

**MY MEXICAN MUSE**

**Francis Murillo Emralino**  
San Pablo City, Philippines.

Green lights trace the catwalk as the Mexican muse travel with a mask  
surrounded by catchy phrases flavored with sadness, topped with short delights.

She opens up through the microphone: *Viva! como esta?*  
And her metered words fell on deaf ears and on the love-struck alike.

Behind this magnificent muse is a line-up of men of words  
whose pieces were brought to existence by her sweet and seductive whispers.

The finished pieces were compiled, all dedicated to her, annotated  
and stamped with her first photo taken on a train to Beirut.

As for me, I first saw her in a magazine while waiting on a train station in Seoul  
and I went to Macau to pray, closed my eyes, and knew right then and there  
that I should write to her, see her, woo her, marry her.

And so on this pre-pageant night, I seat on the front rows  
pen and paper on hand, waiting for the muse's dictations to come.

## The Empire has fallen whither its Clones?

Sandra Colly-Durand

The Empire has fallen but its myths we continue to own  
Values of an era bygone continue to dethrone  
The Empire has receded but her values still reign  
They echo and resonate in the brain

The invisible wounds of self hate still dominate  
Man Friday's Language we negate  
Our tongues are still in the death hold grips of Crusoe and Kipling  
Our visions of our cultures, limiting, crippling

We continue to adulate this bloody heritage, in the name of globalization  
In the name of integration, in the name of the father and the son  
Stop. Don't look in the mirror with veiled eyes; don't bridle your songs,  
Start. Chant your long forgotten verses and chime those bygone gongs

The Empire has fallen, wither its clones?  
Engaged propping up the throne in our zones  
Busy denying the pulsating percussions, the raucous rattles  
Occupied with fighting culture and language battles

## In the Crowd

Basudhara Roy

A crowd is faceless, they say,  
Anonymous,  
Homogeneous,  
Like waters breaking from a dam  
Or from the womb.

It tosses and turns and moves  
Like a mass of curls  
From everywhere to everywhere,  
And I, a random point in its unmapped space  
Pull out from it  
Strands of several half-remembered pasts.

A cyclist in a hurry rides by  
With the scowl of my long dead father  
When he missed his morning daily  
And suspected my mother of having  
Absentmindedly wrapped chappatis in it.

My fifth form maths teacher,  
Pillion riding on a decrepit scooter  
Peers at me from behind a steel-scraped helmet.  
Same eyes, same hair, same taut skin  
And but for the gulf of the nearly twenty years  
Stretching out between the then and now  
And the knowledge of the havoc that time had wrought  
I would have believed the present to be perfect.

The bangle-seller musically calls out his wares.  
The one from the village fair  
In Midnapore who brought the best glass bangles  
Every year? But this is Delhi, I strictly remind myself,  
And nearly twelve years thence.

Life whirls around with its disparate days, dubious years  
And all of a sudden swoops in, in a crowd  
Sudden rememberances, springing surprises, flash-as-lightning recognitions  
The grids of the past collapse and memories roll heavily into one another  
Like waters breaking from a dam  
Or from the womb.

## An Indian Summer

Maitreyee B Chowdhury

I slept on a bed of Jasmine last night  
Cuddled and enfolded in the Cotton of your love,  
Crushed at times and in creases-  
Bereft of the gentleness of rain

From some far off corner..of a night yet young  
Sang a cuckoo,  
In a tongue unknown  
Far into the heady fragrance  
Of an Indian summer delight.

## You and I

Mamta Madhavan

You  
in your space  
I  
on my ground  
our loneliness  
swirling through the darkness  
and leaping out  
as  
we try to defy  
the distance  
separating us

## One night stand

Tarun Agarwal

Let me smile today,  
for tomorrow I may weep.  
Let me an inch of hope,  
I will erect tall dreams.

To gift me a hope you will have to lie,  
please lie so that I may laugh,  
let dreams make me dizzy,  
tell me my beloved will arrive.

Tomorrow, the dreams will crash  
and belied hopes cause agony,  
but the memory of today will console me  
that my life is not all tragedy,  
I too had a night's stand with laughter and joy.

Kristin Kobayashi  
Mother Nature's Concert  
I prefer a storm  
over a symphony.

The clasping of lightning  
is a lot brighter  
than any collision  
of two cymbals.

The tremolo of thunder  
overpowers any beating  
on a tympani as it calls  
to the gander.

The vibrato from a bullfrog  
is rather rounder  
than any glissando  
from a viola.

The fluttering of a dragonfly  
as it skirts the rain  
outshines any crescendo  
sung by a cello.

The pluming of a mallard  
as it bathes in puddles  
mocks any pizzicato  
picked on a violin.

But watch out for the gander  
its blats bite stronger  
than any trumpet  
as it calls to the thunder.

I prefer a trumpet  
over a gander.

**Waking Murmurs****Gopika Nath**

Birds chirping, pigeons cooing and  
colliding with window panes; sharp  
rasping barks, the incessant chatter  
of guards and cleaners wafting  
upwards, disabling that first soft hour  
as the alarm sings me awake.

Ignoring this odd symphony, I loll.  
But cars honk as they tread the tarmac.  
Doorbells chime. A baby cries.  
Its mother yells at the maid  
and that rare moment is lost  
when I wanted to snuggle the curves,  
caressing the idea I slept with last night.

**SAILOR MOON****RJ Kalpana Ph.D**  
India

Its nights like these  
When sleep won't come  
Or drifts like castaway clouds  
Beached on heat sprawled on silk  
I dream of bonfire nights  
When a sailor hangs a moon  
A dangling lamp traps wary faces  
Here where stars won't shine  
No answering echoes, I make do with  
A fist of birthday candles

**HOPES! HOPES! HOPES!****Dr.S.Parvathi Devi**

Hopes! Hopes! Hopes!  
That leads the life!  
Life of her is an eternal journey of intense hopes,  
Aiming high, reaching high,  
She is a dreamer.  
Lot of struggle at every stage of her to grow!  
Never does she dispirit

Never does she stop her efforts  
Achieves a lot in her dreams  
Before achieving in real life.  
She is a dreamer,  
She envisages everything.  
In her world of dreams of extreme happiness!  
She is a visionary!  
Nothing is impossible to her ambitious heart  
Such is her will power  
Such an impeccable character she has developed,  
Persistence, patience, smartness  
And above all this,  
Hopes, hopes, hopes!  
Hope for success.  
An indomitable personality,  
After every achievement,  
She is a soul of inspiration to her own self and of course, to others  
Gone are the days  
She looks back, she wonders for  
She crosses a great many milestones!  
Every time setting new goals and achieving those  
Becomes the modus operandi of her.  
Hopes! Hopes! Hopes!  
That leads her life.