

**21ST
CENTURY
FLOW**

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SUBMISSIONS POLICY

I WOULD like to start off the second issue of 21st Century Flow with a thought on National Poetry Month which was in April and which just ended. In the Instagram era (and Instagram is a real hotbed of poetry), everybody can share their poetry online to followers or just those perusing particular hashtags but that does not mean it's any good.

I am proud to say the poetry in this issue is deep, meaningful, and full of clever language. It's not enough to diary-style annotate your feelings as social media encourages the would be poet to do. Often times that is catharsis in public. No, you need language, rhythm, whatever literary devices you are comfortable using. A big idea is also important.

We also have two pieces of art in this issue. I think successful art conveys mood, thought, feelings and these two pieces do that.

Relationships are also important here - with other people, with reality, with nature, with the concept of some kind of supreme being or power.

I hope you enjoy these works from Asian and American poets and artists.

Regards and Happy Reading,

Raj Dronamraju, Editor

THE NAKED SYMPHONIES by Raj Dronamraju

Our schedule entails at least one moment of brutal honesty
But once we got started, we lost all track of time
Jagged tact-free note after jagged tact-free note bursting out with no warning, seemingly without
any plan as if improvised

But it's not improvised if your silent you finds courage or refuses to be mistreated any longer
I'll explode one day in a crowded city
Until then, I'll be the anonymous beseecher, imploring silently hoping someone will pick up on my
thoughts

For the present, don't call my name
It won't be a comfort or a distraction
I'd rather hear myself cursed out in four letter words
That's a relationship with other people I understand

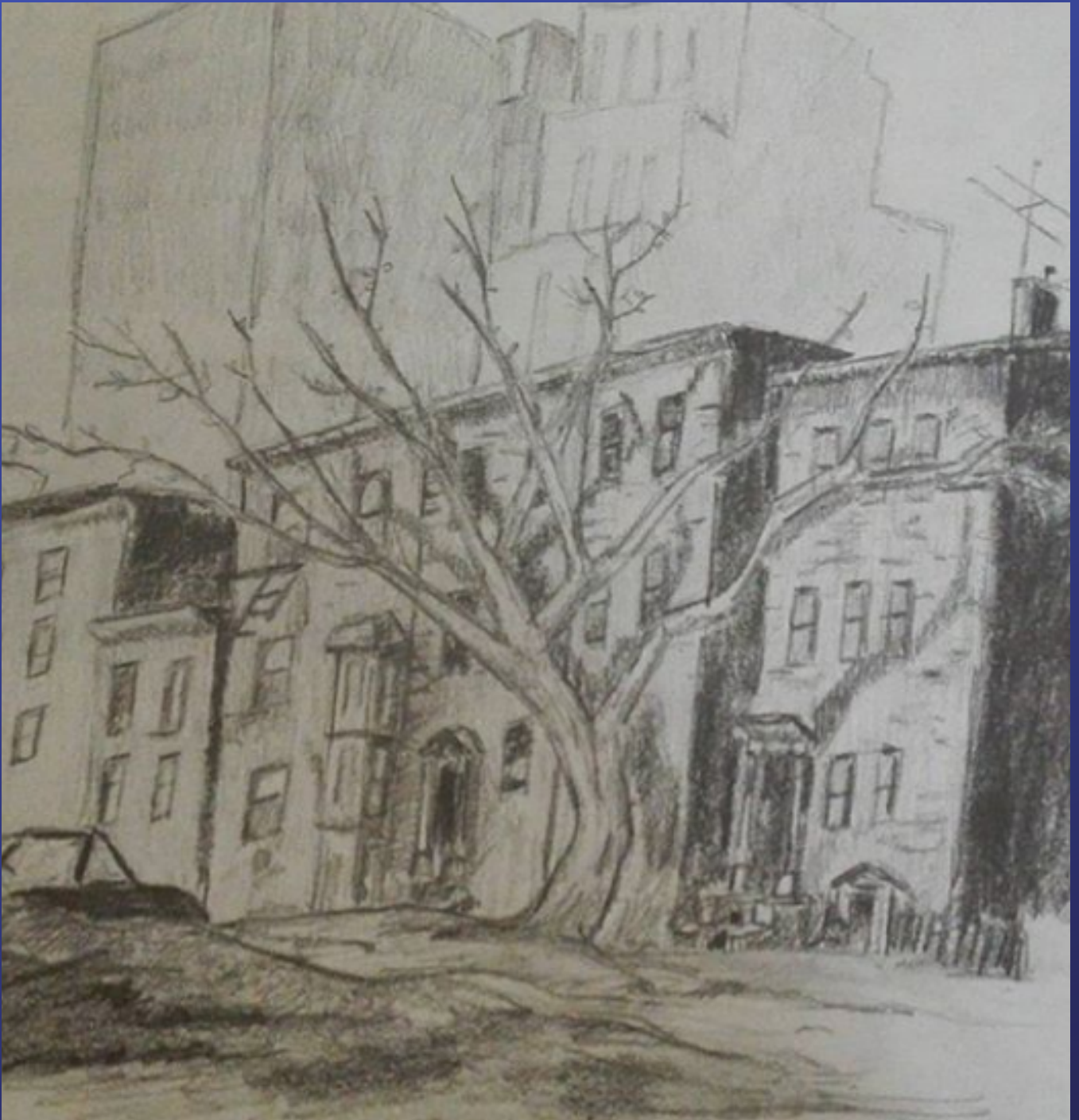
That must be some sinister karaoke playing the tunes we mouth hardened words along with
That too is a relationship we can grasp
It was beat into us by drafty rental houses where you were alone most of the time
And silent dinners where no one had any questions for anyone else

Now that explosion of dissonance which shouldn't be considered sudden
It's a burlesque of panic where everyone is too entertained to look for a way out
They purse their lips and make excuses under avant garde class distinctions
Where nothing could be further from the truth
This is like a talking x-ray held up to the light it pierces you with the most stinging reflections on
your worst qualities

Season ticket holder for the naked symphonies
Wherein all of the above are played in full form, some for sympathy, some for an exorcism
Concertos that cleanse troubled quintessence
The being snaps its fingers, it's impossible not to hum along with the melody

Raj Dronamraju is the editor of 21st Century Flow. He is the author of three volumes of poetry THE RETURN OF THE MAGNIFICENT NINNY, SOLIDARITY WITH THE FLESH-EATING MOSAIC, and TRAVELS WITH THE ANTI-JOHNNY APPLESEED which can be found here <https://raj-books.post-egoism.media/> along with several novels he has written. He is an American living in Malaysia where he teaches English and tries to enjoy life.

APARTMENTS by Jason Koo



Jason Koo loves drawing, especially sketching, plant life and scenes. Besides sketching, he also enjoys drawing feelings, comics and abstract aesthetics. He is not great with numbers and is interested in psychology, literature and listening to other people's life stories.

I HAVE SEEN MY SELF by Prabir Gayen

I have seen my self-
(My projected being)

On the street where the path dissolves in crossing,
On a lone winter evening a silhouette silent and still,
Who art thou standing in lone painfulness?
Gazing at me with undulating gesture.
Oh you! You have come to take me in your arms?
In this silent evening no one is there to bid me farewell,
Will you wait a little, for a tiny bit of time?
I will to make a difference in my domicile.
In this dark indulgence my mind feels joy
Unlimited,
Is this the end of the way?
In this utter calmness all the birds into stillness,
The wind stops blowing and drifting waves cease,
Is this the time to sail across?

On the edge of the path where shepherd boys rare go,
Beneath a banyan tree where birds rear their nestling,
On the edge of the path where sky winks,
You stand before the shore of my life.
O mighty spirit! the joy of leaving, wait a little,
I will go with thee unknown path though.
Life with all its ugliness was not inapt,
It was too deep for my tiny soul.
At the end of the road where it divulged,
A vast shore without shore unknown to me,
A shoreless shore the other shore.
The light blinks and shadow spreads,
Vaster than the sea of life.

Prabir Gayen is a teacher of literature who lives near Kolkata in India. His views on poetry include "My poetry is my inner wisdom and outer ignorance combined. with poetry I am nothing and without poetry I am nothing too. My poetry is the expression of my absolute nothingness".

I HAVE SEEN MY SELF by Prabir Gayen (cont.)

o divine man! Is it you who wait all the time?
In life and death and in between lifetime.
In this winter evening the calm otiose poise of time,
I see my life as evening sees the day,
The dark moon is behind the cloud,
awaiting to shine with its glory.
The night will dawn with new light.
The early morning is gone
with pain and passion,
The evening looks back
the dew and the chirping of birds,
The tidy afternoon buckle though the the soft hour.
The wind is blowing with pain ponderous mind,
it will die soon on your Extremities,
The place where you bide to be
to embrace the tired alphabet of my unused life.
My soul that departs without much use,
In thy hand will it become it upright,
From abysmal pit to empty Esprit.

On the street where people forget to tread,
I see your silent note invoking me to your shore.
Wait a little I will sail across side by side
With smiling face and with no regret.

BREATH OF DANDELIONS by Darshaini Siva Sangu



Darshaini Siva Sangu loves painting as much as nature, dogs and food. She believes that painting is delivering the beauty of God's creation through strokes of a brush. Although her favourite colour is black, she sees life is as vibrant as her colourful artworks. She is currently pursuing a BSc in Biomedical Science just to prove that a scientist could be an artist too. To be more inspired by the wonders of Darshaini's creations, please follow Dee'z Arts in Instagram (https://instagram.com/deezarts?utm_source=ig_profile_share&igshid=1wx1o0tmhmm92)

TO THE LISTENING by Kenya Sims

One trip down
The long haunting
Sigh of all these
Beautiful lovers
Leaves me
Humbled.

These tell-all
Moans
Are spiritual,
And speak through
Small talk,
Fine clothes,
And silky smiles.

Even in Holy Churches,
In "Hi Sis. So and So's",
The Sighs
Can be discerned
By the listening.

These are lovers

Who just
Last night,
(Or even that
Very morning)
Clung
A part
Of another
In intimate
Sessions
Of craving and passion,

With all experience
Of their birthright
Of erotic desire,
Needing to be
Expressed
Like a full breast
Of milk to a hungry
Babe,

"I am the girl who walked a mile in high heels/ and smile as if I have a million dollars in my veins/ I laugh with a looseness that is not the story of my life/ I sip my orange soda as if it's champagne...." -Kenya Sims, excerpt from "As If"(1997). Kenya Sims began writing poetry in the 1st grade and has been writing ever since. She also has written short stories, novels, and plays.

TO THE LISTENING by Kenya Sims (cont.)

They are
Two parts of one
Thing that was made
To accomplish
A beautiful purpose.

These sighs
Can be heard
By the listening.

Even in the Holiest
Of places...

In pulpits,
In the gaps
Of sermons,
In between breaths,
Cadence,
Music,
And the enthusiasm
Of parishioners;

Between
A
Minister's
Teeth
The sighs
Can be heard
By the listening.

He, (Mr. Minister), doesn't
Always
Be preaching
A reverent word of God,
Or singing a hymn,
Or clapping his hands
In praise to the Lord.

To the listening
The sighs
Tell
The rest of the story.

He is a lover.

Even if it
Has been years
(Or never)
Since
He has been
In the arms
Of another.

Sexuality does not
Begin when one
Makes love,
Nor does it end
With years of
Celibacy.

We are all lovers.

And if the sighs
Can even
Be discerned
In the Holiest
Of places
Coming from
The most reverent
Of people,
Then one should know
They can be found
Everywhere,
And in everyone.

One trip down
The long haunting
Sigh of all these
Beautiful lovers
Leaves me
Humbled.

These tell-all moans
Are spiritual.

I am listening.

THE HOUSE I NEVER LIVED IN by Michael H. Brownstein

1.

The door in the wall led to an inner sanctum
and the path through the garden to a paved road
narrow and bent, through and over.
We took it, step by step, against ancient brownstone,
gray brick and rock, until the house
we never lived in became something distant.

We wandered away, sometimes not eating for days,
water a memory a week at a time, air the source
of everything living. Fifty years we walked:
We never made it back home.

2.

Once I left my companion on a long stretch
of straightaway only to discover him
a kilometer in front of me three days later.

3.

Fog and marsh, bus stations going nowhere,
airlines stacked on runways with short lines
and loud people, and never once a car
or a horse or a mule driven carriage.

This became us, and we blended with it,
every now and then finding another like us,
and different, a pair of young women
never aging, a sage with a long purple beard,
his companion not more than a child,
music soaked into our hair like rain,
a grand crowd of revelers silently creating
the soft sound of one hand clapping.

Michael H. Brownstein's newest poetry volume, A Slipknot Into Somewhere Else: A Poet's Journey To The Borderlands Of Dementia, was recently published by Cholla Needles Press

(2018). Websites -<http://projectagatorange.com/>

<http://booksonblog35.blogspot.com/>

[https://www.amazon.com/Slipknot-Into-Somewhere-Else-Borderlands/dp/1727462009/ref=sr_1_1?](https://www.amazon.com/Slipknot-Into-Somewhere-Else-Borderlands/dp/1727462009/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=a+slipknot+to+somewhere+else+broqwnstein&qid=1556031627&s=books&sr=1-1-spell)

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THE HOUSE I NEVER LIVED IN by Michael H. Brownstein

4.

Sick and tired, I turned down an animal path
leaving my companion sleeping by a creek
running brown and blood red from dioxin
and mineral discharge, the factory nonexistent.

Nothing ever happened during the walks away.
He met up with me eight kilometers later,
stepping from between two injured walls,
turning toward me with an expression of nothing.
We did not talk for days and I never asked
where he had found the way intersecting my path
of interruption. I did not need to know the answer.

SUBMISSIONS POLICY

21st Century Flow is always looking for submissions. We are interested in poetry (and art) with a strong POV from the heart and written in modern language. As we are based in Malaysia and governed by Malaysian law regarding sensitive material, we are not looking for poetry with any four letter words nor controversial political opinions.

All poetry submissions must be included in the body of an e-mail. Attachments will be deleted.

E-mail for submissions: raj_dronamraju@yahoo.com

While we do not pay for submissions as we are a free publication, if your poetry or art is selected, you can include one or more links for self-promotion which will be part of your bio.