



21ST CENTURY FLOW

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SUBMISSIONS POLICY

Happy New Year!

I guess you could consider our first issue of 2020 to be a themed one as all the poems are character studies.

Personally, as a poet, I find poems about people, strangers or loved ones, to be among the most fun to write and read. A number of my favorite poems are about people.

Once again, we have poets in 21st Century Flow who are from all over the world but despite the difference in cultures, their ability to use verse to render the people they have seen or encountered or know or just made up off the top of their head is universal.

To all burgeoning poets, start with what you know. Jot down the adjectives that come to mind when you think of a person who inspires description or an idea. Both are the roots of verse.

Regards and Happy Reading,

Raj Dronamraju, Editor

OUTSIDE THE STADIUM, JULIE WAS MISDIRECTED by Raj Dronamraju

**Outside the stadium, Julie grew disoriented
The sounds of the cheering crowds inside move further away until to be
almost inaudible**

**Sudden strong emotion interfered with perception
And she saw herself as completely alone in an asphalt wasteland**

**Outside the stadium, Julie grew uneasy
No one will pick up a hitchhiker in this day and age
The more than understandable caution of strangers
The splintered process of how she sees herself fragments when it falls
onto a hard surface**

**Outside the stadium, Julie was a blur
Not because she moved fast but because she was transferring out of this
existence**

**Large groups of people enjoying something meaningless together
They are the temporary phantasm appearing ethereal to one unable to
lose themselves in group activity**

**Outside the stadium, Julie was misdirected
Allowed one bad experience to wield a broad brush painting crowd
scenes and intimate interiors
Now looked at people as karma
As destructive as they are inevitable**

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 her <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.

A LOST WIDOW by Tiku AKP

**Black night with deep silence
Cockroaches have bends in their whiskers
Rat proliferates in the dank store house
Making noises in their pointed tails
Beating against baskets of chaffs;
Lost in the dream of youth the old man
Snores sounding as waterfalls;
The wooden cot bearing his frame
As if a mass of cloud does the moon;
Billowing wind owes a breath
To the hiccupping woman on the floor;
Suppurating smell of burnt skin fills
The hearth blackened with spilled broth;
Earthworms stuck to the base of pails
As she dips her toes in the holy water
To make the journey weaving patterns
Of scalded dreams around her feet**

Tiku AKP is the pen name of Anil Kumar Panda who was born in a small town, Brajrajnagar, in the state of Odisha, in India. At present he is working in a coal mine and writes stories and poems whenever he gets time. Tiku has published two books of poems 'Fragrance of Love' and 'Melody of Love' and is presently working on a third book of romantic poems. Many of his poems have been published in national and international anthologies.

"I love nature and the abundance of beauty it holds in its lap. During my school days I used to visit our village with my grandfather to supervise cultivation work. During our stay there, I used to loiter around the village and enjoyed nature. The deep greenery surrounded by undulating hills fascinated me and I sat by the side of a stream for hours watching the birds flying, shouting and fighting, folks taking baths for hours and gossiping, girls walking to the wells and ponds to fetch water and take baths, sheep and cattle grazing in grassy fields. The evening was so beautiful with villagers sitting around fire in winter singing devotional songs. Most of my poems are on nature and simple life of my village folks. I enjoyed changing of vibrant colors of the landscape with changing of the seasons. I like to be with my simple village folks." Tiku AP

**THE VILLAGE BRAGGERT by
Kingsley Egbukole**

**Just like the cloud everywhere
You need not search anywhere
You need not even wait too long
To notice the village braggart**

**Confidential matters are nipped
abruptly**

**As he approaches
Silent hisses and sighs
Herald his arrival**

**And like explanatory signpost
Introduction is unnecessary
To usher in the village braggart**

**He babbles and babbles
Like rain stones on metal
And produces enough chaff
Unfit for ruminants**

**He beats his drum anywhere and
everywhere**

**And the brags, empty useless cans
Are lies inflated balloon
Monotonous like night and day
And repeated anywhere and
everywhere**

**He achieves all with his mouth
Not a brick to his name
His harvest the poorest
Though he owns all in his fable**

**Loved by kids like their sweet
Which tingles their buds like his
brags
As he beats his chest again again
The dancers mock him with their
steps**

(Tuesday 14th October,1997)

**Kingsley Egbukole is a practicing academic
librarian with twenty five (25) years' experience.**

**He works with the Federal University of
technology, Owerri, Nigeria. He is a Certified
Librarian of Nigeria (CLN) and a Carnegie Grant
alumnus of the University of Pretoria, South
Africa. He has a Masters in Business**

**Administration (Project Management) from the
Federal University of technology, Owerri,
Nigeria; a Masters in Library Science from the
Imo State University, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria;
and a Masters in Information Technology from
the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He is a
lover of poetry who expresses his experiences,
the things he sees, hears and feels in his**

**writing. (<http://www.poemhunter.com/kingsley-egbukole/>)He a Knight of the Sacred Order of
Saint Christopher (KSC) of the Anglican**

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MISFIT by Bryony Sheldon.

**My hair's too long
My skirt's too short
My thoughts are wrong
My rights aren't fought**

**My days are dark
I'm in a daze
A bruised birthmark
From yesterdays**

**Gun to my head
Heavy and hard
"Just drive, " he said
"I'll pay by card"**

**Their hate so full
It's spilling over
Bright minds cause all
Melanoma**

Bryony Sheldon is a full-time 16 year old schoolgirl from the West Midlands of England. Her passion for poetry was discovered at the age of 15 and despite being ignorant of the fundamentals of writing technique, she has somehow managed to slightly improve her poetry skills.

NEAL UNDER THE LIGHTS by Jamie Z.

**Performance art Dracula and to see Neal drained
Pasty and uncomfortable and with every extra pound
showing under bright lights
Number stamped in purple ink on the back of his hand**

**How uncool is a question of right mind
Without a dose of hallucinatory dispensation
How uncool is Neal with puffy house body**

**Derek drove all night and day from Texas
He carries surprise in conversation beyond greeting
and rejection
Imagine his surprise and disappointment to see Neal
under the lights**

**If you talk as good as you dance
And lie
Not funny
Not sexy**

**Neal sweats alone in public
The gladiator has a gluten intolerance and limp wrists
He slips on banana peels under two drink minimums
and club cover charges**

**Jamie Z is a Los Angeles based graphic artist and sometime
darkwave musician. She is the author of the poetry collection
"Order In The House Of Disorder" which is available directly from
Four Gremlin publishers.**

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.