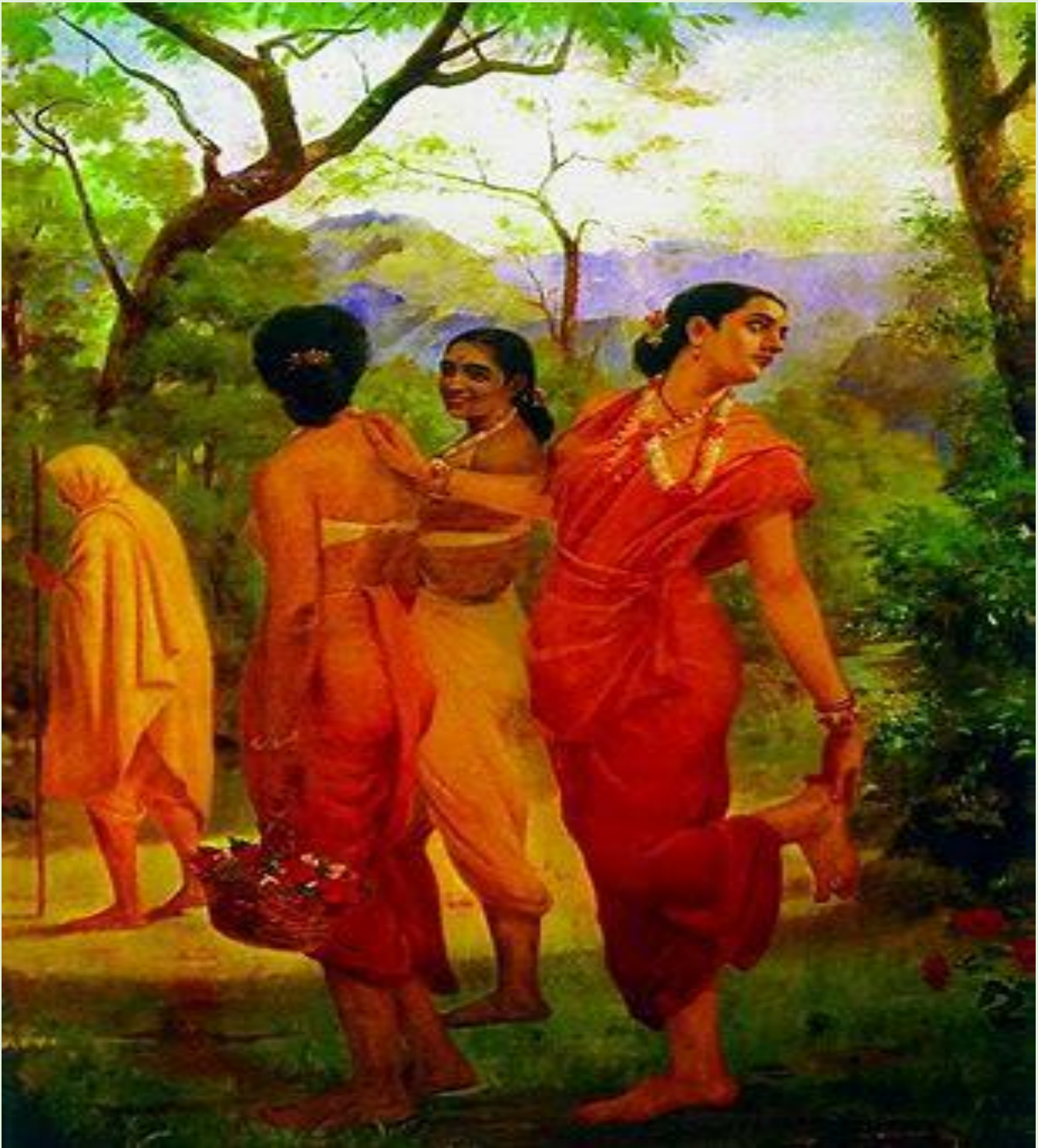


LIFE STREAM

ANNUAL ISSUE – 2022 *IS POETRY ALIVE OR DEAD?*



"Poetry of the world is never dead"-John Keats

"Science that 'alterest all things with thy peering eyes'-Edgar Allen Poe

IS POETRY ALIVE OR DEAD?

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Cover page:

Shakuntala-Painting by Raja Ravi Varma depicting a scene from Recognition of Shakuntala by Kalidas, the greatest poet of India

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“Poetry comes from the highest happiness or the deepest sorrow.” —
A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

WE PRESENT

—A POETIC ODESSEY

*Has poetry any place in a fast- changing digital world? **Is Poetry Alive or Dead?** This is the theme of discussion in this issue of Life Stream.*

*Before answering the question, we need to understand and appreciate the **Relevance of Poetry** in our lives. The write-up **Poetry through the Ages** gives a glimpse of how poetry historically evolved to its present form.*

*In the **Personality** section we have included the name of Kumaran Asan, a great poet of Malayalam literature.*

*The **Economics** section discusses the seemingly unrelated **Poetry and Economics**. We also discuss how the advance of science and Technology have impacted poetry. The Section on **Music** explores the connection between **Music and Poetry**.*

*The Poem “**Owl**” by English poet Edward Thomas in the **Poetry** section reminds us of our public duty.*

*Can a place inspire writing of poetry? Although there are many such places, we have selected **The Lake District in England**, to illustrate this point.*

*The sight, colour, fragrance and taste of food can inspire poetry. **Food Poems** are, therefore, a delight to read.*

*The beauty of poetry also lies in bringing the vast expanse of the mysterious universe close to our existence. In **Poetry and the Universe**, we articulate how great poets visualize the universe.*

Information on the themes have been compiled from electronic and print media, reports, books, speeches and other sources so as to make them available to all, at one place.

*We have great pleasure in presenting the **Annual Issue of Life Stream, 2023**. We invite suggestions and criticisms from our readers.*

Life Science Team

“Poetry is like a bird; it ignores all frontiers.” —
Yevgeny Yevtushenko

POETRY: DOES POETRY MATTER ANY MORE?

Does Poetry matter anymore in our life? In this article we briefly introduce the subject; remaining articles in this issue provide answers to this question in some detail, so that, after going through the entire issue, readers themselves could decide whether we ought to retain a poetic vision of the universe.

In 2003, in an article in Newsweek the author made an interesting observation - "It is difficult to imagine a world without movies, plays, novels and music, but a world without poems doesn't have to be imagined". The author further noted "I find it disturbing that no one I know has cracked open a book of poetry in decades and that I, who once spent countless hours reading contemporary poets like Lowell and Berryman, can no longer even name a living poet."

The Washington Post published government data, indicating that today, fewer people read poetry than ever.

Another writer pointed out that major newspapers no longer review or print poetry. Wrote Jonathan Yardley, the book critic for *The Washington Post*: "Contemporary American poetry is read by poets, by writing students, and by students of literature—and by almost no one else."

The Importance of Poetry Various writers have visualized the importance of poetry, in their own ways. To some, poetry has the ability to express the thoughts and emotions of a writer through flowing words. To others Poetry is one of the most versatile vehicles of expressing human emotions, and describing experiences; Poetry acts as a universal transmitter of all thoughts, feelings, and ideas. As another writer observed "Poetry lives all around you. Poetry shares. Poetry heals. Poetry invigorates. Poetry speaks up. Poetry reveals. Poetry heralds changes. Poetry is what gives cognition to music. Poetry is a beacon, let it illumine the path".

Some writers point out that poetry gives us a historical representation of what earlier generations found 'beautiful, important, or profound'. Some marvel at the power of poetry to address a vast range of subjects like love, war, social issues, the beauty of nature and the love of God. **All agree that** Poetry is a 'timeless, resourceful art, which could serve to value the youngest or eldest of readers.'

Nature and poetry One can find poetry everywhere, hiding in nature--in the smiling flowers, shining stars, deep dark woods, still clear waters or the enigmatic mountains, but one needs to have eyes to see and the mind to perceive it.

Look what the great poet (*Mahakavi*) Kumaranasan (Malayalam) from Kerala had to say. In a poem dedicated to the Goddess of Poetry (*Kavya Devatha*) the poet feels her presence everywhere---'in the slanting doe-eyes (of a beautiful woman) and in the hand-symbol of a sage in deep penance'----- 'She at times bathes in the pool of unending tears of children who lost their mothers, or, at other times in the rivulets of blood shed by fighting warriors". Unfortunately, in today's world, we don't have the time to 'stand and stare' or 'see' and reflect deeply on things that are not of immediate consequence to us.

"Poetry is the art of uniting truth with wonder"- Samuel Johnson

Why Poetry matters? Some say ‘as civilization advances, poetry declines’ We know that it is change that drives human progress. Poetry too is no exception. Technology has invented other modes of self-expression. Despite technology, Poetry may still appear in newer and simpler forms; or it may not disappear altogether. “*The poetry of earth is ceasing never*” wrote Keats (pl. see the Chapter on Poetry Dead or Alive?)

How Poetry Helps Writing and learning poetry still matter to us, even from a pragmatic point of view. Writer’s digest, a web forum dedicated to writing, has this to say

1. **POETRY IS GOOD FOR DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING-** It teaches children the art of creative expression, which most found highly lacking in the new-age educational landscape.
2. **POETRY IS GOOD FOR DEVELOPING SKILLS -**Writing, speaking, and understanding can all be greatly influenced and nurtured by the use of poetry.
3. **POETRY HELPS IMPROVE IDEAS-** Reading and writing poetry makes you think of new ideas, but can also dramatically change the way you perceived old ones. It is a way to process experiences, visual descriptions, and emotions.
4. **POETRY IS THERAPEUTIC FOR THE WRITER**
5. **POETRY IS THERAPEUTIC FOR THE READER**
6. **POETRY HELPS YOU UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORDS THEMSELVES--** writing and reading poetry makes one understand the significance of every single word and their placement.
7. **POETRY HELPS YOU UNDERSTAND PEOPLE-** Reading and writing poetry actually gives people the improved ability to understand others.
8. **POETRY HELPS YOU UNDERSTAND YOURSELF** (Courtesy: www.writersdigest.com)

We need not look anywhere else to understand why poetry matters to us. While discussing the poetic history of Assam, a writer from distant North-east in India has beautifully

summed it up “ Burdened with the complexity of the lives one leads, fretting over appearances, netted in with anxieties and apprehensions, half smothered in drift of tepid thoughts and tepid feelings, one may refuse what poetry has to give; but under its influence serenity returns to the troubled mind, the world crumbles, loveliness shines like flowers after rain, and, the further, reality is once more charged with mystery” .

Ref: www.theodysseyonline.com; allpoetry.com [www.eastmojo.com/ powerpoetry.org](http://www.eastmojo.com/powerpoetry.org)

“The purpose of poetry is to restore to mankind the possibility of wonder”-**Octavio Paz**

THE GREAT EPICS

The epics are the expressions of the deepest emotions and the noblest of thoughts that are unique to mankind. But do they reflect only the life and times of people about whom they were written?

Here we provide you a glimpse of the beginning of world poetic history and the composition of the great epics, and their lasting influence.

The Beginning According to historians, poetry in oral form predates written text and evolved from musical traditions. “The earliest poetry exists in the form of hymns, chants and other forms such as recorded prayers, or stories about religious subject matter, but they also include historical accounts, instructions for everyday activities, love songs and fiction’.

The earliest poetry is believed to have been recited or sung as they were rhythmic and repetitive; it made them easy to remember and retell. Many ancient works from the Vedas (1500- 500 B.C E ---for details pl. see Indian Poetry) to the Odyssey (800-675 B.C.E) were composed in poetic forms, to aid memorization and oral transmission.

Epic Poems Poetry makes its presence in the earliest records of many cultures across the world. Many famous literary masterpieces all over the world were written in the form of epic poetry.

Epic poems were common in the ancient world, because they could be narrated orally. Many ancient poets composed epics that were usually long, narrative poems, often describing adventures and heroic deeds of their heroes. They described the trials and tribulations of the heroes and other characters in the epics. People could easily identify themselves with those characters.

Plato called epic poetry a mixture of dramatic and narrative literature. The stories contained in the epics were so dramatic that they captured the complete attention of the listeners; those who watched their performances were spell-bound.

The Importance of Epics

The great epics have played an important role in shaping human culture and civilization, and that they indeed have a lasting impact in our lives. For they have influenced everything that matters to us- literature, poetry, dance, drama, art, paintings, music and so on.

Through stories narrated in these poems, poets attempted to teach lessons in morality and guide people to lead a virtuous life, individually and collectively, thereby showing them the way to the pursuit of ultimate happiness, and fulfilment.

Regardless of the language in which they were written, they portray the adventures of the human spirit; the great challenges in the life of individuals; the collective destiny of people; the rise and fall of kingdoms; of deaths and destruction of great cultures. Throughout the ages they have influenced our individual and collective conduct and behaviour. They helped to strengthen the bonds that held societies together.

We can easily discern what the epics teach us from a poem about the *Puranas* (ancient Indian legends and traditional lore) written

“Poetry is nearer to vital truth than history”-Plato

by the great Malayalam poet Vallathol. An approximate summary of a few lines from the poem is given below: -

They (the *Puranas*) rule by discriminating between justice and injustice; *dharma* (Righteousness) and *adharma* (immorality); without blinking an eye, they watch in amusement, the playful illusion turning dust into gold; they lament when the flower of human life falls into swamps..... The sceptre is thrown away and the yoga- staff is held; the golden crown turns into a pile of matted hair.... Through a stare with the force of power and authority, or restraining our hands with the power of love, or gently holding and stroking us lovingly, they stop us from acts of evil.

The Great epics It is indeed astonishing that epic poetry was written in ancient times by poets, living far apart from each other, when there were hardly any contact between different cultures. Although the stories were different, they were similar in many ways, sharing a common vision, values, and concerns.

When we consider the great epics of the world, we generally remember only some of them like the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the Iliad or the Odyssey. But surprisingly, we discover that there are other great epics in other languages and geographies too.

Let us now look at some of the more important epics.

Gilgamesh Written in Akkadian, the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is often cited as one of the earliest works of epic poetry, dating back to the **late 2nd millennium BC**.

Gilgamesh was a **hero in ancient Mesopotamian mythology**, and was the king of the Sumerian city-state of Uruk.



Gilgamesh as represented in an Assyrian palace relief

(713–706 BC) Wikipedia

The story of Gilgamesh is about the adventures of the hero together with the wild man Enkidu, whom he befriends. It narrates his arduous journey to the ends of the earth, in search of the secret of immortality. Themes like family, friendship and the duties of kings are also covered in this epic. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is, above all, 'about mankind's eternal struggle with the fear of death'.

"When all the illusions of personal immortality are stripped away, there is only the act to maintain, the freedom to act." John Gardner, **'The Epic of Gilgamesh'**.



The Deluge tablet, carved in stone, of the Gilgamesh epic in Akkadian, circa 2nd millennium BC (en.wikipedia.org)

Quote from Gilgamesh: “Gilgamesh, where are you roaming?

You will never find the eternal life that you seek.

When the gods created mankind, they also created death,

And they held back eternal life for themselves alone.

Humans are born, they live, then they die,

This is the order that the gods have decreed.

But until the end comes, enjoy your life, spend it in happiness, not despair-----

That is the best way for a man to live” — The Epic of Gilgamesh (Ref: sacred-texts.com)

Tales of Gilgamesh's legendary exploits are narrated in five surviving Sumerian poems. Written in cuneiform script, the text was discovered through many different Babylonian tablet versions, during archaeological excavations. The most complete surviving version of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is recorded on a set of twelve clay tablets.

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* has been translated into many major world languages. Most classical historians agree that the *Epic of Gilgamesh* exerted considerable influence on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, written in ancient Greek, during the 8th century BC. The Deluge tablet, carved in stone, of the Gilgamesh epic in Akkadian, is dated circa 2nd millennium BC (see box). There was one view that the Flood Story in the Book of Genesis recorded on the Deluge Tablet was directly copied from the one in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor According to Wikipedia, the oldest surviving poem in the world is the *Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor*, written in *Hieratic* and attributed to a date around 2500 B.C.E. It is a story from Middle Kingdom of Egypt (**approximately 2050 to 1710 BC**), recounting the voyage of the hero to "the King's mines". Some experts believe that the papyrus on which the story was written, most likely, predates *Gilgamesh* by half a millennium.

The Descent of Inanna (circa 2112 BCE – 2004 BCE) Inanna (Ishtar), was the daughter of Nanna. She was the ancient Sumerian goddess of love, beauty, fertility, and wisdom, among other things. The epic chronicles the journey of Inanna, the Queen of Heaven, ‘from her realm in the sky, to earth, and down into the underworld’ beneath the earth, to visit her sister, the queen of the underworld. Some sources say that this epic too precedes the Epic of Gilgamesh, but we do not know how authentic is the claim.

“Your great deeds are unparalleled; your magnificence is praised! Young woman, Inanna, your praise is sweet!” ---Lines 272-274.



Goddess Ishtar on an Akkadian

Empire seal, 2350–2150 BCE.

Wikipedia

Two different versions of the story of Inanna/Ishtar's descent into the underworld have survived- a Sumerian version (circa 2112 BCE – 2004 BCE) and an Akkadian version- from the early second millennium BCE. The Sumerian version of the story is nearly three times the length of the later Akkadian version, and contains much greater detail.

An article published in www.worldhistory.org interpreted the poem as “*an archetypal myth of the*

The Descent of Inanna- The Akkadian version begins with Ishtar approaching the gates of the underworld and demanding the gatekeeper to let her in:

*“If you do not open the gate for me to come in,
I shall smash the door and shatter the bolt,
I shall smash the doorpost and overturn the doors,
I shall raise up the dead and they shall eat the living:
And the dead shall outnumber the living!”* (ref: en.wikipedia.org)

journey each individual must take to reach wholeness. Inanna, ---- is not a `whole person' until she appears vulnerable before her `darker half', dies, and returns to life. At the poem's end, this interpretation asserts, Inanna, through her descent into darkness, the shedding of the trappings of her former self, confrontation with her `shadow', death of who she was, and final re-birth, is now a complete individual, wholly aware”.

The Ramayana & the Mahabharata Other examples of early epic poems include the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* from India, written in Sanskrit. The *Ramayana* has become ‘an important narrative in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology throughout regions of Asia’. Some scholars believe that either the *Mahabharata* or the Tibetan *Epic of King Gesar* is the longest example of epic poetry in history. In terms of narrative time, the action of the *Ramayana* predates the *Mahabharata*.

The Ramayana by the sage Valmiki, paradoxically a hunter, is one of the great epics of the Sanskrit language, and is dated approximately 200 B.C.E. It consists of nearly 24,000 verses, mostly set in the *Shloka*, divided into seven *khāṇḍas*, the first and the seventh being later

“No burden is too heavy for providence,
not even death.” – **Ramayana**

additions. It narrates the story of Rama, the ideal man and, with reference to his life, discusses the goals (*purushartha*) of human life.

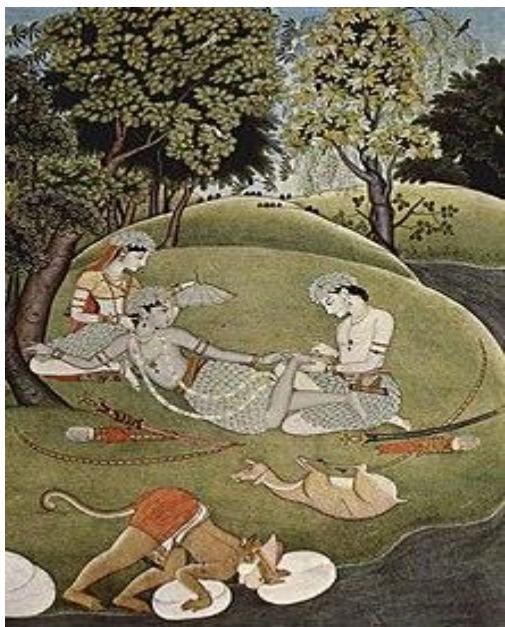
The Story line: Dasaratha, the King of Ayodhya had four wives, but none of them could give birth to a child. Later, a son was born to each of them after a *yagya* (sacrifice) was performed.

Ram, the eldest son born to Kausalya, his senior most wife, was the dearest to Dasaratha. He, therefore, desired that Ram succeeds him to the throne. In the meantime, Ram marries Sita, who was known for her dedication, self-sacrifice, courage, and purity.

Ram is banished to the forest for 14 years of exile and his younger brother Bharath is made the King, by the manipulations of Kaikeyi, the second wife of Dasaratha, and Manthara, her scheming maid. Rama proceeds to the forest accompanied by Sita and his younger brother Laxman. They face a series of challenges in the forest.

Sita is abducted by the Demon-king of Lanka (modern Sri Lanka). With the help of the Monkey God Hanuman and his army, Ram kills Ravana (who was though evil-minded was a great scholar) and rescues Sita. On return to Ayodhya, Ram is coronated as king. Two sons were born to them. But on the basis of a malicious rumor about the chastity of Sita, she was abandoned in a forest, along with his two sons.

Sage Viswamitra in whose Ashram she lived along with her two sons, brings her back to Ayodhya and she was asked to undergo an *agnipariksha* (test by fire) to prove her purity. Having proved her chastity, she refuses to be the queen of Ayodhya, but chooses to return the womb of the Earth, her mother.



Rama with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana during exile in the forest, manuscript, ca. 1780

(en.wikipedia.org)

“Those who have knowledge of dharma say that truth is the highest dharma.” – The Ramayana

Verses from The Ramayana

Poet: On Ram (Rama) the virtuous

*In the learning of the Vedas highest meed and glory won,
In the skill of arms, the father scarcely matched the gallant son!
Taught by sages and by elders in the manners of his race,
Rama grew in social virtues and each soft endearing grace,
Taught by inborn pride and wisdom patient purpose to conceal,
Deep determined was his effort, dauntless was his silent will!
Peerless in his skill and valor steed and elephant to tame,
Dauntless leader of his forces, matchless in his warlike fame,
Higher thought and nobler duty did the righteous Rama move,
By his toil and by his virtues still he sought his people's love!
Dasa-ratha marked his Rama with each kingly virtue blest,
And, from life-long royal duties now he sought repose and rest:*

2 : The curse of Dasa-ratha (father of Ram) when he unintentionally kills a blind hermit's son in the forest, while targeting an elephant

*The Hermit: 'Sorrow for a son beloved is a father's direst woe,
Sorrow for a son beloved, Dasa-ratha, thou shall know!
See the parents weep and perish, grieving for a slaughtered son,
Thou shalt weep and thou shalt perish for a loved and righteous son.*

3. The parting of Sita This is one of the most moving scenes in the Ramayana

*Sita: "If unstained in thought and action I have lived from day of birth,
Spare a daughter's shame and anguish and receive her,
Mother Earth: If in duty and devotion I have labored undefiled,
Mother Earth! who bore this woman, once again receive thy child!
If in truth unto my husband I have proved a faithful wife,*

Mother Earth! relieve thy Sita from the burden of this life!" (From the English translation of Ramayana: The Epic of Rama, Prince of India by Romesh C. Dutt)

Almost *three hundred versions* of Ramayana are available in the world and the Sanskrit version is the oldest one and attributed to the sage Valmiki. There are many versions of *Ramayana* in Indian languages, besides Buddhist, Sikh and Jain adaptations. There are also Cambodian (Reamker), Indonesian, Filipino, Thai (Ramakien), Lao, Burmees and Malay versions of the tale. Retellings include Ramayana in all major Indian languages like the Kamban's Ramavataram in Tamil (CE. 11th–12th century), Champu Ramayanam of Bhoja (CE-11th century) and Adhyathmaramayanam by Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan

"There is no deity powerful than time." – The Ramayana

in Malayalam (CE 17th century).

Tribal versions We found an interesting article on tribal versions of Ramayana in Deccan Herald (www.deccanherald.com), according to which one can witness a number of Ramayana versions among the tribes of Bhils, Mundas, Santhals, Gonds, Sauras, Korkus, Rabhas, Bodo-kacharis, Khasis, Mizos, Meiteis and so on. 'While retaining the structural and thematic unity of the text, the tribal communities linked the Ramayana with local geography and rituals by incorporating songs and narratives from the native repertoire; and by making the characters follow moral and ethical codes of the community, each tribal group renders its version of Ramayana'.

In Assam, where hill women have specialized in weaving, Sita is characterized as a fine weaver. In puppet shows among the tribals, some are worshippers of Ravana (*Ravana upasakas*) who believe that Ravana can never be killed.

Gonds from Madhya Pradesh have their own Ramayana, which reflects their local traditions and is closely linked with their oral narrative repertoire. They are also known for their distinct folk painting tradition.

There are also Buddhist and Jain variations in the tribal versions. In the *Tai-phake* community in the North-East, Rama is a Bodhisattva. The tribal dance forms of Ramayana in Odisha is known under the generic name of **Chhau Dance**.



(Chau dance- Credit: solitarytraveller.com)

Rama's brother Lakshman becomes the main hero in many tribal tales. In many folk and tribal versions, Sita takes the *avtar* of Kali and kills Ravana and other demons.

The greatest of Ramayana narrators Valmiki was a Kirat tribal. But due to his wisdom and saintly personality he became a Brahmana who learned Sanskrit. Once a savage, he became "Adi kavi" in Sanskrit by writing the epic Ramayana.

The Mahābhārata has been described as "the longest poem ever written". 'Its longest version consists of over 100,000 *śloka* or over 200,000 individual verse lines (each shloka is a couplet), and long prose passages. At about 1.8 million words in total, the *Mahābhārata* is roughly ten times the length of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* combined, or about four times the length of the Rāmāyaṇa'.

"The Ramayana's message is not that we passively give in to Destiny, but that we gallantly stick to Duty" — **Chaitanya Charan Das**



Sage Vyasa composing the Mahabharata (ref: Wikipedia)

The bulk of the *Mahābhārata* was probably compiled between the 3rd century BCE and the 3rd century CE, with the oldest preserved parts not much older than around 400 BCE. The original events related by the epic probably fall between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. The



The Song Divine *The battle at Kurukshetra is about to begin.*

The army on both sides are waiting with baited breath for the blowing of conch shell, signifying the start the battle. There comes prince Arjuna to the middle of the battle ground, between the two armies facing each other.

Arjuna is filled with moral dilemma and despair about the violence and death the war will cause in the battle against his own kin. The demoralized Arjuna is counselled by Lord Krishna, who was acting as his guide and charioteer during the war.

The Gita is set in a narrative framework of a dialogue between the two. Nowhere else in the world can one find a philosophical discourse taking place in the midst of an impending war. "The Krishna–Arjuna dialogues cover a broad range of spiritual topics, touching upon ethical dilemmas and philosophical issues that go far beyond the war Arjuna faces".

The Bhagavad Gita is the best known, and the most influential of Hindu scriptures. It is composed of 700-verses and forms a part of the epic Mahabharata (chapters 23–40 of book 6 of the Mahabharata called the Bhishma Parva), attributed to the second half of the first millennium BCE. 'It combines the spiritual and the practical, the divine and the worldly'.

text probably reached its final form by the early Gupta period (c. 4th century CE). Since that time, 'this story has been retold countless times, expanded upon, and retold again'.

The Mahabharata is divided into 18 parvas or Chapters with the main story revolving around two branches of the Kuru clan- the **Pandavas** and **Kauravas** – and their struggles for the throne of Hastinapura. The Kaurava is the senior branch of the family, Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, is younger than Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava. Both Duryodhana and Yudhishtira claim to be first in line to inherit the throne. Their feud culminates in the great battle of Kurukshetra (a place north of Delhi, in present Haryana state).

Several smaller stories, and philosophical discourses are inter-woven into this narrative. 'Including within it the **Bhagavad Gita**, the *Mahabharata* is one of the holiest

of **Hindu** scriptures and is one of the most important texts of

"The body of a man is like the chariot; his soul, the driver; and his senses, the horses. Drawn by those excellent steeds when well trained, he that is wise and patient, performs life's journey in peace.:- Vidura, Udyoga Parva, Mahabharata

ancient Indian, indeed world, literature’.

The *Mahabharata* remains popular to this day in India. It has been a part of folk lore, songs and music, performing arts for centuries together. It has been adapted as plays, TV serials, cartoons and films to suit the taste of contemporary audience. Children continue to be named after the characters in the epic. In most parts of India, the locals will invariably point out the association of the place with events, either of the Ramayana or the Mahabharata.

GITA-Quotes: - Krishna counsels Arjuna to fulfill his Kshatriya (warrior) duty to uphold Dharma (righteousness) through selfless action. Said Krishna: -

*“When meditation is mastered,
The mind is unwavering like the
Flame of a lamp in a windless place.
In the still mind,
In the depths of meditation,
The Self reveals itself.
Beholding the Self
By means of the Self,
An aspirant knows the
Joy and peace of complete fulfillment.
Having attained that
Abiding joy beyond the senses,
Revealed in the stilled mind,
He never swerves from the eternal
truth.”*

“You have a right to perform your prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions.”

“There are three gates to this self-destructive hell: lust, anger, and greed. Renounce these three.

“When a man dwells on the pleasure of sense, attraction for them arises in him. From attraction arises desire, the lust of possession, and this leads to passion, to anger.

From passion comes confusion of mind, then loss of remembrance, the forgetting of duty. From this loss comes the ruin of reason, and the ruin of reason leads man to destruction.”

“Death is as sure for that which is born, as birth is for that which is dead. Therefore, grieve not for what is inevitable.”

“Through selfless service, you will always be fruitful and find the fulfilment of your desires.”

A Persian translation of *Mahabharata*, titled *Razmnameh*, was produced at Akbar's orders, by Faizi and 'Abd al-Qadir Badayuni in the 18th century.

Beyond India, the *Mahabharata* story is popular in south-east Asia in cultures that were influenced by **Hinduism** such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Its various incidents have been portrayed in stone, notably in sculptured reliefs at Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom in Cambodia, and in Indian miniature paintings.

“Men lose good judgment in things which concern their interest.”

– Dhritrashtra, Bhishma Parva

Romesh C. Dutt who beautifully translated the verses of Ramayana into English says *“The Maha-bharata depicts the political life of ancient India, with all its valour and heroism, ambition and lofty chivalry. The Ramayana embodies the domestic and religious life of ancient India, with all its tenderness and sweetness, its endurance and devotion. The one picture without the other were incomplete; and we should know but little of the ancient Hindus if we did not comprehend their inner life and faith as well as their political life and their war-like virtues. The two together give us a true and graphic picture of ancient Indian life and civilization; and no nation on earth has preserved a more faithful picture of its glorious past”*

The Iliad and the Odyssey Great works of epic poetry include the *Iliad* (the *Song of*



Iliad or *Song of Ilium*) and the *Odyssey*, both attributed

to

[En.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

poet Homer, written in circa the 8th century BC. The *Iliad*, along with the *Odyssey*, are considered to be among the oldest surviving works of Western literature. They ‘include tales of heroism, pride, bravery, and war and provided men with guidance for their spiritual, ethical, and social lives’.

The *Iliad* recounts the battle between Achilles, a brave Greek warrior, and King Agamemnon of Troy, during the Trojan War. ‘Agamemnon with his greed, Achilles with his pride, Odysseus with his cunning, 'The Iliad' offers it all’.

Odyssey is another epic poem in 24 books traditionally attributed to Greek poet Homer. It recounts the story of Odysseus, Greek hero and the king of Ithaca, and his journey home after the Trojan War, during which time he encountered many perils, including the killing of all his crew mates.

On his return, he is recognized only by his faithful dog and a nurse. With the help of his son, Telemachus, Odysseus re-establishes himself in his kingdom after destroying the insistent suitors of his faithful wife, Penelope, and her many maids who had colluded with the enemies.

The Iliad is only great because all life is a battle, The Odyssey because all life is a journey, The Book of Job because all life is a riddle---**Gilbert K Chesterton**



15th-century manuscript of Book I written by scribe John Rhosos



The meeting between Achilles & Priam

Priam asking for the return of

hector's body (Ref: finerartamerica.com)

The meeting between Achilles & Priam is one of the most poignant scenes in the *Iliad*. When Hector, Trojan prince and son of old Priam of Troy was killed, Achilles did not give the body back to the Trojans, but took it with him to the Greek camp, thereby taking revenge on the killing of his dear friend Patroclus by the Trojans. Then Priam, goes alone to the Greek camp, and with great humility, to beg Achilles to return his son's body.

"Priam entered in, and coming close to Achilles, clasped in his hands his knees, and kissed his hands, the terrible, man-slaying hands that had slain his many sons----

-----Achilles seized with wonder at sight of God-like Priam, and seized with wonder were the others likewise, and they glanced one at the other.

But Priam made entreaty, and spake to him, saying: "----- Nay, have thou awe of the gods, Achilles, and take pity on me, remembering thine own father. Lo, I am more piteous far than he, and have endured what no other mortal on the face of earth hath yet endured, to reach forth my hand to the face of him that hath slain my sons."

So spake he, and in Achilles he roused desire to weep for his father; and he took the old man by the hand, and gently put him from him.

So, the twain bethought them of their dead, and wept; the one for man-slaying Hector wept sore, the while he groveled at Achilles' feet, but Achilles wept for his own father, and now again for Patroclus; and the sound of their moaning went up through the house.

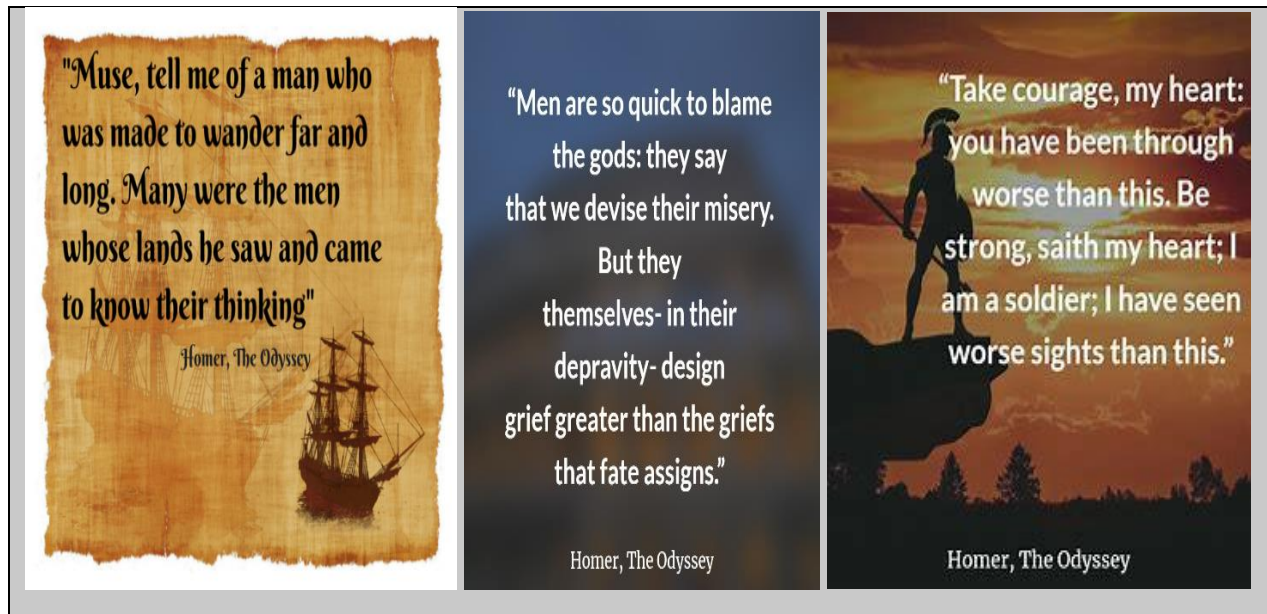
But when godly Achilles had had his fill of lamenting, and the longing therefore had departed from his heart and limbs, forthwith then he sprang from his seat, and raised the old man by his hand, pitying his hoary head and hoary beard; and he spake and addressed him with winged words: "-- - How hadst thou the heart to come alone to the ships of the Achaeans, to meet the eyes of me that have slain thy sons many and valiant?----- But come, sit thou upon a seat, and our sorrows will we suffer to lie quiet in our hearts, despite our pain; for no profit cometh of chill lament"-----.

In the end, the body of Hector is returned to his father Priam. This meeting finally leads to the end of war between the Greeks and the Trojans (The *Iliad*, Book- 24, Translated by A. T. Murray)

"A man who has been through bitter experiences and travelled far enjoys even his sufferings after time"

— Homer, The *Odyssey*

Although the *Odyssey* was originally composed in around the 8th or 7th century BCE all volumes of the *Odyssey* in circulation were in handwritten Greek. In 1488



(Ref: bing.com)

the first printed version in Greek was produced in Florence. The first English translation of the *Odyssey* by playwright and poet George Chapman came out in the 16th century. "The *Odyssey* is filled with adventure, longing and temptation, the struggle between good and evil, and hard-won triumph. It is an enduring classic because its hero, Odysseus, and his story, though centuries old, are remarkably human and continue to grip the contemporary imagination".

Parallels between the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Odyssey* have been pointed out. Both Odysseus and Gilgamesh travel to the ends of the earth, and go to the land of the dead. The *Odyssey* has inspired many works of art and fiction such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922); Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad* (2005), the tale told through the eyes of Penelope; and the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) by Coen brothers. The epic continues to enthrall all who are interested in the poetry of travel and adventure in ancient times.

We have highlighted only some of the great epics the world has produced. It is possible that there could be more in other languages too. We have epic poetry in every major language in India!

The Future of Epics In countries like India the tradition of reading, interpreting and discussing the great epic of Ramayana still continue in many parts of the country. In the State of Kerala one month in the rainy season is dedicated to reading the Ramayana and is called

"A man who has been through bitter experiences and travelled far enjoys even his sufferings after a time"
— Homer, The Odyssey

the 'Ramayana month'. These traditions are now mostly confined to the older generation. But how long will these traditions survive? Today, electronic modes of communication are replacing human imagination and sublimation. It is ever-increasingly difficult for us to spare time to read and enjoy the great classics.

The vast river of poetic history, however, continues to flow in the fast-moving technological era too, but without having the same ideals, the spirit of inquiry and the yearning for adventure. But numerous tributaries of newer, short-span, poetry, however, continue to mushroom. The ideals for which the great epics stand for, and the philosophical and moral battles fought and won depicted by them, and the odyssey in search of the ultimate may continue to inspire humanity for a long time to come. ■

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.worldhistory.org; writingexplained.org; businessplaners.com; glimpsesofhistory.com; www.goodreads.com; archive.org; www.britannica.com; www.learnreligions.com; odyssey.org;

The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out—**Walter Benjamin**

POETRY THROUGH THE AGES: PART-11

Section-1 Here we give a brief account of the rise poetry in early stages, and important poetic movements. In **Section 11** we outline the development and evolution of poetry in major languages of Western Europe, and also the English language poetry, in UK and America. In **Section 111**, we pay a tribute to women poets of those times.



The Parnassus (1511) by Raphael: famous poets recite alongside the nine Muses atop Mount Parnassus.

Section-1 Early Poetry

Poetry has been an integral part of human history and civilization. According to historians, prior to beginning of poetry, language appeared either as an intrinsic ability in humans, or it developed as a product of social interaction.

In the long history of evolution of various languages, it is difficult to pin point exactly when, where and how poetry began. Nevertheless, the historical timeline of poetry, as noted in www.worldhistory.org, is broadly indicated below: -

1. Ancient Poetry: 5000 BC - 2150 BCE - c. 1400 BCE- The Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh written on clay tablets; 1900 BCE - c. 1600 BCE-The poem "Descent of Inanna" written
2. Medieval Poetry: 400 A D
3. The Renaissance Era: 1500 A D
4. Neo-Classical Poetry: 1660-1800 AD
4. The Romantic Era: 1798- 1850 AD
5. Modern Poetry: 1850- Present

"Poetry is one of the ancient arts, and it begins as did all the fine arts, within the original wilderness of the earth." —**Mary Oliver**

Classification Aristotle's *Poetics* categorized poetry as epic, comic, and tragic, developing



rules to assess the quality poetry of each genre. Others, later on, identified three major genres: epic poetry, lyric poetry and dramatic poetry, combining comedy and tragedy as sub-genres of dramatic poetry. Aristotle's influence lasted throughout during the Golden Age of Islam, as well as the European Renaissance.

Poetry--Evolution of subjects and styles By **medieval times** -- about 455 to 1485 -- poets began playing with the subject and language of their poems---- -use of Vernacular language in the place of Latin by Medieval poets, like Geoffrey Chaucer.

The **Renaissance period** (1485-1660)- poets developed new structures and forms of meter. Playwrights like William Shakespeare incorporated poetry in their plays.

Period of Enlightenment (1660-1790) -- return to the classical Greek styles. **The Romantic period** (1790-1830), Romantic poets focused on individuality and nature, and valued creativity over logic.

Transcendentalist's movement (1836-1860) In the United States, new poetic styles emerged, breaking away from the established institutions of society, focusing on creativity, nature and individuality. Poets like Walt Whitman wrote in free verse or completely without meter.

During the **Victorian period** (1832-1901), poets continued to break away from the established forms and structures.

Since the beginning of **20th century up to now**, there have been many changes to the way poetry is written and read. Ref: entertainment.howstuffworks.com

Poetic Movements According to Wikipedia, throughout history, there have been hundreds of major and minor community-based movements – such as the Ancient Greek poetry schools, Provençal literature, Sicilian court poets, Elizabethan and Romantic poets, American Transcendentalists, Paris expatriates (Surrealist), and Beat poets and that they changed the course of poetry during and after their respective eras.

Ancient Greek poetry (7th to 4th centuries B.C.)

Poetic movement started as a part of an overall cultural and intellectual movement in Greece, with its golden age lasting for nearly three centuries. Ancient Greek poets are credited with *writing* poetry, whereas, the earlier civilizations had followed the oral tradition.

Ancient Greek poetry is usually divided into two categories: Epic poetry and Lyric poetry. Homer and Hesiod are considered the **ancient Greek epic poets**, while Sappho and Pindar are probably the most well-known **lyric poets**.

After the age of epic poetry, shorter, more personal poems written for feasts and weddings

“Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.” —T.S. Eliot

came into fashion. By the seventh century BC lyric poetry was spreading across Greece. Some compare lyric poetry in ancient Greece to modern rock music, with the lyric poets being the rock stars of ancient Greece.

The greatest Greek lyric poet in ancient Greece was Sappho, 'one of the rare women whose voice emerges from Greek antiquity' (see write-up on women poets).



Homer

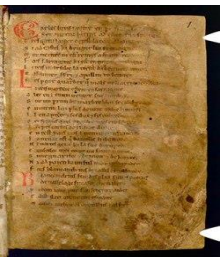
Greek poets wrote hundreds of dramas featuring lyric poetry, which were performed before the local kings. Most of the classical forms of poetry later developed into literature, drama, music and poetry, including the ode, epic, lyric, tragedy, and comedy which spread through the Western world, forming the basis for modern literature. The most prominent among the writers during that period were Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Pindar, Aeschylus, Anacreon, and Euripides. With its conquest first by Alexander the Great and then by Rome the golden age of culture in Ancient Greece came to an end.

The Romans developed their own dramas and poetry, but were heavily indebted to Greeks. The Roman Republic and its successor the Roman empire were known for producing a wealth of great literature, including poetry, much of which survives to this day.

Medieval times (about 455-1485) By this time poets started to fiddle with both subjects and language of their poems. Poetry and other scholarly works till that time were written in Latin. Some of the medieval poets like Geoffrey Chaucer started writing poetry in the language of common people -the vernacular language.

The Provençal Troubadours

Poetry was the earliest form of French literature by late Middle Ages. The French



Song of Roland- Manuscript Bodleian Library

MS Digby 23, Part 2 (Wikipedia) epic ***Song of Roland***, by anonymous and considered as the national epic of France, was written during that period. It is an epic poem based on the Battle of Roncevaux in 778 AD during the reign of Charlemagne, and is considered to be the oldest surviving major piece of French literature. It is found in different manuscript versions that shows its great popularity during the period from 12th to 14th centuries

During the medieval period many of the romances and epics initially written in verse were converted into prose versions.

Medieval French lyric poetry had its roots in the poetic and cultural traditions of Provence in Southern France,

"Gods, not wanting to deprive the **Greeks** of the truth, they gave them **poetry**." – **Joseph Joubert**

including Toulouse, Poitiers, and the Aquitaine region, where the language spoken was Occitan. French poetry was also influenced by poetic traditions from the Hispano-Arab world. The Provençal Troubadours (French medieval lyric poets composing and singing in Provençal) began as singer-poets in courts. “These poets travelled to communities to deliver poems, news, songs, and dramatic sketches in their masterful lyrical styles. Among those deeply influenced were Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarca, and Geoffrey Chaucer. Forms like the sestina, rondeau, triolet, canso, and ballata originated with the Provençal poets. With a gift for rhythm, meter, and form, the musicians and poets created a masterful style by the 13th century”.

Unfortunately, the Popes of the Holy Roman Empire did not support the Provençal Troubadours; in fact, did their best to suppress them. With the Inquisition, the Provençal movement came to an end in the 13th century, though a few poets continued into mid-14th century. Most troubadours fled to Spain and Italy, where two new movements started flourishing.

Sicilian School (mid-13th to early 14th centuries) Inspired by the Provençal troubadours, a small group of Sicilian poets in the court of Frederick II turned verses into lyrical poetry.

The Sicilian movement integrated the Arabic, Byzantine Greek, and Latin poetic influences, and in turn, influenced poetry in England during the Elizabethan and Shakespearean eras. Between 1230 and 1266, court poets wrote hundreds of love poems, working in a derivative of canso, the canzone, the most popular verse form that later on, developed as the sonnet. Invention of new words led to the development of a new language -Italian. Among the best-known poets were de Lentini, Pier delle Vigne, Renaldo d'Aquino, Giacomo Pugliese, and Mazzeo Ricco.

According to Wikipedia, “the Sicilian poets made several changes to Provençal structure, including the discontinuation of repetitive and inter-changeable lines. They also wrote poetry to be read, rather than accompanied by music, and created the 14-line sonnet structure, broken into an octet and sestet, which stands to this day”.

By 14th century, canzones, ballads and sonnets of Sicilian poets captured the attention of the likes of Dante and Petrarch. As a result, they spread throughout Bologna, Florence, and other emerging literary centres.

Elizabethan and Shakespearean eras As the progress in composing poetry that reached its zenith during the Italian Renaissance faded, the ballad and the sonnet found their way to England. Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the forms to the existing lyrical and narrative poetry. Sonnets were the leading form of poetry in the late 16th and early 17th century England, primarily through the works of Wyatt, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare. Their efforts helped in modernizing the English literature. Shakespeare left indelible marks on world literature.

The open society during the Elizabethan era enabled poets to write on a variety of subjects. ‘In many ways, the Elizabethan era more closely resembled the expressionism of

“Watch carefully the magic that occurs when you give a person enough comfort to just be themselves”-Atticus

the Ancient Greeks, than the Sicilian and Italian Renaissance schools from which it derived its base poetry’.

Metaphysical poets

The metaphysical poets gained prominence a hundred years after poetry achieved its heights in the Elizabethan era. They wrote on subjects like nature, philosophy, love and meta physics, departing from the primarily religious poetry that prevailed at that time.

Beginning with John Dryden, the metaphysical movement continued through the 18th century, and ended with the rise of romantic poetry. More important metaphysical poets during the era were Samuel Cowley, John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Henry Vaughan, George Chapman, Edward Herbert, and Katherine Philips.

Romantic poets

The Romantic period, or Romanticism, is regarded as one of the greatest movements in literary history, authored chiefly by seven poets -William Blake (1757- 1827), William Wordsworth (1770 –1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 –1834), Lord Byron (1788 – 19 April 1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822), and John Keats (1795-1821). It lasted approximately three decades – from the rise of William Blake in late 1790s to the death of Lord Byron in 1824.

American Transcendentalists (1836-1860)

The Transcendentalists who rose to prominence in early 19th century in the U.S., stood for utopian values, spiritual exploration, and full development of the arts. They rebelled against the prevailing culture, for, they considered it to be too puritanical; to them the educational system was too intellectual. Noted among the Transcendentalists were Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Orestes Brownson, William Ellery Channing, Sophia Peabody, and her husband, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Beat movement (1948-1963)

According to Wikipedia, “A combination of disenfranchisement, wanderlust, and creative expression prompted a handful of New York and San Francisco students and young intellectuals to spearheaded the Beat movement, considered the most influential movement of the past 100 years. But it lasted only for 15 years”.

SECTION-11

In the previous section we saw how poetry emerged as poetic movements in the Western Europe, UK and USA. Here we look at their poetic history in more detail.

1. Greek Poetry

In the previous section we saw how the poetic movement developed in ancient Greece. Now we look at the entire Greek poetic history.

The Greek poetic history is divided into different periods----**Ancient Greek** (800 BC – 350 AD) which is sub-divided into

“We are but dust and shadow”
— Horace, The Odes of Horace

Pre-classical (800–500 BC), Classical (500–323 BC), Hellenistic (323–31 BC) and Roman Age (31 BC – 284 AD), Byzantine (350–1453) and Modern Greek poetry (1453–present).

Ancient Greek literature (800 BC–350 AD) refers to oldest surviving written works in the Greek language and includes the works up to the fifth century AD.

Pre-classical (800–500 BC) poetry was based on myths. It includes the works of Homer-- the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The Classical period (500–323 BC) saw the beginning of drama and history. Many of the genres of western literature- lyrical poetry, odes, pastorals, elegies, epigrams- were composed during the period. The two major lyrical poets were Sappho and Pindar. Only a few of the hundreds plays written and composed then have survived.

The Hellenistic (323–31 BC) period refers to the period between the death of Alexander the Great and the rise of Roman domination. After the 3rd century BC, the Greek colony of Alexandria in northern Egypt became the center of Greek culture where Greek poetry flourished. Of the many poets who lived during the period, Theocritus, (310 to 250 BC), the creator of pastoral poetry, Callimachus, and Apollonius of Rhodes were famous.

Roman Age (31 BC – 284 AD)

Many important works on the subjects of poetry, comedy, history, and tragedy were composed during this period.

Byzantine literature (350–1453) *Digenes Akritas* is the most famous of the Acritic songs and is often regarded as the only surviving epic poem from the Byzantine Empire.

The period from 1453 up to the end of 19th century saw the revival of Greek and Roman studies. *Erotokritos*, a verse romance written around 1600 by Vitsentzos Kornaros (1553–1613) is a prominent work of this period.

20th Century poetry The Second World War, followed by the civil war, was a turning point in Greek poetry resulting in a generation of poets who expressed disillusionment and defeat. Kostis Palamas, Angelos Sikelianos, Yiannis Ritsos, Odysseus Elytis Dionysios Solomos, George Seferis are some of the important names in modern Greek poetry.

George Seferis (1900 – 1971) was a noted Greek poet of the 20th century. He was *awarded the Nobel prize*

Odysseas was a Greek translator. He major exponent

“One should learn even from one’s enemies.”
— **Ovid, Metamorphoses**

in Literature in 1963.
Elytis (1911 – 1996) poet, essayist and was regarded as a

of romantic modernism in Greece and the world.

Elytis’s poetry collections include *What I Love: Selected Poems of Odysseus Elytis*, translated by Olga Broumas (1978), *Maria Nefeli: Skiniko Piima* (1978, translated as *Maria the Cloud: Dramatic Poem*, 1981), and *The Axion Esti* (1959, translated as *Worthy It Is*, 1974). He was *awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature* in 1979.

“Of all creatures that breathe and move upon the earth, nothing is bred that is weaker than man”-**Homer**



"The Axion Esti" (1959) which translates to "It Is All Right" is the most famous poem composed by Odysseas Elytis and is "regarded as a monument of contemporary poetry". Axion Esti is a long poem in which 'the speaker explores the essence of his being, as well as the identity of his country and people'

The poem is inspired by the 'memories of the 1940-1941 war, the German occupation, the Greek resistance and the Greek Civil War that followed'. Elytis having experienced all these critical phases of the modern Greek history considers them as 'timeless siege of Greece by the forces of Evil'. This poem was set to music by Mikis Theodorakis and became very popular.

The Axion Esti is divided into three sections: "The Genesis," "The Passion," and "The Gloria," and is considered as the autobiography of the poet. The first section details Odysseus Elytis' great love for his own country; the second section deals with the loss of innocence from World War 2, and the final section is the re-discovery of beauty that still remains. A few lines from the Genesis

*In the beginning the light And the first hour
when lips still in clay
Try out the things of the world
Green blood and bulbs golden in the earth
And the sea, so exquisite in her sleep, spread
Unbleached gauze of sky
Under the carob trees and the great upright palms (Ref: theculturetrip.com)*

Contemporary Poets

There are quite a few young Greek poets today. Due to paucity of space, we are not going into details. These poets keep the Greek poetry alive.

2. Roman Poetry

Roman literature began near the end of the 3rd century BCE. The earliest Roman poetry (Latin poetry) dates back to the second century B. C. Poetry was a popular and widespread art form, and the poets of that age continue to influence the way we think about poetry today.

Roman poetry initially was basically adaptation of Greek poetry, for, many of the poets were actually Greek or were influenced Greek poetry. Roman poems were composed not only on chiefly Greek mythological themes, but also on themes like love and angst, philosophy, and retelling of historical epics, relating to early history of Rome." Roman poetry borrowed the style of the Greeks; however, it surpassed that style".

The Golden Age of Roman poetry (c. 70 BCE – 14 CE) produced some of the great writers such as Virgil, Horace, Catullus, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid.



Publius was Vergilius Maro or Virgil (70 – 19 BCE) a Roman poet of the Augustan period, wrote the Greek

*'A great fortune is a great slavery'-
Seneca*

classic *The Aeneid*. It is Virgil's most widely recognized work. It is an epic story of the journeys of Aeneas, after the fall of Troy, and passing through the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus, to the age of Augustus.

Virgil's Aeneid

The *Aeneid* is an epic poem in Latin, written by Virgil between 29 and 19 BC.

In Greco-Roman mythology, Aeneas was a legendary Trojan hero, the son of the Trojan prince Anchises and the Greek goddess Aphrodite. The poem *Aeneid* narrates the legendary story of Aeneas, a Trojan, who fled the fall of Troy and travelled to Italy, where he became the ancestor of the Romans.

In Book 6, Aeneas travels to the underworld where he sees his father Anchises, who tells him of his own destiny as well as that of the Roman people. Anchises describes how Aeneas' descendant Romulus will found the great city of Rome, which will eventually be ruled by Caesar Augustus:

*Turn your two eyes
This way and see this people, your own Romans.
Here is Caesar, and all the line of Lulus,
All who shall one day pass under the dome
Of the great sky: this is the man, this one,
Of whom so often you have heard the promise,
Caesar Augustus, son of the deified,
Who shall bring once again an Age of Gold
To Latium, to the land where Saturn reigned
In early times* (Ref en.wikipedia.org)



Quintus Horatius Flaccus, commonly known as Horace (65 BCE – 8 BCE) was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus. He wrote satires, sharply criticizing the vices of that time. He wrote odes with themes of love, friendship, philosophy, and the art of poetry, and 'viewed nature as the primary source for poetry'.

His verse-essay *Ars Poetica* on the art of poetry became famous. He is credited with the famous phrase "*carpe diem*" — "seize the day."

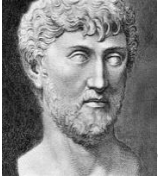


Ovid Pūblius Ovidius Nāsō in 43 BC, known by his Anglicized name 'Ovid' was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus. He was one of the most prolific poets of his time and is often ranked as 'one of the three canonical poets of Latin literature, along with Virgil and Horace'.

It is said that with Ovid, Roman Poetry attained 'an elegance and lyricism to rival that of any Greek'. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, inspired authors such as Chaucer, Milton, Dante, and Shakespeare. For Shakespeare, it served

*"How each man weaves
his web will bring him
to glory or to grief-" Virgil (Aeneid)*

as the inspiration for some of his plays, including *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Two famous Roman poets of the golden era of Roman Poetry are **Marcus Annaeus Lucanus**, better known as **Lucan (39 – 65 CE)**, and **Publius Papinius Statius (45 – 96 CE)**.



Titus Lucretius Carus, Lucretius or simply Lucretius (c. 99 – c. 55 BC) was a poet and philosopher. He was known as “A Man of Rationalism and Reasoning”. He is credited with a series of didactic poems titled *De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things)* written in c. 60 BC, which was regarded as a dangerous threat to religious belief. *The poem has a remarkable description of Brownian motion of dust particles in verses 113–140 of Book II. He uses this as a proof of the existence of atoms.*



This new age under the reign of Augustus also produced many young Latin poets like **Gaius Valerius Catullus (84 BCE – 54 BCE)**. Catullus is considered one of the greatest of all Roman lyric poets.

Impact Roman literature had a far and wide impact on the rest of the world, especially, the Western world. Ancient Romans spoke and wrote in Latin, which spread throughout the world. Latin became the mother language from which a group of languages known as the “Romance languages” that include Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, and Catalan evolved.

Let us now look at the chief languages that evolved from Latin.

3. Italian poetry

Italian poetry traces its roots back to the 13th century. We have already seen the origins of Italian poetry, and how it influenced the poetic traditions of many European languages, including English.

Important Italian poets of that period include **Giacomo da Lentini (13th century)**, who is credited with the invention the sonnet and **Dante Alighieri (1265 - 1321)** who wrote *Divina Commedia*, the greatest literary work in the Italian language. Later poets include **Giosuè Carducci (1835 - 1907)** and **Eugenio Montale (1896 – 1981)** who won the Nobel Prizes in literature in 1906 and 1975 respectively and **Torquato Tasso** whose poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (Jerusalem Liberated) was a masterpiece. Decadence of Italian literature began in the late 16th century, continued during the 17th century and the early 18th century.

Contributions by some of the most famous to Italian poetry are mentioned below: -

1. **Giacomo da Lentini (13th Century)** also known as Jacopo da Lentini and Il

“The gods conceal from men the happiness of death, that they may endure life—”
Lucan or Marcus Annaeus Lucanus

Notaro, was 'acclaimed as a master by the poets of the following generation, including Dante, who memorialized him in the *Purgatorio*'. He is believed to be the inventor of the sonnet.

2. **Dante Alighieri** -*Sommo Poeta* ("the Supreme Poet")



Dante Alighieri is commonly referred to as **Dante (c. 1265 – 1321)**, was born in Italy and was one of its greatest poets. Dante started writing poetry in the vernacular language when, during those times most poetry was written in Latin, which was accessible only to a few readers. Important Italian writers such as Petrarch and Boccaccio followed the precedent set by him later. English writers as Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton and Alfred Tennyson, among many others were influenced by his writings.

Dante is considered as the "father" of the Italian language. His ***Divine Comedy*** is widely considered one of the most important poems of the Middle Ages and the greatest literary work in the Italian language (box below).

As someone noted, the *Divine Comedy* is not a comedy. The journey starts from hell and ends with Dante's visit to heaven and meeting with God. "It is a profound Christian vision of humankind's temporal and eternal destiny. it may be read as an allegory, taking the form of a journey through hell, purgatory, and paradise. The poem amazes by its array of learning, its penetrating and comprehensive analysis of contemporary problems, and its inventiveness of language and imagery..... His depictions of Hell, Purgatory and Heaven greatly influenced and inspired Western art and literature".

"The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis." — Dante Alighieri

The Divine Comedy

(From the last Canto of Paradiso xxx111, 46-48,52-66)

*As I drew nearer to the end of all desire,
I brought my longing's ardor to a final height,
Just as I ought. My vision, becoming pure,*

*Entered more and more the beam of that high light
That shines on its own truth. From then, my seeing
Became too large for speech, which fails at sight*

*Beyond all the boundaries, at memories undoing—
As when the dreamer sees and after the dream
The passion endures, imprinted on his being*

*Though he can't recall the rest. I am the same:
Inside my heart, although my vision is almost
Entirely faded, droplets of its sweetness come*

*The way the Sun dissolves the snow's crust---
The way, in the wind that stirred the light leaves,
The oracle that the Sibyl wrote was lost.*
(Translated from Italian by Robert Pinsky)

However, Italian poetry is not all about Dante or "The Divine Comedy." There were other great poets too.

3. Petrarch



Francesco Petrarca, (1304 – 1374), "Petrarch" to the English-speaking world, was a famous poet of early Renaissance Italy.

Petrarch is often regarded as the founder of Humanism because of his significant contribution to the popularity of the classical world and literature study. Other European poets admired and imitated his sonnets which became a model for lyrical poetry. He is best known for the narrative poem *Trionfi* (The Triumphs) and *Rerum Vulgarium fragmenta* (Fragments of Vernacular Matters), his collection of

366 lyric poems in various genres known as *canzoniere* (Song Book). Petrarch's poetry was frequently adapted to music after his death.

4. Matteo Maria Boiardo (1440 – 1494)



Count Matteo Maria Boiardo was an Italian Renaissance poet, most noted for his epic poem called *Orlando innamorato* (Orlando/Roland in Love).

6. **Torquato Tasso** (1544 –1595) was a famous Italian poet of the 16th century. Tasso is best-known for his 1591 epic called *La Gerusalemme liberata* (Jerusalem Liberated) which depicts the imaginary combats between Christians and Muslims at the end of the First Crusade in 1099. His work was widely translated and adapted, and until the beginning of the 20th century, he remained one of the most widely read poets in Europe.

"There is no lighter burden, nor more agreeable, than a pen"— **Petrarch**

6. Giacomo Leopardi (1798 –1837)



Considered the greatest Italian poet of the 19th century, Giacomo Leopardi is one of the most important figures in world literature. He is noted as one of the principals of literary romanticism.

7. Giosuè Alessandro Giuseppe Carducci (1835 – 1907)



Regarded as the official national poet of modern Italy, Giosuè Carducci was *the first Italian to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature* in 1901. In 1863, he penned the anti-Vatican “*Inno a Satana*” (“Hymn to Satan”). However, he would be reconciled to the Catholic Church three decades later.

Giosuè Carducci’s most notable works are *Odi barbare* (Barbarian Odes) published in 1877 and *Rime nuove* (New Rhymes) in 1887.

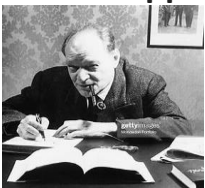


Gabriele D’Annunzio (1863 – 1 March 1938) was an Italian, poet, playwright, orator, journalist, aristocrat, ultra-nationalist, and army officer during World War I. He occupied a prominent place in Italian literature from 1889 to 1910 and later political life from 1914 to 1924.



9. Umberto Saba (1883 –1957) Noted for his simple, lyrical autobiographical poems, Umberto Saba’s poetry was influenced by Petrarch, Giosuè Carducci, Giacomo Leopardi. Some of Saba’s most renowned poems include “Trieste,” “*Ulisse*” (Ulysses), and “*La Capra*” (The Goat).

10. Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888 –1970)



Giuseppe Ungaretti was one of Italy’s foremost poets of the 20th century. His debut as a poet took place while fighting in the trenches during World War I, in one of his most renowned pieces called *L’allegria* (*The Merriment*).

“ Every evening words, not stars, light the sky. No rest in life like life itself ---- **Umberto Saba**”

Some of his poems were made into songs and set into music. He apparently wrote shortest Italian poem, "Mattina" (Morning).

11. Eugenio Montale (1896 – 1981)



Montale was a leading Italian poet of the 20th century. Montale along with Giuseppe Ungaretti and Salvatore Quasimodo are often named as the founders of the poetic school called hermeticism. Montale received the *Nobel Prize in Literature* in 1975.

12. Salvatore Quasimodo



Salvatore Quasimodo (1901 –1968) who was awarded *the Nobel Prize in Literature* for his lyrical poetry and, along with Giuseppe Ungaretti and Eugenio Montale, was one of the top Italian poets of the 20th century.

An outspoken anti-Fascist, Quasimodo was known for his poems commenting on modern social issues.

Modern Italian poetry Twentieth-century Italian poetry is 'haunted by countless ghosts and shadows from opera'. Echoes of Opera are found in Modern Italian Poetry too.

According to critics "--the diminished prominence of the lyric poem and the decreasing intellectual prestige accorded poets—two undeniable phenomena are not limited to Italy----Italian poetry of the last century is far from homogeneous: genres and movements have often been at odds with one another, engaging the economic, political, and social tensions of post-unification Italy".

4. FRENCH POETRY

Poetry is the earliest form of French literature; the prose as a literary form developed much later. In the late Middle Ages, many of the romances and epics, originally written in verse, were converted into prose.

By the late 13th century, the poetic tradition in France had begun to diverge significantly from the Troubadour poets, both in content and in the use of certain fixed forms. Some of the earliest medieval music has lyrics composed in Old French. **Roman de Fauvel** , a satire written in 1310 and 1314 is an example. The best-known poet and composer during the period was **Guillaume de Machaut**.

French poetry continued to evolve in the 15th century. **Charles, duc d'Orléans** who lived during the Hundred Years' War, wrote about loss and isolation in his ballades. **Christine de Pisan** was one of the most prolific writers of her age; her "Cité des Dames" is considered a

"I have always knocked at the door of that wonderful and terrible enigma which is life"-
Eugenio Montale

kind of feminist manifesto" (See section on Women Poets). **François Villon** was a vagabond poet who wrote satires. He attained a mythical status in the 16th century, and was championed by rebel poets in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Poetry in the initial years of the 16th century was subjected to experimentation by poets such as **Jean Lemaire de Belges** and **Jean Molinet**, generally called "les Grands Rhétoriciens". Soon French poetry was profoundly influenced by **Petrarch**, and Italian poetry through the poets in the French court, and the rediscovery of Greek poets such as **Pindar**. French poets **Clément Marot** and **Mellin de Saint-Gelais** are credited with some of the first sonnets in French language.

French poetry took a new direction in the work of the humanist **Jacques Peletier du Mans**, who in 1541, published the first French translation of Horace's "Ars poetica". In 1547 he published a collection of poems "**Œuvres poétiques**", which included translations from the first two cantos of Homer's *Odyssey* and the first book of Virgil's *Georgics*.

Poetry at the end of the 16th century was profoundly marked by the civil wars: Poet **Agrippa d'Aubigné**, wrote a poem on the conflict: ***Les Tragiques***.

poetry became one of the principal modes of literary production of noblemen and of professional writers in the **17th and 18th centuries**. Poetry was written to celebrate events like a marriage, birth, military victory or to solemnize a tragic event such as a death or military defeat.

Poetry was the chief form of 17th century theater: the vast majority of scripted plays were written in verse. Poetry was used in satires. **Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux** is famous for his "Satires" (1666). As far as epics are concerned, from the 1660s, three poets namely- **Jean de La Fontaine** ((1668–1693), famous for his "Fables" inspired Aesop, **Jean Racine** the greatest tragedy writer of his age and **Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux** and **Jean Chapelain's *La Pucelle*** became noted for poetic classicism. "Classicism" in poetry would dominate until the pre-romantics and the French Revolution.

French poetry from the first half of the 19th century was dominated by Romanticism associated with such authors as **Victor Hugo**, **Alphonse de Lamartine**, and **Gérard de Nerval**. The Romantics were responsible for a return to fixed-form poems used during the 15th and 16th centuries, as well as for the creation of new forms. By the middle of the century, an attempt to be objective was made in poetry by the group of writers known as the *Parnassians*.

The 20th century was noted for radicalized poetic exploration of modern life. Poets like Paul Éluard, André Breton, Louis Aragon and Robert Desnos and others, the founders of the Surrealist movement, were influenced by the notion of unconsciousness propounded by Sigmund Freud. The surrealists tried to reveal the workings of the unconscious mind, and the surrealist movement continued to be

"Like a French poem is life; being only perfect in structure when with the masculine rhymes mingled the feminine are" ----**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

a major force in experimental writing and the international art world, until the Second World War.

Surrealism forms the basis of understanding contemporary French poetry. The new poetry explores 'an unfamiliar world, far more psychotic than sentimental--- the gulf separating prose and poetry has widened due to influence of surrealism'. The young poets today write in this new language of poetry.

A Few Famous French Poems

1. ***Les Roses De Saadi* by Marceline Desbordes Valmore (1786 – 23 1859)**. Published in 1860 this beautiful poem is titled "*The Roses of Saadi*". Marceline Desbordes – Valmore was known as "The most charming, the most natural" **French** Poet (pl. see the section on Women Poets)

2. ***Le Lac* by Alphonse De Lamartine (1790-1869)** was a **poet, historian, and statesman**



an. He attained fame for his lyrics in *Méditations poétiques* (1820), which established him as one of the key figures in the Romantic movement in French literature. *Le Lac* (The Lake) is considered to be one of the most iconic French poems about love.

3. ***Demain, dès l'aube*, ("Tomorrow, at Dawn")** by Victor Hugo (See box)



Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885) is considered to be one of the greatest French writers of all time. With a career spanning over 60 years, he wrote in a variety of genres and forms. He was also renowned for his poetry collections, such as *Les Contemplations* (The Contemplations) and *La Légende des siècles* (The Legend of the Ages).

Demain, dès l'aube, ("Tomorrow, at Dawn") by Victor Hugo is a classic poem-- one of the best-loved in French. It forms a part of Hugo's poem collection, *Les Contemplations*. It is a recount of the time Hugo visited his daughter's grave (she had passed away a few years before in a drowning accident).

Tomorrow, at Dawn...

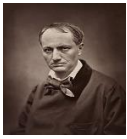
*Tomorrow, at dawn, when the countryside turns white,
I leave. You see, I know you are waiting for me.
I will go through the forest, I will go across the mountains.
I cannot stay away from you any longer.
I will walk with my eyes fixed on my thoughts,
Without seeing anything outside, without hearing any noise,
Alone, unknown, back bent, hands crossed,
Sad, and the day for me will be like night.*

*I will not watch the gold of the falling evening,
Nor the sails in the distance descending towards Harfleur,
And when I arrive, I'll put on your grave
A bouquet of green holly and flowering heather.* (ref: en.wikipedia.org; dreamsinparis.com)

"If I speak, I am condemned.
If I stay silent, I am damned!"

— Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*

4. À Une Passante by Charles Baudelaire (1821 – 1867)



Charles Baudelaire was an icon of the modern literature movement in France. Baudelaire's highly original style of prose-poetry influenced a whole generation of poets. His most famous work, a book of lyric poetry titled *Les Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*), expresses 'the changing nature of beauty in the rapidly industrializing Paris during the mid-19th century'. His famous poem *À une passante* ("To a Passerby") elaborates upon the poet's experience of being in awe of the beauty and poise of a woman he passed by on the street. Here are a few lines ---

*The deafening street around me roared.
Tall, slim, in deep mourning, majestic grief,
A woman passed, lifting and swinging
With a pompous gesture, the hem and flounces of her skirt,*

*As for me, I drank, twitching like a crazy man,
From her eye, livid sky where*

*the hurricane is born,
The softness that fascinates and the pleasure that kills,
A lightning flash... then night! O fleeting beauty,
By whose glance I was suddenly reborn,
Shall I see you again only in eternity?*

5. Le Dormeur Du Val by Arthur Rimbaud



Jean Nicolas Arthur Rimbaud (1854 – 1891) was a French poet whose works deeply influenced the Symbolist movement and Surrealism. Published in 1888, **Le Dormeur Du Val** is one of the most famous French poems of all time and was written by the poet when he was just 18 years old. It is a moving tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in war. When he wrote this piece, France was at war with Prussia.

The Sleeper of the valley *A young soldier, open-mouthed, bare-headed
With his neck bathed in the blue-green cress
Sleeps; he's stretched out in the grass, under the sky,
Pale on his green bed where the light falls like rain.
His feet in the gladiolas, he sleeps.
Smiling as a sick child would smile, he takes a nap.
Nature, cradle him warmly: he's cold!*

*No perfume makes his nostrils quiver;
He sleeps in the sun, hand on his chest,
Quiet. There are two red holes on his right side. (Ref: lyricstranslate.com)*

*"The poet is he who inspires, rather than he
who is inspired." — Paul Éluard*

5. ***Le Pont Mirabeau* by Guillaume Apollinaire (1880 – 1918)** was a French



poet, playwright, short story writer, novelist, and art critic. Apollinaire is considered one of the great poets of the early 20th century, as well as “one of the most impassioned defenders of Cubism and a forefather of Surrealism”. The poem **The Mirabeau bridge** was first published in 1912 as part of the poet’s collection titled “*Alcools*” (Alcohol).

7. ***Liberté* by Paul Eluard**



Paul Éluard (1895 - 1952), was a great French poet and one of the founders of the Surrealist movement and is considered the most gifted of French surrealist poets. During World War II, he wrote and clandestinely circulated several poems against Nazism. He became known worldwide as The Poet of *Freedom*. Written in 1942 by this poem titled *Liberté* (Liberty!) is an ode to liberty.

9. ***Les Feuilles Mortes* by Jacques Prévert**



Jacques Prévert (1900 – 11 April 1977) was a renowned French poet and screenwriter. His poems still remain popular in the French-speaking world and are learned in schools. Written in 1946, *Les Feuilles Mortes* (“The dead leaves”) ‘uses dead autumn leaves to symbolize the memories of the love that was lost and replicates the feelings of emptiness and nostalgia for the reader’.

(Note: This is no way an exhaustive list of famous French poets and their famous poems. We have included only a few of them, due to paucity of space)

5. Spanish Poetry

Spanish Verse boasts of ‘one of the widest ranges and more comprehensive catalogues of genres, verse and stanzaic forms in the poetry world’. A mention has already been made as to how the early history of Spanish poetry was influenced by the traveling Troubadours, the Church, the Moors and French Romanticism.

In the early days of poetry, primitive lyrics were written in *Mozarabic dialect* that has Latin origins, with a combination of Arabic and Hebrew. This was perhaps the oldest form of poetry in Spain.

The **Medieval period** covers 400 years of different poetry, chiefly religious and didactic.

“When truth is no longer free, freedom is no longer real: the truths of the police are the truths of today.” — **Jacques Prévert**

The **Spanish epics** emanated likely from France. *Cantar de Mio Cid*, *Cantar de Roncesvalles*, and *Mocedades de Rodrigo* are considered parts of the Spanish epics.

The first works of Spanish poetry were written during the Middle Ages. The Poem of *El Cid*, (author unknown), is credited as the first work written in verse in Spanish. In this poem the heroic deeds, of *El Cid* are recounted.

Thereafter, we see the rise of Mester de Clerecía (Clerical Minstrel Poetry), a medieval literature genre, written by clerics to spread Christian faith, covering a wide range of topics that include religion, philosophy, history, knowledge, and adventures. Examples are *The Miracles of the Virgin Mary*, *Poema de Fernán González*, *Book of Alexander*, *Cato's Examples*, and *Book of Apolonio*.

During the following period the use of language shifted from Galician-Portuguese to Castilian. Main themes were derived from Provençal poetry and the verses were generally compiled into books, known as **Cancioneros**. Main works include *Cancionero de Baena*, *Cancionero de Estuniga*, and *Cancionero General*. Other important works from this era include parts of *Dance of Death*, *Dialogue Between Love and an Old Man*, verses of *Mingo Revulgo*, and verses of the *Baker Woman*.

The XV Century continued with the same medieval patterns, namely the didactic and religious. The Castilian poet **Jorge Manrique** was prominent during this period.

The Renaissance period was noted for publication of *Don Quijote*, in 1605 by Miguel De Cervantes in 1605. "The Renaissance instilled a division between the natural and supernatural in reaction to The Middle Ages, where religion was always present'. Three types of poetry developed during this period namely - *the Profane* (represented by Garcilaso De La Vega who wrote about love and *the pastoral life*), *the Ascetic* (noted poet: Fray Luis De Leon) and *the Mystical* (represented by Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa of Jesus).

The Baroque period -XVII century saw the 'emergence of skepticism and pessimism in reaction to the idealism and optimism of the Renaissance'. Poet Góngora and Quevedo, were the noted poets of this period.

The **Enlightenment and Neo-classicism** started in France in the 18th century 'signified a return to the classical, with an educational and moral aim'.

Romanticism - At the start of the 19th century arose Romanticism as a reaction to the rationalism from the previous era. The most important poets are **Espronceda and Bécquer**. José de Espronceda wrote his best poems after coming into contact with the English Romanticism.

Realism and Naturalism- In the 19th Century Realism looked for the objective representation of reality.

Modernism- 20th century -characterized by search for a formal beauty. Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, who initiated Modern Poetry, had a simple and intimate style:

"To conquest without risk is to triumph without glory"-**El Cid**

*“The dark swallows will return
To build their nests on your balcony
And once again with their wings on the glass
They will call you out to play.
But those that the flight deterred
Those who learned our names
Those...will not return!”*

Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) was a Spanish poet, playwright, and theater director. He belonged to *Generation of '27*, a group of poets who essentially worked with avant-garde forms of art and poetry. The Generation of 27 owe their name to the celebration of the third centenary of the death of the poet Góngora, whose work they admired. Among them were **Federico García Lorca, Rafael Alberti, Vicente Alexandre and Luis Cernuda.**

Post-war literature 20th century literature after the Spanish civil war was called the *period of Social Realism*, dealing with social realities and injustices.

The decade of the 60s and the Modern era. In Spain, the main modernist poet was Juan Ramon Jimenez. The authors of the *98 Generation* wanted to renew society and they were concerned with the problems of Spain.

Women Poets We have some of the best poems in Spanish written by women who hail from South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Spain. Their works include short romantic and simple poems. Some of their poems have been translated into English. Their names include **Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda** Cuban writer known for her romantic poems and play, **Delmira Agustini**, poet from Uruguay, **María Elena Walsh** novelist, playwright, musician, and poet from Argentina, **Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz**, one of the most famous Latin American poets of all time, **Alejandra Pizarnik** Argentinian poet, **Gabriela Mistral Chilean**



poet who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1945, becoming the *first Latin American ever to do so*, **Mercedes Negrón Muñoz**, Puerto Rican poet who was born in 1895 and is one of the most recognized postmodern writers of her time, **Rafaela Chacón Nardi** famous Cuban poet, **Nydia Lamarque** 20th century Argentine poet and **Rosario Castellanos** poet, an author, diplomat, and one of Mexico's most influential literary voices of the 20th century.

“You shall create beauty not to excite the senses
but to give sustenance to the soul. ”
— **Gabriela Mistral**

6. English poetry

English today is spoken and written not only in Britain but also in countries which were its former colonies, and has been expanding to all continents. It is the language of global knowledge and commerce.

In Section 11 we already saw origins of English poetic history. Here we provide a further account of its development.

Early poetry

The earliest surviving English poetry was composed in Anglo-Saxon, the direct predecessor of modern English, as early as the 7th century. The poem is a hymn on the creation attributed to **Cædmon** (fl. 658–680), who was, according to legend, an illiterate herdsman.

The great epic **Beowulf** is the only heroic epic to have survived in its entirety. The date of its composition is a matter of contention among scholars; but the manuscript was produced sometime between 975 and 1025.



The first page of *Beowulf* in Cotton Vitellius A. xv.

The

Dream of Rood Written before circa AD 700, it is one of the Christian poems of Old English literature and an example of the genre of dream poetry.

Subsequently, poems were composed on historical events, such as *The Battle of Brunanburh* (937) and *The Battle of Maldon* (991); others were religious or devotional works; yet others were elegies such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *The Ruin*.

Anglo-Norman period and the later Middle Ages With the Norman conquest of England, beginning in 1111, the Anglo-Saxon language underwent a gradual transition into Middle English. Around the turn of the 13th century, **Layamon** wrote his **Brut**, in Middle English.



The new aristocracy spoke predominantly Norman. It became the standard language of courts, parliament, and polite society. English language in 1362 replaced French and Latin in Parliament and courts of law.

It is with the 14th century that major works of English literature began once again to appear; these include the works

*"I give thanks to God / for all this gold and treasure
that I see before me / and for the opportunity to give
it / to my countrymen on this, my last day. / I have
traded my life for this treasure / so be sure to use it
for the good of our country"* - **Beowulf**

of **Chaucer**, ‘the most highly regarded English poet of the Middle Ages, who was seen by his contemporaries as a successor to the great tradition of Virgil and Dante’. **Geoffrey Chaucer** (1340s – 1400) was a poet, author, and civil servant, best known as the author of *The Canterbury Tales*. He was known as the "Father of English poetry".

The rise of **Scottish poetry** began with the writing of *The Kingis Quair* by James I of Scotland. The main poets of this Scottish group were Robert Henryson, William Dunbar and Gavin Douglas. Henryson and Douglas ‘introduced a note of almost savage satire’. Douglas translated Virgil's *Aeneid* into Middle Scots named *Eneados*.

The Renaissance was slow in coming to England, starting around 1509, extended until the Restoration in 1660. With a few exceptions, the early years of the 16th century are not particularly notable. **Thomas Wyatt (1503–42)**, was one of the earliest English Renaissance poets.

He introduced the sonnet from Italy into England in the early 16th century.



Shakespeare also popularized the English sonnet, which made significant changes to Petrarch's model.

The Elizabethans

Elizabethan literature refers to bodies of work produced during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603).

There was a genuine sympathetic support for poetry and the arts in general during her rule. We have already noted the growth of English poetry during this period. This period saw the emergence of Elizabethan song tradition, which was about a courtly poetry often centered around the monarch, and also the growth of a verse-based drama. Among the best known examples is Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.



William Shakespeare

Poets of this period composed poems on themes from classical mythology. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and the Christopher Marlowe/George Chapman's *Hero and Leander* are examples of this kind of work. Translations of classical poetry also became more widespread. Chapman's translations of Homer's *Iliad* (1611) and *Odyssey* (c.1615), are the outstanding examples. **Poetry: 1603–1660** English Renaissance poetry, post Elizabethan era, is categorized as the *Metaphysical*, the *Cavalier* and the *School of Spenser*.

“What more felicity can fall to creature, than to enjoy delight with liberty?”---Edmond Spenser

The term **Metaphysical poets** was coined by the critic Samuel Johnson to describe a loose group of 17th-century English poets whose work was 'characterized by the inventive use of conceits, and by a greater emphasis on the spoken rather than lyrical quality of their verse'. **Abraham Cowley, John Donne, and John Cleveland** were three of the noted poets during this period.

The **Cavalier poets** wrote in a lighter and more elegant style than the Metaphysical poets. Leading members of the group include **Ben Jonson, Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick, Edmund Waller, Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and John Denham.**

The poets who belonged to the **School of Spenser** were the followers of **Edmund Spenser** is



(1552/1553 – 1599) who is considered one of the pre-eminent poets of the English language. **Phines Fletcher** (1582-1648) and **Giles Fletcher** (1583-1623) are the most important poets of this school.



John Milton (1608–74), one of the greatest English poets, is generally considered to be the last major poet of the English Renaissance. But his most renowned epic poems were written in the Restoration period, including *Paradise Lost* (1667). Milton also wrote *L'Allegro*, 1631; *Il Penseroso*, 1634; *Comus* (a masque), 1638; and *Lycidas* (1638).

Paradise Lost is an epic poem detailing the Christian creation story, from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. The story narrates the rebellion of Satan, the creation of the world, and finally the fall of mankind.



PARADISE LOST-JOHN MILTON

Book-1

*Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of EDEN, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of OREB, or of SINAI, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen
Seed,*

--- (Ref: owlcation.com)

Satirists All the major poets of the period, **John Dryden** (1631 – 1700- literary critic, translator, and playwright (who in 1668 was appointed England's first Poet Laureate), **Alexander Pope** (1688 – 1744-- poet, translator, and satirist), **Samuel Johnson** (1709 –1784--- writer who made lasting contributions as a poet, playwright, essayist, moralist, critic, biographer, editor and lexicographer) and the Irish poet **Jonathan Swift** (1667 –1745-- Anglo-Irish satirist, author and essayist, poet), wrote satirical verses during the early eighteenth century.

*"The life so brief, the art so long in the learning,
the attempt so hard, the conquest so sharp, the
fearful joy that ever slips away so quickly—
"- Chaucer*



Alexander Pope was best known for his poems *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), *The Rape of the Lock* (1712–14), *The Dunciad* (1728), and *An Essay on Man* (1733–34).

Towards the end of the 18th century, poetry began ‘--to move away from the strict Augustan ideals and a new emphasis on the sentiment and feelings of the poet was established’. The leaders of this new trend include **Thomas Gray, George Crabbe, Christopher Smart** and **Robert Burns** as well as the **Irish poet Oliver Goldsmith**. These poets paved the way for the Romantic movement.

Romantic Movement (1800-1850) was an artistic, literary, musical and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century. It developed as a reaction against prevailing Enlightenment ideas of the 18th century. Generations of the English-speaking world have admired the romantic poets.

The Romantic movement emphasized the creative expression of the individual and made nature central to their work. They believed in expression of passion, pathos, and personal feelings. For them ‘life is centered in the heart, and the relationships we build with nature and others through our hearts defines our live’. The chief among the great Romantic poets were William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, George Byron, Percy Shelly, and, of course, John Keats. Unfortunately, some of them died young; Keats, at the age of 26, Shelley at 30, while Byron died at 36.



William Blake (1757 – 1827) was an English poet, painter, and print maker. He was largely unrecognised during his lifetime. He is held in high regard by later critics for ‘his expressiveness and creativity, and for the philosophical and mystical undercurrents within his work’.

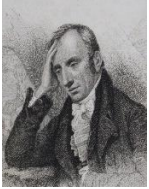
Between 1793 and 1795 Blake produced a collection of poems known as the “Minor Prophecies” that include *In Europe* (1794), *The First Book of Urizen* (1794), *The Book of Los* (1795), *The Song of Los* (1795), and *The Book of Ahania* (1795). Blake had an enormous influence on the beat poets of the 1950s and the counterculture of the 1960s. In 2002, Blake was placed at number 38 in the BBC's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons. His visual artwork is also highly regarded around the world.

Here are the oft-quoted lines from his poem **Auguries of Innocence**.

“To err is human; to forgive is divine—”
Alexander Pope

***“To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour”***

William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850) is one of the founders of English Romanticism. “He is



remembered as a poet of spiritual and epistemological speculation, a poet concerned with the human relationship to nature, and a fierce advocate of using the vocabulary and speech patterns of common people in poetry”. Wordsworth was Poet Laureate of England from 1843 until his death in 1850.

Wordsworth was a great poet of nature. Students of the earlier generations used to learn his poems by-heart in their schools and colleges. Two of his famous poems taught in schools in India were ‘The Daffodils’ and "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood".

Wordsworth is best known for *Lyrical Ballads*, co-written with Coleridge, and *The Prelude*, generally considered to be his *magnum opus*, a semi-autobiographical poem of his early years that he revised and expanded many times. *Look at these lines from the poem*

*Prelude--**Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!***

Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought!

That giv’st to forms and images a breath

And everlasting motion! not in vain.

‘**Tintern Abbey**’ is Wordsworth’s most famous poem, published in 1798. My heart leaps up when I behold’, ‘A slumber did my spirit seal’, and ‘The Solitary Reaper’ **are some of his other famous poems.**

No one who has read the poems of Wordsworth can ever forget his two poems ----The Daffodils and the Ode to Immortality. In the poem ‘I wandered lonely as a cloud’ (commonly known as the Daffodils) the poet visualizes ‘*a host, of golden daffodils, beside the lake, beneath the trees, fluttering and dancing in the breeze; Ten thousand saw I at a glance, tossing their heads in sprightly dance----- For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye, Which is the bliss of solitude*”(Pl. see the Travel Section for details)

When we are old, we do look back at the joys of our childhood. Wordsworth beautifully captures those sentiments in the following lines from this famous poem ‘Ode: Intimations of Immortality’.

*“Come fairies, take me out of this dull world,
for I would ride with you upon the wind and
dance upon the mountains like a flame”—W.
B. Yeasts*

'Ode: Intimations of Immortality'

**There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day.
The things which I have seen I now can see no more ...**

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 -1834), poet, literary critic, philosopher, and theologian, who, along with Wordsworth, founded the Romantic Movement in England. He was one of the Lake Poets. His poetic works include *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*.



Biographia Literaria is a major prose work by him. His critical work, especially on William Shakespeare, was highly influential. He had a major influence on Ralph Waldo Emerson and American transcendentalism.

George Gordon Byron (1788 – 1824) or Lord Byron, was one of the leading figures



of the Romantic movement. Byron was regarded as the most flamboyant and notorious of the major English Romantic poets, whose poetry and personality captured the imagination of Europe.

Don Juan and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* are among his best-known works. Many of his shorter lyrics in *Hebrew Melodies* also became popular. Wrote Byron--

'There is pleasure in the pathless woods, there is rapture in the lonely shore, there is society where none intrudes, by the deep sea, and music in its roar; I love not Man the less, but Nature more' (*'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage'* (1812-18) canto 4, st. 178)



Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 –1822) was one of the major English Romantic poets. He was known as a radical in his writings, as well as in his political and social views. Shelley did not achieve fame during his lifetime, but his fame grew steadily following his death. He is described as "a superb craftsman, a lyric poet without rival, and surely one of the most advanced skeptical intellects ever to write a poem."

Among his best-known works are

*"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring
be far behind?"-Shelley*

"Ozymandias" (1818), "Ode to the West Wind" (1819), "To a Skylark" (1820), the philosophical essay "The Necessity of Atheism" written alongside his friend T. J. Hogg (1811), and the political ballad "The Mask of Anarchy" (1819). His other major works include the verse drama *The Cenci* (1819) and long poems such as *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude* (1815), *Julian and Maddalo* (1819), *Adonais* (1821), *Hellas* (1822), and his final, unfinished work, *The Triumph of Life* (1822). His work *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) is considered a masterpiece.

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts

Shelley also wrote prose fiction and a quantity of essays on political, social, and philosophical issues. Much of this poetry and prose was not published in his lifetime.



John Keats (1795 –1821) belonged to the **second generation of Romantic poets**, along with Lord Byron and Shelley. He was comparatively unknown during his short life time. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 25. He ‘devoted his short life to the perfection of a poetry marked by vivid imagery, great sensuous appeal, and an attempt to express a philosophy through classical legend’. The odes (essentially lyrical meditations on some object) are considered to be Keats’s most distinctive poetic achievement.

Today his poems and letters remain among the most popular in English literature and analysed extensively, in particular "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Sleep and Poetry" and the sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer".

Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* and Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark* are ‘two of the glories of English literature’.

‘Ode to a Nightingale’

*Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call’d him soft names in many a mused
rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy! - ----John Keats*

‘TO A SKYLARK’

*Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.
--Shelley*

The Romantic movement came to a close by the end of the 19th century, due to untimely deaths of the younger poets. However, it profoundly influenced poetry not only in Britain, countries of the Europe and America, but also its former colonies like India wherein Hindi and Regional poetry are indebted to Romantic Poetry for its lasting influence.

The Victorian era denotes Queen Victoria's reign (1837- 1901). It was a period of great political, social and economic change. The major Victorian poets were **John Clare, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, William Butler Yeats, Rudyard Kipling, Thomas Hardy, and Gerard Manley Hopkins.**

Comic verse abounded in the Victorian era. Magazines such as *Punch* and *Fun magazine* teemed with humorous invention.

Keats and Shelly



*At the foot of the beautiful Spanish steps built on a steep slope, in Rome, Italy, a house is located, where the English poet John **Keats** died in 1821.*

Keats moved to Rome after he fell ill, hoping that the weather in Rome would favor his health. However, he died within a few months, aged 25, from tuberculosis.



Some say that young Keats recited his poems to a successful woman and writer, Mary Shelley, walking along the stone steps. The house is now a museum where people can see different memorabilia of Keats's work and that of the English Romantics.

*Though Shelley and Keats were mutual friends, their world view was different. Keats was a romantic; Shelley was an idealist. Upon learning of Keats's illness, Shelley graciously requested him to stay with his family in Italy, which the poet politely declined. Shelley wrote the beautiful elegy **Adonis** after Keats died.*



The very next year, Shelley himself drowned in a ship-wreck; and his body was washed ashore. A volume of Keats's poetry was found in his pocket. Both Keats and Shelly are buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome.

One of our Life Stream team members had visited both the museum and the cemeteries of Keats and Shelly way back in 1980. She was indeed surprised to learn that in death both the great poets were united, that too in a foreign land. Watching nature showering petals on the tomb of Keats in the Protestant Cemetery during a hailstorm was a poignant moment of her visit.

*"Beauty is truth, truth beauty -- that is all
ye know on earth, and all ye need to
know"---John Keats*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, FRS (1809-1892) was the leading Victorian poet. "His poetry is remarkable for its metrical variety, rich imagery, and verbal melodies. It dealt often with the



doubts and difficulties of an age in which traditional religious beliefs about human nature and destiny were increasingly called into question by science and modern progress". He was the Poet Laureate during much of Queen Victoria's reign. His early poems were "Timbuktu" and *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), which included "Claribel" and "Mariana". In 1832 Tennyson published another volume of his poems (dated 1833), including "The Lotos-Eaters," "The Palace of Art," and "The Lady of Shalott." Tennyson also excelled at short lyrics, such as "Break, Break, Break", "The Charge of the Light Brigade", "Tears, Idle Tears", and "Crossing the Bar". Much of his verse was based on classical mythological themes, such as "Ulysses". *In Memoriam*, a long poem of 131 sections, mourned the untimely death of his friend Hallam. The poem also touches on many contemporary issues of the Victorian Age.

In our old age we look back on our life and our life's experiences. Some of us, like the Greek hero Ulysses, yearn for more knowledge and newer experience in our old age. Tennyson has described these feelings beautifully as

*I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.* (From Ulysses-Lines 18-21)

Sometimes we ask ourselves the question why do we live? Tennyson explains the meaning of life through the words of his hero

*"To follow knowledge like a sinking star
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought"*

Another line from the same poem

"To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield". To those in their old age who believe that there is nothing more to be done in life, Tennyson's words are inspiring, for, they provide them with a reason to live further.

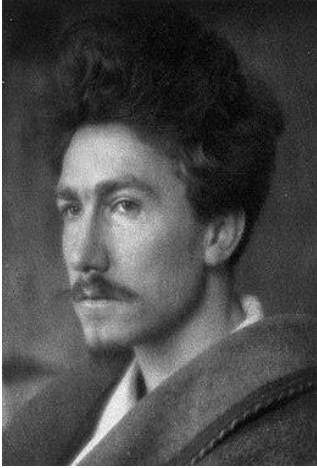
The end of Victorian era Towards the end of the century, English poets began to take an interest in French symbolism, and, Victorian poetry entered a decadent phase. **The twentieth century** The Victorian era continued into the early years of the 20th century.

The **Georgian poets** were the first major grouping of the post-Victorian era. Their work appeared in a series of five anthologies called *Georgian Poetry* The poets featured included **Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, D. H. Lawrence, Walter de la Mare** and **Siegfried Sassoon**. Their poetry represented something of a reaction to the

"The great art of life is sensation, to feel that we exist, even in pain" --**Lord Byron**

decadence of the 1890s and tended towards the sentimental. **Thomas Hardy** (1840 – 1928) and **Rudyard Kipling** (1865 –1936) were great writers and poets of this age. Kipling is the author of the famous inspirational poem *If—*, which is an evocation of Victorian stoicism, as a traditional British virtue.

Modernism Among the foremost avant-garde writers were the American-born poets **Gertrude Stein**, **T. S. Eliot**, H.D. and **Ezra Pound**, **D. H. Lawrence** and others.



Ezra Weston Loomis Pound (1885 –1972) was an expatriate American poet and critic, who lived in London in early years. He a major figure in the early modernist poetry movement. In the course of time he turned into a fascist collaborator in Italy, during World War II and had to undergo imprisonment and great suffering in his final years. He played a part in developing Imagism, ‘a movement stressing precision and economy of language’. His works include *Ripostes* (1912), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), and his epic poem, *The Cantos*.



T.S. Eliot (1888 – 1965), American-born British poet was considered one of the major poets of 20th century and a central figure in English-language Modernist poetry. He was awarded the 1948 Nobel Prize in Literature, ‘for his outstanding, pioneering contribution to present-day poetry’.

“If you can wait, and not be tired by waiting ... if you can dream, and not make dreams your master; if you can think, and not make thoughts your aim; if you can meet with Triumph and Disaster, and treat those two impostors just the same; ... yours is the earth and everything that's in it...” **Rudyard Kipling**

THE WASTE LAND

Published in 1922, this year we celebrate **100 years of his writing this poem.**

PART 1 - BURIAL OF THE DEAD

*What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
your shadow at morning striding behind you
or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust*

(allpoetry.com/T-S-Eliot)

Published in 1922, **The Waste Land** is widely regarded as one of the most important poems of the 20th century. This year marks 100 years of publication of the great poem.

"The Hollow Men" another of his famous poems was published in 1925. It marked "The nadir of the phase of despair and desolation, given such effective expression in 'The Waste Land'. Look at these famous lines from the poem: -

***"This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang, but a whimper"***

The other famous poets of the 20th century include **A. E. Housman (1859-1936); Alfred Douglas (1870 – 1945); Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874-1936 and Edward Thomas (1878-1917)** -an encounter with Robert Frost inspired him to write poems. He was killed during World War I; **A. A. Milne (1882-1956); D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930) J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973); Robert Graves (1895-1985); C. Day Lewis - 1904-1972**-British poet and Poet Laureate from 1968 until his death in 1972; **W. H. Auden (1907-**

1973) Anglo-American poet; **Philip Larkin (1922-1985); Ted Hughes (1930-1988) and Michael Rosen B. 1946.**

English poetry Today

Today the English language is spoken world- wide. English literature has been enriched by writers and poets from countries across the world. Due to paucity of space, we have not explored the beautiful garden of English poetry, full of native and exotic blooms.

7. American poetry American colonists started writing poetry in the 17th century, well before the unification of the Colonies. As is aptly observed "On the whole, the development of poetry in the American colonies mirrors the development of the colonies themselves".

The early American poetry stood for Puritan ideals. Later on, it reflected the strides made by the colonies towards independence. Early colonists' poems were modelled after contemporary English. However, in the 19th century, American poetry developed its own distinct identity. By the later part of the

"Here is our poetry, for we have pulled down the stars to our will" -**Ezra Pound**

century, American Poets attained individuality, fame and success.

Much of the American poetry published between 1910 and 1945 remained confined to political periodicals, mostly belonging to the far left. Many were destroyed during the McCarthy era in the 1950's.

Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot were influential English-language poets in the first half of the 20th century 'who rejected traditional poetic form, meter and of Victorian diction'. African American and women poets made significant contributions during this period. Toward the end of the millennium, there was increased emphasis on poetry by women, African Americans, Hispanics, Chicanos, Native Americans, and other ethnic groups. It is remarkable that a significant number of poets appeared during the period, which lead us to believe that the new- found freedom in America inspired traditionally neglected groups like women and African Americans to express their deepest emotions and feelings through poetry. Some of the famous American poets are: -

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803- 1882)



Ralph Waldo Emerson was an essayist, lecturer, philosopher, and poet. He was the leader of the American Transcendentalist movement in the 1820s and 1830s. He popularized individualism through his writings and influenced many thinkers and writers that followed him. He mentored Henry David Thoreau, who later became a leading transcendentalist.

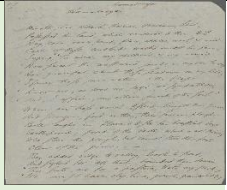
Emerson believed that "Nature is a language and every new fact one learns is a new word; but it is not a language taken to pieces and dead in the dictionary, but the language put together into a most significant and universal sense".

Emerson composed great poetry, which was beautiful, at the same time, profound. Here are lines from his Collected Poems and Translations

*"See yonder leafless tree against the sky,
How they diffuse themselves into the air,
And ever subdividing separate,
Limbs into branches, branches into twigs,
As if they loved the element, & hasted
To dissipate their being into it." — Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is
patience-R.W. Emerson"

He wrote the 'Boston Hymn' in late 1862, just before the proclamation of American Independence. Brahma, the Concord Hymn, Fate, Give All to Love, Teach Me Your Mood, "O patient



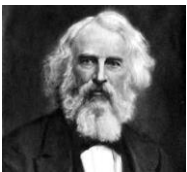
Hamatreya Emerson wrote this beautiful poem which explores 'the permanence of mother earth in comparison to the transience of human beings' Emerson was fascinated with the Hindu scriptures, especially the sacred Vedas. The poem, 'Hamatreya' (a shortened form of "Hail Maitraya) is based on a passage of the Vishnu Purana.

To a question raised by his disciple Maitreya regarding the real worth of earthly possessions Sage Parasara replies thus: -

*Where are these men? Asleep beneath their grounds:
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boy
Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs;
Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet
Clear of the grave.
Ah! the hot owner sees not Death, who adds
Him to his land, a lump of mould the more. (Credit: Poetry Foundation)*

stars!', Terminus, The Bell, The Mountain and the Squirrel', The Rhodora', 'The River', The Snow-Storm and 'Water,' are some of his famous poems.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) became the most popular American poet of his day, and his fame spread overseas.



His poems are lyrical and are known for their musical quality. He often presented stories of mythology and legend in his poems. His original works include "Paul Revere's Ride", 'The Song of Hiawatha', and 'Evangeline'. He was the first American poet to translate Dante's Divine Comedy in the USA.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849) was a writer, poet, editor, and literary critic. But his first love as a writer was poetry.



He was a central figure of Romanticism in the United States. While enlisted in the United States Army, he published his first collection *Tamerlane and Other Poems* under an assumed name. He is considered the architect of the modern short story; his plots were ingenious and profound. His

*"Silently, one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels"— H.W. Longfellow*

poem "The Raven" published in 1845 was an instant success.

A few lines from the poem--

*"--Deep into that darkness peering,
Long I stood there, wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals
Ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken,
And the stillness gave no token----*

"The Raven is indeed the poem of the sleeplessness of despair; it lacks nothing: neither the fever of ideas, nor the violence of colors, nor sickly reasoning, nor driveling terror, nor even the bizarre gaiety of suffering which makes it more terrible." Poe experimented with combinations of sound and rhythm and wrote poems that were intended to be read aloud.

He influenced English romantics such as Lord Byron, John Keats, and Shelley.

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) was an American naturalist, essayist, poet, and philosopher.



A leading transcendentalist, he is best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay "Civil Disobedience". Here's a short poem by Thoreau.

Winter Memories

*I have remembered when the winter came,
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,
When in the still light of the cheerful moon,
On every twig and rail and jutting spout,
The icy spears were adding to their length
Against the arrows of the coming sun,
How in the shimmering noon of winter past.*

Walt Whitman (1819–1892) is among the 'most influential poets in the American canon', and is known as the 'father of free verse'.



According to Wikipedia, truly indigenous English-language poetry in the United States emerged with the works of

*"Were all stars to disappear and die,
I should learn to look at an empty sky
And feel its total dark sublime,
Though this might take me a little time."~
W.H. Auden,*

two poets, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. The two poets were unlike each other. "Whitman's long lines, derived from the metric of the King James Version of the Bible, and his democratic inclusiveness stand in stark contrast with Dickinson's concentrated phrases and short lines and stanzas, derived from Protestant hymnals. What links them is their common connection to Emerson"

It is said that Walt Whitman's poetry "keyed to the energy and rhythms of a young nation waking to its own voice and vision".

Leaves of Grass is a poetry collection by Walt Whitman, first published in 1855. The title metaphor of grass, 'indicates a pastoral vision of rural idealism'. Whitman revised the poem at least nine times during his life time. The collection has influenced popular culture, films, music and literature, later on, and became recognized as one of the central works of American poetry.

*"I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you."* - wrote Walt Whitman.

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) is regarded as one of the most important poets in America.



(Pl see the Section on Women Poets in this issue- the Annual Issue of Life Stream. 2021 also includes a write up on her).

Robert Lee Frost (1874 – 1963) "Robert Frost, along with Stevens and Eliot, is considered the greatest of the American poets of the 20th century.



Frost was a poet known for his realistic depictions of rural life in New England, USA. In 1912, Frost sailed with his family to England but in 1915, during World War I, Frost returned to America. His works were initially published in England, before it was published in the United States. He acquired fame in England, before he became well-known in America.

Frost is the only poet in the US to receive *four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry*. He became one of America's rare "public literary figures, almost an artistic institution". He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1960 for his poetic works. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature 31 times.

"The Witch of Coös", "Home Burial", "A Servant to Servants", "Directive", "Neither Out Too Far Nor In Too Deep",

*"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."***Robert Frost**

“That it will never come again is what makes life so sweet.” — **Emily Dickinson**

"Provide, Provide",
"Acquainted with the Night", "After Apple Picking",
"Mending Wall", "The Most of It", "An Old Man's
Winter Night", "To Earthward", "Stopping by Woods

on a Snowy Evening", "Spring Pools", "The Lovely Shall Be Choosers", "Design", and "Desert Places" are some of his much acclaimed works.

“The Road Not Taken,” undoubtedly is one of Frost’s well-known poems. It was published in his 1916 book “Mountain Interval.” The poem was inspired by his frequent walks along with poet Edward Thomas’ in the English countryside. The lines “Woods are lovely, dark and deep, And I have promises to keep” seem to reverberate in our mind and heart.

According to critics “No other living poet has written so well about the actions of ordinary men; his wonderful dramatic monologues or dramatic scenes come out of a knowledge of people that few poets have had, and they are written in a verse that uses, sometimes with absolute mastery, the rhythms of actual speech”. No wonder he was known as the people’s poet.

There was wide-spread criticism about the denial of the Nobel Prize to Frost, perhaps the most widely read poet of the 20th century.



James Mercer Langston Hughes (1901 – 1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist and playwright. Hughes was a central figure in the *Harlem Renaissance* (the flowering of black intellectual, literary, and artistic life of the 1920s in a number of American cities, particularly Harlem). Hughes, recorded with sensitivity the pains and frustrations of black life. Hughes “Greatness seems to derive from his anonymous unity with his people. He addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people”.

He wrote the poem “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”, *in the summer after his graduation from high school*, which was much acclaimed. Here are a few lines from the poem: -

"The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1920)

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

*I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy*

bosom turn all golden in the sunset. ...

—in *The Weary Blues* (1926)

“Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird,
That cannot fly.” **Langston Hughes**

Ogden Nash (1902-1971)



wrote in light verse, using unconventional rhyming . His was rated as most humorous poetry by *The New York Times*.

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) was a prominent **Beat Generation** poet. Best Known for His Poem 'Howl', Which is one of the most significant contributions of the 'Beat Movement'. In that poem he denounced what he saw as the destructive forces of capitalism and conformity in the United States. He took part in the Vietnam War protests.



Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014) was a popular American poet, and civil rights activist. She was a champion for black feminism (Pl see the Section on Women Poets for details)



Sylvia Plath (1932- 1963) is one of the most renowned and influential American poets of the twentieth century. (Pl see the Section on Women Poets)



Wendell Erdman Berry (born August 5, 1934) is an American novelist, poet, essayist, environmental activist, cultural critic, and farmer. He is a prolific author, with fourteen books of poems, sixteen volumes of essays, and eleven novels and short story collections to his name.



Bob Dylan (1941) is a world-famous American songwriter, who has also written poems. He is often regarded as 'one of the greatest songwriters of all time and has been a major figure in popular culture during a career spanning more than 60 years'. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in the year 2016. The Swedish academy was criticized

“Humor is the best means of surviving in a difficult world ---”- **Ogden Nash**

by many for including song- writing under the genre of poetry and awarding Dylan the Nobel Prize in literature. But others justified it by saying that in ancient times poetry was *heard* rather than *read*!



Louise Elisabeth Glück (Born April 22, 1943) an American poet and essayist who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2020. She was praised for "her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal". She won many awards including the Pulitzer Prize, National Humanities Medal, National Book Award. She was Poet Laureate of the United States during 2003 - 2004.

Gilbert Scott-Heron (1949 – 2011)



Gilbert Scott-Heron was an American jazz poet, singer, musician, and author, known primarily for his work as a spoken-word performer in the 1970s and 1980s. His poem "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised", tuned to a jazz-soul beat, and, was a major influence on hip hop music.

American Poetry Today New groups, schools, and trends have emerged in American poetry today. Its presence is largely noted on the Web, online journals, magazines, blogs and websites. But there is still reluctance of most major newspapers and magazines to publish poetry.

In a survey conducted in 2017, 11.7 percent of Americans said they had read poetry in the previous year. This is good news. While many people read classic poetry, 'modern American poets offer terrific perspectives on politics, society, and love that resonate with readers deeply'. Poets are engaged in graduate creative writing programs which are becoming increasingly popular. This has helped professionalization of poetry. USA now has at least two large national prizes for poetry, in addition to the Pulitzer- The Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award of \$50,000 and the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize of \$75,000.

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; http://britannica.com; theculturetrip.com; www.poetryfoundation.org; earlyworldhistory.blogspot.com; www.thefamouspeople.com; worldhistory.org; allpoetry.com; www.best-poems.net ; thiswaytoitaly.com; learnodo-newtonic.com; www.fluentu.com; historyofspain.es; dreamsinparis.com; journeytofrance.com; snippetsofparis.com; theculturetrip.com; www.talkinfrench.com; famouspeople.com; www.thecollector.com; poemanalysis.com; www.best-poems.net/www.spanish.academy; 100.bestpoems.net; interestingliterature.com; lithub.com; discoverpoetry.com; theguardian.com; poets.org; www.americanpoems.com; americanliterature.com; www.womenshistory.org; www.mayaangelou.com; www.indianetzone.com; artandpopularculture.com; www.poetrymagnumopus.com

"May your heart always be joyful. May your song always be sung" — **Bob Dylan**

Section 111 Women poets

The early poetic history of Europe, UK and the USA marks the uncommon presence of women poets, starting with Sappho, one of the earliest known poets in ancient times, followed by many.



Sappho, was an ancient Greek poet and was acclaimed for her lyric poetry, set to be sung. Sappho was known by names such as the "Tenth Muse" and "The Poetess", (like Homer being known as "The poet"). Most of Sappho's poetry is now lost; only a few in fragmentary form has survived, like the one noted below: -

A Hymn to Venus

*O Venus, beauty of the skies,
To whom a thousand temples rise,
Gaily false in gentle smiles,
Full of love-perplexing wiles;
O goddess, from my heart remove
The wasting cares and pains of love.*

Christine de Pisan (September 1364 – c. 1430), was an Italian **poet** and court writer for King Charles VI of France. She was one of the most prolific writers of her age; her "Cité des Dames" is considered a kind of feminist manifesto".

The 18th century A number of women poets of repute emerged in England during the period of the Restoration, including Aphra Behn, Margaret Cavendish, Mary Chudleigh, Anne Finch, Anne Killigrew, and Katherine Philips. Nevertheless, print publication by women poets was still relatively scarce when compared to that of men. Entry of women into the poetic space was not welcomed; women had to justify their writing poetry out of economic necessity or forced by others.

Women writers were increasingly active in all genres throughout the 18th century, and by the 1790s women's poetry was flourishing. Notable poets later in the period include Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, Susanna Blamire, Felicia Hemans, Mary Leapor, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Hannah More, and Mary Robinson.

Women poetry writers made their presence felt in other parts of the world too.

“Although they are only breath, words
which I command are immortal.”-
Sappho



Phillis Wheatley (c. 1753 –1784), is considered to be the first African-American author of a *published book of poetry*. She became a renowned poet and great persons of that age, like George Washington, praised her work.

Born in Africa, she was kidnapped and subsequently sold as a slave at the age of seven or eight and transported to North America, where she was bought by the Wheatley family of Boston. They taught her to read and write and encouraged her to write poetry when they saw her talent. The publication in London of her poems in 1773, brought her fame both in England and the American colonies. Wheatley was emancipated by her enslavers shortly after the publication of her book. Wheatley died in poverty and obscurity at the age of 31. Wheatly never wrote about herself in any of her poems. One exception is a poem on slavery "On being brought from Africa to America". A few lines from the poem are given below: -

*T'was mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic dye."*



Marceline Desbordes Valmore (1786 – 23 1859) was a French poet and **novelist**. Published in 1860 this beautiful poem is titled "*The Roses of Saadi*". Her poems convey feelings of melancholy, despair, and lost love.

The Roses of Saadi

*I wanted to bring you some roses this morning;
But I had taken so many in my closed belts
That the too tight knots could not contain them.*

*The knots burst. The flown roses
In the wind, to the sea all went away,
They followed the water never to return;*

*The wave seemed red and as if inflamed.
This evening, my dress is still all perfumed with it...
Breathe in the fragrant memory of it on me.*

*"May I write words more naked than flesh,
stronger than bone, more resilient than
sinew, sensitive than nerve?" Sappho*

The 19th century saw the emergence of several prominent female poets who laid the foundations for women's poetry in the next century. Among the leading 19th century female poets were Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson and Christina Rossetti.



Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 –1861) was an English poet of the Victorian era. Her works had a major influence on prominent writers of the day, including the American poets Edgar Allan Poe and Emily Dickinson. She is remembered for such poems as "How Do I Love Thee?" (Sonnet 43, 1845) and Aurora Leigh (1856).

'Bianca among the Nightingales' is a tragic love poem by her. Set in Italy, it sees Bianca weeping among the sorrowful song of the nightingales, for her lost love:

*The cypress stood up like a church
That night we felt our love would hold,
And saintly moonlight seemed to search
And wash the whole world clean as gold;
The olives crystallized the vales'
Broad slopes until the hills grew strong:
The fireflies and the nightingales
Throbbled each to either, flame and song.
The nightingales, the nightingales.*



Emily Elizabeth Dickinson (1830–1886) has been regarded as one of the most important poets in America. Although very little-known was known about her during her lifetime, she acquired great fame later.

She was a prolific writer, who wrote nearly 1,800 poems. " Her poems were unique for her era; they contain short lines, typically lack titles, and often use slant rhyme as well as unconventional capitalization and punctuation". Death and immortality were the two recurring themes of her poems, although she also wrote on themes like aesthetics, society, nature, and spirituality. (Pl see Annual Issue of Life Stream, 2021 which includes a write up on her). Here are a few lines from 'Hope', her best known work: -

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers –
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –*

*"I heard an angel speak last night
And he said, 'Write!'"*-**Elizabeth
Browning**



Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830 – 1894) was an English writer renowned for her romantic, devotional and children's poems. Her Christmas poem "In the Bleak Midwinter" was set as a Christmas carol by Gustav Holst and later by Harold Darke, after her death. It became very popular in the English-speaking world. Her poem "Love Came Down at Christmas" (1885) has also been widely sung as a carol. 'Remember' is another of her famous poems.

*Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.*

The 20th century saw great contribution of women in the field of poetry. Important 20th century female poets include Sylvia Plath, Maya Angelou, Mary Olive and others.



Sylvia Plath was an American short-story writer, novelist, and poet. Plath is credited with popularizing confessional poetry. She was also equally famous for her short stories and novel. Her best known works are *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1960) and *Ariel* (1965), as well as *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel published shortly before her death in 1963. *The Collected Poems* published in 1981, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1982. Sylvia Plath achieved popularity and critical acclaim despite suffering from clinical depression for the most part of her adult life. Her story inspired the 2003 film *Sylvia*.



Maya Angelou (1928 – 2014) was an American poet, and a civil rights activist who attained much fame and popularity. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received many awards and honors. In 1993, Angelou recited her poem "On the Pulse of Morning" (1993) at the first inauguration of Bill Clinton. The recording of the poem won a Grammy Award. She actively participated in the in the Civil Rights Movement and worked along with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. As one writer put it in *The Guardian*, "To know her life story is to simultaneously wonder what on earth you have been doing with your own life and feel glad that you didn't have to go through half the

"My heart is like a singing bird."
— Christina Rossetti

things she has". About writing, she had this to say "I make writing as much a part of my life, as I am eating or listening to music". Here is one of her famous poems: -

When Great Trees Fall 1

*When great trees fall,
rocks on distant hills shudder,
lions hunker down
in tall grasses,
and even elephants
lumber after safety.
When great trees fall
in forests,
small things recoil into silence,
their senses
eroded beyond fear.*

When great souls die, 2

*the air around us becomes
light, rare, sterile.
We breathe, briefly.
Our eyes, briefly,
see with
a hurtful clarity.
Our memory, suddenly sharpened,
examines,
gnaws on kind words
unsaid,
promised walks never taken.*

President

Barack Obama

awarded Angelou the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor in the year 2011.

Latin America Many women poets made their mark in Latin American poetry. Noted for her

*"Do you see my soul filled with pain and
anguish,
wounded by torments so savage, so fierce,
burned in the midst of living flames and
judging*

*herself unworthy of her castigation?" Sor
Juana Inés de la Cruz*

range, themes, wit and creativity Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz attained much fame in the 17th

century. Gabriela Mistral, the first Latin American poet to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature generally wrote on women-related subjects. Hailing from Chile at the start of the 20th century, feminist poet (and once teacher to the famed Pablo Neruda)

Lucila Godoy y Alcayaga, who wrote under the pseudonym Gabriela Mistral. Other women poets include Alejandra Pizarnik's from Argentina (prose poetry), Delmira Agustini, Giannina Braschi (who wrote epic poetry covering even subjects such as debt crisis, national building, decolonization, and revolution) and Afro-Cuban poet Excilia Saldaña's who wrote children's poetry.

Women poets in other languages are dealt with in the respective sections.

Women occupy an important position in contemporary poetry across the world. With increasing literacy and changing role of women in society they write poetry while searching to find a new meaning in life.

Ref: en.wikipedia.org/ www.britannica.com; theculturetrip.com www.womenshistory.org www.poetryfoundation.org/
www.familyfriendpoems.com www.poemhunter.com www.huffpost.com allpoetry.com poemanalysis.com www.poetryfoundation.org;
poet.org; www.thefamouspeople.com; www.literaryladiesguide.com;
poetryarchive.org/interestingliterature.com; poemanalysis.com;
www.biography.com; www.thoughtco.com;
www.emilydickinson.net; www.best-poems.net;
interestingliterature.com ; www.womensweb.i;

*"I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead;
I lift my lids and all is born again" -Silvia Plath*

POETRY THROUGH THE AGES PART-111

Here we take you through the poetic history of some of the major languages in countries across the continents.

1. Russian Poetry

As one Russian writer noted 'Russia is a poetic nation and any person you meet will know a dozen poems by heart'.

She further noted '--- Literature is the most complete and expressive manifestation of the Russian creative genius'---- Great Russian poets and writers have always been the voice of the people's conscience and soul, and had to suffer for it---'

The poetic history of Russia can be categorized into different stages -- the early folk poetry, influence of the Church, search for national originality, Romanticism, Great reforms and focus on social issues, the Silver Age, the 20th century: the revolution and after, and, the contemporary poetry.

Folk Poetry Poetry had its origin in Russia as folk poetry in the form of songs, fairy tales, epics, etc. Folk poetry developed in three stages --- mythological, heroic and historical. Old Russian literature consists of several masterpieces written in the Old East Slavic.

Bylina (the word 'byl' means something that really happened) is a heroic epic speaking about *bogatyri* (mighty heroes), who protect the land of Rus from enemies and act for its unifying. In later medieval times these byliny were sung by skomorokhi, fraternities of wandering minstrels. Later historic and Lyric songs replaced Bylinas.

Church influence and early literature Slav mythology had been subjected to Christian influences.

Written language and literature were introduced to Russia from the outside, along with Christianity. For centuries together church scriptures influenced the spiritual and moral character of the Russian people.

Middle Ages Russian written poetry seems to have emerged independently in the middle seventeenth century. Medieval Russian literature had an overwhelmingly religious character and used an adapted form of the Church Slavonic language. From the late 17th century Russian culture is invaded with West European values. Poetry turned urbane and cosmopolitan, and could stand up to European examples, owing much to the reforms of Peter the Great (1689-1725). Indeed, the first poets were court officials fully dependent on the tsar's patronage.

The Golden Age of Poetry The 19th century is traditionally referred to as the "Golden Era" of Russian literature when poetry, prose and drama underwent dramatic changes.

The reign of Alexander-1, emperor of Russia (1801–25), saw creativity at its best, for, under





Alexander Pushkin (May 26th, 1799 - January 29th, 1837) is considered to be the most famous literary figure in Russian history. Born in a noble family, his life was cut short at the young age of 37 in Saint Petersburg, due to an injury sustained after a duel.

Pushkin was a very prolific writer whose compositions were in a large number of genres, from novels and short stories to poems and plays that are considered masterpieces. Among them, his verse- novel *Eugene Onegin* is the most famous.

Before Pushkin, Russian poetry was virtually non-existent. Pushkin is credited with developing the modern Russian language, as well as Russian literature. His style though simple, was carefully crafted. Instead of using pompous words he preferred colloquial speech. He dwelt on a variety of subjects through his poetry- love and friendship, freedom, loyalty to the state, as well as art and life.

Eugene Onegin is considered a classic in Russian literature. This verse- novel powerfully depicts the deadly inhumanity of social convention. Onegin's selfishness, vanity, and indifference are portrayed in the introduction. Even when he moves to the country, he maintains the same profile. He is unable to relate to the feelings of others and lacks empathy. In the later part of the poem, he is depicted as a victim of his own pride and selfishness. Onegin kills his only friend, loses his love, finds no fulfillment in his life and is doomed to loneliness forever.

Pushkin's "I Remember the Magic Moment" dedicated his beloved Anna Kern is the most well- known Russian poem of all times. The poem has been translated into more than 210 languages. Here are a few lines from the poem: -

My soul attained its waking moment:

You re-appeared before my sight,

As though a brief and fleeting omen,

Pure phantom in enchanting light.

And now, my heart, with fascination,

Beats rapidly and finds revived

Devout faith and inspiration,

***And tender tears and love and life* (Translated by Andrey Kneller)**

him Russian writers experienced great artistic freedom and stimulation for creativity. Indeed, the Romantic period saw a flowering of Russian literature, especially poetry. Alexander Pushkin was the central figure of this movement and is credited with the development of Russian language and literature.

He introduced a new level of artistry to Russian literature (see box). His best-known work is a novel in verse, *Eugene Onegin* (1833).

An entire new generation of poets including Mikhail Lermontov, Yevgeny Baratynsky, Konstantin Batyushkov, Nikolay Nekrasov, Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy, Fyodor Tyutchev and Afanasy Fet came under his influence.

*"So quiet that you can hear
how the silence walks
dressed in white clouds. A young day enters the city.
Morning birds on his shoulders" — Ekaterina Yakovina,*

Great Russian Poets



Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799-1837)



Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966)



Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov (1899-1977)



Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996)

Alexander Pushkin was the central figure of this movement and is credited with the development of Russian language and literature. He introduced a new level of artistry to Russian literature (see box). His best-known work is a novel in verse, *Eugene Onegin* (1833). An entire new generation of poets including Mikhail Lermontov, Yevgeny Baratynsky, Konstantin Batyushkov, Nikolay Nekrasov, Aleksey Konstantinovich Tolstoy, Fyodor Tyutchev and Afanasy Fet came under his influence.

As for external influences during the period, Scottish poet Robert Burns became a 'people's poet' in Russia. Lord Byron was a major influence on almost all Russian poets of the Golden Era, including Pushkin.

Great Reforms The 'great reforms' brought out in literature during 1860s - 1870s focused on social issues. **Symbolism**, a new movement in

Russian poetry started in the 1890s. It was both a literary and spiritual movement and replaced logic by beauty. The first generation of Russian symbolists, included V. Bryusov and K. Balmont.

The emergence of symbolism also marked the beginning of the Silver Age.

The Acmeist movement was a direct descendent of Symbolism. A group of Acmeist poets - prominent among them being A. Akhmatova, N. Gumilev and O. Mandelshtam - would meet in the famous literary cafe Stray Dog in St Petersburg. Acmeism was proposed as an alternative to symbolism, which was viewed with suspicion and did not receive due recognition at that time.

The Silver Age The pre-revolutionary years (end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th century) saw the dawn of a new age in literature, called the '**Silver Age**'. The prominent poets of the "Silver Age" included Konstantin

Balmont, Valery Bryusov, Alexander Blok, Anna Akhmatova, Nikolay Gumilyov, Sergei Yesenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Marina Tsvetaeva. Alexander Blok was the leader of the movement. In his poems, 'beauty was juxtaposed to the grim reality of revolutionary Russia'.

*"O men! A wretched race, worthy of tears and laughter!
Priests of the minute, worshippers of success!
How often a man passes by you,
Whose blind and exuberant age scolds you,
But whose high countenance in the coming generation
The poet will be delighted and amused"* -Alexander Pushkin

With the demise of Blok, the Silver Age ended altogether.

St Petersburg- the city of Russian Poets and writers



Russianpaintings.net

One writer beautifully described St Petersburg, the city on the Neva River, 'as a huge stone book, whose pages were created by great Russian poets and writers'. The Great Russian Empire has left its indelible stamps on the city's streets, buildings and literature. When one walks along the river, it echoes with the poems and writings of great men and women who lived in the city during 17th to 20th centuries. Café Stray Dog was a central point of St Petersburg's cultural life in the Silver Age.

Prominent landmarks include National Pushkin Museum; Literatorskie Mostki, (a special section of the Volkovskoe Cemetery in St Petersburg, also known as the museum-necropolis, where many Russian and Soviet writers, musicians, actors, architects, scientists and public figures were buried); The Dostoevsky Zone area close to Sennaya Square in St Petersburg, associated with the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Aleksander Blok's apartment, number 21, which later became a museum (Ref: theculturetrip.com)

The Revolution in 1917 brought an artificial division of Russian literature into domestic and emigrant literature, with the most outstanding writers finding a safer place abroad. However, literature retained its unity, based on the traditions of classical Russian culture. The famous names include that of Ivan Bunin, Vladimir Nabokov, Ivan Shmelyov, Vladimir Khodasevich, Osip Mandelstam, Mikhail Bulgakov, Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Gorky, and others. Russian literature received universal acclaim in the 20th century.

Post Revolution poetry The first years of the Soviet regime after the October Revolution of 1917, featured a proliferation of avant-garde literature groups. Following the establishment of Bolshevik rule, Mayakovsky worked on interpreting the facts of the new reality. His works, such as "Ode to the Revolution" and "Left March" (both 1918), brought innovations to poetry.

Josef Brodsky (1940 – 1996) was one of the greatest poets during that time. Born in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg) in 1940, Brodsky ran afoul of Soviet authorities and was

"I sit in the dark. And it would be hard to figure out which is worse;

The dark inside or the darkness out"-

Joseph Brodsky

expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972. He settled in the United States.

After the Revolution of 1917, while the Soviet Union strived for universal literacy and had a highly developed book

*"We see joy's shadow in our earthly dreaming,
Somewhere joy exists: There are no shadows without substance."*

— **Nicholas Karamzin**

printing industry, it also enforced ideological censorship. Later Soviet era Stalin (December 1878 – 5 March 1953) years asphyxiated poetry. Some poets emigrated but some remained in Russia, being persecuted by the state (Akhmatova) or murdered (Mandel'shtam). Tsvetaeva spent hard years as an émigré.

The '**Khrushchev (c. 1954 – c. 1964) Thaw**' brought some fresh wind to literature and poetry became a mass cultural phenomenon. This "thaw" did not last long; in the 1970s, some of the most prominent authors were banned from publishing and prosecuted for their anti-Soviet sentiments. Books were not published officially until the perestroika period of the 1980s.

The end of the 20th century proved a difficult period for Russian literature, with relatively few distinct voices. Although the censorship was lifted and writers could now freely express their thoughts, the political and economic chaos of the 1990s affected the book market and literature heavily. The canon of Russian poetry has been reshaped since the fall of the Soviet Union.

The 21st century Censorship disappeared with the fall of the Soviet Union. Although in the 21st century, a new generation of Russian authors appeared, they are being forced to compete with more popular forms of entertainment. As in the rest of the world, contemporary poetry in Russia retains a small but devoted readership.

Ref: www.russia-ic.com; www.ocasopress.com; theculturetrip.com/ archive.org/www.rtbp.com

11. Poetry in the Middle East

Poetry was **part of the Middle East culture**. At a time when poetry in Europe was in its earliest stages, the Middle East already had a robust tradition of poetry.

While today we think of the "Middle East" as a geographical area, the language and literature of Middle Eastern cultures, especially Arabic, had a widespread influence across multiple continents.

The poetic history of Middle East can be classified into three distinct periods: pre-Islamic literature, literature composed during Islamic dynasties, and modern literature. Before the modern era when novels and short stories became more popular, poetry was the backbone of Middle Eastern literature. The modern era began with Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798.

The earliest poetry in the Middle East was by tribal poets of the Arabian Peninsula who memorized and recited tens of thousands of poems. "These poems were used to declare war between tribes, resolve disputes, and preserve legends and history".

One of the most common types of poems in this era was the "wuquf 'ala al-atlal" or "stopping by ruins." In these poems, a wandering poet paused in the middle of ruins to observe and reflect. Eventually, this type of ruin poetry became so common that poets would write

*"Blossoms rupture and rapture the air,
All hover and hammer,
Time intensified and time intolerable, sweetness
raveling rot"*-**Osip Mandelstam**

satirical poems about “ruin-wandering.”

Today, though, ruins have taken on new significance because of the destructive warfare in the Middle East. Poets in the Middle East today use ruins to comment on the devastating effects of war on homes and families.

We learn from poetryteatime.com that poetic form and style in the middle East can be categorized as **Qasidah**: an ancient poetic form similar to an *ode*; the **Ghazal**-a highly structured verse form made of 5-15 couplets. The theme of a ghazal is often both love and loss. **Nabati** developed in nomadic Bedouin tribes, are composed in colloquial language with an informal style. A pre-Islamic poet and knight, **Antarah ibn Shaddad's** name is one of the most easily recognized in the Arab world.

Rumi, Omar Khayyam, al Mutanabbi, Hafez and Ibn Arabi are some of the greatest among middle east poets.

Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1207 –1273) was a Persian poet, Islamic scholar, theologian, although originally from Greater Iran. Rumi's influence transcends national borders and ethnic divisions.

Rumi's *Rubaiyat* has some of the most famous poems in the world is considered to be the greatest mystical poem in world literature. The Masnavi contains a series of six books of poetry that together amount to around 25,000 verses or 50,000 lines His spiritual, often mystical lines have inspired generations.

A few lines from two of his poems are given below: -

Enough Words?

But that shadow has been serving you!

What hurts you, blesses you.

Darkness is your candle.

Your boundaries are your quest.

You must have shadow and light source both.

Listen, and lay your head under the tree of awe.

When I run after what I think

When I run after what I think I want,

my days are a furnace of distress and anxiety,

if I sit in my own place of patience,

what I need flows to me, and without any pain,

from this, I understand that what I want also wants me,

and is looking for me and attracting me,

there's a great secret in this for all who can grasp

Omar Khayyam was a Persian artist and scientist. Like Rumi, he wrote rubaiyat (quatrains) and it was translated into English in the 19th century by Edward Fitzgerald. His poetry

*“I am the one whose literature can be seen (even) by the blind
The steed, the night and the desert all know me
And whose words are heard (even) by the deaf.
As do the sword, the spear, the scripture and the pen”-Al-
Mutanabbi*

handles topics such as life, religion and Sufi philosophy.

“The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,

Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,

Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it”

Al Mutanabbi, an Iraqi poet lived during the Abbasid Caliphate is considered one of the greatest poets in the Arabic language, and has been translated into many languages.

Hafez best known for *ghazals* (rhyming couplets) was one of the greatest names in Persian literature.

Khalil Gibran, a great Lebanese poet spent his life both in Lebanon and the United States and wrote poetry and prose in both English and Arabic. His poems are considered part of an Arabic literary renaissance.

Ibn Arabi, a mystic, Islamic scholar and poet, is known as one of the great masters in Sufism. His poetry revolves around religion, humanity and the spiritual life.

Ahmed Shawqi, one of the greatest contemporary Arab Poets hailing from Egypt introduced epic poetry in to Arabic language. His themes range from patriotism, to nostalgia and religion, the greatness of Egyptian and Islamic history.

2. African poetry

Modern African poetry has a dual heritage — pre-colonial and Western. African poetry is large and complex due to a wide variety of traditions arising from Africa's 55 countries and also Africa's original tribal and linguistic diversity. The devastating effect of slavery and colonization have left their imprint on African poetry. Now poetry is written in English, Portuguese and French, as well as Creole or pidgin versions of these European languages, being spoken and written by Africans across the continent.

Poetry has undergone several phases of evolution from pre-colonial to colonial and then to post-colonial eras in most African countries. In the pre-colonial era in many countries like Nigeria poetry was unwritten. "There existed a thin line between poets and musicians, who composed and rendered poetry in musical form".

Bottoms Up

“To the children we call our
future

Who have no shoes to put on
their feet

Who have barely any food to eat

Who believe in some unreal hope

But still dare to dream

Wild and free” ----- **Ama Nuamah**

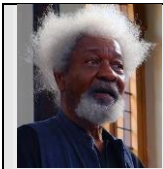
With most African nations gaining their independence in the 1950s and 1960s and with increased literacy, African literature written in foreign and traditional African languages, has grown dramatically. They are noted for dealing with “seven conflicts as themes: the clash between Africa's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community,

*“Do not fear the past. It is painful, but it is real,
Blood was spilt and people died,
but love and unity had survived—*

Do not fear the past” Zuhura Seng’enge (Tanzania)

between socialism and capitalism, between development and self-reliance and between Africanity and humanity". Social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries, and the rights and roles of women are also reflected in the poems written during this period.

A welcome trend noticed in the contemporary writing of African poetry is the increasing role of women writers. Female writers are today far better represented in published African literature compared to pre-independence era.



Wole Soyinka, Nigerian writer, poet and playwright, who became the first post-independence African writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986.

Hanging day

A hollow earth

*Echoes footsteps of the
grave procession.*

Walls in sunspots

*Lean to shadow of the
shortening morn.*

Since the 1960s, political, economic, and cultural events have begun to shape African poetry, with the shades of colonialism that were an unending pre-occupation of African poets disappearing. In modern African poetry, works that focus on the healing and purging of the country and families are popular.

4. Chinese poetry

Poetry has remained a popular literary form in China for centuries and poetry has been held in high esteem. Poetry has provided" a format and a forum for both public and private expressions of deep emotion, offering an audience of peers, readers, and scholars insight into the inner life of Chinese writers across the country for more than two millennia".

Classical Chinese poetry originated during the **Han dynasty** from 206 BC to 220 AD.

Chinese poetry is **written, spoken, or chanted in the Chinese language** and is generally classified as Classical Chinese poetry and Modern Chinese poetry.

Classical Chinese poetry includes, **shi**, **ci** and **qu** and traditional Chinese literary form called **fu** (prose-poem), although free verse in Western style are written in modern times. Traditional forms of Chinese poetry are rhymed.

The anthologies *Shi Jing* and *Chu Ci* both had a great impact on Chinese poetic tradition. The *Shi Jing* or the *Classical Chinese Poetry* from over two millennia ago is well preserved.

In contrast the *Chu Ci* anthology (the *Songs of Chu* or the *Songs of the South*), poetry was typical of the state of Chu, with verses more lyrical and romantic. During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the *Chu Ci* style of poetry contributed to the evolution of the *fu* ("descriptive poem") style, typified by a mixture of verse and prose passages. Also, during the Han dynasty, a folk-song style of poetry became popular, known as *yuefu*.

Between poetry of the latter days of the Han and the beginning period of the Six Dynasties was Jian'an poetry.

The **Six Dynasties era (220–589 CE)** continued to build on the traditions developed.

"Where, before me, are the ages that have gone? And where, behind me, are the coming generations? I think of heaven and earth, without limit, without end, And I am all alone and my tears fall down"-----Chén Zǐ áng (661-702)

The **Tang period (618–907)** is considered to be the golden age of Chinese poetry. During this period there was a proliferation of poets and poems out of which around 50,000 poems reportedly survive. “During the Tang period, ‘poetry was integrated into almost every aspect of the professional and social life of the literate class, including becoming part of the Imperial examinations taken by anyone wanting a government post’”. The poetry of the Tang Dynasty remains influential even today.

“An Ode to the Goose” is a short poem from the Tang Dynasty, is often the first poem that Chinese children are taught due to its simplicity.



Ode to the Goose

by [Luo Binwang](#)

Goose goose goose
Bend neck towards sky sing
White feather float green water
Red foot push clear wave
Goose, goose, goose,
You bend your neck towards the sky and sing.
Your white feathers float on the emerald water,
Your red feet push the clear waves.

This poem was written by the child prodigy poet Luò bīn wáng, when he was only seven years old. He later became one of the most famous poets of the Tang Dynasty.

By the **Song dynasty (960–1279)**, another form called the *ci* lyric with set rhythms of existing tunes developed.

Yuan poetry During the **Yuan dynasty (1271–1368)**, we see types of poetry written to fixed-tone patterns.

Ming-Qing transition includes the interluding/overlapping periods of the brief so-called Shun dynasty.

The **Qing dynasty (1644 to 1912)** is notable in terms of development of the criticism of poetry and the development of important poetry collections.

Both *shi* and *ci* continued to exercise their influence beyond the imperial period. It is said that Mao Zedong, former Chairman of the Communist Party of China, wrote Classical Chinese poetry in his own style.

Modern Chinese poetry ("new poetry") refers to the modern vernacular style of poetry, as opposed to the traditional poetry written in Classical Chinese language.

Poetry was revolutionized after 1919's May Fourth Movement, by the use of vernacular

“I awake light-hearted this morning of spring, Everywhere round me the singing of birds -- But now I remember the night, the storm, And I wonder how many blossoms were broken-” **Mèng Hàorán (689-740)**



Portrait of Li Bai Li Bai (Li Po) is considered to be the greatest among the Chinese poets, and is famed as a genius and a romantic figure. He took traditional poetic forms to new heights during the period of Tang dynasty, which is often called the "Golden Age of Chinese Poetry". Around a thousand poems are attributed to him.

Li Bai's poems were mostly on friendship, nature, solitude, and the joys of drinking wine. Among the most famous are "Waking from Drunkenness on a Spring Day", "The Hard Road to Shu", and "Quiet Night Thought". Li Bai wrote occasional verse and poems about his own life.

His poetry is known for its clear imagery and conversational tone. His work influenced a number of 20th-century poets, including Ezra Pound and James Wright. Look at this poem,

Alone Looking at the Mountain

**All the birds have flown up and gone;
A lonely cloud floats leisurely by.
We never tire of looking at each other -
Only the mountain and I.**

**The birds have vanished down the sky.
Now the last cloud drains away.
We sit together, the mountain and me,
until only the mountain remains.**

styles closer to what was being spoken, rather than previously prescribed forms. Early 20th-century poets sought to break Chinese poetry from past conventions by adopting Western models.

In the **post-revolutionary Communist era**, poets used more liberal running lines and direct diction, which were vastly popular and widely imitated.

In the **contemporary poetry**, the most important and influential poets are in the group known as Misty Poets, 'who use oblique allusions and hermetic references'. **5.**

Japanese poetry

Japanese poems have a long and rich history that dates back well over a thousand years. Japanese poetry is written, spoken, or chanted in the Japanese language, which includes Old Japanese, Early Middle Japanese, Late Middle Japanese, and Modern Japanese, as well as poetry in Japan written in the Chinese language.

Written Japanese poetry has existed as an art form since the Chinese Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), Under the influence of the Chinese poets of Tang dynasty era, Japanese began to compose poetry in Chinese called **Kanshi** which was a popular genre of poetry in the **Heian**

"There seems to be no one on the empty mountain.... And yet I think I hear a voice, Where sunlight, entering a grove, Shines back to me from the green moss-" Wáng Wéi (701-761)

period (794–1185), and a favorite among Japanese aristocrats. Due to the influence of Chinese arts, poetry in Japan was closely associated with pictorial painting, the tradition of the using ink and brush, for both writing and drawing. It took several hundred years to merge *kanshi* poetry into a Japanese language literary tradition.

According to Japanese mythology, poetry began, not with people, but with the celestial deities. The history of Japanese poetry goes from an early semi-historical/mythological phase, through the early Old Japanese literature inclusions, just before the Nara period, the Nara period itself (710 to 794), the Heian period (794 to 1185), the Kamakura period (1185 to 1333), and so on, up through the poetically important Edo period (1603 and 1867, also known as "Tokugawa") and modern times; however, the history of poetry often is different from socio-political history.

Different forms of poetry In Japan, poetry has often been gathered into anthologies. Since the middle of the 19th century, the major forms of Japanese poetry have been *tanka* (the modern name for *waka*), *haiku* and *shi* or western-style poetry. Today, the main forms of Japanese poetry include both experimental poetry and poetry that seeks to revive traditional ways.

Waka Traditional Japanese poetry is known as Waka. It is the earliest Japanese poetry form. In ancient times, the aristocratic class, known would often exchange Waka instead of letters. During the Heian period, women were the primary waka poets since men traditionally wrote in Chinese during this time. One of the most famous waka poets was Kakinomoto Hitomaro (c.653-c.710). Some of the most famous collections of Japanese poetry are Waka.

Tanka is the modern name for classic Japanese poetry, meaning "short poems" and are poems written in Japanese, with five lines having a 5–7–5–7–7 metre. The *tanka* form has shown some modern revival in popularity.

Renga Much traditional Japanese poetry was written in a collaborative form, with two or more poets contributing verses to a larger piece, such as in the case of the *Renga* form, which developed in the twelfth century. One poet writes the opening stanza of a *Renga* and the next poet writes the second stanza!

Renku: is another type of collaborative poetry and linked verse—alternating three-line and two-line stanzas written by different poets. Writing Renku was often a form of entertainment, as poets would gather to write these poems together.

Haikai: Haikai is a form of linked verse that incorporates satire or puns. Haikai poems contain over 100 verses.

Haibun: This form of poetry is a combination of haiku and prose.

Haiku

Spring ocean

Swaying gently

All day long-----Yosa Buson

Haiku is considered to be the most well-known form of Japanese poetry. It is a short verse written in one line in Japanese and commonly three lines in English and other languages. It has become popular in many countries and has been adapted from Japanese into many other languages.

Originally called *hokku*, haiku became its own standalone poetic form in the nineteenth century when it was renamed *haiku* by famous haiku poet Masaoka Shiki. Shiki, Kobayashi Issa (1763–1828), Matsuo Basho (1644–1694), and Yosa Buson (1716–1784) were the most famous haiku poets. Buson, was a poet-painter who combined haikus into his art- a form of poetry called Haiga.

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694) made about 1000 haiku poems through the lifetime, traveling around Japan. His writing “The Narrow Road to the Deep North” is the most famous haiku poetry collection in Japan.

Japanese haiku poetry canters around themes of nature and the seasons. An old silent pond...is the most famous haiku poem of the most famous haiku poet in Japan. Basho reflects the spirituality of Zen Buddhism in this haiku.

An Old Silent Pond



(Courtesy: Fine Art America photo by Michael Durham)

**A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again.**

Basho is said to have composed this poem at a haiku gathering held at his hermitage Basho-an, having a pond, in 1686, when he was 43 years old. The theme of poems to be read at the gathering was “frog”. Basho did not actually experience the scene. But he imagined the world of silence in his mind, which was broken by a tiny creature from outside.

“Frog” denotes the spring season. All other Japanese poets only wrote about frog’s croaking. It was the first time that a poem used the sound of a splashing that a frog made. These simple lines denote beauty and tranquillity. This haiku poem is one of the most “*Sabi*” poems by Matsuo Basho (*Wabi and Sabi* are words that express the sense of beauty, unique to Japan) (Ref: Wikipedia;doyouknowjapan.com)

Katauta: This three-line poem has a syllabic meter of either 5-7-5 or 5-7-7. A Katauta is often called an incomplete poem. The form is written as one lover addressing another. When paired with the response from the other lover, the two katauta become a Sedoka.

Sedoka: A sedoka poem is a call and response poem. Each verse has a 5-7-5 or 5-7-7 pattern.

Modern Japanese poetry post–World War I is known as *gendai-shi*, or contemporary poetry. It consists of poetry after the 1900s and includes vast styles and genres of prose,

Haiku

“I write, erase, rewrite

Erase again, and then

A poppy blooms- **Katsushika Hokusai**

including experimental, sensual, dramatic and erotic. Many contemporary poets today are female. Japanese contemporary poetry seems to either stray away from the traditional style or fuse it with new forms. It adopted more of a western poetic style of poet style where the verse is freer and more relaxed. Ref: en.wikipedia.org; theculturetrip.com; www.chinahighlights.com; www.chinahighlights.com; www.masterclass.com; doyouknowjapan.com/poetry; www.indianetzone.com; www.britannica.com; learnodo-newtonic.com; learnodo-newtonic.com; www.indianetzone.com; artandpopularculture.com; historyofspain.es; www.poetrymagnumopus.com

6. Latin American Poetry

Although poetry existed in the South American continent for a long time, the world began to notice the poetry of Latin America only in the 1960s.

Latin American poetry generally refers to **poetry written by Latin American authors**. Although called 'Latin' and is often written in Spanish, it is also composed in Portuguese, Mapuche, Nahuatl, Quechua, Mazatec, Zapotec, Ladino, English, and Spanglish. The blending of Indigenous and foreign cultures produced a kind of literature unique to this region. After the introduction of African slaves in the region, African traditions too greatly influenced Latin American poetry.

Aztec poetry, written in Nahuatl, were collected by Spanish clergy during the early period of the colonization of Mexico. Many great works of poetry were written in the colonial and pre-colonial periods.

During the colonial period many Hispanic Americans were educated in Spain. During this period, Latin American poets followed the European trends and styles in literature.

An eminent poet of colonial era poetry is the Mexican nun Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, who

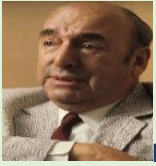


wrote many notable works of poetry, prose, and theater in Spanish and other native languages. She was known for her feminist standpoints and liberal ideas. But, her works, in fact any poetry or literature that promoted concepts of liberty and freedom, were opposed to by counter-reformists. After the 1802 Haitian Revolution, writings containing liberal ideas were banned by colonizers. The struggle for independence of the Spanish Colonies saw 'a literature of defiance of authority and a sense of social injustice that is ever present in Spanish American poetics. Pablo Neruda, was described by Gabriel García Márquez as "the greatest poet of the twentieth century in any language". Many will be surprised to know that he was also a diplomat and politician.

Pablo Neruda was the pen name of Ricardo Eliécer Neftalí Reyes Basoalto. He wrote in several forms-surrealist poems, historical epics, political manifestos, autobiography in prose,

*"Pine trees rise through cloud, soar up into the blue skies,
bush clover spangled with dewdrops, sways in the autumn breeze;
As I dip cold, pure water at the edge of the stream,
a solitary white crane comes lolloping my way" — Baisao*

and passionate love poems. Neruda won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1971.



Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

“Neruda’s epic flows in a blank verse and piles metaphors upon metaphors with a lyrical style that favors excess’. Canto General owes much to the treasures of the ballad tradition in Spanish. Here are two profound quotes from **Canto General**: -

*Through the hazy splendor,
through the stone night, let me plunge my hand,
and let the aged heart of the forsaken beat in me
like a bird captive, for a thousand years!*

Give me silence, water, hope.

Give me struggle, iron, volcanoes.

Cling to my body like magnets.

Hasten to my veins and to my mouth.

Speak through my words and my blood (From Canto-11: The Heights of Macchu Picchu)

Pablo Neruda's epic poem **Canto General** comprising of 15 sections and 231 poems and more than 15,000 lines, gained world-wide recognition as his greatest work. The poem sweeps across the entire history of the continent from the perspective of a proud Hispanic American. Known for his communist sympathies, Neruda depicts Latin American history as a great and continuous struggle against oppression.

Poetry of the 18th and 19th centuries saw the trend toward more modern and short forms. The poetry of the 19th century continued to reflect ideals of liberty and revolution, focusing on the greatness of the lands and the indigenous inhabitants. Poetry written by leaders and revolutionaries spread throughout the region. José Martí, a poet-martyr who died fighting for the freedom of Cuba wrote his famous poem, Yo soy un hombre sincero which was absorbed by the popular culture.

Later in the 19th century, the poetry of Latin America continued to shift away from European styles, and a distinctive Spanish-American tradition began to emerge with Modernismo, a literary movement that arose in Spanish America in the late 19th century and was subsequently spread to Spain. Started by Rubén Darío with the publication of "Azul" (1888), it ended with his death in 1916. The modernists, in rebellion against romanticism, attempted to renew poetic language.

The avant-garde movement flourished in the 1920s and 1930s. Noted poets of this period were Cesar Vallejo (author of *Trilce*), Gutiérrez Nájera, Juana Borrero, Delmira Agustini from Uruguay (feminist poet who in later years inspired Alfonsina Storni and Nobel laureate Gabriela Mistral).

*“Something started in my soul, fever or forgotten wings,
and I made my own way, deciphering that fire
and wrote the first faint line, faint without substance, pure
nonsense, pure wisdom, of someone who knows nothing,
and suddenly I saw the heavens unfastened and open”-Pablo*

Latin American poetry continued to develop in the 20th Century. Toward the end of the millennium, Spanish-American poetry took a multi-cultural approach, giving importance to poetry by women, Afro/a-Hispanics, indigenous communities, and other sub-cultures. Nobel Prize winners like Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda, and Octavio Paz, used surrealism in their work.

During this time Latin American poets started writing prose-poem. Jorge Luis Borges ("Everything and Nothing"), Pablo Neruda (*Passions and Impressions*), Octavio Paz (*Aguila o Sol?/Eagle or Sun?*), Alejandra Pizarnik ("Sex/Night"), Giannina Braschi (*Empire of Dreams*), and Clarice Lispector (*Água Viva*) were some of the great practitioners of Prose-Poems.

Women poets Many women poets made their mark in Latin American poetry. (Pl. See Section-3 of Chapter 111 on women poets)

Contemporary Latinx poets

In a piece published in bookriot.com in 2018, Christina Orlando wrote “--- Latinx cultures have such strong oral storytelling traditions, and poetry is a direct descendant of that. There is a long lineage of Latinx writing, an ancestry of words that go beyond borders and politics--we’re in something of a poetry renaissance, with a clear shift towards diverse voices. Poets are exploring identity in new ways, and with the help of the internet, have access to new platforms and ways of reaching readers *en mass* ---contemporary Latinx poetry is also joyful, sensual, indulgent, and vibrant”.

Juan Felipe Herrera She has listed the names of 15 prominent contemporary Latinx poets (Ref: bookriot.com) which includes Ada Limón (one of the most renowned living poets- won accolades from the *New York Times*, National Book Critics Circle Award, and the National Book Awards for her last book, *Bright Dead Things*), Melissa Lozada (2015 National Poetry Slam Champion, 2015), José Olivarez, son of Mexican immigrants (received fellowships from many prestigious programs) Javier Zamora (2016 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award),



Eloisa Amezcua’s (*From the Inside Quietly*), Denise Frohman work has appeared in places like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and ESPN Vanessa Angélica Villarreal Carmen Giménez

Smith (The Mom of Latino poetry), Analicia Sotelo, Rosebud Ben-Oni (noted Jewish Latina), Roy Guzmán, Yesenia Montilla (her collection *The Pink Box* was listed for a PEN award in 2016),

“Sunset is always disturbing, whether theatrical or muted, but still more disturbing is that last desperate glow, that turns the plain to rust

When on the horizon nothing is left of the pomp and clamor of the setting sun” —Jorge Luis Borges (Poem-Afterglow)

Ariana Brown (won two Academy of American Poets Prizes and a 2014 collegiate national poetry slam championship) and Marcelo Hernandez Castillo (leading the Undocu poets campaign).

It is worth mentioning that Juan Felipe Herrera, a proud Chicano, son of migrant farmworkers became **21st Poet Laureate of the United States** from 2015 to 2017. Elizabeth Acevedo, Alan Pelaez Lopez, David Thomas Martinez, Ada Limón, Sonia Guiñansaca, Christopher Soto (Loma), Ariana Brown, Yosimar Reyes, Jessica Helen Lopez, Kristina Rae Colón are some of the important contemporary Latinx poets listed by remezcla.com.

Ref:www.webexhibits.org; historyofspain.es; en.hellenism.net/ poetryteatime.com; theculturetrip.com; www.chinahighlights.com; www.chinahighlights.com; www.masterclass.com; doyouknowjapan.com/poetry; www.indianetzone.com; www.britannica.com; learnodo-newtonic.com; learnodo-newtonic.com; www.indianetzone.com; archive.org

“I used to stand on the corner in San Diego with poems sticking out of my hip pocket, asking people if there was a place where I could read poems. The audience is half of the poem”-**Juan Felipe Herrera**

POETRY THROUGH THE AGES - CHAPTER-111

Part-1 Indian Poetry It was Mark Twain who said “India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend, and the great grandmother of tradition----”. The Indian civilization is one of the oldest in the world, and, the Indian literature has a long poetic history, dating back at least to Vedic times. The whole of Indian Sub- continent is like an expansive beautiful garden, as far as literature is concerned, with an assortment of trees, shrubs and plants, all in bloom. Poems were written in various Indian languages such as Vedic, Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Tamil, Malayalam, Odia, Maithili, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Assamese, Urdu, and Hindi and numerous other regional and folk languages. Poetry in foreign languages, especially Persian and English, also had a strong influence on Indian poetry. Historically, Indian poetry primarily developed during three distinct periods: Indian Epic Poetry written around 3000 years ago predominated by Prakrit and the Sanskrit languages, Indian Medieval Poetry composed in Urdu/Persian that flourished during the Mughal period, Pre -Independence/Independence and modern poetry. The developments

catalyzed Indian poetry to reach ‘majestic and subliminal heights’.

“A JEWELRY STORE NAMED INDIA”

*If you hold this
Dazzling emerald
Up to the sky,
It will shine a billion
Beautiful miracles
Painted from the tears
Of the Most- High.
Plucked from the lush gardens
Of a yellowish-green paradise,
Look inside this hypnotic gem
And a kaleidoscope of
Titillating,
Soul-raising
Sights and colors
Will tease and seduce
Your eyes and mind.*

*Tell me, sir.
Have you ever heard
A peacock sing?
Hold your ear*

*To this mystical stone
And you will hear
Sacred hymns flowing
To the vibrations
Of the perfumed
Wind.”*

— **Suzy Kassem, Rise Up and Salute the Sun: The Writings of Suzy Kassem**

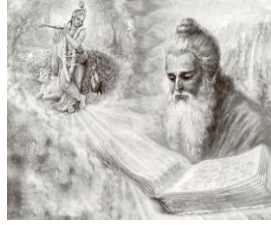
(Ref: Goodreads)

The Epic Period We already saw how the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, were composed during the epic period. Originally composed in Sanskrit, they were later translated into many other Indian languages. The regional and folk poetry, was profoundly influenced by these two great epics.

*“The divine light that pervades in all beings,
Let it illuminate my intellect, and
Enlighten my consciousness”-Rig Veda*



Valmiki



Ved Vyas *Itihāsa* and *Puranas* find

a mention in the *Atharva Veda*. The *Puranas* comprise of a huge collection of verse on stories related to many Hindu gods and goddesses.

We too have great epics from the South. Five Great epics of Tamil Sangam literature (2nd century-6th century) ---- *Silappatikaram, Manimegalai, Civaka Cintamani, Kundalakesi and Valayapathi*. Out of the five, Manimegalai and Kundalakesi are Buddhist religious works, *Civaka Cintamani and Valayapathi* are Tamil Jain works and *Silappatikaram* has a neutral

THE VEDAS

The term **Veda** means "knowledge". Vedas are considered among the oldest, if not the oldest, religious works in the world. There are four Vedas- the *Rigveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Samaveda* and the *Atharvaveda*.

The Vedas have been orally transmitted since the 2nd millennium BCE. The mantras (Chants), the oldest part of the Vedas, are considered the 'literal sounds of the Divine which, when recited or sung, recreate the primal vibrations of the universe. Even so, the works continue to be recited, studied, and venerated in the present and remain an important part of Hindu religious observances, festivals, and ceremonies. (Ref: en.wikipedia.org)

religious view. They were written over a period of 1st century CE to 10th century CE and act as the historical evidence.

With a

literary tradition more than two thousand years old, they are some of the oldest surviving epic poems ever written.

The *Thirukkural*, is a **classic of couplets or Kurals** (1330 rhyming Tamil couplets) or aphorisms authored by Thiruvalluvar (2nd century BCE and 5th century CE).

The Prakrits are a group of vernacular Middle Indo-Aryan languages that were used in the Indian subcontinent from around the 3rd century BCE to the 8th century CE. The term excludes earlier inscriptions and the later Pali.

Prākṛta literally means "natural", as opposed to Samskrta (Sanskrit), which literally means "constructed" or "refined". Prakrits were considered the regional spoken (informal) languages of people, and Sanskrit was considered the standardized (formal) language used for literary, official and religious purposes across Indian kingdoms of the subcontinent (en.wikipedia.org)

The classical period of Sanskrit literature dates back from the 3rd century

BC up to the 8th century AD. One of the earliest known Sanskrit plays *Mrichakatika* is thought to have been composed by Shudraka in the 2nd century BC. Bhasa and Kalidasa were the major early poets and dramatists.

Apart many great the

“Do not be led by others, awaken your own mind, amass your own experience, and decide for yourself your own path” – Atharva Veda

from Kalidasa, India had court poets who composed poetry. The list of some of noted court poets is given below:

“Dharma is the foundation of universe”- Bhasa

Poet	Patron	Contribution
Amarasimha	Chandragupta II	—
Ashvaghosa	Kanishka	Buddha Charitra (a biography of Buddha), Saundarananda
Banabhatta	Harshvardhan	Kadambari, Harsha Charita
Bharavi	Yasodharman	Kiratarjuniyam (about Kirat and Arjun)
Bhavabhuti	Yasovarman	Malatimadhava, Mahaviracharita
Harisena	Samudragupta II	Prayag Prashasti on Allahabad Pillar inscription
Jayadev	—	Geet Govinda (Krishna and Radha)
Shudraka	—	Mrichchakatikam
Thiruvalluvar	—	Thirukkural (Tamil epic)
Vishakhadatta	Harshavardhan	Mudra Rakshas and Devichandraguptam

Ref: exampariksha.com

Harisena, was a 4th-

century Sanskrit poet, and a government minister.

Amarasimha was a Sanskrit grammarian and poet from ancient India, of whose personal history hardly anything is known. He is said to have been "one of the nine gems' that adorned the throne of Vikramaditya



Kalidasa (Kalidas) who probably lived in the 5th century B.C. is often considered the greatest poet and playwright of ancient India. He is credited with the writing of three famous poems 1) *Meghadutam* 2) *Ritusamharam* and 3) *Kumarasambhavam*.

Kālidāsa wrote three plays- [Abhijñānaśākuntalam](#) ("Of the recognition of Śakuntalā"), [Mālavikāgnimitram](#) and [Vikramōrvaśīyam](#) . Considered a masterpiece, [Abhijñānaśākuntalam](#) was among the first Sanskrit works to be translated into

say

*"Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name
combine?
I name thee, O Sakuntala! and all at once is said"--Goethe*

English, and has since been translated into many languages. Critics that 'Tenderness in the expression of feeling and richness of



The Cloud Messenger

Meghaduta (Hindi-Meghadoot; Sanskrit -Meghadootham) by Kalidas

Meghaduta, is a lyrical love poem in 115-120 stanzas, a beautiful work of literary art, composed by Kalidasa, probably in the 5th century CE, and is considered one of his most famous works.

In this poem the main character is a Yaksha (a genial nature spirit). He is banished from the Himalayan Kingdom of Alakapuri by its ruler Kubera, for disregarding his duties. Separated from his wife, the Yaksha pines for his beloved on a lonely mountain peak. At the start of the rainy season, he notices a cloud perched on the peak. He addresses the cloud to deliver a message to his beloved.

*Sudden, Himalayan breezes split open
the tightly-shut leaf-buds on deodars,
and redolent of their oozing resin
blow south; I embrace those breezes
fondly imagining they have of late
touched your limbs, O perfect one!*

(Meghaduta of Kalidas-Translation by MR Kale)

The poem, also provides a description of the sights on the cloud's journey to Alaka. Its 'beautiful descriptions of nature and the delicate expressions of love in which passion is purified and desire ennobled' won the admiration of Goethe. The Yaksha's plight touches a universal chord.

Meghadoot was translated into English by Horace Hayman Wilson in 1813. The play Maria Stuart by Friedrich Schiller was inspired by the poem. The poem was also the inspiration for Gustav Holst's The Cloud Messenger Op. 30 (1909–10) (Ref: Wikipedia; Kālidāsa; The complete works of Kalidasa)

[From the Complete Works of Kalidasa]

literature and numerous subsequent authors, including Rabindranath Tagore. The poet Kalidas became widely known to western writers in the 18th century and since then he has also had an impact on western literature.

Bhartrhari (5th century CE) wrote two influential [Sanskrit](#) texts: the *Vākyapadīya*, on [Sanskrit grammar](#) and linguistic philosophy, and the *Śatakatraya*, a work of [Sanskrit poetry](#). Śatakatraya is a collected work of poetry, the three "Satakas" or 'hundreds', with three thematic compilations on *Shringara*, *Vairagya* and *Niti* (love, dispassion and moral conduct), of hundred verses, depicting the three stages of life. This compilation is one of the greatest works in Sanskrit language.

Great
Between

*"Trees bend low with ripened fruit; clouds hang
down with gentle rain; noble people bow
graciously. This is the way of generous things".*

Bhartrhari

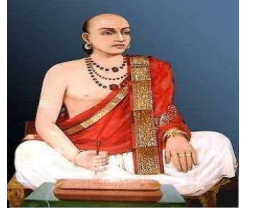
poets after Kalidasa
the period 5th century

creative
fancy has
assigned
to him a
lofty place
among the
poets of
all nation'.
For e. g.
look at
these lines
of
evocation
of dawn
by the
poet.

Kalidas
has had
a great
impact on
Indian

CE and the Bhakti movement we see a number of great poets who enriched the Sanskrit poetry and literature.

Bharavi (*Bhāravi*) who lived in the 6th century was a poet known for his epic poem [Kirātārjunīya](#), one of the six [mahakavyas](#) in [classical Sanskrit](#)



Banabhatta, a great poet and Sanskrit prose writer, born around the 7th century, was the court-poet of King Harshavardhana. *Harsha Charita*, his composition is considered to be the first among historical poetic works in the Sanskrit language. It is said that Bana has 'described everything in this world and nothing is left' ("Banochhistam Jagatsarvam").

Bhavabhuti lived in the 8th-century and was a scholar noted for his plays and poetry, written in [Sanskrit](#). His plays are considered to be equal to the works of [Kalidasa](#). The play *Malatimadhava* was his most famous composition.

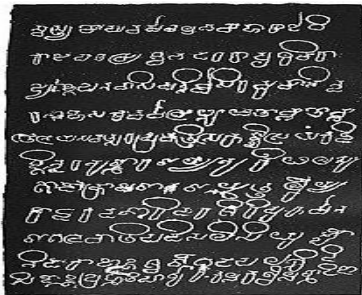
Adi Shankara (8th century CE) is the founder of Advaita Vedanta school of



Painting of Adi Shankara, exponent of Advaita Vedanta with his disciples by Raja Ravi Varma

Hinduism. He wrote commentaries (*Bhasyas*) on ancient Indian texts. *Brahmasutrabhasya* (commentary on Brahma Sutra), a fundamental text of the Vedanta school of Hinduism, is considered his masterpiece and has an ever-lasting influence on Hinduism.

Amoghavarsha-1 (814–878 CE), the greatest emperor of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was an accomplished poet and scholar.



Old Kannada inscription (876 AD) of Rashtrakuta

King Amoghavarsha I at Veerabhadra temple in Kumsi He wrote (or co-authored) the *Kavirajamarga*, the earliest surviving literary work in Kannada, and *Prashnottara Ratnamalika*, a religious work in Sanskrit.

Rajashekhara who lived in the 10th century was a Sanskrit poet, dramatist and critic and the court poet of the Gurjara Pratiharas. He wrote the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* between 880 and 920 CE, a poetical encyclopedia, a practical guide on science of applied poetics.

Gunavarma-1 (around 900 CE), an early Kannada language poet authored two Mahakavya (epic poems), the *Shudraka* and the *Harivamsha*.

Somadeva Bhatta (1035 – 1085) a writer from Kashmir and court poet to King Ananta of Kashmir, apparently was commissioned to compose a cycle of stories to amuse the queen

Sūryamati, which resulted in his monumental

“To be free from bondage the wise person must practice discrimination between One-Self and the ego-self. By that alone you will become full of joy, recognizing Self as Pure Being, Consciousness and Bliss.”-- Adi Shankara

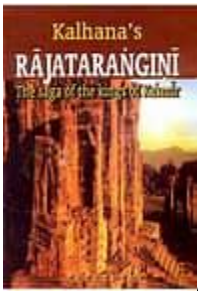
work *Kathasaritsangraha* (Ocean of River stories).

Jayadev (1200 or 1300 A.D.) a poet and dramatist, composed *Gita*



Govinda (Song of Govinda), a lyrical poem, dramatizing the love (Rasa-leela) of Krishna and Radha, but at the same time conveying 'the deep ethos of devotion of the individual soul, its pining for God realization'

Kalhana who lived in the 12th century CE (11th century CE) was a Kashmiri historian and is credited with composing *Rajatarangini* ("The River of Kings"). Written in Sanskrit, it is a historical chronicle of the north-western Indian subcontinent, particularly the kings of [Kashmir](#).



Auvaiyaar, a renowned female poet- saint was a court poetess in the **Chola Kingdom** (CA- 12th century CE) during the Sangam period, wandering the Tamil lands, staying with poor families, and composing songs and poems for their benefit.

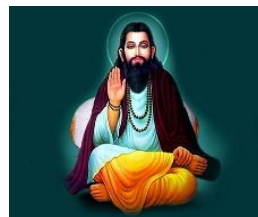
Harihara was a noted Kannada poet and writer in the 12th century. Among his important writings, the *Girijakalyana* written in champu metre is considered one of the classics of Kannada language.

The Bhakti Movement

The Indian poetry reflects the country's diverse spiritual traditions. In particular, many Indian poets have been inspired by mystical experiences.

The medieval period in India saw the emergence of several great poets which include **Ravidas, Tulsidas, Rahim and Kabir**.

Ravidas (1450-1520) was an Indian mystic poet-saint of the [bhakti movement](#) during the



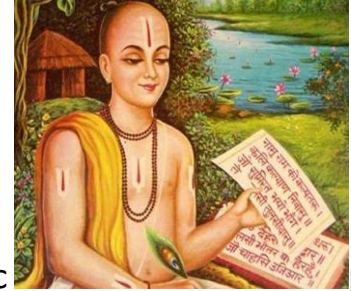
15th to 16th century CE. His devotional verses were included in the [Guru Granth Sahib](#). He taught removal of social divisions of [caste](#) and gender, and promoted unity in the pursuit of personal spiritual freedom.

"That noble-minded poet alone merits praise whose word, like the sentence of a judge, keeps free from love or hatred in recording the past"-Kalhana



Surdas (lived somewhere between 1478 and 1483) is known for his contributions to devotional poetry of India. They were written mostly as hymns of Lord Krishna. He was a literary genius and a gifted composer. Surdas, is believed to have written 100,000 songs of which only 8000 could be recovered.

Tulsidas (1543–1623), was a prolific writer and he composed at least six major and six minor



works. Among them the best known is *Ramcharitmanas*, an epic poem which tells the story of Rama. *Ramcharitmanas* is widely regarded as one of the greatest works of Hindi literature, and it has been acclaimed as “*the tallest tree in the magic garden of medieval Indian poetry*” Acclaimed as one of the greatest poets in the world, Tulsidas is often considered the reincarnation of Valmiki. Here is a sample of his writing: -

*Only the saints
who know the body's heart
have attained the Ultimate, O Tulsidas.
Realize this, and you've found your freedom.*

Abdul Rahim Khan-I-Khana, better known as **Rahim**, was one of the *Navaratnas* or the “*nine gems*” in the court of Akbar. As a poet, Rahim is most famous for his *dohe* or couplets, which are lessons for everyday life. Apart from *dohe*, Rahim also wrote a great deal of Hindu devotional poetry.

Kabir was a saint who lived in the 15th century revered by Hindus, Muslims and



Painting of Kabir weaving, c. 1825

Sikhs. His poetry is simple but profound, having metaphors which are easy even for the common people to understand. They usually contain a moral. Kabir is most renowned for his *Dohe*. They still remain hugely popular in India.

“I am not a Hindu, nor am a Muslim !! I am this body, a play of five elements; a drama of the spirit dancing with joy and sorrow.” – Sant Kabir Das

Narsinh Mehta or
Narsinh Bhagat, 15th-century poet-saint

of Gujarat, is known as the *Adi Kavi* of Gujarati literature. His works are predominantly in Gujarati language and one among them is “*Vaishnav Jan To*”, the Bhajan which was close to the heart of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mirabai a 16th-century Hindu mystic poet and devotee of Lord Krishna was born into a royal



Rajput family. Her religious hymns on Lord Krishna were popularly

(Ref: Poemhunter) known as Bhajans. She is celebrated as a Bhakti saint, particularly in the North Indian Hindu tradition.

Bhakti Movement in the South We can trace the roots of the Bhakti Movement in the Tamil speaking regions of India. India’s greatest philosophers like Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya and Madhwacharya were from South as well. *Shrimad Bhagavatam* was composed here. The Alwar saints wrote some of the finest verses in praise of Krishna. Andal’s ‘*Thiruppavai*’ is sung till date in every Vaishnava temple.

Poets and philosophers from the Telugu origin like Vallabhacharya, Rupa Goswami, Sanathana Goswami, Gopal Bhatta flourished during that period.

In Bhakti Movement we can see the deep interconnection between religion, poetry and music. Instead of reading poetry, one could easily sing or listen to musical form of poetry. This way, bhakti poetry, especially in the South, became popular and received wide acceptance among the public.

In Karnataka, Purandara Dasa known as *Pitamah of Carnatic music* and a devotee of Krishna, composed over four lakh seventy- five thousand poems and songs! A few hundreds of them written in Kannada and Sanskrit survive to this day and are sung in concerts. Swami Haridas, the teacher



of Miyan Tansen was said to have been a student of Purandhara Dasa. In the 20th century, his songs became popular both in Hindustani and Carnatic classical music. Legends like Pt. Bhimsen Joshi and M. S. Subbulakshmi popularized his songs.

In Kerala, Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri (1558 – 1643) wrote the famous epic poem ‘*Narayaneeyam*’ in praise of Krishna, and was popularized in Carnatic music by legends like Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavataar in the 20th century. It is still sung as devotional music in the famous Guruvayoor temple of Kerala.

In

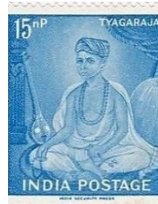
*“This is bliss, This is bliss, This is bliss, I proclaim
The real happiness lies in the chant of Lord’s name”*
Song by **Purandara Dasa**

addition to these are several other poets like Venkata Subramanian (1700- 1765), Narayana Teertha (1650-

1745), Sarangapani (17th century) of Karverinagaram from Andhra, Kanakadasa (1509-1609) from Karnataka who wrote poems depicting Bhakthi for Krishna. A large part of them exists as a 'living tradition' through Carnatic music and dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Manipuri and Yakshagana.



Swāti Tirunāl Rāma Varma (1813 –1846), the celebrated [Maharaja](#) of the [Kingdom of Travancore](#) was also a brilliant music composer and is credited with over 400 classical compositions in both Carnatic and Hindustani style.



Muthuswami Dikshitar (1776–1835), [Tyagaraja](#) (1767–1847), and [Syama Sastri](#) (1762–1827) all three legendary composers of Indian classical music, together are considered the **musical trinity of Carnatic music**. Their compositions still form a part of the great musical traditions of the South and are sung with reverence at homes and in concerts.

Urdu poets

Urdu poetry had a great influence on the poetry, music, culture and traditions of the people of the Indian sub-continent. Urdu poetry in India took its final shape only in the **17th century** when it was declared the official language of the court. Of course, some poets wrote Urdu poetry even before that time.

We have a separate write-up on Urdu Poetry under the broad heading- Indian Poetry. Still, we mention some of the great Urdu poets of India here, considering their importance at the national level.

Nasiruddin Mahmud Dehli –(C.1274–1337) was a 14th-century mystic-poet and a [Sufi](#) saint of the [Chishti Order](#). He was called "Roshan Chirag-e-Delhi" (means Illuminated Lamp of [Delhi](#)" in [Persian](#)) by his followers.



Amir Khusrau (1253–1325 AD), was a great Urdu poet of the 13th century (see box)

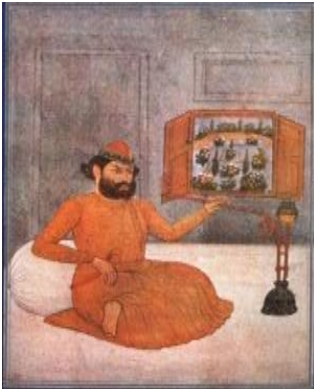
Khusrau
Amir
1253,

Music transcends language and time. The fact that compositions of the Trinity of Carnatic music — Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri — are still revered today attests to the dictum-**The Hindu**



called the father of Urdu literature, even though his poetry was primarily composed in Persian. He is credited with having fused traditions from across the continent to create the *qawwali* style of song writing and introduced *ghazals* to the Indian subcontinent. His poetry took many forms including ghazals, Masnavi, Gata, Rubai – all of which soon became integral to poetry traditions in Urdu. He is known as **the parrot of India**. Besides his contribution to literature, he was famous for his contributions in music forms. Amir Khusrau's eminent works include, *Afzal Ul-Fawaid* (Greatest of Blessings), *Baqia-Naqia* compilation and romantic *Masnavi Duval Rani* - Khizr Khan.

*I have become you, and you me,
I am the body, you the soul;
So that no one can say hereafter,
That you are someone, and me someone else.”* (Ref: en.wikipedia.org)



Mir Taqi Mir Born in 1722 in Agra, Mir Taqi Mir started writing Urdu poetry at a time when it was at its formative stage. He was integral to developing the language itself. His work explores themes of love and spirituality, and is rich with pathos drawn from his own personal tragedies. He was called the God of poetry in his times.

Mirza Ghalib (1797 – 1869) *Mirza Asadullah Baig Khan*, popularly known as *Ghalib* is still



Mirza Ghalib (Ref:Free

regarded as ‘the loftiest poet Urdu has ever produced’. “He is
Press Journal)

one of the major world poets across all languages, one of the most chronicled poets and a genius of his age”. He was known as the “Poet of Poets”. Ghalib wrote during the last years of the Mughal Empire in India.

*This earth, burnished by hearing
the name,
is so certain of love.*

“What heart-sick sufferer's grave is the sky?
an Ember rises hence at dawn”-- **Mir Taqi Mir**

*that the sky bends unceasingly
down,
to greet its own light-Ghalib*

He wrote both in Urdu and Persian. He still remains an iconic poetic figure of Urdu poetry in many countries, particularly India and Pakistan. Although Ghalib wrote in several genres, he is most famous for his ghazals. 'His

poetry is known for the intensity of emotions that it expresses, it's absolutely perfect form and for the profound ideas, it conveys'. Example-"*Comes mysteriously such thoughts in my mind that...*

Ghalib, scratching sound made by pen is the voice of an angel"

Nawab Mirza Khan Daagh Dehlvi (1831 – 1905) Nawab Mirza Khan, commonly known as



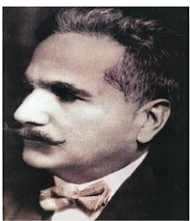
Daagh Dehlvi ('Daagh', an Urdu noun, means stain, grief and taint while 'Dehlvi' means belonging to or from Delhi) was an outstanding Mughal poet famous for his Urdu ghazals and belonged to the Delhi school of Urdu poetry. Daagh Dehlvi shayari and ghazals are still popular among people who love to read good poems. He wrote simple romantic poems and *ghazals* in chaste Urdu, with minimum use of [Persian](#) words. Here's a sample: -

O Daagh! If you're fed up with life then

Why are you alive?

Life isn't dear to you and you don't quit living either

Sir Muhammad Iqbal



Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877 – 1938), was a writer, philosopher, and politician, whose poetry in the Urdu language is considered among the greatest of the twentieth century. He was born in Sialkot, in Punjab province in British India. He is best known for his poetic works, including Asrar-e-Khudi. After its publication he was awarded knighthood. He gave the idea of Pakistan. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, he was named **its national poet**. Here is a sample of his writing.

Jawab-e-Shikwa [Response to The Complaint]

Whatever comes out of the heart is effective

It has no wings but has the power of flight

It has holy origins, it aims at elegance

It rises from dust, but has access to the celestial world

Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911 – 20 1984) Born in Punjab in British India in 1911, and later a citizen of [Pakistan](#), Faiz was considered to be one of Urdu's greatest poets by many. Having been nominated four times for the [Nobel Prize for literature](#). A recipient of Lenin Peace Prize in 1962, Pakistan Government conferred upon him the nation's highest civil award, Nishan-e-Imtiaz, in

Kaifi

1990.

Azmi is another legendary poet legend

"Lest we forget: It is easy to be human, very hard to be humane"-Mirza Ghalib



of modern era. He was born in Agra on May 19, 1919. His great contribution was introducing Urdu poetry to the Hindi film world.

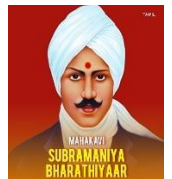
*Don't worry, don't open the doors of kindness
I will call out for a while, then go away,
In this very lane where the moon once bloomed
I will spend a dark night, and go away.*

Poetry in the pre-independence & independence era

By the second half of the 19th century British rule was firmly established in India.

The introduction of English education and interface with British culture had a profound impact on Indian literature, especially poetry. Many of the Indian poets were influenced by the English romantic poetry. This influence is notable even amongst the regional poetry.

Nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the emergence of several towering figures in Indian literature like Subramonia Bharati, Iqbal, Aurobindo, Surya Kant Tripathi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Mahadevi Verma, and Ramdhari Sing 'Dinkar'. Other famous poets were Harindrananth Chattopadhyaya (1898 – 1990), younger brother of Sarojini Naidu, Manmohan Ghose, (1869– 1924) -brother of Sri Aurobindo, and, one of the first from India to write poetry in English.



Subramaniya Bharathiyar (1882 – 1921) was a **Tamil writer, poet, journalist, Indian independence activist, social reformer and polyglot**. His poems inspired the people during the independence struggle.



Savitribai Jyotirao Phule (3 January 1831 – 10 March 1897) was a social reformer, educationalist, and poet from Maharashtra. Along with her husband, she played an important role in improving women's education and was the pioneer of India's feminist movement in Maharashtra.

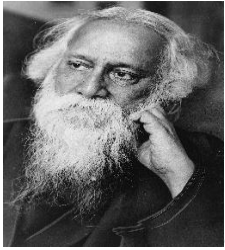


Aurobindo (1872-1950) Besides being one of India's most important modern poets, Sri Aurobindo was also a highly influential philosopher, yogi and political figure. His poetry revolved primarily on themes

When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence---Sri Aurobindo

of spirituality and mortality, as well as involved commentaries on and translations of *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) Referred to as “*the Bard of Bengal*”, is



a great figure of world literature and the most famous modern Indian poet. His best-known work in poetry, *Gitanjali*, was published in 1910. Tagore himself translated its works to English and the English *Gitanjali* or *Song Offerings* was published in 1912. The following year, Rabindranath Tagore won the *Nobel Prize for*

Literature.

I know, I know, my pride must be
cast on the waters,

My soul must be cracked open by
stabbing pain,

And tunes must be played on the
flute,

By my hollowed-out heart.

And all that is stony in me

Must melt in tears.

-Rabindranath Tagore

The same stream of life that runs through my
veins night and day runs through the world and
dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the
dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass
and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and
flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-
cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of
this world of life. And my pride is from the life-
throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.”

— **Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali***

Tagore was a prolific writer who, apart from numerous poems, also wrote drama, short stories and novels and even translated some of them to English. The major

theme in the poetry of Tagore is the essential unity of all creation, which is also the main theme of the *Upanishads*.

Tagore, composed the inspirational national anthems of two nations, India as well as Bangladesh, and


a third,

“Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add color to my sunset sky.”

“It smelt of new rains and of tender
Shoots of plants- and its warmth was the warmth
Of earth groping for roots... even my

providing inspiration for that of Sri Lanka.

Women poets Very few women poets have made their mark in the field of poetry in India. The traditional society seldom encouraged women to explore intellectual pursuits. It was the Indian Independence movement and the call given by Mahatma Gandhi that brought women to the forefront. Of course, a few of the women were fortunate enough to be the beneficiaries of English education (in this section names of only the most prominent women poets at the national level have been included. Names of other women poets have been listed under Hindi and regional Poetry).



*Nay, do not grieve tho' life
be full of sadness,
Dawn will not veil her splendour for your
grief,
Nor spring deny their bright, appointed
beauty
To lotus blossom and Ashoka leaf.*

*Nay, do not pine, tho' life be dark with
trouble,
Time will not pause or tarry on his way;
To-day that seems so long, so strange, so
bitter,
Will soon be some forgotten yesterday.*

*Nay, do not weep; new hopes, new dreams,
new faces,
The unspent joy of all the unborn years,
Will prove your heart a traitor to its
sorrow,
And make your eyes unfaithful to their
tears -Sarojini Naidu*


Sarojini Naidu (1879 – 1949) Known as the 'Nightingale of India', Sarojini Naidu is among the most influential poets in modern India. She began her writing career at the age of 13. Her first collection of poems, *The Golden Threshold*, was published in 1905 and was widely acclaimed.

Sarojini Naidu was also a political leader and celebrated freedom fighter. Her work explores themes such as love, death, patriotism, among others, and her poetry set the tone for modern Indian literary traditions.

Amrita Pritam (1919 - 2005) was a Punjabi novelist, essayist and poet, who wrote in Punjabi and Hindi. A prominent figure in Punjabi literature, she is the recipient of the 1956 Sahitya Academy Award. Her body of work comprised over 100 books of poetry, fiction, biographies, essays, a collection of Punjabi folk songs and an autobiography. They were translated into several South Asian and foreign languages.

Kamala Das (1934 – 2009) was one of the leading Indian poets of the 20th century and she is known as

the 'Mother of Modern Indian English Poetry'. She converted to Islam in 1999 and assumed the name *Kamala Surayya*. Her open and honest assessment of female sexuality made her work controversial. She wrote in English as well as in Malayalam, the language of her native state Kerala. While to her English audience she was Kamala Das; in Malayalam, she wrote under the pen name *Madhavikutty*.



*“When the body
perishes all perishes,
but the threads of memory
are woven of enduring atoms
these particles,
the threads,
et you, yet again.”*

*“To quench my longing, I bent me low
By the streams of the spirits of Peace that flow*

—

“When a man denies the power of women, he is denying his own subconscious.”

— **Amrita Pritam**



Kamala Das

*You
planned to tame a swallow, to
hold her*

*In the long summer of your
love so that she would forget*

*Not the raw seasons alone, and
the homes left behind, but*

*Also her nature, the urge to fly,
and the endless Pathways of
the sky.*

**From The Old Playhouse and
Other Poems by Kamala Das
(1973)**

Nissim Ezekiel (1924 –2004) was an Indian Jewish poet, actor, playwright, editor and art critic. He was one of the founders of postcolonial India's literary history, specifically Indian Poetry in English. He was honoured with the Sahitya Academy Award in 1983 for his poetry collection "*Latter-Day Psalms*"

Most of us remember Ezekiel through his work 'Night of the Scorpion' which we read in high school. Ezekiel has been 'appreciated for his well-crafted diction, works dealing with common and mundane themes, and unsentimental and realistic sensibility'. Ezekiel received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1983 and the Padma-Shri in 1988. Here are a few lines from his poem 'Night of the Scorpion'. See how simple and profound it is.

Poetry and Films A mention may be made about the role played by poetry in film music. With the beginning of the era of "talkies", film music became an unavoidable part of films in

India. The lyrics of film songs in early days were nothing but pure poetry, reflecting every human emotion like love, romance, sadness, death, so much so that they directly appealed to the heart of the listeners, young or old, man or woman, learned or the illiterate, rich or poor, alike. Of course, with the passage of time the lyrical quality of film songs has been lost, giving way to sound and fury of the present times.

Contemporary poets Gulzar (Born: August 18, 1934---) Known by his pen name Gulzar, Sampooran Singh Kalra is perhaps the most famous living Indian poet. Although he has written poetry collections and directed films, he is best known as a lyricist who has contributed greatly to the Indian Film Industry. Gulzar received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the highest award

of the Indian cinema. He has also won an Oscar and a Grammy for writing the song "Jai Ho" for the film Slumdog Millionaire.



Night of the Scorpion

*I remember the night my mother
was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
of steady rain had driven him
to crawl beneath a sack of rice-----*

*The peasants came like swarms of flies
and buzzed the name of God a hundred times
to paralyze the Evil One.*

*-----and they sat around
on the floor with my mother in the center,
the peace of understanding on each face.
My mother twisted through and through,
groaning on a mat.*

*My father, sceptic, rationalist,
trying every curse and blessing,
powder, mixture, herb and hybrid.*

*-----I watched the holy man perform his rites to
tame the poison with an incantation.
After twenty hours
it lost its sting.*

*My mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children.*

Vikram Seth is a poet and novelist. whose works include children's fiction and non-fictions. His *Mapping and Beastly Tales* is the best known of his poetry works. Vikram Seth has received many honorable awards like Padma Shri, Sahitya Academy award, WH Smith Literary Award and Crossword Book Award.

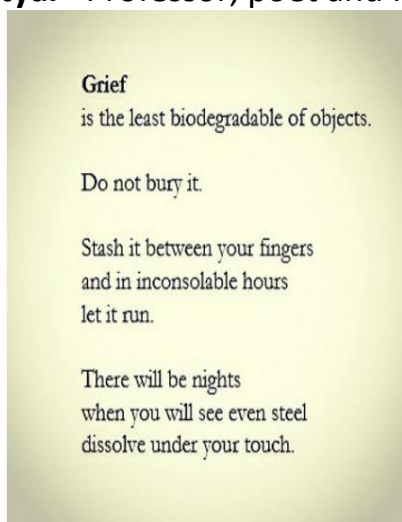
Young modern Indian poets It is difficult to really pick up names of young poets in India, as there are so many persons writing both in English and regional languages. Some of the prominent names of young poets who write in English are noted below. Other names have been included under **Regional Poetry**.

Meena Kandasamy Chennai-based poet, writer and translator. Her first book *Touch* (2006)- won several prizes - Her works are published in various literary journals and publications.

Tishani Doshi Poet, writer and dancer- Born to Welsh and Gujarati parents in Tamil Nadu - first book of poetry, *Countries of the Body* (2006), won a Forward Prize for Best First Collection- published six books of poetry and fiction.

Sonnet Mondal Described as a "weaver of marvellous words"- The 'young bard of India'- authored eight books of poetry.

Akhil Katyal - Professor, poet and PhD scholar is the author of *Night Charge Extra*.



'Grief', Poem by Akhil Katyal Harnidh Kaur-Currently pursuing Masters in Public

Policy- poem '*Pantheon*' created a furor in social media

Nabanita Kanungo - teacher in Assam- debut collection - *A Map of Ruins*- love songs for her hometown Shillong

Arundhathi Subramaniam - Editor, curator, writer of prose and journalist of literature and performance arts-most prominent contemporary female poets of India. Her book of poems- *On Cleaning Bookshelves*- was published in 2001.

It may be remembered that we have many poets in modern times who wish to remain in anonymity and who write poetry just for the pleasure of it.

We have also included in this section a prize-winning poem by **Ms Sudha Shrotrria**, a former civil

Editor

*Give me a home
that isn't mine,
where I can slip in and out of rooms
without a trace----- Arundhathi Subramaniam*

servant, poet, writer and painter and Associated of Life Stream e-magazine.



Stranger in the Street**

*Do not ask me the name of the place where I come from,
 Do not ask me the name of the place where I am going to,
 Do not judge me by the color of my hair,
 Or by the clothes I wear,
 Do not judge me by the shape of my face,
 Or by my lack of grace;
 Look beyond the narrow lines you have
 drawn around you with the passage of times;
 For I may be rich or poor,
 I may be strong or weak,
 But if you endeavor to seek,
 You will find something of me in you,
 And you in me,
 For you cry like me when you feel the pain,
 And I laugh like you when I feel the joy,
 Deep down we are much the same
 For we care and we share
 A bond greater than eternity;
 It is the bond of humanity.*

(** Prize-winning poem: first published in Asian Age -2005)

Poetry Today

Poetry today is vastly different from what it used to be in earlier times. The times in which we live has a profound influence on the way we read and write. Poets no longer live in their lofty heights, admired by a select set of people. The surge of technology, urbanization, revolution in communications have made poetry more decentralized, democratic and accessible. But at the same time isolation and alienation have set in modern life and is reflected in the poetry of our times. One notable change is the rise of oppressed classes and their giving voice to their sense of injustice and repression. We find more and more women giving expressions to their innermost thoughts and emotions. But the sad fact is that today we don't have the kind of poetry wherein the poetic imagination soared high, reflecting the beauty and mystery of nature.

(Ref: www.britannica.com; archive.org; buzzfeed.com; homegrown.co.in; en.wikipedia.org; archive.org; theculturetrip.com; allpoetry.com; www.indianetzone.com; en.everybodywiki.com; www.iloveindia.com; www.scrollroll.com; www.worldblaze.in; poemanalysis.com; www.gktoday.in; poetandpoem.com; exampariksha.com; www.urdupoint.com; www.rekhta.org; poets.org; homegrown.co.in; openlibrary.org; www.thefamouspeople.com Ref: en.wikipedia.org/wiki; www.Britanica.com; www.gktoday.in; archive.org; www.uponline.in; www.storypick.com; mppsc.org

Part-11 Hindi, Urdu & Regional Languages

(Note: -We already had a glimpse of the history of Hindi poetry and the great poets of different ages in Chapter-111 on Indian Poetry. For the convenience of the readers to easily follow the poetic history of Indian languages, we have groped together the states in India as follows: -

Group-A-1 --Hindi -Bihar, Utter Pradesh (UP), Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Rajasthan- Group-A-11 Urdu Poetry

Group-B---

Group- C- (Bengali)

North-East Poetry

Eastern States- West Bengal and Orissa (Oriya)

“As I write, I create myself again and again.” —Joy

Harjo

Group-D Western States - Maharashtra (Marathi), Gujarat (Gujarati) and Old Punjab (Punjabi)

Group E- J&K (Kashmiri)

Group-F-- Southern States- Telangana (Telugu), Tamil Nadu (Tamil), Karnataka (Kannada) and Kerala (Malayalam))

Group A-1 Hindi Poetry

Hindi, the Language Hindi is the national language of India. Today most people in different corners of the country can at least understand or speak Hindi. It is the main language spoken in states like undivided U.P, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, thanks to Bollywood movies and efforts of the Hindi Rajya Bhasha Prachar Samiti.

Hindi is often ambiguously referred to as vernacular speech of the whole of North India between the Punjab on the West, and Bengal on the East.

Many readers, especially from South India, may not know that Hindi Language itself is like the vast River Ganga (Ganges), with many of its tributaries flowing into it, and, nourishing her. Therefore, any attempt to attribute any uniformity to it in the way it is spoken, read, or written, will only be futile.

Dialects: Dialects are regional in character and are the languages used by the common man.

Magahi, Bhojpuri and Maithili are the most spoken dialects spoken in **Bihar**. In **U.P**, Hindi is the state's official language (Urdu is co-official) and according to census data, it is spoken by over 80.16% of the population. Bhojpuri is the second most dialect, spoken by 11% of the population. Other dialects include Awadhi, Bhojpuri Braj Bhasha, Bundeli, Bagheli, Kannauji.

Madhya Pradesh has eight different dialects, corresponding to eight different regions – Bundelkhandi, Nimadi, Bhagelkhandi, Malvi, Brij Bhasha, Bhili, Korku and Gondi.

The chief dialects of **Rajasthan** are *Mewati*, *Marwari*, *Jaipuri*, and *Malvi*.

Poetic history According to historians, the history of Hindi Poetry extends to at least one thousand years. It can be classified into four stages, based on the style of poetry written during that period----Adikal (the Early Period) 11th–14th century; Bhaktikal (the Devotional Period) 14th–18th century; Ritikal romantic period 18th–20th century and Adhunikkal (the Modern Period).

Adikal The earliest poetry of this period is represented by the *Apabhramsha* poetry, which includes the **Siddha**, **Nath** and the **Jain literature**. Chief amongst the Nath poets were Gorakhnath and his followers. Jain poets included Swayambhu, Som Datt Suri, Sharang Dhar and Nalla Singh.

The poetry of this period represented mostly religious ideologies. It also included verse-narratives (*Raso-kavyas*) that praise the heroic deeds of the rulers and warriors. The important heroic eulogy- poems include *Prithvi Raj Raso* by *Chandbardai*, *Khuman Raso* by *Dalpativijay*, *Visaldev Raso* by *Narpati Nalha* and *Parmal Raso* by *Jagnik*.

Chand Bardai (1149-1200) has the honour of being the first of great Hindi poets. His epic poem '*Prithviraj Raso*' is considered a masterpiece and termed as the first Hindi composition, and is also the largest Hindi writing, containing more than 10,000 verses and has the use of six contemporary languages. The *Prithvi Raj Raso*, written in Brajbhasha is about the life of the 12th century Indian king

*"The nature never tolerates even for a moment
The rejected stale and old broken crusts
The joy of nature takes the support and sustenance
Only from what is new and maiden"-Jay Shanker
Prasad (Kamayani)*

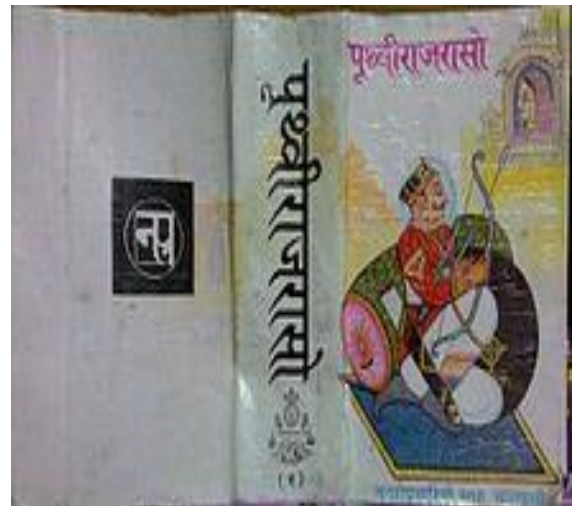
Prithvi Raj Chauhan (c. 1166-1192 CE).



Prithvi Raj Raso -Quote “The night came: the beam of moon arose. The Lord of men descended from his steed and placed Sanjogta on another.

The blood- stained arrows fly: one pierced the casque of Chohan.

Then did the bard demand to wield the sword; but his prince exclaimed, ‘strong are our swords, oh bard, leave thou the fight, that we may live in song’ (translated by James Todd British officer and Oriental scholar). These lines are about an episode in the life of Prithviraj-111 of Chauhan dynasty who lived in the 12th century. He kidnaps Sanjogita (Sanyukta), the daughter of Jaichand, the powerful ruler of Khanouj, from the middle of her wedding ceremony. While fleeing with the Princess, Prithviraj fights the army of king Jaichand, supported by his political advisor and (supposedly) by the bard who wrote this poem.



The cover of a *Prithviraj Raso* version published by Chand Bardai at work by the [Nagari Pracharini Sabha](#)

Bhakti Kal is the Devotional Period between the 14th and the 17th century and was noted for devotional poetry. Kabir, Guru Nanak, Dharma Das, Maluk Das, Dadudayal, Sunder Das, Thulsidas and Meera Bai emphasised on monotheism

through their *Sakhis* (couplets) and *Padas* (songs). The Sufi poets, who believed that love was the path of realising God, included poets like Mohammad Kutuban and Riti kal (the Scholastic Period-17th to 19th century-) to increasingly used in poetry. rhetorical tradition was emulated in this period

When the end draws near, the first thing a man loses is his wisdom-**Ramdhari Singh Dinkar**

like Malik Jayasi, Manjhan, Usman.

Scholastic 19th century-) increasingly Sanskrit

Adhunik Kal (1937 onwards) begins in the middle of the 19th century. There was a proliferation of the use of *Khariboli* (local dialect spoken in Western Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and in some parts of Haryana), in poetry in place of Brajhasha.

The modern period is further divided into four phases- (a) **Bharatendu Yug** Known after Bharatendu Harishchandra (1849-1882), Father of Modern Hindi Literature” (b) **The Renaissance** (1868-1893) Period (c) **Dwivedi Yug** (1893-1918) named after Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1868-1938) who is regarded as the architect of modern Hindi prose (d) **Chhayavad Yug** (1918-1937), age of Romanticism- Jayshanker Prasad, Maithalisharan Gupt, Surya Kant Tripathi ‘Nirala’, Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma and Subhadrakumari Chauhan being most well- known poets.

The decline of *Chayavad* movement saw the emergence of several different styles in Hindi poetry as noted below: -

Pragativad (1943-60). After the Second World War, a wave of great despair and depression that spread throughout the world also had an impact on literature. The main poets of this stream are- Girijakumar Mathur, Prabhakar Machwe, Bharat Bhushan Agarwal and others. Other noted poets of progressive poetry were Bhagvati Charan Varma, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar and Narendra Sharma.)

Hridayvad (poetry of passion) and **Prayogvad** (Poetry of experiments or ‘Nai Kavita’). Important Poets of this period were S.H.Vatsyayan ‘Agyeya’, Shivmangal Singh ‘Suman’, Girija Kumar Mathur, Dharamvir Bharati etc.

Poetry from the states Among the four states, Bihar has produced a number of poets and writers in its local dialects like Bhojpuri, Maithili, Magahi, Angika and Bajjika. Bhikhari Thakur, Heera Dom, Viveki Rai, Satishwar Sahay Verma, Pandey Kapil are prominent writers of Bhojpuri and Vidyapati in Maithili.

The poets of Uttar Pradesh have made outstanding contributions, be it in Sanskrit Hindi, Urdu or the regional languages. Valmiki is considered to be the first poet of India and Ramayana is the first ever poetic work of India. Many believe that Ved Vyas, who wrote the great epic *Mahabharata*, was born in an island in Yamuna near Kalpi, Uttar Pradesh. We have already noted the contributions of mystic poets like Surdas, Kabir and Tulsidas; great poets like Ghalib and Amir Khusrau; and more modern poets like Kaifi Azmi and Harivanshrai Bachan.

The state of Madhya Pradesh also has produced many noted poets like Pandit Makhanlal Chaturvedi (1889- 1968), Atal Behari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India 1921), Rahat Indori (1950), Harishanker Parasi (1924), Nida Fazli (1938), Bhagawan Dutt Sharma (1935) and others. **Pandit Makhanlal Chaturvedi (1889- 1968)**, was a writer, essayist, poet, playwright and journalist from Madhya Pradesh. His poetic work *Him Taringini* won him the first ever Sahitya Akademi Award for Hindi writing, in the year 1955. He was also awarded Padma Bhushan in the year 1963.

Poetry has played an important role in shaping the literary history of Rajasthan. Rajasthani poetry

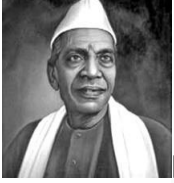
major
(3)
Noted

“Neither sin nor virtue exists in this world; it (depends on) the perspective with which we analyze the situation- about Chitralekha” by **Bhagawati Charan Verma**

is often divided into five types: (1) Jain (2) Charan Akhyan (4) Sant (5) Laukik. poets of earlier times were Magha, Hari Bhadra Suri,

Udyotam Suri, Siddha Rishi, Vigrah Raj Chauhan, Samadeva, Jayanak, Maharana Khumbha and others.

Great Hindi poets When we look at the history of Hindi poetry, we find that it has been elevated to a very high level by the rich contributions made by a dedicated group of great poets, especially in the 20th century, before and after Indian Independence. But it remains a sad fact that people who are not well-versed in Hindi are unable to enjoy these great poems, as English translations of most are not readily available.



Maithili Sharan Gupta (1886-1964) Born in Chirgaon, Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, he was one of the most important Modern Hindi Poets. He was one of the pioneers of *Khari Boli* Poetry, and usually wrote in the same dialect. Mahatma Gandhi gave him the title **Rashtra Kavi** (National Poet). His prominent works include '*Rang Me Bhang*' published in 1910 and *Bharat Bharati*. He also served as an honorary member of the Rajya Sabha after independence and was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1954.



Jaishankar Prasad (1890-1937) was distinguished figure in modern Hindi literature as well as Hindi theatre. He was born in Benares, in the United Province under

British India. He wrote under the pen-name

Kamayani is considered as one of the greatest literary works in Hindi literature. It is an allegorical epic poem that 'dramatizes the tradition, culture and philosophy of India'. It narrates a mytho-historical theme ---the story of Mann and Shradha, the progenitors of the human race after the Great Deluge, taken from our ancient religious scriptures. *Kamayani* is a mirror of both Prasad and his times, dealing at length the socio- a political issues of the day and trying to provide answers to those issues. It also signifies the epitome of Chhayavadi school of Hindi poetry which gained popularity in late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

See how powerful and profound are these lines from *Kamayani*----

Canto I: Chinta (Thought)

***O first furrow of thought, O serpent of world's weald,
hissing like the first tremor of volcanic fire!***

O fickle maiden of misery, O brow's line of loss! -----

***-----Would you linger long? Would you slay this wayward
immortal? Would you delve into my depths? -----***

Come oblivion! Sorrow, seize me! Silence, shroud me!

Begone awareness! Fill my void with languor! (Translation by Usha Kishore)

According to the Times of India the original handwritten copy of *Kamayani* is now kept in the private collection of National Archives in Delhi

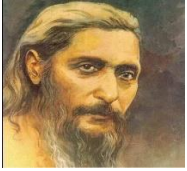
his
was

"With the incompleteness in life, I face gains and losses, I fight hope and hopelessness, I battle tears and smiles. I ensure my speed doesn't get hit and I keep walking". Shivmangal Singh 'Suman'

'Kaladhar'. 'Chitradhar' first collection of poetry, written in Braj dialect of Hindi, but his later works were in Sanskrit, Hindi or

Khadi dialect. Mahadevi Verma said about Prasad "Whenever I remember our great poet Prasad, a particular image comes to my mind. A fir tree stands on the slope of the Himalaya, straight and tall as the proud mountain peaks themselves". After reading Kamayani she feels that if Nobel Prizes could be awarded posthumously Kamayani would definitely be eligible!

Suryakant Tripathy 'Nirala' (1897-1961)



A native of Medinipur, West Bengal, Suryakant Tripathi, with pen name *Nirala* (meaning the unique one), was a poet, artist, novelist, essayist, and short story writer. He is credited with bringing in free verse in the modern Hindi prose. "He wrote in both free verse and traditional metres — but despite no fixed format, he never failed to mesmerise the reader."

His poems have been translated into other languages too. American novelist David Rubin translated his poems and published the same as "A Season on the Earth: Selected Poems of Nirala", "The Return of Sarasvati: Four Hindi Poets" and "Of Love and War: A Chayavad Anthology". His poem Saroj Smriti is said to be one of the greatest, showing his emotions and sentiments for his daughter.



Born on 20 May 1900 in Kausani-Almora, North-Western Provinces, British India, **Sumitranandan Pant** (1900 -1977) was one of the most celebrated Hindi Poets of the 20th century. He was known for romanticism; his poems were inspired by nature, people, beauty, and aroma of rural India. Pant mostly wrote in Sanskrit version of Hindi and was one of the prominent Hindi Poets of the *Chhayavadi* School of Hindi Literature. He composed 28 published works containing poetry, verse plays, and essays. He also composed evolved, socialist, humanist and philosophical poetry.



Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (1904 – 1948) Born in Nihalpur village in Allahabad, United Province, she joined the freedom movement and was the first woman Satyagrahi to court arrest in Nagpur. Her poetic works were highly patriotic and inspiring.

"The vessels would never cross the river, if they feel scared of the waves. Those who keep trying, would never fail"-**Harivansh Rai Bachan**

"Jhansi ki Rani" was one of her most popular poems as also the most learned and sung poems in Hindi literature. Here is the opening stanza of Jhansi ki Rani:

"The thrones shook and royalties scowled,
Old India was re-invigorated with new youth
-----The old sword glistened again in 1857
-----This story we heard from the mouths of Bundel bards
-----Like a man she fought, she was the Queen of Jhansi"

India's Great Women Poets

It is indeed amazing that India's traditional and patriarchal society has produced many women Hindi poets of eminence in the 20th century. In elegance and quality of their poems they are second to none.

Mahadevi Verma (1907 – 1987) was one of the greatest



Hindi poets of all times. She was born in Farukkabad, in United Province in 1907. She is considered as one of the four major poets of "Chhayavaad", an era of Neo-romanticism in Hindi literature. She is known as the "modern Mira" and the grand dame of Hindi literature. Her poems reflect emotional intensity and rich imagery of nature. In 1988, she was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award in India. Her poems are widely read in schools. **Thuj Me Priya**

*Why an introduction dear, you are within me,
reflections on starry nights, memories of a life,
creations of life in short spells, eyes notice
gentle footsteps!
I don't have much to treasure anymore,
you are the treasure I have in me.*



Ramdhari Singh Dinkar (1908 – 1974), known by his pen-name 'Dinkar', was a poet, essayist, freedom fighter, patriot and academic. Born on 23 September 1908 in Simaria, Bengal Presidency, British India, he wrote both in Hindi and Maithili languages. He has been hailed as a Rashtrakavi ('National Poet') on account of his inspiring patriotic compositions which he wrote in the pre- independence era. His poems such as Kurukshetra (1946), Rashmirathi (1952) and Urvashi (1961) won acclaim. He is a recipient of numerous awards and honors. Dinkar was greatly influenced by Iqbal, Rabindranath Tagore, Keats and Milton.

"Embark on that journey of self – introspection, even time is waiting for you to find your purpose"-- Tanveer Ghazi

Chhayavad- similar to "Romanticism", literally "Shaded") refers to the era (1918 to 1937) of Neo-romanticism in Hindi literature, that focused on themes of love and nature, as well as reinterpretation of the Indian tradition in a new form of mysticism.

Jaishankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Varma are considered as the four pillars of Chhayavadi school. Other important figures of this literary movement include poets such as Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', Harivansh Rai Bachchan among others.

When it arrived, Chhayavad was very well received by readers and critics alike, but was later on criticized for excessive use of decorative language, romanticism aloof from contemporary social and economic malaise and setting stricter rules on meter, rhyme etc. (ref: en.wikipedia.org)

Srivastava; 1907 – 2003) was a poet and writer of the New Literary Movement (romantic upsurge) of early 20th century Hindi literature. He was born on 27 November 1907

in [Babupatti, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, British India](#).

He is best known for his early work *Madhushala*. He was honored with Padmabhushan in 1976. Here are a few lines from *Madhushala*: -

“Look at the vast expanse of the skies. When a star breaks, it remains broken forever. The universe never laments over the loss of its dear ones. What’s gone is gone”.

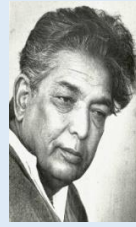
Shivmangal Singh "Suman" (5 August 1915 – 27 November 2002) was a poet and academician who wrote in Hindi. He was born on 5 August 1915, [Unnao](#), former [United Province](#). His notable works include *Mitti Ki Bharat*, *Hillol*, *Jeevan Ke Gaan*. He won awards including the Sahitya Academy Award (1974), Padma Sri (1974) and Padma Bhushan (1999). A quote from his poem: -

“The one who is ready to die for this journey, who is not afraid to drink in the joys and sorrows of life with a smile on his face is the one who lives the most. This elixir, this journey of life, is the most intoxicating of all”.

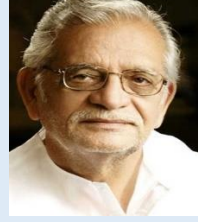
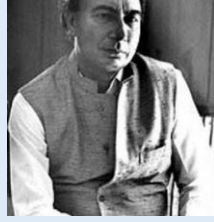
*“Become a pioneer, a trendsetter. Become the torch-bearer.
Do not bend down, you keep walking-“ Sohanlal Dwivedi*

Hindi film music and poetry A mention has already been made about the relation between film songs and poetry in India. This is especially true of Hindi language. The lyrical and mesmerizing poetry penned during the golden era of Hindi films by some of the legendary lyricists like Shailendra, Shakeel Badayuni, Kafi Azmi, Majurooh Sultanpuri, Anand bhakshi and Sahir Ludhianvi

The Legendary Lyricists of Hindi Film Music



Shailendra (1923 – 1966); Shakeel Badayuni (1916 – 1970) Kafi Azmi (1914-2002); Majurooh Sultanpuri (1919-2000);



Anand Bhakshi (1920-2002) Sahir Ludhianvi (1921 – 1980); Gulzar (b. 1934); Nida Fazli (1938 – 2016)

immortalized Hindi film songs of the period. Urdu played a crucial role in the growth and development of Hindi film music, especially adding rhyme and lyricism to the Hindi numbers. But let us not forget that the great composers of Hindi film music like Naushad, Shanker- Jai Kishan gave life, tune and melody to the lyrics, by playing a complementary role.

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; theculturetrip.com; en.everybodywiki.com; www.gyanipandit.com; www.indianetzone.com; lisindia.ciil.org/Hindi; www.scrollroll.com; www.varanasi.org.in; www.rekhta.org/poets; www.poemhunter.com; www.britannica.com; poetandpoem.com; www.livehistoryindia.com; www.socialvillage.in; sahityadarpan.com; www.republicworld.com; www.thefamouspeople.com; feedingtrends.com; www.Britanica.com; www.gktoday.in;archive.org; www.uponline.in; ww.storypick.com; Ref: en.wikipedia.org/wiki; www.Britanica.com; www.gktoday.in;archive.org; www.uponline.in; ww.storypick.com; mppsc.org; www.rajras.in

*Sweetheart, don't tell lies,
Because, eventually,
you'll have to show your face before God:
There are no elephant or horse carriages up there,
You can only walk there-Lyrics by **Shailendra** (Sajanare Joot mat
Bolo)*

**Group-A-11- Urdu
Poetry**

Urdu literally means 'Camp' in Turkish language. 'The rich tradition of Urdu poetry has been integral to the complex history of literature in the Indian subcontinent'.

The Urdu language is a mixture of many languages and tongues. During the rule of Delhi Sultanate in the late 12th century, the languages spoken around Delhi were mainly Brij Basha and Sauraseni, but were influenced by Persian, the language of the Muslim rulers. Languages such as Turkish and Arabic also got mixed with the local languages, at about the same time. The basic grammar and structure of the original Indian languages remained intact, but the vocabulary was significantly changed. Many conventions of Urdu poetry came from the Persian, Turkish and Arabic languages.

Urdu poetry in India made its strong presence felt around the 17th century, after being declared the official language of the Mughal court. The 18th century saw a phenomenal rise on Urdu poetry in the country.

During the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, Urdu, it was named 'Urdu', . Subsequently, the language was introduced in the southern region of India, notably Hyderabad in Deccan.

As there were very few means of information available to the people during that time, Urdu became the chief medium of communication in regard to the prevailing social and political conditions. The Arabic tradition of *musha'era*, wherein poets used to assemble and read poems was also followed in India.

During the British rule all famous writers of Urdu language, including Ghalib and Iqbal, were recipients of scholarships.

After the Partition of India in 1947, major poets and scholars of Urdu language were divided along the nationalistic lines. Thereafter it "moved seamlessly across cultures, languages and politics". However, Urdu poetry is cherished both in India and Pakistan.

A powerful literary grouping known as the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) was most active from the 1930s to 1950s in promoting Urdu language.

The Urdu tradition still remains relevant today in India, chiefly due to Hindi films.

Types of Urdu poetry

Some important types of Urdu poetry are noted below: -

Marsiya is an Urdu-Persian poetry form that is recited normally at the death of someone. It originated from Arabic and Persian language where it was customary to recite Marsiya to commemorate and lament the death of Hazrat Hussein and 72 of his comrades during the siege of Karbala.

Masnavi is a poetic form in Persian, Ottoman and Urdu literature.

Qasida was conceived and developed in pre-Islamic Arabia way before Islam was introduced. Qasida is basically a laudatory and elegiac poem.

Rubai The Rubai (Rubaiyat) is an Urdu-Persian poetic form with each Rubai stanza forming a quatrain.

Shayari is a dominant and popular form of poetry wherein each and every "sher" is a short rhyming couplet. Shayari often portrays the meaning and beauty of life in a very subtle way.

Ghazals A Ghazal is a form of love poetry and consists of a set of couplets or sher, which is sung as a short song.

Urdu

The drop grows happy by losing itself in the river-Ghalib

Nazm is a type of ghazal that has a smooth flow of

rhyme and is written in verses. Both Gazal and Nazm are complimentary but similar to each other

Doha is one of the most popular genres of poetry in Urdu language, usually conveying didactic messages.

Urdu Script Urdu poetry is written in the standard [Nasta'liq calligraphy style \(Perso-Arabic script\)](#) in [Pakistan](#) and Deccan region of [India](#). However, in North India, the [Devanāgarī script](#) is followed. The 'Lakhnavi' way of spoken Urdu is considered to be the highest literary form of Urdu in India.

Urdu Poets and Freedom struggle Urdu poetry played an inspiring role in the Indian freedom struggle with poets like Altaf Hussain Hali, Brij Narain Chakbast, Hasrat Mohani, Zafar Ali Khan, Mohd Ali Jauhar and his brothers Shoukat Ali, Allama Iqbal, Durga Sahai, Suroor Jahanabadi and Trilok Chand Mehroom. "Urdu, the language born in the streets of Delhi, became the language of love in the 19th century and the language of rebellion in the 20th and 21st centuries".



Altaf Hussain (1837-1914) Born in Panipat he adopted the pen name of Hali (the contemporary). He was one of the first poets to raise his voice for freedom.

Wrote he thus

'In lieu of one fistful of your dust

Refusal of Paradise in exchange is for me a must'

Bismil Azimabadi (1901 – 20 June 1978) was a freedom fighter, landlord, and an Urdu poet from Azimabad, Patna, Bihar. He wrote the inspiring verse,

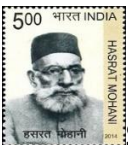


The desire to sacrifice my life [rebellion] is now in my heart

Let's see how much power the executioner has [to stop us]

Written in 1921 "it became the cry of a generation of revolutionaries and was hummed by Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukhdev as they marched to the gallows".

Hasrat Mohani (1875-1951)



Syed Fazl-ul-Hasan known by his pen-name Hasrat Mohani was an activist, freedom fighter and a noted Urdu poet. He coined the rousing slogan **Inquilab Zindabad** ("Long live the revolution!") in 1921 that 'was a call against the British (that) became an anthem for the freedom struggle'. He is regarded as one of the first person to have demanded complete independence for India in 1921 at the Ahmedabad Session of Congress.

How long will tyranny succeed, let us see

Till when will freedom be a dream, let us see

are in

'Treat knowledge as if it were treasure once lost

Hold fast when you find it,

No matter what cost-----' Altaf Hussain

*Hindustan's riches
the clutches of
plunderers*

Till When will this continue, let us see



Ali Sardar Jafri (1913 - 2000) was also a poet, critic and film lyricist. He was born in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh. He joined the national movement and went to jail several times because of his political activities. It is behind bars that many of his early poems were penned. He was honored with Padma Shree in 1967. Look at these beautiful lines----

Dance, O spirit of liberty, for life is eternally dancing,

The universe revolves in the orbit of times, in an eternal dance.

Great Urdu poets We have already discussed contributions made by great poets like Ghalib, Mir Taqi Mir, Amir Khusrau, Iqbal and others in the Chapter on Indian Poetry.

Post-Independence Urdu was added to the state Official Language Act, 1951 through an amendment to the Act in 1989. The wide usage of the Nastaliq Script in written Hindustani gave rise to Urdu as a spoken and written sub-sect.

Contemporary Urdu poetry Many rules and conventions need to be followed while writing traditional Urdu Poetry. But modern Urdu Poetry has no such set of rules. Poets can write it in the form of free verses. The New Urdu Poetry is still popular, as it is simple and easy to understand.

Ref: [-en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org); www.britannica.com theculturetrip.com; www.poetrytop.com; www.dailyo.in/ loveindia.com; www.niazi.com/blogpostswww.dailyo.in/loveindia.com; www.thehindubusinessline.com

INDIAN REGIONAL POETRY

One common thread that connects all regional poetry in India is Sanskrit language, for Sanskrit had a great influence on Indian vernacular languages. Interestingly, we find translations of the Ramayana in all major languages---[Kamba](#) Ramayana ([Tamil](#), 12th century), [Saptakanda Ramayana](#) by Madhav Kandali (Assamese-14th century), Kirttibasi Ramayana or Sriram Panchali, translated by Kirttibasi Ojha (Bengali-15th century), Jagmohan (Dandi) Ramayana by Balram Das (Oriya, 15th century), Ramcharitmanas by [Tulsidas'](#) ([Awadhi](#), 16th century) and Adhyatma Ramayanam by **Thunchaththu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan** (Malayalam- early 17th Century).

Although every language has produced its own great poets and poetry, very little about them is known to the people living in other parts of the country. This is perhaps because very few have been translated into English. Also, that readership is dwindling for poetry.

Let's now have a look at the great poets and poems of different regions of India.

Group-B-North-East Poetry

For those living in rest of the country, India's North-eastern region is an unknown, remote and mysterious territory, as the communities of North –East India have been historically isolated from mainstream India. “Most people who don't hail from the Northeast don't know there's anything beyond Assam” wrote one writer----- “The Northeast only gets attention when something

How long will Bengal rule over the home – poor Sita?

“We practiced a craft, Leaving imprints, On sky walls, Linking the seasons

Coding the tailing mist, In silent message

Across the vast landscape“--- Mamang Dai (“River Poems”)

goes wrong. The representation and the mind space we occupy is minimal.”

‘An



NE-Special features

Bologspot.com

- The term North-east is purely geographical, but it tends to homogenize an extremely heterogeneous group of people.
- There exists no common history and heritage of the people in North-East India, except that the states of [Arunachal Pradesh](#), [Mizoram](#) and [Meghalaya](#) were parts of former British [Assam](#).
- Without any authorised script of their own, most preserved their myths and stories through oral tradition.
- People in the NE states share a close proximity with nature. Poetry of the North is marked by the unique presence of nature.
- The old, traditional, innocent way of life, so characteristic of this part of India, is slowly and steadily being eroded.
- The most prominent concern expressed in many poems is the feeling of loss and the overwhelming- all-pervasive shadow of violence---- a land where “the ugly thud of the boots of both the extremists and the Indian Army” stands out as a reality
- Since the introduction of English and Hindi, a new generation of writers has emerged. ‘The troubled political climate, the beautiful landscape and the confluence of various ethnic groups have given rise to a body of writing that is completely different from [Indian English literature](#)’.

amalgamation of undulating hills, rolling valleys and tranquil hamlets’ the seven states of North-East India (called seven sisters) comprise of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram. Sikkim which became a state in 1975 is also now a part of N-E India.

Now let’s have a look at the poetry and poetic traditions of the N-E states.

1. Assamese poetry



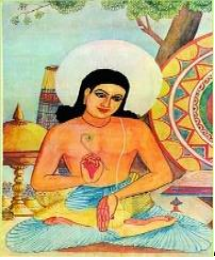
Shikhir blog

When we think of Assam a few images pass through our minds, like the fury of the floods rendering thousands of people homeless during the Monsoon flashed on the TV, a cup of freshly brewed Assam tea and the pretty Assamese women welcoming the annual *Bihu* festival with flowers and offerings. But no one can imagine that this ‘Gateway to the N.E.’ is rich in tradition and culture and has given rise to several luminaries who have enriched its poetic history.

The history of poetry of Assam is indeed glorious. The earliest seeds of Assamese poetry can be found in folk songs. Assamese poetry is greatly indebted to the lyrical poetic heritage of Assam’s folklore.

Prahlada Charitra by Hema Saraswati (13th-century) is probably the earliest text in Assamese literature. However, the first great Assamese poet was Madhava Kandali (14th century), who made the earliest translation of the Sanskrit Ramayana and wrote *Devajit*, a narrative on Krishna. He was known as *Kaviraja Kandali*, the king of poets.

The *bhakti movement* brought a great literary upsurge in Assam. A famous Assamese poet of that period was Srimanta Shankaradeva (1449–1568) who was a polymath, saint-scholar, poet, playwright and social-religious reformer. Considered a versatile genius, he greatly influenced music theatrical performance, dance as well as literary language. Some of his famous poetic works are *Kirtana-Ghosha*, *Harischandra-Upakhyana*, *Rukmini-Harana*,



Ajamilopakhyana, *Bali-Chalana*, *Kurukshetra-Yatra*, *Gopi-Uddhava-Samvada*, *Amrita-Manthana*, *Krishna-Prayana-Pandava-Niryana*, and *Kamajaya*.

Wrote the poet, “Never seek ye the caste of a Brahmin (upper caste) or a Chandal (lower caste). Have an equal eye on a donor and a thief. One who has an idea of sameness in between a rogue and a saint, know him, ye all, to be a true scholar” (*Kirtan Ghosa*). Those lines are relevant today, as they were centuries ago.

Madhavadeva (1489–1596) was a saint, composer, poet, playwright and scholar. He was a religious reformer. He is known particularly for his book of hymns, the *Naam Ghosa*, as well as a large selection of songs called *Borgeets*.

Lakshminath Bezbaruah (1864 – 1938)



Lakshminath Bezbaruah is a pioneer of modern Assamese literature. Born in 1864 in the Nagaon district of Assam he was a poet, novelist and playwright of modern Assamese literature. He was one of the literary stalwarts of the *Jonaki Era*, the age of romanticism in Assamese literature. He wrote essays, plays, fiction, poetry and satires, gave a new impetus to Assamese literature. No wonder he was awarded the titles – ‘*Rasaraj*’ and ‘*Sahityarathi*’.

Lakshminath Bezbaruah’s entire literature was rooted in deep passion and love for the country and the nation. ***O mur Apunar Desh*** is the national anthem of Assam which is among one of the poems written by Laxminath Bezbaruah.

Mofizuddin Ahmad Hazarika (1870-1958) Born in Dibrugarh in 1870 he was an Assamese poet and writer of the early 20th century. He is the author of the famous poetry books ‘*Gyan Malini*’ and ‘*Tottyia Parijat*’.

Padmanath Gohain Baruah (1871–1946) novelist, poet, dramatist, is regarded as the “Pitamaha” (great grandfather) in Assamese literary world.

“One need not be a god or a Brahmana or a sage;
and there is no need of knowing all the scriptures.
It is in vain that people perform other rituals and get mortified in doing them.
The Lord is pleased simply by bhakti”---- (Devotion)-Sankaradeva
through IJF State Anthem Assam by **LAKSHMINATH BEZBARUAH**

Hemchandra Goswami (1872–1928), writer, poet, historian, teacher and linguist Who published the first Assamese dictionary. Some of his other works include *Asamiya Sahityar Chaneki* and *Phular Saki* (The Bunch of Flowers), which contains the first sonnet in Assamese. **Ananda Chandra Agarwala (1874-1940)** translated poems from English which read like the original.

Hiteswar Barbarua (1876-1939) wrote long narrative poems in blank verse and a number of sonnets, modelled after English types. His earliest collection, *Dhopakali* (The Bud, 1902), contains poems composed in early youth.



Raghunath Choudhury (1879–1967) was a prominent poet of the romantic era of Assamese literature. Choudhary is known as Bihogi Kobi (poet of birds) because most of his writings are based on birds and nature. Choudhary also took part in the [Indian independence movement](#). His first poetry book '*Sadri*' was published in 1910. His second poetry book '*Ketaki*' was published in 1918. The poetry book '*Karbala*' was published in 1923 and '*Dahikatara*' was published in 1931. Raghunath Choudhary was a freedom fighter of India's freedom movement.



Nalini Bala Devi (1898– 1977) A noted writer and poet of Assamese literature, known for nationalistic as well as mystical poetry, she was awarded the Padma Shri in 1957 for her contribution to literature, and in 1968 she won the Sahitya Academy Award for her poetry collection *Alakananda*. She is the first woman Assamese poet to be awarded Padma Shri and the first woman to the chair of the Assam Sahitya Sabha. Her first book of poems *Sandhiyar Sur* (Evening Melody) is much acclaimed.

Jyoti Prasad Agarwala (1903 – 1951) was a noted



playwright, song writer, poet, writer and film maker from [Assam](#). He was considered as an [Assamese cultural](#) icon, deeply revered for his creative vision and output and is popularly called the *Rupkonwar* of Assamese culture. He composed more than 75 popular poems, to name a few: *Biswashilpi*, *Hai Mrityu Nomoskar*, *Adhunik Kobita Moi*, *Jyoti Raamaayon* and *Luitor Paaror Agnixur* are two of his notable poetry collections.

Hem

"Who's for whom in this world / Who's under whose care / Temporary acquaintances, eye-to-eye contacts these are with // Bounded facial outlines / That get dissolved in the infinite oblivion / If the thread of love that binds them snaps-" **Nalini Bala Devi**

Barua (1915-1977), is considered to be

the father of modern [Assamese poetry](#). He wrote “*Balisanda*” (1951) and “*Manmayuri*” (1967).

Birendrakumar Bhattacharya (1924 – 6 August 1997) was one of the pioneers of modern Assamese literature. He was a



left wing writer. He was the first ever Assamese writer to receive **the Jnanpith Award**, in the year 1979 for his novel *Mrityunjay* (The Immortal)



Navakanta Barua (1926 – 2002) was a prominent Assamese novelist and poet.

Navakanta’s three published books of verse are *He Aranya*, *He Mahanagar* (O Forest, O Metropolis) *Eti Duti Egharati Tara* (Counting up eleven stars) and *Yati*. Navakanta has been influenced more deeply by T. S. Eliot than by others.

The most important poems of Barua are *Polokh*, *Monot Pore Arundhati*, *Norokot Don Juan*, and *Crussot Don Juan*.

Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi (1932/1933 – 2004) A notable poet, lyricist and folklorist associated with Assamese literature, Nirmal Prabha Bordoloi received several awards including Sahitya Academy Award in 1983 for her poetry book *Sudirgha Din Aru Ritu*, President award in 1957 for children’s literature.

Nabakanta Barua (1926 – 2002) is a famous name in the Assamese literary world. He was known by his popular pseudonym “*Akhud Kakaideo*”. He also wrote many poems under the pseudonym of Seema Dutta. His poems have given a shape of unique dimension to modern Assamese poetry. His poems are rich in various themes like the beauty, life, love, death, mystery, etc.

Hiren Bhattacharya (1932 – 2012) Popularly known as Hiruda, Hiren Bhattacharya was a poet and lyricist. He had innumerable works published in Assamese and achieved many awards and accolades. Few of his notable poetry works are *Roudro Kamona*, *Kobitar Rod*, *Tomar Bahi*, *Xugondhi Pokhilaa*, *Mor Desh aru Mor Premor Kobita*, *Mur Prio Bornomala*, *Bhalpuwar Buka Mati*, and *Bhalpuwar Dikchou Batere*. His Assamese rhymes collections include *Lora Dhemali* and *Akon Dhemali*.

Bhupen Hazarika (1926 – 5 2011), the Bard of Brahmaputra, a was a **playback singer, lyricist, musician, poet, actor and filmmaker from Assam**, widely known as **Xudha kontho** (meaning cuckoo, literally “nectar-throated”). He was a much-loved poet- singer across India. He also was a social reformer, a humanist and a harbinger of love/ passion and universalism. His songs, written and sung mainly in the Assamese language by himself. His poems and songs

Give me back my boyhood, For the night

I'll once again drop off, On my mother's lap:

Lai hale jale abeli batahe... (lullaby)

My reminiscences mount to a rumble, In the flow of the starving moments'-Hiren Bhattacharya

are marked by humanity and universal brotherhood.



The Wanderer - by Bhupen Hazarika

We see in his songs 'the complexities of life, the tension between existence and essence, life and death, soul and body ---His songs bear everything that he feels, sees, imagines and hopes'.

The world having embraced me as its own,

I've forgotten my own home.

I've become a wanderer.

I've become a wanderer.

From the land of the Ganges,

I visited the mighty Mississippi and saw the beautiful Volga.

From Ottawa through Austria, I arrived – covered in Paris's dust

From Ellora I took color and gave it to the distant city Chicago,

I heard the ghazals of Ghalib, sitting inside the Tashkent minaret.

Sitting at Mark Twain's tombstone I talked about Gorky.

Again and again by the pull of the road I have made the road my home.

That's why I am a wanderer.

That's why I am a wanderer.

Though most wanderers appear aimless,

I travel with intention:

Wherever I go I soak my mind in the color of the place.

I have seen countless rows of tall buildings touching the sky.

Under their shadow I have also seen many homeless folk

I have seen endless groves of roses and bakul flowers blossoming in the millions.

I have also seen buds withering due to neglect

Country after country, I have seen love-less unions breaking apart families.

The stranger becomes my own in my mind, and my own people become distant.

That's why I am a wanderer. I'm one wanderer. I'm a wanderer

Bhupen Hazarika's songs have not only been translated into Bengali and Hindi but a number of other languages as well. (thirdeyefell.com)

He was posthumously awarded the Padma Vibhushan, in 2012.

New era poets Mahendra Bora has recently compiled a selection from the writings of twenty young poets and calls it *Natun Kavita* (New poetry), a criticism of the present-day social order. Homen

Bargohain writes short stories and poetry with equal felicity and distinction. The other younger poets Dinesh Goswami, Nilmani Phukan (Junior), Bireswar Barua, Mahim Bora have used novelty of themes, new symbolism and imagery.

Towards far off "I bawled out over the field
Towards far off Across the horizon beyond the range of
vision No response came back as an echo
Feel like following that soft whistle Which has been calling
me from across the patch of fog With a swishing sound the
whole day Towards far off" - **Mahendra Bora**

2. ARUNACHAL PRADESH



As the eastern-most state of India, Arunachal Pradesh is known as the “Land of the Dawn-lit Mountains” or the “Land of the Rising Sun”. The state is the abode of diverse ethnic communities, with their own distinct tongues and cultures. They are either of Tibeto-Burman or indigenous tribal origin. One is surprised to learn that there are 26 major tribes and hundreds of sub tribes, with more than 90 languages being spoken!

Most *Tani* languages are indigenous to central Arunachal Pradesh, including the *Nyishi*, the *Apatani*, the *Tagin*, the *Galo*, the *Bokar*, the *Adi*, the *Padam*, the *Pasi*, and the *Minyong*.

The literature of Arunachal Pradesh is both the oral and the written. Oral histories of the state were passed down from generation to generation, in verse and song.

Written references to local people first appeared in *Ahom Burunjis* (chronicles). The first historical account about the tribesmen of Arunachal could be seen in the writings of a Mughal chronicler, Shihabuddin in 1662.

THE EARLIER MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN THE STATE WAS ASSAMESE, AS ARUNACHAL WAS THEN A PART OF ASSAM. WE HAVE EXAMPLES OF WRITERS LIKE YD THONGCHI AND LUMMER DAI WRITING IN ASSAMESE. WRITERS AND POETS STARTED USING ENGLISH OR HINDI AS THEIR MEDIUM SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH AND HINDI IN ARUNACHAL IN 1972.

A NEW GENERATION OF WRITERS HAS EMERGED BY THE MIDDLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY. TODAY, MANY AWARDS AND HONORS ARE BEING WON BY ARUNACHAL WRITERS. NAMES OF PROMINENT POETS INCLUDE MAMANG DAI, RITA CHOWDHURY, DIBANG, YESHE DORJEE THONGCHI AND TAMO MIBANG.

*What is felt left unsaid,
is a sadness.
Bereft of our symbols
this strange tattoo in my heart*



Mamang Dai is a poet and novelist from Arunachal Pradesh. Her mother tongue is Adi but she writes both in Adi and in English. Hers is one of the renowned tribal voices from North-East India. She was the first woman of the state to have been selected to the IAS/IFS. But she gave up her career in the Civil Service and preferred a career in journalism.

Mamang Dai re-created the pre-historic past of Arunachal Pradesh in *The Legends of Pensam* and *The Hidden Land* (2003). One finds in her anthology *The Balm of Time, River Poems* an amalgamation of traditional literature and creativity. "Dai's poetic world is one of river, forest and mountain, a limpid and lyrical reflection of the terrain of her home state. Nature here is mysterious, verdant with myth, dense with sacred memory. There is magic to be found everywhere: in the way lilies "navigating on a heartbeat . . . are shooting up like swordfish", in the quiet equipoise of "cool bamboo/ restored in sunlight", in the "speechless ardour" of mountains. And there is no doubt whatsoever that "the river has a soul".

"The Voice of the Mountain"

I am the desert and the rain.

From where I sit on the high platform

I can see the ferry lights crossing

criss-crossing the big river.

I know the towns, the estuary mouth.

There, beyond the last bank

where the colour drains from heaven

I can outline the chapters of the world.

-----The wild bird that sits in the west.

The past that recreates itself

and particles of life that clutch and cling

For thousands of years –

She writes about 'cultural amnesia' in her poems. She bewails it in her poem "**This Summer**"

*"...begging the forgiveness of butterflies,
and beauty that we destroyed
in our hunt for life".*

Some important names of poets writing in indigenous languages are Takop Zirdo, Tony Koyu and Yabin Zirdo. There are also a number of Hindi poets and writers such as Taro Sindik, Jamuna Bini and Joram Yalam who have made significant

contributions to poetry.

The book of maps

says nothing about our lands and forest rights--- **Yumlam Tana**

MAMONG DAI'S POEMS (SEE BOX) AND LW BAPU'S *KHANDUMA'S CURSE* ARE EXAMPLES OF BLENDING OF TRADITIONAL LITERATURE AND CREATIVITY.

Oral literature has begun to disappear into a state of oblivion in recent times, largely due to globalization and urbanization. This friction of globalization and tradition is reflected in the themes like identity, nostalgia and social conflicts in contemporary writings.

3. Meghalaya (The Abode of the Clouds) The state has a poetic name. Before the state of Meghalaya came into existence, the area was ruled by the independent kingdoms of *Jaintias*, *Khasis* and *Garos*. Not much is known about their origins, as no written records are available. In the 19th century all the three kingdoms became part of the North East province under the British. At the time of Indian independence in 1947, present day Meghalaya constituted two districts of Assam, enjoying limited autonomy. Meghalaya finally attained statehood on 21st January 1972.

The languages spoken in the state are mostly *Khasi*, *Garo* and *Jaintia*, corresponding to the three main tribes of Meghalaya. Other than that, Bengali, Assamese and English are also used. English is the official language of the state.

Pioneers Thomas Jones Elias (1816-1849) and **Soso Tham (1873-1940)** were the two great



pioneers of Khasi literature. Thomas Jones was a Welsh Christian missionary, who worked among the Khasi people of Meghalaya in India and of Bangladesh. He was a prominent poet and essayist of the Khasi language. He is regarded as *"the most versatile and towering genius...He is one of the greatest poets, essayists, story writers and thinkers among the Khasis"*

Jones's skills in carpentry and other crafts were valued by the Khasi community, and he learned their language by living among them. He also recorded the Khasi language in Roman script. In 1842 he produced a Khasi Reader, and translated a Welsh-language work, *Rhodd Mam*, into Khasi; these were the first books written in the Khasi language. He also compiled a Khasi alphabet and dictionary. It is aptly inscribed on his gravestone "The founding father of the Khasi alphabets and literature". In 2016 the State celebrated his 50th death anniversary.

Soso Tham (1873-1940), once known as the 'Robert Burns of the Khasi Highlands', is still



remembered for his beautiful poems. Soso Tham was a poet and philosopher of the mid-nineteenth century when formal education did not reach the villages of the Khasi Hills. Braving all challenges, he started composing poems and in 1925. In the midst of a financial crisis, he published his first book *'Ka Duitara Ksiar'* (The Golden Harp 1925) comprising 46 Khasi poems and 14 translations from English poems, for which he received no appreciation. But is one of most distinguished

works in Khasi language. He had to go from door to door

go

To this place I belong

That frolics with rhythmic Rhapsody -Soma Gupta-(Hiraeth-Meghalaya)

to sell his books, without much success. His poems reflect 'the complexity, diversity, richness and poignancy' of the North east. Soso Tham expressed his tragic frustration in many of his poems that touch every heart even today. One such poem is:

*'Quietly he lives, quietly he dies,
Amidst the wilderness
Quietly in the grave let him rest,
Beneath the soft green grass'...*

Many of U Soso Tham's valuable writings are lost or untraceable today. Soso Tham died on December 18, 1940, leaving many of his poetic works unfinished. The day is observed today as **U Soso Tham Day** throughout the state of Meghalaya.

contemporary poets Prof. Streamlet Dkhar, is a renowned Khasi poet. He was felicitated during a 3-day South Asian Literature and Culture Summit-2018 held in Bangladesh.

Two noted Hindi poets from Meghalaya are Nilmoni Phukan and Thangjam Ibopishak.

Desmond Leslie Kharmawphlang and Desmond Karmawphlang write lyrical poetry both in English & Khasi. Today in Meghalaya there are many young budding poets in English language.

4. Mizoram (The Land of the Mizos) is a state in Northeast India, with Aizawl as its capital city. Often called the, "Song Bird of the East" the Mizos are blessed with a natural talent for music. [Mizo Tawng](#), is the principal language of the [Mizo peoples](#), which has both [written](#) and [oral traditions](#). The *Duhlian* dialect, also known as the Lusei, was the first language of Mizoram and now has come to be known as the Mizo language. Although, Mizo is the most important language in the state, English is being widely used in administration and education.

The different periods in the poetic history of Mizoram are as follows;

Oral tradition, folklores & folktales (ancient period)

Pre-Christianization period (1860-1894)

Early period (1894-1920)

Middle period (1920-1970)

Contemporary Mizo literature (1970 to present)

All [Mizo languages](#) such as [Pawi language](#), [Paite language](#) etc. remained unwritten until the beginning of the twentieth century. The collection of Mizo poems published under a single volume is one of the most reliable sources of knowledge for ancient Mizo poetry.

One of the best-known Mizo languages [poets](#) was Awithangpa (1885–1965). Various other poets were active during this period, writing mainly songs used in various Christian services in the Mizo tradition that include Patea (1894–1950)

(who composed 55 songs) and Saihnuna (1894–1949- composed about 98 songs) and the blind poet Laithangpuia (1885–1935 – composed about 27 songs) among others. There were also poets who wrote both religious and secular poems, such as R.L. Kamlala (1902–1980), Damhauhva (1909–1972) etc.

The names of other prominent poets of later period include Pu [Rokunga](#) , who was one of the most prolific Mizo poets. He composed patriotic songs, festive songs, [Christmas](#)

[songs](#), [idylls](#), poems about nature etc. He was chosen *Poet of the Century* by the

*The stories burn our memories like a distant meteor searing
the unnamed gloom, by their light I examine*

the great hurt I carry in my soul---Desmond Kharmawphlang ("Letter from Pahambir") Khasi

Mizo Millennium Celebration Committee in 2000), Lalţanpuia, Lalzova Chhangte ,P. S. Chawngthu, Vankhama, V. Thangzama, Zirsangzela Hnamte and Pastor Saikhuma.

5. Nagaland Naga Hills have been occupied by the Naga people as early as 150 AD. Nagas have a rich tradition of oral literature. Originally, Nagas were illiterate, practiced hunting and they mostly lived in isolation from each other.

The early writings on the Nagas were mostly anthropological, and the middle period largely consisted of Government records. Writing began with the development of Naga script, which came through the efforts of the American Baptist Missionaries in the 1860s.

The second phase came in around 1919, after the British occupation and World War II/Battle of Kohima.

The third phase began after Indian Independence, in the 1950s. With more people getting educated, from 1970s onwards, writing started among the Nagas. Due to prolonged years of intense fighting, they could however, hardly devote any time to writing, let alone poetry. "Naga Society has lost one generation, may be even two, of potential writers --- because of conflict situation".

Only by the turn of the century, writing truly began in Nagaland. Although English is State's official language, diverse local dialects exist side by side. Among the pioneer Naga writers are **Temsula Ao, Nini Lungalang, Easterine Kire and Monalisa Changkija 1960**), whose works are well received regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Temsula Ao (1945-) is a poet, short story writer and ethnographer. She is a retired Professor



of English at North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), where she taught since 1975. She has published five poetic works---*Songs that Tell* (1988), *Songs that Try to Say* (1992), *Songs of Many Moods* (1995), *Songs from Here and There* (2003) and *Songs From The Other Life* (2007).-She was awarded the Governor's Gold Medal in 2009, Sahitya Academy Award in 2013 and Padma Shri in 2007. Two poems by Temsula Ao refer to underground groups which have filled the minds of Naga youth with violence and hatred, and the general situation in Nagaland.



Nini Lungalang (1948-2019) she wrote two book of poems and has published widely in anthologies and journals. During the [long-running insurgency in Nagaland](#), Changkija began to write poetry and short stories to protest the violence, and to criticize the condition of society that led to the unrest. Her noted works are *Monalisa* (1993). *Weapons of Words* *Monsoon Mourning*. Marking her first death anniversary, a book titled "The Morning Years" written by Nini Lungalang was also released by the former chief minister of Nagaland in 1920.

Easterine Kire (1959-) is a poet, writer, and novelist. She published her first book of poetry in 1982 titled "Kelhoukevira"-which was the first book of Naga poetry published in [English](#).

Her poetry and books have been translated to German, Croatian,

So I return to where I began, I go because I must: I return to the dust of which I was formed. And the air that breathes life in me-And yet-through the misty height I see, Your face strange now, shattered, refracted In the prism of my tears--- **Nini Lungalang (Nagaland)**

Uzbek, Norwegian and Nepali.

Monalisa Changkija (1960-) is a well-known journalist and poet. During the [long-running insurgency in Nagaland](#), Changkija began to write poetry and short stories to protest the violence. She criticized the condition of society that led to the unrest. Changkija's writings put her in grave risk from the militants.

Mmhonlumo Kikon (Born: 1978) is a **politician, poet, former social worker**. He is also a member of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly. Kikon has published two books of poems since 2018.

Tialila Kikon (1998) Her poem 'Dandelion Dreams' is a collection of contemporary poetry written with a belief that 'life can still be beautiful amidst all the rejections, pain and disillusion of the world'

Beni Sumer Yanthan (Yanbeni) is a poet and folklorist. Her poetries illustrate deep anguish of AFSPA victims. See the lines below:-

Brother,

Your blood has drenched this earth

And soaked up our sins,

Your silent screams now hang above

This parched town

Where the mist gathers at dusk

6.Manipur, a princely state under British rule in 1891, was [unified with India](#) in



Loktak lake, manipur (wikipedia) 1949. It became a Union Territory in 1956 and a fully-fledged State in 1972. Manipur had a long record of insurgency and inter-ethnic violence.

The history of Manipuri poetry could be divided into three phases – Early, Medieval and contemporary Manipuri poetry.

Manipuri poetry begins from oral literature. The oral tradition continued for many centuries. According to historians, writing in Manipuri alphabet commenced probably at the close of the 12th Century, but not later than the 15th.

[Meitei language](#) (officially known as [Manipuri language](#)), a 3500 years old Sino-Tibetan language, is the most widely spoken language and is also the official language of the state. A number of epic poetries, mostly written in [Meitei script are found](#) in [PuYa](#), the Manipuri manuscripts.

It's my turn at the water point:

The trickle is slower today

[Khamba Thoibi](#), with 34,000 verses (even longer than the [Ramayana](#)) fifteen chapters (Pandups) and ninety-two sections (Taangkaks) is regarded as the greatest of all the Meitei epics. Composed by Hijam Anganghal, a legendary bard, born in [Samurou](#), it is based on the love story of [Khamba](#), a hero in [Kanglei mythology](#) and [Thoibi](#), the then princess of [Moirang](#).

The **Early period** covers up to 17th Century and it deals with prayer, royalty, romantic events, heroic deeds and worship of nature written in old Manipuri. Those poems have no dates and no author. Foreign and loan words were not available. The poems included among others *Ougri*, *Khemcho*, *Anoirol*, *Lairema Paosa*, *Yakeiba*, *Hijan Hirao*, *Ahonglon*, *Pakhangba Langyenshei*, *Langmeilon*, *Ningthourol*, *Mei*, *Tharon*, *Nonglao Eshei*, *Leichinlon*, *Larol*, *Chingoirol* etc.

Manipuri Ramayana is basically **Krittibasi Ramayana in Bengali**, adapted to Manipuri language. In Manipur, Ramayana is performed in Wari-leeba (traditional story-telling), Pena-sakpa (ballad singing), Khongjom parva (narrative singing accompanied by Dholak) and Jatra (folk-theatre) styles.

The **Medieval Period** covers the period from 17th to 18th Century. There was high influence of Hinduism during the time of King Garivaniwaj. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were written in Manipuri. Many books relating to Hinduism like *Laxmi Charit* and *Bhakti Charit* were written during this period; Bengali, Sanskrit and the foreign words begins to establish in Manipuri language. Names of authors and the dates of writing were begun to mention in the publications.



The 20th Century saw the Renaissance in Manipuri literature. "*Shatra Macha*" by Khwairakpam Chaoba was published in 1932. The names of prominent poets include, among others, Khwairakpam Chaoba, Dr. Lamabam Kamal, Hijam Anganghal, Hawaibam Nabadwipchandra, Arambam Dorendrajit, Chingakham Mayurdhwaja, Hijam Irabot, Ashangbam Minaketan, Rajkumar Shitaljit, Sanjenbam Nodiya, Khumanthem Ibohal, Khumantham Gourakishwor. Their style was similar to Romanticism in English literature.

The romantic tradition changed after the World War II; instead, the Western modernism, arrived in Manipuri poetry.

The poem "*Manipur*" by Elangbam Nilakanta (called the father of Modern Manipuri poetry) laid the foundation for modern Manipuri poetry. Laishram Samarendra wrote poem *Sita* in 1960. These two poems influenced the poets of the new generation.

"While rambling like a vagabond in a seraphic poetic submersion, in a remote region, witnessed the most captivated sight ever, a sleeping valley rippled in wild blooms, as sparkling in mystical celestial beam, in the mesas of the clouds, the Dzukou Valley"---- **SILPIKA KALITA (Manipur)**



Writing poetry in English

started during the British rule in Manipur. English poetry by the Manipuri poets actually appeared in the late 1960s in the works of **Sanasam Gourhari Singh** (1911 – 1988), the author of *'Manipur and World War-II'* in two volumes in verse form and Dr Soibam Haripriya. *Recent anthologies of her poems include –A Map Called Home (2018), Centre Piece (2017) and 40 under 40: An Anthology of Post-Globalization Poetry (2016).* Her poems highlight the constant subjugation of Manipuri women, and age-old issues such as UAPA, AFSPA, cultural hegemony, plaguing the Manipuri society. Noted below are some quotes from her acclaimed poem *'In Prison'*.

*The prison raids homes, gathering evidence of humanity
sniffing out the prophetic poets of doom and hope
without a trial.*

*Indifference is a virtue
unpunished by law.*

----- *Mulaqat is a time
When women visit men in prison
And no one visits the women in prison.*

The noted poets in early 1970s were Nongthombam Shri Biren, Rajkumar Madhubir, Thangjam Ibopishak and Yulembam Ibomcha who protested against the social system, religious practices, politics, culture, the degraded morality of their time. In the mid nineteen nineties the new trend of post modernism began to appear.

7.Tripura is the third smallest state in the country. Its inhabitants are a diverse mix of 19 indigenous tribal groups and a large Bengali-speaking community. Tripura came under the

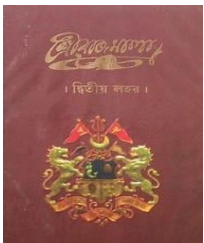


Mughal rule in the early 17th century. After www.bing.com the Mughals were defeated by the British, Tripura became a princely protectorate of the British, though the Manikya dynasty continued to rule. Tripura became a Union Territory on 1 July 1963, and attained the status of a full-fledged state on 21 January 1972.

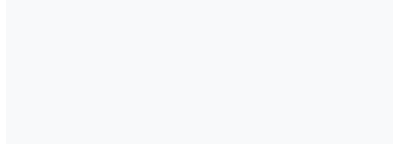
Tripura is also rich in myths and legends. The main native language of Tripura is *Kokborok*, which belongs to the Sino-Tibetan group of languages. But it was replaced by the Bengali script in the 19th century.

Rajmala is the first [chronicle](#) of the [Kings](#) of [Tripura](#), originally written

*I write so people can stop putting up an act
I write to break the shame in honesty.
I write for the little kid
Who grew up dreading the night,
Jumping at every touch.
I write for people like me*



in Kokborok in the 15th century under [Dharma Manikya](#) and later translated into [Bengali](#) verse .After the Rajmala, Kokborok writing remained static for several centuries, until it was revived at the end of the 19th century.



Tripura’s greatest poet and creative soul **Gakulananda Gitiswami (1896-1962)** was a poet, writer and social reformer. One of his well- known **poems** is “*Matribandana*” i.e., “Homage to mother”. Read the first two lines noted below:

“It will not serve any purpose if one clings to age old customs. The customs of Satya Yug and Treta Yug will not hold good in Kali Yug. One should not turn a deaf ear to the demands of time, because when fire starts burning the forests, it burns both dry and green timber at the same time.”

Smai Kwtal, a translation of the New Testament of the Bible, published in 1976, was the first popular literature among the Tripuri community. It has gone through many reprints and revisions.

There has been a vigorous movement to develop Kokborok literature since the second half of the 20th century. The Tripura government adopted Kokborok as a state language in 1979. The 21st century ushered in a new dawn for Kokborok literature with the publication of a Kokborok dictionary and the re-publishing of the *Rajmala* in the language. Tripura’s indigenous poet Chandra Kanta Murasingh won the Sahitya academy award in1996.

8. Sikkim is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural state having eleven



Sikkim Lake languages viz. Limboo, Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali, Tamang,

Rai, Gurung, Manger, Sherpa, Newari and Sunuwar which are recognized as official languages of the state. Limboo Language “Yakthung Sappan” (one of the oldest and indigenous racial groups of Sikkim) is one of the major spoken and written language of Limboo tribe of Sikkim.

In 1968, the

Chogyal approved Limboo language as an optional

*Because they are displaced, From their homeland
By the intruders, Their dew wet Courtyard inundated With tears*

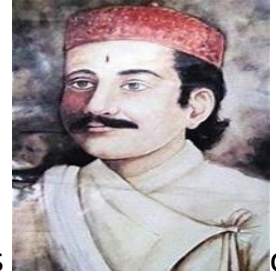
.....
But someday, Their unspoken words Will be uttered boldly- Niranjan Chakma (translated by Rita Chakma)Tripura

study

subject in the schools of Sikkim.

Mundhum (Oral literature) of the Limboo tribe consists of legends, folklores, pre-historic accounts, sermons and moral or philosophical exhortations in poetic language. It is the source of inspiration, information and enlightenment for the Limboos and the way of their life, customs, rites and rituals.

Written **poetry in Limboo language** began in the first half of the twentieth century with the publication two **Limboo** premiers, Tum Yakthung Ningwa phu Sapla and Yakthung Nisige:k Sapla by Iman Singh Chemjong. Those poetical songs are still sung and preserved through oral transmission among the Limboo. However, there has been gradual decline in the Limboo language speaking people, due to the influence of western language and culture.



Most of the writings, from Sikkim, are mostly in Nepali. Among the poets of Sikkim, Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-1868) was a writer, poet and translator, widely regarded as the first writer in Nepali language. He is known as the '**Adikavi**', as it is he, who translated the great epic Ramayana from Sanskrit to Nepali. Bhanubhakta Acharya's 208th Birth Anniversary was observed with great Fervor in Sikkim.



Gadul Singh Lama (1939-) famous poet of Sikkim, popularly known as Sanu Lama, is a writer, poet and translator of Nepali literature. Gadul Singh published more the three books, story-based in many languages like English, Hindi, Urdu. He won several prestigious awards, including the Sahitya Academy Award in 1993 and the Sikkim Bhanu Puraskar. He was also honored with Padma Shri in 2005 for his contributions to literature.

Kedar Nath Gurung (1948-) was born on 9 July 1948 at the village of Sardong, Lingchom, in Sikkim. Gurung is credited with 15

*"Where would I go
I shall only stay here,
like a handprint
on a door
just to be there---"* **Kedar Nath Gurung**



publications composed of poetry, essays and literary criticisms. His works include four poetry collections. He was conferred [Padma Shri in 2012](#).

The list of prominent poets of Sikkim includes the names of S. Mahinda, Kazi Dawa Samdup, Gyatsho Tshering and Tanka B Subba. Two compilations of poems – ‘Bigyapan’ and ‘Silam Sakma’ by Poet G.S. Subba – were released on 25th sept. 2021 in Gangtok. Bigyapan’ is a Nepali poem collection (36 short poems) while ‘Silam Sakma’ is a compilation of Limboo poems (29 poems and six songs).

The people of Sikkim did not receive English education, as there were only a few English medium schools. English writing by the Sikkimese was scanty and mainly restricted to non-fiction books, mainly history and polity. But now with the spread of English education, Sikkim has a youth brigade writing in English.

North-East -----Poets of the New Age Four poems (selected from local authors “who have penned their deepest, most personal thoughts through poetry”), two of them read in the

World Poetry Day- NE 2021, give us a flavor of the new generation poetry from the NE.

Bazik Thlana is a Mizo artist who describes himself as “a socially conscious eccentric”. He is currently doing his Ph.D. in visual arts at JNU in New Delhi. His poem Eye-Identity touches our hearts. [Michelle Rungsung](#) from Manipur (Garden in a Graveyard), [Tialila Kikon](#) from Nagaland (‘Paper Cranes’), [Emisen Jamir](#) from Nagaland (“Loneliness Is an Orange”), [Wedekhro Naro](#) from Nagaland (“True Love Keeps Moving”), [Chirmi Shimray](#) from Manipur (“The Sea And I”) and [Yuimi Vashum](#) from Manipur (“Love, Lust and Loyalty”) are some of the new generation poets from the North-east.

3. She is Poetry

By [Wedekhro Naro from Nagaland](#)



“Then define her, so I may see,

she asked,

“I can’t because she is poetry”, I replied.

She is invisible

Like the early morning breeze

That refreshes your soul.

You can only feel it.

She is untouchable,

like the wind that blows

the seeds to the fertile land.

you can only feel it

She is eternal

She is poetry. (Ref: [rootsandleisure.com](#))

I hold every poem in equal regard because each of them comes from a place of extremely pure inspiration. ~ Vancouver Shullai

An Eye-Identity by -Bazik

Thlana *The human eyes are the windows to his soul
a window for looking in, looking out and illumination
the windows to my soul are framed by small and narrow panes;
polite passers-by in Delhi have sometimes asked me if I could see clearly through them-----they gaze, they stare, they pre-suppose
yet again my entity has been summed up by my eye-identity*

*a Chink- a flaw in the armour of unified India?
a chink in the chain of uniformity?
i'm taking it back
a Chink- it's narrow and slanted: it'll do to let the light in
if only they'd look in. (Ref: www.mizowritinginenglish.com)*



The Wait-

Vancouver Shullai from Shillong

**How to love a broken man
I am thirteen years of ignorance
Five years of mistake and three years
Of telling of myself not to do them again
I am Khasi, with no Khasi name
Catholic, with no catholic name
I am christened with imagination.
Watered with Precision
And salted with Detail (Ref: [www.
Roots &leisure.com](http://www.Roots &leisure.com))**



Presence in Absence

Presence in absence
Absence in Presence
Remnants of old and new
Some lost, some given away
Some abandoned and some outgrown
An attempt to capture and preserve them

In jars and photographs and marks
With brushes and ink
Memories hanging by a thread
The void is not always empty
The missing are not always missed
The missed are not always missing.

Bazik

Thlanawww.mizowritinginenglish.com

3. 'Labyrinth'

By Nongwarngam Chinir from Manipur



*Promise me that
You won't let them win
That you won't let injustice make you cruel,*

*That when you sit on that throne
And all Duked bow before you,*

*And at your Command legions move---
You will never forget the child in you that build
Castles for turtles and chased after fireflies-(Ref:
www. Roots &leisure.com)*

Ref: www.britannica.com, sahitya-akademi.gov.in
assamnewslive.com; allpoetry.com www.the-criterion.com;
rootsandleisure.com; indiaeducationdiary.in; www.gaggyan.org/
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www.thestatesman.com; www.manipuri.org; cordite.org.au; nagalangdk.com;
www.outlookindia.com.; en.wikipedia.org; poetry.sangamhouse.org
www.academia.edu; www.indianetzone.com; www.e-pao.net/assamesepoemsnew.blogspot.com;
www.esamskriti.com;
lisindia.ciil.org/Assamese; poemhunter.com; hellopoetry.com
theshillongtimes.com;

www.meghalayatourism.in;www.manipuri.org/henortheasttoday.comwww.northeasttoday.com

Group-C-1 -BENGALI POETRY

Even those who know only a few words of Bengali will appreciate that it is one of the most lyrical languages in India--- even mundane things around us have lyrical names such as *Lajjawati lata* for the common plant *Touch- me- not* or *Subarnarekha* for a river. Bengali language has proudly presented India its national anthem '*Jana Gana Mana*' and the national song '*Vande Mataram*'.

Going through the vast treasure of Bengali literature down the centuries, we can find a huge galaxy of distinguished poets. It is indeed very difficult to track the list of poets or their works.

the

*And if I'm lost,
in the crowded pages of your life-----
Would you ever,
turn the pages,
to find me, to read me,
and feel me again-----Tialila*

History Poetry in colloquial dialect of Bengal first originated from Prakrit. The history of Bengali poetry can be

categorized into three stages of development: poetry of the early age *Charyapad*, the Medieval period and the modern age from the 1930s.

Charyapad is the oldest poetry and literary specimen of Bengali language. It is a collection of Buddhist mystic songs, said to have been composed between the tenth and twelfth centuries AD probably by Buddhist Siddhacharyas. The mystic poems or hymns were called *Charyacharyavinishchaya* or *Charyapad*. a collection of Buddhist mystic songs dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries These were discovered in Nepal's Royal Library by a Bengali scholar.

Medieval Period During the **Medieval Period** (between 1350 and 1800) we find the development of puthis or manuscripts (the pages of Puthis could be leaves, leather, sheets of wood, or barks). We also find the translation of Epics into Vernacular by great poets like Krittibas Ojha and Kashiram Das.

Noted poets from this period include 13th century Vidyapati, Baḍu and Chandidas, writer of *Sri Krishna Kirtan* considered to be the most important philosophical and erotic work of the period.

During the Late Middle Period (the period from 1500 to 1800 AD), Vaishnava literature developed under the influence of Chaitanya. Vaishnava poets include Govind Das and Gyan Das.

The other significant work of the 16th century was *Chandimangal* by Mukunda Chakravarti. The other Mangal-Kāvya or religious texts are Manasamangal, Dharmamangal and Phullaketu.

Two of Bengal's most well-known Muslim poets, Daulat Qazi and Alaol, lived in the 15th century (1607-1680) in Myanmar.

Birth of modern poetry

The poets of the pre-colonial and colonial periods who left their profound impact were [Amiya Chakraborty](#) (1901-66), [Jibanananda Das](#) (1899-1954), [Buddhadeb Basu](#) (1906–64), [Bishnu Dey](#) (1909–62) and [Sudhindranath Dutta](#) (1901–60). A sect of modernists included pro-socialism poets like Sukanta Bhattacharya, Samar Sen and [Dipankar Saha Deep](#).

Bharat Chandra marks the transition between pre-colonial and modern poetry. Iswar Gupta, Michael Madhusudan Dutta (1834–1873), Biharilal Chakravarti (1834–94), [Rabindranath Tagore](#) (1861–1941), Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899 –1976) and Jatindramohan Bagchi (1878–1948) were the great poets of this period.

We come across the *Krittibas* group of poets that included [Shakti Chattopadhyay](#) (1933-1995), [Sankha Ghosh](#) (1932-2021), Tarapada Ray (1936-2007) [Sunil Gangopadhyay](#) (1935-2012).

*“But I find that thy will knows no end in me.
And when old words die out on the tongue.*

Bengali poetry was reshaped during the 1930s through a number of “little magazines “, a unique movement started by some of the great poets. A group of writers wrote for *Kallo*, a little magazine founded in 1923, the most popular writer being Kazi Nazrul Islam. They included writers like Jibanananda Das (1899-1954), Buddhadev Bose (1908–1974), Sudhindranath Dutta (1901–



Sunil Gangopadhyay or Sunil Ganguly (1934 – 2012) was one of the celebrated writers of the present age Bengali poetry. Besides being a poet, he was a historian and novelist too. He was the founder-editor of *Krittibas*, a Bengali poetry magazine published from 1953, that became a platform for a new generation of poets experimenting with many new forms of poetry. His Nikhilesh and Neera series of poems have been extremely popular. *From the poem **Ephemeral***

*You know Neera,
that the white pigeons that fly in the evening sky,
even they are obscured by darkness!
like the light of our eyes,
and like all worldly sorrows!
It's only the misery of man
that stretches beyond his lifetime. He received Sahitya Akademi award in 1985. (Ref: Wikipedia)*

1960), Bishnu Dey (1909–1982), Amiya Chakravarty (1901-1986) and Samar Sen (1916-1987). The well-known Post-World War II poets were Shakti Chattopadhyay, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Dinesh Das (1913–1985), Sukanta

*“The evening, blushing with colors,
sings itself out on an exhilarating note*



Kazi Nazrul Islam 1899 –1976), one of the greatest poets in Bengali literature, was originally an Indian and later Bangladeshi poet. He is the national poet of Bangladesh.

Nazrul, a polymath, not only wrote poetry, but also produced music, novels, stories, essays etc. Nazrul's writings explored themes such as freedom, oppression, equality, justice, humanity, love, and revolution. He stood for communal harmony and opposed all forms of bigotry and fundamentalism. He was instrumental in introducing ghazals in Bengali. He extensively used Arabic, Persian and Urdu words in his works.

Nazrul wrote and composed music for nearly 4,000 songs, collectively known as Nazrul Giti.

In 1942, at the age of 43, Nazrul began to suffer from an unknown neuro-degenerative disease, losing his voice and memory. He died in the year 1976.

Nazrul was arrested on 23 January 1923 and charged with sedition. Quoted below is his most famous poem **Bidrohi**.

***Bidrohi (The Rebel) I am the burning volcano in the bosom of the earth,
I am the wildfire of the woods,
I am Hell's mad terrific sea of wrath!
I ride on the wings of lightning with joy and profundity,
I scatter misery and fear all around,
I bring earthquakes on this world! "***

***I am the rebel eternal,
I raise my head beyond this world,
High, ever erect and alone!***

– Translation by Kabir Choudhary. He was awarded Padma Bhushan by Government of India in 1960. Government of Bangladesh conferred upon him the status of "national poet" in 1972. On May 25, 2020, Google celebrated his 121st birth anniversary with a Google Doodle (Ref: Wikipedia)

Bhattacharya (1926–1947), Arun Mitra (1909–2000), Nirendranath Chakravarty, Subhas Mukhopadhyay (1919–2003), and Abul Kasem

Rahimuddin, Krishna Dhar (1928) and Dipankar Saha Deep (2000).

The noted Islamic poets at that time were Syed Ismail Hossain Siraji, Mohammed Mozammel Haque (1860–1933) Golam Mostofa (1897–1964), Talim Hossain, and Abdul Kadir (1906–1984) and Farrukh Ahmed (1918–1974).

The Hungry Generation was a literary movement in the Bengali language launched by a group of four poets Shakti Chattopadhyay, Malay Roy Choudhury, Samir Roychoudhury and Debi Roy (Haradhon Dhara), during the 1960s in Kolkata.

Following the Partition of India in 1947, Bengali poets were divided along nationalistic lines. West

*"We died so many times over and over again
in many cities, bazaars, waterways,
amidst blood, fire, blurred decadence,*

Bengal still had a great literary culture around it.

Many poets of East Bengal took inspiration from Kazi Nazrul Islam and other major poets. Farrukh Ahmad, Talim Hossain, Golam Mostofa and Raushan Yazdani were some of the popular poets. After the Bangladesh Liberation War, it became a popular theme in the years that followed. Al Mahmud is considered one of the greatest Bengali poets to have emerged in the 20th century.

We have Bengali poets from other parts of the world too, the most famous being Taslima Nasrin (born 1962). She is a **Bangladeshi-Swedish writer, physician, feminist, secular humanist, and activist**. Her writings on women's oppression and her views on religion have been widely criticized. Some of her books are banned in Bangladesh.

Sumita Nandy, author of *Desirous Water* (2014) and Bibhas Roy Chowdhury, who wrote the poem *Continuous* ("I can see the inflamed body of / my lifeless dream / It has its flow, however, / and floats in every direction as the flood sets in"), translated by Kriti Sengupta.

The list of contemporary poets includes the names of Sanghamitra Halder, Indranil Ghosh, Anupam Mukhopadhyay, Paulami Sengupta, Arnab Roy, Souva Chattopadhyay, Pushpanjana Karmakar and Rangit Mitra.

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.britannica.com; wb.gov.in; en.banglapedia.org; pennyspoetry.fandom.com; www.thedreamingmachine.com; theculturetrip.com; learn.culturalindia.net; www.indianetzone.com

Group-C 11- Oriya Poetry

Orissa was a vast empire in the ancient and medieval times, extending from the Ganges in the north to the Godavari in the south. Orissa formed a part of the Bengal and Madras Presidencies during the British rule. The present state of Orissa was formed in 1936, after the bifurcation of Bihar.

The modern Oriya language is a mix of Pali and Sanskrit, (about 70%), Hindustani (about 2%) with the remaining (28%) of mainly "Adivasi" origin.

Oral literature of Orissa has a rich collection of innumerable myths, legends and folklore.

Early Poetry

Oriya language had beginning much before the third

its

*"With as much pain as a human being becomes a woman,
That much pain makes a woman a poet.*

A word takes a long year to be made,

a poem an entire life"-Taslima Nazrin

century B.C., a view supported by inscriptions of Ashoka (third century B.C.) and of Kharabela (first century B.C.). Thus, between third century B.C. and 700 A.D., the foundations of Oriya as literary medium seem to have been firmly laid.

From the 7th century A.D. till about the end of the 14th century, literary works in Orissa were confined to Buddhism and Nathism. Oriya poetry had its beginning with the development of **Charyapada / Caryagiti**, literature in the 10th and 12th centuries, started by Vajrayana Buddhist poets.

Old Oriya literary period

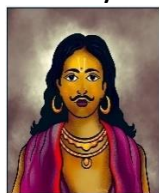
Historians have classified the period from 10th century to the 14th century as the **Old Odia** period, the time Odia began to take shape as a distinct language. This refers to the



period from the start of Oriya literature up to Mahabharata Ka bya of Sarala Das i.e. up to 15th Century. Three great works are attributed to Sarala Das — namely Mahabharata, Bilanka Ramayana and Chandi Purana. Sarala Das is therefore called the *Vyasa of Orissa* and the founder of the Oriya literature. Apart from Sarala Das, five saint-poets (Panchasakha) also made their valuable contributions. Jagannath Das (1492-1552) was the most famous of the Panchasakhas and he wrote the famous Oriya Bhagabat.

Medieval Oriya poetry was composed between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. This includes the Bhakti Movement Period that flourished during 16th Century. The poems composed were mostly *Kavyas* (romantic/narrative poems), *Puranas* (narrative poems with themes borrowed from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagabata and folklore), *Bhajanas* (devotional poems), and other poetic forms with a variety of themes. Those poems were mostly popularized by the Royal Court and folk performers.

The Age of Oriya ornate poetry (Riti Yuga or Alanakar Yuga) began in sixteenth century in Orissa and extended through mid-seventeenth century to mid-nineteenth Century. During this period *Bhakti Rasa* was replaced by *Srinagara Rasa*. Upendra Bhanja (1680-1720), the



author of *Lavanyavati*, called the Emperor of Poets, made significant contributions to ornate poetry. Hence this literary period is often called 'Bhanja Yuga'.

Giti Kabita Towards the end of eighteenth century, the ornate Kavyajuga gave way to the age of Oriya Lyrical poetry (Geeti Kabita). The most prominent lyrical poets were Kabisurya Balladev Rath (Kishore Chandranan Champu) (1789-1845), Gopal Krishna (1785-1862), Gaurhari, Gauracharan, Basamali, Haribandhu. Baladev Ratha (1779-1845), known as "Kavya Surya" was a great musical poet of Orissa.

*"The yellowed diary's notes whisper in vernacular.
They sound the forgotten posture,
the cramped cry that forces me to hear that voice.
Now I stumble back in your black-paged wake"*-**Jayanta Mahapatra**

Modern Oriya Literature (1803 Onwards) The renaissance of

modern Oriya literature commenced after 1850. The British who occupied Orissa in 1803 brought English education to the state. Soon the printing press was introduced.

The modern phase of Oriya literature is a product of western education during which time prominent Oriya writers were exposed to the western literature having a different world view.

Radhanath Roy (1848-1908), who received western education, is said to be the first modern poet to break- away from the Medieval tradition. He wrote nine Kavyas, with themes based on Greek sources. Other poets of the same period were Madhu Sudan Rao (1853-1912), Gangadhara Meher (1962-1924), Nanda Kishore Bal (1875-1928) and Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918).

Twentieth Century poets The first two decades of the 20th century saw the emergence of a group of poets whose chief concern was patriotism and were led by Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928). Kali Charan Patnaik (1898-1978) gained considerable repute as poet. Mayadhar Manasingha (1905-1973) too was widely recognized as a poet, critic and educationist.

Mayadhar Mansingh (1905-1973), Radha Mohan Gadanayak (b.1911) and Godavarish Mohapatra (1900-1938), Ananta Patnaik (1910-1988) and Sachidananda Routaray (b.1919), are/ were the major poets of this century.

Guru Prasad Mohanty (b.1924), Ramakanta Rath (b.1934), Sitakant Mahapatra (b.1937), Jagannath Prasad Das (b.1936), Soubhgya Kumar Mishra (b.1941) Devdas Chhotray (b.1946), Rajendra Kishore Panda (b.1944) and Hara Prasad Das (b.1945) are some of the major poets of the post-independence period. Surendra Mohanty (1922-1990) was a recipient of several



literary

awards. **Sitakant Mahapatra (b. 1937)** is one of the major voices in contemporary Oriya poetry. He is the most widely translated poet in Odia. He has also been in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) since 1961 until his retirement in 1995. His notable works are, *Sabdar Akash* (1971) (The Sky of Words), *Samudra* (1977) and *Anek Sharat* (1981).

He won the State Sahitya Academy awards in 1971 and 1984, Central Sahitya Academy award in 1974, *Jnanpith in the year 1993*. He was honored with Padma Bhushan in 2003 and Padma Vibhushan in 2010. He also received the SAARC Literary award in 2015 and the Tagore Peace Award in 2017. In the Jnanpith citation this was noted, "Deeply steeped in western literature his pen has the rare rapturous fragrance of native soil"

Guru Prasad Mohanty's '*Kala-Purusha*', is a land mark in modern Odia Poetry. Though based on T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, '*Kala-Purusha*' reads like an original poem.

Sachidananda

Routray (1916 – 2004), winner of Jnanpith in wrote on a

1986

"The doves of my eyes rise to the sky's steel body.

And th

This e

Where

The m

*"My little village! How beautiful is
Your shimmering moon light!*

Yet, how more beautiful is your darkness too" ---



wide range of subjects. Rout Roy has recently published a few poems with religion as their theme. It is interesting that a poet, who was inspired by Marxism in this youth, has chosen Lord Jagannatha as a theme in his old age.

Some of the other important poets of modern period are Brajanath Rath, Sourindra Barik, Nrusingha Kumar Rath, Prasanna Kumar Mishra, Hara Prasad Paricha Patnaik and Phani Mohanty.

The emergence of a number of women poets is an important development in the post-independence literary scene. Manorama Mohapatra Biswal, Pratibha Satpathy, Brahmotri Mohanty and Sucheta Mishra 'have brought in lyricism, grace and a feminine perspective to modern Oriya poetry'.

Odia Poetry today The twenty-first century is witnessing visible changes in Odia poetry, especially in its form and content. According to www.goethe.de 'Although modernism introduced many desirable changes to Odiya poetry, it remained highly individualistic and cut off from social realities. Odia poetry today gives emphasis on issues pertaining to farmers, Dalits, tribal people and women. It is now closer to the readers than ever before-----'. Poets like Biraja Bal, Saroj Mohanty, Kedar Mishra, Bharat Majhi, Durga Prasad Panda, Ajay Pradhan, Pabitramohan Dash, Hemanta Dalpati Biraja Bal and many others belong to this category.

Dalit poetry has made its presence felt in Odia literature since the beginning of the 21st century. The poems by Basudev Sunani, Pitambara Tarai and Akhila Nayak express the angst and anger of a people who have been subjected to caste discrimination down the ages. Basudev Sunani writes: -

*No-one has been able to decide
if untouchability
is a color or a touch,
a feeling or an ideal;
whether it resides
in one who touches
or the one who is touched.* (Ref: Odisha Dalit Sahitya
& Art Academy, 2001)

Poets like Mamata Dash, Giribala Mohanty and Pravasini Mahakud Aparna Mohanty, Sucheta Mishra, Chirashree Indrasingh, Swapna Mishra and several younger women poets have been writing to assert the identity of women. Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.britannica.com; oriyapoetry.weebly.com; lisindia.ciiil.org; indianexpress.in; [imp. center/i/history](http://imp.center/i/history); odisa.govt.in; www.geocities.ws/allpoetry.com; www.jstor.org; www.goethe.de

Western Region-Group D-1- Marathi poetry Along with Bengali literature, Marathi

the literature is considered as the oldest of

*"-----on the soft leaves of a thorny bush
sleeps my sorrow*

There might be the color of my desire

in a sparkling dew drop of your dawn--"Mamta Dash (In your world)

the Indo-Aryan literatures, dating to about 1000 CE.

Ancient period *Maharashtri*, an Indo-Aryan language of ancient times, was an offshoot of Vedic Sanskrit and dates back to approximately 3rd century BCE.

The Maratha Period Marathi, a derivative of *Maharashtri*, although existed at least 2300 years ago, the earliest records of actual literature in Marathi appear only in the late 13th century.

The poet saints **Namdev (1270)** and **Dnyaneshwar (1275-1296)**, wrote the earliest significant religious poetry in Marathi.



Dnyaneshwar **Namdev**, the Bhakti saint and contemporary of Dnyaneshwar, composed religious songs in Marathi as well as Hindi; some of his Hindi compositions are included in the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. Another early Marathi writer was **Mukundaraja**.

Jnanadeva, also called **Jnaneshvara**, (1275-1296), mystical poet-saint and composer



of the *Bhavarthadipika* (popularly known as the *Jnaneshvari*) is best known for his translation and commentary in Marathi oral verse on the *Bhagavadgita*.

Saint-poet Eknath (1533–1599) was the chief successor of Dnyaneshwar during the Sultanate rule. **Mukteshwar (1574-1645)**, the grandson of Eknath, too, wrote several works in Marathi including a translation of the epic Mahabharata.

“The Hindu worships at the temple, the Muslim at the mosque.
Naam Dayv serves that Lord, who is not limited to either the
temple or the mosque”.

— Guru ***Namdev***, *Guru Granth Sahib*

The early Marathi literature was mostly religious and philosophical in nature, and was composed by the saint-poets. **Bhaskarabhatta Borikar** of the Mahanubhava sect is the first known poet to have composed hymns in Marathi.

POVADAS In the 17th century secular poetry found expression in the Povadas—ballads of valor and warfare—and Lavanis-romantic and erotic. In old Marathi, powada means “to glorify”. Those who sing powada are known as shahirs in Marathi. Povadas is a genre of ballads, originally sung by the members of the Gondhal (Gondhia) caste, which is a Dalit community. Post-Shivaji, all castes adopted it (Ref: Wikipedia)

In the



Yadava period Marathi replaced Kannada and Sanskrit as the dominant language in the region.

16th to 18th century poetry Prominent poets from the 17th century include Tukaram, Mukteshwar, Ramdas, Vaman Pandit, Raghunath Pandit and Shridhar Pandit. Moropant was a prominent poet of the 18th century. His Aryabhaarata was the first epic in Marathi.

19th Century Marathi Poetry Prominent poets of this period were Parasharam, Honaji Bala, Anantaphandi, Ram Joshi, and Prabhakar.

The British period Marathi grammar was standardized during this period through the efforts of the Christian Missionaries. The works of mid-19th century Marathi poets such as Krushnashastri Chiplunkar, Kunte, Lembhe, and Mogare were influenced by both Sanskrit and English poetry.

In the late 19th century, poets like Keshavasuta, Rev Tilak Narayan Waman Tilak also wrote poems that showed influence English poets such as Wordsworth and Tennyson.

The Modern Period in Marathi poetry began with Kesavasut, who was influenced by 19th-century British Romanticism and liberalism. He declared a revolt against traditional Marathi poetry and started a school, lasting until 1920.

After that, the period was dominated by a group of poets called the Ravikiran Mandal, who

considered

that
for
was

Words are the only jewels I possess
Words are the only clothes I wear
Words are the only food that sustains my life
Words are the only wealth I distribute to people---**Tukaram**

poetry was not
the elite, but
a part of

everyday life. Most noteworthy among them are Madhav Tryambak Patwardhan and Yashwant Dinkar Pendharkar.

After 1945 Marathi poetry became subjective and personal and used colloquial language.

Modern Marathi poetry was heralded by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. Later poets Keshavsuta, Balakavi, Govindagraj, Ravi Kiran Mandal, Madhav Julian, were influenced by Romantic and Victorian English poetry.

The avant-garde modernist poet BS Mardhekar brought a major shift in poetry that began in the 1940's. In the mid-1950s, many poets emerged from the 'little magazine movement' who wrote poems of non-conformist, radical and experimental nature. It also strengthened the Dalit literary movement.

A major change in Marathi poetry began in the 1990s with the arrival of poets like Shridhar Tilve. He is one of the most popular contemporary writers of Marathi literature.

A new wave in contemporary Marathi poetry is led by non-urban poets like Arun Kale, Bhujang Meshram, Pravin Bandekar, Sandip Desai and Avinash Chavan.

en.wikipedia.org; www.britannica.com; allpoetry.com; [imp. center/ rarebooksocietyofindia.org](http://imp.center/rarebooksocietyofindia.org); www.forwardpress.in; protelostudios.com

Group-D-11- GUJRATI POETRY

The early period

Gujarati language evolved from a dialect of the *Gurjara Apabhramsa*. The early Literary journey began in Gujarat way back during 11th century. Before Gujarati developed its own linguistic identity, the works were notably in Sanskrit and Prakrit Languages.

Gujarati Literature reached a distinctive form by the 12th century. Oral tradition of Gujarati folklore dates back to the 12th century.

The poetic history of Gujarat can be divided into two distinct periods—the period from 12th century to the early 19th century is known as Middle Age, and the period from 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century is known as Modern age.

The Middle Age Gujarati literature, was dominated by poetry. Prominent poets of this period were Narsinh Mehta ((c. 1414 – c. 1481), Mirabai (1498–1547), Akho (1591–1659), Premanand, Shamal, Dayaram (1757–1852), Bhalan, Nakar, Bhim, Raje, Pritam, Dhiro, Bhojo and many others. Religion formed the central theme of Middle Age Gujarati Literature. Narasingh Mehta was renowned poet - saint in Gujarat. His composition [Vaishnav Jan To](#) was [Mahatma Gandhi](#)'s favorite and became popular with freedom fighters across India. In the Modern period, as in the rest of India, cultural renaissance started in the 19th and 20th centuries with the spread of English education. Modern Gujarati literature developed in three stages.

1. **Reformation Age** (1850-1885) or Narmad Age, wherein poets were motivated towards social reformation. Narmad (1834–1886, Dalpatram (1820–1898), Govardhanram Tripathi (1855–1907), (1867–1923), Jhaverchand Meghani (1896–1947) were the noted poets during this time

2. **Pundit Age or Govardhan Age** (1885 to 1915): dominated by of the graduates of the upcoming

universities like Manilal Dwivedi,

*"If anywhere there is god it must be man of love,
If he'll separate from love than he'll lose by love--" -Kalapi*



Vaishnav Jan toh - the favourite

Bhajan of Mahatma Gandhi

Written by Adi Kavi Narsingh Mehta

One who is a Vaishnav (Devotee of Vishnu)

Knows the pain of others

Does good to others

without letting pride enter his mind.

A Vaishnav, tolerates and praises the entire world.

Does not speak ill of others

Keeps his promises, actions and thoughts

pure

your mother is blessed indeed.

A Vaishnav sees everything equally, rejects greed and avarice

respects women as he respects his own mother

though his tongue may tire he will utter no untruth

Never touches the property of others.

A Vaishnav does not succumb to worldly attachments

he has renounced lust of all types and anger

The poet Narsi will like to see such a person by whose virtue,

the entire family gets salvation. allpoetry.com

, Kalapi (1874–1900), Nahnalal, Balwantrao Thakore, Govardhanram Tripathi (1855–1907), and many more

3. Gandhi Age (1915 to 1950) named so since Gandhi influenced life during this phase. The important poets of the Age are: Sundaram (1909–1990), Umashankar Joshi (1911–1988, Zaverchand Meghani (1896–1947) and Snehrashmi. Their poems reflected the ideals of Gandhi. Poetry moved away from decorative style to the simplicity.

CONTEMPORARY POETRY A NEW GENERATION OF POETS FROM GUJARAT LIKE UDAYAN THAKKAR; MANISHA JOSHI; THE LATE NIRANJAN BHAGAT; LABHSHANKAR THAKAR; AND SITANSHU YASHASCHANDRA IS KEEPING A RICH POETIC LEGACY ALIVE.

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.britannica.com; www.gujaratindia.gov.in; rupkatha.com; www.poetrytranslation.org; indianculturalforum.in; www.poemsearcher.com; rupkatha.com; allpoetry.com

Group-D 111 -PUNJABI POETRY

“This is a language we share with our closest neighbours. The very soil it flourished on was divided in the partition, yet it thrives. It is Punjabi, the sonorous language of the land of five rivers” stated Prof. Chaman Lal, Professor in Hindi at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi in an interview.

The Partition saw the erstwhile state of Punjab divided into two. The Indian Punjab was dominated by a Hindi-speaking majority till the trifurcation of the state in 1966. Thereafter, Punjabi became the official language of the state.

There are over 120 million estimated Punjabi speakers in the world; nearly two thirds of them live in Pakistan and only about a third of them live here in India. Pakistani Punjabi is written in the Persian script and it is a mix of Urdu and Arabic dialects; Punjabi is not its official language.

Indian Punjabi is of the Gurmukhi tradition, with a Sanskrit influence. While now English is pre-dominant in Punjab, Punjabi is taught in many schools and colleges and spoken in homes around the globe.’ It is a living, thriving language having its prolific writers and scholars’. Punjabi songs now find its strong presence in Hindi films.

Historically, Punjabi poetry developed through distinct stages-the Medieval, the Mughal-Sikh period, the British period and the Modern era. Yet others classify Punjabi literature on the basis of linguistic traditions--- the Gurmat tradition



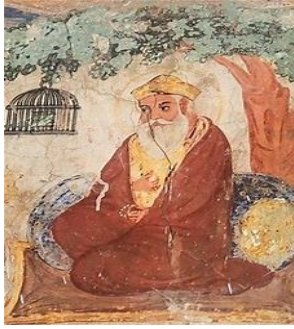
Sheikh Farid based on the poetry of the Sikh Gurus, the Sufi tradition, the beginning marked by Sheikh Farid, whose poetry is contained in the Guru Granth Sahib and the tradition of Kissa poetry, of balladeers of singing tales of love and romance.

The early period The Punjabi literary tradition is popularly seen to commence with Fariduddin Ganjshakar (1173–1266), whose Sufi poetry was compiled after his death in the Adi Granth. Early Hindu Nath Yogis were the first poets to use Punjabi language in praise of God.

Sikh Poetic Traditions Indian Punjabi is of the Gurmukhi tradition,

“Those Who have loved are those that have found God”-Guru Nanak

green leaves, of shiny branches” ---Sitanshu Yashchandra



having

Guru Nanak -wikipedia

Sanskrit influence. The script evolved during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With the Guru Granth Sahib (the holy book of the Sikhs) written between 1469 and 1708), religion and literature began to evolve together. Guru Nanak (1469–1539), composed Punjabi verse incorporating vocabulary from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, and other Indic languages as characteristic of the Gurbani tradition.

Sufi Poetic Traditions Sufi poetry constituted a major part of the Punjabi Poetry in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The Sufis poetry is lyrical and simple and using images and symbols drawn from daily life.

Punjabi Sufi poetry developed under Shah Hussain (1538–1599), Sultan Bahu (1628–1691), Shah Sharaf (1640–1724), Ali Haider (1690–1785), Saleh Muhammad Safoori (1747–1826), Bulleh Shah (1680–1757) Waris Shah, Hashim, Pilloo and others. In contrast to Persian poets, who had preferred the ghazal for poetic expression, Punjabi Sufi poets tended to compose in the Kafi.

Vaar Poetry Heroic ballads known as Vaar has a rich oral tradition in Punjabi. Guru Gobind Singh's in Chandi di Var (1666–1708), the semi-historical Nadir Shah Di Vaar by Najabat fall in this genre. The Jangnama, or 'War Chronicle,' was introduced into Punjabi literature during the Mughal period; the Punjabi Jangnama of Shah Mohammad (1780–1862) recounts the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845–46.

Modern Punjabi poetry English education was introduced in Punjab during the British Raj. The first Punjabi printing press (using Gurmukhi font) was established through the Christian Mission at Ludhiana in 1835. The first Punjabi dictionary was published by Reverend J. Newton in 1854.

The twenty first century brought masters like Dhani Ram Chatrik, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Amrita Pritam, Darshan Singh Awara, Satinder Satraj, Balwant Gargi, Abid Tamimi and many others, to the forefront.

Kissa (Quissa) Poetry One major form of poetic tradition in Punjabi is Kissa or quissa (an Arabic word) which is a fusion of languages spoken by the local Punjabi people and migrants from the Middle East. The first available Kissa in Punjabi is attributed to Damodar author of Heer, written in the dialect of Jhang. Most of the Punjabi Quisse were written by Muslim poets who wandered the land.

W... A.D.
17... ong
the

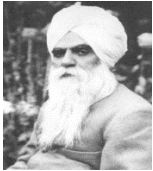
*Look further on ahead, there
Between truth and falsehood.
A little empty space-Amrita Pritam*

The Kissa poets wrote on number of religious and social themes concerned with the life of the people in the Punjab.

The Sufi tradition and the Kissa tradition run parallel, 'interacting with each other to constitute the most comprehensive strong tradition of Punjab poetry, deeply rooted in socio-cultural life of Punjab'. It ran unabated to the end of the nineteenth century. (Ref: lisindia.ciil.org)

Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957), a great scholar, poet and theologian is

considered



to be the harbinger of modernism in Punjabi literature.

Puran Singh (1881-31) is a very important scholar poet of the period who wrote poetry and prose inspired by the American poets. **Dhani Ram 'Chatrik' (1876-1954)** was one of the most popular poets.

Modern age of Punjabi poetry is said to have emerged with the works of **Mohan Singh (1905-78)** and **Amrita Pritam (1919-2005)**. Amrita Pritam is the only Punjabi writer who has been honored with the Jnan Peeth Award, besides numerous national and international recognitions. She highlighted, among other themes, the experience of women, and the [Partition of India](#).

Diwan Singh (1897–1944) and [Ustad Daman \(1911–1984\)](#), Darshan Singh Awara (1906-1982), Prem Singh Prem, Devinder Satyarthi (1908 – 2003), Pritam Singh "Safeer" (1916–1999), Dr. Harbhajan Singh (1920 – 2002), Shiv Kumar Batalvi, Bhai Vir Singh, Charan Singh, Shahid Nanak Singh (1897-1971) were among the prominent poets during the 20th century.

After independence, Punjab literature focused on the themes of revolution, violence, death, and devastation. This continued until the early 1960s.

[Jaswant Singh Rahi \(1930–1996\)](#), [Shiv Kumar Batalvi \(1936–1973\)](#), [Surjit Patar \(1944–\)](#) and [Pash \(1950–1988\)](#) are some of the more prominent poets and writers. Kumar's epic *Luna* (a dramatic retelling of the legend of Puran Bhagat) won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1965.

Post-independence Urdu poets of the Punjab also wrote Punjabi poetry, including, [Munir Niazi \(1928–2006\)](#), [Pir Hadi Abdul Mannan](#) and [Ali Arshad Mir](#).

During the 1970s, new poets have shown great promise were Harnam (1934-90), Mohanjit (1938), Tarlok Singh Kanwar (1931-94), Surjit Patar, as well as Manjit Tiwana. Surjit Patar, and Manjit Tiwana, are both recipients of the coveted **Sahitya Akademi Awards**.

[Punjabi diaspora](#) literature has developed through writers in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and the United States, as well as writers in Africa. Themes focused in their poetry

included revolt against during the [Indian freedom movement](#). Notable

*"Give me, O Lord, A few more songs.
My fire is dying, Give me a spark.
At a very young age I exhausted every sorrow.
For my youth Give me a fresh pain"-----Shiv Kumar Batalvi*

among them was Bawa Balwant (1915-68), who belonged to the progressive stream of poetry. Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.britannica.com; hamariweb.com; www.rekhta.or www.indianetzone.com; punjabi-kavita.com; folkpunjab.org; apnaorg.com; heritage-india.com; www.thefamouspeople.com; www.poetryfoundation.org;

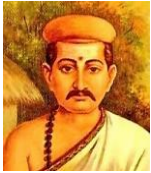
Group-E- KASHMIRI POETRY

Kashmir, known as the “Paradise on Earth” has a very rich literary history and has produced many eminent poets and writers. As someone pointed out ‘Add in the lyrical beauty of Kashmir to poetry, and we, as readers, know that we’re in for a dazzling treat”.

Glancing through Kashmiri poetic history it is amazing that this region of conflicts and violence has produced so many great poets, many of them women poets. Poetic expression is perhaps an escape from the violence and bloodshed happening daily, around them.

Kashmiri, one of the main languages used in Jammu and Kashmir, is derived from Sanskrit and has indeed played a role in enriching its heritage. Kashmir’s literary history can be broadly classified as the **Ancient (up to the 13th century), medieval (c. 1320–1586), the Mughal era (1586–1752), the period of Afghan and Sikh rule (1753–1947), and the post-Partition era (1947 onward).**

The dawn of Kashmiri literature arose 2500 years back, starting with Sanskrit and other languages. Some of the oldest texts in the literature of Kashmir have been written in Sanskrit.



Kalhana, the author of the famed work *Rajatarangini*, was an ancient Sanskrit writer. Early names include Patanjali, the author of the Mahābhāṣya commentary on Pāṇini's grammar.

Somadeva: (11th century) was a great Sanskrit poet of Kashmir and the court poet of King Ananta of Kashmir. He is best-known for preserving India’s ancient folklore in the form of a series of stories written in verse.

The original literature in Kashmiri language began 750 years back with the work of three great poets – Shiti Kanth (c.1250), Lall Ded (1320-92) and Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (1377 – c. 1438). Shiti Kanth wrote *Mahayana Prakash* in the twelfth century.

The greatest poet of Kashmiri language so far is **Lal Ded** (1320-1392). She and her contemporary, **Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani** (1377 – 1438 AD), are the famous literary icons in Kashmir.

“WITH DEEP-SEATED GRIEF AND PAIN IN EVERY FIBER,
I WONDER WHEN LOVE CARVED ITS IMAGE IN MY HEART!”-

GHULAM AHMAD MAHJOOR

THE SPLENDOR WHICH BRINGS TO MEET WITH A SMILE FOR A BRIEF MOMENT LIKE STARS,

Lal Ded (1320 -1392) was one of the foremost poets of Kashmir, she was known as Lalleshwari. She was a Kashmiri mystic who belonged to the school of Kashmiri Shaivism. She created a style of mystic poetry, which is known



as *vatsune*. In one of her poems, she rejoices in the collapse of such restrictive identities as 'I' and 'You' when confronted with the presence of the Divine:

*Wrapped up in Yourself,
You hid from me.
All day I looked for You
and when I found You hiding inside me,
I ran wild, playing now me, now You.*

Her philosophy?

*Wear just enough to keep the cold out,
Eat just enough to keep hunger from your door.
Mind, dream yourself beyond Self and Other.
Remember, this body is just picking for jungle crows.* (poetry.sangamhouse.org)

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (Nund Rishi) (1377 – 1438 AD), was known by the title Alamdar-e-Kashmir ("Flag Bearer of Kashmir"). He was a Kashmiri Sufi saint, mystic, poet and Islamic preacher. Sheikh was a missionary who used poetry as a medium of individual and social reform.



Charar-e-Sharief shrine-The resting place
of Nund Rishi

*Fear, attachment and violent thought,
I shunned,
For a whole life-time,
I followed but one path, and then,
Bathed in the waters of contemplation,
I walked to a sojourn
In blissful seclusion!*

Habba Khatoon: (1554–1609) Known as the Nightingale of Kashmir, she was the wife of Kashmir's king, Muslim Yusuf Shah Chak, and is regarded as the last independent poet queen of Kashmir. She is believed to have introduced *loal* (meaning lyric) to Kashmiri poetry.

Gani Kashmiri (1630-1669) ---- regarded as the greatest writer of Persian in the Mughal era. The famous Mughal poet Ghalib is said to have translated many of his couplets in Urdu.

Mahmud Gami (1765-1855) was a renowned poet and introduced the Persian forms of the Masnavi and Ghazal in Kashmiri. His work is found mostly in Kashmiri language. His important work is 'Yusuf Zulaikha' (poem) which was the first and most popular *masnavi* in Kashmiri. Other important works are 'Shirin-Khusro', 'Laila-Majnu'. He is renowned for his Ghazals which were based on Sufiana and love themes.

Paramananda (1791-1864) was a famous saint poet and philosopher of Kashmir. Earlier in his life, he wrote poetry in Persian under the poetic title of 'Gharib'. His important works are 'Radhaswaymvara', 'Sudamacharita' and 'Sivalagan'.

Rasool Mir (1840 -1870) It is believed that he brought Ghazal to Kashmiri poetry. He is often referred to as 'imām-e-ishqiya shairi' (The epitome of romantic poetry) for his literary contribution to Kashmiri romanticism.

Nandalal Kaul (1870-1940) was a famous poet and dramatist of Kashmiri. He wrote noteworthy dramas like Satach Kahwath, Ramun Raj, Dayalal and Prahlada Bhagat.

Pirzada Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur (1885-1954), popularly known as Mehjoor, was one of the earliest nationalistic poets of Kashmir who wrote several lyrical and patriotic poems with political themes. He was also known as 'Shayar-e-Kashmir' (the Poet of Kashmir)



Zinda Kaul (1884-1965), popularly called 'Masterji' was a writer, poet and teacher and composed his work in Persian, Hindi, Urdu and Kashmiri. He was the first Kashmiri poet who received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1956 for his book of poetry 'Sumran'.

Rasul Mir: 1840- 1870 Rasul Mir's is regarded as the epitome of romantic poetry. He is one of the pioneers of Kashmiri ghazals.

Abdul Azad Zargar (1882-1973), was a Sufi writer who created literary works in Sanskrit language, along with Arabic, Persian and Kashmiri.

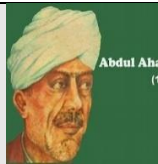
Peerzada Ghulam Ahmad: (1887 – 1952) He wrote poems in Kashmiri, Urdu, and Persian, using the pen name Majhoor. He introduced a new style in Kashmiri poetry and explored some new themes.

Mehmood Gami (1765–1855), **Maqbool Kralwari (1820–1877)**, **Shamas Fakir (1843 · 1901)**, **Samad Mir (1894-1959)** are also some of the famous lyricists and writers of Kashmir.

**Twentieth &
Twenty-first century
poets**

*"Oh Peace, come here.
Oh Peace, stay here.
Oh Peace, have a home here"*—**Kudzai Mhangwa** (Poem on Kashmir)

Abdul Ahad Azad (1903 – 1948) was one of the well-known Kashmiri poets of his era. He was one of the pioneers of the modernist movement. Azad is often referred to as John Keats of Kashmir. Both Keats and Azad wrote modernist poems and both died in early forties.



The Stars Speak to Man

-----By Abdul Ahad Azad

*There is a restlessness in the heart, there
is a veil over our dreams
All this is an illusion. When will you wake
up?*

*The heartbroken, the dejected, my friends
and well-wishers*

*How you destroy human hearts in the
name of the human?*

(Ref: poemhunter)

'Azad' changed the entire fabric of Kashmiri poetry, its woof and warp. He deviated from the age-long tradition. With eyes wide awake, he metamorphized the content as well as form of Kashmiri poetry".

Ghulam Rasool Nazki (1910 – 1998) was a teacher, poet, writer, and broadcaster. Apart from Kashmiri, his written works also span the Urdu, Persian, and Arabic languages. He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award In 1987.

Dina Nath Nadim (1916-1988) Nadim was a famous poet who led the



Among the contemporary writers, **Rahman Rahi** (b. 1925) is considered to be the greatest living poet of Kashmir. His writings have been translated in many languages, including English. He has received many honors and awards, including the Sahitya Academy Award in 1961 and Padma Shri in 2000. He is the first Kashmiri writer to receive the **Jnanpith Award** in 2007, which is India's highest literary award.

Quoted below is a translation of his poem "Inklings from the Dark", translated by Ghulam Rasool Malik. It is one of Rahi's most powerful Kashmiri poems. The poem expresses 'a gradual shift from despair and sadness to hope and a promise of happiness'.

*Yesternight, my sleep driven off and the thread of my fancies slit,
I espied an eagle in the wild shadows of my mind:
On its beak, in the same old fashion, smoldered the blood of the dove
Whose feathers were shed by hilltops into the atmosphere.
Turning my head on the pillow, I sighted a deep, dark chasm.*

*My lips froze dry as whisperings reached me from outside the window.
The snowflakes were sailing into the shelter of the crevices.
Not a mouse did creep from under the box to the store-cabinet.
In place of my upper garment, a cat hung by the hanger.
Rubbing my eyes, I tried to pull the quilt up to my cold back
But O, the Kangri shook and the cold, hapless ashes kissed my feet
While the owl hooted outside, "O woe to you, O woe!" (Ref: smartenglishnotes.com)*

progressive writer's movement in Kashmir. He received Sahitya Academy Award in 1986 for 'Shihul-Kul', a collection of his poems. His important poems are 'Bombur Te Yambarzal first Goperas'

“---Slow river body, a handful to drink,

“Kashmir is the delicate reminder of the fact that poetry not always need pages and words. When the pages are torn and ink is faded, the living poetry can be felt through heartbeats and emotions—”-Kashmir quotes

'Trivanzah' (Monologue), 'Zit'nl (Fireflies). Nadim has greatly influenced the young Kashmiri poets of today. Kashmiri poetry is still said to be going through the Nadim era.

Amin Kamil (1924–2014): He is a major contributor to the Kashmiri ghazal. He has helped create the modern alphabet of the Kashmiri language. In 1967, he was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award, and the Padma Shri in 2005.

Padma Sachdev: (1940 – 2021) Born in Jammu, she was a poet and novelist. She also worked as an announcer at All India Radio. She is the first modern poet of the Dogri language and also wrote in Hindi. She is the recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award in 1971 and Padma Shri in 2001.

Aga Shahid Ali (1949 – 8 December 2001) is considered as a great poet of Kashmir. He wrote poetry in English.



Naseem Shafaie (born 1952) is the first Kashmiri woman to receive the Sahitya Academy Award which she won in 2011.

I asked the rose, where is your scent?

It said, "The autumn took it away."

I asked the spring, why the lines on your forehead?

It said, "For my wounds have been salted."

So I left the garden that once bloomed

And since then,

I wander, aimless.

Nighat Sahiba (b.1983-) is a Kashmiri poet who writes in Kashmiri and Urdu. Her writings are based on conflict, rebellion, romance, feminism, pain and existentialism. She was awarded Akbar Jaipuri Memorial Award in 2014 for her contribution in Urdu poetry and also got Sahitya Akademi Award in 2017 for her contribution in Kashmiri poetry collection namely 'Zard Paneki Dair' (Yuva Puraskar). Her important poems are 'Piles of Palled Leaves' and 'Betwixt the two'. Ref: www.poemhunter.com; indianationfirst.in; allpoetry.com; indianationfirst.in; www.the curiousreader.in; www.ikashmir.net/www.wisdomlib.org; www.greaterkashmir.com; www.jk.gov.in; kashmirreader.com; educationluxury.com; www.poetryfoundation.org

Group-F – 1 - TELUGU POETRY

Telugu is a classical Dravidian language and is the most widely spoken member of the Dravidian language family. It is spoken by the people of Andhra Pradesh and the newly formed state of Telangana (after bifurcation of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh). It is also spoken by the Telugu linguistic minority in several states and is also spoken by the Telugu diaspora across the world.

Like other languages Telugu poetic history too is divided into different periods.

Early writers

The Pre-Nannayya Period (before 1020 AD)

Early Telugu literature was concerned with religion as subject matter. Telugu literature existed in the form of inscriptions from 575 AD on-wards. According to

“---Good poetry is all of this together
Dancing wherever poets live---”**Srinatha**

historians, Addanki inscription (848 AD), featured a Telugu poem and the Bezawada inscription (934 AD), featured five poems.

Malliya Rechana (940 CE) composed the first Telugu poetic prosody book *Kavijanasrayam*. An earlier prosody book by Rechana's guru Vaadindra Chudamani is not available.



The Age of the Purāṇas (1020–1400 CE) Nannayya, Tikkana and Yerrapragada are known as the Kavi Trayam or Trinity of Poets. Nannaya's (11th century) *Andhra Mahabharatam*, is considered as the first Telugu literary composition (Aadi Kaavyam) and was completed by Tikkana Somayaji (1205–1288 CE). **The Prabandha Period (1400–1600 CE)**

Srinatha (1365–1441) who is widely regarded as the *Kavi Sarvabhowma* ("the emperor among poets"), popularized the *Prabandha* style of composition.

Bammera Potanaamatya (1450–1510) is best known for his translation of the *Bhagavata Purana* from Sanskrit to Telugu. Annamayya (1408 – 1503) is known as the *Pada-kavita Pitaamaha* of the Telugu language.

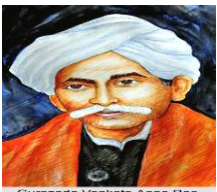
Tallapaka Tirumalamma (Annamacharya's wife) wrote *Subhadra Kalyanam*, and is considered the first female poet in Telugu literature.

Krishnadevaraya (1471–1529) was the ruler (poet-king) of Vijayanagara Kingdom and the period of his rule is considered to be the golden age of Telugu literature. *Ashtadiggajalu* was the title conferred on group of eight poets in the court of Krishnadevaraya of which Allasani Peddana (15th or 16th centuries) was ranked as the foremost. Another poet was Dhurjati (15th and 16th centuries). Vikata Kavi (sixteenth-century) was also a court poet of this group famed for his brilliance and wit. Garlapati wrote *Tenali Ramakrishna*, popularly known as *Tenali Rama*.

The Post-Prabandha Period (1600-1850)

Kasula Purushottama was a Telugu poet who lived during the late 18th century (CE 1798). Mulugu Papayya or Sangameswara Sastry, (1778 – 1852) was a Telugu and Sanskrit scholar, well-known for his translation of the Devi Bhagavatam from Sanskrit into Telugu. Kshetrayya (1600–1680) was a famous poet and composer of Carnatic music.

Modern era



The modern poetry in Telugu was heralded by Gurazada Venkata Appa Rao (1862 – 1915 and Rayaprolu Subba Rao (1892–1984). *Mutyala Saralu* by Gurazada 'presented a

The great tree which is the country
Should bloom the flowers of love
Drenched in the perspiration of men
The crops of wealth should yield-**Gurazada Appa Rao**

new poetic vision and ushered in an era of lyrical poetry in Telugu'. Rayaprolu

Subba Rao dominated the Telugu literary scene for nearly five decades. He was well-acquainted with English poetry and literary movements of Bengal. He inspired the development of a new wave of poetry, *Bhava Kavitvam*.

Other **pioneer of modern Telugu literature** were romantic poets like Abburi Ramakrishnarao 1896- 1979, Nanduri Subbarao 1896 - 1979, Vedula Satyanarayana Sastri 1925-2004 and Nayani Subbarao 1899- 1978. Nanduri Subba Rao wrote the famous *Yenki Patalu* (songs of Yenki), C. R. Reddy, Divakarla Tirupati Sastry and Chellapilla Venkata Sastry also played a role in the shaping of modern Telugu poetry.

The first phase of modern poetry in Telugu literature **started with the beginning of the twentieth century**. Important poets of this period also include Vajjala Kalidasu's (1909) who wrote the historical poem *Andhra Mahavishnuvu* (1928) in couplet form. Bhakta Chintamani (1893) is a devotional work of 100 poems (Satakam) by Subrayudu. Tirupati Venkata Kavulu wrote *Buddha Charitra* (1902), in verse. Other poets -Puttaparthi Narayanacharyulu, Sripada Krishnamurthy Sastry, Janamanchi Seshadri Sarma, and Vavilakolanu Subba Rao- continued to use traditional forms in their poetry.

In the second half of the twentieth century *Bhava Kavitvam* started waning. A new trend in Telugu poetry known as Progressive poetry or *Abhyudaya Kavitvam* started. Social commitment became an important theme. Poets like Sistla Umamaheswara Rao, Srirangam Srinivasa Rao (Sri Sri), Pattabhrami Reddy, and Srirangam Narayanababu were prominent in the 1940's.

Srirangam Srinivasa Rao (1910 – 1983), popularly Called Sri Sri is well-known for his



anthology *Maha Prasthanam* (The Great Journey). He is a recipient of National Film Award, Nandi Award and Sahitya Akademi Award (1972). The subject of human rights was close to his heart. Sri Sri wrote about the new generation which searched for beauty and justice, but could find only cruelty, oppression and deceit:

*Sulphurous fumes strewn over our eyes
False frank incense burnt in our hearts
Thorns on our way, and whenever we think
thousand devils dancing before us.
Is this what the world has done to us?*

The progressive movement lost some of its momentum by 1955 with the decline of general interest in communism.

A number of new trends developed in the post-1955 period. The influence of European avant-garde writing was visible. Prose poetry, or *Vachana Kavitvam*, became the new form. It dealt with the problems of the common people in everyday language and idiom. Tilak, Narayana Reddy, Aluri Bairagi, Varavara Rao, and Guntur Seshendra Sarma wrote poetry of this kind.

The
also saw
of a lot of

"Don't cry, don't cry. The wheels of the chariot of Jagannath are coming; they are coming! The apocalyptic chant of the chariot wheels! Come, realize your dreams Rule your new world!"-- Srirangam Srinivasa Rao (on social injustice)

1960's
the rise

revolutionary poetry by the *Digambara* poets. The Revolutionary Writers' Association- Viplava Rachayitala Sangham [VIRASAM])- which stood for leftist ideology was set up in 1970. *Kavisena*, another group, came into existence in 1977.

One interesting fact was that even as Bhava Kavitvam and Abhyudaya Kavitvam were in ascendance, traditional poetry continued to co-exist.



Viswanatha Sathyanarayana (1895 · 1976) belonged to the traditional school of poetry. He wrote both traditional and modern poetry. *Srimad Ramayana Kalpa Vruksham* (Ramayana the divine wish-granting tree') in traditional form was published in 1962. *He was the first Telugu writer to receive the Jnanpith Award in 1971 for his book "Ramayana Kalpavriksham".*

*"She slept just like that
As though someone bundled up
A long drawn dream and
Forgot to take it while leaving---"-Shiva Reddy (Dream)*

The same year, he won the Kendra Sahitya Academy Award. He became the Poet laureate of



(THE) MIRROR AND I

---BY SAROJADEVI KOMATLA

MIRROR AND I
ARE DISTINCT ENTITIES,
THE REASON IS THAT IT LAUGHS
WHENEVER I DO,
IT WEEPS WHENEVER I DO, MIRROR
AND I,
ARE THE TRUTHS BECAUSE, WE
REFLECT
THE IDENTICAL FACE
WITHOUT ANY ISM, MIRROR AND I
HAVE GOT FRAGILE TENDENCY
BECAUSE
WE BOTH CAN'T
ENDURE THE STONES
THROWN, WANTEDLY AT US...!
(WWW.PRIMEPOST.IN)

Andhra Pradesh and was awarded Padmabhushan in 1970.

Among the other traditionalists, Madhunapantula Satyanarayana Sastri is well known for his *Andhrapuranam* (1954), history of Andhra written in verse.

K. Siva Reddy is a major voice in contemporary Telugu poetry. He has published eleven collections of poems: his first was published in 1973 and his most recent book in 2003. He has won several honors, including the Sahitya Academy Award in 1990.

Contemporary Telugu Poetry Historians point out that Telugu society has always undergone many struggles, which are also reflected in its literature. Apart from class struggle, the last 25 years there has been mobilization of women, Dalits, Muslims, reflecting a more democratic and humane society. Contemporary Telugu poetry is dominated by feminist, Dalit and Muslim poets.

From 1985 onwards, feminist poetry emerged as a strong dissenting voice against patriarchy, and by 1990, it was established as a different genre of Telugu literature. Dalit Poetry is also receiving attention as never before. Ref: www.poemsearcher.com; telugupoetry.com; www.indianetzone.com; www.liquisearch.com; www.primidi.com; www.poetryinternational.com; www.goethe.de

Group F-11-TAMIL POETRY

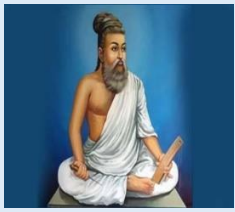
Looking at the history of Tamil language one finds an array of great poets in every age. It is indeed difficult to track the individual poets, let alone remember their names.

Tamil is a classical Dravidian language spoken in parts of Southern India and [Sri Lanka](#). Tamil language evolved independently from Sanskrit and languages derived from Sanskrit. Dravidian languages, including Tamil, 'have time and again, asserted their separate origins and history---

Early period Tamil Nadu has a long and rich literary tradition spanning more than two thousand years. Apart from Sanskrit literature, Prakrit and Pali, Tamil is the oldest literature in India. Some inscriptions on stone dated to the 3rd century BC have been found, but the beginning of Tamil literature is estimated to be around the 1st century AD. Much of the early [poetry](#) was religious or epic.

*"At the time of birth life doesn't turn back even if ordered
At the time of death it doesn't stay back even if ordered---
"Nanmanik Kadigai-old Tamil poetry*

Tirukkural



Valluvar, the author of the Kural

Considered one of the greatest works ever written on ethics and morality, the **Tirukkural** ('sacred verses'), the Kural for short, is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 short couplets, or kurals, of seven words each. The book is a comprehensive manual of ethics, polity and love. It is known for its universality and secular nature.

The text is divided into three books with teachings on virtue (*aram*), wealth (*porul*) and love (*inbam*), respectively.

Its authorship is traditionally attributed to Valluvar (Thiruvalluvar).

The text has been dated variously from 300 BCE to 5th century CE. The traditional accounts describe it as the last work of the third Sangam, but linguistic analysis suggests a later date of 450 to 500 CE and that it was composed after the Sangam period (Ref: en.wikipedia.org)

The Sangam period, dated before 300 BCE, saw Tamil Poetry in

bloom. Some of the grandest of Tamil literary classics like [Kambaramayanam](#) and [Periya Puranam](#) were written during this period.

Sangam period was followed by the early epics and moral literature, composed by [Shaivite](#), [Vaishnavite](#), [Jain](#) and [Buddhist](#) poets/authors lasting up to the 5th century CE.

Didactic age The three centuries after the Sangam age marks the didactic age, around 300 CE, during which period saw the rapid growth of [Jainism](#) and [Buddhism](#). A number of Buddhist authors who flourished during this period contributed to the creation of these didactic works as well as grammar and lexicography. The best known of these works on ethics is the [Tirukkural](#) by Thiruvalluvar.

Notable works of the 4th–6th centuries include the twin epics *Cilappatikāram* ("The Lay of the Anklet") and *Maṇimēkalai* ("The Girdle of Gems)," and the [Tirukkural](#), a collection of aphorisms on such matters as love, kingship, and ethics. *Manimekalai* was written by Sattanar who was a contemporary of Ilango Adigal.

Bhakti Period The 6th–12th centuries saw the emergence of *bhakti*, the poetry concerning religion and personal devotion, with the hymns of the Ālvārs and the Nāyanārs. Poems from the Sangam literature and Bakthi literature are examples of classical Tamil poetry.

The medieval period From the 12th to the 16th century many philosophical treatises and anthologies of religious legends were composed.

The 11th century saw the poets the Pandya this era

*"My lord, even if I attain infinite eternal bliss
That's neither curtailed nor drawn out,
If compared, will it ever match the rapture
Of the short span of time spent as your servitor?" -----
Nammalvar (Thirumozhi)-Old Tamil poetry*

period between the 11th and the 13th centuries peak of the rule by imperial Cholas. Many were patronized by imperial Chola and empires. It is during that some of the

grandest of Tamil literary classics like *Kambaramayanam* and *Periya Puranam* were composed.



Avvaiyar (c.1100 CE) A contemporary of Kamban was the famous poet Auvaiyar who found great happiness in writing for young children. Her works, *Athichoodi* and *Konraiventhan* are even now generally read and taught in schools in Tamil Nadu.

In the later medieval period, many minor literary works were developed. A few Muslim and European authors also made their contribution.

Sangam Literature



Siddhar Agastyar is traditionally believed to have chaired the first Tamil Sangam in Madurai

The Sangam age is considered as the golden era of Tamil language. Sangam (means "gathering, meeting, fraternity, academy") is the earliest known literature of South India. Sangam literature deals with themes like love, traditions, bereavement, war, governance and trade.

According to Tamil tradition the earliest Sangam poetry is over twelve millennia old and that Sangam literature was composed in three successive poetic assemblies (Sangam) that were held in and around Madurai and Kapāṭapuram (Pandyan capitals): the first over 4,440 years, the second over 3,700 years, and the third over 1,850 years before the start of the common era. But modern estimates place it between the 3rd and the 2nd century CE.

The Sangam literature was said to be composed by 473 poets, some 102 anonymous. At least 27 of the poets were women.

Based on chronology, Sangam Literature was broadly classified as -- the Eighteen Greater Text Series (Pathinenmaelkanakku) comprising the Eight Anthologies (Ettuthokai) and the Ten Idylls (Pattupattu) and the Five Great Epics as also the *Tolkaappiyam*, the most ancient extant Tamil grammar text .

Unfortunately, much of the Tamil literature belonging to the Sangam period has been lost (Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.britanica.com)

The Modern era in Tamil

literature generally covers the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. During this period the Tamil society was passing through profound changes under western influence. From the 19th century onwards, Tamil literature was increasingly influenced by Western literature. A revival of Tamil literature took place from the late 19th century that made common people

comprehend poetry easily.

Until the beginning of the 20th century poetry

"Dharma will protect us all" — Thirukkural

"Known is a drop. Unknown is an ocean!"
— Avvaiyar

followed the classical tradition. Barathiyar, Namakkal Kavingar, Barathidasan (1891-1964), Vaanidasan and Pattukottai Kalyanasundaram are some noted exponents of Tamil classical poetry.



The modern Tamil literary movement started with [Subramania Bharathi](#) (1822- 1921), the multifaceted Indian Nationalist poet and author. Naa Pichamurti, (1900-1976) the other founder of new Tamil poetry movement introduced free verse in Tamil Poetry.

One of the most famous poets of the 20th century, Kanakasabai Subburathinam, aka, Bharathidasan (1891 – 1964), wrote extensively on socio-political issues. Barathidasan's poems written in the classical tradition, celebrate the greatness of Tamil culture and language. His verses inspired the growth of the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu. The Invocation to Goddess Tamil, written by him, has been adopted as the state anthem of Puducherry.

Sundara Ramaswamy (1931 – 2005), fondly called Suraa was one of the most versatile of contemporary Tamil writers. He brought about a new wave in Tamil literature. He wrote poetry under the pseudonym Pasuviah.

Kannadasan and Pattukottai Kalyanasundaram wrote several songs in the classical tradition for the movies.

At the beginning Naa Pichamurthy and K.P. Rajagopalan wrote poetry in prose form which they called '*Vachana Kavidhai*'.

The year 2008-2009 marked the completion and celebration of fifty years of Tamil *Pudhukkavidhai* (New Poetry) movement as golden jubilee year. Shanmuga Subbiah, Narano Jayaraman, T. S. Venugopalan, Pasappal Rajagopal, Nakulan, and S. Vaitheeswaran were some of the first- generation poets.

Modern Tamil poetry ie., (***Puthu Kavithai***) is also known as *Vasana Kavithai* ie., (poetry which is prose like and conversational in tone), *Yappilla Kavithai* ie., (poetry which does not follow the rules in the "*Yappilakkanam*") and *Kattiladangaa Kavithai* ie., (Free Verse)

Critics like Ka. Na. Subramanyam and C. S. Chellappa advocated "*Pudhukavithai*". They severely criticized the traditional verse-making. Poets like Dharmu Sivaram (Premil), Nakulan, Pasuviah, and C. Mani strengthened the New Poetry movement.

Even poets like Abdul Rahman, Meera, Sirpi, Mu.Mehtha and Tamilanban who were champions of traditional verse-making("Marapu") , started writing New Poetry.

In 1970s, a band of poets called "*Vanambadi*", comprising of poets like Sirpi, Puviyarasu, Gnanai, Agniputhran, described themselves as "the skylarks singing in praise of humanity"

resorted to writing free verse style of poetry. "*Pudhu Kavithai*" became

"Great wealth, like a crowd at a concert,
Gathers and melts."

— **Tiruvalluvar, Kural**

the dominant mode of poetry of the day. **Sirpi Balasubramaniam**, a recipient of the Sahitya Academy award, was one of its founders in the 1970s. S Abdul Rahman, known as the 'emperor among poets', was a member of the literary movement and has been a recipient of several literary honors.

In 60s and 70s, like in other Indian languages like Bengali, Little Magazine and Small Press movement (examples: "Ezuthu", "Nadai" "Vanambadi", "Ka Cha Da Tha Pa Ra", "Kanayazhi", "zha" etc) emerged in Tamil language as well.

In 1983 the Sri Lankan Tamil ethnic conflicts influenced Tamil poetry writing. Sri Lankan poets Cheran and V.I.S Jayapalan started recording the tragedies and new challenges of the Tamil population in Srilanka. In 1984 a new anthology of Srilankan Tamil poetry titled as "*Maranathul Vazhvom*" ("We live amidst death), compiled by M. A. Nuhman, Cheran and Jesurajah was published.

In 1982, Indran Amirtanayagam released his "*Araikul Vandha Africa Vanam*" (The African sky that came inside my room), a translation of African and Afro-American poetry and prose that influenced the style of Tamil poetry of eighties.

Tamil Dalit Poetry Movement Historically, Dalit literature witnessed a rather late start in Tamil as compared to its counterpart in Marathi or Kannada. During the birth centenary celebration of Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1991 Dalit Tamil poetry reached new heights, and, many compilations of Tamil Dalit poetry started appearing in English. "The Oxford India Anthology of Tamil Dalit writing" (2012) edited by Ravikumar and R. Azhagarasan and "No Alphabet in Sight"

(Penguin Books- 2011) edited by K. Satyanarayana& Susie Tharu were released.

Another important development in 80s is the emergence of a new generation of **Tamil women poets** who started writing with Feminist overtones. Malathy Maithrey, Kutti Revathi, Sugirtharani, Salma, Leena Manimekhalai and Puthiya Madhavi are the poets whose poetry with themes like gender and power, class, social and family relationships. There are another set of women poets like Ilambirai, Thamizhatchi Thangapandian, Thenmozhi Dass, Uma Maheswari and Brindha who deal with motherly love, appreciation of nature, rural life experiences etc.

*"To us all towns are one, all men our kin.
Life's good comes not from others' gift, nor ill
Man's pains and pains' relief are from within.
Thus have we seen in visions of the wise !."*

- Tamil Poem in Purananuru, circa 500 B.C

THE MIGRANT'S REPLY

---BY INDRAN AMIRTHANAYAGAM(INDRAN)



Born (born 1960) in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), Indran grew up in London and Hawai'i, and served as an American diplomat in Haiti before taking up his current post in the State Department in Washington. Indran writes poetry in five languages. His published works include collections 'The Splintered Face: Tsunami Poems', 'Ceylon R.I.P.', 'The Elephants of Reckoning,' and most recently, 'Uncivil War' in English.

"We have been running for so long. We are tired. We want to rest.

We don't want to wake up tomorrow and pack our bags. We have gone 10,000 miles.

We have boarded a row boat, tug boat, bus, freight train. We have a cell phone and some bread.

Our eyes are dry. Our breath needs washing. What next? You are putting up a wall on your Southern flank? What an irony. The country that accepts refugees does not want us. We qualify. We have scars and our host governments hunted at least some of us. The rest fled in fear. Gangs do not spare even the children.

White vans took away our uncles, our cousins. Do you think they have been made into plowshares? Ay, what are you saying? Too easy. Too easy to wear our hearts in these words, in slings, on our faces, furrowed, perplexed.

WHAT HAPPENED IN KINDNESS TO STRANGERS? WHY DO WE HAVE TO BE HERDED LIKE PRISONERS, HELD IN A HOLDING CAMP? WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS AND, LIKE YOU, IN SAFER COUNTRIES-----"

(WWW.POETRYFOUNDATION.ORG)

In 90s,
the earlier
trend of

contextualizing the private experience with the socio-political issues started dissipating slowly. Manushya Puthiran is an important voice in the new generation of Tamil poets who got Sanskriti National award in 2002 for his poetic contribution as a young writer.

New voices like Yuvan Chandrashekar, Ramesh-Prem, Sankara Ramasubramanian, N.D.Rajkumar and Yavanika Sriram are being heard.

Global Tamil Poetry

A very interesting feature of the Tamil poetry today is the emergence of a global Tamil poetry. In today's Tamil poetry, we find 'new symbols and images, new expressions with western nuances, new landscapes and geography wherein we can find descriptions about pine trees in the place of neem trees and palm trees, and new birds and animals in the place of peacocks and parrots'

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; tamilnation.org; www.britannica.com; www.tamilvu.org; sangam.org; www.jstor.org; tamil.webdunia.com poieinkaiprattein.org; oldtamilpoetry.com; sangam.org; www.livehistoryindia.com; oldtamilpoetry.com; www.tamilvu.org; tamilculture.com

Group-F-111- Kannada Poetry

Kannada is a [classical Dravidian language](#) spoken predominantly by the people of [Karnataka](#), written using the [Kannada script](#).

Pre-

history

Destroy the world if even a single person doesn't have food'----Subramanya Bharati

Earliest record of
Kannada poetry can be

tracked to around 5th century A.D, but no record of those early works exists. The earliest records of Kannada poetry can be found in the [Kappe Arabhatta](#), belonging to 700 C.E. The first well known Kannada poet was Pampa who wrote in old Kannada. His *Vikramarjuna Vijaya*, along with his other important work *Adipurana*, are considered to be classics in Kannada poetry.

Middle Ages Kannada had poetry in the 12th century that resembled the *haiku* poetry. Called *Vachanas*, they were three liners reflecting the society that existed at that time.

During **the Bhakti period**, around 15th century, the *Dasas* or saints wrote poems called *Padas* usually of 10 to 20 lines in praise of God. This form of poetry could be easily converted to musical compositions and evolved into the highly sophisticated form of Carnatic music.

Navodaya (New birth) This period 1925–1950 saw the renewal of Kannada poetry. Before that Kannada poetry was in a dormant state for quite a few centuries. This period, saw the birth of great poets like Srikanthaiah(1884 – 1946), Kuvempu (1904-1994), D.R Bendre 1896-1981, Shivaram Karanth (1902-1997) who wrote poetry being highly influenced by English Romantic poetry. Belluru Mylraiah Srikanthaiah, a doyen of Kannada literature, started the movement, with his translation of English poems of the Romantic period. Here are a few lines from Bhendre's (see box) collection *Sakhigita*:-

*Let my troubles stay my own,
I will give you just their song!
And if that melts your sugar-heart,
send drops of sweetness back along!
(pub.1937)*

Navya (New) Poetry

Navya refers to the modernist phase in Kannada literature. With Indian Independence in 1947 a new genre developed in Kannada poetry. The *Navya* phase began in the 1950s and came to a close by 1980. A number of works of the time portray Indian society in transition. Gokak's poetry collection entitled **Navya kavitegalu** (New Poems) published in 1950'. The Navya Sahitya Movement in Kannada Literature was founded by Gopalakrishna Adiga (1918-1992). As against the Romanticism of the Navodaya writers, Navya writing is characterized by disillusionment. He portrayed the "disillusionment and angst of the times".

"Every child is a Universal Man at birth. We reduce him into a "Little Man" as he grows up. The duty of education should be to make him "The Universal Man" once again- "Kuvempu

Dissolution – Creation



Like a cloud of smoke that scattering

*disappears,
the remembered form dissolves; a pall begins
to rise and spread; like form is lost within
a dream, a formless darkness fills all space;
the mind is dense and thick, and time itself
is lost, unknowable; unmoving, the
mind has turned upon itself; what world is
this that lies ahead? An uncreating
sight, a picture! Unpicture. Do I exist?
What else exists? A spreading moor of silence!
Like a deadened body gaining breath, the
darkness around responds; born of the
holy river stone, the melody of Krishna's
flute is making every fibre of the body
dance; it wears a peacock's mask. And every-
where are eyes on eyes! Like the widower
given back his bride, the mind is a happy home-*Da Rā Bēndre,-*
*- (1896 –1981) is generally considered the
greatest Kannada lyric poet of the 20th century and one of the
greatest poets in the history of Kannada literature. He received
the Gyanpith award in 1973.**

*"They eat what we grow, take the sweat of our brow. It's only
us people they shun"— by Siddalingaiah-Dalit poet*

Kannada Poets Winning Jnanpith (Gyanpeeth) awards

Karnataka state has the unique distinction of producing eight **Jnanpith** award winners, the highest for any Dravidian language in India. Six of them were also poets.

1. Srinivasa, Maasti (Masti Venkatesha Iyengar 1891- 1986)



Member of Mysore Civil Service, Professor, Poet, Writer- Notable award: Jnanpith Award 1983. Maasti composed a number poems on various philosophic, aesthetic and social themes. His epic **Shree Ram Pattabhisheka** was based on the theme of coronation of Lord Ram.

2. Dattatreya Ramachandra Bendre (D. R. Bendre- 1896- 1981)



Teacher, Poet; Notable awards: - Sahitya Academy Award – 1958; Kelkar prize – 1965; Padma Shri –1968; Jnanpith Award – 1974 - Considered the greatest Kannada lyric poet of the 20th century and one of the greatest poets in the history of Kannada literature. Bendre published his poetry as *Ambikātanayadatta* -awarded the Jnanpith, India's highest literary award, for his 1964 poetry collection, *Naaku Tanti* (lit. 'Four strings').

3. Kuvempu (Kuppali Venkatappa Puttappa- 1904- 1994) Playwright, Poet, Novelist, Critic and Thinker,



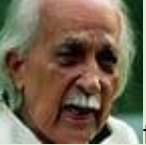
Professor- awarded Padma Bhushan (1958), Padma Vibhushan (1988), Jnanpith (1967) and Karnataka Ratna (1992). His writings and his contribution to “Universal Humanism” (in his own words, “Vishwa Maanavataa Vaada”) gives him a unique place in modern Indian literature. He penned the Karnataka State Anthem.

4. V.K. Gokak (Vinayaka Krishna Gokak- 1909- 1992) Professor, writer- Central Sahitya Akademi award in 1961; Jnanpith award in 1990 for his epic *Bharatha Sindhu Rashmi*



----- perhaps the longest epic narrative in any language in the 20th Century. He was deeply influenced by the Kannada poet D.R Bendre

5. K. Shivaram Karanth (1902- 1997) Novelist, playwright, poet, naturalist, environmentalist,



film director, journalist, Yakshagana researcher and artist, educationist. Notable Awards: Sahitya Academy award – 1959; Jnanpith Award – 1978; Dadabhai Nauroji Award (1990) Padma Bhushan (returned his Padma Bhushan honour in protest against the Emergency imposed in India)



6. Chandrashekhara Kambara (Born: 1937) Poet, Playwright, Professor Notable awards: Jnanpith Award; Sahitya Akademi Award; Padma Shri; Pampa Award



The essential features of this genre of poetry were sophistication in the use of language and the new techniques used in writing poetry.

Kannada Poetry today

The Navya phase in Kannada poetry was followed by post-modernism Kannada poetry in the last 50 years has been closely related to social issues. Dalit poetry and women's poetry began to find expression in modern times, especially in the second half of 20th century. Siddalingaiah is one of the first Dalit Kannada poet.



Siddalingaiah (1954 - 2021) is credited with starting the Dalit-Bandaya movement and the genre of Dalit writing in Kannada. Siddalingaiah, unfortunately passed away due to COVID in 2021. Kannada Dalit poetry was heavily influenced by American Black movement, Marathi Dalit Panthers movement and Digambara literary movement of Telugu. Feminine genre of poetry also developed as a protest against the discriminatory treatment meted out to women by a patriarchal society.

----- Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.languageisavirus.com; www.jstor.org;

qmotu.com; www.rem.routledge.com; list.ly/list; www.indianetzone.com; pennyspoetry.fandom.com; www.worldresearchlibrary.org; www.caleidoscope.in

Group-F-1V-Malayalam Poetry



Kerala, a state known for its high literacy is blessed by nature, its lush green beauty is often reflected in its writings and poetry.

Origin The origin of Malayalam calendar dates back to year 825 CE. The Quilon Syrian copper plates of 849/850 CE is the oldest available inscription written in Old Malayalam.

The Sangam literature is considered as the ancient predecessor of Malayalam. The renowned

poets of Classical Tamil such as Paranar (1st century CE), Ilango Adigal (2nd-3rd

*"Equal were all and happy they all were,
Deceits and falsehoods were unheard of there,
Free from all illness, cares and infant deaths
No one came to harm and none spoke untruths"
This was what obtained in a strip of land Called Kerala flanked by
mountains and sand Gifted to 'Nakas' by the God of Sea
Cornucopia land it grew to be—Onam Song*

century CE), and [Kulasekhara Alvar](#) (9th century CE) were said to be [Keralites](#).

Early works Earliest examples of Malayalam literature are ballads and folk songs [indigenous in origin](#). However, [Sanskrit](#), the language of scholarship, and [Tamil](#), the language of administration, influenced the development of Malayalam.

The earliest known literary works in Malayalam are *Ramacharitam* and *Thirunizhalmala*, two epic poems written in Old Malayalam. *Ramacharitam*, written by Cheeraman in 1198 CE is a collection of 1,814 poems based on the *Yuddhakanda* of the *Ramayana*, and is one of the most important work influenced by [Tamil](#).

Manipravalam In the following period, besides a popular *pattu* (song) [literature](#), [poetry](#) composed in the *Manipravalam* style (an admixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit) flourished. This style is described in detail in the [Lilatilakam](#), a 14th-century [treatise](#) in Sanskrit on Malayalam grammar and poetics.

Among the many *Manipravalam* works are *Sandesha Kavyas* and *Champus*. *Sandesha Kavyas* (“message poems”) are modeled on the *Meghaduta* of [Kalidasa](#) (c. 5th century CE). The finest example, *Unnunili Sandesam*, was probably written in the 14th century.

Middle Malayalam The Old Malayalam gradually developed into Middle Malayalam (*Madhyakaala Malayalam*) by the 13th century CE. The Malayalam literature also completely got diverged from Tamil literature by this period.

The works of poets from Niranam family in Central Travancore flourished in the late 14th and 15th centuries. Its member’s works include translations of the Ramayana and Mahabharatha---- *Kannassa Ramayanam* and *Kannassa Bharatham* by Rama Panikkar who lived between 1350 and 1450 and of the *Bhagavadgita*, by Madhava Panikkar.

The [Champu](#) *Kavyas* written by Punam Nambudiri, one among the *Pathinettara Kavikal* (Eighteen and a half poets) in the court of the [Zamorin of Calicut](#), also belong to Middle Malayalam. They were heavily influenced by [Manipravalam](#).

Modern Malayalam [Middle Malayalam](#) was succeeded by Modern Malayalam (*Aadhunika Malayalam*) by the 15th century CE.

Malayalam literature developed into the present form mainly due to the influence of the poets [Cherusseri Namboothiri](#), [Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan](#), and [Poonthanam Nambudiri](#), in the 15th and the 16th centuries CE. The poem *Krishnagatha* (“Song on Krishna”), attributed to Cherusseri Namboothiri who was the court poet of the king Udaya Varman Kolathiri (1446 – 1475) of [Kolathunadu](#), is written in modern Malayalam.



Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan



Cherusseri (www.veethi.com)

"My salutations to that Narayana, For being the great teacher, Who stood as a person, to make me know, That truth which is revealed by the sound of Om, Though split in to three forms of trinity, As soon as it was born, Is only an illusion created by my ego"-**Ezththachan**

Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan known as the father of Malayalam Literature (his last name means “father of letters”)

believed to have lived in the 16th century, was a Bhakti poet. His poems are classified under the genre of *kilippattu*. His *Adhyatma Ramayanam* is still read with reverence in Kerala homes.

Dance drama

Malayalam poetry has close links with dance and theatre. Kunjan Nambiar (1705-70) and his contemporary Unnayi Variyar were the two great poets of that period. Nambiar invented a unique art form called *thullal*, a recitation-and-dance form of theatre, based on mythological stories conveyed in satirical form, entertaining the onlookers.

[Kerala](#) is also known as the home of [kathakali](#). The verses belong to a literary [genre](#) known as *Attakatha*, developed since the 15th century, based on themes from the [Puranas](#). *Nalacharitham* by Unnayi Variyar is considered as the finest dramatic work in kathakali.

Arabi Malayalam [Muhyadheen Mala](#), was developed in 16th-17th centuries of CE. The growth of [Arabi Malayalam](#) literature eventually led to [Mappila Songs](#). The works are also very close to the modern Malayalam language.

Modernism and Post- Modernism The post-independence era saw a shift toward modernism and postmodernism.

Modern poetry in [Malayalam literature](#) began with the Venmani School of poets who pioneered a movement known as the Venmani Movement in Malayalam Literature in the 19th century, discarding the classical styles. Venmani Mahan Nambudiripad (1844-1893) was a famous [Malayalam](#) poet of the [Venmani Illam](#).

Elite [Brahmin](#) and Nair poets frequently used to engage in poetic combats like *akshara shloka* (recitation) and *samasya* (riddles). This gave rise to a lively literary environment that encouraged many new poets to start resisting the orthodoxy. Whereas the older orthodox poets were indifferent to the prevailing social and economic realities, the newer ones were boldly exploring new forms and contents for their poetry.



K.C. Kesava Pillai (1868–1914) was the Poet Laureate of Travancore and was known for his great poem *Kesaveeyam*. With the publication of K. C. Kesava Pillai's '*Asanna Marana Chinta Satakam*' (Verses on Imminent Death) and V. C. Balakrishna Panicker's (1889 – 1912) '*Oru Vilapam*' (A Lament, 1909), Malayalam poets started writing romantic poetry. Mythological subjects were replaced by individual experience and human emotions.

Three of the most prolific poets of the first half of the twentieth century, Vallathol Narayana Menon (Vallathol for short-1878-1958), Kumaran Asan (1871-1924) and Ullur Parameswara Iyer (1877-1949), are collectively known as the *Great Triumvirate*. Vallathol and Kumaranasan wrote great masterpieces.

[Vallattol Narayana Menon](#) (1878 – 1958) was a nationalist poet who wrote

"We create heaven for ourselves; we also create hell for ourselves- "-----Mahakavi Uloor



on different aspects of the [Indian freedom movement](#). He also wrote against the caste system and the tyranny of the British and the indignities of the caste system. He translated Sanskrit works and wrote a number of poems on Sanskrit models. He founded the [Kerala Kalamandalam](#) and is credited with revival of [Kathakali](#). He was awarded [Padma Bhushan](#) in 1954.

His celebrated works include among others *Mahakavya Chitrayogam* (1913) *Bandhanasthanaya Anirudhan* (1914), *Sahitya Manjari* (A Bouquet of Literature 1917) and *Magdalana Mariam* (1921).

Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer (1877 – 1949), popularly known as Ulloor, was a famous poet and historian. *Umakeralam*, a *mahakavya*, is his major poetic work.



N. Kumaran Asan (1873 – 1924) was not only a great poet of Malayalam literature, but also was a social reformer and philosopher. He is credited with transforming Malayalam poetry from the metaphysical to the lyrical. He was a disciple of Shri Narayana Guru, the great spiritual leader and social reformer of Kerala (For more details PI see the Section on Personalities)



P. Kunjiraman Nair (1905 –1978), fondly called 'P' was known for his romantic poems, reflecting the natural beauties of Kerala as well as the realities of his life and times. He 'led a bohemian lifestyle, wandering across Kerala, living in several places, meeting their people and making them part of his life and literature'. His autobiography, *Kaviyude Kaalpaadukal* (The Footprints of a Poet), is one of his most celebrated works in Malayalam. *Thamarathoni*, *Kaliyachan*, *Vayalkarayil*, *Ratholsavam* and *Pookkalam* are some of his well-known poems. He received the inaugural Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for Poetry in 1959 and the Central Sahitya Academy Award in 1967.

Edappally Raghavan Pillai (1909 ·1936), along with his close friend Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, are regarded as the greatest romantic poets of Malayalam literature.

"The world is a family,
For him the plants, grasses and worms are its members-"
"Vallathol on Gandhi



They are referred to as Shelley and Keats of Malayalam poetry. *Sudha*, *Chillikkashu*, *ThusharaHaaram* (1935), *NavaSaurabham* (1936), *Hridhaya Smitham* (1936) *Maninaadam* (1944) are his well-known poems, of which the last one considered by many as his best work. The poet, unfortunately, committed suicide when he was only 27.

Changampuzha Krishna Pillai (1911 – 17 June 1948) was a



celebrated **Malayalam poet** known for his romantic poem ***Ramanan***, which is a pastoral elegy dedicated to, Edappally Raghavan Pillai, his friend, after his untimely and tragic death. Written in 1936, it was a bestseller in Malayalam literature. It is said that the youth at that time were intoxicated by this poem.

Changampuzha is credited with bringing poetry to the masses with his simple romantic style. His style influenced poets of the next few generations of Malayalam poetry. He died of tuberculosis aged 36.

In the second half of the 20th century, poets and writers like G. Sankara Kurup, Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri, made valuable contributions to the modern Malayalam literature.



G. Sankara Kurup, (1901 –1978) popularly known as Mahakavi G, was a **poet, essayist and literary critic of Malayalam literature**. One of the greats among Malayalam poets, *he was the very first recipient of the Jnanpith Award for his masterpiece Odakkuzhal (The Flute)*. He served as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from 1968 to 1972 and received the Padma Bhushan in 1967. He was also a recipient of Central and Kerala Sahitya Academy Awards and Soviet Land Nehru Award. *Poojapushpam, Nimisham, Navathidhi, Ithalukal, PathikantePaattu, Muthukal, Anthardaham, Chenkathirukal, Vishwadarshanam, Madhuram, Soumyam Deeptham, and Sandhya Ragam* are his major works.

Vyloppilli Sreedhara Menon (1911 – 22 1985) (also written as **Vailoppilli**) is Known for his works such as *Kudiyozhikkal, Kannikkoythu* and *Mambazham*, *Kudiyozhikkal* (Eviction of the tenant) as his magnum opus. He was a recipient of several honors, including, the Sahitya Academy Award, Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for Poetry, Vayalar Award and Odakkuzhal Award.



Vailoppilli

*Come what may, I want to savour,
this wine of life----- Changampuzha*

Olappamanna Mana Subramanian Namboothirippad (1923-2000), better known by his family name, Olappamanna, was a **noted poet of Malayalam literature**. He authored 20 books of poetry; his poems were noted for their explicit social expressions. Three of his books, *Theethailam*, *Panchali* and *Nangemakutty* are short poems and *Amba*, is an [attakatha](#) (For Kathakali).

He received the [Kerala](#) and [Kendra Sahitya Academy](#) awards, besides honours such as Government of Madras Poetry Prize, [Odakkuzhal Award](#), N. V. Puraskaram, [Asan Smaraka Kavitha Puraskaram](#) and Ulloor Award.

Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri (1926 – 15 2020)

Popularly known as Akkitham, he was both a poet and essayist. He was known for a simple and lucid style of writing, exploring themes of profound love and compassion in his works. Some of his



prominent works included *Irupatham Noottandinte Ithihasam* (English: Epic of the 20th century), *Balidarshanam* (English: The vision of Bali), and *Nimisha Kshetram* (English: Holy moment).

People of Kerala still remember his profound lines” ***Light is woe my son, darkness alone is bliss***

Akkitham was the recipient of India's highest literary honour, the [Jnanpith Award](#) in **2019**, and other awards including [Padma Shri](#), [Ezhuthachan Award](#), [Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award](#), [Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for Poetry](#), [Odakkuzhal Award](#), [Vallathol Award](#), [Vayalar Award](#), [Aasan Prize](#) and [O.N. V. Literary Award](#).



Prof: O. N. V. Kurup (1931 – 2016) fondly called ONV he was one of the finest poets and lyricist from [Kerala](#). He was a teacher by profession. “His poetic works in Malayalam have touched the heart and soul of thousands and became subjects of their veritable entertainment and source of inspiration”.

ONV’s works include *Dahikunna Panapatram* (The Thirsty Chalice), a book featuring a collection of his poems from 1946 to 1956, *Marubhumi*, *Nilakkannukal*, *Mayilppili*, *Oru Tulli*

Velicham, *Agni*
Salabhangal,
Aksharam, *Karutta*
pakshiyude pattu, Uppu
Bhumikku *Oru*
Charamagitam.

and

*“I know, somewhere unknown to me
 You dwell, oh soul mate.
 I sing for you
 You wait for my song,*

*“As I shed a tear for others, There rise within me a thousand suns.
 As I expend a smile for others, Shines within me a full moon,
 eternal and serene.
 I never knew of this heavenly bliss before; Lamenting over that
 great loss again and again I weep—”-Akkitham*

He won the [Jnanpith Award](#), for the year 2007, [Padma Shri](#) in 1998 and [Padma Vibhushan](#) in 2011.

'Bhoomikkoru Charamageetham' (A Requiem for Earth)

ONV, towards the end of his life wrote **A Requiem for the Earth**. The poem came straight from his heart, reflecting his deep love and concern for Mother Earth. He, apparently, did not throw away a single page or strike down a single word while writing it. 'A Requiem for Earth' is an outcry against the exploitation of Nature and Earth by humans in the name of development. It went on to become one of the most popular poems in Malayalam".

It is said that an ominous thought occurred to ONV after a visit to an exhibition of lunar material – What if Earth becomes a wasteland like the moon? He felt that even after drinking her (mother earth) milk, humans were not able to satiate their thirst and they began to suck her blood too. '

Thus begins the requiem with an epigraph:

*'A song of praise
For this earth
For its surge of life
For poetry, the essence of its beauty... Mother Earth
still alive,
in the imminence of your death,
may your soul rest in peace!
This song I inscribe in my heart today
is a requiem to you (and to me)!*

*When tomorrow you lie benumbed
in the shadow of the enveloping
dark poison-flower of death, none will be left here,
me either,
to mourn, to wet your dead lips
with our tears!*

With the departure of Sankara Kurup, Idassery, and Kunjiraman Nair, a new generation of poets who took Malayalam poetry in a new direction. They were the post-modernists, the



period beginning with the publication long poem Kuruskhetra (1961) by Ayyappa Panicker. "With its echoes of 'The Waste Land' and the *Bhaqavad Gita*, this long poem gathers together varied strands of Indian post-modernity".

Ayyappa Panicker" (1930 – 2006), was a **poet**, literary critic, an academic and a scholar.

Kunjunni (1927 - 26 March 2009), popularly known as **Kunjunni Mash (master)**, was Known for his Haiku- style short poems with a philosophical overtone. His works were popular

among children as well as grown-ups.

Other prominent post-modernists

were

*When those pure white balls of cotton
skim across the blue sky
Its a lovely sight we see!
Makes you stand and stare.
Where else would you find such beauty in whiteness? **Ayyappa Panicker***

Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan, M. Govindan, A. Ayyappan, O. V. Usha, Chemmanam Chacko, Cherian K. Cherian, N. N. Kakkad, Madhavan Ayyppath, K. G. Sankara Pillai, Vinayachandran.

Women poets

There are only a few women poets in Kerala who have made a name for themselves. Chief names among them are that of Balamani Amma (Kamla Das, her famous daughter), Sugatha Kumari and Vijayalaxmi.

Nalapat Balamani Amma (1909 – 2004) was known as the mother and Grandmother of Malayalam poets, as she expressed her love for children through her poetry.



Amma (Mother), *Muthassi* (Grandmother) and *Mazhuvinte Katha* (The story of the Axe) are some of her well-known works. She was a recipient of many awards and honors, including the Padma Bhushan, Saraswati Samman, Sahitya Academy Award, and Ezhuthachan Award.

Kamaladas (1934 – 2009) was a poet and writer of eminence at the national level, in India. She received international acclaim and recognition for her works.

Sugathakumari (1934 – 2020) was a poet and activist. She was a pioneer in



environmental activism and championed many of the environmental and feminist movements in Kerala. Her notable works are *Muthuchippikal*, *Pathirapookkal*, *Krishna Kavithakal*, *Ratrimazha*, and *Manalezhuthu*.

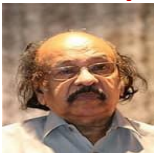
She won many awards and recognitions, including Kerala Sahitya Academy Award (1968), Kendra Sahitya Academy Award (1978), Odakkuzhal Award (1982) In 2006. she was honored with Padma Shri in 2006.

Vijayalaxmi (b.1960), wife of Balachandran Chullikadu is a poet in her own right.

She has won many awards, including the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award (1994).

Modern women poets like **Anita Tampi**, **Kavitha Balakrishnan** and **Sahira Thangal**, have already made their mark in contemporary Malayalam poetry.

Contemporary Malayalam poetry is vibrant today with the contributions from poets



like Satchidanandan (b.1946), Balachandran Chullikkad (b.1957). Sachidanandan is a pioneer of modern poetry in Malayalam, a bilingual literary critic, playwright, editor, columnist and translator. *His poems have*

has

his

“On a dining table
in this midday heat,
deep within each grain of rice
in this meal that we eat together,
innumerable paddy fields---“**Anita Thampi**

received national and international acclaim. He won many awards and honors. A few lines from poem The Circle are noted below:-



*Joy is a narrow space
between two sorrows.
A space lit by the morning sun
where a sunflower is in bloom
amidst fresh blades of grass,
that two people can hardly occupy,
and may be a pale butterfly too.
You can dance there with
movements and gestures
possible in that narrow space*



Balachandran Chullikadu (b. 1957) is a **poet, orator, lyricist, a film actor** and a shining star of Malayalam literature. Together, both poets form a class by itself, writing poetry quite distinct from its hither to known forms and taking it to new heights. Here are a few lines from his poem “The Visit”.

*It's been some time that we are sitting
In this room for visitors, sipping silence.*

*And beyond the window,
As daylight fades away like life.*

*And as birds of memory are
Flying home to fold their wings,*

*Forgetful for a moment
Are we losing in each other's eyes.*

*Yet there are things to say,
Even if the heart where golden champaka
Bloomed has long withered away,*

*Even if poetry has dried up
That would have flowed from my stained lips.*

*A lone cry is thrashing in the throat
Unable to take wings.*

*My heart-lines stretch out again
Looking for distant oceans of memory.*

Significance Unlike in most other states, poetry in Kerala is popular and mass-based. There are several reasons---high literacy that encourages more readership, historic use of lyrics for conveying messages like slogans, theme songs, songs for dramas/plays and film songs. A popular form of narration of great poems in public, during festivals, celebrations and mass-gatherings called ‘Katha Prasangam’ entertained

*“Stammer is no handicap.
It is a mode of speech.
Stammer is the silence that falls
between the word and its meaning-----“K.Sachidanandan*

and educated the masses in the late 50's and 60's.

ONV, along with Vayalar Rama Verma, another noted poet, brought poetry close to the ordinary people in Kerala through their vibrant lyrics. Left-leaning, both shared their vision of equality and brotherhood with the ordinary people, and played a significant part in communism taking deep roots in Kerala. P. Bhaskaran, Sree Kumaran Thampi, Kaithapram, Yusufali Kecheri, Rafeeq Ahmed, Harinarayanan and others too are /were great lyricists.

The role played by journals and weeklies in promoting poetry needs a special mention. Matrubhumi Weekly (it celebrated 90 years of publishing recently), is in the forefront in this regard. Even today, poems by all great writers first appear in Matrubhumi.

To sum up, what poet Sachidanadan observed about Malayalam poetry is note-worthy.

“More than any other genre in Malayalam literature, poetry has articulated the profound contradictions of the Malayalee psyche, its moral trepidations and its desire for liberation from the oppressive ideologies of discrimination like those of class, caste and gender. Poetry has insistently refused to be a mere entertainer or a leisure-pastime, involving itself seriously in social struggles and sharing the agonies and aspirations of individuals of all social layers and persuasions. This is also the reason for its unique vibrancy and popularity that we seldom find in most other languages of India” (Extract from the article 'Malayalam

Poetry Today' by K. Satchidanandan) Ref: En.wikipedia.com; commons.wikimedia.org; www.britannica.com; www.indianetzone.com; www.republicworld.com; www.onmanorama.com; www.keralaculture.org; www.modernliterature.org; www.poemhunter.com; allpoetry.com; malayalamkavithakal.com

PERSONALITY: KUMARANASAN

In this section, our focus is on Kumaranasan (a.k.a Kumaran Asan), the Great poet from Kerala, India. Ignoring the most well-known names of poets in languages across the world, we intentionally made this choice, just to show that even among local or regional languages there exists great poems and poets, unknown to us.

Although he was not known outside Kerala or India, Asan was one of the triumvirates of great poets (Mahakavi) in Malayalam poetry in the 20th century. Asan's poems are comparable to those by Keats or Shelly.

N. Kumaran Asan (1873 – 1924) was not only a great poet of Malayalam literature, but also was a social reformer and philosopher. He is credited with transforming Malayalam poetry from the metaphysical to the lyrical, in the early part of twentieth century.

Life & times Asan was born on April 12, 1873 in Kayikkara village, Trivandrum district, Kerala. His father was a trader in coir and copra, but was well-versed in Malayalam and Tamil literature. He also took interest in classical music and Kathakali, which explains Asan's love for literature and arts. After schooling, although he took up the job of a teacher, and later

at a
quit

*“My dreams are
the texture of the earth
softened by the monsoon
a clairvoyant fragrance rises
from the green sprouts
pushing their way through-out”----Vijayalaxmi*

worked as an accountant local grocery in 1890, he both the jobs to study Sanskrit. Asan also studied Tarka Sastra and English later.

His meeting with Shri Narayana Guru, the great spiritual leader and social reformer of Kerala, was a defining moment, and Asan became his life-long disciple. The Guru was the inspiration behind his poems.

He became the Secretary of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) in 1904. He founded Vivekodayam, a literary journal in Malayalam, and was its editor.

In 1913, he was elected to the Sri Moolam Praja Sabha, the first popularly elected legislature in India.

Later on, he moved to Thonnakkal, a village in the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram, where he settled with his wife Bhanumathamma, an active social worker, whom he had married in 1917.

His tragic end came due to drowning on January 16, 1924, at the age of 51, when *Redeemer*, the boat he was traveling capsized in River Pallana.

Works

Asan was a prolific writer. Despite his short life-span, his accomplishments were substantial. Through his poems he explored themes such as the meaning of life, immortality, love, devotion, womanhood, besides social issues like caste inequality and untouchability. His poems were simple, lyrical, and profound, 'characterised by their moral and spiritual content, as well as dramatic contextualisation'.

Some of his earlier works like *Subramanya Sathakam* and *Sankara Sathakam*, were devotional poems, but the later ones dealt with social issues.

Some of his other major works include *Prarodanam (1919- Lamentation)*, an elegy, *Khanda Kavyas* (poems having only one section or *Khanda similar to English poems*) such as *Nalini (1911)* *Leela (1914)*, *Chinthaavishtayaaya Sita (1919)*, *Duravastha (1922)* *Chandaalabhikshuki (1923)* and *Karuna (1923)*. Besides, he wrote two epics, *Buddha Charitham* in 5 volumes (1915-29) and *Balaramayanam (1917-21)*, in three-volumes.

Major poems Asan in his classic poem "**Chintavishtayaya Sita**" (Sita in Contemplation) portrayed Sita Devi of the epic *Ramayana*, abandoned by her husband Sri Ram, sitting under shadows, in the falling dusk in Valmiki's Ashram grounds, in deep thoughts, solitude and sorrow. The poet says that she was so lost in thoughts that the Goddess was not aware that the Sun had already set, and the earth filled with moon light, and that she was sitting all alone in the garden. The poet goes on to say that in the breeze from Tamasa River that 'caused the tingling in the still waters to bloom as water lilies', the strands of her hair playing in the breeze 'shone in the moonlight, as though cast in silver'. Asan uses such lyrical expressions in describing the profile and mood of the pensive Sita.

Sita Devi reflects on her past life, especially the years spent with her consort Sri Ram. She expresses righteous indignation at the perceived acts of injustices committed by him, but soon corrects herself and apologizes for her criticisms, attributing them to her confused state of

mind. Towards the end of the poem, we find Sita Devi bidding fare-well to

"As the zeal in me subdues
Leaving the senses and body
God, I will come to you

Like a flower falling on earth"-Kumaran Asan (all translations of quotes : CP Student Blog)

everything around her, before finally returning to mother-nature.

In this poem Asan



Veena Poovu (The Fallen Flower)

Kumaranasan wrote Veena Poovu (The Fallen Flower) in 1907, which is considered a literary classic in Malayalam. With its publication he ushered in a renaissance in Malayalam literature.

This classical poem is an allegory on the transience of life, symbolized by the various stages in the life of a flower. Ironically, in a way, it depicts the very life of the poet himself, whose death was untimely, and, it happened at the pinnacle of his fame. It is said that the poet was inspired to write this poem by a fallen flower he noticed on the ground, one day, while walking.

The poet says in the very first stanza of the poem 'Alas! the flower that once reigned supreme as a queen in its pristine glory, has now faded and fallen to the ground'. That prompts him to reflect on the ephemeral nature of life and fortune.

He describes the flower's birth and infancy thus: -

*"The mother-plant with loving care,
Enfolded your infant charm in calyx soft;
The gentle breeze came rocking you to sleep
To the lullaby of the murmuring leaves"*

The poet moves on to the next stage of its life - youth - wherein it transforms into a resplendent bloom. By now 'its body acquired a certain grace and beauty, expression changing in the face, cheeks glowing, with a new smile playing upon it'. The poet goes on to say that there is no parallel in the world to describe its radiance and beauty--- that even a monk who has renounced the world or a coward running away from his worst enemy - *anyone with eyes would have stopped (and stared) at thee.*

In the last few stanzas, the poem reaches its philosophical heights, with a message on mortality of life.

*"Behold O eyes, this flower will
Wither, dissolve into dust and be soon forgotten;
Know that this is the fate of all; What avail are tears?
Alas! earthly life is but a dream"* (based on translation by KANIC-with minor changes)

champions the cause of a woman of spotless character subjected to 'cruel, unfair and unjust treatment by a patriarchal society'. With its original concept, emotional appeal, and philosophical musings, this poem 'has few equals and none to excel it'.

The poem **Veena Poovu** (The Fallen Flower) has been rated as the masterpiece of Asan by many critics.

As one reader wrote "The way Asan drew parallels between human death rituals and nature's ways (e.g., spider web forming the cloth that wraps the dead flower, dew drops on it as a garland) is hauntingly beautiful".

Poems based on Buddhist legends

*"Beautiful moonlight spreads on tiny flowers
Lovingly showered from the boundless sky
Hanging way up, the full moon
Appears a just a yard away-"Kumaran Asan (Translation: CP
Student's Blog)*

Asan wrote two major poems based on Buddhist legends--- *Chandala Bhikshuki* and *Karuna*. The poem *Chandala Bhikshuki* (Female

Mendicant belonging to *Chandala* caste) deals with the story of Ananda, a disciple of Buddha, who while wandering as a mendicant (*Bhikshu*) on foot through villages, feels thirsty. He comes across a woman drawing water from a well and asks for water. She hesitates, as she was an untouchable belonging to the *Chandala* community. Ananda, nevertheless, dismisses her protests and nonchalantly accepts water from her. His love and compassion in treating her like a human being, disregarding her caste origins brings enlightenment to the woman. She, later on, joins the Sangam as a nun, renouncing her previous life.

Karuna is another poem of Asan based on a Buddhist tale dealing with sensory attraction and its aftermath. Vasavadutta, a courtesan in North Mathura, famed for her beauty and wealth, gets a glimpse of Upagupta, a Buddhist monk walking down the streets, along with his disciples, from her opulent home. She is attracted by the mystique and radiance emanating from the monk's face ('like a thousand Suns rising at the same time'). She yearns for him and sends an invitation to him through a maid to visit her. The monk politely declines, saying that 'the time has not yet come'. Years pass by. Vasavadutta's waiting yields no result. In the meantime, she is condemned in a murder case and as punishment, her body is dismembered and thrown into a jungle. She lies in pain waiting for her imminent death, attended by a lone maid. By chance, Upagupta passes that way. He stops near her. Seeing her plight, a drop of tear falls from his eyes on her. Vasavadutta, thereafter, dies in peace.

Impact

Kumaran Asan hailed from the *Ezhava* community, one of the backward communities in Kerala. Till that time the upper castes had monopolized the literary and cultural life of the state. Asan had mastered Sanskrit language, a forte of traditional poets. He decided to 'outstep the barriers of convention and move out of traditional obscurantism into the lime-light of cultural refinement'. He created a new way of writing poetry, which had both emotional appeals, as well as spiritual luminance.

Women formed the central characters in many of his poems. Asan was greatly influenced by the women in Buddhist tales. The women he portrayed were dignified, bold and courageous. They stood up against discrimination and tradition.

Asan is considered to be a poet of love: but the love he preached was of the ethereal kind, as could be noted in poems like *Nalini*, *Leela*, *Karuna* and *Chandalabhikshuki*. These women ultimately realize the true nature of love and fulfilment.

Chintavishtayaya Sita portrayed Sita Devi critically looking at her past life. It is unimaginable that anyone could criticize Lord Ram, especially his consort Sita Devi, pointing out one by one his perceived acts of injustices. But Asan makes Sita regret doing so later in the poem in order to set aside any misgivings on that account, without hurting the religious sentiments of the readers.

His work drew much strength from Buddhism, which challenged the inequalities of caste. Asan was also greatly influenced by the teachings of Sri Narayana Guru. Those influences gave him the courage to take on feudalism and caste system through his poems. A good example is his poem *Duravastha* in which portrays Savitri, a Brahmin woman, marrying Chathan, a youth belonging to marginalized caste in whose hutment she has taken shelter

during a riot.

exhorts in *Duravastha*
"Change your effete

Asan

"In beautiful flowers and colorful butterflies,
We see His wonderful creations.
His blessings we feel in the rays of sun,
Praise Him who lives in the realm of thoughts"--- Kumaran

traditions yourselves / Or else they will change your own selves”.

Asan faced criticism from several quarters after its publication, but he outlived it due to perhaps the cordial atmosphere created by the Guru’s teachings on ‘One God, One religion and One caste’ at that time, and his own greatness as a poet.

A Memorial to Asan As a mark of respect to the great poet, the Government of Kerala acquired Asan's home, along with the surrounding land to establish the *Kumaran Asan National Institute of Culture* (KANIC), as a memorial for the poet. The memorial houses an archive, a museum and a publications division. Various memorabilia, including a replica of a gold bangle (original reportedly stolen) presented in his honor by the Prince of Wales, as well as his personal belongings, and, impressive collections of his works and manuscripts and mural paintings based on Asan’s poems. The campus also exhibits some of the unique sculptures crafted by the famous artist Kanayi Kunhiraman, drawing inspiration from some of the poems of Asan. However, what impresses one most are the twin hutments made of mud and thatched with palm leaves, with a nearby well, standing just behind the main building. One hutment was Asan’s living quarters and the other his work place. One could only marvel at the simplicity of his life.

Looking out through the window from his humble home Asan might have visualized various characters from his poems coming alive- Sita sitting in deep thought under the dark shade of a tree in the garden bathed in moon light, or Vasavadutta lying in the green woods, with her mutilated body, awaiting her last moments or Budha Bhikshu Ananda asking for water from an untouchable woman from the well. -----

(Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.kanic.govt.in; malayalamkavithakal.com)

IEWS: POETRY DEAD OR ALIVE?

*Poetry Dead or Alive in this technological era is a complex question to answer. Here, we present poems by two great poets **Edgar Allen Poe** and **John Keats**, one lamenting that science (and technology) has robbed all imagination and magic from the world, and the other who believes that the poetry of the world is never dead. In the analysis that follows, we suggest that poetry is both **dead and alive!***

‘**Sonnet – To Science**’ is one of the earliest poems written by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49). This poem was written when he was barely 20. Poe was greatly interested in science. "Sonnet -

*“Freedom alone is nectar,
Freedom itself is life;
Slavery for the proud, is more fearsome than death”-*
Asan

To Science" ‘is a poet's lament over the dangers of scientific development, and its negative implications for poetry and creativity’. In the second half of the poem, he cites instances from

mythology, stating that old myths about nymphs and nature have lost their power, and that poets can no longer dream easily.

Sonnet-To Science

---- Edgar Allan Poe



*Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree.*

(Ref: www.poemofquotes.com)

11. Poetry of the Earth is Never Dead

“In the earliest ages science was poetry, as in the latter poetry has become science”

— James Russell Lowell

According to the poet, the earth poetry and music in nature never die, rather remain alive in every season, round the year. 'During spring, birds chirp, in summer, grasshoppers sing, and in winter, the cricket keeps the spirit of every-living nature alive, and sings songs'



The Poetry of Earth Is Never Dead ----- John Keats

*The poetry of earth is never dead;
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead.
That is the grasshopper's, – he takes the lead
In summer luxury, – he has never done
With his delights; for, when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never.
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems, to one in drowsiness half lost,
The grasshopper's among some grassy hills (Ref: Canadian Centre of Science and Education)*

In those times, when poets like Keats were alive, poetry was intimately intertwined with nature. Nature expresses her feelings in myriad ways. As with nature,

poetry is intrinsic to human nature, giving expression to his/her deep feelings. Poetry in nature never dies; so, should be poetry residing in the hearts and souls of men and women forever.

Earlier poetry Change is the essence of human progress. Like everything else in life, poetry too has undergone changes in theme, form and content, over centuries. Poetry in earlier times gave meaning to our mundane life; it provided an escape from daily drudgery; it showed us an ideal to live for; it taught us great lessons out of history. Old-style poetry has indeed declined. Critics point out that at the beginning of the new century at least, there was no poet of any stature.

Nature & Poetry Nature has inspired poetry throughout the ages. But today we are far away from nature. Sadly, rather than nature, it is *the destruction of nature* that, at present, moves the poet. Consequently, today, urbanization and alienation are themes of natural choice for writing poetry.

Modernism & Post-modernism Modernism 'focused on central themes and a united vision in a particular piece of literature'. In contrast post-modernism sees "human experience as **unstable, internally contradictory, ambiguous, inconclusive, indeterminate, unfinished, fragmented, discontinuous, "jagged,"** with no one specific reality possible".

Modern poetry is written in simple language, 'the language of every day speech and even sometimes in dialect or jargon'. Modern poetry exercises a great freedom in the choice of themes. Poetry today can be written on almost any subject. "The modern poets find

inspirations from railway trains, tramcars, telephones and things of commonplace interest. The

"America today is poetry-curious"-Julien Poirier

modern poet sees life and paints it as it is with all its wart and ugliness. He tears the veil which the romanticists had hung between life and art' says one writer. It is no longer patronized by the rulers or the ruling class. It refuses to recognize the authority of any single style or definition. Poetry is free- in the sense that anyone can access, read or write poetry. 'The distinction between high culture and mass or popular culture, and between art and everyday life seems to have collapsed'.

Some are worried that poetry has now turned into a commodity 'whose marketing is studied rather than its making and achievement'. But even professional poets unabashedly promote themselves and their friends, angling for teaching appointments and reading fees.

Evolution of Poetry

No one doubts the inevitability in the evolution of poetry along with the evolution of mankind, when the progress is slow and natural. But when the evolution is 'directed and mechanical', wherein human activities are replaced by smart machines, and, through mass media, we are bombarded with surreal images, which have nothing to do with reality, can poetry touch our souls any longer?

Poetry dead and alive? Although Poetry seems to have declined, it is still struggling to survive by giving expressions to our day- to- day thoughts and concerns in life. Perhaps, the famous thought experiment by the great Physicist Ervin Schrödinger on an imaginary cat, shut in a bell jar, under experimental conditions, and his conclusion that "The cat is both alive and dead" and that it is the viewer who perceives it as alive or dead, may be applicable to poetry! But the only problem is that the cat which looked lively and playful earlier, now appears frail, and lifeless!

(Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.researchgate.net; poemanalysis.com; www.poemofquotes.com);www.literary-articles.com; Modernagejournal.com)

SCIENCE & POETRY

Can Science and poetry ever go together?

Science and Technology has brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity to our lives. They have revolutionised not only how we live, but also the way we think and imagine.

While science explores new knowledge for itself methodically through observation and experimentation, technology is the application of scientific knowledge for desired purposes. The theme of science and technology has been dealt with and elaborated upon by poets. While some dread the invasion of technology into the world of poetry, others seek inspiration from science to compose poetry. When we visualize the world as inter-connected, is it possible that poetry and science are only two different facets of the same ever-changing vision?

Science & Poetry

Compared to technology the progress made by science is slow and abrupt. Technology causes immediate disruptions to our set lives; science changes technology itself.

We have included a poem 'A Sonnet to Science' by Edgar Allen Poe in the

"Poetry is dead? No way. I'm a trauma surgeon. I know what's dead when I see it"-- **Elizabeth Dreesen**

section ‘Poetry Alive or Dead’ in which the poet calls science that ‘alterest all things with thy peering eyes’. However, science also inspires some of the finest poetry, as can be seen from poems noted below.

John Keats, the great poet, famously expressed his concern about Isaac Newton unweaving the rainbow through his experiments on the color- spectrum. On the contrary, the famous scientist Michael Faraday once said, “I am no poet, but if you think for yourselves, as I proceed, the facts will form a poem in your minds.’ Metaphysical poets such as John Donne and Andrew Marvell incorporated scientific ideas in their poems about four hundred years ago. Poets over the last few centuries too have included themes on science in their works.



Sarah Howe FRSL (born 1983) a Chinese–British poet, editor and researcher in English literature in her sonnet "Relativity", that was commissioned for the 2015 National Poetry Day, wrote about scientific ideas, specifically relating to Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity and its impact on subsequent physics. The poem was dedicated to Stephen Hawking and was read out to him.

RELATIVITY

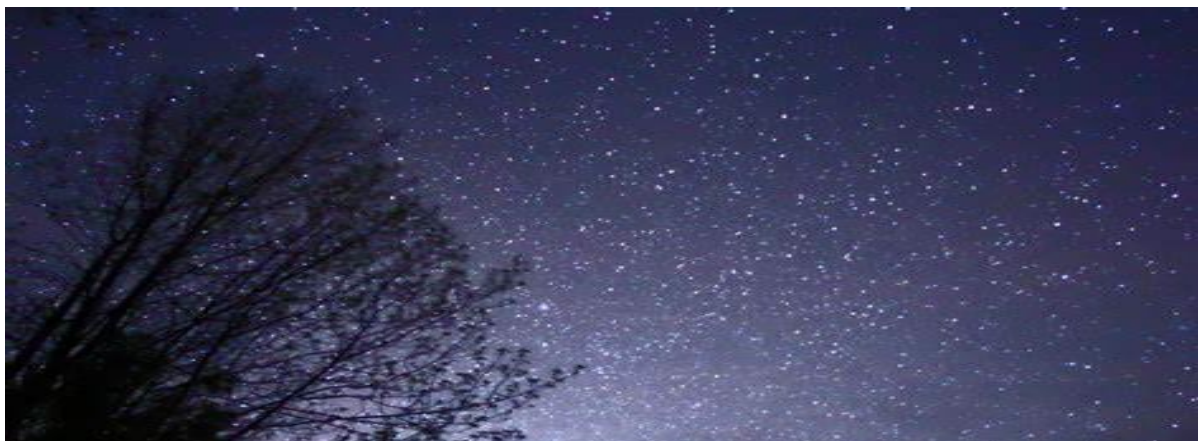
*When we wake up brushed by panic in the dark
our pupils grope for the shape of things we know.
Photons loosed from slits like greyhounds at the track
reveal light’s doubleness in their cast shadows
that stripe a dimmed lab’s wall—particles no more—
and with a wave bid all certainties goodbye.
For what’s sure in a universe that dopplers
away like a siren’s midnight cry? They say
a flash seen from on and off a hurtling train
will explain why time dilates like a perfect
afternoon; predicts black holes where parallel lines
will meet, whose stark horizon even starlight,
bent in its tracks, can’t resist. If we can think
this far, might not our eyes adjust to the dark?*

(Source: pickmeuppoetry.org)

Science can *help us to see* the magic of the natural world. In this short poem, **Walt Whitman (1819-92)** describes, how after listening to an astronomy lecture dry with statistics, wandering alone, ‘opens his mind up to the wonders of the night sky’.

‘When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer’

“SCIENCE IS THE POETRY OF REALITY.” — **RICHARD DAWKINS**



When I heard

*the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself ...
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,*

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars. (Ref: poemanalysis.com From the poetry collection of Walt Whitman- "Leaves of Grass")

The poem points out the difference between mechanical learning inside lecture halls and experiencing nature outside.

In the poem given below **Emily Dickinson** (1830 – 1886) examines what science can analyze and understand, and what human nature senses: -

*A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period –
When March is scarcely here
A Color stands abroad
On Solitary Fields
That Science cannot overtake
But Human Nature feels ...*

Can poetry and science be ever reconciled? Scientists and poets may differ in their discipline, but both seek to 'communicate the beauty of the world around us'. If *truth is beauty and beauty is truth*, it follows that the truth that scientists seek and the beauty that poets explore are one and the same. Imagination and creativity are not the *forte* of poets alone. The theory of Universal Gravitation or Relativity could not have been conceived by Newton and Einstein, without having the intuitive understanding, vivid imagination, deep insights or creative genius of great poets.

This takes us to the question about the duality in nature. How do we perceive nature---- through the eyes of a poet or a scientist? This poem explains the oneness of nature.

The Duality

*The constant flux of molecules,
Is it 'the dance of Shiva'
or the Brownian Movement?
A baby's smile, sweet and divine,
Merely a play of neurons?*

Are

*the roaring waves in the sea,
nature's lamentations?*

"Science is the labour and handicraft of the mind; poetry can only be considered its recreation"-----**Francis Bacon**

*or, are they only Moon's gravitation?
Are the twinkling stars in the sky
The tiny lights hanging from the heavens,
Or, are they just gaseous clouds?
Do we see the golden leaves fluttering in the breeze
Or the pulsating photons underneath?
Is the expanding universe surreal?
Or is it only real? (Credit: Life Stream Team)*

Poetry and science ultimately represent the duality of existence-the same reality in two different perspectives.

(Ref: www.researchgate.net; www.writersdigest.com; www.researchgate.net/www; www.writersdigest.com www.edutopia.org/poets.org pickmeuppoetry.org; www.interestingliterature.com)

TECHNOLOGY & POETRY

Does technology matter? How do poets and writers view technology?

Technology Take over "I fear the day when the technology overlaps with our humanity," wrote Albert Einstein, himself a famous scientist.

Expressing similar fears, a modern poet wrote an interesting poem under the headline **Technology Takes Over**. Said the poet -- "But now I've come to believe that we act as if we're worshipping it (technology), and cherishing the fact that 'Our life's made easier', but rather we are blinded by the imminent torture of the future" --- The poem reads further thus

*We've seen the movies.
The ones that foretell the day technology takes over
when machines grow minds and robots' breath air
when humanity is trodden under by the electric foot
I fear that day
and that day
has begun (Credit: powerpoetry.org)*

Another poet from India speaks about the world before technology took over.

BEFORE THE TECHNOLOGY TOOK OVER

*How beautiful were those days
When tech had not touched us
To spoil our minds and hearts
When life was simple and plain.*

*When television had not snatched
Leisure hours from every one of us
And we use to dance and sing
On the call of heart touching tunes.
When mobiles had not spoiled our minds
While snatching from us,
Our peace of mind
When computers were a remote cry
And*

*internet had not ruined the
purity of minds.*

"SCIENCE AROSE FROM POETRY----WHEN TIMES
CHANGE THE TWO CAN MEET ON A HIGHER LEVEL AS
FRIENDS"- WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

Poetry in the Digital Age Writing in www.writersdigest.com KM Barkley, author and consultant stated --- "The Digital Age is booming. That means attentions are shrinking and focus is altering. With 140-character communication on Twitter, picture and visual postings on Pinterest, and classrooms shying away from difficult material in favor of easy reading and easy grades, poetry has become one of the most underutilized, and underestimated mediums in modern culture".

The flame of creativity dies out and the tide of inspirational revelation recedes and the building blocks of imagination freeze at the bottom of the artist's psyche, as they gradually transform into a shallow abstract translation of a constellation of enormous technological capabilities, devoid of any creative substance. (www.researchgate.net)

Students are not required to memorize poems because memorizing was considered as a mechanical process. Following new trends in teaching and learning poetry, traditionally popular works were rejected to be replaced by more modern works. Barkley went to the extent of saying that ---"No wonder that so many suspect that much poetry written today is a hoax, like Pablo Picasso's (Art) and Jackson Pollock's paintings or Samuel Beckett's (Fiction)".

The positive side of Technology

While negative effects of technology on poetry demand all our attention, we forget that technology has positive sides too. Social media sites, like Facebook and Twitter, have become a great way for readers and writers to share favorite poems or lines of poetry.

A number of technology-tools are now available, especially to students, for creating and sharing their poetry like **Edutopia**, **Evernote**, **Animoto** **VoiceThread** and **Kidblog**.

We forget that new technologies alone are able to protect and preserve our poetic heritage. Ancient manuscripts and old poetic works are being digitalized.

There are 7,000 documented languages currently spoken across the world, but half of them could be endangered, according to a new study. 'Between 1950 and 2010, 230 languages went extinct, according to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. Today, a third of the world's languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers left. Every two weeks a language dies with its last speaker, 50 to 90 percent of them are predicted to disappear by the next century'. Only technology could help protect them from extinction.

The New Generation is technologically literate. Always surrounded by technical gadgets and tools, speaking, singing, listening and hearing aided by technology, they consider their predecessors technologically deprived.

We looked in the internet to know the pulse of the younger generation. While some accept the changes brought in by technology others look at it critically.

Look at this poem by Martin Dejnicky which speaks about the all-pervading influence of technology in our daily life. This prompts him to conclude that his predecessors were technology-deprived. Jessica Evans in her poem 'My Generation' describes how she is proud to be a part of the new generation powered by technology.

*"We aren't mute, we aren't shy,
We aren't strangers
Yet we remain with not a word escaping our mouths,
Staring into little rectangles of light"-Gwen Pimental*

<p>Technology</p> <p>I wake up each morning, when my android makes noise.</p> <p>Technically speaking, he's just one of my toys.</p> <p>Call me lazy, but I try to save time.</p> <p>Microwaving my breakfast, is not a real crime.</p> <p>Before I dance, with my electric toothbrush.</p>	<p>Straight for the inbox, I dive in a rush.</p> <p>With the click of a mouse, I outsource my work.</p> <p>Through Amazon reviews, I search for my perk.</p> <p>----- I return to my office, My game has arrived.</p> <p>My ancestors were truly, technology- deprived.</p> <p>By Martin Dejnicky blog. tree. cards</p>
<p><u>My Generation</u></p> <p>My generation is the technology generation We are connected 100% of the time My generation is the "selfie" generation A generation of self- love and positivity My generation believes you can love someone Even if they're thousands of miles away My generation is the download generation</p>	<p>Music from every era is at our fingertips They'll tell you all this is bad They'll say we're a generation ruled by technology And we are, but that's not a bad thing- -----</p> <p>MY GENERATION CHECKS SOCIAL MEDIA AND HEARS ABOUT NEWS BEFORE CNN OR FOX MY GENERATION USES PICTURES AND VIDEOS TO DISPUTE THE LIES WE'RE BEING FED MY GENERATION HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD</p> <p>Jessica Evans (Hello poetry)</p>





















































ANOTHER POEM (JORDYNN ROSE- CREDIT ALLPOETRY.COM) SPEAKS ABOUT THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON OUR LIVES. THE POET WONDERS “WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE POWER WAS TURNED OFF--- IF MIRACULOUSLY ALL OF THE ENERGY IN THE WORLD IS DISSIPATED TO NOTHINGNESS?” HE FORECASTS THAT OUR TECHNOLOGICALLY INGRAINED SOCIETY WOULD BE BORED TO TEARS AND OUR COMPUTER INFESTED NATION WOULD TREMBLE WITH FEAR. SIMILAR SENTIMENTS ARE EXPRESSED IN THE POEM “WHEN TECHNOLOGY DIES” BY DON BOUCHARD.

“While researchers strive to expand the frontiers of human faculties, the products of their endeavors tend to dull the creative urge of mankind at large”

— **B.S. Murthy**

Technology, friend and foe

Technology,
You know me so well
I share everything with you first
You know everything about me
Things I might not even be aware
about
You bring me to Utopia with each
touch
A single swipe, and I get my cup of tea
But how bad could you be for me
I have increasingly decreasing
attention
I am just a tool to you
A point to collect more data to sell
And sell away to manipulators
And attack me with new intelligence
I am always gullible
Technology, I can't live without you
I need you more than I thirst for water-
([Druzzayne Rika](#)-- Hellopoetry.com)

When Technology Dies

When Technology died,
some of us merely shrugged and
Tried to go back to before...

Only it wasn't the same...
So many hard-wirings gone,
So many places where we used to go,
So many thoughts we used to know,
Forgotten in an ethereal swirl...

----- ([Don Bouchard](#) hellopoetry.com)

I Finally Understand

"Life was easier when I was young." Was what my grandma used to say,
I never used to understand how she could think that's true,

We have Email, and iPods, and TV you can record!
We have every kind of website to peruse if you're bored!
We have Netflix, and GPS, and don't forget Smartphones,
And we can do all our shopping with a mouse click in our homes!

Things have gotten so convenient that it's so hard for me to know,
How somebody could think life was easier many years ago.

As I get older, all this convenience slowly seems less grand,
And when I think of what my grandma said, I finally understand— ([Ryan Unger](#) --hellopoetry.com)

In his poem 'Technology, Friend & Foe' Druzzayne Rika writes about the good and bad aspects of technology, but embraces it in the end. Ryan Unger in his poem 'I Finally Understand' points out the comfort that technology brought to our lives, but finally realizes that there is truth in what his grandma said about the prosperity of the times past.

Many in the older generation, who were so far used to a 'slow and steady' pace of life, now seem to be bewildered by fast-paced technologies. Some of the persons belonging to the new generation also concerned about the disruptive influence of technology. However, in the modern world most of us have quietly accepted the ease and comforts offered by new technologies. We know that there is no going back, for, the flow of technology is like the arrow of time that can only move forward.

Some people argue that 'We have chosen a particular way of life. Technology is only a tool. Can we blame technology for all our ills? Or shouldn't we blame ourselves?' Others say that nobody prevents any one from withdrawing to a quieter world, to devote time for poetry and other intellectual pursuits. Those who can afford still do it. But for others, there appears to be no option but to flow with the tide. Poetry alone cannot be an exemption.

"Many of us are paying for the so-called free lunch in one of the most expensive currencies out here — our privacy."

— **Mitta Xinindlu**

IS THERE ANY RELATION BETWEEN POETRY AND ECONOMICS? OR ARE THEY AS DIFFERENT AS CHALK AND CHEESE? CAN ECONOMISTS LEARN ANYTHING FROM POETRY?

ECONOMICS IS VIEWED AS THE DISCIPLINE THAT DEALS WITH 'DRY STATISTICS AND DEAD MATHEMATICAL MODELS' OF THE ECONOMY, WHEREAS, POETRY DEALS WITH HUMAN EMOTIONS, IMAGINATION, AND CREATIVITY. IT IS THEREFORE, DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THERE COULD BE ANYTHING COMMON BETWEEN THEM.

BRENDAN MARKEY-TOWLER, AN INDEPENDENT ECONOMIST WRITING IN MEDIUM.COM SAYS THAT 'IT MIGHT SEEM THAT POETRY AND ECONOMICS HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON AND CAN COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER OR EVEN LESS. THIS IS NOT SO--- THE EXPERIENCE OF POETRY ALLOWS THE ECONOMIST TO UNDERSTAND MORE FULLY WHAT IT IS TO EXIST WITHIN THAT WHICH THE ECONOMIST STUDIES".

WHY POETRY MATTERS AT LEAST SOME ECONOMISTS FEEL THAT

- HUMAN BEINGS ARE CONCERNED WITH THEIR FEARS, HOPES, DESIRES, NEEDS, LOVES AND LIVES.

- POETRY CAN FILL THE GAP BETWEEN REASON AND EMOTION, ADDING FEELINGS TO ECONOMICS.

- THERE IS A ROLE FOR THE ECONOMIST AS DISPASSIONATE, DISINTERESTED, DETACHED SCIENTIST. BUT THE BEST ECONOMIST IS THE ECONOMIST WHO KNOWS DEEPLY ABOUT OUR DESIRES AND NEEDS.

- THE REASON OF THE ECONOMIST IS NOT ABOUT DEAD MATTER, BUT ABOUT LIFE. TO KNOW WHAT IT IS TO HAVE HUMAN LIFE MAKES THE ECONOMIST A BETTER ECONOMIST.

- STATISTICS AND MATHEMATICS ARE IMPORTANT TOOLS WHICH HELP US REASON, BUT WHAT WE REASON ABOUT IS THE VERY STUFF OF POETRY. THE STUFF OF ECONOMICS IS HUMANITY.

Separation of Art and science



Plato

Although artists and scientists are 'both driven to observe and create, they largely reside in different cultural spheres'... Plato's dialogues have been universally recognized as literary masterpieces; but he dismissed art because it attracts emotions, involves imagination and inaccuracy; instead, he promoted intellect and logical reasoning'. Plato's views on Art led to the separation of Art and Science in western civilization. Some of the leading economists like John Stuart Mill have written about "---this neglect, both in theory and in practice of the cultivation of feeling naturally resulted, among other things, an undervaluing of poetry, and of Imagination generally, as an element of human nature." (See box)



Mill and Poetry

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) was one of the most influential thinkers in the history of [classical liberalism](#). He made significant contributions to [social theory](#), [political theory](#), and political economy, and was considered as the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the nineteenth century.

Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill differed in key ways from that advocated by Jeremy Bentham and others, for, Mill considered that pleasures differed in quality as well as in quantity, with some pleasures of higher quality than others. Mill considered poetry amongst the higher pleasures. He wrote "–Poetry is higher than Logic, and ...the union of the two is Philosophy'.

*As mentioned in the opening paragraphs of Chapter V of his autobiography, he had asked himself whether the creation of a just society, his life's objective, would actually make him happy. The answer he got was "no". Thereafter, he lost interest in pursuing the objective. Eventually, he came under the influence of the poetry of William Wordsworth which led him to believe **that beauty generates compassion for others, and stimulates joy**. With renewed vigour, he continued to work towards his goal of a just society (Ref: en.wikipedia.org)*

Many in Australia believe that the country has benefited greatly from the influence of its poets over its economists. Poets like Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Les Murray are said to have inspired passion and compassion in its economists.



H.C. "Nugget"

Coombs (1906-1997), Australia's economist

was

"ECONOMICS IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LEAVE TO THE ECONOMISTS." — **STEVE KEEN**

extraordinaire who guided the country's post-war reconstruction. **Judith Arundell Wright (1915 – 2000)** was an Australian poet, environmentalist and campaigner for Aboriginal land rights. Coombs attained much fame due to the influence over his life and thinking of Judith Wright. Coombs apparently had a secret relationship with her.



Read the very first stanza of the poem *A Human Pattern* in her poetry collection "The Company of Lovers".

*We meet and part now over all the world
we, the lost company
take hands together in the night, forget
the night in our brief happiness, silently.
We, who sought many things, throw all away
for this one thing, one only,
remembering that in the narrow grave
we shall be lonely*

In his book *The Poets Guide to Economics*, John Ramsden describes the contribution of 11 poets including Defoe, Swift, Coleridge, Scott, Shelley, de Quincey, Ruskin, Morris, Shaw, Belloc and Pound to economics, now largely forgotten. According to the author, 'the poets' take on economics is often visionary and idealistic, but their theories are mostly grounded on real insight, sometimes strikingly ahead of their time as they predict evils all too familiar to the 21st Century'.

Haiku Economics In his brief write-up on "Haiku Economics" ([www. poetry foundation. com](http://www.poetryfoundation.com)) Stephen T. Ziliak, American professor of economics, notes that Haiku, the distinguished (if short) form of poetry with roots dating back to 17th century Japan is the most efficient form of economic speech. Prof. Ziliak drew attention of the readers to the principles of writing Haiku poetry, and their importance to economics. According to him, technical efficiency is not the only or even the main goal of writing Haiku; Haiku enlightens and stimulates open discussion. To date, haiku and economics have not been explored together and certainly not at the level of principles.

He observed that 'Perhaps it's the economists who can learn the most from

A Classroom poetry experiment

www.researchgate.net in a write-up mentions a poetry experiment conducted in an economics classroom. Students were randomized across two groups and were given assignments to write poetry or short answer essay during a course in microeconomics.

The student experience was positive and they were excited. Students reported that writing poetry improved both their short- and long-term understanding and retention of the concepts. One criticism of the experiment was the additional time and effort needed to write creatively. This could have been due to the insufficient time allotted to the task compared to writing standard short answer essays.

Overall, the results suggest that 'creative writing provides a potentially important tool to enhance learning opportunities and economic literacy among economics student'.

poets
about
precision
and
efficiency,
about
objectivity
and

maximization'. Other
writers too have tried to
dispel the traditionally

*Haiku: The US needs jobs
Politicians have theirs now
With which they do little-Austin Frakt*

held views on economics and poetry.

Behavioral Economics Concerns have been expressed about linking Economics with poetry which are two entirely different disciplines, although, as noted above, human feelings and behavior do play a role in both.

The growth of **Behavioral Economics** as a sub-field of economics is a fairly recent development. It is a 'method of economic analysis that applies psychological insights into human behavior, to explain economic decision-making'



(Credit: pinrest.com)

In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Adam Smith wrote on concepts later popularized by modern Behavioral Economic theory. Jeremy Bentham, another Neoclassical economist in the 1700s conceptualized utility as a product of psychology.

As explained by Wikipedia, conventional economics assumes that all people are both rational and selfish. In practice, this is often not the case, which leads to the failure of traditional models. Behavioral economics studies the biases, tendencies that affect the decisions that people make to improve, tweak or overhaul traditional economic theory. It aids in determining whether people make good or bad choices and whether they could be helped to make better choices. It can be applied both before and after a decision is made.

Behavioral models typically integrate insights from psychology, [neuroscience](#) and [microeconomic theory](#). Behavioral economics is still growing as a field, being used increasingly in research and in teaching.

It is interesting to note that there have been several Nobel Prize winners from the field of Behavioral Economics in the recent past. The concepts some of them developed to explain economics in a new light, taking into consideration human behavior and emotions, may be of interest to the readers.

“Many problems are so complex that even if we had the money to fix them, we wouldn't know how to do it. Fixing inner-city schools, reducing obesity, creating peace in the Middle East are just a few examples-“

Richard Thaler

Nobel Prize winners in Behavioural Economics

1. **Herbert Simon** – a Jewish-American economist, political scientist and cognitive



psychologist- **Nobel Prize- 1978** – for the concept of **Bounded Rationality** - the idea that we make decisions that are rational, but within the limits of the information and time available to us to make that decision.

2. **Gary Becker** – American economist- professor of Economics and Sociology at



the University of Chicago- **Nobel Prize 1992 -Motives and Consumer Mistakes**- that many different types of human behaviour can be seen as rational and utility maximizing.

3. **Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky** – The former is an Israeli-American



psychologist and economics- awarded the 2002 Nobel Prize-Amos Nathan Tversky-cognitive and mathematical psychologist- The Prospect theory proposed by them assumes that losses and gains are valued differently, and thus individuals make decisions based on perceived gains, instead of perceived losses.

5.**Richard Thaler** – American economist – **Won Nobel Prize in 2017 -Nudge**



Theory proposes positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions as ways to influence the behavior and decision making of groups or individuals. Nudge is "a way to manipulate people's choices to lead them to make specific decisions". Both Prime Minister David Cameron and President Barack Obama sought to employ nudge theory to advance domestic policy goals during their terms. (Credit: www.beastglobal.com)

POEMS ON POETRY & ECONOMICS HERE ARE A FEW INTERESTING POEMS ON POETRY AND ECONOMICS: -

Lamentations of the Confounded Economist

By Gordon Snyder

Supply and Demand
The Invisible Hand
Isn't this the way the economy shrinks and expands?

Are your goods elastic
Or inelastic static
When you raise your price is it sweet or tragic?

Does your income waver
As you look for labor
Is it the inferior goods you favor?

Is there a substitute
For the pricey things you choose
Will the demand curve shift when you get a clue?

It's hard to give a break

To those who like to take.

I pay my bills

To fund their thrills

No bread? Eat some of my cake.

By Nathaniel Mayo

(Credit: pinterest.com)

A CONVERSATION

The poet and the economist

Discussed their times to know what is best.

*Said the poet looking worried,
'Many are those below the poverty-line buried'.*

E: "No problem you relax and sit'

Then I can pull the line down a bit'.

P: "Most laborers are without any work,

Out of despair they have gone berserk",

E: "They are just numbers on my Table

Those should soon be stable",

2.

P: What about those without a roof?

E: Let me sample and see your proof."

P: "Farmers do not get the right price,

E: "To decide that market is the best place".

P: "Shops and businesses do not have capital,

E: "When they squander, that is natural".

P: "Alas! they will soon be sucked in by the quick sand"

E: "Know that states do not have any magic wand

E: Wait patiently for the invisible hand!"

(Credit: Life Stream

Team)

Ref: www.poetryfoundation.org; medium.com www.sciencedirect.com poets.org; allpoetry.com; www.enlightenmenteconomics.com; www.beastglobal.com

POETRY & MUSIC

In this section we explore the relation between poetry and music

"A

"Wouldn't economics make a lot more sense if it were based on how people actually behave, instead of how they should behave?" ---- **Dan Ariely**

poem set to music is a song, while a song

that does not involve music is a poem". Even then, many music composers, singers and artists present lyrics of songs as poetry. 'Today poets still draw on the forms and rhythms of different musical traditions, from jazz, rap, and hip-hop to folk songs and country music'. While tracing poetry through the ages, we saw that poetry had its beginnings in musical traditions. According to Wikipedia, the Vedas, ancient scriptures of India, have been orally transmitted since the 2nd millennium BCE. The mantras (Chants), the oldest part of the Vedas, are considered the 'literal sounds of the Divine which, when recited or sung, recreate the primal vibrations of the universe'.

Shijing, (means the **Odes**, songs or Poetry) is the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry comprising 305 works dating from the 11th to 7th centuries BCE.



the *Classic of Poetry*, handwritten by the Qianlong Emperor, with accompanying painting (en.wikipedia.org)

In the western world too poetry and music have remained connected for thousands of years. In antiquity, poems were often sung: the first lyric poets in ancient Greece performed their work to the accompaniment of the lyre. The lyrical work of Provençal troubadours in southern Europe in the middle-ages would influence European poetry for centuries. The ballad form continues to be a common form for both poems and songs. Poetry's links with music can be noted in the poetic history of the Middle East, Africa, Latin America or the Far East.

Poets and Music.

Many great poets have been inspired to write poems on music. Poetryfoundation.com has listed some of these beautiful poems.

'When the Nightingale Sings' is a medieval poem dating from the early fourteenth century, written in Middle English. The poem describes what happens in nature when the nightingale starts singing. "I would define the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty." – Edgar Allen Poe.

*When the nyhtegale singes,
The wodes waxen grene,
Lef ant*

gras ant blosme springes

the

"Music is the universal language of mankind." – **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

(Anonymous) (When nightingale sings, the

woods grow green, leaf and grass and blossom spring).

Another is a poem by **Sir Thomas Wyatt**, lyrical poet, who introduced sonnets to the English language.



'My Lute Awake!

-Sir Thomas Wyatt,

*My lute awake! perform the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun;
For when this song is sung and past,
My lute be still, for I have done.*

Emily Dickinson sometimes wrote her poems to the tunes and forms of church hymns.

William Shakespeare, in **Sonnet 8** asks ---Why are you sad when you hear music?

*Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?*

In his poem 'To—' **Percy Shelley**, the great Romantic poet says

*"Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken ..."*

Walt Whitman, the famous American poet could hear America singing everywhere.

'I Hear America Singing'

*I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the
steamboat deck* (interestingliterature.com)

Poets such as **W.H. Auden**, **J.D. McClatchy**, and **Eileen Myles** have written successful opera libretti.

Musical history Music has seen great development over the past one thousand years. Historians divide musical history into different periods such as the Medieval period (500-1400 AD), the Renaissance period (1400-1600 AD), the Romantic period (1810-1910 AD),

1750

Baroque period (1600-AD), the Classical period (1730-1820 AD) and Neo-

"Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart." – **Pablo Casals**

classical and Modern times (1900-current).

Although in the twentieth century, many composers continued to work in forms that derived from the nineteenth century, a 'new freedom and experimentation with new musical styles and forms that challenged the accepted rules of music of earlier period' also emerged.

With the invention of electronic instruments and new technologies, a revolution was brought about, especially in song-writing, singing, synthesizing, recording, thereby liberating music from confines of clubs and theatres into the wider world. It enabled the common man everywhere to enjoy the new kind of popular music that included many forms like Pop, jazz, hip hop, romantic music, folk music, blues, atonal music, aleatoric music, film music, art music, opera, electronic music, symphony, and rock and roll.

The music industry produced many songs with poetic lyrics- some that 'bring back the past; love songs; songs of the world around us; Odes and tributes; the Blues; Songs to get down to; Anthems; Songs of tradition; the art of Music, Audio and Blog posts'.



The Beatles in 1964; clockwise from top left: [John Lennon](#), [Paul McCartney](#), [Ringo Starr](#) and [George Harrison](#)

Rock music The Beatles were are regarded as the most influential band of all time and 'were integral to the development of 1960s counterculture and popular music's recognition as an art form'. John Lennon and McCartney were the primary song writers of the band. The world then was gripped by Beatle-mania.

Numerous rock bands like the Rolling stones, Pink Floyd, Queen, Aerosmith emerged with a range of styles by mid- 1960's. It may be noted that these bands became popular not only for their music and performance, but also for the simple and beautiful lyrics which directly appealed to the masses. The Beetles wrote and sang songs voicing their concern for world peace like 'Give Peace a Chance', 'Imagine', and 'Happy Christmas (War is Over)'.

"AS POETRY IS THE HARMONY OF WORDS, SO MUSIC IS THAT OF NOTES; AND AS POETRY IS A RISE ABOVE PROSE AND ORATORY, SO IS MUSIC THE EXALTATION OF POETRY." — [HENRY PURCELL](#)

Social relevance Many songs of the mid- twentieth century addressed social and [cultural issues](#) of the time. Rock music promoted the civil rights movement in the [United States](#) . Many singers and songwriters of that time period such as Joan Bake and Bob Dylan were actively involved in it (pl. see box). Many music artists, at this time began to write and sing songs about world peace and for ending the Vietnam War, which were very popular. Protesters included song-writers and singers loke Bob Dylan; Country Joe and the Fish; Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young; Janis Joplin; Joan Bake; and Jim Hendrix. It was also the time when women strived to seek a better place for themselves in society.

Surprisingly many songs did inspire and empower women.

Michael Joseph



Bob Dylan (B.1941) is often regarded as one of the greatest song-writers of all time. Dylan has been a maior figure in pop culture during a career spanning more

Blowin' in the Wind

-----**WRITTEN BY: BOB DYLAN**

*How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?*

*Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannonballs
fly
Before they're forever banned?
Yes, 'n' how many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his
head
Pretending he just doesn't see?*

*How many times must a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he
knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind*

cluding songs such as "Blowin' in the (1964) became 'anthems for the civil e a Rolling Stone' and 'All Along the concern of the troubled youth at that important political voices in America

old tens of millions of albums, wrote artists, performed all over the world,

2016 "for having created new poetic on". He also has received numerous om, ten Grammy Awards, a Golden een inducted into the Rock and Roll and the Songwriters Hall of Fame. cial citation for "his profound impact lyrical compositions of extraordinary

Jackson (1958 – 2009) was an American singer, songwriter, dancer, and philanthropist. Dubbed the "King of Pop", he is regarded as one of the most significant

cultural figures of the 20th century. Here is one of his famous songs: -

Earth Song
[Verse 2]
*What have we done to the world?
Look what we've*

“I consider myself a poet first and a musician second. I live like a poet and I'll die like a poet.” – **Bob Dylan** and more probably to the moral character, by embracing the emotional part of our nature” ---**Charles Darwin**

done

What about all the peace that you pledge your only son?

What about flowering fields?

Is there a time?

What about all the dreams that you said was yours and mine?

[Pre-Chorus 2]

Did you ever stop to notice

All the children dead from war?

Did you ever stop to notice

This crying Earth, these weeping shores?

Apart from Bob Dylan and Michael Jackson many other singers and song writers attained much acclaim during the last century. We have randomly selected a few names.



Quincy Jones or Quincy Delight Jones Jr. (1933) -an African-American record producer, musician, songwriter, composer and film and television producer. His career spans 70 years in the entertainment industry with a record of 80 Grammy Award nominations, 28 Grammys, and a Grammy Legend Award.



Paul McCartney (born 1942) was English singer-songwriter and musician Co-Lead Vocalist of the Rock Band 'The Beatles'. He gained worldwide fame with the Beatles. He was one of the Most Successful Composers and performers of All Time. Many of the songs he wrote for the Beatles, including "And I Love Her", "Yesterday", "Eleanor Rigby", and "Blackbird", rank among the most covered songs in history.



Dolly Parton (Dolly Rebecca Parton -born 1946) is an American singer-songwriter, actress, philanthropist, and businesswoman, known primarily for her work in country music. She has sold more than 100 million records worldwide.



Elton John (1947) is a singer, Pianist and Composer- One of the All- time Best-Selling Artists. He is famous for *Candle in the Wind*, his tribute to Princess Diana in 1997, which till date is one of the best-selling singles in the UK and the US.

*"I hope you don't mind,
I hope you don't mind,
that I put into words,
how wonderful life is,
now you're in the world-----**Elton John***



Stevie Nicks (born 1948) is a songwriter and vocalist with the British-American rock band, Fleetwood Mac.



Prince (Prince Rogers Nelson, 1958 –2016) Singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist dancer, and musician, Prince is widely regarded as one of the greatest musicians of his generation.



Bryan Adams (1959) is a Canadian singer, guitarist, songwriter, and photographer. He has been cited as one of the best-selling music artists of all time, and is estimated to have sold between 75 million and more than 100 million records and singles worldwide.



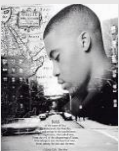
Jon Bon Jovi (John Francis Bongiovi Jr. born 1962) known professionally as Jon Bon Jovi, is an American singer, songwriter, guitarist, and actor. He is best known as the founder and front man of the rock band Bon Jovi, which was formed in 1983.



Jay-Z
Shawn Corey Carter (born 1969), known professionally as Jay-Z, is an American rapper and songwriter and is one of the world's best-selling music and Hip-Hop artists.



Ricky Martin (born 1971)
Singer-songwriter Known For his Biggest Hit Song "Livin' la Vida Loca". He is known as The King of Latin Pop. Ricky Martin ruled the music scene of the 1990s, with hits such as Livin' La Vida Loca and The Cup of Life.



Nas- Nasir bin Olu Dara Jones, (born: 1973), better known by his stage name Nas, is a Rapper, songwriter, record executive and actor. He is one of the Most Influential and Greatest Rappers of All Time

Indian Music and Poetry

As in other countries Indian poetry had its origins in music. We saw in the Section on Indian Poetry how the Vedas, hymns and chants slowly evolved into musical forms. Surprisingly, the Vedas are still recited by people in different parts of India, in temples, on the bank of rivers, or in their own homes, indicating the continuity of Indian civilization from ancient to modern times.

The earliest poetry was devotional, written in praise of Gods and Goddesses. They were either recited or sung. Later on, we come across Doha's or couplets- of Kabir, Tulsi das, Rahim and Nanak that were **-ancient lyrical verse format of Indian poetry**. Meera Bai and her devotional music are well-known. Urdu poetry evolved into several musical forms during the British period. During pre-independent period, during and after attaining Independence, we find a number of poets who wrote poetry in musical form like Subramanya Bharti

or Tagore.

In the South India poetry and music have an intimate relationship. The earliest poems were mostly devotional music. We have already seen how the music of Purandara Das or Avvaiyar influenced the life and culture of people in earlier times. Carnatic music composed by the trinity Swati Tirunal, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Sastri is famous not only for the musical compositions, but also for their lyrical content. Even today in India poetry is recited or set to music.

The dramatic changes happened to Indian music with the coming of motion pictures. Music was and is an integral part of films in Hindi and regional languages. We already noted the names of giants in writing Hindi music lyrics like Sailendra, Sahir Ludhianvi, Anand Bhakshi, Shakeel Badayuni, Hasrat Jaipuri, Kaifi Azmi, Gulzar, Javed Akhtar and the like. In South India song-writers like P. Bhaskaran, Vayalar Rama Varma, ONV, Kannadasan and so many others gave life to music by their lyrical poetry. Sung in the melodious voices of Lata Mangeshkar and Geeta Dutt, in the seductive voice of Asha Bhosle or in the versatile voice of Muhammed Rafi, or the melancholic voice of Mukesh, or the exuberant voice of Kishore Kumar, Hindi songs always conquered minds and hearts.

The beauty of Indian film music lies in its lyrics, as much as in music composing. There is always a movie song giving expression to our everyday moods and feelings. In a happy mood you sing *"life itself is beautiful music"* as in one of the movie songs. The lines from a Hindi movie song *"Pyar kiya to dar na kya"* (What is there to fear when you are in love?) emboldens lovers who are afraid to

express their love. The following lines remind us that love can be expressed through sheer poetry.

"Yesterday you came to me as a beautiful tune, hiding in my flute, In the intoxication of my finger's touch you came out as a love song". No one can write more profoundly about loneliness than the lyricist who penned this *"After roaming in the fearful primitive forest paths, In*

the streets towers broken, wounds

"Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent."-unknown

the deserts dozing in moonlight, In the where the clock of the centuries lay where have you reached? Carrying the of knowledge in your

heart, and floating on the wings of experience; Ending the blindness of your desire, where have you reached? --the endless coast of loneliness----. (Approximate translation only).

These simple lyrics by a Tamil lyricist can console any one who is in mourning for his/her loss
“--Let it go dear--- Is there anyone who has come to stay here forever? If all those who come remain here, where is the place on Earth for all to stay?”



A scene from the legendary film Pakeezha that became popular due to its songs and music

The veteran Actress Meenakumari immortalized the Hindi film 'Pakeeza' (the Pure) by her mesmerizing dancing and acting. Here are a few lines from the famous song "Chalte Chalte" from the movie.

**While walking, while walking
I met someone by chance
Walking around the path
Right there it stood still
This night of mine, which is fading away
What I was unable to say
The world is saying that
A story has been created
From those words of mine
The night of waiting
Will after all shorten soon
These lamps are dying
As they burn alongside me**

India too has developed pop music which seems to be only a poor imitation of western pop music and hardly have any lyrical content.

Thus, we see that in great songs composed all over the world, poetry (lyrics) and music blend beautifully so much so that they become indistinguishable from one another. Music without poetry is lifeless; Music with beautiful poetry (lyrics) is divine. Ref:-en.wikipedia.org; www.worldhistory.org; www.gemtracks.com; www.poetryfoundation.org; benjaminbarber.org/twentieth-century-music-and-its-reflection-of-history; kidadl.com; www.newworldencyclopedia.org;

"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind,
flight to the imagination and life to everything."
~ Plato

POEM: THE OWL



Here is a blog by one of our team members on the poem “The Owl” by Edward Thomas, British poet, **essayist, and novelist**. In the present world wherein pursuit of one’s own happiness and selfish desires reign supreme, **this simple poem reminds us of the plight of those who are less fortunate than us.**

As in any other year, this year too came *Diwali* (the festival of light) with resplendent light, crackling sounds, spontaneous joy and excitement; buildings decorated with modern LED lights in varied design and also traditional lamps, men and women in their fineries, children busy with their crackers, sweetshops briskly selling sweets of myriad colors and tastes. In the midst of reveling in the festive glory, came the sharp cry of a hawker trying to sell the last of his wares, late in the day. No one seemed to notice him, or the little children in their rags, playing in the streets, with stubs of burnt crackers. No one had the thought, time or inclination to share their joys with those less fortunate than themselves on a festive day. The hawker’s cry reminded me of Edward Thomas, poet, and his poem- The Owl.



Edward Thomas In my youth I had never heard of Edward Thomas or his poems. I came across a feature ‘Edward Thomas, Robert Frost, and the Road to War’ by Mathew Hollis, published in The Guardian dated 29th July, 2011. Ever since reading it, I have cherished the poem “The Owl” in my heart.

Philip Edward Thomas (1878 –1917) was an Anglo-Welsh poet and essayist, by nature very quiet and inwardly drawn. He is considered a war poet, although

few of his poems deal directly with his war experiences. Thomas was vehemently opposed to wars and gave expression to his anti-war sentiments, through his poems. However, in his desire to defend the English country side, which he loved deeply, and, to show his camaraderie with his fellow citizens who were fighting in the First World War, he finally

decided to join it. He was ultimately killed in the

war.
The

“OVER the land half freckled with snow half-thawed
The speculating rooks at their nests cawed,
And saw from elm-tops, delicate as a flower of grass,
What we below could not see, Winter pass-- **Thaw** by Edward

poet shared a warm friendship with Robert Frost, the famous

American Poet. It is said that the poem 'The Road not Taken' by Frost influenced Thomas to finally take the decision to join the war.

The Poem "The Owl" is a simple poem without any apparent lyrical quality. It doesn't convey any grand idea either. Then why does it disturb us? The shriek of the owl on a cold wintry night, pierces not only our ears, but also our hearts and souls. For the poet, it was "telling me plain what I escaped and others could not, that night".

Now have a look at the poem: -

*DOWNHILL I came, hungry, and yet not starved,
Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof
Against the north wind; tired, yet so that rest
Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.
Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,
Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.
All of the night was quite barred out except
An owl's cry, a most melancholy cry.
Shaken out long and clear upon the hill
No merry note, nor cause of merriment,
But one telling me plain what I escaped
And others could not, that night, as in I went.
And salted was my food, and my repose,
Salted and sobered too, by the bird's voice
Speaking for all who lay under the stars,
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.* (www.poemhunter.com)

Meaning It is interesting to ponder over the meaning of this poem. A soldier,

tired and hungry, arrives at an inn where he finds food, warmth and shelter. While he is basking in his comfort, he hears the melancholic shriek of an owl, which reminds him of his fellow soldiers, and the poor, who were lying under the open sky, deprived of those comforts.

The soldier symbolizes the poet himself who has been able to fulfill his basic needs. However, the owl--his conscience- wakes him up from his repose, reminding him of the plight of those who are less fortunate than him. Perhaps, it is the same fellow-feeling and pangs of conscience which drove him to join the war, and, sacrifice his life for a common cause.

In Memoriam

*"The flowers left thick at nightfall in the wood
This Eastertide call into mind the men,
Now far from home, who, with their sweethearts, should
Have gathered them and will do never again-"***Edward Thomas**

Importance This poem once again tells us that man cannot be truly happy, unless he thinks and cares for his fellow (sentient & non-sentient) beings. We must remember that in

today's world owls are fast disappearing, due to habitat loss; there will be no owl left to remind us of our duty anymore, except, the owl of our conscience. (Note: This blog is based on a write-up by the author on similar subject, published in the Annual Issues of Life stream e-magazine 2012 & 2013)

TRAVEL: THE LAKE DISTRICT.

Are there places on earth known for their poets and poems? The Lake district is indeed one of them. The Lake District, a mountainous region in North West England is famous for its lakes, forests, and mountains, and its associations with William Wordsworth and other Lake Poets, and also with Beatrix Potter and John Ruskin.



(Photo Credit: Anup Sinha) The Lake District in the North West of England is a popular holiday destination for 16 million visitors every year. The stunning scenery of the area, the changing landscape and fresh air of the mountainous region, activities for all members of the family,

and

*"My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity- inscription on the grave of Edward Thomas by fellow-poet **Wilfred Owen**"*

gorgeous places to eat
drink, charming
accommodation make

the Lake District a sought-after location by many. Most come to enjoy the scenery, peace and quiet, and for walks, but many others visit specific attractions or enjoy outdoor activities. After being confined inside the four walls of my home for more than a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was looking forward to visit what William Wordsworth described as "the loveliest spot that man hath ever found" which I did, in May, 2021.

Home of Wordsworth



Dove

Cottage (Town End, Grasmere, Credit: Pinterest) The Lake District had inspired many great Lake Poets - William Wordsworth, Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge - during the Romantic Period in the nineteenth century (See box) I would recommend all to read Wordsworth's 'Guide to the Lakes' written at Allan Bank villa in Grasmere village. Wordsworth was living in Dove Cottage, across the valley from Allan Bank, and called it 'a temple of abomination', ruining his view down the Eastdale Valley when it was being built in 1805. But due to his growing family size, and requiring a larger house, he rented the villa and its grounds, measuring 11.84 acres, in

The Lake Poets *The Lake District is intimately associated with English literature of the 18th and 19th centuries. At the end of the 18th Century, the Lake District became the focus of a group of young poets like William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey who came known as the Lake Poets. Although Thomas Gray was the first to bring the region to wider attention, it was William*

1808.
The
owner



Wordsworth *whose poems were most famous and influential, in drawing imagination of the people. Out of his long life of eighty years, sixty were spent amid its lakes and mountains.*



Samuel Taylor Coleridge *lived for some time in Keswick, and also with Wordsworth at Grasmere. Wordsworth, his friend was instrumental in bringing him to this beautiful part of England.*

Robert Southey *Coleridge's brother-in-law, the Poet Laureate for thirty years and friend of*



Wordsworth was mostly a
prose writer
en.wikipedia.org

Poet
fee
in t

"HOW BEAUTIFUL IS NIGHT! A DEWY FRESHNESS FILLS
THE SILENT AIR; NO MIST OBSCURES, NOR CLOUD, NOR
SPECK, NOR STAIN, BREAKS THE SERENE OF
HEAVEN" — ROBERT SOUTHEY

consulted with Wordsworth, and laid out the gardens and grounds to his liking. I witnessed the picture-perfect views that inspired several poets that resided there, to be creative.

Other famous writers In addition to the residents or natives of the Lake District, a number of other poets and writers made visits to the Lake District. **Tennyson** was another poet who knew and loved the Lakes, and used descriptions of them in poems such as “Morte d’Arthur”. **John Ruskin**, the radical thinker and social reformer, continued the theme of Wordsworth’s work on nature, man and society. **Ruskin** arrived in the Lakes in 1830s, as a guest of friends from Cambridge. He was instantly captivated and spent most of his life in the area.

The Lake District is mentioned in Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice; other visitors include great romantic poets like Percy Bysshe Shelley, Sir Walter Scott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Arthur Hugh Clough, Henry Crabb Robinson, Thomas Carlyle, John Keats, Matthew Arnold, Felicia Hemans and Gerald Massey. During the early 20th century, Beatrix Potter the famous author of children’s books resided at Hill Top Farm. Many of her famous Peter Rabbit books had the Lake District as their settings. (Ref: en.wikipedia.org)

The Lake District National Park is famous for its stunning scenery, abundant wildlife and cultural heritage. It was

established in 1951 and covers an area of 2,362 square kilometers (912 sq mi). The Park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2017. “Ice and fire carved the highest mountains and deepest lakes. Humans brought life and love’ says the Park’s website.

Over the hills and valleys Those that enjoy walking must visit the nearby Loughrigg Fell, located 2.2 miles away. It is a relatively easy walk, being a modest 335 meters in height. The shortest walking route is 2-3 hours long, but to enjoy the stunning views, I would recommend the route that can be done in 3.5-4 hours. (<https://www.hikingphotographer.uk/2020/06/loughrigg-fell-walk-via-grasmere-windermere-rydal-water-lake-district.html>)

The more adventurous should head to Helvellyn Mountain. At 3,118 feet, it is the third highest point in England. It can take around 6-7.5 hours to climb. Helvellyn is popular with fell walkers but conditions at the summit can be treacherous, even in summer – highlighted by the 12 deaths in 2019, followed by 26 deaths in 2022. I took the easier route to climb Helvellyn from Thirlmere. The valley of Thirlmere is known for its sizeable reservoir that serves as a water supply for Manchester. It offers one of the most premier landscapes of Lake District. Perhaps truth depends on a walk around the lake-

Wordsworth ‘wandered lonely as a cloud ‘in the valleys here. His favorite valley was Dunnerdale or the Duddon Valley nestling southwest of the Lake District.

I highly recommend visiting Aria Force, the most famous of Lake District waterfalls. It offers a glimpse of a

“But not even Hitler can damage the fells.”
Beatrix Potter

landscaped Victorian park with dramatic waterfalls, arboretum and rocks scenery. The main force falls 70 feet from below a stone footbridge.



(Photo Credit: Anup Sinha) **Lake cruises** Windermere Lake Cruises offers the popular way to explore the 10.5 miles of Windermere by boat. You can start your journey at Bowness, Ambleside or Lakeside; the spectacular voyage gives the traveller magnificent 3.5 hours round trip views



of mountain scenery, secluded bays and the many wooded islands. You can get off the boat at any of the stops and explore the surroundings.

Stott Park Bobbin Mill I visited the working Stott Park Bobbin Mill that produces a quarter of a million bobbins a week that is vital to the Lancashire spinning and weaving industries. Visitors can see the journey from tree to bobbin first hand during production on the original belt driven machinery.



(Photo credit: Anup Sinha) However, having seen the views from the mountain tops, I felt that the adrenaline filled walks on mountain ranges were a better way to spend my week in the Lake District. There are lots of places you can picnic.

I, then, took
Walk”,
lovely lake of
hours. The

“The fleeting hour of life of those who love the hills is quickly spent, but the hills are eternal. Always there will be the lonely ridge, the dancing beck, the silent forest; always there will be the exhilaration of the summits. **Alfred Wainwright**

the “Wordsworth
walking round the
Rydal Water in 2
walk began at

White Moss House, the only house that Wordsworth ever bought. I could imagine how during these walks he and his sister Dorothy came across endless array of smiling daffodils that inspired him to write the famous poem “I wandered Lonely as a Cloud”(See box)



Ullswater from Gobarrow Park, J.M.W. Turner, water colour, 1819

Wordsworth's poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud", was inspired by the sight of daffodils on the shores of Ullswater. It is one of the most famous in the English language. Wordsworth took a walk along with his sister Dorothy around Glencoyne Bay, Ullswater, in the Lake District. This is what she wrote in her journal.

“When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow park, we saw a few daffodils close to the water side-- – But as we went along there were more, and yet more, and, at last under the boughs of the trees, we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore, about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful they grew among the mossy stones about, and about them, some rested their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness, and the rest tossed and reeled and danced and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the Lake, they looked so gay ever glancing ever changing — Dorothy Wordsworth, The Grasmere Journal Thursday, 15 April 1802 (Ref: [www. tripadvisor.in](http://www.tripadvisor.in))

My
thoughts
on

Wordsworth led me to Coleridge.

Coleridge met poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy in the year 1795. Besides The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Coleridge composed the symbolic poem Kubla Khan, and the first part of the narrative poem Christabel. Both poets together brought out a joint volume of poetry, Lyrical Ballads, which proved to be the starting point for the English romantic age. The poem ‘To nature “is also one of his famous poems (Box below)



Daffodils

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales
and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the
trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the
breeze.*

*Ten thousand saw I at a
glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly
dance.*

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward
eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with
pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*
-Wordsworth (1802)

To Nature

*It may indeed be fantasy when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me
lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower
yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.*

-----*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*
www.poemofquotes.com

After reflecting on these two great poems and the poets who composed them, I continued to explore other interesting tourist spots in the district.

Keswick is located towards the north of Lake District. It is a lively market town with great facilities, nightlife and cafes. Dating from around 3000 BC, it consists of Castlerigg Stone Circle perched moor with spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. The Derwent Pencil Museum demonstrates why Keswick was the world-centre of pencil manufacturing.

No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher. For poetry is the blossom and the fragrance of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language.-[Samuel Taylor Coleridge](#)

Keswick has association with Robert Southey, one of the Lake Poets. "**The Cataract of Lodore**" is a poem composed by him 1820 to describe the Lodore Falls on the Watendlath,



The Cataract of Lodore
*From its sources which well
 In the tarn on the fell;
 From its fountains
 In the mountains,
 Its rills and its gills;
 Through moss and through
 brake,
 It runs and it creeps
 For a while, till it sleeps
 In its own little lake.
 And thence at departing,
 Awakening and starting,
 It runs through the reeds,
 And away it proceeds,
 Through meadow and glade,
 In sun and in shade,
 And through the wood-shelter,
 Among crags in its flurry,
 Helter-skelter,
 Hurry-scurry.
 (allpoetry.com)*

2

*Here it comes sparkling,
 And there it lies darkling;
 Now smoking and frothing
 Its tumult and wrath in,
 Till, in this rapid race
 On which it is bent,
 It reaches the place
 Of its steep descent.*

*The cataract strong
 Then plunges along,
 Striking and raging
 As if a war waging
 Its caverns and rocks among;
 Rising and leaping,
 Sinking and creeping,
 Swelling and sweeping,
 Showering and springing,
 Flying and flinging,
 Writhing and ringing,
 Eddying and whisking,
 Spouting and frisking,
 Turning and twisting,
 Around and around
 With endless rebound: -----
 Robert Southey*

Keswick. The poet has described the Fall in such a way that the reader is made to feel as if watching and experiencing it in person.

From Wikipedia I found that the Lodore Falls are formed from Watendlath Tarn cascading over huge boulders for a distance of some 100 feet. The main drop of the falls is about 28 meters. The falls look spectacular just after heavy rainy period, but they are too dry to a trickle in periods of prolonged dry

weather.

The poet Coleridge also lived in Keswick for a short while.



Greta Hall, Keswick – home of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1800–1804; home to Robert Southey, 1803–1843 (Wikipedia)

“ALL NATURE SEEMS AT WORK. SLUGS LEAVE THEIR LAIR THE BEES ARE STIRRING, BIRDS ARE ON THE WING, AND WINTER SLUMBERING IN THE OPEN AIR, WEARS ON HIS SMILING FACE A DREAM OF SPRING.” — SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Whitehaven Only 5½ miles from the border of the Lake District National Park, Whitehaven coastline stretches from the

18th century harbor of Whitehaven towards the sandstone cliffs of St Bees Head. The site of England's first under-sea coalmine, Whitehaven had the deepest mines in the world by the 1730s.



(Photo credit: Anup Sinha) There is plenty to see and do in the 2,362 square kilometers of Lake District. On the way back, I could not agree more with the words "You may leave the Lake District, but once you've been, it'll never leave you". I will visit the ever-changing romantic landscape and soak in its spectacular scenery, wildlife, history and culture. I will also read and re-read the beautiful poems by Wordsworth, Coleridge and other great poets inspired by its pristine beauty. Ref: en.wikipedia.org; www.britannica.com; www.lakedistricts.co.uk; poemanalysis.com; www.bbc.co.uk; www.poemofquotes.com; allpoetry.com

FOOD & DIET: **FOOD POETRY**



Still Life with Ham, Lobster, and Fruit by Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

The sight, fragrance, colours and taste of food, meat, fruits and vegetables are so attractive and evocative in that they often inspire poets to write poetry. Many a great and no- so- great poets have written poems about cooking, eating, sharing, their favourite food and food memories. Here we note some of the interesting poems relating to food, selected from the net.

1. **Goblin Market**

--- by Christina Rossetti

"Yet the wee ponds that compose the Lake District would disappear into Lake land like a twist of lemon in a cup of Earl Grey."



Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830 – 291894) was an English writer of romantic, devotional and children's poems, including "Goblin Market" and "Remember". Here are a few lines from her famous poem "Goblin Market".



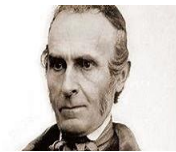
(Credit: tiquet.com)

*Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
'Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpeck'd cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheek'd peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries; —
All ripe together In summer weather ...*

(interestingliterature.com)

2. "The Pumpkin"

-----by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 –1892)



Whittier was an American Quaker poet and advocate of the abolition of slavery in the United States. Here are a few lines from his 19th century poem 'The pumpkin'.



*"Then thanks for thy present! none sweeter or better
E'er smoked from an oven or circled a platter!
Fairer hands never wrought at a pastry more fine,
Brighter eyes never watched o'er its baking, than thine!"* (Ref: www.poetrysoup.com)

3. "Ode To Onion"

*"When I think how far the onion has traveled
just to enter my stew today,
I could kneel and praise all small forgotten miracles-*

-----by Pablo Neruda



Pablo Neruda (1904 – 1973), was a Chilean poet-diplomat and politician who won the 1971 Nobel Prize in Literature. A few lines from his poem “Ode to Onion” are given below: -



"Onion,

luminous flask,

your beauty formed

petal by petal--(Ref: www.poetrysoup.com)

4. 'Cooking Poem: How I Shall Dine'

--- by Jonathan Swift



This rare poem on cooking mutton by Jonathan Swift, (1667 – 1745), the famous satirist, author, essayist and poet.



(Credit: Stock Photos)

*Gently blow and stir the fire,
Lay the mutton down to roast,
Dress it nicely I desire,
In the dripping put a toast,
That I hunger may remove:*

Mutton is the meat I love. (Ref: interestinglilerature.com)

5. "Fame is a Fickle Food"

-----by Emily Dickinson



"Fame is a fickle food

Upon a shifting plate

a

The second time is set." (Ref:

6. Maya Angelou (1928-

the best-

*"Coolness of the melons
flecked with mud
in the morning dew-"Matsuo Basho*

*Whose table once
Guest but not
www.poetrysoup.com)*

2014) one of
known poets of

*"Food is not rational. Food is culture,
habit, craving, and identity." – Jonathan*



America, has also published several books of recipes, beginning with *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table* (2004). In this poem 'The Health-Food Diner', Angelou lists the nutritious vegetables the diner offers, but says that what she really needs is a steak. Others may follow the healthy diet: but the poet is an incorrigible carnivore.

THE HEALTH-FOOD DINER

**NO SPROUTED WHEAT AND
SOYA SHOOTS
AND BRUSSELS IN A CAKE,
CARROT STRAW AND SPINACH
RAW,
(TODAY, I NEED A STEAK).**

**NOT THICK BROWN RICE AND
RICE PILAW
OR MUSHROOMS CREAMED ON
TOAST,
TURNIPS MASHED AND
PARSNIPS HASHED,
(I'M DREAMING OF A ROAST).**

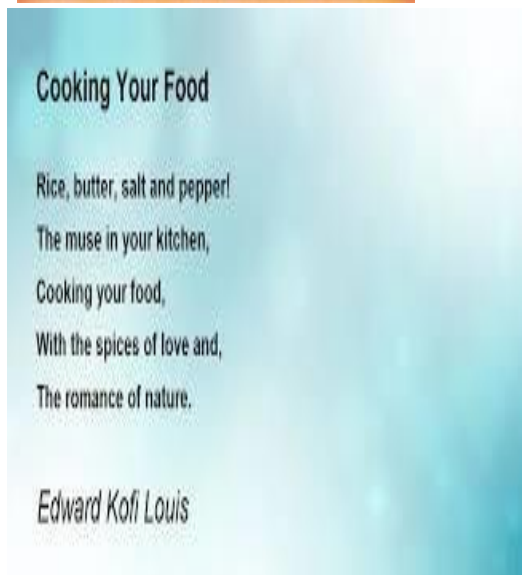
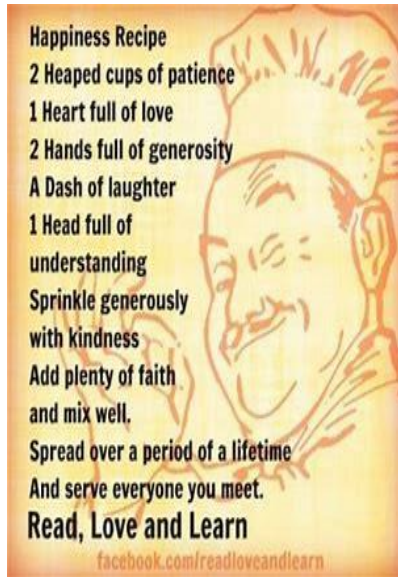
**HEALTH-FOOD FOLKS AROUND
THE WORLD
ARE THINNED BY ANXIOUS ZEAL,
THEY LOOK FOR HELP IN
SEAFOOD KELP
(I COUNT ON BREADED VEAL).**

**NO SMOKING SIGNS, RAW
MUSTARD GREENS,
ZUCCHINI BY THE TON,
UNCOOKED KALE AND BODIES
FRAIL**

Are sure to make me run

(interestinliterature.com)

Here are three funny poems.



Italian Food

-Shel Silverstein



*Oh, how I love Italian food,
I eat it all the time,
Not just 'cause how good it tastes
But 'cause how good it rhymes.
Minestrone, cannelloni,
Marconi, rigatoni,
Spaghettoni, Scallopini,
Escarole, braciole.
Insalata, cremolata, manicotti,
Marinara, Carbonara,
Shrimp francese, Bolognese,
Ravioli, mostaccioli,
Mozzarella, tagliatelle,
Fried zucchini, rollatini,
Fettuccine, green linguine,
Tortrellini, Tetrazzini,
Oops----I think I split my jeani.
(www.TheSilverPen.com)*

Ref: en.wikipedia.org; poemssearcher.com; interestinliterature.com; www.poetrysoup.com;

To me, good food is the sole reason we are on this Earth." – Esi Edugyan

POETRY AND THE UNIVERSE



The early cosmos Credit: NASA

What does the night sky hold for a poet?

Throughout the ages poets were beholden by the magic and beauty of the night skies. The poems noted below tell us how the poets were profoundly affected and captivated by the vastness of the universe, the night sky illuminating the planets and the stars.

The Light of Stars

----- ***Henry Wadsworth Longfellow***

***The night is come, but not too soon;
And sinking silently,
All silently, the little moon
Drops down behind the sky.***

***There is no light in earth or heaven
But the cold light of stars;
And earnest thoughts within me rise,
When I behold afar,
Suspended in the evening skies,
The shield of that red star.***

By describing the “cold night” of the stars Longfellow prompts us to imagine the dark and vast nothingness of space, broken up only by stars in the distance.

Longfellow had initially composed this poem in the summer of 1838. However, it was finally published in Longfellow’s poetical works in 1891, posthumously.

2. I Saw No Way

-----Emily Dickinson

***I saw no Way—The Heavens were stitched—
I felt the
The Earth***

***I touched
And back it
A Speck***

“Through our eyes, the universe is perceiving itself. Through our ears, the universe is listening to its harmonies. We are the witnesses through which the universe becomes conscious of its glory, of its magnificence” — **Alan Wilson Watts**

***Columns close—
reversed her
Hemispheres—
the Universe—
slid—and I alone—
upon a Ball—***

*Went out upon Circumference—
Beyond the Dip of Bell—*

In this poem she points out the insignificance of both Earth and the human being, compared to the vastness of the Universe.

3. Bright Star

----by John Keats

*Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,*

-----This is a sonnet composed by one of the great romantic poets between 1818 and 1819. Here, the poet talks about 'a permanent and consistent love and compares it with the permanence and endurance of the north star'.

A Night Piece

-----by William Wordsworth

*The sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon, Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,
A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,*

*At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while he treads*

*His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder, —and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.*

*There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,*

*At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.*

This poem is introspective and observational. The poet, is walking underneath a clouded sky in contemplation closely observing the heavens.

Here is what Tennyson has to say about the Universe: -

God and the Universe

I.

Will my tiny
vanish in your

spark of being wholly
deeps and heights?

“The Universe is under no obligation to make sense to you.” — Neil deGrasse Tyson

Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens, of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery clash of meteorites?

II.

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state,
Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent Opener of the Gate.'

Today instead of poets sharing their vision, it is man- made instruments like James Webb Telescope that transmit to us, not only from a distance but from close quarters, rare pictures of blackholes and stars.

Ref: en.wikipedia.org: www.learnncram.com; allpoetry.com; poemanalysis.com; internetPoem.com/ americanliterature.com

LIFE SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Service in Trusteeship

ABOUT US

The Life Science Foundation is a Not- for- Profit Public Charitable Trust registered on 30th December, 2009. It is a unique initiative by two officers belonging to the Indian Administrative Service (Bihar cadre) namely S. Jalaja and A.N.P. Sinha (IAS-1974) who have retired as Secretaries to Government of India. Their long experience with Governments at the National and State levels have instilled in them the will to continue to serve people, although from a different platform. Service through the medium of a public charitable Trust is in keeping with the Gandhi's ideal of Trusteeship.

OUR VISION

The term Life science encompasses all aspects of life from Right to life- an inalienable right of every human being- to the interconnectedness of the entire web of life. Our vision, therefore, is to promote holistic understanding of life and its purpose, and improvement of quality of life of all.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to improve quality of life through policy formulation, applied research and real-life action. The Gandhian ideals of Sarvodaya and Trusteeship will be the guiding spirit.

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To accomplish the above vision and mission, the Foundation will initially have the following aims and objectives. In course of time, more could be included:

1. To promote strategic thinking and suggest policy interventions on holistic and sustainable development.
2. To promote holistic health care system based on simple living, preventive healthcare, and both modern and traditional health systems.
3. To undertake studies, research and action-oriented projects pertaining to holistic life
4. To undertake pilot projects of good governance including e-governance and eventually support the governments in adopting and up scaling successful pilots.
5. To work towards promoting quality of life of vulnerable sections of population, including women

The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the
beat of the universe, to match your nature with
Nature — Joseph Campbell

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***LIFE STREAM** is a quarterly magazine on holistic life published by a group of people who are committed to spreading the message of living in harmony with nature.*

