

**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/>