

Foreword

Welcome to this edition of *ESBB's* Creative Pages, in which we feature the poetry of writers and scholars from around the world. A special thank you to Seema Jain for bringing together the exceptional talents of Jaishree Shanker, Meenaskshi Mohan, Mohini Sharda, Roohi Kapur, Sarita Sharma, and Satinder Kaur, all of whom are established Indian women writers and from whose words readers will find rich cultural exposition. For example, take Meenaskshi Mohan's "Maya," which feels outside of time -- or at the eschatological edge of it -- in a place of abandonment and disrepair, far from a glorious past, where now "No silver moon illuminates its dark corridors" while a haunting flute "ripples through the ruined walls." Additionally, Sarita Sharma's two poems, "era..." and "a married life..." leave their mark with sharp-bladed intimacy: "you don't have to like it all / says sister in law / i look at my brother and see him differently / something sour gags me," the speaker says, while later counting her blessings: "at least i do not get beaten / like mrs mishra next door / or have to bear with a mistress / like mrs kanan."

We welcome Roger Nunn to the creative ranks with his nostalgic, fairytale-esque "Bridge of Hesitation." Nunn's melodic and magical stanzas are linked to a media recording set to music, so be sure to click on the link on p. 182. *ESBB* continues to blend multimedia to support and diversify our creative efforts, and more can be found with Wenjie Shi's poem, "A Walk-up to West Hilltop for Sunrise," in which from a mountain summit on the outskirts of Beijing, he evocatively photographs the moment rosy-fingered dawn fires across the horizon.

American poet and scholar Pat Bizzaro's powerful suite of three poems relate the experiences of his Italian immigrant parents, both of whom are celebrated for their perseverance and love. Bizzaro's words remain in the reader's heart afterwards, powered by how he translates those moments in a similar spirit of "delivering an experience as close as possible to that of ... of the original" (from Guyer & Woods' 1998 translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.73). The depth and scope of Bizzaro's contribution cannot be captured in the few lines of this foreword, so I instead encourage you to make time for the contours and connotations which have found a good home here with us, many of whom will relate to the themes of surviving each day surrounded by a language into which they were not born.

Speaking of translation, Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay brings us a bit of the best in Bangla poetry-in-translation with next-level mysticism, figurative polemics and onion-skinned layers of meaning: "The piano's ribs wring a finger's melody / When did your hate's voice mix in my blood?" asks the speaker in "The Seven Turns Around a Marriage Fire" from Tarun Mukhopadhyay. "I placed 108 lotuses in your palm, yet you weren't a goddess / How much more poison should I drink to be like blue throated Shiva?" In contrast, John Unger's suite of 3 poems feature a characteristic visceral directness, keeping in his tradition of presenting the less-redeemable dark parts of the human condition. Finally, John W. Gilbert returns with his poem, "Bull." Readers may remember Gilbert from his short story, "Lightning Camp" in *ESBB* 7(2). In closing, this particular edition captures an eclectic mix of established and emerging talents from within the *ESBB* membership and without. An appreciative thank you goes out to all the contributors herein, and to the readers who take the time to share their words.