

WHEN POETS PASS

In memory of my father, the late poet Nissim Ezekiel

By Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca

When poets pass beyond the world of poetry
To that other world of greater beauty
Where lines will be written on stars
Sent shooting in shafts of light to earth,
Flags must fly half-mast, heads must bow.

My poet father gone too early, I heard of in a phone call
The old typewriter mourned in silence
The purple ribbon faded and sad,
He gave me life, seeds to plant my garden
My blood, the colors of his Poetry.

The poet lives in veins and arteries of my body
Posterity will be a silent witness to both
Breathing life through odes and postcards, lines in his hand.
I was not there to throw the mud
On his lowered grave, my poet,
The reluctant earth gave back the words
I would have choked to speak then
Now, in this eulogy.

Meanwhile we continue to mourn and weep
The poet's journey has been long and steep
Night turned to day and day to night
Writing to redeem the world's plight,
His road continues beyond the grave
Gifting words and precious memories to save

He labours at his desk while the moon is out
When I am left to dream and doubt
The mysteries of life and death
Feeling his absence with every breath.

A CANADIAN FALL

If you listen carefully,
You will hear
Summer giving permission
To the sun-drenched trees
To turn their leaves from green
To shades of orange and yellow.
“Do it slowly,” summer says,
“I’m having trouble letting go”.

The wasps are tired
They’re crawling on the sidewalks,
I’m afraid they’ll bite my feet
I skip around them on my evening walk,
And I wonder about the butterflies.
I heard they may be tucked into the logs
In my backyard, preparing for winter.
I listen for the soft flutter of wings
Pressing my ear to the wood.
The large anthill, once teeming with ants
Is a silent solid red rock.

Stand quietly when you shelter
Under the trees from the sun
They will drop their secrets.

The hawks are saying their shrill goodbyes
Going back to Argentina, from where they came,
The skies will miss their circling.

I pull out the sweaters, the warm boots, the umbrellas
They don't smell of mothballs
Still they remind me of home,
I smell only the Jasmine flowers
In my grandmother's hair garland.

My consolation is the spreading red blush
On the apples on the apple tree
In my back yard.
Still, I mourn the passing of summer.

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Brief Bio of Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca

Kavita Ezekiel Mendonca was born and raised in a Jewish family in Mumbai. She was educated at the Queen Mary School, Mumbai, received her BA in English and French, and an MA from the University of Bombay in English and American Literature, and a Master's in Education from Oxford Brookes University, England. In a teaching career spanning over four decades, she taught English, French and Spanish in various colleges and schools in India and overseas. Her first book, *Family Sunday and Other Poems*, was published in 1989, with a second edition in 1990. She has read her poems for the All India Radio in Mumbai, and her poem 'Family Sunday' was featured in an Anthology of Women's Writing. Her poems have also appeared in *Destiny Poets*, U.K, *Poetry India*, *SETU*, *Café Dissensus*, among others. She writes Poetry and Short Fiction. Kavita is the daughter of the late poet, Nissim Ezekiel. She manages her Poetry page at <https://www.facebook.com/kemendoncapoetry/>