

## From the Editor's Desk

*Is there then a world  
where I rule absolutely on fate?  
A time I bind with chains of signs?  
An existence become endless at my bidding?  
The joy of writing.  
The power of preserving.  
Revenge of a mortal hand.*

“The Joy of Writing” —Wisława Szymborska

We live in difficult times, the fabric of the human society seems frayed at the ends with wars, social injustice, crimes against women and children, and all we can really do is witness a growing grievous spectacle. I was struck by this thought at the stroke of midnight, on 15<sup>th</sup> August, this year, when the entire city of Kolkata and many parts of the country, erupted in waves onto the streets, reclaiming our rights to safety at all hours of the day, a basic human right to dignity. The same day, I was shaken by another ghastly news doing the rounds on the internet—a hapless father breaking down at the loss of his wife and newly-born twins in Gaza, just as he headed out to get their birth certificates. The celebration of life mauled over by death in an ironical twist that seemed medieval, almost Shakespearean in its scale. While walking the streets that night, hand in hand with my friends, watching the endless procession of people of all ages, crying out the slogan “We want justice,” the moment seemed to be both celebratory and gloomy at the same time.

The next morning, on Independence Day, many chose to turn their profile pictures on social media a pitch black, in silent protest, in

solidarity, articulating the questions—what is there to celebrate in times such as these, what this is independence about, and whose freedom are we upholding in this day and age? By the time this issue goes to print and is held in your hand, dear reader, we will have celebrated a host of festivals in this country, a truly carnivalesque time. Durga Puja in Kolkata, followed by a host of smaller festivities, culminating in Diwali, is a time that in my mind has always been an embodiment of Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque, having a suspension of normalcy, people roaming the streets at all hours of the night and day, without the usual concerns of safety and constraints of budget. People indulge in food, music, and frolic, walking endlessly, thriving on excess. While I myself partake in the festivities with much gusto, with each year I observe a tendency to lengthen this celebratory duration. Why is that?

Festivals harbor joy, a temporary sense of unity, a potent concoction of nostalgia and faith, a time that births hope in a hopeless world, a degree of trust among the faithless, the lights and sounds drowning out the general pall of gloom. It is a time when we, irrespective of our life situation, reclaim some of our agentic selves. This festival edition, in collating powerful writing from India and abroad, that delve into the manifold challenges of living in these difficult times, celebrates precisely that—the essentially human proclivity to write, tell stories, fight, subvert, uphold beliefs, simply put, to live, challenge and fight to preserve the human fabric, albeit frayed.

Rituparna Mukherjee  
Kolkata

## Poetry

### Akka's Bones

Akkalin Elumbugal

Translated from the Tamil by Sherwin Sanchez Rodriguez

#### Poem 1

As if planned by someone  
 akka's hut  
 is picketed by winter.  
 She has given  
 the jamakkalams to the washers.  
 How will the warmth  
 of the small lamp  
 burning in *machan's* memory  
 suffice for her?

#### Poem 2

When collecting clay  
 for the pongal stove  
 in the potters' land,  
 he was the blue shell  
 which got caught  
 between your fingers.  
 When the village pond  
 was destroyed, he was the *kendai*  
 which leapt over your head  
 and fell into your *munthi*  
 When breaking off a chunk  
 of jaggery as sides for arrack  
 he was the stray shard  
 that fell in your eye.  
 When we picked flowers to decide,  
*Veyiluganthal* gave Akka

a red Oleander.

It's good;  
 there isn't as much poison in those flowers now.

#### Poem 3

It has been six years;  
 Akka brings out the unused brass pot  
 hidden away in the wall-shelf  
 to polish it.  
 Stubbornly climbing the tallest branches,  
 he picks tamarind fruit for her.  
 Against the golden shimmer of the pot  
 in the water as she brushes it,  
 the sun fades away.  
 At the sound  
 of water filling the pot,  
 the town is speechless.

#### Poem 4

O pumpkin flowers blooming  
 on the roof of the madwoman  
 cast out from the village,  
 pick a finger;  
 Akka was beaten to death with a pestle,  
 or  
 a python swallowed her.  
 But, but  
 Akka is sound asleep inside.

**End notes:**

**Akka** is a Tamil word which means elder sister.

**Machan** is the Tamil word for brother-in-law.

**Kendai:** A fish.

**Munthi:** The front part of a saree when worn. It is often held up by the hem to form a pouch of sorts to collect things in.

**Veyiluganthal:** A form of the Goddess Amman, popular in the Southern districts of Tamil Nadu.

## Poet Bio:

**Veyyil** was born in a village along the banks of Thamirabarani river in the district of Thirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. He has a postgraduate degree in Tamil Literature and has been writing poetry since 2008. He is currently the Head editor of one of the magazines in the Ananda Vikatan Group. Without any preferences, he lives in and wanders between Thirunelveli, Karaikal, Nagapattinam, and Chennai.

## Translator Bio:

**Sherwin Rodriguez** is a writer and translator from Chennai, India. He was a recipient of a fellowship supported by the JCB Literature Foundation. His translation of a Tamil short story was shortlisted for the Mozhi Translation Prize 2022. He was also a translation fellow in the South Asia Speaks mentorship program 2023. His poetry has been published in multiple journals.

## Meet the Tide and Shore and Other Poems

Shaz Tamkanat  
Translated from the Urdu by  
Huzaifa Pandit

### Meet the Tide and Shore

Meet the jittery waves,  
then the languid shore  
Bid the full moon  
In its slick glory.

After you've met all

Spare a moment please for my heart, once.

Desire was inked all over  
my heart's debris.

I sculpted you  
From rented breath  
dipping

each moment in dour death.

Every glance

Sketched in exact desire.

Head bowed  
in devoted testimony  
of your divinity.

Meet dizzy color

Then opulent prosperity

Bid privilege  
sloshed on luxury  
then dazzle

blended from fragrance

Meet everyone at great ease

After you've met all

Spare a moment please for my heart, once.

Meet the jittery waves,  
then the languid shore

Bid the full moon  
In its slick glory.

You linger on my lips

Like a lisped prayer.

How naïve you are

Like my vows of fidelity.

You're distant

Like breeze fluttering through a forest.

Come, pour

Like drenched clouds.

Meet meadows

Then budding spring

Bid sprightly gusts  
Meet millions  
After you've met all

Spare a moment please for my heart, once.

Meet the jittery waves,  
then the languid shore

Bid the full moon  
In its slick glory.

The tide of wine seeks  
etiquette of swilling  
from you.

Flowers in meadows  
implore decorum of fragrance

from you.

Beauty seeks opinions  
On sparkling in almond eyes

From you.

The moon of glum grief  
Seeks tutorials in glistening  
from you.

Meet morning

Then look over evening too

Follow the fashion  
And affect affection.

Put your elegance on  
And tease with coquetry.

After you've met all

Spare a moment please for my heart, once.

Meet the jittery waves,  
then the languid shore

Bid the full moon  
In its slick glory.

What to tell you?

In this teeming world, there is none  
So forlorn like me.

All is known to you  
Nothing has ever been veiled

From you.

Who is my sole succor  
except you?

Come, console Shaz

With a promise sworn anew.

Meet the graceful night

Then the dawn of morrow.

Bid the tipsy claret wine.

Meet the whole world.

After you've met all

Spare a moment please for my heart, once.

Meet the jittery waves,  
then the languid shore

Bid the full moon

In its slick glory.

### Land and water

I recall it has been decades  
Since I soaked some syllables  
in the dew of affection.

Someone would call out often to me  
Guided by the innocent flavor of a lyrical call

I have tiptoed to here - slowly, quietly.

Outside a crowd of idlers was scattered in all  
directions

I asked of every person with great pride:

Say, was it you who called out to me?

Was it to you who wanted me?

But the distraught crowd of idlers

Harassed, hassled, harried and haggard

Just mumbled: "No it wasn't us

Somebody called out to us too

And then hid from us."

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Poet Bio:

**Shaz Tamkanat** was a famous poet from Hyderabad. A teacher at the Department of Urdu, Osmania University, he has won several awards for his work

including Imtiyaz-e-Mir and Andhra Pradesh Sahaitya Akademi Award. He passed away on August 18, 1984 in Hyderabad.

Translator Bio:

**Huzaifa Pandit** is an Assistant Professor of English in the Higher Education Department, J&K. His first book—*Green is the Colour of Memory* (Hawakal Publishers) was published as the winning manuscript of Rhythm Divine Poets Chapbook Contest 2017. His poems, translations, interviews, essays and papers have been published in reputed international journals.

## Coral Isle

Tobias Burghardt  
Translated from the German by  
Tobias Burghardt

### Persian Gulf

for Mohsen K. Rahjerdi

That much I've probably dwelt there,  
but also here,  
says Abū Tammām,  
that I do not know anymore,  
with I unforgettably belong?  
Whether I'm still occidental –  
or rather from the Orient?  
Then I wonder southwards:  
where  
to find the flowers of the night sea?  
The gulls babble with each other.  
Perhaps a honey eater might even  
become the barking of a puppy?  
So, the wise would carry her amphora  
inside the subterranean cisterns,  
giving birth to drips from the breeze?  
Where I (never) have been,  
am I (n)ever –  
(n)or somewhere else?  
Brother's answer,

as the moon-glow reddishly  
strolls near upon water:  
In sands lied your lid,  
precise stones / both  
at one place / farther skin like.

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Poet Bio:

Born in 1961, poet, essayist and translator of poetry, **Tobias Burghardt** published various volumes of poetry in Germany and several other countries. His poems have been translated into numerous languages and published in anthologies, magazines, and newspapers. Tobias received the International Poetry Award Antonio de Ferraris 2020 in Rome, Italy, and recently the International Literary Festival Award Indjija Pro Poet 2024 in the Vojvodina, Serbia.

## The Caravan and Other Poems

Marina Corona  
Translated from the Italian by  
Ernesto Livorni

### The Caravan

When the war was over  
The stars were exterminated  
Instead of them there had remained arrows  
We found difficult keeping high  
Our heads and a communal grave  
Is not to contemplate,  
Bed of heather or hammock  
Between two trees announcers  
Nevertheless we hoped in the passage  
This millennium perhaps  
This iron bar  
That forces us  
But not by ourselves, the dead  
It ought to take them arm in arm,  
Those foreign peasants

So tied to the soil,  
 And thus, in pairs  
 In pairs  
 The caravan shaped itself.

### Colors

The moon the mercurial the ship  
 Of the ships the virgin by the face  
 Of doe beyond the windows  
 Opened wide passing over with royal  
 Touch, while naked embracing  
 We were at the root  
 Of the dream we let them  
 Blossom to measure  
 The defenselessness of the bodies  
 The degree of surrender the absence  
 That overflows in the breathing,  
 Tied us in a divisible  
 And indivisible knot and it gave  
 you the reflections of green that are the tones  
 Of the leading rod and made me  
 Of blue like the sky  
 Round and familiar  
 At dawn we woke up  
 Without knowing of the colors we went  
 Outside brushing the fingers at greeting  
 Each on a road  
 In the morning air that does not erase.

### The Beam

The brightness of the TV set is moon  
 Light, the little screen  
 Writes words in the air  
 That the air then takes back  
*Factum infectum fiery non potest*  
 Not even God... the moon witch laughs  
 Of that beam that men  
 Stole from her and they believe  
 Trained, from afar  
 It counts flocks silent fields

Rains north winds deserts  
 Sphinxes cracked by the winds  
 She knows that enduring such a close  
 Beam is divine duty  
 "Sew your garment" the nocturnal  
 Mender of the woods whispers  
 "The little garment of the soul  
 With this water of pool  
 And fountain rain-water  
 That every night I dissolve"

### For Such Long Time

For such long time  
 You carried me in your hand,  
 Domestic dawning  
 Insect,  
 I made you little gifts  
 A lens  
 A lancet  
 A nail  
 When you threw me to the ground  
 I gathered my light by habit  
 And I got married by myself  
 So, nuptial  
 I live in a house  
 With roaring walls

### The Vision

Your voice  
 Liquefied in the burning  
 August air  
 Is still at the stake fence  
 And it pours a resounding  
 Waterfall that unnerves the sea  
 It does not reach me  
 In the silent orchestra of my ear  
 Where only silence  
 Beats its drum,  
 One day  
 Love will rise again

Like a star  
 From the horizon of the water  
 With rotating twin satellites,  
 And you will turn suddenly  
 Your profile carved/engraved in the azure  
 Arpeggio of hair  
 As though the angel of memory  
 Forced your face in the gaze  
 At that astral  
 Signal boundless annunciation.

### The Necklace of Pearls

The weight of these moons that I keep on my  
 neck  
 And they slept in valves  
 Shells  
 Their night made white  
 Absorbed in the river-bed of mother of pearl  
 Darkness filtered  
 laid upon in luminescent sphere  
 Saliva of the stoned  
 Night  
 This I cannot take  
 I daughter of the thoughtful womb  
 Who has dendrites for hair,  
 This line that I put on me  
 And that brandishes me  
 It drags me low; it decapitates me.  
 Crescent-shaped hours

### Crescent-shaped Hours

Circles of expanded rays  
 Superb dome-like  
 Fall on your hair  
 chisel your face  
 in molded chiaroscuro  
 gloss your lips  
 the moon with silver twigs  
 remakes your person  
 in the brown air

in dance  
 in figuration  
 in agile posture  
 in dimension of juggler  
 but if I extend my hand  
 to lightly touch you  
 now that in blinking traits  
 you compose yourself in the dark  
 you are not there  
 it is draped air that I touch  
 it is void  
 it is a hole within your figure  
 of fluctuating light  
 it is your absence  
 that in white pins it pierces my fingers.

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#### Poet Bio:

**Marina Corona** was born in Milan in 1949. She is the author of five collections of poetry and two novels and is the recipient of several awards, including the Montale Prize for *L'ora chiara* (The Bright Hour, Jaca Book, 1998). Her latest book is *Alfabeto morse di Novembre* (November Morse Alphabet, Samuele Editore, 2022). Corona is an active member of the Casa della cultura in Milan, for which she organizes readings and events dedicated to the great poetry of all times.

#### Translator Bio:

**Ernesto Livorni** teaches Italian at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. His scholarly publications include *Avanguardia e tradizione: Ezra Pound e Giuseppe Ungaretti* (Le Lettere, 1998) and *T.S. Eliot, Montale e la modernità dantesca* (Le Lettere, 2020). He has written extensively, in both Italian and English, on Italian, English, American, and Italian American literature as well as comparative literature. Livorni has also published three collections of poems which are now gathered in *Onora il padre e la madre* (Honor Thy Father and Mother, Aguaplano – Officina del Libro, 2015).

## One Day of the Way of the Cross

Placide Konan  
Translated from the French by  
Patrick Williamson

One day of the Way of the Cross  
I lost my name  
in the tumbledown streets of my scar  
since then  
my nights are as bitter as a hurricane  
I come down from where the shadow of history  
stinks of our breathless echoes  
from where time is rendered in tears

Since then

I've worn a crest that could've been a halo  
A multicolor green crest  
A slouching, scarified crest  
borrowed from *Anopheles* in the sewers of your  
memory

I wear on my wrist a distant kiss that suffocates  
the worst praises which are abstractions

Days in a grave are like night  
and memory a dry, empty piece of paper that  
flutters in the wind

[....]

My laughter was the color of my blood  
and  
my cries dug the big pit in which  
they wanted to condemn us to obliteration

Then

my cries dug deep wells in the sky  
and it rained weeks of clay to build us  
anonymous tombs  
I plucked my anger to make it less virile  
I sing enclaved notes and my memory runs

aground  
like a tornado  
I recite in a voice that has chewed too much  
sand  
the lacerated drops of our discontinuity

I lost my name  
since then  
I teach maggots to read the Bible I teach how to  
make ages to weave windows in tombs to  
crunch nails to undo rosaries  
to silence the echoes of the church  
I spanned silences with an interval as wide  
as our tears  
I sang unspoken songs to appear mute  
in the eyes of those who no longer hear  
I would cry out against a puff of dust  
against the frequencies  
of my apnea: *Let the little children come to me*  
Their voices strung cords around my neck  
I imagined the sky and clouds were made  
of my flatus

I spread my pores wide to inspire  
the cold-blooded asphalt and dances that are  
quartered screams  
My sweats were ruins  
I also tried to count the letters that  
made up my name  
But all the cries were blurred, inaudible and  
profane  
A few looks were tattooed on my body  
Whispers and lame roses spurted out  
bewitched proverbs too

I still want to cry my sweat  
with all my tears

in the depths of our arched reflections  
the sky is torn into pieces of unleavened bread  
without a halo  
I want



exclamations at the drop of my first names to  
give my life the meaning of an upright sentence

I want hands  
Yes, hands with holes in them to let the little  
sun shine in  
That illuminates the splinters of our tears

It's always night in a naked grave  
I was never a lamb  
I was one of the flock of rams  
so I lost my name  
without their greed we would be twelve instead  
of thirteen

We might be the apostles  
of a black Christ

[....]

Life is a sentence  
that begins with a capital cry  
You have to know how to count each anguish  
you crush to be happy  
our cries have scratched the solfeggio and we are  
only this seed to whiten the chlorophyll of the  
green of our stuttering flag  
I am your drunkenness your dizziness and a bit  
of your reveries  
I have corrected the errors of your great  
ambitions  
I have filled your gaps of my unknown face and  
you are still empty  
For my name vanished at the touch of a bullet

Let neither oblivion nor hunger take me from  
your prayers

Poet Bio:

Ivorian writer, poet, and slam poet **Placide Konan** is the vice-president of the Fédération Ivoirienne de Slam Poésie, a member of the Ecole des Poètes de Côte d'Ivoire, and the director of independent publishing house La Case des lucioles. In 2016, he became Côte d'Ivoire's first national poetry slam champion. In all his works, he depicts memory and the duty to remember as a means of liberation. In a style that is both frontal and colorful, he takes a close look at social failings and calls for genuine awareness so that Africa can make the most of its lifeblood. His poetry book *J'écris de profil* won the 2019 Horizon Literary Prize. He was awarded the Grand Prix d'Honneur Ivoire Club Écriture 2023.

Translator Bio:

**Patrick Williamson** is an English poet and translator. A longstanding collaborator with artists' book publisher Transignum, a member of the editorial committee of La Traductiere, and a founding member of the transnational literary agency Linguafranca, his work has been published in many reputed international journals.



## Grants

### ACGAL Translation Grants Announcement for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2025

From now until 28th February, 2025, Anonym Council of Global Arts and Literature invites you to apply for the Translation grants announced for 1st quarter 2025.

#### **Eligibility**

To be considered for ACGAL Translation funding, the original book must have been published in India within the last 20 years.

The selection committee will consider the following factors when evaluating works:

1. Quality of the original book and its importance in contemporary literary scene.
2. Innovative content and literary form
3. Quality of the translation

#### **Application Materials**

In addition to filling out the application form on The Anonym website, please provide two physical copies of the book in original and one digital version of the original text (see required documents below).

Physical copies of the book should be mailed to:

Grants Department  
Anonym Council of Global Art and Literature  
94/74 Sree Maa Sarada Sarani, Vivekananda Abasan, Amrapalli, Kolkata - 700055

Please send a PDF version of the book to [biswadip.ch@anonymcollection.com](mailto:biswadip.ch@anonymcollection.com)

Please note that only complete applications with physical copies and e-books will be considered.

#### **Required Documents**

(File types accepted: .doc /.docx /.pdf /.xls /.xlsx files)

- 1 – Author's biography / bibliography
- 2 – Excerpt in English: A 10–12-page, double-spaced sample of the translation.
- 3 – Excerpt in Original Text: The application must include a scanned version of the corresponding sample in Original Text.
- 4 – Translator's biography: Please provide a few redacted lines, not a CV (400 characters max).
- 5 – Acquisition of rights permission: A signed copy of the permission provided by the author or the right holder
- 6 – Two physical copies of the book and one digital copy of the original text.

#### **Timeline**

Application Deadline (session two): February 28, 2025.

Recipients will be announced in April 2025

Details of available Grants for 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2025:

For all the following grants, 50% of the grant goes to the translator, 25% for editorial support and 25% towards publishing.

**Debajyoti and Sikha Chatterjee Translation Fund - \$2000**

Translation of Memoir or non-fiction on immigrant experience into English from any Indian language.

**Ranu Chakraborty Memorial Translation Grant - \$1000**

Translation of feminist non-fiction from Bengali into English

**Haripada Chakraborty Memorial Translation Grant - \$1000**

Translation of non-fiction or memoir on Indian Communist movement into English from any Indian language.

**Manju Bhattacharya Memorial Translation Grant - \$1000**

Translation of a fiction from Bengali into Hindi

**Param Bandyopadhyay Memorial Translation Grant - \$500**

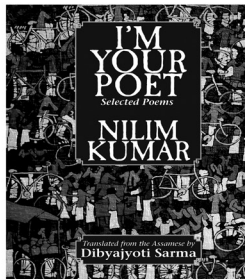
Translation of Bengali poetry (single author) into English

Contact

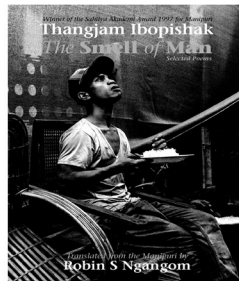
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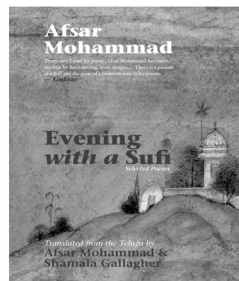
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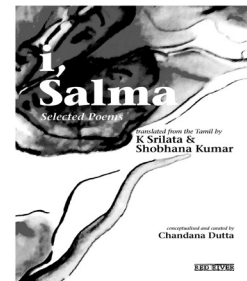
*I'm Your Poet*  
 by Nilim Kumar  
 translated from the Assamese by  
 Dibyajyoti Sarma  
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*The Smell of Man*  
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 translated from the Manipuri by  
 Robin S Ngangom  
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*Evening with a Sufi*  
 by Afsar Mohammad  
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 Afsar Mohammad and  
 Shamala Gallagher  
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*i, Salma*  
 by Salma  
 translated from the Tamil by  
 K Srilata and Shobhana Kumar  
 curated by Chandana Dutta  
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Red River is a boutique publisher focused on poetry and short fiction  
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