed
Get heaviness, put on hug clothes and lay in bed
No eating or eating too much
Stuck in this place of rejection
Where no matter how good you are:
How much you offer
It feels like it's not enough
You cry for hours
And.

Sometimes you don't know why you are crying
It's just a heaviness that comes along
That you can never explain.

All you need is a spirit
Gal, you must do something.
The fear of someone find out out the battles is piling
The fear of being known for battling with depression and the tag
It is getting bigger than we can handle
The battle is the culture
Mental illness is talked about not
What will: people say keeps us in bondage
But all we need to do is pause, then!

Walk to the therapist and get diagnosed
There are God gifted ones
That will walk with you
The path to livelihood and happiness

Ruth M Kemigisha

Fear

Titanic lizards tall and small
Set-up for cata-clysmic fall,
Mothers protect when offspring call.
Useless ‘n plight.
One rock create extinction full
Survival slight.

Ai! Devil! Ye must have been bored,
But thy entertainments ‘re flawed,
To instil thy fear, use your hoard
It went too far.
So crown thyself as o’erlord
Tha’s how ye are.

The next twas when, be-came too cold,
Advance o’ ice, glacier bold!
A vice-like grip, its power hold
Av’lanche abound.
Choose small steads, ye watch it unfold
Chased by thy hound.

Ai! Devil! What more can ye do?
Thy playthings live ‘n fear of you,
Reaper’s busy, always, its true
Inevitable.
Thou play thy games, but still too few
Not as Liberal.

Upon an entrance to thy lair,
Vesuvius, had shoulders bare,
Surrounded not, by those who care
but for themselves.
Ash is punishment, filled the air
Not thou dev’ls.

Ai! Devil! Now use hearts o’ men,
Twisting and turn in shapes wi’ ken,
A war you wage ‘till all fal-len

Chance be fine.

Target a power-ful beacon

Some souls to mine.

Two Strong silent sentinel's surprise,
When scurvy rats plan a demise,
Scatter, scurry, shouts an' cries

Sirens Wailing.

Retaliation, away it flies

Trust is failing.

Ai! Devil! What's in thy next hand?
Play thy cards, nay we und'rstand,
But dare we, all be brother's band

You carry on.

For'ver we shall cry on land

Now where ye gone!

Fro' a full year o' woe,
Fire, fight and flight forbo',
One virus, refuse to go

Response and research

All united, we'll show

Faith remains in church

Timothy Dance

门前花

阶前横生一枝花，
不知阶后有人家。
幸逢屋主怜花草，
朝来浇灌暮赏夸。

Chunman Li

Translation on next page

Flower at Door

There is a flower in front of the steps,
Not knowing there is a family after the order.
Fortunately, the owner loves the flowers and grasses,
Morning watering and the twilight praise.

Chunman Li

Frosty Beginnings

I watched them, frozen in trance,
The tiny flecks beyond the glass,
Gently trickle from the sky,
Floating through the frigid air,
Covering each thing that they brushed,
With soft, white dew, cold to the touch,

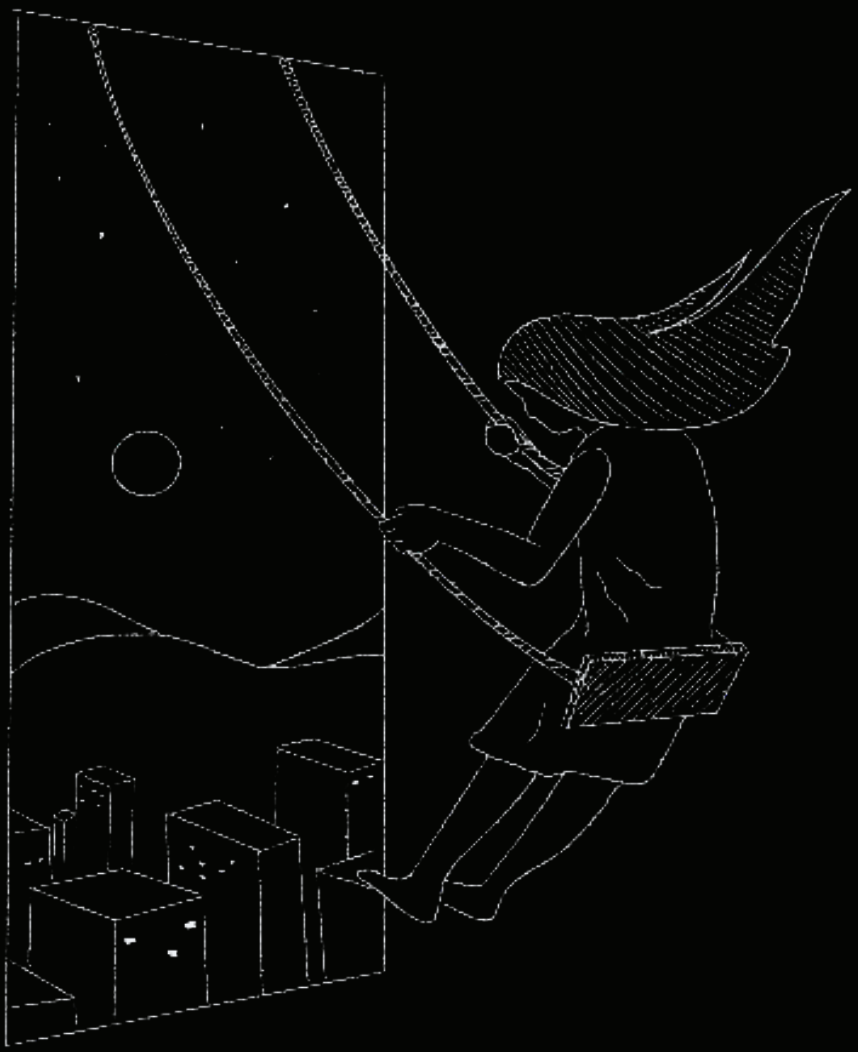
The winder was like,
Nothing I had ever seen,
Or felt,
Or heard

The snowflakes were like...
Drops of tropical rain,
The kind that fell loud and fast,
But frozen into icy dust,
And slowed down just enough,
That they sauntered,
Slowly
Through
The clouds.

The cold air felt like...
Heat,
Pouring from the island sun,
But lessened into frozen wind,
And tempered down just enough,
That it sent ripples,
Through my skin,
Forming goosebumps,
From within.

The bare trees looked like...
The West African Iroko,
With leafy branches stretching out,
But reduced to naked frames.
And stripped down just enough,
That when wind travelled,
Through their shells,
No sound of rustling leaves, were heard.

Davida Eyam-Ozung



Her world within

No one knew
Her deep pain
Her hidden tears
Her fast beating heart

The masks protected her
She didn't need the wrath
Her world within was hers

No one knew the struggle
The daily chaos from which she emerged to reach work
The chapter she closed before she began another

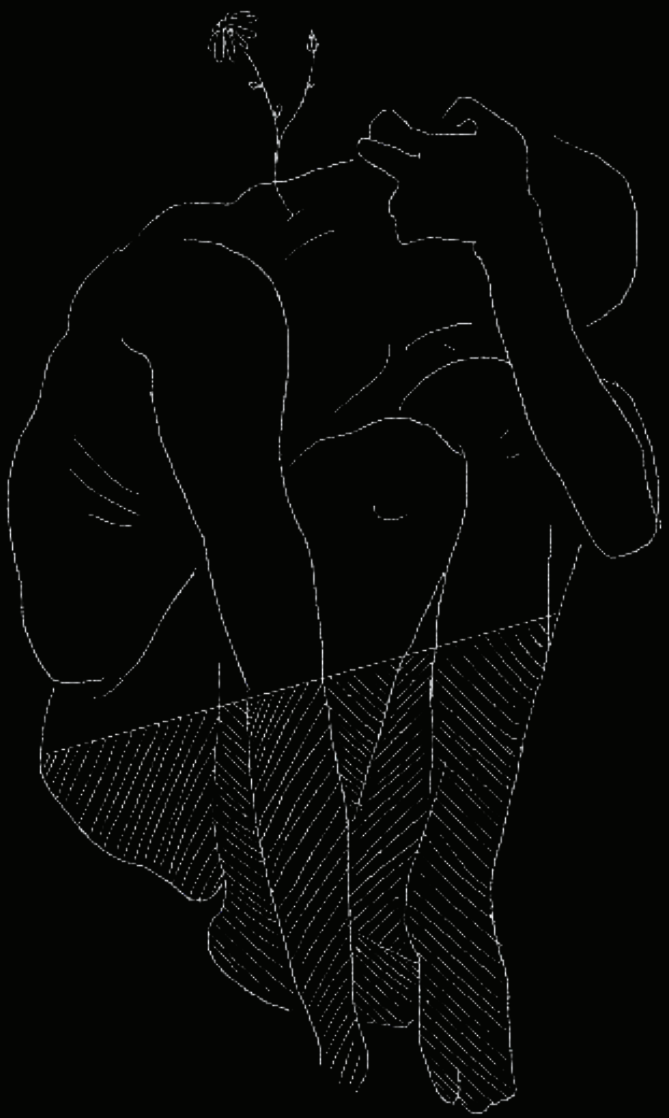
Drowning the self in the intensity of work
Experiencing the momentary pleasure of something well done
This was her only relief

No one knew
The labyrinth in which she was struggling to keep afloat
The puzzle she was trying to complete
Her world within was only hers

The evening commute was time for preparation
To paint the smile back on her face
To fluff up the heart that was deflated
To make it all right for the little one who eagerly waited

Her different masks for the different stages,
her different worlds
Each one carefully crafted to perfection
Because no one knew
Her world within was only hers

Reshma Agarwal



我是ASer，

目前的医学无法把我治愈，
AS让我关节受损，行走不便活动受限;
AS让我脊柱融合，腰身不立呼吸不畅;
AS让我体力低下，辗转难眠精神不振。
有时觉得得AS很残忍，像悬在头顶的达摩克利斯之剑，时刻有砍下的风险;
有时觉得得AS算幸运，剑只是时刻悬着，
病发时我也保留着学习、工作与思考的能力。
病情　定的日子， 生活像风和日丽中的肆意奔跑，
只偶尔想起，心底飘过一朵乌云。
病发的日子，才意识到，
我本应被囚禁在牢笼里现世安　，
所有的风和日丽都是挣脱牢笼，偷来的片刻美好。
我会懊恼，会痛恨，会责骂自己，
然而，然而，谁愿意如此年轻的人生就受困受限啊
然而谁要去向这样的安排低头。
我不莽撞，
我深知抵抗不是硬碰硬，
是曲折而不歇，是妥协而不弃。
我知道驻足是为了更　的行走，
我知道停留时也有身前的风景。
我知道我有时不得不忍受伤痛，
有些美好的事物不得不忍心放弃。
我知道我要付出更多的努力，一个人。
少有人人赞同我面对身体问题时的态度，
然而我仍然执着地
要去寻找我的勇气与智慧，
并为自己的所有决定承担责任。
即使，写下这句话时我的心仍然害怕得有些颤抖。
更重要是，我深刻明白，
即使拿了一手不那么出色的牌，
即使同样的努力不能换来同样的成果，
我相信过程本身就会焕发光彩。
因为，生活的意义不只在于最后达到怎样的高度，
更在多大程度地超越自己，
超越所处。

Xiaoyin Deng

Translation on next page

I am ASer.

Modern medicine is unable to heal me.
AS damages my joints, I can't move freely;
AS melds my vertebrae, I can't stand tall or breathe as normal;
AS makes me frail, I can't sleep nor thrive.
Sometimes I think having AS is cruel – at any moment, the Sword of Damocles could fall.
Sometimes I think having AS is lucky – the Sword is only hanging.
Even in sickness, I retain my ability to learn, work, and ponder.
And in the good days, life is a wild dance under the sun,
With a dark cloud crossing my mind, only occasionally.
But when illness strikes, I realize
I should have been held captive, not wishing for more.
All the sunny days and gentle breeze are all but stolen.
I will fret, detest, and reprimand myself.
After all, who wants to be so young, yet so constrained?
Who wants to say yes to such an arrangement?
I'm not going to be preposterous.
I know I must put up a peaceful resistance
By unyielding in setback, by compromise but not giving in.
I know to halt is for going further,
I know I can make something out of nothing.
I know there are pains that I must bear,
And certain happiness that I must forego.
I know I must try harder, alone.
Rarely anyone endorses my belief,
Yet I persevere
In my journey to find courage and wisdom,
And to take responsibility for my own decisions.
Even though my heart trembles from fear, when writing down this line.
More importantly, I understand
Although I don't have a good deck of cards,
Although the same effort cannot bring the same result,
I still believe the journey itself is glory.
Because life is not just about how high one reaches at the end
But more about how far one rises above the self,
And rises above what was given by life.

Xiaoyin Deng
Translated by Di Zou / UN

I am the forest…

The storm didn't sustain for days, nor the rain
The happiness is not forever, nor the pain
They are the visitors, will come and go
You are an ancient forest here, please know:
Sadness will dry you, your tear will bring the rain
Still, you will remain here, unmoved and same
Rain will grow foliage on your being
The storm will try to destroy everything

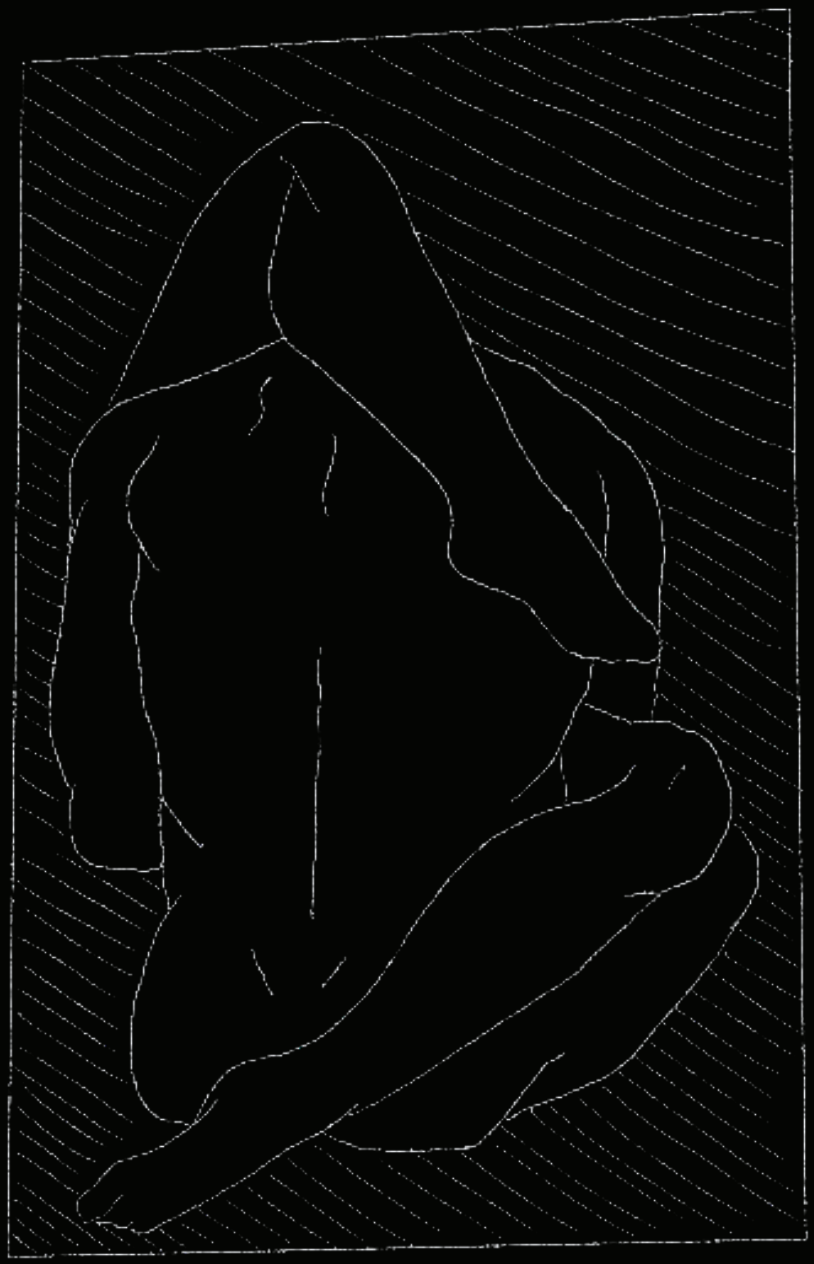
Still trust me, you are not a leaf
You are an ancient forest
Drought is seasoning you
Bush fire is cleaning you
Storm is sweeping you
Everyone is helping you the best.

Md. Firoj Alam

I love you

And I know: “this is too mundane”
(a love confession neednt be so plain)
but still--
I love you
and you’re always in my heart
through times of pleasure
and of pain
I love you
to the breadth of the sun
the width of the earth
through its hills and its plains
I love you
though I’m just a star
(maybe a little dim star)
In your star-studded domain
I love you
So it is enough for me
To be near you
every now and again.
I love you
So it is enough
To have a glimpse
of your shining beauty
That will never wane
I love you
so I love God and his Universe,
the land and its grain
You are the color of the autumn,
the cleanness of the first snow,
the sweetness of the spring
and the softness of a summer rain
In prose
You are the beginning to the end
In verse
a permanent refrain!
In music, you are the drowsy tinkling
Of a gently-rhyming quatrain
My pen drags on and on--
And one day it shall dry
but my heart will never drain.

Sherif Okasha



I see, I feel, I need to take a step back….

I see, I feel, I need to take a step back,
Step back from this elusive shrine,
Step back from this life of mine,
It's been evasive, misleading hurtful and a mime,
I see, I feel, I need to take a step back……., a step back from time.

Feelings and emotions are but sublime,
Subjective and evasive covered with grime,
I recoil in despair….as I struggle to hold these moments coated in sluggish slime.
I see, I feel, I need to take a step back……..., a step back from time.

Quintessential embodied in my core,
Is this affection for you that I had bore,
from the day you sparked the light of hope,
to this day….when I search once again in vain…, from pillar to post
I see, I feel, I need to take a step back……, a step back from time.

Charade me no more…don't try to beguile me with your fallacious lore,
Leave me be with your lies……. the lucid memory of pretentious smiles.
My heart feels contrived…slighted by your discreetly hidden slithering spite,
I ached….I hurt…….a lot, until courage picked pace and said no more!
I see, I feel, I need to take a step back……, a step back from time.

Time to listen to my soul……. time to take it slow……,
Time to hear the birds sing in my ears……. time to let the trail tell me another tale….
Time to feel the wind comb my hair, as I lay my head to rest on the bosom of mother earth,
Time to let the sun kiss away the wrinkles of time,

Time to free my feet and watch them dance to the music of the universe's ethereal beat.
I see……. I feel……. I need to take a step back……,
a step back from time…….to heal me from within and
preserve that, what's mine.

Rasika Sharma

Dans la nuit profonde

J'ai pensé à toi,
Dans ces moments où la folie du monde le dépasse,
Je me demande quelle vérité ignorons-nous,
Qui de loin t'effraie et pour nous t'attriste.

J'ai pensé à toi hier,
Dans la panique contagieuse qui broie nos trippes,
J'essaie de me remémorer tes mots apaisants
Qu'avec force obstination tairaient mes angoisses.

J'ai pensé à toi encore,
Quand le silence autour de moi devenait encombrant,
Comme un coup d'état sans armes, ni grabuges,
Pourtant tellement pleins d'éclats !

Cette nuit, je pense encore à toi,
Toi, source de moi,
Moi qui te sens vivre en moi,
Toi qui m'as donnée la vie,
Je penserai toujours à toi !

Myrline Sanogo-Mathieu

Translation on next page

In the deepest night

In the depth of the night
I thought of you.
In those moments when the madness of the world overwhelms it,
I wonder what truth we don't grasp,
Which from afar frightens you and for us saddens you.

I thought of you yesterday,
In the contagious panic that crushes our guts,
I try to remember your soothing words,
Which with great tenacity would silence my anxieties.

I thought of you again,
When the silence around me became cumbersome,
Like a coup with no weapons, no stir,
Yet so full of sparkle!

Tonight, I still think of you,
You, source of me,
I who feel you living in me,
You who gave me life,
I will always think of you!

And I now am thinking of you!

Myrline Sanogo-Mathieu

Year-End Jibberish

A poet noir famously whispered:
“My dark eyes are a gift of the dark night.
With these eyes I search for light.”

The number 2020 triggers a strange thought:
A Z-turn that ends in nought.
(Then it’s repeated,
In case you missed the plot) -
Black swans of fate and
Warts and warps of a common kind
Threatened to back the world
Into an alley, hopelessly blind.

In the tunnel of panic, angst and desolation
Flickers a candle of consolation.
2021 betokens a flip,
A zigzag that halts the slip:
As nothing ends
So begins something, a new trip.
For if the zero means reset
Then the one is a budding tip.

Lo, Gu Cheng’s dark eyes glow
Against this winter’s first snow:

Death is an unplumbed abyss, void of birth.
I peer in,
And see what life is worth.

C. Ji

Journey of Life

There are days where we feel deeply our inner voice
And live clearly with its noise
It doesn't matter if the voice is a cry of a wild bear
Or a sweet whisper of a mum in her toddler's ear
The clearer we hear it, the stronger we are
Paths can cross or be far
Can be highways or slippery slopes,
Can be concave or convex
There will always be something, someone to shut you down
Life is like a puzzle with black and white pieces
And we spend our lives looking for purples
Surfing colors and curves
Speedy or slow
And at some moments we drop the anchors
We can do nothing but wait
Wait till breeze brings us to the ascending arc of the curve
And we continue the move
Until hugging the shore
Lying down, appreciate the extreme straightness of the horizon
And the brightness of the sky
By dusty days and from the heart of the storms
There's always a hope
There's always a sound of music coming from far away
There's always a dance to share
A life to care
And may devils be judged and remain in hell
They could never change the warmth of mornings
And the rhythm of seasons
do they dare?!

Ilhem Brini

Mental Health

M-ind enable us to think and feel,

E-nergize it by praying and meditating.

N-ever ignore so that it won't be draining,

T-he stress and anger will be a sign of suffering.

A-ll irritation and drowsiness after thinking,

L-ose emotion and feelings.

H-elp the mind to back in life.

E-xercising can make it active and alive.

A-lways read and challenge it right.

L-et it relax and avoid frustration,

T-oo much thinking can lead to depression.

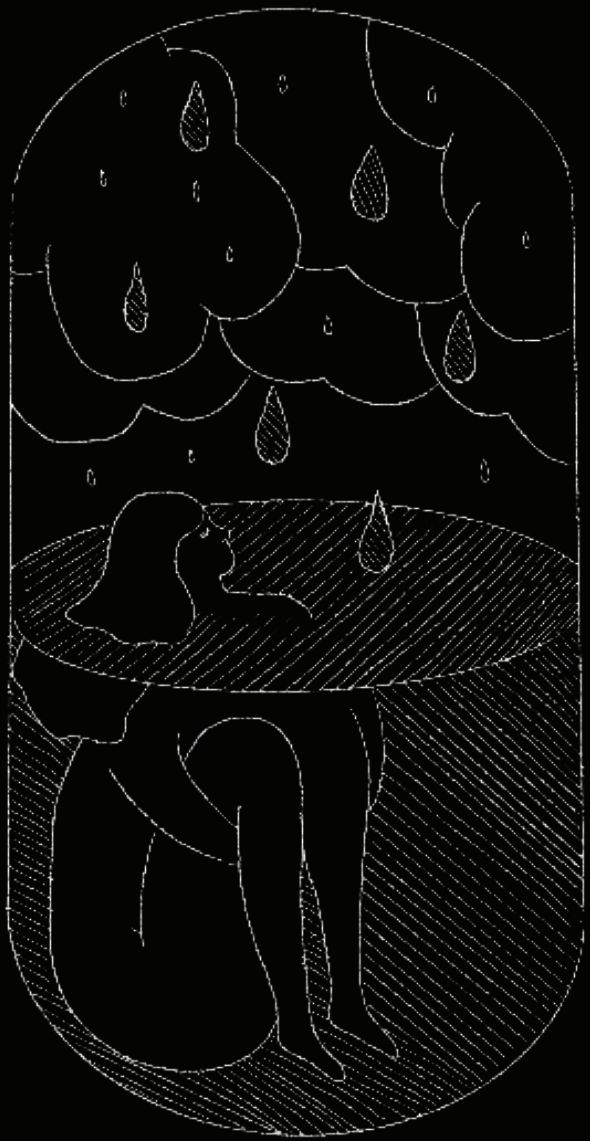
H-elp our minds solve the difficulties, so that we can think of more opportunities.

Maria Julwin De Guzman

Let Your Love Flow to the World We Dream

Let your wish grow, let your love flow, let your dreams raise to the world we want;
The world might be changed; Your thoughts might be rethinking;
Your life might be changed; Your dreams might be redreamed;
You might be writing a new song, a new poem or a new script for opera;
For the world we want
A World-it's your world, a world it's my world;
A world ofour children;
A world of our own;
Let's take a break, let's check and back, have you seen? the world we reimaged?
A world for everyone, to the richest, to the poorest, to the blacks, to the whites
Equal for all, equal for everyone;
Let's dream it again, your dream begins and rise
And so, let your love, warmth and wish flow and rise
Let it flow to the odds;
Let It flow in peace;
Let It flow in darkest, let it flow in sunshine's;
Let your love flow in crisis;
Let it flow to cross the region, to cross the boundary and cross the ocean;
Let it flow to the toughest;
For a reimagining world –the world, that we want it all;
Let's take care of our heart and soul;
Let's take care of our loved ones;
For are imagining world;
Together everyone from every corner, for our reimagining world;
For a better future, a better life, a better world for our children, an equal world for everyone.

Umme Halima



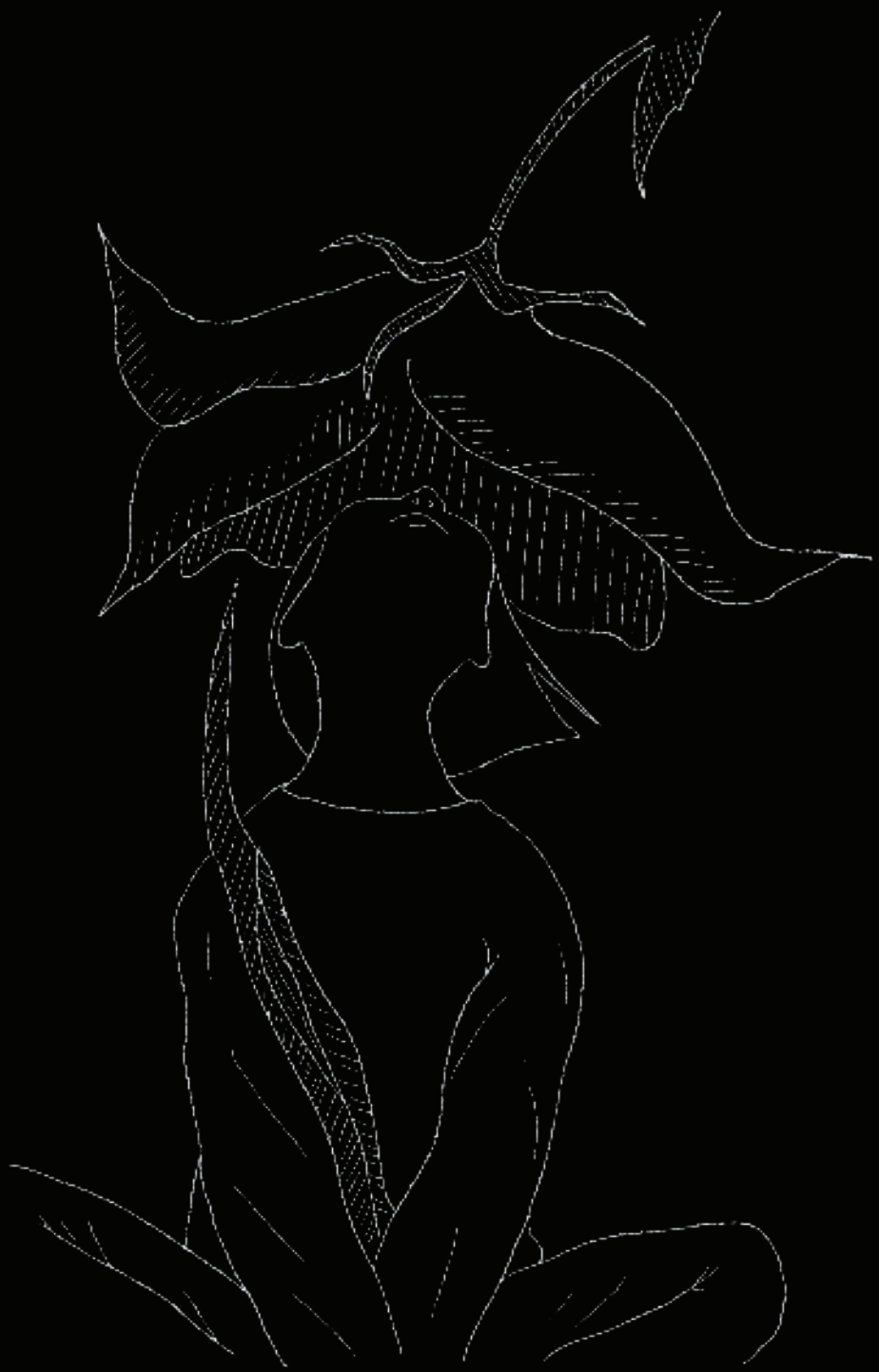
Let the birds fly

Beautiful tunes inherited not taught
Art of living difficult not incredible
Dating mating occurred as life flows
Starry nights countless recollections
Bedside breakfasts candlelight dinners
fairy-tale marriage two families joint

Fabulous nest eggs were laid
Ample food to fill up mama's heart
One by one eggs were broken
Murmurs whispers leading to shouts
Action packed movies repeat telecast
Cohesion gone, dual detached paths

Sun shone bright mom grasp chicks
Working nourishing womanning home
Countless nights anonymous emotions
Frequent floods countless lonely dusks
Grown up chicks sang new tunes
Mamma desired to embrace them all
But, let the birds fly it's a new life

Kumari S. Wickramasinghe



Little Girl

Hello little girl standing next to me,
you are growing every day,
and your mamma wants you to know
that she sees.

She sees all that beauty and the wit
that you possess,
and the big heart filled with feelings
which shows how much you cares.

Even though you are only a little girl
standing next to me,
I know that one day
you will make great things happen,
should I not be there to see.

Hello there, little girl standing next to me,
mamma wants you to know
that she loves you
and you will always be part of me.

My heart is filled with love for you,
that I hope you can feel,
until my last breath on this earth,
I will try to heal.
Heal what is supposed to be healed,
and give you the strength to accomplish the rest
as you growing little girl and become your greatest.

Your mamma loves you little girl,
that she wants you to know,
every day of your life
as you continue to grow.

I am thankful little girl for
all you have given me,
I am thankful little girl
for all that you have thought me to see.

Every day I am growing with you
as life unfolds ahead,
it is our journey my love
to be continued,
and lived without a regret.

Zuzana Vrbova

Mali Morning

The first reverberating drone of the muezzin
emplaces me in the darkened rooms of my neighbours,
hearing through all our ears
that which arouses us to the common day.

At this early hour he has no competition for our attention
And binds us in a sense of shared experience
weaving our spirits with a thread of sound,
offering to arouse us to our common life.

Dan Burns

Mirages

At the gates of night
Waiting still for dawn
Dreams and words
Suspended in time
High in the sky
Draped in blues
Colorless rainbows
Star sparks swept by the wind…

At the gates of night
Waiting still for dawn
Nothing but silence
Drowning in sorrow
Rays of emptiness
Tracing your shadow

At the gates of night
Until the midday sun
Words stand still
Broken, shattered, half buried,
Gray like your ashes
Scattered in the wind
Tired of existing
At the edge of silence...

Yanick Dargout Maxi

Translation on next page

Mirages

Aux portes de la nuit
J'attends déjà l'aurore
Les rêves et les mots
Suspendus dans le temps
Flottent en ombres et mirages
Dessins bleus sans contours
Arcs-en-ciel sans couleur
Etincelles d'étoiles
Balayées par le vent…

Aux portes de la nuit
J'attends déjà l'aurore
Le silence du vide
Le vide de ton départ
Sans larme sans un cri
Fait écho à ton ombre
Qui lentement s'efface
Trainant sur ses pas
Ton enfance en lambeaux

Aux portes de la nuit
Jusqu'au soleil de midi
Les mots seront les mêmes
Cassés, brisés,
à demi enterrés,
Gris comme tes cendres
Sans présent, sans passé
Fatigués d'exister
Aux confins du silence…

Yanick Dargout Maxi

My Father's Last Message

Saved in my voicemail
his words, I love you, goodbye
I didn't pick up

Laura Reid

My True North

Who Is He?
Lord God Almighty
He's Strong in battle
Powerful and fully capable

I call to Him from where I am
Sometimes strong
Sometimes weaker even in despair

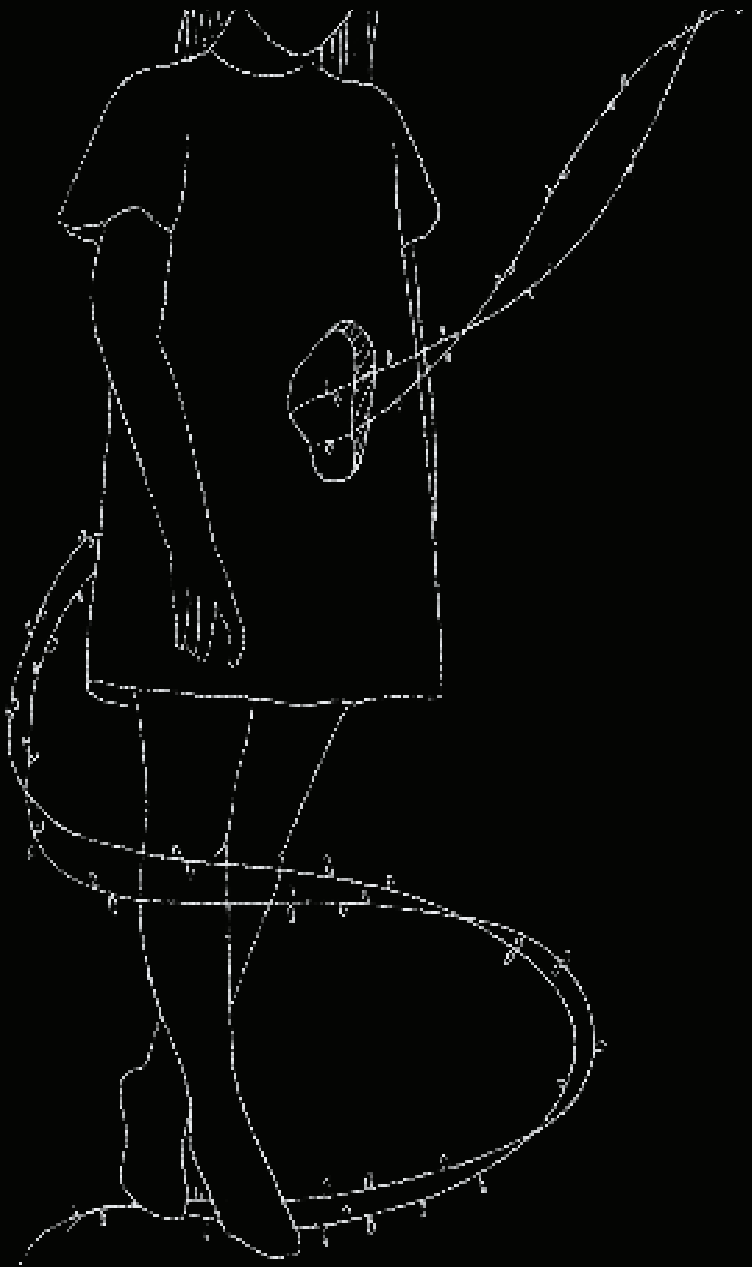
But I know He lives
Now there's no fear Jesus saves
Even when
I am not aware

With this hope
I rise
To fight another day
Amidst it all
He continues to lead the way

So tomorrow come
As days gone by
I will win
That's the hope I have inside

No more swaying
Or groping aimlessly
I have found my true North
In Jesus I hope unreservedly.

Mervin Peters



Poem

Speak, they enquired
But the voices within
Were overwhelming
In deafening silence
Limiting beliefs
Automatic negative thoughts
Generalisations
Deletions
Creating an alternative
Reality

How are you
Really
They asked
Paused
Leaned in expectant
Partly posed to flight
The silence rose sharply
Then settled
Between us
As we received and sipped our drinks
Focused on shared experience
Similarity not doubt.

The years have flown
Our mindsets too
But not the essence of
Who we are
Me and my mental health status
Them in theirs

Nyambici Macharia

尘寰处珍惜情缘 （摸鱼儿词牌）

尘寰处，珍惜情缘，可贵以沫相濡;
历史长河匆过客，生命短如朝露;
路崎岖，世无常，不测风云层迭出;
相互体恤，淼百般忧　，千言万语，良友能倾诉。
蹒跚步，几度飘摇风雨，不尽苍凉凄楚;
万里悲秋暗饮苦，萦怀愁绪无数’
天赐予，知己交，天地悠悠岂孤独?
同心同德，是良朋密友， 提握搀扶，行尽人生路。

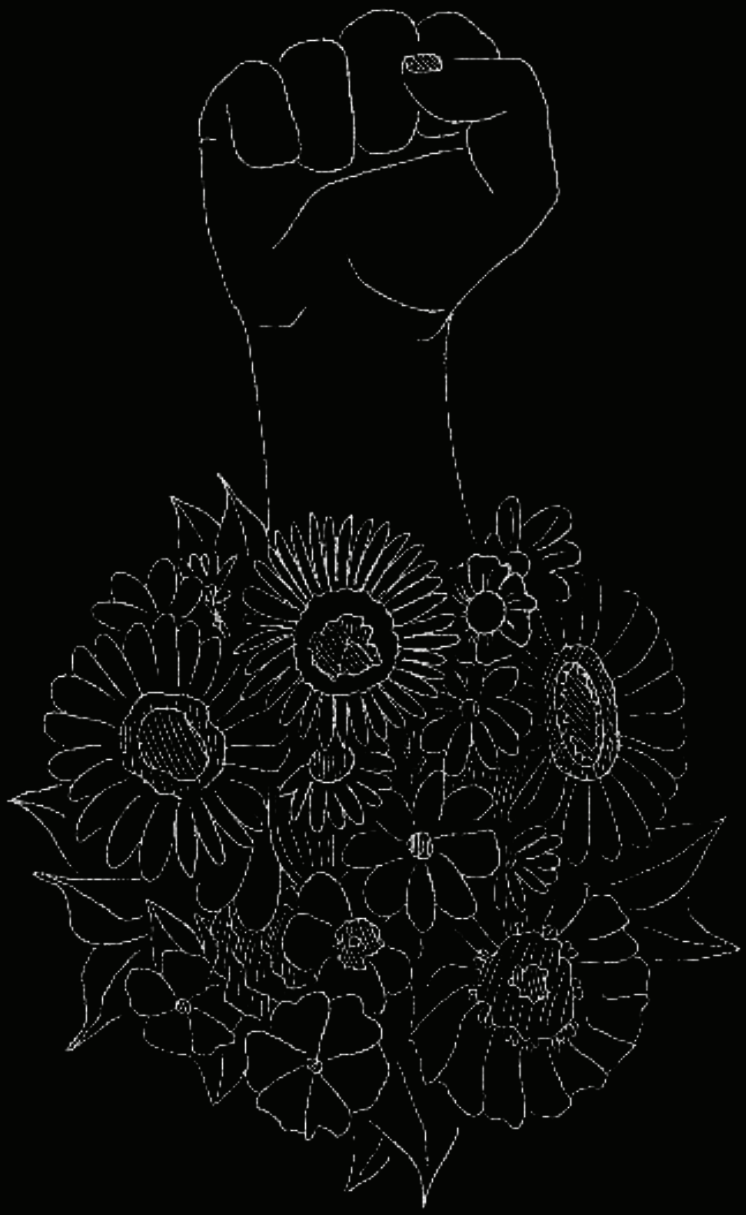
Dorcas Cheng

Translation on next page

Precious Friendship; Bridge Over the Troubled Waters

It's precious that we can be friends in this big world;
Life is short and we're but hurry sojourners down the path of history.
It's a rugged road full of unexpected storms;
Sorrow and worries can be shared with good company.
It's tough to trudge through troubles;
Many a night we feel sad and lonely.
But we have friends around and are not alone;
We have the same mind and can help each other on this journey.

Dorcas Cheng



Sono fiero di essere un volontario

Nella mente il volto di un bambino
gli occhi persi all'orizzonte
di una vita senza futuro.
Lo sguardo di una donna che non ha più latte
per un piccolo che stringe a se
senza speranza. Le mani di un uomo che chiedono pane,
ed il dolore della fame che non da pace.

Sento la miseria, la sofferenza
e quel grido silenzioso di aiuto
che squacia le mie notti e non mi da pace
la Pace, il mondo ha ancora bisogno di Pace.

Sento l'indifferenza dell'uomo,
che ha abbandonato quei popoli.
La desolazione di queste terre
che ora i miei passi calpestano.

Come rimanere ancora sordi
davanti a quel grido?
Come chiudere gli occhi
dinanzi a tanto dolore?

Ho scelto
Ho scelto di non ignorare
Ho scelto di essere un volontario
mettere la mia vita al servizio degli altri.
Partire dalla propria terra, lasciare tutto,
per andare dove c'e piu bisogno di me

Vivere per aiutare gli altri, per regalare gioia o anche un sorriso. aiutare,
e' la cosa piu bella del mondo, non ce dubbio
Non costa nulla, non si vende non si compra
E' gratis, Si da senza attendere ricompensa
Questa e l'essenza del volontariato

Ma cosa mi spinge a tutto questo?
Il sorriso di un bambino che gioca spensierato,
la gioia di una mamma che può allattare il suo piccolo
La felicita un padre che può lavorare e credere ancora in un futuro.

Felici grazie al mio operato
Questa e la ricompensa piu grande che si possa avere
Sono felice e fiero.

Ho scelto di guardare la realtà,
anche se scomoda, e agire.
Sono fiero di essere un volontario.

Cristian Mazzei

Translation on next page

Proud to be a Volunteer

In my mind the face of a child
its eyes lost to the horizon
a life without future.
A woman with no way of feeding
her child that she holds close to her
but without hope.
The hands of a man asking for bread
and the pain of a hunger that gives no rest.

I feel the misery, the suffering
and the cry for help
which perturbs my nights and gives me no peace
Peace, the world still needs Peace.

I feel the indifference of people,
who have abandoned these people.
The desolation of this land
that my steps now walk on.

How can one still remain passive
before this outcry?
How can one close his eyes
before so much pain?

I have chosen I have chosen not to ignore
I have chosen to be a Volunteer
to put my life to the service of others.
To leave my own land, to leave everything,
To go where there is more need for me

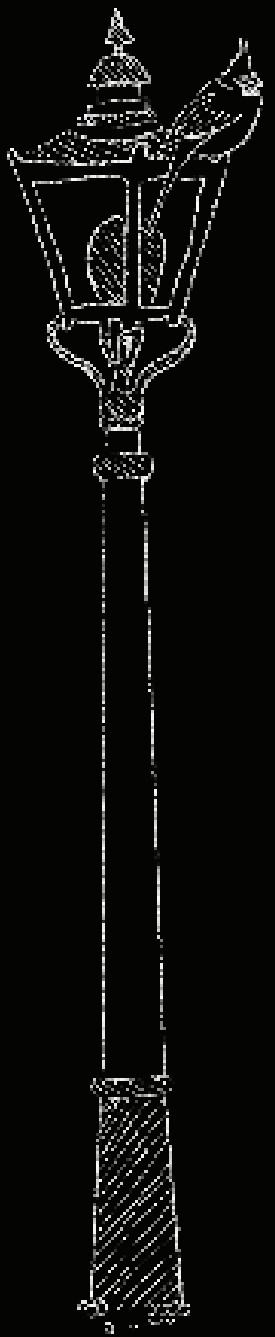
Living to help others,
to give joy or even only a smile
to help others, It is the most beautiful thing in the world,
there is no doubt
It does not cost anything, you cannot sell it, you cannot buy it
It is free, you can give it without expecting to be rewarded
This is the essence of a Volunteer

But what pushes me to do all this?

The smile of a child who plays thoughtlessly
The joy of a mother who can nurse her little one
The happiness of a father who can work and still believe in a future.
Happiness, thanks to my action
This is the reward that one can have I am happy and proud

I have chosen to face reality,
although uncomfortable, and to react
I am proud to be a Volunteer

Cristian Mazzei



Randagio

Parole sciolte, come cani randagi.
Devi stare attento alla recinzione.
C'è scritto: Stai alla larga, in questo momento! Per la precisione.
Un ammonimento.

Sono le parole di un mendicante di attenzioni, alla ricerca,
sempre alla ricerca di quiete e di serena ispirazione.

Parole a briglia sciolta, che passano veloci,
che possono mordere e ferire e avere gli occhi persi di solitudine.

Richiedono cura, come le ferite che lecchi sulla tua zampa sinistra,
le escoriazioni brucianti, quel che ti rimane del sinistro.

Curami, ma non avvicinarti troppo, mi dici.
Non allontanarti per abbandonarmi. Salvami.

Le tue parole, come i pensieri, vagano sciolti, come cani sciolti.
Pensieri randagi.

Randagio e fragile, colui che sopravvive a se stesso.
Pericoloso, può darsi, se ci si avvicina mancando di cautela.

Randagio è di strada ed è come ti sento.
Come chi sopravvive agli eventi che hanno avuto il sopravvento
ed è ora trascinato da se stesso, in balìa dei suoi venti.

Ci vuole cura. Ci vuole tempo.

Vincenza Lofino

Translation on next page

Stray

Loose words like stray dogs.
You've to be careful out of the fence.
It says: St(r)ay away, right now!
It's a warning, to be precise.

These are the words of a beggar of attention,
seeking, always looking for quiet and peaceful inspiration.

Words in free rein, they pass quickly.
They can bite in this moment and hurt
and their eyes are lost for the loneliness.

They require care, like the wounds you lick on your left paw,
the burning bruises, what's left from the accident.

Heal me! But don't get too close, you tell me.
Don't walk away! Do not abandon me. Save me!

Your words, like thoughts, roam loose, like tramp dogs.
Stray thoughts.

Stray and frail, is how one outlives to himself.
Dangerous, perhaps, if you approach towards without caution!

A-Stray is like living roaming by streets and that's how I feel you.
Like those who survive to the events that have prevailed
and now is carried by himself, at the mercy of his winds.

It takes care. It takes time.

Vincenza Lofino

Sleep

As I lye here slowly, drifting to sleep.
My brain is starting, to lower its beat.
My eyes are heavy, I'm hearing less.
I'm slowly drifting, out of consciousness.
I hope my dreams, are exciting and pure.
No doubt when I wake, it'll all be a blur.
As I begin to awaken, my brain becomes more alive.
And all I can think of, is to stay in my hive.
As I slowly arise, to start the day.
I take comfort in knowing, again sleep will come my way.

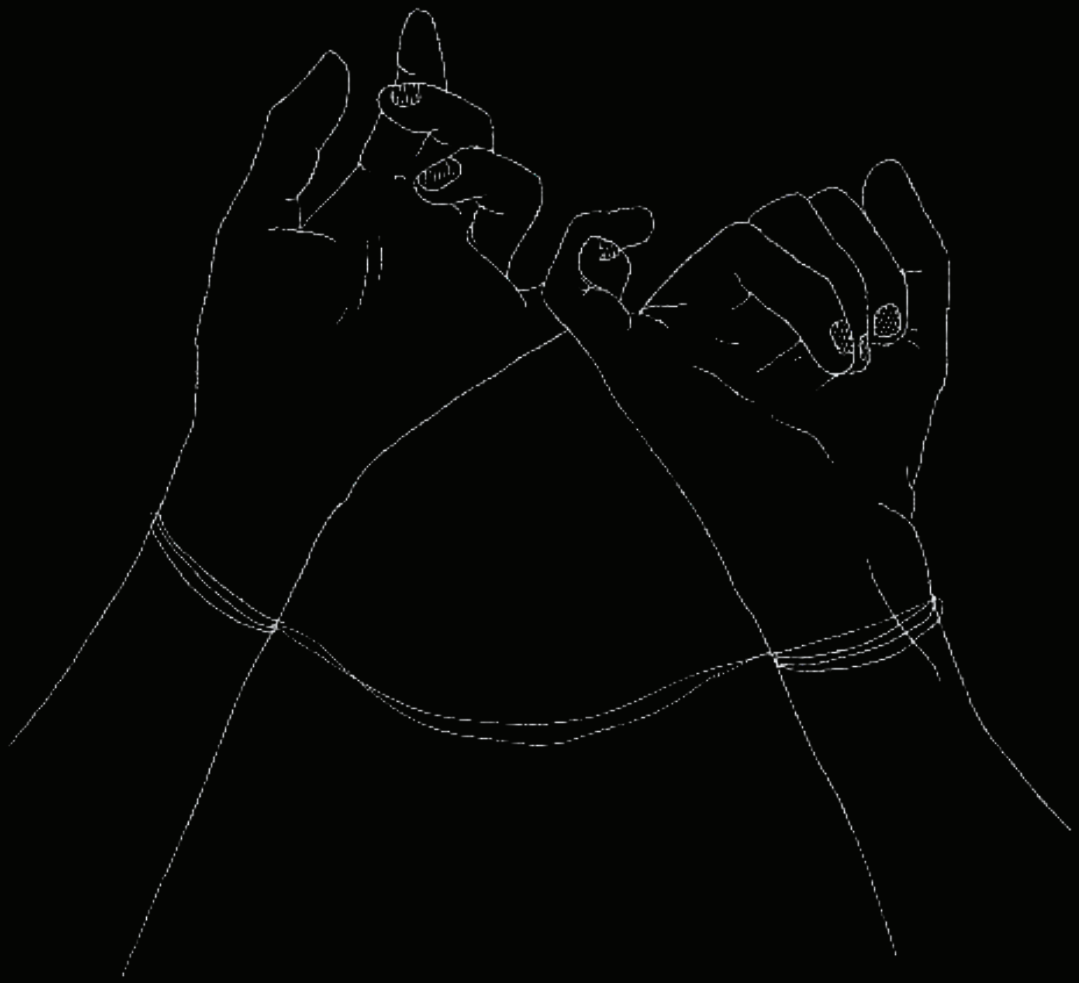
David Williams

Solitude

My heart is so lonely
My eyes just stare
At a landscape of wasteland
And an ocean of despair
Encaged and imprisoned, ironically through choice
I scream at full volume, at the top of my voice

The silence is deafening
Where can I go?
Drowning in wretchedness
Sorrow and woe
My heart is so lonely
My eyes just stare
At a future of darkness
In the depths of despair.

Fiona Jane Walker



इतना काफी है

रुकने और थकने लगे जो कदम तो कोई दे हौसलों को उडान, बस इतना काफी है
कुछ करने की हो आस और मनमें हो विश्वास, बस इतना काफी है
कोई भूखा ना सोये और सब रहें साथ, बस इतना काफी है
खूशी में गम में अपनों का हो साथ, बस इतना काफी है
ना बनें बात कोई गिला नहीं पर बिगडे ना बात, बस इतना काफी है
इन्सानियत रहे जिन्दा होते रहें प्रयास, बस इतना काफी है
में ढूंढ लेते हैं खुशियॉ कितने भी मुश्किल हों हालात, बस इतना काफी है

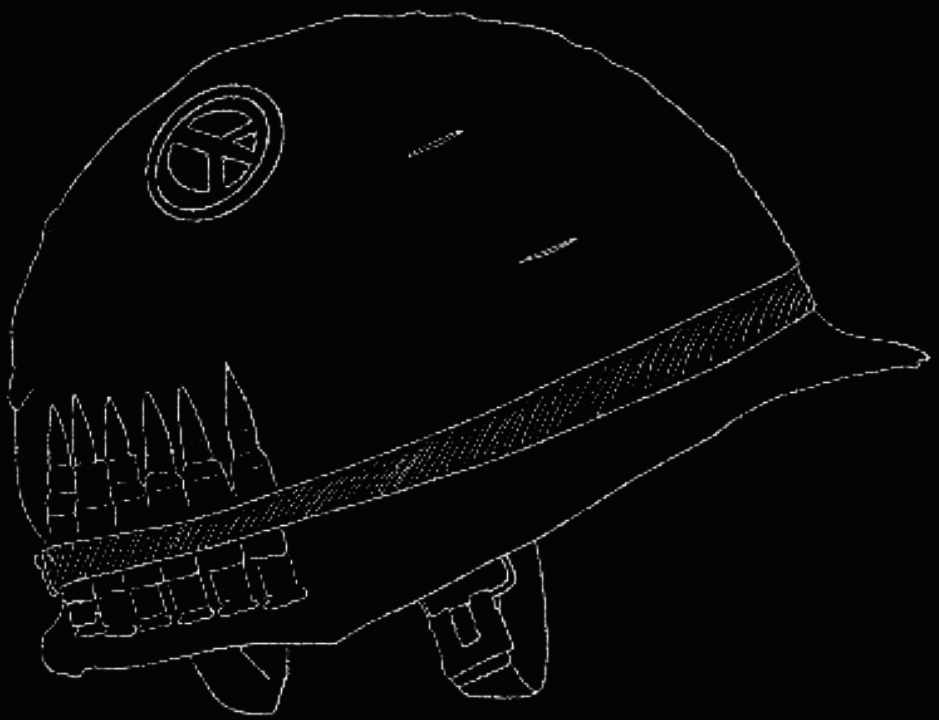
Pushpa Awasthy

Translation on next page

Thats Enough

On the verge of giving up, someone gives wings to hopes, that's enough
Want to do something and have faith in your mind, that's enough
Nobody sleeps starving and all remains together, that's enough
In happiness or in sorrow, you are with your people, that's enough
No worries if things don't get sorted but it should not get distorted, that's enough
Humanity remain alive and this effort continues, that's enough
Find out happiness in trivial things, no matter how difficult the situation is, that's enough

Pushpa Awasthy



نیرنگ صلح

باز یک روز دگر ؛ یک غم جانسوز دگر ؛ جنگ دگر

باز یک زجر دگر ؛ ترس دگر ؛ یک غم بدرنگ دگر

باز یک شام دگر ؛ ماه دگر ؛ یک غمٔ جانکاه دگر

باز یک مرگ دگر ؛ نام دگر بر لب یک سنگ دگر

باز یک سود دگر ؛ دود دگر ؛ یک بم وباروت دگر

باز یک ماتم نو ؛ زخم دگر ؛ یک نفس تنگ دگر

باز یک قصد دگر ؛ مکر دگر ؛ عزم دگر؛ بزم دگر

باز یک قوم دگر ؛ سمت دگر ؛ دانش و فرهنگ دگر

باز یک سوژهٔ نو ؛ قصهٔ نو ؛ وحشت نو ؛ دهشت نو

باز یک دهٔ دگر ؛ گور دگر ؛ در پی یک بنگ دگر

باز یک رنج دگر ؛ درد دگر ؛ یک نفس سرد دگر

باز یک شکل دگر ؛ جای دگر ؛ نام دگر ؛ رنگ دگر

باز یک فکر دگر ؛ طرح دگر ؛ نقشهٔ نو طرز دگر

باز یک چال دگر؛ صلح دگر ؛ در پئ نیرنگ دگر

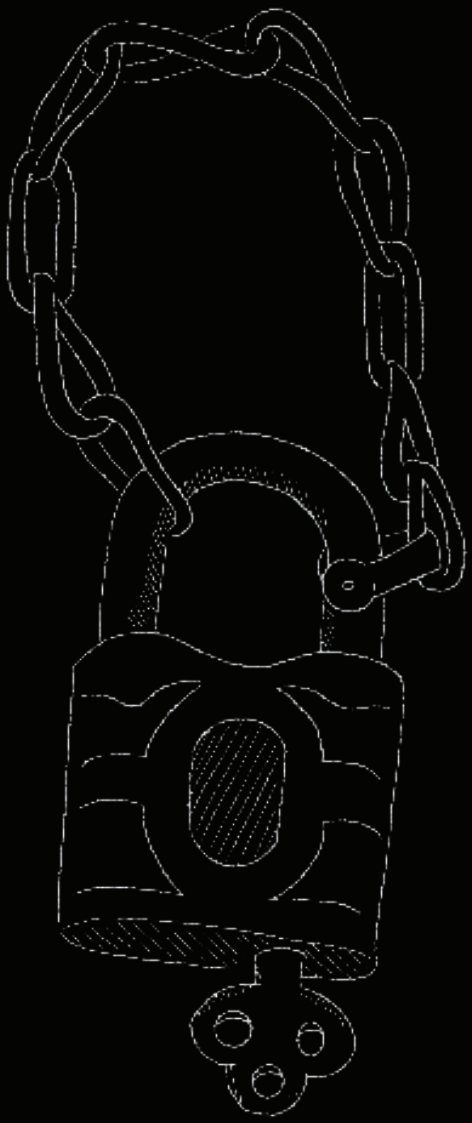
فریدون احمدی

Translation on next page

The Deception of Peace

Once again another day, another heart rending grief, another war;
Another day of suffering, of fear, of grief;
Another night, another moon, another heartache;
Another death, another name on the tombstone;
More profit for them, more fire, smoke, destruction and explosion for us;
Another sorrow, another wound, one more dying breath;
Another deceitful plot, another plan, another reason for them to celebrate;
Another tribe, another culture, another direction;
A new target, another story, a new fear;
Another village, another grave after another attack;
More suffering, more pain, more death;
A new form, a new place, a new name, a new colour;
Another thought, another plan, another plot, another way;
Another challenge, another deceitful plot called "Peace"

Fridoon Ahmadi
Translated by Roxanna Jafari-Omid / WHO



The Depths are a Dungeon

The depths are a dungeon,
Drowning out the voice of laughter,
Stifling emotion,
Crushing hope.

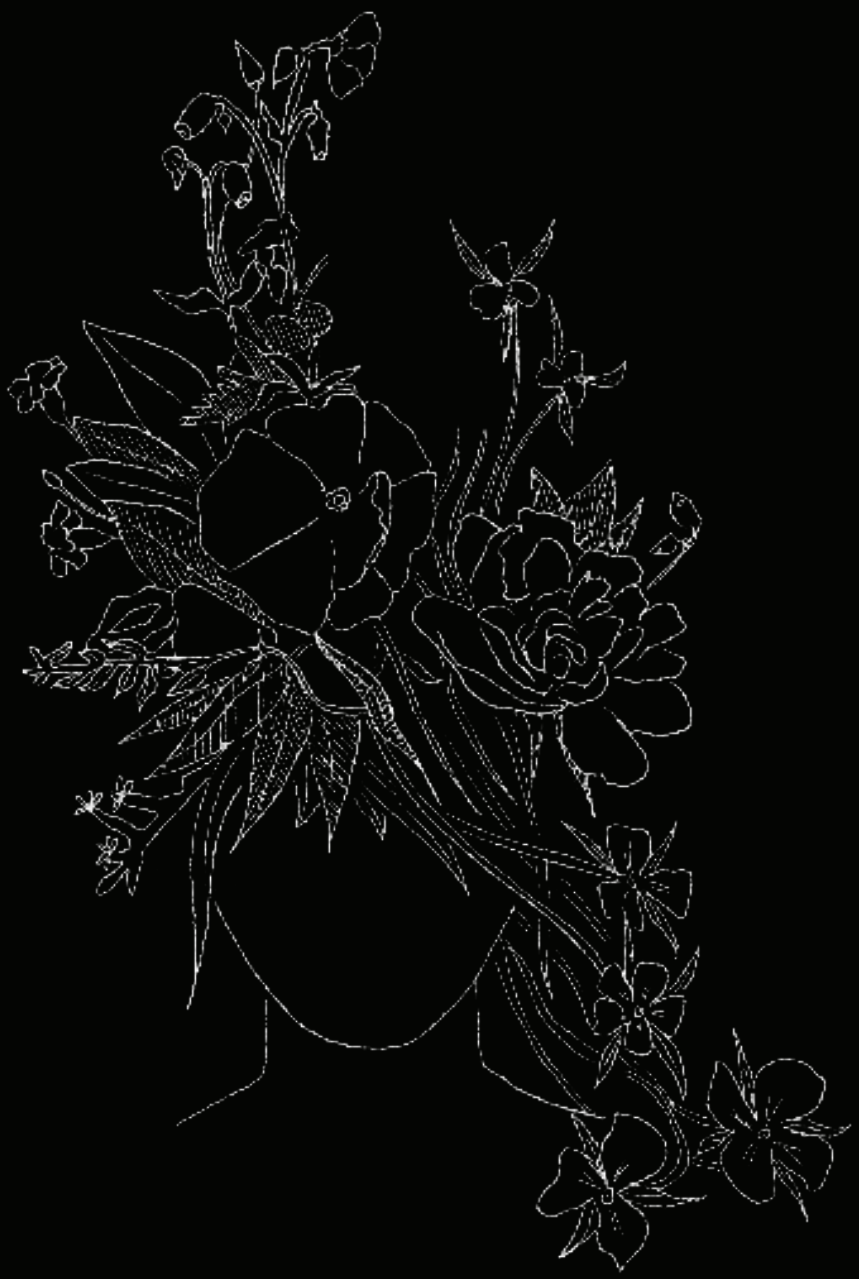
Weakness and helplessness,
Abound in the men of sorrows,
And they weep from a known
or an unknown cause.

Depression is indeed a slave master,
Chaining the soul,
To the fetters of despair,
Despair even unto life.
Stress, a mental strangler

Snuffing out the flame of creativity,
Milking the last juice of the desire,
To live.

Spurgeon calls it the winter of the soul,
That only Christ and His Cross can thaw,
To a new spring...
way before the noose
Has its last word.

Esther Wanjiru Kung'u (Njonde)



The inexhaustible vessel

I write believing it has healing properties
Thanks to language for the poetic liberties
Trying to find their way through the window from the heap
below my pillow,
my jumbled thoughts tell me take it slow...

Since March we have come a long way
but work from home, virtual meetings and webinars are here to stay
On my mind are deadlines, reporting, meetings and workflow
But my jumbled thoughts tell me take it slow...

The house is a mess, the plants need water,
my balcony longs to meet me where the concern is evident in
the way the birdies chatter
Informs them the peepal tree looking at me through my window
She doesn't smule as much, moves less and looks low
Diving into the ocean of competing timelines, I realize I am
staring at my green friend when suddenly squawks the crow
And my jumbled thoughts tell me take it slow...

Home is comforting, warm and serene,
Not the kind who would crib about being in quarantine
Days were supposed to be fourteen but as I face it first hand,
they are updated to seventeen,
And such are the idiosyncrasies of novel corona virus COVID-19

I wish I was the host but once in contact, it touches most
Husband, househelp help and mother, we are sailing in this together
But what bothers is who will bake the toast
A tinge of worry about to spread its claw and right then
my jumbled thoughts interrupted to say 'take it slow...'

Magnanimity is easing out others' troubles as one would have oneself gone through
I could not believe it when a couple of angels appeared out of the blue
A pleasant call, a sense of care and nutritious food,
Trust me for the family it served enough to uplift our health and mood

The gesture brough back my faith in compassion, kindness,
Humanity, love , solidarity, etcetera
The group of angels called themselves 'Akshaypatra'
When we face days which are full of despair we must believe
That the angel would spot us & extend care
For the love spreads faster than the speed at which the evil virus can grow

When in doubt, just let yourself know
That Self-love is the most important & rest will follow
Mind is vagabond, the thoughts might aimlessly flow
But don't forget to remember "Take it Slow..."

Veena Singh

The messed blessed world

the sight of a living creature's walk
the sound of little kids play and talk
the feel of a firm hand to hold
the sense of heaven in your home

the air and land polluted
the hunger that goes unheeded
the look of strangers that scare
the cold still in the air

the family support that never dies
the mother who can feel your cries
the father who can make everything alright
the sister who is always by your side

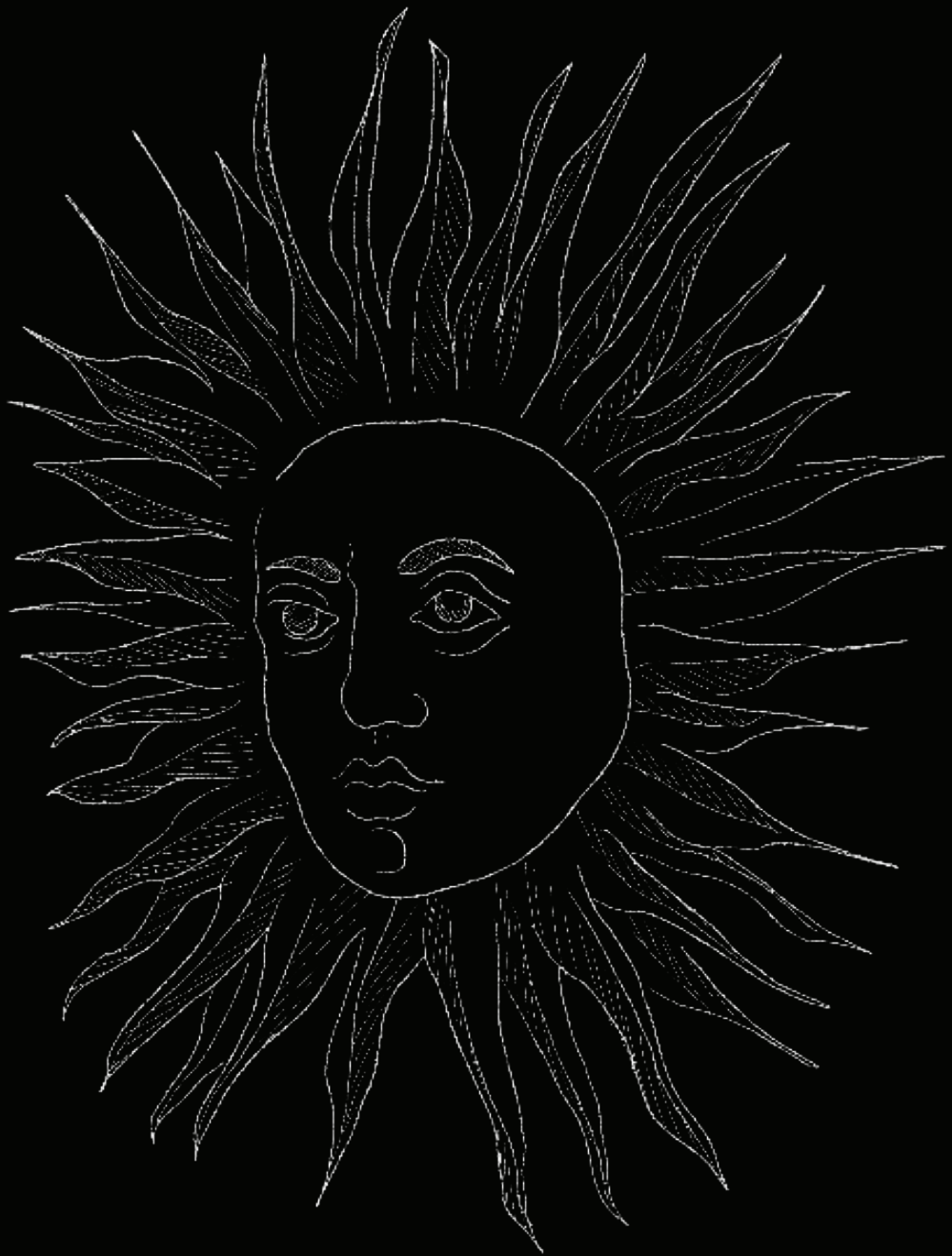
the house that strives hard to survive
the lady whose child is no more alive
the father who can't pay for his child's breath
the sister who has seen her brother's death

the walls the doors the locks all safe tight
the warmth of blanket on a cold night
the name, the pay, the reward of hard work you hold
the clothes, the cars, the jewels of gold

the open street where a child sleeps unclothed
the little girl who knows what it is to be old
the bribe, the theft, the cheats that stay free
the coins that matter more than you and me

this world of contradictions often makes me wonder
you and I have so much to do while we are here
If you & I together don't play our part
who else will hold our world before it falls apart

Shweta Sharma



The Sun refuses to rise

The Sun refuses to ascend today
What is the point, he asks,
Of rising only to set?
To what eternal end
is my Sisyphean task?
I stay silent, for I know
All that rise, must fall
All that drop, rebound
Neither cycles nor circles
Explain it
Only stock-prices, tree leaves
Contours of land
Human hopes and wind-swept
Grains of sand
Like a sonar buoy, I plumb
the depths of gravity
To retrieve from the abyss of grief
a cloud of levity…
I explain to the Sun
That he never sets at all
It's the Earth
That bows and rises
in the Sun's court
Each day.

Raja Karthikeya Gundu

The Undersung health issue; Mental Illness

Our spirits are troubled,
seems like we are in the dark
Pinned down, And our brains, flooded
A person with great fulfillment
Dreamed all, Had all, lost all,
Everything in the person crying out for aid

Take a trip down memory lane growing up
as a youngster,
the community telling us
Never give up; Always be strong
Now we are down on life's luck
A person going on to forty years; afraid to be chronicled as a `fool at forty`
With no navigation to weather the storm

Off-track, bizarre, unusual,
now we are losing our precious sleep
Intense fear of the unknown,
anxious because we realize the more we think we know,
the more we realize we don't know at all
No more appetite to eat
Our once beautiful health, now ugly; embarrassing and failing us

Anger, Anxiety, Bipolar personality disorder, Depression, Hoarding, Loneliness,
Panic attacks, Psychosis, Schizophrenia, Suicidal feelings, Self-harm, Trauma...,
These are very real My forewarn therefore is to humanity:
Let's all give a voice to the voiceless including ourselves, with the courage to speak up and rise,
Get counseling, embrace Psychotherapy
Be conscious that your `well-being` cares and values you!

Dr. Frankline Sevidzem Wirsiy

The woman I love

The first time I saw you, I felt like a bird in the open sky
I started shaking, didn't know why
But kept looking into your eyes
Eyes, those beautiful eyes that most look like a full moon in the dark skies
Good bye beautiful bright eyes
Good bye

Ivan Cordeiro

This Breathtaking Beauty Of The Wild

She steps out each day, exuding grace
Elegance describes her pace
Dazzling beauty defines her face
Her velvety complexion defies all race
Her mandibles certainly need no brace
Her hem seems sewn with black lace

She is ever ready to run her race
Her graceful step leaving no trace
Her fluid moves transfix one's gaze
Every detail seems right in place

Where she lives may be no palace
Large fields abound where she can graze
Gentle and calm, she portends no menace
Confronted with trouble, evokes her grimace
Enemies around, she just must out pace

If ever trapped in a predator's space
For her it feels like in a furnace
Clenched, in the grip of perilous embrace
This typical scene, quite commonplace

Leaping abruptly
Delay costly
Escaping the mighty
Executed smartly
Gliding off gleefully
Phew! Free, flee

You'll see her
You'll love her
You'll find her
In the wild
Famed for alarm calls

Her names enthrall
Impala in the Savannah
Dorcas in the Sahara
Springbok, down South
Gazelle in some settings
Please never plate her to make game her name
This breathtaking beauty belongs in the wild.

Benta Achieng' Aseto

Three things

Three things, I am doing differently now,
Are things that came with COVID,
Amongst anxiety and fear,
I grasped for air - to seize every happy moment,

All of a sudden, there was time,
It was no longer lost in traffic,
And looking back on recent years,
I, for the first time, found the time to self-care

Investing time where it belongs,
As part of personal reflection,
With pen and paper under visibly bluer sky
I sat down and wrote myself a letter.

A letter promising myself, from now on
I self-care,
I am adding hours to my sleep,
I am eating clean, I dare

I dare to set up new routines
To change myself for better
To fail, give up and start again,
Mind over matter,

And if the world is at a standstill
As paradox, it is also ever changing,
Ignoring signs and putting things off is a peril,
If not now, then when?
I pick the pen up and write a positive daily affirmation,

Of course, the chapter is not closed,
And like with any process,
It will take time to acknowledge and adapt,
As such, every compromise requires losses,

Worries, anxiety and fear
Can eat one from within like dinner
And that's the hardest struggle,
To sleep well when the worries creeping in,
Or build and plan your life around a lockdown.

With ups and downs,
I am staying, trying to stay strong,
Repeatedly, I am losing motivation,
Now, realizing most important thing

To value process,
Not rush the goal,
Allowing myself to put the plan in motion

How are you feeling ?
Dear friend,
Are you all well and happy?
Or is there something on your mind
Making your mood at times grow sappy

Please do not ever feel alone,
There are so many of us feeling anxious,
And sharing worries with a friend
Has the potential to become recovery in making.

We'll meet again,
We'll hug and kiss,
And at some point restrictions will be lifted,

Now, don't occupy the mind
With things you can't control
And you will thank yourself for that later.

Mauria Fransishku

七律 – 劝友

莫恨青丝成雪发，
问君可见不凋花？
西施艳丽成白骨，
始帝辉煌入土家。
青丝难逃耕事恼，
雪发能享果实佳。
谁言美景唯晨日，
一样欢欣看落霞！

Haiming Zhu

Translation on next page

To a Friend

Do not regret the graying of your mane
For no flower keeps its bloom when time flies.
Of Xishi the ancient beauty now only bones remain
And Shihuang the great emperor in the ground he lies.
When young we toiled in the fields with plenty of sweat
But now is the season to taste the fruits so ripe.
Who says no joy is born in the glow of a sunset
Its splendor hardly different from the morning type!

Haiming Zhu

Tonight I Put a Candle in My Window

This poem is dedicated to Tante Wally who was our Light
during the lockdown time in spring 2020 in Vienna, Austria

And the flame went so high
It touched other flames up there
Tonight, I put a candle in my window
And all the windows of my neighbours were lit in bright radiant togetherness
And up there the sky was brilliant and radiating silver sparks
Tonight, I put a candle in my window
For you, for me
It has already warmed me up
It was my neighbour who brought the Light!

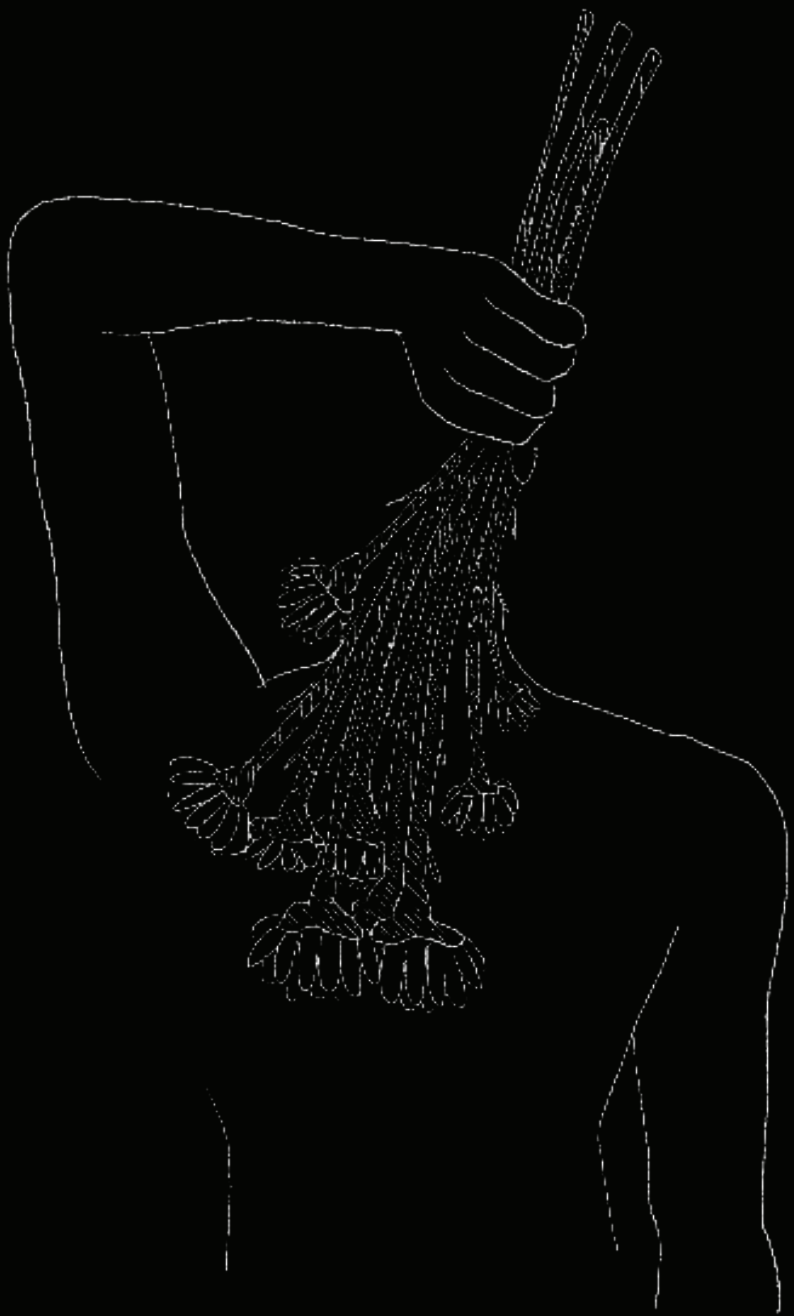
Vlasta Grabovac

Undying

I want to walk the museum of
what once almost killed me.
Look here: these fossils fastened in stone,
the pale light pouring over
the lurking kitchen knives.
When will we take them out —play with
the dull blades, braid the ropes
like hair? When will we string

through the pills, wear them
to parties like pearls?
Those infinite moments,
docking a boat, or cutting an apple,
when the choice of living
grips me so tightly.
The damp light
illuminating my rising chest.
No longer breathing in that dark air.

Jack Davis



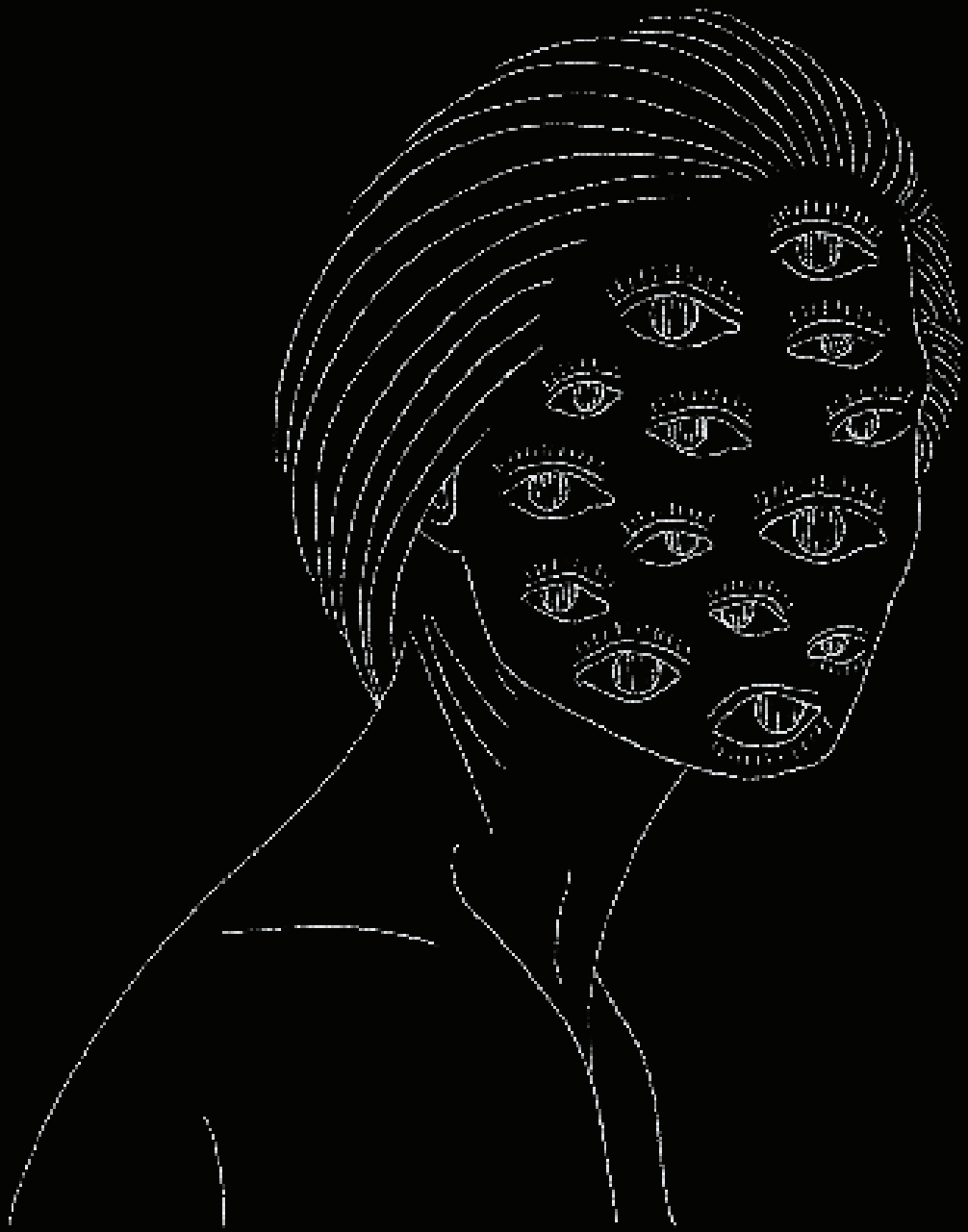
你坐在
皮肤砌成的城堡
听无数人争吵
光明的一方终于战胜黑暗
你轻触权杖：
You are dispelled
一切恢复平静
你执掌心爱的战士
驰骋一个宇宙的战场

Di Zou

Translation on next page

Sitting in a castle
made of skin
You watch a herd wrangle
trying to take your throne
The dark is defeated
light prevails
"You are dispelled."
You say
Peace again.
Take your best soldiers
Win this one man's war

Di Zou



Untitled

I heard the birds tweeting at my window, so its another morning. These mornings are becoming shorter, I thought to myself. How can make the night longer than the day. I have suddenly begun to dread the daytime...As I muse to myself, I get jilted from my thought by the alarm clock, sending another wave of anxiety through my mind. I jumped out of bed, but lost my footing, and to the floor I fell.

Living alone by myself, there was no one to call too. I staggered to my feet, my hands made way to my eyes, only to touch my reading glasses...Goodness me! The last I remember; I was reviewing the SitRep that was due for submission the following morning. Why did I fall asleep? I fell asleep because it was only natural for me to sleep.

Mental health distress are you trying to have dress rehearsal on me? Yes, I am. What right do you have over me? I was having a conversation with my mental health. Hahahaha...It all started when you stopped having adequate nutrition, when you worried over everything, when you had analysis until paralysis set in... I see. Now I will not let you go ever, I have you now as my captive.

I felt my mind and body having a tug of war with my spirit being an umpire. Taking a deep breathe to free my body, I said my confessions to send energy to my mind and spirit. I felt alive again. My confessions were my morning pills to get me on my feet every morning. I had to win the war in my mind, and yes I did with my morning pills!

Gloria Momoh

深郊华木出，万古鸣心材。
狠断千年根，颠沛蒙土来。
雕针续工刀，夜昼痛无觉。
为今剩一意，弃轮长天外。
绞绞木有茎，灼灼纤无尽。
久忍无隙停，却慰身犹在。
幕黯转黎光，烨亮接灯明。
紫铜碧玉芯，终卸黄尘盖。
飞凤栖碧梧，岳黑刺弦白。
九朝无一晤，三世生麟彩。
指近声先应，如识满心言。
颤初泪疾转，似悉经年慨。
余香旋地升，陈气着风徊。
谁言磨可彻?谁言砌可改?
沧乐为思悲为喜，
人木一念阴阳连。
却怎奈，
知音本不遇，实幻两重天。
溯漫荆棘域，行随衡阳雁。
千里觅何得，纵目霭霾掩。
难留乾坤命，独断在人间。
时时长记怀，刻刻沉木憾。
孤码紧旧弦，只影顶风烟。
泠泠七弦　，止尔肺中乐。
汐汐暮声弄，把我执灵监。
磐骨捋成音，韧质倾为籁。
同源终相汇，故址必和载。
唯一叹，
枯弦亦守，今心犹在！

Yi Zhang（张祎）

Translation on next page

From the remote suburbs, the exquisite wood was excavated, rare, with a natural connection with humanity
The roots, grown for thousands of years, are cruelly cut off, (the wood was) transported all the way with the soil
The needles and knifes being applied on the wood, day and night, without stopping, (it's)getting used to the pain
"Now there is only one thought left in my mind, everything else is forgotten"
The stems are extremely tough, and the fibers stretch endlessly
The black sky is gradually illuminated by the morning light, and the afterglow of the evening is replaced by lights
(After processing,) the wood reveals a beautiful inner substance, with a copper-like luster, and as gentle as jasper, coming out from the cover of dust
(Its body is carved with,) a phoenix perching on the plane tree, the white strings passing through the black mountains
This is unique even among the nine dynasties and three generations (as great musical instrument)
(When playing) As soon as the fingers (of the player) are close to the strings, the sound seems to indicate a response, as if it (Zheng) has known all the thoughts of the player
As soon as the strings tremble, the player's eyes are filled with tears, as if the player also knows the emotion of the wood over the years
The scent of wood is circling up, the breath that has accumulated for many years wanders with the wind
Who says that carving is thorough, who says that rebuilding can change the inner quality?
The joyous movement played by the strings seems to be deep thoughts, and the core of the tragedy (played by the strings) seems to be the pleasure after accepting impermanence
The player and the wood seem to merge into one at this point, physically and metaphysically
However, helplessly, (said by the player)
It is not easy to meet inner-connected friends like that, fantasy and reality are always incompatible
Set off to the wild land full of thorns, wandering and migrating like a wild migratory goose
After searching thousands of miles, what can I find? There is only this haze looming in front of me
There are so many places outside, why am I thrown into the world?
A little thought stays for a long time, like the encounter with wood, deeply settled in the mind
The lonely bridges jammed the aging strings, while the player is walking alone against the dust
The clear sound of Qin's seven strings is so far away that the music in my heart and lungs is forced to stop as well
The sound of the night flowing like water traps my soul
I seem to have become the "Zheng" itself. The hard bones and stretched nerves cross and collide with each other into the sound of nature.
Waters of the same origin will eventually converge, and people with similar spiritual burdens will eventually meet
Just sigh,
The seemingly dry strings are still in the hands, and that little thought still exists today!

Yi Zhang (张祎)

هو: أحبك

هي : احبك اكثر

هو: لا انا احبك اكثر منك

هي: اثبت هذا لي واصرخ امام العالم انك تحبني

هو: اقترب منها واحتضنها وهمس لها وقال احبك

هي: لماذ تقولها همسا

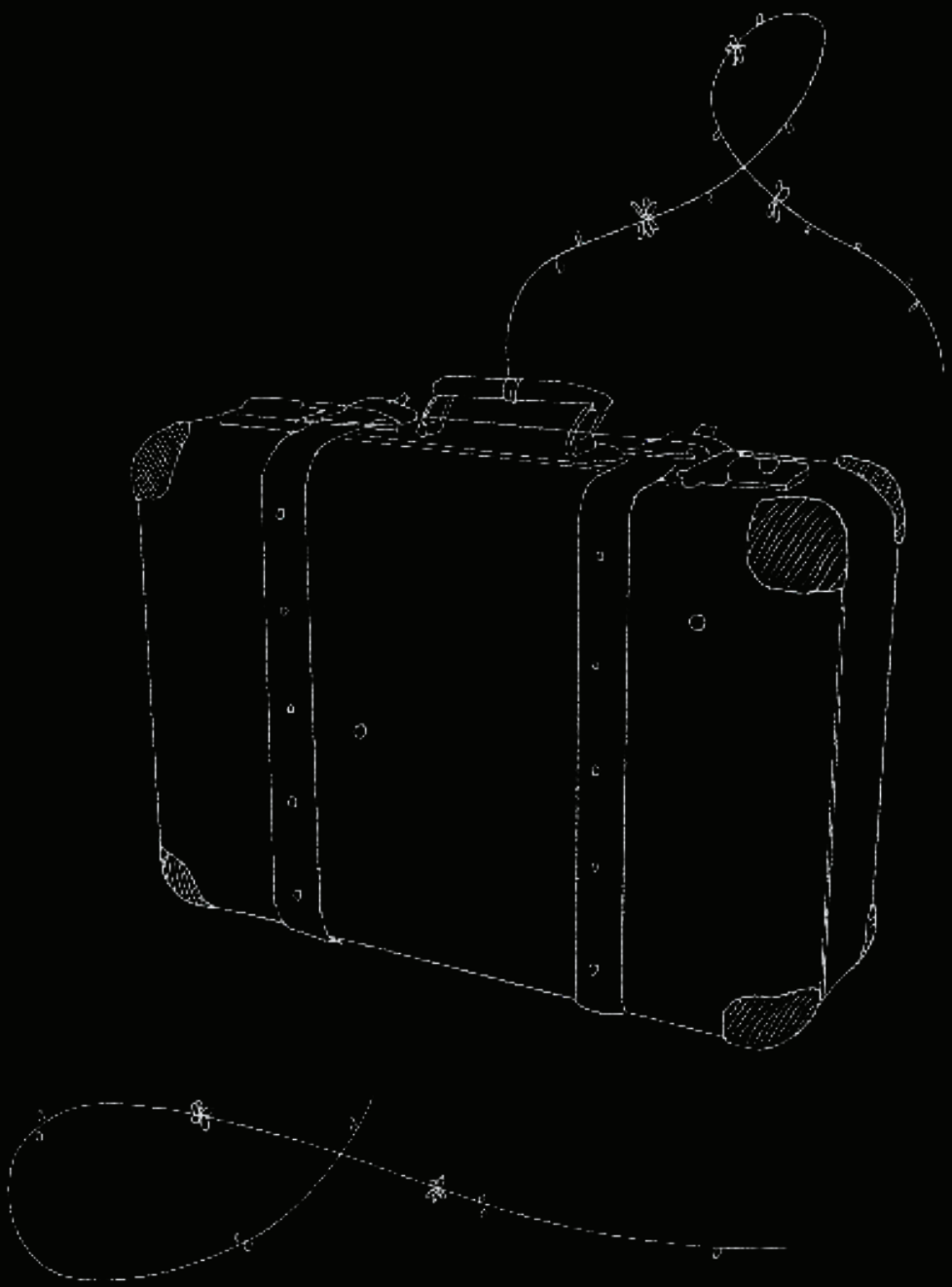
هو: لانك انت عالمي كله

Utba Agha

Translation on next page

He: I love you
She: I love you more
He: No, I love you more than you
She: Prove this to me and shout to the world that you love me
He: approached her, hugged her, whispered to her, and said I love you
She: Why are you saying it in whispers
He: Because you are my whole world

Utba Agha



Voices on the Way Up

Voice 1: “What a way to go. Christmas Eve.”
Voice 2: “If I’d been given the choice, this is exactly what I’d’ve chosen.”
Voice 1: “Really? On a holiday like this?”
Voice 2: “Sure. That way, my kids can’t be too sad. There’s so much to do, and so much else to celebrate.”
Voice 1: “They’ll forget you, is that what you mean?”
Voice 2: “No, not forget. It’s only that the sadness will get swamped by greater things.”

Voice 3: “Greater? How can you say that? No one will even take the time to remember properly.”
Voice 2: “They will, don’t worry.”
Voice 1: The real trouble is, you can’t control the types of stories they’ll tell. You want to imagine you fought bravely against a disease? Ha! What they’ll remember is a wasted figure in a hospital bed.
Voice 2: Might be. But I think that’ll fade. Then they’ll remember some of the good stuff you did.
Voice 3: I never did squat. Well, I travelled a bit. Got to reconnect with an old love.
Voice 2: That sounds all right.

Voice 3: I guess? I was trying to experience everything I could, after I was given only six months. How long did you have?
Voice 1: They kept telling me something different. And now I won’t get to meet my newest grandchild.
Voice 2: I’m not sure how long I had, not after the dementia kicked in. I hardly remember a thing, except vague figures by my bedside, and warm hands in mine.
Voice 1: I remember that sort of thing, too. Funny how everyone suddenly wants to touch you.

Voice 3: As if being ill makes us special.
Voice 1: Or we’re going to fade at any moment.
Voice 2: Better that than what I had -- imagine not being able to recognise your own family anymore.
Voice 3: Apples and oranges. We’re all in the same spot now.
Voice 1: We don’t matter anymore. It’s all the ones left behind that count.

Voice 3: I hope they miss me.
Voice 2: I hope they don’t mourn too much.
Voice 1: I hope they know how much I loved them.

Deniz Bevan

When

When do you let it go
Or employ it with a flourish
The past it shapes you, now and in times to come

When do you come to a stop
Or push beyond
The pain so recurrent, the suffering your choice

When do you follow it
Or take the alternate path
The beat a ever-guiding, or conventional too much

When do you eat it
Or wait for more and save
Marshmallow soft and tasty, sticky coloured stuff

When do you make a change
Or stubbornly stand your ground
Evolution constantly - or holding back the waves

Lying or a truthing
Each one it has its time

Destination or the journey
We circle round again

Idealism, cynicism
Have moments here and there

Waiting, coming, going
We may do without a care

There is a moment to destroy
So much still to create
Multiple voices or just one
The option always awaits

Then an instant when to share
Or out of sight a time to hide

Black or white or grey or colour
Song of palette, dance of brush

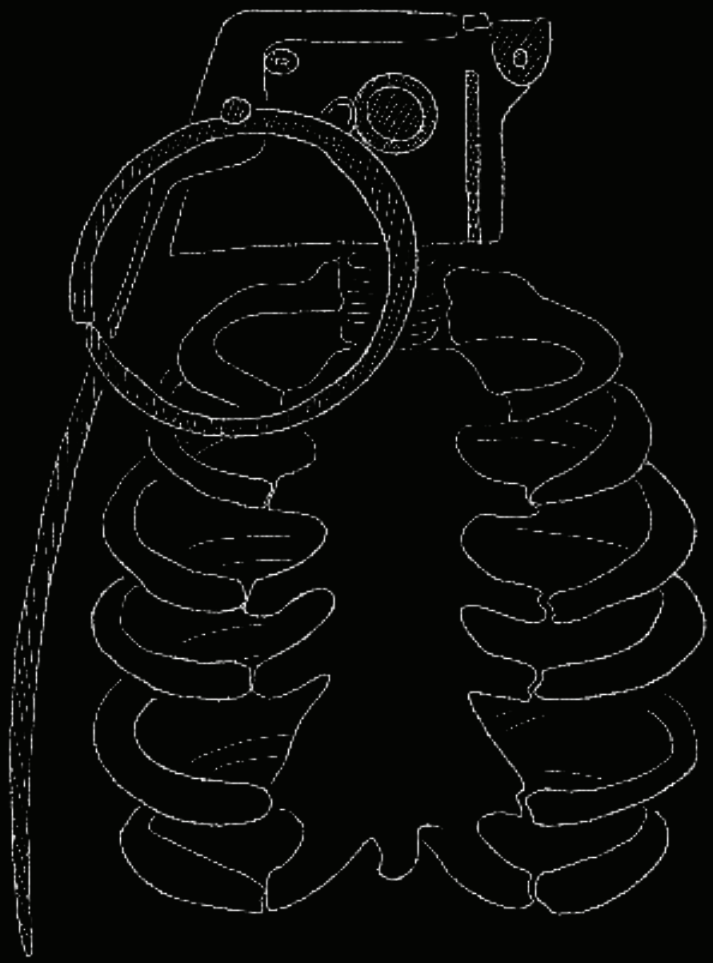
And smiling, frowning or mouth quite straight
Emotions felt, passion disloyal
Fear and hope they ring their bells
Rhyme and reason sometimes clang

Experience teaches, innocence drives

Come each instant in our lives

When we draw upon the lesson
When we rise, and fall again
When the dawn quits every night
When we fight and reconcile
We simply move, in a complex world
Searching the meaning
When

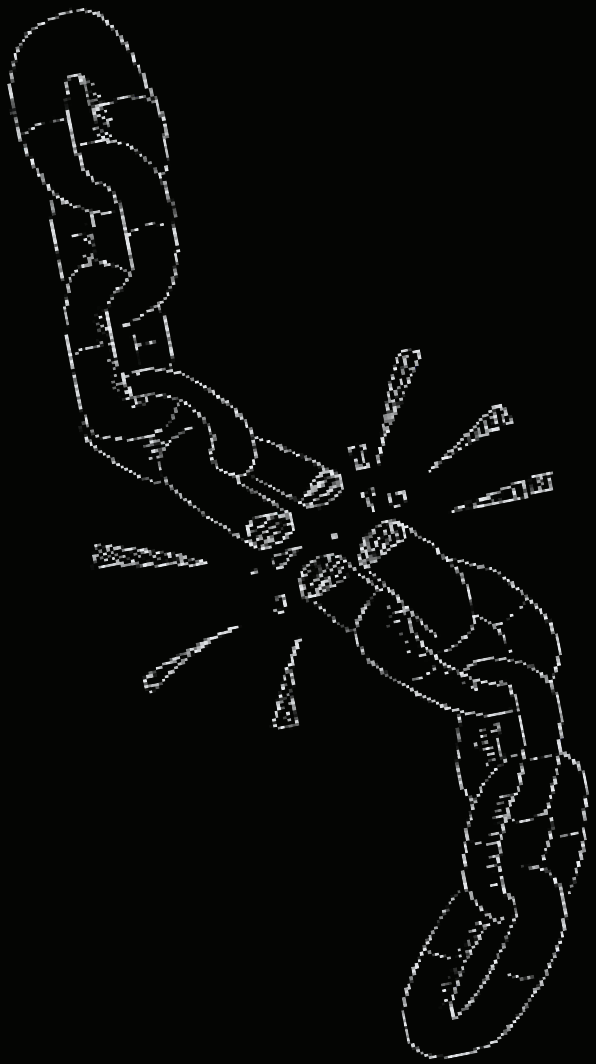
David Sunderland



where there is rage

where there is rage
there is always defeat
in the depths of flames
there is no soul that can see
and as time progresses
immersed in anger
where skin is torn
twisted and strangled
only those on the outside
can light a beacon

Omar James Kanaan



Wide Asleep

Void conquering the streets at your navel of love
Epicenter bricks go far above

The girl by the bull former brave now lame
We used to wish that every day was the same

Seven o'clock the shift is ringed in
Malochen a word for the sweat dripping of your chin

The angst is real
What's there to grab?
The gloved hands reach for the mother's back

Trying to smile behind the curtains of faces
Not a thing for those deprived by spaces

Your center park a fucking petri dish
What's there to fight?
Your people at risk

Jet fighters connect your hugging boroughs
Silently mourning as your vision narrows

Tomorrow we'll go to the library
And learn about how to break free

Sonja Kirschner

趣或禅

常思何所来，
又思何所在。
梦游尚翩翩，
醒觉何问禅。
且停此寤求，
任尔心稍休。

Huiming Wang 王慧明

Translation on next page

Zen or Zest

Too often I cannot have these questions my mind untie,
The questions wherefrom, whereto and why.
My spirit drifts here, there and everywhere,
And seems to hear from far away an answer saying: Nay,
Let it be, this immortal quest,
For thou shalt have your mind rest.

Huiming Wang 王慧明

* * *

I burned an ice cube today

and watched it blaze into pieces.

The flame created

a puddle of ashes.

I burned a snowman today

and watched him fly towards heaven;

only two stone-eyes fell on the ground.

I set the ocean on fire

and it is still burning

like oil in an old lamp.

Who says you can't burn water?

Who says water doesn't burn?

How come I have burn marks

under my eyes?

Danijela Milić

I want a love like that, LOVE

I want a love that says "I see you"
Beyond body mass to the soul of my existence
See the essence of me, spiritually
An interconnected kind o' love, love
I comprehend you

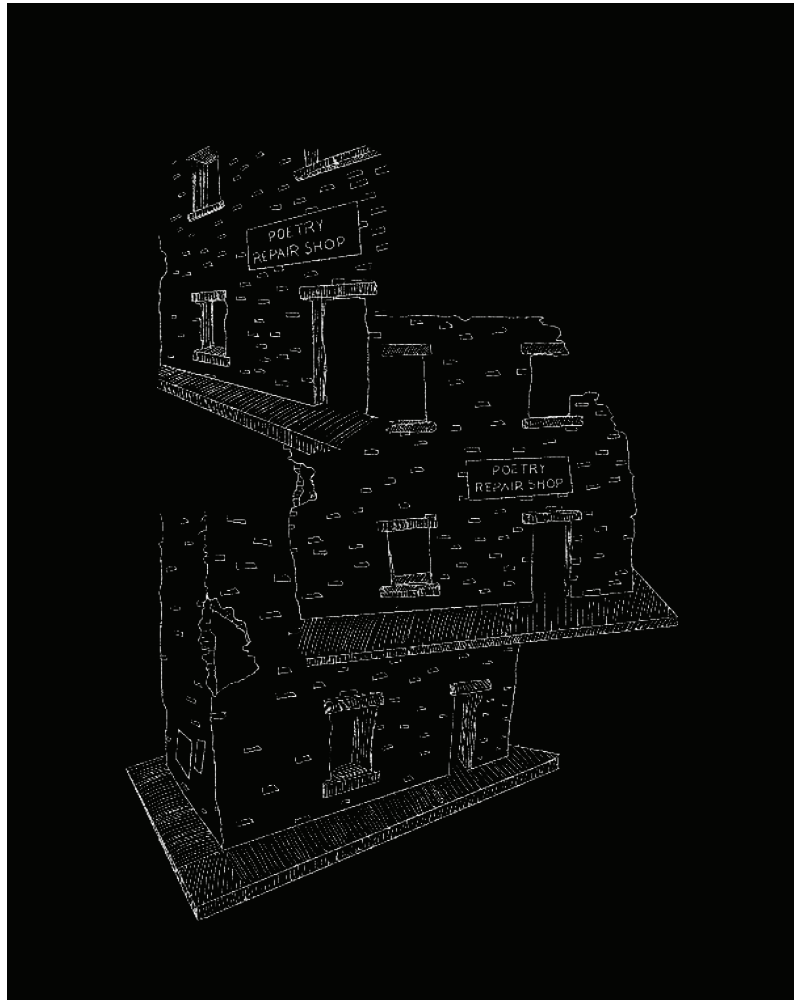
I want a love so close, its communication transcends words
It exudes across a crowded room "I'm with her" only
She belongs to me, I belong to her
An only-space-for-two kind o' love, love
I am with you

I want a sensual love
A love that caresses without touching
Disrupting innards, the central part of my essence pulsating
A whisper-light-as-breath-on-ear kind o' love, love
I feel you

I want a love that seduces with words
Touching senses in ways I never imagined
Directing, illuminating my path
A compass—navigating-me-to-you kind o' love, love
I read you

I want a love that connects to the love in me
A love that redefines my be-ing and existing
A soul-mate-love-at-first-sight kind o' love, love
—Pray-to-God-up-above love
—Live-and-die-for kind o' love
—Best-friend-for-life love
—A Barry White "can't get enough of your love" kind o' love
—Interdependent, secure, no-matter-what, I got you love (you know that ...)
—Push-come-to-shove love
—Because-you-see-me-I-am-here kind o' love
Yeah ... I want a love like that, LOVE

Dawn Minott



Poetry Repair Shop: Every brick is a story
'anxiety is about the future and depression the past'

Every brick has it's own story. The bricks all form a place where we once came from: some are weathered, and broken from a life well journeyed. That still forms a recognizable place where poetry repairs all and brings us back to a place we once called home'

Miniature by Patrick Gordon
Plaster, cement and wood
20x25x20 cm

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the contributing authors for sharing their original work.

Thank you to colleagues in the UN System who have taken the time to follow and support our work, to attend our events and webinars, and to engage with us on social media and through other communication channels.

Thank you to the entire UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being team members: Danijela Milic, Jack Davis, Cristina Silva Roig, Esra Gumrukculer, Marienette Abadilla, Mellesia Jeetoo, Lucia Vinti and Sarah Park for supporting the project; realized under guidance of Therese Fitzpatrick, Global Lead for the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, and Miguel Mourato-Gordo, Director of Global Strategy and Policy Division, Office of Human Resources, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

Thank you to Esra Gumrukculer for the beautiful illustrations that accompany each poem, the cover design, layout and the graphics.

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

Last, but not least, thank you to all mental health and well-being champions for joining us as we continue to challenge and break the stigma so that the United Nations truly becomes an inclusive workplace with greater inclusion and mental health access for all.