

Poetry Series

**Leonard Dabydeen**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2018

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Leonard Dabydeen()

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Poetry manuscripts submitted in Poetry Contests in Canada & U.S.A.

## &quot;When They Go Low, We Go High.&quot;

&quot;When they go low, we go high&quot;

A magnificent, articulate cry  
Beyond cauldrons of indignity  
So magnifying in chicanery  
Blindfolding a nation in apathy  
We must never be daunted  
But look them as so haunted  
To stampede our dreams  
Using every lie as their means  
They cannot hack our mind  
As they struggle to repeal us blind  
So here and now in felicity I say  
Be the change you wish for today.

Leonard Dabydeen

## (1909-1965

Not in any paradigm without shadows  
Nor moon-gazing just looking at blue skies  
He lets music in his mind echo  
Like a flute through his writing bones  
Always hearing the Corentyne Thunder  
Even if it means a Morning at the Office  
His pen did not abandon him  
He could not leave the pen alone.

Leonard Dabydeen

## 9/11 (Anders)

Between passage of time

and reality sublime

you sit with a mark

that unfolds history,

where requiem

is carved in masonry

and wreaths

embrace steel

honoring lives

time and time again;

but low and behold

you lift a hand

to cheer your lot

fraught with many

a gleeful bunch,

gifting you

forever joyful

with love and happiness

in a clarion call

not to worry:

it's your Birthday! !

Leonard Dabydeen

# A Common Cold

How  
effortless  
it seems sometimes  
to make battle  
or wage a war  
with a common cold  
all this tirade  
so eager  
not to be a tyrant  
and so eager  
to stuff tissues  
in my gaping nostrils  
hopelessly trying  
to clog  
each ruction tunnel  
I say  
lemon juice  
and sea salt  
are best to stir  
a citrus opiate.

Leonard Dabydeen

# A Crow's Heart

Shadows move among them,  
amorphous like the wind  
whispering in tranquility,  
and twittering in unison  
a harmonious cry  
among the dead and the dying.  
Unmindful of the waxing and waning  
of the moon  
their carrion minds  
dance effortlessly on a barbed fence  
sepulchral vigilantes watching closed eyes  
never to see the light of day again:  
a crow's heart only knows  
recluse of dark places.

Leonard Dabydeen

# A Crow's Watch

In the meantime  
I'll sit here  
and I'll pray  
it is the patience  
imbued upon my life  
as a crow  
when evening light  
takes a bow  
and night spreads silent wings  
in comfort  
of your impending demise  
I'll stay awake  
just to see your closed eyes  
before I partake  
of a sumptuous meal  
in your dark world.

Leonard Dabydeen

# A Cruise Ship

When a cruise ship  
is about to lose  
its broken sail  
and linesmen  
become tired and weary  
and its capt'n  
looks at the deep blue sea  
with cataract eyes  
with sailors awaiting his call  
there will be a moment's cry  
like gurgling water  
rushing down main outlet  
into a sewer  
into an acoustic tunnel  
coursing along  
where scavenging mice  
feast on putrid licorice  
and this cry  
will echo without tears  
far out in turbulent waves  
'cause the ship's capt'n  
loses his direction  
just like he's about  
to lose his ship.

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# A Gifted World

Opening my window  
beauty catches my eyes  
in a gifted world...

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# A Kite Watch

Must  
watch  
my kite  
a kite watch  
it dances like a fool  
or is it me...fool as I am?

I ball the string to bring her home  
ground zero launch pad  
take me home  
enough  
wind  
play!

Leonard Dabydeen

# A Life Without Music

If  
I cannot listen  
to the sound of music,  
guitar playing  
steel pan beating  
sweet echo  
of a melodious voice -  
reggae or rock  
calypso bacchanal,  
as I watch  
the Atlantic rushing  
to wet my feet,  
let my coconut water  
and rum  
dance like the waves,  
then I'd rather  
turn the light out  
from the blue skies  
because I have no life to live;  
deep in my heart  
a life without music  
is a life without love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# A Little Too Late

I  
did not  
get to see  
my father in  
the Tower in the hub of my country.

They took him away before my mother  
heard me crying  
in a crib  
next to  
her.

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# A Long Ride

Horse for a long ride -  
getting my saddle ready,  
\*Corentyne road side.

\*Corentyne - Guyana,

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# A Mid-Summer Night's Play

Headlamp beams  
on fallen log  
and a dot of glowing green  
beams back  
as a fishing spider  
nods to the headlamp  
with star-mangled eyes  
in glaring delight.

Inside the crater of a dead log  
there is a scratching song of Katydid  
a nocturnal foray  
in blossoming darkness  
with oak and hickory and tulip trees  
in soldier-stance salutation.

Bugs luminescent in ecstasy  
innocent in a mating furor  
and ritualistic by default  
inside the crater  
of a dead log  
exuding spasms of life  
with sexual appetite.

Watch termites dance□  
termites chatter  
their conversation  
is musical melodrama  
in a lavender glow  
of black light.

On the other side  
of the dead log  
longhorn beetles urinate  
while camel cricket  
flutter in a sugary bait.  
there is no end  
only continuation  
of this mid-Summer night's play.

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# A Migrant's Path

this journey of hope  
where darkness  
is full of dreams  
and light brings joy  
like a new born child  
theirs are silent voices  
speaking without tongues  
networking  
with shrieks of emotions  
how they trek this journey  
listening to harsh footsteps  
speaking to naked brushes  
crisp as sunlight  
tumble weed  
and blunted stones  
one group craving thirst  
wrestling faith  
one migrant  
facing undaunted death  
yet daring to die  
where there is no rhyme  
or rhythm  
for survival.  
uncaring of slurs  
or shameful taunts  
do not call them dogs  
nor monkeys  
their calves are not cantaloupes  
for your putrid tongue  
relentless is their journey  
hope is their beaming star  
their every footprint  
is like light  
that brings joy  
to a newborn child.

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# A New Dawn

I watch the glowing sunlight  
in the horizon  
the night before is sleeping.

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# A Ploy Of Time

No one  
heard the turmoil  
in my sleep  
nor the rattling sound  
barricading my dreams  
inside  
my stuttering mind-  
silence  
must be deafening indeed.

I bruised my brown eyes  
as I furrowed my forehead  
and dusted attachments  
from the barnyard  
clinging to my  
wrinkled attire –  
eyes so guilty  
from atonement.

The air was nostalgic  
like innocence of relief  
after cattle mooed  
at my disorientation-  
fresh air sifted  
through a window  
where I caught  
a glimpse of daylight.

I woke up  
with a sigh of  
sprinkled bewilderment-  
looking at the wound  
that never let go  
like a ploy of Time.

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# A Winter Day

Waking with a squint  
the kitchen chandelier glowing  
in silence and looking at me.

I scrub my stubbed face  
bare hands clearing cobwebs  
my sofa-bed breathing sigh of relief.

I reach for pull-strings of latticed blinds  
free LED lamps by the touch of a switch  
let nature's candescent glow wash my face.

There is falling snow from light-grey skies  
flurries soft as dancing cotton balls in the wind  
snow-flakes catch the eyes to see a winter day.

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# A Woman's Story

A woman's story  
is not  
what she sees in the mirror  
that is so cosmetic  
so intrusive  
so inconclusive  
yet she pools her plots  
like tidal waves  
rushing to shore  
let the ocean of her being  
saturate her wholeness  
in search of the unknown  
deep within lies her story  
pulsating in every heartbeat  
untold to the naked ear  
she only knows  
beginning and end.

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# Acrobatic Action

Dog raises hind leg  
acrobatic in action  
he takes a quick piss.

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# Addicted

This cool morning breeze

keeps my heart beating with joy:

I smell your perfume.

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# Adelphi Dream

One one dutty  
a build dam  
punt trench wattah  
a run go ah koka  
and alligata ah hide  
between muck-mucka  
waiting fuh catch yuh  
while carrion crow  
ah sit pon barb-wyah fence  
watching fuh see  
who guh dead  
gyal a wash claat  
pon de ghat  
and all ahwee  
a listen  
how donkey a bray  
while cane cuttah  
ah come home  
wid he cutlass in he han  
wrap up in ah bag  
and I wake up seeing  
everyting, everyting  
wid me naked eye.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Age

Age,  
you old much-ado-about -something  
now you come to take stock  
of my tattered clothes  
and hobbled knees  
and my thinning gray hair  
and my frail bone-in body  
why is it that you think  
my memory is short of breath  
as if I suffer loss of time  
here in this neck of the woods  
if I were to tell you  
that I've been there  
and done that too  
perhaps you'll shower me  
with acquiescence wider  
than the smile of a chimp  
or regurgitate in laughter  
louder than the echo of a hyena  
or perhaps make your hands akimbo  
to support your equine jaw  
only to consider  
that your time will come  
like ocean waves washing  
towards the shore  
and leaving a crustacean memory  
for those who are yet to come.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Aleppo Dying

Aleppo dying -  
bodies lying everywhere  
a massive graveyard.

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# All An Act

This platform I stand on  
is my playground  
my world stage  
in the game of life I play  
you can come to me  
like a bandit in the night  
and try to steal what I have  
or what I am  
or like an angel  
full of charm  
chaste in gilded armor  
with candle-light burning  
in the palm of your hands  
and with sanctity  
wrapped in prayer  
it will still be my choice  
when I tip-toe on the stage  
and hear the cheering  
from the illusive audience  
and every dance  
I perform for you  
will be free from antics  
of desire visual  
through the thin fabric  
of my scented underclothes  
and when I touch you  
to stir the metallic  
gender in your heated mind  
it will be sweet and swift  
until the moment expires  
and the encore  
fades in the wind  
and I return to the stage  
knowing deep inside  
it's all an act.

Leonard Dabydeen

# All Because Of You

(for Sri) @ Pf

Indeed, my smile  
is wider than the oceans  
spanning Canada to India.  
and now...  
I'll open my library door  
and let the waft of air  
fill my room  
with aroma  
of hot dal and paratha  
and scented agarbatti  
my God! ! so much ecstasy!  
and so happy to hear  
a koel chime  
like the bell on my altar  
all because of you

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# Always From The East

Now the British comes to shore  
wet and tired from colonial gatherings  
he sits on the bench  
in the park smoking a cigar  
and watching ducks  
play in a pool  
falling asleep as the centuries  
drift in a dream  
wakes up looking at the carpet  
being rolled out curry-stained  
on the ruffled edges  
in a corner Mahatma Gandhi  
is eating dal and roti  
and looking at the children  
marking pages of the British constitution  
they too eating  
tandori naan and drinking chai  
listening with intent  
musical hummings of Rabindranath Tagore  
and reading Gitanjali  
as a new beginning  
of the sun comes rising again  
always from the East.

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# Always On My Mind

Always on my mind -  
bird-songs in the pink of spring:  
joy to birds singing.

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# Always The First (Tetractys)

Rain  
falling  
makes me laugh  
to watch you hide  
why is man so much fearful of nature?

He is the best of the best to endure  
always the first  
to decide  
what is  
right.

Leonard Dabydeen

# An Eclipse Of My Mind

As always  
my mind floated across  
the equator of dreams  
bright as naked moonlight  
sprinkling starry spots  
of luminescence  
glowing in things moving

or pretending mobility  
or things unmindful  
to be intimate with silence  
a conjugal rhapsody  
in the constant of death  
and then  
on this estranged night  
I let an uncanny dream  
take amorphous shape  
like a cluster of clouds  
to overcome my ambience  
and obscure my mind  
overshadowing me  
like a browser  
and forming  
an eclipse of my mind  
that will last in one phase  
of memory.

Leonard Dabydeen

# An Uninvited Guest

AN UNINVITED GUEST

Let me visit you today

let me be an uninvited guest

for I do not know

what fortitude or good luck

will knock at my door tomorrow

our destiny is guided

by the dreams we pursue

and we must be prepared

for what tomorrow brings

with or without an invitation

even if you don't know me

let me be an uninvited guest

I am here to wish you farewell

even though I know this is not

your final resting place

Forest Lawn Mausoleum

will keep us remembering

your footprints in the journey

of your mysterious, yet illustrious life

let me be an uninvited guest  
so that I can watch over you  
like the invitees here today  
let me be your leonardo da vinci  
and participate  
in the last supper  
of your Michelangelo  
let me be an uninvited guest  
holding your torch  
with flickering flames  
of pop music  
I am waiting to see  
if Sammy Davis Jr.  
or Nat King Cole  
will find your presence  
a thriller  
when you do the moon-walk  
not knowing  
if you are black or white  
or an uninvited guest.



## And Then She Was Gone - Part Iii

I stood there  
under the tamarind tree  
listening to the rain  
and the hooting of owls  
and realized she was  
looking at me  
with folded arms  
while she leaned on the tombstone.

I wanted to go to her  
but somehow my feet were wet  
and wedged in the veined roots  
of the tamarind tree.  
But I did not take my eyes  
away from her  
thinking how cold  
she was in the rain.

Then I heard the owl  
hooting louder than before  
beckoning me to rescue her.  
She did not move  
a blade of her trestles  
as I approached her  
with my black overall  
ready to make her warm  
as the moonlight  
chased the shadows  
in the graveyard.

I reached the cross  
she was leaning on  
but she was no longer there  
only her laughter  
filled the air  
leaving me to wonder  
who was she.

Leonard Dabydeen

## And Then...

and then it came into view

as if it had roots

among the stones and boulders

slithering in silent meandering

towards my broken path

and then slowly in awe

I laid my clayed goblet

of water dipped from the Ganges

on the bedrock

where my naked feet held firm

as if they, too, wanted to make root

and then the cobra lifted its head

with tongue darting

and eyes riveting

as if transmitting a message

into my frightful brain

its shimmering body exuding

majestic power at the edge

of the fissure divide

and then as if the heavens

made friends with the enigmatic quake

a twister with stormy wind

dusted the fissure

like a mirage

and then as the dust

settled in my mind

the cobra slowly

moved down the opening

only to rise again

wrapped in sanctity

around the neck of Lord Shiva

and then I clasped my hands

in solemn prayer

celebrating Maha Shivaratri

unscathed by evil in my destiny.



# April Fool

You do not dare fool me  
with your eyes in the half-white clouds  
with stars coquetting moon  
I know the feeling of cold wind  
whispering among naked trees  
I, too, have seen the Komagata Maru  
coming in the Vancouver harbour  
white men walking and talking  
where the harbour front has no turban  
and British Columbia does not make pujas  
but I learn never to be blind  
and that if I speak their language  
British will question their English  
so I sit on the crooked planks on the wharf  
patiently hum bhajans  
soon to see Gurdeep Singh arriving  
in time to make Maple Leaf our flag  
oceans may be deep, but colourful  
you do not dare fool me  
not even on this April morn.

Leonard Dabydeen

# April's Fool

begin to enjoy  
this feel of warm wetness  
on the sandy beach,  
listening to the rush of water  
bathing the shore  
and watching the seined fisher  
casting his netted hopes in the sea.

here, too, I begin to gather feelings  
like the fisherman over there  
and I think of you standing in water  
waving invisible hands of greeting.

I remember how yesterday  
you considered me smart  
to water the ground  
you planted my seed on;  
I still feel the wetness.  
now I live at home  
with every morning looking the same;  
even today is the same  
in your hurried absence,  
as if distance is a measure of freedom:  
nothing but this April's fool.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Arrival

Splash of water  
plummeting  
in the roaring wind,  
angry waves wandering  
in the crevices  
of salted wounds  
as the Hesperus  
heave and sigh  
in the Atlantic adventure;  
frail hands  
shiver in fright,  
mingling uncertainty  
for an arrival  
without time:  
indentureship  
is a journey  
feasting angrily  
inside the heart.

Leonard Dabydeen

# As I Hold You (Tetractys)

Fresh  
fragrance  
of deep trust  
comes to my mind  
as I hold you and walk along this path.

This is the route you came to visit me  
when I forgot  
to call you  
at your  
home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# As I Plant A Bouquet

"But can I feel the  
salt in her tears  
stinging my skin  
I wonder aloud..."  
sridevi data (2010/08/22)

And as I let my fins  
brush the water's edge  
my mermaid's mind  
begins a tune  
with shimmering ripples  
of the sea  
making sweet sound like a sitar  
as I watch the glowing  
sea anemones winding waywardly  
around the bed-rock where I sit  
waiting for the choir  
of blue dolphins  
in the heart of the sea  
only to echo in this moment  
the rhyme and rhythm  
of my handsome mariner  
as I plant a bouquet of sea-shells  
upon my dark and curly hair.

Leonard Dabydeen

# As I Search For My Dreams

I, too,  
search for my dreams  
without guidance  
of a dreamer  
I travel around the moon  
among the stars  
(how they twinkle to see me)  
float on the clouds  
just to watch the blue skies  
and then...  
I return here  
sipping camomile tea  
on the deck of a cruise ship  
look around every port  
on the islands  
even talk to deck- hands  
returning from the wharf  
on a stop- over in Guyana  
(I remember I was born there)  
even write an email  
to the Chancellor of UG  
about stalking at night  
on the long haul to Turkeyen  
and then...  
in a quiet moment  
I begin to hear a drum  
tassa sound in a ritual  
and I see cutlass and cane  
and a man in soot  
with indentureship  
like a halo around him  
only Demerara rum  
to appease him  
as I search for my dreams.

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# As Tears Fall

As tears fall  
upon dehydrated cheeks  
making their own free rivulets  
without interference  
from plastered hope  
my bony fingers  
are bruised from combing  
rubbles and bricks and stones  
I am searching for one little  
pulsating moment  
to ricochet from the crumbled  
silence beneath my weary feet  
I cannot feel the dryness  
of my throat  
my thirst is empty  
with unremitting faith  
only to become quenched  
when I touch you again  
as tears fall.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Attachment

Play music  
and dance the tune  
feel strings attached  
resonating sounds  
melodious  
tranquil  
no heavy metal  
eyes closed  
begin journey of sleep  
harnessing dreams  
watch every movement  
closer  
almost touching  
scent of imagination  
recluse  
just a smile.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Autumn Leaves

I made  
a pact  
with my heart  
that I will  
share  
precious moments  
with autumn leaves  
golden hues  
brown tint  
coppertone  
while I sit  
in Sandalwood Park  
and watch them  
silently fall  
to the ground  
I lay  
my feet on  
assuring each one  
its goodness  
is yet to come.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Backyard Watch

Sit  
outside  
on a bench  
watching the hens  
now a peacock comes strutting for a mate.

Morning cock crowing to herald sunlight  
straddling a mate  
go ahead  
make my  
day.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Baptism

Singing with the choir  
sinful, kneeling church goes  
the preacher stands firm;  
with benevolence and grace  
he makes a soulful baptism.

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# Baskets Of Flowers

(I)

You and I are here:  
with baskets of flowers pruned  
after raging storms.

(II)

We come to your door  
with hope amidst blowing wind:  
holding a basket.

(III)

We bring this for you:  
flowers of joy and true love-  
to start your new day.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Beach Comber [tetractys Poems}

(i)

Set

my feet

on beach sand

feel the wetness

I watch the Atlantic in tidal waves.

(ii)

Shrimp

catcher

casting net

with coming tide

I feel the seined salted sea in my bones.

(iii)

Drink

water

coconut

under the tree

I quench my thirst from the heating sunrise.

(iv)

Watch

the crabs

creeping out

from sandy holes

I open my satchel to collect them.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Before I Leave

Read  
what  
I write  
before I  
leave this world alone  
here today but gone tomorrow.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Behind Every Gilded Armor

Behind every gilded armor  
life is like steel resilient to the bone  
a knapsack of love over the shoulder  
not a burden, never was, never will be.  
Share my love with you. Anytime.  
Sing with me a song of hope,  
reaching far beyond  
my balcony of beautiful roses  
where I play in my pool  
among lilies and lotus flowers.  
I will remember not to forget  
what power you possess  
like the sunshine  
after this eruption  
with every after-shock.

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# Black History

One day me cross over punt trench  
greenheart bridge only wide like me shoulda  
me machete tie `pon me waist  
me head-band tie strong  
fuh steady me head  
me bend down and scratch me big toe  
waiting like a morning cock a crow  
in Goberdhan back yard  
'till overseer done make he list  
me and Cujo fuh cut cane  
'till punt come, 'till punt come  
quick, quick me squat on the grass  
take out me calabash  
with me dry-coconut  
and me salt-fish  
eat quick, quick and drink water  
from the canal  
and all day we cut cane  
cut and bundle cane  
load punt 'till sun come down  
skin black like punt  
ashen-gray in Picasso color  
in the truck I listen to the voice  
deep inside my heart  
how the dust from my black skin  
will one day take me far, far away  
on a journey of my dreams  
from Africa, through the villages in Ghana  
across the Atlantic and the Pacific  
into the cold, winter streets of America  
and rendezvous in Canada  
for my new generation  
to make black history  
a curriculum of their lives.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Bless You

If I am a yawn upon your finger tips,  
Then let me become your 4-letter word  
Ripped from the pages of the dictionary:  
Make LOVE to me;  
Give me a KISS;  
Touch me there...when your hands are FREE;  
Now let me reciprocate SAME.  
BLESS you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Blessings

Your melodious voice  
brings illimitable pleasure  
in our hearts  
like a swirling aromatic incense  
burning in the altar  
of our minds  
when you begin to sing  
as you step out  
of your pristine room  
and make entry  
into your warm shower  
a rapturous feeling  
of elation  
dances  
with elusive joy  
in our minds  
as you chant the names  
of Lord Krishna  
of Lord Shiva  
of Lord Ganesha

of Mother Laxmi

making an encryption

of a pooja in our soul

can we ask for your blessings?

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# Blue Moon

The Blue Moon rises:  
mystic, majestic, silent;  
park riders see light.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Body And Mind Recluse

"A man's as old as he's feeling ..."  
~ Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"If the body frees the mind in its quest  
For youthful dreams to be forever young  
Let not Time play such games like cricket test\*  
To stay batting because the gloves are hung.  
If I should sit alone in dark of night  
Will I hear angels singing of a new King?  
Or should I let my mind wander for light  
Until sunlight herald flowers of Spring?  
Never too old, " I think in solitude,  
Murmuring to myself, "Am I too late? "  
But the Mind regales with much gratitude  
That I am so far from St. Peter's Gate.  
When youthful feelings prod the mind to soar  
Sweet dreams go far beyond ocean's shore.

\*Cricket test or test cricket is an international sport. Test matches are played between competing countries (England vs Australia ...)When a test player "stays batting, " this means he is not available to play in international matches. He hangs up his gloves.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Booed By Your Own Mind

Booed  
by your own mind  
not sure  
what was said  
or what thought process  
might have jerked off  
from the brain  
like political crap  
to play fiddle  
with the mind  
but something  
so awful  
so un-pallet like  
evoked a response  
that was nothing less  
than booing  
as if it were  
self-satiation  
and I cannot  
express my shame.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Break Of Day (Haiku)

Morning sun brightens  
The sky in an orange glow-  
Birds are everywhere.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Breakfast Will Be Different Tomorrow

I sat at the breakfast table,  
looking at my bruised knuckles  
like they were telling me  
the fight was not over.  
Even the ceramic plate,  
sitting in front of me,  
did not feel tortured with only  
bread crumbs crowding its rim,  
as if they were going to commit suicide.  
Even the glass on my left,  
stained with yesterday's milk,  
did not feel shy to look at me.

My stomach growled  
like it was angry with me, too;  
even more so, it started to make  
funny sounds as if I would soon need  
an interpreter to comprehend  
this language of hunger.

I started to shake my head,  
thinking of the post-man soon  
coming with the mail again;  
seemed to me he was visiting  
every day of the week,  
like someone gave him  
free postage stamps. Too bad.

Now once and for all  
I mustered the thought of this life  
being in need of change;  
if I stayed longer at the breakfast table,  
this change will wander away  
like lost opportunity,  
as if it were knocking at my door.  
I went outside:  
breakfast will be different tomorrow.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Buffet Treat (Senryu)

Slice of tender love  
warm Chinese acupuncture  
steak of happiness.

Watch you brim with smile  
ready to massage a meal  
cutlery bare hands.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Bus Ride (Tetractys Poem)

Rape  
victim  
enemy  
so much anger  
tsunami of heinous minds in disgust.

Bus ride on a lonely Indian roadway  
turn time to fear  
how mind works  
body  
soul.

Men  
repeat  
wicked shame  
denigrating  
flesh and bone to smear woman of her dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# But Didn'T Make It Home

I left the group today  
thinking I should go home  
and fight a different war  
just go home and gather friends  
from the hood  
show them the value  
of staying off the streets  
gathering resources  
taking care of the homeless  
and putting food on their table  
without ownership  
comforting those in shelter  
not with an MK 47  
but with hands that once  
pulled triggers of guns  
to defend and survive  
or protect without knowing  
faces and families  
none to call my own  
so I left the group today  
but did not make it home  
where I wanted to be

Leonard Dabydeen

# But What Is Truth

Weighs a tonne, if  
it's a burden to tell it  
or explain it clearly  
snipping away frills and flattery  
but becomes a monumental relief  
like reaching for the moon  
in a visceral cranial of meteorites  
but touching sky-spangled stars  
if it is what it is  
then what is it  
yet leaving minds convoluting  
begging for clarity  
or conviviality  
yet cradling frivolous shrapnel  
dark clouds grey with hearsays  
Plato perorates it is beauty  
and yet finds it amorphously  
esoteric and inconclusive  
how photo-philosophic can it be  
to query Aristotle or Socrates  
to pantomime its evidentiary lust  
and did Pontius Pilate knew it  
when Christ was mounted on a Cross  
until my dreams expiate  
TRUTH will be an epiphany of Life  
its mystery mine to endure.

Leonard Dabydeen

# By The Lake

Now  
I  
can sit  
here again  
and feel the warm sun  
and watch fishes swim in the lake.

Cool breeze lingers over my face  
caressing me as  
I trace the  
contour  
lake  
land.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Caged Child

Like a night gripping darkness amidst light  
turning halogens in sombre delight□  
a caged child whimpers with a moaning gripe  
and certainty languishes without hype.

Early dawn shimmers with glory of sun  
shadows move stealthily, nowhere to run  
a caged child sobs uncannily with fear  
while hunger crawls with a stomach so bare.

Sun strikes radiant rays of harmony  
across azure sky and earth aplenty  
a caged child stands still, yearning for mother  
absence haunts the mind, 'What happened to her? '

When night or day there is only ennui  
why rely on border security?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Cast Shadows

Cast  
shadows  
like the moon  
as clouds pass by  
we are shapes without metamorphosis.

There is no anger among the shadows  
yet they follow  
every move  
that we  
make.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Caught In Your Shadow (Haiku)

I remain quiet  
When the moon is glowing bright  
Caught in your shadow

Leonard Dabydeen

# Caveat

When grey clouds silently  
overshadow the moon  
I wait patiently for the first raindrop  
When rain comes in a loud, thunderous burst  
I lift my hands joyfully praising Him

Leonard Dabydeen

# Cherry Blossoms

So beauty-inspired  
by cherry blossoms  
I am so awe-struck  
with all senses alert  
harmonizing the moment  
with hanami  
so enamoured to share  
tragedy and joy  
with calmness of spirit  
so much beauty and life  
so magnifying as I stumble  
over wood studs  
and disgruntled concrete walls  
scouring rubble from dusk to dawn  
and vice versa  
as the ocean remains calm  
as if there lies innocence.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Children Of The Camp

They listen  
to blowing wind  
whispering  
through crevices of the camp  
slowly navigating  
their flesh and bones  
one child  
clutches a father's legs  
to embrace his warmth  
the cold  
bites her fingers  
her toes, her lips  
they are uncertain  
of night following day  
slowly  
patience  
feasts on their minds  
they expect a ride  
to another city  
to another world  
waiting  
bus arrival  
children of the camp.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Children Of The Night [haiti Refugee Camp]

You  
do not  
want to be  
here among them  
they are part of these bedrock make-shift tents.

Their dreams are torn just like their tattered clothes  
always hungry  
wish for food  
to eat  
now.

They  
are ghosts  
of the night  
fearful to cry  
no one can listen to silent voices.

Across the horizon music playing  
people dancing  
shameful joy  
voodoo  
song.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Chindia

Zao aur Zindy  
no matter to me  
now my name-change  
is massala- mix in belly- dance  
I am Lou Low Singh  
and you  
now Sita Ram Lee  
what's in it for me  
if I come from Shanghai  
and kiss you in Mumbai  
and here I dream  
to see you  
in Canada  
holding one hand in China  
holding one hand in India  
just like in Guyana.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Civil Crisis

Shoot  
to kill  
everyone  
in the district  
Syrians must die  
no hope for survival  
civil outcry they fear not  
they will never tolerate this  
bombings continue to destroy them  
human rights no longer exist for us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Cold Night

This festering cold  
In this stormy wind tonight  
I wear my parka.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Cold, Hard Truth (Haiku)

I can't tell lies  
When I sit by your altar:  
This is cold, hard truth.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Colour Blind

Better to be  
than not to be  
colour blind,  
bare bottom black  
bare bottom white  
or a mixture of both,  
some yellow tint  
and brown too  
with green texture,  
where did they come from  
to change the brush- stroke  
creating a new diaspora?  
I am therefore  
who I am,  
yet you wonder  
who you are  
when sunshine  
is born  
for a new day.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Colour Of Racism

You can mock me at your dinner table  
call me bad names from your filthy mouth  
ride your prancing horse  
and whip me like your slave boy  
when colony sugar burning  
because you bought me  
to make flourish your plantation  
you can take my woman as you please  
and drown your whore-mongering angst  
in her black womb  
while I tug and sweat in underground railways  
but just you never forget  
you cannot change this colour of my skin  
like I can change yours  
it is my black heart you fear  
that will rise and bury your shame  
when history pages keep turning  
to make new chapters  
as this millennium gathers storm  
just you never forget  
just you never forget! ! !

Leonard Dabydeen

# Colour Of Spring

Play  
holi,  
celebrate  
name of Prahlad  
colour of spring rekindle happiness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Come And Visit

Come  
and visit  
my new home  
where angels muse with  
child-like innocense all the time.

In my rocking-chair I shall sit  
playing sweet music  
mandolin  
humming  
a  
tune.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Come Visit Me

Come visit me  
where everyone is dressed up  
for a ceremony  
in their best-ever attire  
and carrying on  
as if the moonlight  
will last forever  
our music is enthralling  
in the vicissitudes of heaven  
and its quiet tambourine  
rattles the Gates of Hell  
come visit me  
with a bouquet of flowers  
or a wreath scented  
with your tears  
but most of all  
come visit me  
and leave a smile on my feet  
as I always will be  
wherever you are  
in every step you take.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Comforting Others

I  
begin  
to ask you  
about yourself  
but comfort you bring to my heart lulls me.

What shall I call you after I wake up  
you are happy  
comforting  
others  
too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Coming Home

Search

marshlands

feel prairie

wind in your bones

this is your country lush with happiness.

Cartier's dream in the sign of Gaspé cross

a maple leaf

emblazoned

coming

home.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Concepcion, Chile...

neither true nor false  
then how can I vindicate  
myself from hoping

this quake will go back  
to the ocean just as day  
recedes into night

here a blanket of  
rubbles is wrapped over my  
knees and I am stuck

over and over  
I hear the siren of death  
closer to my ear

on the bridge up high  
a man leaps into the air  
he is afraid, too

before I shut my eyes  
the tsunami will come  
to wash all my dreams

I am lingering  
in hope to survive today  
to be free again.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Conflict Of Interest (Tetractys

Just  
as I  
begin to  
listen to you  
a conflict of interest stops my thoughts.

Your next door neighbor is my client too  
another case  
in progress  
small claims  
court.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Conquerer

I  
agree  
that sometimes  
journey of life  
can be remorselessly filled with bad dreams.

Flesh-eaten tendrils of freaking horror  
haunt your night sleep  
leaving you  
without  
hope.

But  
it is  
the power  
of a strong mind  
that conquers death even in dying times.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Court-Room Whisperers

Silence is like a bamboo leaf  
broken at the mid –rib  
and I sat there in the pew  
waiting with a blue paper-mate pen  
and a wire-ribbed Hillroy note pad  
and listening for the sound of evidence  
and watching prosecutor and defendant  
lawyers robed like carrion crows  
and almost ready  
to peck at the victim’s flesh  
or massage the evidence  
like a masseuse at therapy  
then a voice fills the courtroom:  
“All rise.”  
and I follow like monkey see  
what monkey must do  
and watch the black-robed judge  
come burrowing to his desk  
then voices  
begin to filter in the air  
West Indian voices  
Italian voices  
Romanian voices  
Polish voices  
Canadian voices  
and voices from Kolkata and Gujrat  
and Portugal and Russia  
and Sri-Lanka  
and I listen intently  
like a court-room inter-com  
still trying to decipher  
the melting-pot of languages  
and eyes rivet on the judge  
as if he is now the pot-salt  
who will validate the brew  
in crime and punishment  
and satisfy  
my court-room whisperers.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Crustacean Joy...

and freaking with a smile  
knowing you're here  
collecting sea-shells  
for tomorrow evening

...to place them in  
my cupboard of fantasy  
they come back to life  
these precious shells  
from a forgotten life  
whenever my feet get locked  
in the tar-sands of the shore

so beautiful and soul-searching,  
so much crustacean joy  
I crunch my freaking bones!

Leonard Dabydeen &  
Indira Babbellapati

Aug.30,2010

Leonard Dabydeen

# Cycle Of Faith

No wheel to turn  
no companion  
empty space  
like a lost coin  
treasured in hiding  
her absence hurts  
my heart aches  
yearning for her return  
longing  
like parched lips for water  
even dew drops  
before the sun rises  
and I call her name  
reminisce good times  
as I walk along  
musing my cycle of faith.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Dance Pacific, Dance

Deep in the bowels of the earth  
and closer to the Pacific North  
encrypted on the Crazy Horse  
totem pole vaulted in the archives  
of British Columbia  
and ridging the shoreline  
of Northern California

they tell me this is where  
Mendocino Redwoods shake hands  
with the resident sea  
and here like a secret in a dream  
the Pacific is brewing a turbulence  
in volcanic form and shape  
as Earth's enigmatic plates  
silently shift to cascade the fault line  
with frightening quakes

they will come when your eyes  
are closed as the blanket warms the skin  
or the ears begin to fall in love  
with the silence of the night  
or even before the first draft of your dream  
is saved and the next episode begins  
on the 15th floor in a hotel room  
or your prayer-book is planted  
beside your octagon-shaped night table  
for a night cap

the quakes will tip the Richter scale  
then hammer the Earth with aftershock  
like a wild animal regurgitating its victims  
then licorice them again and again  
and in continued intensity  
an angry tsunami giant  
will rise from the deep blue sea  
like a gigantic sea-monster  
snorting towering walls of water  
as if it had a bad dream

then it will move uncannily  
with unrelenting speed  
as it lashes out towards the coastline  
going after people and places and things  
and in the echo of howling winds  
a song will be heard  
in the fright of fear  
show time begins with an ominous tune  
dance Pacific, dance.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Darkness Is Everywhere

No light in sight  
and the thunderstorm  
is roaring like a hungry lion  
and the hooting of owls  
in the trembling trees  
and the mournful cry of cats  
frightened the light away  
even among the shadows  
I can hear dogs barking  
how uncomfortable is the feeling  
when light is like a long lost friend  
and darkness is everywhere.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Dead Flowers (Aleppians)

Flowers not for dead  
Lying in a massive grave -  
No identity.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Dead In Sahara Desert (Tetractys)

Pray  
tonight  
no more tears  
no grief abound  
death is about dying in search of hope.

Flesh scavenged lying in the Niger sands  
bodies bone dry  
no water  
their minds  
lost.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Death Of A Cobra

Come give me a kiss:  
Eyes wet with desire to feel  
Death of a cobra.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Deep In Love

Too  
busy  
counting stars  
on my altar  
tiny lamps rippling with bright delight and joy.

So serene they make peace with each other  
share their delight  
on my hands  
deep in  
love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Deep Water

Long  
after  
the silence  
becomes brittle  
I feel stormy wind across the ocean.  
I abandon ship without a shipwreck  
without a tide  
deep water  
nurture  
mind.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Depth Is Illusive Like A Bad Dream

Depth is illusive

like a bad dream

unimaginable in scope

like the cornea of the eye

trying to fathom

the bottom of the ocean floor

excruciating in pain more than

any amputation of a body part

dislocated in a rubble

in the heartland of Port-au-Prince

here heat has no friend

no depth for imagination

scouring mind and body and soul

lips parched dry as dust

stomach empty from hunger

all deep in despair

too weak to search for survival

blind hope knows know depth

for survivors among the dead

and dying or the living dead.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Disclaimer

Inside the content of my dream  
I profess to tell the truth  
but this is not intended for you  
to uphold with a sense of pride  
my dream comes to me  
with eyes closed unconsciously  
so it is not my fault  
if you strive to follow me  
just bear in mind  
I express morbid thoughts  
with an effortless skip of a heartbeat  
and a sense of paralysis  
so it may be idiopathic  
for all I know  
but it is up to you to follow  
just remember  
I profess to tell the truth  
and I linger long enough  
to decipher  
the content of my dream  
and if my thoughts become morbid  
I eschew  
only what I think I knew.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Discontent

Frankly speaking  
I must have fallen  
into a seismic dream  
in a distant period of time  
watching tumultuous turmoil  
in the rumble of discontent  
tidal waves lash  
against unwavering shores  
and mountains spew fire  
like bellowing dragons in China  
mount Roraima gone  
and the Andes  
and Appalachian ridges  
regurgitate in molten lava  
and the Rockies and Himalayas  
melt in torrential slush  
winding in fissures  
swallowing every peak  
every pinnacle  
all in a molten mass  
in sizzling heat  
and then...  
the mighty Amazon river roars  
at the shivering flora and fauna  
as the Pacific and Atlantic  
and Indian oceans  
immerse all things in a tsunami gulp  
leaving my index finger  
on the power button  
of my twittering remote control  
as I pull the clouds  
over my eyes  
and go to sleep.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Dishonesty

Look me in the eyes  
tell me what you see  
dishonesty is like a city of gold  
bright on the outside  
dark as your shadow inside  
twisting your mind  
with a knotted heart in blindfold  
ask Sir Walter Raleigh  
as the story was told  
of one lost city called El Dorado  
this city of gold  
somewhere in a rainforest  
where men made leaps and bounds  
over the Atlantic  
and the Pacific  
beyond the Amazon River  
until disbelief did not offer mercy  
for unaccountable dishonesty  
closer to home within oneself  
night takes leave as day begins  
after you made hurried love  
and two untangled hearts  
make promises in mindless lust  
after a bounty of molten satisfaction  
knowing how dishonesty  
is fashionable like the search  
of a lost city  
or like truth crusted in layers of lies.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Do It Now

Stuck  
in  
traffic  
going home  
nature begins to  
make my delay much more urgent.

I feel my inside becomes so  
unbearable  
telling me  
do it  
now.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Do Not Feel Shame

Do  
not  
feel shame  
who you are,  
for who you become  
makes a difference tomorrow.

Light on your black skin brings pleasure,  
erase any lies  
of weakness  
about  
you  
us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Do You Know Where Smart Flies End Up?

There is this young boy  
who is well-liked by his parents;  
like honey on pita bread,  
as the mother would say sometimes.  
Morning comes with this boy one day  
milking Sita in the backyard,  
and Ramoo rocking away in his hammock.  
This boy calls out to Ramoo,  
"Hey Dada, got something to tell you."  
Ramoo goes closer to the boy,  
picking a ripe guava from the tree,  
like a monkey when hungry.  
Listening carefully. Like BBC news.  
This boy tells a story to Ramoo,  
how he plans to outsmart Didi,  
to buy snacks at school for him.  
"No lie. I'm smart," he says.  
Ramoo walks away, smiling;  
then he turns back to look  
at this boy, as if youth forgets  
age when mouth opens  
to let story jump out.  
Ramoo asks the boy,  
"Tell me something. Do you know  
where smart flies end up?"  
The boy is puzzled. He looks  
at the milk. The pale refuses  
his answer. And the milk  
refuses to tell.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Don'T Be Afraid To Cry

Who will come to your rescue

when the pain is erupting

in your crumbled mind

like a volcanic explosion

and tears are rivulets

searching the crevices

of cheeks and bones

meandering closer

to parched, sagging lips

who will come

as the eyes squint

in the bright sunlight

watering with the innocent

and wary distance

where yesterday's drought

is now climaxing in

torrential downpour

like a typhoon's ghost

who will come

to watch with you

as the house floats  
across the road  
in tattered pieces  
and flesh and blood  
of parents are remnants  
of history, your child  
cannot cry again  
only the tears welling  
from deep within  
must gush relentlessly  
like a broken dam  
and discharge with relief  
freeing the mind  
so don't be afraid  
to cry, and cry, and cry.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Dying Declaration

The  
preacher  
looks at me  
with eyes dimming:  
he knows that the truth is now or never.

I hold the guard of faith to his forehead  
he watches me  
eyes closing  
smiling  
dead.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Elements Are Us

She  
always  
will be blue  
benevolent  
we watch the sky night and day for answers.

Our questions arise from the earth and air  
and the water  
fire within  
each of  
us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Empty Chair: Liu Xiaobo

World  
wide watch  
empty chair  
his soul sits on  
frail hands wave to his people with warm heart.

Hearts waving back with hands like pendulum  
his chair is warm  
with freedom  
his name  
Liu.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Empty Stomach (Tetractys)

No  
restraint  
not caring  
empty stomach  
now gratification leaves the stomach.

Holes in my pocket leave no coin for change  
they wash their hands  
walking out  
without  
haste.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Everlasting Love

Feel it deep within  
without congruence of hate  
meshed like a spider's web  
in a dedication of craftsmanship.

Here it echoes like a fluted maestro  
sending signals sweet to the ears  
making the mind dance  
to every tune.

In a labor of ecstasy  
it utters a smile  
or makes you laugh in congeniality  
with happiness never a compromise.

You can find a name  
to call it your own  
but being my significant other  
you are my everlasting love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Every Night Or Day

Every night or day  
as you begin to pray,  
just ask your mind  
if it's ready to believe  
in what you say;  
just don't let your heart  
lead you astray -  
it's the mind that offers guidance  
to the heart,  
as it's nourished in the soul;  
and clasping your hands  
in prayer for penance  
or faithful repentance  
is a rock-solid oath,  
only if it's honored by the mind  
without make-belief  
or shameful pretense,  
as you travel in this world  
one day at a time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Everything Gonna Come To Light (Celebrating The Legend: Bob Marley- 1945-1981)

No, oh no, no, no ...  
Is not the natty dread lock  
What catch me eye, me eye;  
I look at his face  
See the pain, the pain  
Like you see naked rain ...  
Hear the music playing, playing:  
Everybody no cry, no cry  
Let the music play, play Almighty  
With love in the eye, the eye ...  
Listen to history of man-  
Reggae drum a talk:  
No lie, no lie ...  
Everything gonna come to light.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Except Her

I  
listen  
to the sound  
of her silence  
her grief so worn in pain and agony.

Night knows not the difference of darkness  
neither shadows  
of her dreams  
except  
her.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Except Me

This  
home  
I call  
my habitat  
my space coronation  
ambient flow of dreams  
that gather filtered thoughts  
streaming with unfettered joy  
and rivulets of hope.

Sometimes  
I gather wishes  
and pan-handle parcels of ideas  
and watch them fall  
over the balcony  
swiftly taking recluse  
with wind winding wayward  
without worry...  
except me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Eyes On The Sea

To watch the sea  
is often  
like evoking deities  
from inside the underworld.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Face To Face (Bm)

Just  
listen  
to his music  
steel drum echoes  
guitar playing  
ain't nothing like it  
to mash you up  
his unique voice  
just keep you humming  
everything gonna be alright  
as you pack up your clothes  
leave the shack  
shanty town and all  
and the light  
gets brighter  
echoing reggae sound  
you ain't no  
Buffalo soldier  
just a rasta  
face to face.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Fall Leaves

Not anymore hanging on a limb  
fluttering in the wind.  
There is this emptiness that is  
becoming bothersome to the mind  
as they leave their abode. They leave  
limbs languid and naked as the sun.  
Little by little cold air bruises their  
veined feature, chilling flesh; their  
colours imbue a rustic gold and bronze.  
A delight to the squinting eyes roaming  
parks and country side. In a quiet moment  
they unhinge themselves flamboyantly,  
slowly beckoning to earth's yielding call.  
Without any finicky human touch they  
nest a soft bedrock, tender and inviting.  
They let me sit in yoga trance, with nostrils  
ocean-wide, breathing organic air. Soon  
the mind will permeate the body with renewed  
energy as the fall season unleashes its charm.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Farewell

I am here to bid you farewell  
no, never a moment to tell  
my friends, my fellow countrymen  
a sad day to leave, even then  
I have no choice but to go  
as I gladly look forward for tomorrow  
of those eight years memory will abide  
with footsteps of those at our side  
and when I open my new doors  
after all the White House tours  
as a friend from yesterday  
I'll take note of the role you play.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Feast Or Famish

Just one morsel of food  
to satiate empty spaces  
in my growling stomach  
I cannot have pity  
neither do I have guilt  
that you be my feast  
at this precious  
moment of desire  
my need is on fire  
I let hot flames  
open wide  
my gaping jaws  
to make you  
my relish dinner  
come gently  
and be at peace  
offer yourself  
knowing that  
your purpose  
is my fulfillment.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Festival Of Light

I keep staring  
at the flickering light  
in the tiny clay bowl  
...as if in a trance  
at the brilliance it portrays  
feeling the heat of the night  
cloistered in intransigent darkness  
light making shadows dance  
without sound of music  
iridescence of hope  
in a world  
unwittingly engaged  
in wars  
and unrest  
and nature's own  
remorseless storms  
I clasp my hands  
and bow in prayer  
seeking blessings  
of this festive aura  
light of hope and joy  
over darkness within.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Folklore [tetractys Poem]

Folks  
folk gaffe  
bring to life  
culture their own  
folklore continues till mo'ning day come.

Behind blacksage bush in the dark of night  
you squat fuh pee  
but hear sound  
jumbee  
call.

Leonard Dabydeen

# For What May Yet To Be

May all good things be with you  
that they may follow each footstep  
you make where life's open journey  
lead you on and on  
through stormy weather  
and bright sunny days  
smile after a scream  
when the going gets tough  
and laugh aloud  
when the challenges confront you  
time is yet to come  
for what may yet to be.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Free At Last!

Freedom! Freedom!  
so hot! hot! hot!  
Juba, Juba let me sing  
Juba, Juba let me dance  
my independence is joy  
my independence is dream  
to bring new tomorrow  
from the rubbles of yesterday  
Juba, Juba let me think  
now is my freedom  
and I see my dream.

(Independence of South Sudan)

Leonard Dabydeen

# Freedom

Cold wind pushes against the van  
as if it wants to test its silver coating  
but I listen carefully to the whooshing sound  
without complaining  
no one will listen, anyway, except  
my frozen ears like folded strips of bacon.  
And as the wheels grind Main Street tarmac  
a bird swings in a U-turn, swaying  
with the ease and carefree arrogance  
one bird wants to show our open world.  
This is the freedom I choose  
it belongs to me, let alone my van  
and a black bird  
whose place of abode is far from  
the ceramic tiles and oak polished flooring  
of my Egyptian sand living room.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Full Of Love

Do  
it all  
by yourself  
then let it go  
where the mind finds happiness unending.

Then let it fly like birds of a feather  
crested the sky  
marking time  
full of  
love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Funchal Flood

...watch my SUV dround  
in a swift flash flood.  
I am swimming in it.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Gandhiji, Namaste

I  
shouted  
when I heard  
the shot rang out  
his frail hands in solemn prayer, hey Ram.

Today I mark his final 'Namaste'  
satyagraha  
no more fight  
ending  
war.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Gatekeeper

What  
would you  
like to do  
as Gatekeeper:  
play the piper and call the tune for us?

Ask us to repent before exiting:  
tell no more lies  
speak the truth  
plea to  
live.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Ghost Who Walks

Walk among the dead-  
Graveyard is my best resort:  
I fear no evil.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Going Home

Posted: July 12,2010,12: 44 am

Going home  
is what everyone  
seems to be looking forward  
to do  
it does not matter  
if night catches day  
or day catches night  
or shadows snoop around  
rugged bends on the road.

Sometimes the road is rough  
and feels as if tightening your belt  
should have started  
a long, long time ago  
on the hour when you yelled  
as someone kept you  
upside down  
and you felt a slap  
on your naked behind.

And sometimes the road  
is like cool breeze  
riding with waves  
of the illusive Atlantic  
or like wooing echoes  
of the unconquered Pacific  
swirling memories  
of Sir Francis Drake  
having a jug of red wine  
on the Plymouth  
or Christopher Columbus  
sea-bound in the Pinta,  
landing on my shore

gathering pebbles of the West Indies  
eyeballing Caribs and Arawaks  
canoeing in blue seas  
with bows and arrows  
like weapons of mass destruction  
or like Sir Walter Raleigh  
vexing at trekking over  
river beds in the Amazon jungle  
and looking at every shining stone  
as a fragment of a lost city of gold.

Someday it will come to an end  
I know the distance  
is near and far  
or short and long  
my soul tells me this  
from the knapsack in my mind  
as I am going home.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Going To My Grave (Haiku)

(I)

Going to my grave:  
Tomorrow rain will melt snow  
Blanket my coffin.

(II)

Bright sunshine at dawn,  
Rain will come till tomorrow;  
Flowers are happy.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Gold (Haiku) (I)

Stream glitters with gold-

Embedded in the pebbles;

River is silent.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Gold (Haiku) (Ii)

Gold is glittering-  
the moon is spreading its light:  
and the rocks shimmer.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Gold Corrruption (Guyana)

Tell me nuh  
ah who ah tief  
de gole:  
one han'  
ah shake de basket  
de nex han'  
ah full pocket;  
gole digga  
nah get kinnah-  
anyting you get  
is bettah than notting;  
sometimes two tief  
ah mek Gad laff  
and one man trash  
is a nadda man treasha  
is dat wha mek  
dankee a laff  
so loud.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Goodbye, With Love

and then...  
the eyes did not blink  
as I watched the wings  
of the Canada Airways jet  
turned in the northern direction on the runway  
and the wheels began to gather speed  
like an eagle in its moment of flight  
each moment my heart pulsated faster  
than nanoseconds before  
as the lift-off became imminent  
and drone of sound  
kept me silent  
like a coffin being lowered  
in its final recluse  
and in the moment of flight  
I raised my right hand in gesture  
only to wish you  
blessings on your journey  
and scribed in the palm of my hand  
were words I will cherish  
till the end of time:  
Goodbye, with Love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Gratitude

In the beginning I thought it was more of a habit  
for him to come to this chosen spot, like the full moon  
peeping out of the grey clouds and shining through  
my latticed window at 10 o'clock in the night.

I had passed through this much-travelled street  
the night before and commented to my mind  
about the LCBO café so close to St. Michael's hospital.

He was not there. How must I know if time was of  
any significance for him?

Tonight I stayed a little longer at the crossing, waiting  
for the count- down of the stop light. He was there, spreading  
sheets of corrugated cardboard on the side-walk canopy,  
getting ready for a night-cap. And on his right side he kept  
a little cardboard box guarded as if it were more than  
what his life was worth.

I went over to him and asked, Are you hungry?

He looked me in the eye, but I could not tell if he  
had written a smile on his bearded face. Sound was stifled  
like clouds in the sky.

I handed him the paper lunch bag with sandwiches I was

taking for my patient at the hospital.

And he angled his head in a bow

to offer his gratitude, as he opened the lid of the  
cardboard box. Inside the box a little kitten lifted its  
head, meowing mournfully in heartfelt thanks also.

And then the old man pointed to a sign written on the  
box: Blind and dumb, but not deaf. Thank you.

I smiled to myself, thinking how gratitude has no  
particular shape or form. Gratitude is in each of us  
to share with the world.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Gun Control (Fib)

(for President Obama)

Shoot  
me  
tonight  
if you like  
if your mind is dark  
but my executive order  
brings safety to innocent lives on your bullet watch.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Gun Violence (Tetractys Poem)

Gun  
to shoot  
aim to kill  
enemy eyes  
targeted within the scope of your mind.

□

Take this bullet in your hand to kill me  
just load your gun  
wait for me  
right here  
now.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Haiti...

...now comes voodoo dance  
man still jumping in a trance  
head on totem pole....

dark bodies lying  
silent near the twisted fence  
waking of the dead...

a choir sings a hymn  
it is not the Lord's prayer  
love is never lost.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Halloween (I)

...in the vineyards of Edgar Alan Poe...

Wind  
howling  
tonight here  
on the seashore  
as I lay upon my pillow of rock.

I echo for sleep so that I can dream  
like a vampire  
emptying  
vials  
blood.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Halloween (Ii)

...in the vineyards of Edgar Alan Poe...

I  
tinker  
with my flute  
in my tavern  
drinking a brew of vampire's milk with lust.

Taste of venomous blood on my tongue  
I carve your name  
in my bones  
watching  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Halloween (Iii)

...in the vineyards of Edgar Alan Poe...

His  
coffin  
I carry  
in a satchel  
just so his mildewed bones will not see light.

His tombstone I balance on my shoulder  
black hat askance  
tattered clothes  
dead man  
walk.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Happy As A Bird

I am just a kite,  
humming a tune in the wind:  
happy as a bird!

Leonard Dabydeen

# Happy Diwali

Light  
this lamp  
and let it  
adorn your heart  
diyas bring hope to your dark world with joy.  
Happy Diwali to all of my friends  
just celebrate  
each moment  
full of  
love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Happy Mother Day A Salutation

From that special moment  
as conception tickles her womb  
Motherhood takes root  
like a banyan tree  
she's a nascent woman  
pristine in her own castle  
all consummate Jai Santoshi Ma  
so devoted to happiness, prosperity  
void of selfishness, fiery maw  
ebullient cooing heartbeat Durga Ma  
shakti aur bhakti, ma mukti  
Lakshmi mata, Saraswati mata  
child in her cocoon you are  
migrating in her pulse  
she sleeps portraying your dreams  
sculpting body, mind and soul  
many are nights of bad tales  
she strokes your karma  
for birth into a new world  
always a silent bhajan  
aarti her pregnant tummy  
her smile an embroidery of faith  
her utmost wish mere ma  
satyam, shivam, sundaram  
glorious joy to the world.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Happy Now

Yes

I sing

with a heart

clapping my hands

the rhythm of my song gusting the wind.

I share the tune of tweety birds up high

swaying tree tops

happy now

leaves are

born.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Happy Valentine's Day

Romancing the night  
with celestial stars and moonlight  
and glowing glasses of wine  
blending bonds of love divine

caressing mind and body on fire  
fanning flames with un-channeled desire  
forever true roses are red  
a bouquet or garland before bed

before the light is out  
say a word or two about  
sweet promises the heart to keep  
blessing Mother Earth a place to sleep

sculpting your sweet, sweet Valentine  
with bonds of love and happiness design.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Happy Valentine's Day!

This tiny package you posted to my heart  
is stamped with a scarlet rose  
and laced with a golden bow  
something tells me in this candle light  
there is a Dairy Queen confetti inside  
and I must open it  
with gifted hands  
in slow maneuvering I nested  
the glass of red wine you offer me  
on the Bombay mahogany night table  
my first sip  
is not to drown the rich chocolaty caramel  
of sweetness you feasted in my body  
but to implant sobriety to my next move  
as I open the package  
to display a golden mannequin  
with words written in its open arms:  
Happy Valentine's Day! Always loving you! !

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hard To Comprehend

think it's hard to comprehend  
what life is all about  
shifting ideas  
like shifting temperature

how winter knows  
what autumn looks like  
before snowflakes  
climb back into the skies

and spring spreads sunshine  
swift enough to catch  
skimp-clad cuties caressing  
crest of waves on sandy beaches

and summer comes  
like a smart little child  
riding his bike around the lakes  
ponds and pools are prime  
party escapades as people  
barbecue outdoors under  
shades of old sycamore trees

and flowers fade and bloom  
in lovely tint and hue  
and look special in the morning dew  
grass is green with shades of gray  
and landscape listening  
to lawn-mowers making hay

then comes again this time of year  
all neighbors stay indoors  
not a breath of fresh air  
and families are like a game  
of checkers or solitaire

and beyond borders  
behind innocence or guilt  
where children seek errands

for survival and sustenance  
life goes on without tomorrow  
and so hard to comprehend  
what life is all about.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hate

Where there is hate, the heart has no peace.  
Anger heats up in the gurgling churn  
Of blood palpitating rush;  
The mind is restless  
Like a hungry wolf.  
You can hear the snarl and growl  
Over high rises sitting aimlessly  
Steering at the naked sky.  
What will man think  
When the noise abates,  
To inform the rush of traffic  
It is only an escalation  
Of ruptured blood pressure?

Leonard Dabydeen

# He Cannot Sleep

He cannot sleep

with eyes wide open

he does not see enough light

through this blinding darkness

he feels the recession thundering

like an enormous quake

on a Richter scale

with unfathomable

logarithmic upheaval

as joblessness

cries out for mercy

rising like a tsunami

in tumultuous waves

wallowing in our hopes

for a better tomorrow

often times

job openings make mockery

of our social fabric

lashing away with emptiness

or nibbling away

at our broken dreams

like piranhas

only leaving our bones

for the breakfast table

with our eyes wide open

he cannot sleep

we cannot sleep

sleep.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Heaven

I want to think  
Heaven is made for me  
and for you  
but only as an afterthought  
I look inside  
the playground of my mind  
where a narrow gap  
forms a cleavage of rituals  
where the flowers bloom  
after the rain is gone  
and the sun shines  
with embers of glowing light  
stroked across an emerald sky  
and hues and tints blush with beauty  
spiraling delight more than rainbows  
can offer colours in an arc  
that's when I come to my senses  
and tug at your combed hair  
and pinched your chubby cheek  
and sigh with a smile  
as I undo the notion  
that Heaven is not  
what I think it is  
but a secret  
unfolding  
eternally in all of us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Here Is Our Playground

Here is our playground  
bigger and better than any golf course  
or football stadium  
where pebbles of our minds are crested  
with opinions and beliefs  
some confessional, some consummate  
each heart in tandem with another heart  
or delighting in some differences  
yet we will not falter  
as we present our pot-luck  
to nourish our ambient souls  
fragrance of pious spices  
wafting like aroma in a buffet  
our round- table larger than a globe  
our seats unmarked, to each his own  
yet we will not falter  
as we partake with love  
encrypted in understanding  
in this delightful game of life.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Here Today...Gone Tomorrow

It is like a stampede  
how the mind works  
in the gathering of things  
and there are footsteps everywhere  
sounds of feet chattering in chaos  
screeching sometimes  
in the push and shove  
jostling each other  
in the city streets of Mumbai  
slick tiny business sizzling  
with tandori naan and goat curry  
and Times Square mavericks  
hiding their eyes from street vendors  
now selling hot-dogs and sugar-cane juice  
you can see them here too  
in Nathan Phillips Square  
drinking water-coconuts with straw  
or balancing cups of Tim Horton's coffee  
heading in and out of nowhere  
in transit to pan-handle rush hour  
sometimes difficult to understand  
if mobility means to peddle oneself  
in ascent or decent in going places  
this we know with certainty  
you are here today  
and you will be gone tomorrow  
as long as memory does not  
suffer senility syndrome.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hide And Seek (Senryu)

hide and lose  
seek and find  
now hide and seek

\*\*\*\*\*

searching for love  
looking under a table  
hiding from me

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hide The Truth

Sometimes people hide the truth  
by spreading a blanket of lies  
like wool over your eyes  
in make-belief  
that love has no shame

convincing enough  
if you let yourself be blunted  
by naked deceit  
but so help me God  
when this love bursts into flame

only to bring fire in your home  
embers rustle in your mind  
as you pretend to sleep  
you hide the truth  
like you hide in this love  
as faith weeps in your soul

a child wakes up  
in the middle of the night  
searching for comfort  
for love  
that exuded from the womb

true love is absent  
is on a vacation on a cruise ship  
deaf to the whisper of a child  
loud laughter scavenging the moment  
until the phone rings

someone else takes the call  
as the caviar wets the floor  
love stares in the face of denial  
now let me explain  
only to hide the truth again.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Holocaust

Some  
day this  
ingrate act  
will bring remorse  
and men will be swallowed with punishment.

Atrocities will whiplash their being  
burn them inside  
and outside  
without  
fire.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Holocaust (Ii)

This  
evil  
that men do  
features front page  
with shame in the annals of history.

Holocaust by name marked in flesh and bone  
bring cursed denials  
that echo  
inside  
them.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Home (Tetractys)

You come back into the room  
where you've been living  
all along. You say:  
What's been going on  
while I was away?  
(Margaret Atwood)

home  
is where  
I sit alone  
thinking of you  
wondering what on earth you are doing.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hope

Hope

In the silence of this endless night  
my last song  
ricochets in the wind;  
and in every nook and cranny  
of the abyss  
I hear the echo of my song swirling  
through every crack and crevice.  
Sometimes swaying trees  
beckon to my song;  
they, too, dance to the lilting tune  
while my fluted words  
make melody to marinate my dreams.  
So look deep into my eyes  
before you let sleep  
harness your memories  
with this brewing storm;  
and listen to the purr in my voice:  
in this aura of Hope  
I will hide this endless night  
with a new dawn  
for your dreams;  
and as the sun rises  
your smile will take shape and form  
as you watch children play  
in the living-room of your happiness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Horse Wanderer

I pause to absorb this glacial beauty  
within the breath of my naked eyes  
and my vehicle remains quiet  
like a mouse  
thinking I am just another Iceland tourist  
lost in amazement at this porsmork landfill  
a glacial dance of rocky undulation  
where tributaries are without rest  
meandering in the cornea of the dark-blue sky  
with passion like a Viking god  
silently you straddle alongside my open window  
make your traditional greeting  
rear-ending my metallic companion  
and without a neigh you poke your face  
through my open window  
look me in the eye  
with an animal sniff  
sneaking appreciation  
or approval  
then continue on your uncaring path

a horse wanderer with a pebbled mind.

Leonard Dabydeen

## How Can I...

How can I dance in the rain  
when morning comes without a smile  
when trees no longer have branches  
when light and darkness catch me  
hiding in the shadows  
like a cornered mouse ...

How can I begin to cry  
when tears know not fear  
when the sun drifts north and south  
when east and west are lost  
in the pouring quagmire  
like a lost pendulum of hope ...

How can I tell what tomorrow brings  
when I am moving along aimlessly  
when I feel as if I am sailing in a dinghy  
when I am steering in any direction  
only listening to myself  
like a flute without a sound...

How can I...

Leonard Dabydeen

# How Can You Believe

I was not certain

what it would be like

what it would look like

what shape or form

it would take in the mind:

a bunker paradise

breathless

silent as a coffin

an expanse looking

half empty with hope

or half full in doubt

and a measured distance

12 feet to the hole

with snake eyes

tense yet iridescent

Yang kissed the ball

and a birdie putt exploded

in overflowing joy

and an echo resounded

relentless like a twister

as clenched fists

stamped history

advocated by Tiger Woods:

how can this be?

how can you believe

in what you see

but see it nonetheless?

with an Asian smile.

Leonard Dabydeen

# How Far

How  
far are you  
from being a licensee  
when you're  
not called to the bar?

Not knowing  
what type of law person  
you have become  
not knowing  
the strength of your voice.

If I speak  
no legalese  
will I rumble at ease  
on becoming a paralegal  
or become tortured  
as a paraplegic?

Leonard Dabydeen

# How I Wish To Sing You A Song

How I wish to sing you a song

to let you know my love for you

is greater than all the world;

How I wish to hold you tight

and embrace your coastland:

your rich mud-banks,

golden rice fields swaying in the wind,

sweet sugar-cane burning in the fields,

punts slowly drifting in the canals,

bauxite mining and gold diggers panning;

How I long to watch buck-crabs marching

and jumping shrimps in dragging seines

where the Atlantic greets the sandy shores;

How I wish to see little boys

riding donkeys on red clay-brick streets,

some playing marble games in their back-yards,

mothers crouched on their knees

spreading cow-dung beneath stilted houses;

How I wish to drink sweet coconut water

sitting by the black-sage bush

or under a canopy of towering coconut trees  
swaying like giants reaching for the blue skies;  
How I wish to call my country  
my home  
not wanting to be a refugee:  
fleeing from the wrath  
of demon-like men who want all  
not even listening  
if you're begging for some.

Leonard Dabydeen

## How Much More...

How much more  
and for what price, if not  
beyond sleepless nights  
and empty stomach,  
must this human travesty  
without halt or hope  
continue unabated?  
Sometimes I implore my mind  
to alt, control and delet  
just to give me a restart  
and to come and rescue me  
from this egregious holocaust-  
so much wasted lives  
unchallenged for their creativity  
and their innovative explorations.  
Oh! what has man done to man  
to emboss him with so much hate and anger?  
You ask me as much  
as I ask you with a blush of hope  
how much more  
and for what price?

Leonard Dabydeen

# How To Remember

I dip my cup made of clay  
into the rivulet of the Lethe  
meandering in carefree travel  
and drink of the clear, balmy waters  
as I watch the rolling pebbles  
distant themselves secretly  
in the solitude of Hades  
my mind begins to fade  
as my memory weakens  
at the thought of you  
and my slumbering eyes  
quietly go to sleep  
forgetting night or day  
as the sound of Hypnos  
whispers in my ears  
and I begin to forget  
how to remember.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hudhud

It raged in mighty anger  
like a hungry cougar in motion  
leaping  
catapulting  
uprooting bedrocks  
and wailing trees  
people everywhere awed  
unable to shriek  
or hide their brittle limbs  
in sinuous motion  
every stone unturned  
every hope blunted  
like an un-kindled diya  
hudhud hooded cities  
without a tinge of regret  
then a quiet moment oozes  
out of the wreckage  
only to let the eye see  
how nature endures  
bad moments of our lives.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Hunger Snow Moon

Now the snow storm pelts a whopping  
across New York city and the Governor  
tells everyone to hide before the night  
spreads its wings of snow squalls and blisters  
let the people not see  
because there are outages  
and only men in black will be cruising  
with feet burrowing snow-deep  
with flashing lights hunting for  
smart miscreants and duffle-headed truants  
but as the night sky eyes the game plan  
the Hunger Moon wiggles its way  
silently across the sky  
a mystic glow spreads ominously  
playing with shadows and shapes  
and the sky will illuminate with  
intensity as the full moon  
moves elegantly up high  
in a sacred path  
staying on course  
from dusk to dawn.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Am At The Cross-Roads

I am at the cross-roads  
where many paths seem  
to lead me to where the grass  
is greener on the other side  
or so it appears to be  
every opportunity is lingering with  
uncertainty wrapped in vaulted  
vestibules, luring the mind to slice  
any tentacles of doubt  
I harbor more certificates  
and more certificates to support  
more certificates  
but those are all I have  
waiting for Hope  
like a desperate prostitute  
needless of any recruiters  
then, again, looking back  
at what has been, or what might  
have been, is like recharging  
the mind to move forward

where the future is dancing  
in the wind without looking back  
with lingering anticipation  
I am at the cross-roads.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Am At Your Side

Here  
my world  
moves around  
with your fingers  
soothing my being in every contour.

I know that you touch me everywhere I go  
I am peaceful  
when I am  
at your  
side.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Am Black

Just  
because  
I am black  
you measure me  
by the colour of my skin to such shame.

I build you railroads and teach you freedom  
never turn back  
to hear you  
insult  
me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Am Overjoyed

I am overjoyed,  
Looking at flowers blooming:  
Spring is here again! !

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Am So Happy

(1)

I open my window,  
and my eyes catch the beauty:  
sunshine everywhere.

(2)

Sunlight in the sky,  
and hibiscus bloom outside:  
my lawn is now green.

(3)

Birds are twittering,  
on tree-tops and roofs so high:  
spring is here again.

(4)

Song-birds are dancing  
on branches of trees outside:  
flowers are blooming.

(5)

I am so happy  
to sit with you in the park:  
with geese in the lake.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Ask To See Myself

Up  
all night  
watching stars  
moonlight radiance  
this is the night of self revelation.

I ask to see myself in the darkness  
not hidden there  
only here  
on this  
bench.

Light  
at night  
makes you watch  
even shadows  
you wonder how there are so many shapes.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Begin To Recognize

I begin to recognize  
a storm fight  
only when the winds  
rustle waves of the Atlantic  
and sway  
coconut trees  
rooted in the islands  
like Earl whip-lashing rooftops  
and howling hurricane madness  
and sweeping through homes  
without invitation  
everything gone astray  
even tadpoles loitering  
in a pond  
and hiding from silver-fish  
and my knitted hammock  
all busted in a splurge of chaos  
and underneath the house  
I hide inside grandma chicken -coop  
peeping through broken boards  
watching  
to see if Uncle Max  
will open his ice-cream shop  
but it is now clap-boarded  
with sheets of plywood  
hiding from the hurricane  
and the wet wind  
touch my feet  
as I begin to recognize  
a storm fight  
a dry-coconut rolled over  
next to me  
thinking  
I would recognize it.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Belong To The Battle Front

Hold  
me  
tonight  
do not go  
without taking me!  
I belong to the Battle Front!

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Belong To You

When the morning sun  
shines upon the horizon  
and jewels of dew drops  
glitter in delight  
upon green, green grass  
and flowers blossom  
like a mother's charm  
as the wind delights  
in beautiful fragrances  
let me come to you  
with one special wish  
never to leave you  
naked as a dream  
for I belong to you  
like a river to the ocean  
you are my beginning  
you are my end.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Break Free

Twist of fate  
knots inside  
my belly wounds  
as I listen to the roaring sky line  
I continue my journey with a song  
singing with joy knowing that  
I break free

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Cannot Stay Longer (Tetractys)

I  
cannot  
stay longer:  
pull the sails down,  
the sea is getting tired of my complaints.

And the wind is approaching with a limp  
to cover my  
aching bones,  
crying  
lies.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Demand Freedom Too

I  
demand  
freedom too  
composed of rights  
my symbol for peace is not a gesture.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Do Not Know

I  
blew a kiss  
with pouted lips,  
and let it chart  
a silent course  
deep within  
your restless heart.

I clasp my hands  
to offer you  
a simple prayer,  
and bow my head  
with sanctimonial gesture  
before I ask Him  
for blessing too:  
just for you  
just for me,  
and all others  
I cannot see.

My eyes are closed  
to hide the sin  
I face within  
this journey  
of life,  
where I go  
I do not know.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Don'T Know

I don't know  
if tomorrow will come  
with my head hanging in shame  
as I recoil  
from home-grown Socialism.

But those who pride themselves  
as Comrades of a Revolution  
trying to construct a path  
with pebbles of Marx  
and Lenin  
and Kim Il Sung  
they're sadly wooing  
our people  
into deeper self-destruction.

As new vistas unfold  
in the illimitable horizon  
these comrades  
shackle the nation  
in entrapment  
they fill their coffers  
with the toil  
and sweat  
and blood  
of our people.

Along the way  
the path behind  
becomes broken  
and disjointed  
leaving the nation  
parched with hunger  
there is no bread  
to eat  
the strength of our people  
drained  
like the juice  
from a ripe mango

squeezed to the last drop.

Fear of our people's survival  
enhancing in the sleepless hours  
of the night  
gun-toting bandits  
roam the streets  
knocking down doors  
raping sisters  
raping mothers  
killing fathers and sons  
maddened by the impotence  
of their weakened victims.

When such Socialism  
can breed maggots  
in the minds of Comrades  
and let a nation weep  
while they sleep  
I pray in earnest  
not to be a part  
of its machinations.

(This poem is surfacing from my  
archive - written on June16,1984.  
It was not so long ago THE JONESTOWN MASSACRE  
took place) .

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Inhale The Earth

Just for this moment,  
when wind purges me in love:  
I inhale the earth...

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Know Now

I  
know now  
no reason  
necessary  
to hold a lie to set you free again.

But I cling to this last chance with slow breath,  
watching the wind  
almost lost  
within  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Need You

I  
believe  
miracles  
crested your soul  
to watch over me when sleep has no dreams.

In the hereafter beyond galaxies  
like a lonely  
traveler  
I need  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Never Speak Lies

Just  
what  
you think  
is the truth?  
I never speak lies!  
But does that mean I speak the truth?

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Pity Farewell

Raindrops of pearls flow  
In eyes glowing with teardrops  
I pity Farewell.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Speak The Truth

I  
speak  
the truth.  
Only thing is...  
you do not know it!  
and you may never know at all.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Think I Can

If you look  
at me without knowing  
who I am  
It is likely your judgment  
may fold your mind  
with the unthinkable  
and in your wandering sojourn  
you may believe  
I can fly to the moon  
become President of my country  
sail the seven seas  
sleep in the Royal Palace  
and have breakfast  
with the Queen  
or dance with  
Bollywood stars  
but all you have to do  
is just ask me  
before you sleep  
and think it's just a dream  
because the answer is  
I think I can

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Took The Fall

I took the fall  
on slippery ice  
without a frame of thought  
to explain how it happened  
wetness can lure you  
to your death  
or leave you with broken bones  
or let the pain  
vibrate slowly on swollen parts  
and the driveway  
waits in camouflage  
in freezing cold excitement  
for another victim  
here in the contour  
of black ice  
just crystal clear  
threatening the grid-lock  
on your padded boots  
you step on the ice again  
feeling the passion once more  
as if it were a rink.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Watch

No  
mental  
dysfunction  
will irritate  
this sea-salted rock of my mind today.

I watch the bodies nest on the sea-shore  
innocent as  
receding  
waves go  
by.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I Watch Him In My Dreams

I watch him in my dreams

(waking hours are sometimes dreams, too)

with endearment streaming

through my veins

and my blood feels cold

with trepidation

as I wonder what drama

is unfolding

in the silver city

of his mind

yesterday in history

his nuptial knot etched in ink

gratified his manhood

nurturing today

a frenzied hope

and a family more refreshing

like honey-dew

innocent of what tomorrow heralds

as he gestates in a wheel chair

with MS wriggling his toes

and youth imprisoned  
without trial or tribulation  
and in this ocean of grief  
I cry without tears  
longing for my son  
to see this world  
from dusk to dawn.  
Leonard Dabydeen

# I, Too, Have My Roots

My navel-string is attached to the Caribbean  
I, too, have my roots  
with coastland raindrops anointing my soul  
only English-speaking country  
juxtaposed to watch the Atlantic  
sometimes on the tip of Mount Roraima  
I'd listen like an Arawak  
to the winding rush of the Amazon river  
pointing my arrow to catch a meal  
hearing the cry of the mighty Kaieteur  
wondering why they did not see  
my Eldorado in broad day-light  
my long-tenured city of gold  
must be for sure they were lost  
in the medley of tunes emanating endlessly  
from the rainforest  
chirping of birds,  
monkeys swinging on tree tops  
like nature's Tarzan,  
toucans and rainbow- colored parrots  
esoteric in flight  
and alligators parading on mud-banks  
and tiger-cats rushing in leaps and bounds  
but never, never a sound of a quake  
sometimes a tremor is like a drizzle  
but more like a forgotten dream  
yet, I too, walked a mile or more  
for water to drink  
lit a candle when there was no light  
slept in a canoe with eyes wide open  
waiting for New Brunswick sardine  
and no-name bags of flour  
to make a meal  
like a burrowed contraband  
you cannot erase this memory  
even if I visit my country  
six feet below sea level  
so let me hold your hand, my friend  
and walk in faith and hope

through rubbles of Port-au-Prince  
we shall not witness God, I pray,  
sitting on the highest mountain-peak  
shouting: Let my people perish.

Leonard Dabydeen

# If Colour Matters Not

When  
I did  
not feature  
my inner self  
black or white or somewhere in between tint:

How will I know what is reality  
in innocence  
if colour  
matters  
not.

Leonard Dabydeen

# If I Were A Cartoonist

if I were a cartoonist  
and you were my cartoon  
what in this twisted world  
you'd rather be?  
would you rather be me  
making characters I don't know  
as if I have doubts who I am?  
or share the space on this forum  
like a prince-charming chameleon?  
my hands are gifted to pencil you  
as my mind would rather have you  
but I would like you to have wings  
to soar above the clouds  
to heave and sigh  
in the illimitable blue sky  
to seek adventure  
to seek tangential shape and form  
to keep rising above the crowd  
and be whatever you must be  
free as the wind  
free as the cartoon I cannot be.

Leonard Dabydeen

# If It Weren'T For Love

You

are laying in your new home

visitors

confirm you're there

with their signature

blotting lined pages

on a silent open book

your eyes look tired

from an over-worked

mortician's face-lift

hair coloured

and groomed

just the way you like it

what more can you

ask for

from those who sit

in the front pews

mourning

wet napkins of tears

only the other day

whatever day  
you may select  
or think it should be  
they whispered  
of your demise  
curiosity lavished their tongues  
with wishes  
wondering how  
you will be missed  
if you were to go upstairs  
but you're gone now  
to the other side  
after your last sleep  
on the sofa  
leaving a memory  
smelling of your  
wrinkled presence  
so glad to listen  
to blissful mourning  
asking yourself  
why bother

after you're gone

if it weren't for love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Illegal (Tetractys Poem)

Where  
can I  
have a place  
to call my home  
I am illegal in my own country.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I'M Not A Number

I am not  
a number  
not today  
not tomorrow  
nor the day after  
not even a stroke  
on a keyboard  
to watch a monitor  
scribble aliases  
of myself  
in numerical values  
or marked  
like a prisoner  
in a jail-house  
nor am I ever  
a tab at a blood clinic  
waiting for a vampire  
needle to plunge  
at my flesh  
withdrawing  
blood for DNA  
I am who I am  
always making  
a name for myself  
I am not  
a number.

Leonard Dabydeen

## I'M Not For Sale (Haiku)

I enjoy living  
In your beautiful garden:  
I am not for sale.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I'M Yours To Hold Tenderly

Read me when you're free,  
or make a date with me.  
I'm yours to hold tenderly;  
I'm always there for you to see;  
or to keep in your library.  
I'm a book with a life-long story-  
in sickness or health you'll cover me,  
and keep me warm and cozy,  
and turn my pages as you turn your body,  
and hold me under your pillow tightly.  
Then in the morn you'll wake with glee-  
remembering what you said to me:  
let me be you, and you be me;  
and your words will set me free,  
and forever make me happy.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Imagination

No  
noodle  
in my soup  
what I request  
is in a bowl with imagination.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Immigrant Prison Cry

How indefinite is my life  
wreaking with constraints  
here with outstretched hands  
I feel naked with clothes on  
my body ashamed  
of Nature's urgent calls  
let me go  
set me free  
I will not take your food  
I will only  
feed mouths  
you left on pavements  
while you crave  
your rotten core  
of blunted denials  
smelling the stench  
of who said what  
to whom and where  
just let me be  
set me free.

Leonard Dabydeen

# In A Dream

In a dream I sleep  
with eyes wide open  
looking at the skies  
watching the angels  
move in unison  
among the stars  
I let my hands  
mold the clouds  
into different shapes  
chasing a flock of sheep  
going where the wind  
is like a shepherd of the night  
I put a mound of hope  
inside a crater of the moon  
like a feathered pillow  
in preparation for a night cap  
before the next satellite  
comes looking  
for a drink of water  
then I stirred at the sound

of imaginary people

running in the hallway

with my feet reaching the floor

and my flailing hands closing

the nocturnal door

in a dream I sleep

no more, ever.

Leonard Dabydeen

# In A Graveyard

Curse of the Devil  
in darkness of a graveyard  
tombstones do not lie  
ghosts will walk in the night  
reading names of friends  
and foes alike  
in marbled italic inscriptions  
how they will guffaw  
at the memory  
in eulogizing joy  
pointing a witch's wand  
at some Mc Coy Donald guy  
but cry in rivulet woes  
for a child washed ashore  
from the Mediterranean sea  
and that Syrian mother refugee  
that ached for freedom  
now set free for eternity  
and soldier-boy shot down  
in rough terrains in Afghanistan  
an old man dressed in khurta and dhoti  
aged beyond a century  
some ghosts will be silent  
like the graves that be  
but welcome us all  
as the night awaits for you  
and for me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# In Captivity

You have not  
found the place  
you belong to  
but you have  
your dreams  
in an overhang  
like open umbrella  
sometimes  
you want to snarl  
in submission  
but suffocate  
the mind  
denying approbation  
and yet  
you keep  
looking  
because the place  
is waiting  
just for you  
like a shrine  
in captivity.

Leonard Dabydeen

# In God We Trust

If so much in faith in God we trust  
our love to share forever we must  
lift our spirits in outreach so high  
sifting away the rubbles to see the sky  
every darkness in time will vanish  
every light will sparkle without tarnish.

If with bruised hands our pain we must endure  
our hope in time will keep us secure  
this quake we know now leaves us in fear  
every tremor more, more of despair  
our parched lips in thirst we suffer  
covered in dust in heat unable to utter-

Words like drum-beat our hearts to mutter  
echoing through our songs without a stutter  
yet singing in hope we pray and pray  
glorifying our life with each new day  
if so much in God we trust  
our love to share forever we must.

Leonard Dabydeen

# In Life All Sorts Of Things Happen

In life

all sorts of things happen:

you tread carefully

along the journey

windy road

strange sounds and all

eyes like squirrel

everywhere

lightning flash

thunder growl

belly fat moans

body weight defies bmi

the healthy vista awakens

crying for herbal nutrition

organic cohorts dance in melody

brain storm and body growth

like mockery of the mind

in life

all sorts of things

happen.

Leonard Dabydeen

# In The Eyes Of The Mahatma

In the eyes of the Mahatma  
there is no wound to hurt the inner self  
bullet by bullet only feast on flesh  
and the echo of his voice:  
hey Ram, hey Ram  
only illuminated the sky  
with the purity of love  
and peace  
and contentment  
taking era by era  
to keep us unwinding  
our insubordination of hope  
our dreams to pursue  
wailing in the tremors of wars  
his sandaled feet  
are our footprints to follow  
each step in the path  
to a more condescending world  
to bring happiness  
even though I was wailing  
as a new born  
thirteen days before a gun  
was pointed to his frail body  
to end his march  
in transition for a better world  
hey Ram, hey Ram.

(Celebrating Mahatma Gandhi- assassinated on January 30,1948)

Leonard Dabydeen

# In The Park

How Mother Nature  
dances  
in such radiant delight  
of her beauty  
such magnificence  
cannot be challenged  
in Picasso's palette  
or van Gogh's trembling  
optic delight  
to imprint the same  
Fall brings for us  
such ecstasy in colours  
imagery beyond  
brush strokes  
of May Stevens  
or Emil Noble  
here our appetite  
for Life  
is living with Nature.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Indentured Man

They  
call me  
a coolie  
plantation bound  
indentureship is my common slave dance.

Shackled in chains to keep me from running  
like common thief  
they kept me  
docile  
too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Independence Arrival

Stand  
your ground  
feet firmly  
bedded  
mud-rock  
on coastland  
waving Atlantic  
holding  
the Golden Arrowhead  
aloft  
wafting the air  
buckman  
blackman  
coolie  
puttagee  
chinee  
whiteman  
God save the Queen  
rigor mortis  
now dwell  
on Independence arrival  
we hate  
we love  
we fight  
we despise  
yet longing  
to share  
togetherness  
our motherland  
yearning.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Indian Arrival

We  
bring you  
shapes of fire  
colour of skin  
indentureship wakes from very bad dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Initials

why it had to be

this way

and not as you'd have liked

that way

this way or that way

doesn't matter

or maybe it does

you try to figure it out

like you figure which shirt

to wear

for the dinner party

and some of us hide it in the mind

like the moon

hides behind the clouds

and shows up when you least expected

they say much about his poems

and he's T.S. Eliot

the initials reprimand his full name

so why then it's not W. Shakespeare

instead of William Shakespeare

or E. Dickinson for Emily Dickinson

or G. Chaucer for Geoffrey Chaucer

somehow the rendition is lackluster

if we say his name is Thomas Stearn Eliot

so we exude delight saying his name

is T.S. Eliot

I like the full name better

than initials.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Inspired By Vampires

Look  
at night  
where darkness  
hides from the moon  
bats swinging upside down under the house.  
They seem to be so inspired by vampires  
enjoying night  
with vision  
for the  
cause.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Intrepid

From the sky  
bearing no animosity  
not a shame to befriend  
no enemy daring  
it comes  
with a warning sign  
first as tiny drops  
a little later  
it waits for your wet response  
rushes as a torrent  
pours its heart out  
daunting  
marries the clouds  
makes some pregnant  
again  
like last evening  
while you watch  
eyes beaming  
through window panes.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Iranian Eyes

Iranian eyes

cannot sleep anymore

vigil in every nook and cranny

like a moonbeam flashlight

seeing a mosaic

flesh and blood

colour of hope and freedom

knowing

echoing

this moment is a sanctity

of fate

we hear your cry Iran

we shed your tears Iran

you have become

you belong.

(for Neda)

Leonard Dabydeen

# **Ironic Beggar**

How  
Daunting  
This picture  
On the one hand  
Cigarette burns and the other open.

His eyes peering at the empty sidewalk  
And his stomach  
Cries for a  
Morsel  
Food.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Is My Freedom Any Better?

My  
cup  
half full  
half empty -  
what should I say now?  
Is my Freedom any better?

Leonard Dabydeen

# It Burns Inside

I cling

to hope

knowing

it burns inside

boiling and churning

changing the colour of skin

black and white

brown and yellow

mullato diaspora

and a new kind

of family and friends

and not so certain

the opiate of drugs

belong to any kith or kin

and all I ask for

since there is no end

and as if I knew when

was the beginning

is premordial peace

and unpretentious love

just give me a handshake

a smile to be a bonus

and I shall walk

with you

till the end of our time

we are indeed

our future.

Leonard Dabydeen

# It Is Everything

It is everything  
always something looking at you  
teasing you like a child  
hiding in the crevices  
of your inflated mind  
always waiting to jump  
in your path  
as you make errands  
and innocent are letters  
forming words  
like a cross-word puzzles  
and then ricochet  
off your ball-pointed pen  
or tip-toeing like your fingers  
on a grey keyboard  
everything indeed it is  
from the bossom of your smile  
and the way you walk  
swaying this way and that  
and from the blind man  
crossing the street  
tapping his white cane  
and listening to the sound  
whispering in his ears  
it is everything  
from the music and madness  
of this unruly world  
and to the prayer on your alter  
where the bhajans  
reach for your thirsty soul  
everything indeed it is  
even when you make offer  
to love me  
as I love you  
in every cadence  
of an innocent heart-beat  
wanting more  
of what is becoming less.

Leonard Dabydeen

# It Is How We Fool We Self

It is how we fool we self  
all through history  
everything gonna be alright  
singing and dancing with one love  
knowing for real that come what may  
you can `t please everyone all the time  
but, of course, you can give satisfaction  
to some people some of the time  
night always will be dark  
even though you shine the light  
when morning comes  
you gonna still be black  
so make up you mind  
to do what is right  
it is your freedom  
when you pick up the fight  
full of heartache and pain.

Leonard Dabydeen

# It Is The Rain

It is the rain  
dancing on my rooftop  
tap my fingers  
to the beat  
no more quietude.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Itinerant Poet

Quote:

&quot;The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on.&quot;

~ Louis L'Amour

You are not alone on this wind-rush march,  
Itinerant ink scribing papyrus  
Upon demands and deadlines flaming porch;  
Or over ant-hills disturbed omnibus.

Sometimes the hour is long as day or night,  
And eyes rebel to yawning sleep-o-tide;  
But you cannot haul sail in a ship's flight  
For the ink must flow where shadows abide.

When it is not by your will, but dharma  
This oeuvre lit-fest embellish your mind,  
Tour your cradled domestic regatta  
And unfurl all your constraints free from bind.

Where vista cravings for horizons tempt,  
Our writing rhapsody must be well spent.

Leonard Dabydeen

# I've Got To Run

I've got to run

I said so many things before,

it will never be surprising if I pretend

to remember to forget. So can you.

This time is certain of a joint foreclosure.

Never mind I've got to run

a plane over the body of my leg.

I like the touch of a smooth body, too.

I scribed lines onto the legs with a marking gauge,

penciled them,

hold them in position in a vise.

Then as if my life is going to run

from the shackles of the work-bench,

I watched the mallet knock some sense

Into the head of the chisel,

deeper and deeper

forming a wood-grave.

A mortised mind so unforgiving

With a tenon arm moistened

With creamy carpenter's glue

closing the entrails

of an intimidating fit.

Is this the journey of man

and his environment?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Job-Seeker

Caught  
in the wind  
moving like a rolling stone  
knocking on doors  
or looking through windows  
or maybe not  
hoping all that's needed  
is one foot  
in the door  
right or left does not matter  
it's the beginning  
that underscores  
an opportunity  
to mark your name  
in the suspecting game  
of a job-seeker.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just A Dream

A little child wants to grow up  
to become a man  
and so he decides to seek help  
from among the people  
in his distant village  
where a book in the hand  
is the only voice that echoes  
deep in the crevices of his mind  
a television is but a dream  
and a computer not found  
in the pages of a thesaurus  
his country is six feet below  
any level of the ocean  
and English is all that God  
wants him to read  
and his pen becomes mightier  
than an MK45 (or 47- who cares)  
in his journey across the Atlantic  
he opens the book where the words  
etch a brighter light for living

nurturing his manhood mind -

remembering this:

reading makes a perfect man

conference a ready man

and writing an exact man

(and thank God for Francis Bacon)

this is my pursuit, not

just a dream.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just A Pause

Just  
a pause  
this moment  
taking deep breaths  
feeling the wind sift through my fragile bones.

A sigh of relief is spasmodic now  
as I hold him  
once again  
going  
home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just An Angel

She  
is just  
a little  
angel above  
decorating the deities with flowers.

She flitters like a butterfly with joy  
touches Shiva  
Ganesha  
Laxmi  
Om.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just As I Hold You

I shall take  
one more flight  
up the stairs  
just to feel the glow  
of achievement  
on higher ground  
no lose boulder  
to trip my blunted toes  
the grip is firm  
just as I hold you  
before I begin  
my pleasant dream.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just Growing Old

Just growing old  
not knowing  
just how old  
age does not matter  
and Time minds its own business  
inside the body  
bones, cartilages, and muscles  
they reconnoitre the mind  
vice versa  
almost all the time  
body and mind inseparable  
mind knows when body hurts  
body tells mind  
to err is not human  
both wish youth  
to stay young  
let heart and limbs  
be indefinable  
be indefatigable  
let every action purports  
its moment  
like an insignia  
this is what defines  
the age in you  
the age in me  
the age in all of us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just Picture Me

Just  
picture  
me, myself  
and I alone  
watching the tide of time rolling to shore.

And I alone sitting on a corner  
between the rocks  
poking life  
without  
fear.

Just  
picture  
me alone  
wondering what  
will happen if I should let go a scream.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Just The Same

Turn  
the tap  
just once, twice  
not a response  
maybe the plumbing is out of order.  
What must I do to be sure the plumbing  
is all to blame  
if life is  
just the  
same.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Kim Is Gold

Such elegance my eyes to behold  
Kim skating in royal ambiance towards gold  
this February in 2010 will I forever  
view the world only in Vancouver  
this ice rink respected your presence  
like a winged angel swaying in confidence  
you are indeed a beauty in balance and grace  
as you step on the podium with warm embrace  
forever we will be in your heart  
as long as ice skating is such elegant art.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Kites Are Flying

In flight paper wings  
sway in the whispering wind:  
kites are flying, too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Legacy

Clasp your hands  
Before you close your eyes:  
Let the Light in your heart  
Shine so bright,  
That darkness and shadows  
That prowl around you  
Day and night,  
Shame themselves into oblivion;  
Let the beacon of joy  
Bring everlasting peace and happiness  
Deep within your soul -  
So that you may one day  
Leave us with a legacy  
Of perpetual love.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Let Me Be...

Let me be  
even for a moment  
before you close your eyes  
your Commander-in-Chief  
I promise you transparency  
deep from within my heart  
I promise I shall not fail  
in providing visions of hope  
my audacity is evident  
my lingering hands  
will nurture every cleavage  
where weakness unfolds  
wet with the substance of joy  
as I offer this prayer  
in the poetry of my soul  
to be your Commander-in-Chief  
forevermore. Love always.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Let Me Finish My Snack

Let me finish my snack  
my scarlet plumage is all I own  
and you  
(haiku)

Leonard Dabydeen

# Let Me Touch You Now

Let me touch you now  
Before I take leave and go to sleep;  
Let me feel the warmth  
Of your heart-beat  
As it seeps through  
Your satin-green plumage.

The earthy green texture  
Of your fluffy feathers  
Bristles with the wind filtering  
Through my bamboo window;  
It makes me feel  
Eco-lubed in your green majesty.

And the shaft of light  
Pulsating through my attic window,  
Brings a resplendent green glow  
of rich, textured earthiness  
within my heart;  
In this ambience,  
I am forever green with happiness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Let Me Touch Your Wet Lips

let me touch your wet lips  
my child  
forever I will hold my peace  
because you mean  
so much to me  
I do not even  
have to lift my head  
to see that the skies are blue.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Life & Death

Night sounds whisper in my ears.

They tell me grave-yard stories of people

buried deep in punt-trenches. Howling dogs

mutilate the darkness.

Tonight xenophobia lingers in the air.

Death with fragile bones

stir flame between man and beast.

They say someone will die tonight.

If you stand on their grave. Me, too.

I am Life making mockery and mirth.

How can Death pierce the cold silence

with sepulchral sounds

and somber shadows

of quiet footprints

imprisoned in fortitude?

Death has a friend in Life.

Life has a friend in Death.

But the twain shall never meet.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Life If Full Of Rituals

&lt;/&gt;Life  
so fullof rituals  
of engagement  
or non-engagement  
we splutter  
our spleens  
in subliminity  
in political plethorics  
or literary amphitheatrics  
and social rhetorics  
losing our own  
inner profile  
almost having a non-desire  
of who we are  
or who we want to be  
or where we're going.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Life Is A Fire Burning

Even when your world is blind  
With oceans of atrocities  
Even when nothing seems to hint  
An iota of hope,  
Open your eyes as if you cannot sleep  
And heave and sigh as your heart  
Palpitates  
Knowing that life is a fire  
Burning without ashes crumbling  
And take a moment to seek His guidance  
And make one forward leap  
Towards your dreams  
Kindle tiny lamps to light  
Your journey, step by step  
Break the hurdles like falling rain  
Where dark, grey clouds abound  
Never look back on yesterday  
For there are many tomorrows  
Waiting to break your fall.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Life Of Flowers

If  
only  
we may have  
life of flowers

and greet sunshine in early morning dawn  
and delight in flowers' fresh fragrances  
so much beauty

unfolding  
before  
us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Light

Light is the affluence of life  
dancing in enigmatic swirls  
on dark surfaces  
in shapely adoration  
how my heart pulsates  
in tandem  
with cornea vibrations  
as I watch  
each swift movement  
like flitting butterflies  
starry glowing energy  
playing, enticing  
with theatrical harmony  
sometimes beyond darkness  
like a bottomless cavern  
light emerges  
in triumphant glory  
musing with the night  
in sweet amorphous dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Light (Tetractys)

Light  
so much  
immersion  
beautiful glow  
many colours radiating harmony.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Light In Your Heart

Search

my

dark room

for a pen

colour also black

groping in the dark you wonder

how difficult life can be without light in your heart.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Like A Song Bird

Like A Song Bird

Every morning when I wake up  
I open my dew-drenched sash window  
to the lilting tune of the kiskadee  
hopping and popping on a branch  
of the jamoon tree  
loaded with mouth-full bunches of  
jamoon berries, purple and delicious  
fresh-scented air wet with the morning dew  
intoxicate my nostrils with a heave and sigh  
I stretch my open arms  
in welcome glee  
to spread my soul among the trees  
I wish my voice could echo  
like a song bird  
kiss-kiss-ka-dee  
kiss-kiss-ka-dee  
to make me free.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Like Children

I  
cycled  
this roadway  
so many times  
and thought I knew where potholes are nesting.

But soon I realized even the tyres  
need our guidance  
like children  
on this  
road.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Like Three Musketeers

Eyes sharp as swords

vigilante Athos

powerful Porthos

cautious Aramis

sabre-like prancing in the back-yard

grandpa watch with visionary eyes

smoking his cigarette

coffee-cup gripped firmly in his hand

can't let go of this drink

as they dart swiftly around the shed

tumbling bits and pieces of dead wood

these tall trees are innocent of their dead

they holler at each other

echoing their togetherness

one for all

all for one

like three Musketeers

grandiose joy in freedom

watching grandchildren growing up.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Listening To Your Hearbeat

I  
surface  
from the pyre  
feeling the heat  
with molten ashes releasing my soul.

And now I travel to your heart with love  
listening to  
your heartbeat  
play a  
song.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Liu Xiaobo: A Tribute

Cut  
my tongue  
and I shall  
still speak to you  
with voice of freedom you cannot muzzle.

Your stubbornness is your weakness I hold  
in the palm of  
my open  
restless  
mind.

Give  
freedom  
a fighting  
chance to breathe here  
I will have no grudge against you again.

Sunshine comes to your backyard without fear  
brightening your  
lawn with hope  
of fresh  
grass.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Loneliness

She creeps around my room  
lulling any sound whispering  
in the creak of my chair  
or the opening of a cabinet  
watching and listening  
like a hawk perched for flight  
then she comes into my mind  
with a hug and a kiss  
loving me for who I am  
and who I want to be  
or who I have become  
then she tickles me  
in the vulnerability of my soul  
stirring me into life  
and I begin to let my keyboard play  
like a piano of my dreams  
as I play a song for her to sleep  
while I sift through my world  
like a spider's web  
trapped in the loneliness  
of bountiful joy and happiness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Long Is The Journey To Success

Mark  
here  
my words  
I echo  
for Freedom Fighters:  
long is the journey to Success.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Look At Me

Look  
at me  
come closer  
let me admire  
the retina connecting our two worlds.

You wish to leap at me with open paws  
then allow me  
to open  
my arms  
too.

This  
impact  
is beyond  
comprehension  
only Tarzan of the Apes remember.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Looking At My Calendar

Dark clouds hiding moon  
windstorm gathering more speed  
rain is in my dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Looking For Hope

Wherever

I go in my waking hours

or sleeping and dreaming

my locomotive mind

keeps chugging with rhyme

and rhythm in a drum beat

swathing in blue skies and bright sunshine

I visualize

his caricature etched in fear

standing on a platform

and sometimes embracing a pillar

vigilant like a rattle snake

day in

day out

looking for hope.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Looking In The Mirror

looking in the mirror  
    seeing myself  
    as yourself  
emptying my mind  
    without a downpour of tears  
    hope is not shattered  
you have visited the rubbles  
    too many times clawing  
    with bloodied bare hands  
heart is convinced the voice is heard  
    I can hear it, too  
    like my own voice  
the mirror is shimmering only because  
    you are trembling  
    as you hear the voice  
louder and louder like a clarinet  
    soon hope will be revealed  
    like innocence of a crime  
and you will be home free as the storm  
    from deep within  
    brings peace of mind  
as you comb the final debris  
    to bring your child home  
    where once there was a house.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Lost In The Echo Of Time

Yes, I must say  
we all know it  
and we see it  
like back and front  
of naked hands  
smoothed in Aloe cream  
but I remain  
uncertain as rolling pebbles  
in a blistering storm  
and feel the masquerading heat  
like a body  
trapped in heated chamber  
in a crematorium on fire  
as the diaspora swirls  
in caste and colour  
in rituals and antics  
ashrams and mandirs  
mosques and churches  
all burn inside  
with likes and dislikes  
and love blind  
as blackness of night  
or like the hollowness of  
a vaulted chamber  
and trafficking of flesh  
leaves no mortal wound  
free from calluses  
and indentured souls  
stir cluster like potpourri  
scenic in coated slavery  
lost in the echo of Time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Love For Angel

I found her pulsating  
in my heart in tandem  
to the rhythm of my heart-beat,  
bouncing up and down  
with illimitable joy;  
and sometimes in silent glee,  
like a fetus  
in a mother's womb,  
she would hold her breath  
only to keep me from dancing  
off my painted toes:  
oft times as I travelled this road,  
I pondered of her existence  
like the wind whispering among  
the old oak trees  
that measured the stoned path  
to my way back home;  
and yesterday when I made  
this trek without a freckle  
of thought for distance or time  
on my way back home,  
she bounced into the palm  
of my wandering mind:  
for me to see the visual,  
without a sliver of the virtual:  
this love for Angel I found...  
reeking of happiness like a treasure  
deep in the ocean of my heart;  
every meowing sound she made  
was like music in the distance,  
on my way back home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Love Of Nature

In the waning cascades  
of the evening sun  
I straddle across  
to the edge of the pond  
and settle on the rustic rocks  
beneath a sycamore tree  
and in a vigil moment  
I watch the horizon  
lingering in nonchalance  
deep in the bowels  
of an orange-glow sky  
the wind lurking  
among blades of grass  
whispering in monotone  
and rabbits querying  
garden vegetation  
as if they suspect  
organic grocery is not real  
and I listen to the neighing of horses  
and grunting of pigs

and quiet wading of geese  
in the water's rush  
over a lingering stream  
then my eyes  
dwell on a mole-hill  
watching black ants  
congregating for a night cap  
as the evening  
draws a curtain for the day  
full of love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Love Pity Lost

Love pity lost  
where the candle burns  
to a puddle of liquid wax  
yet my veined hands  
I clasp in prayer  
as I grace the murtis  
of Shree Ganesh  
and Lord Shiva  
and let Mother Laxmi  
bring light  
through the dark tunnels  
of my frightened dreams  
let my candle burn  
in your pulsating heart  
let everyday  
be my birthday  
and sing with me  
as if I'm there  
gracing your presence  
only me  
myself  
and you  
here today  
and gone tomorrow  
where children of our world  
need my presence  
to bring sunshine  
in their uncanny world.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Love Will Never End

I now take this brush  
and caress your inner soul:  
love will never end.

Yesterday a voice  
whispered in my throbbing heart:  
a ritual of love.

Today this same voice  
jingles beautiful bhajans:  
in Lord Krishna's name.

I feel so gifted  
with this everlasting love:  
when you are with me.

I now take this brush  
and caress your inner soul:  
love will never end.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Loving You (Tetractys)

Rain  
music  
joyful song  
listen alone  
this evening I feel wet under moonlight.

Mud-sling under my feet feels very soft  
I fold my hands  
thinking of  
loving  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Make Love To This World

I sail across oceans  
wide, wide blue seas  
climb highest mountains in my flight  
travel over hills and dales  
and valleys beyond the reach of moccasins  
each journey is sometimes laden  
with tormented moments  
the glass is broken, shattered  
those who throw stones  
also live in glass houses  
in every flight distance is without meaning  
as I come closer and closer to you  
I seek you like I seek myself  
in this humble abode of my mind  
and all I ask for in earnest  
from the bosom of your heart  
cuddle my soul with warmth  
your womb my cocoon of joy  
let me come forth  
and make love to this world  
the earth is my heaven  
my heaven is in this earth.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Make Me A Crocheted Pillow For My Tears

"You swallowed everything, like distance.  
Like the sea, like time. In you everything sank! "  
A Song of Despair: Pablo Neruda (1904-1973)

This mammoth quake came swiftly  
like an unpretentious thief  
to rattle my window before I sleep.  
Like a drunken megalomaniac  
with giant paws it shoved my ruffled bed  
and rustled me awake in heart-thumping fear.

In my eyes I am seeing the vista  
everywhere the earth beneath  
all things great and small  
all things awake or in slumber  
all things sweet and sour  
all things making love or being loved  
all things living or dying  
opens like unhinged jaws  
swallowing everything with guttural noise.

I watch everything broken and bruised  
out of yesterday's shape. More gulping  
sound amidst incessant screaming.  
The disarray has no art form. It is like a frenzied  
dislocation of the mind. And I begin to well  
in tears like the pending tsunami. Dry  
dust becomes moist on my face.  
My cry knows no sound but the agony  
of hope. Despair lingers like a dog  
wagging its tail for a bite of sandwich.

What vehement emptiness now takes over  
where I once stood and watered my flowers?  
Everything is nothing anymore. Do I cry in vain  
or do I cry out loud in pain? Did you know  
this will happen to me, Pablo Neruda?  
Wake up and look at me  
or make me a crocheted pillow for my tears.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Man And His Laughter

Man  
and his laughter  
need no currency  
you'll agree  
the brew  
like great grandma's stew  
is scented  
everywhere  
from land and sea  
every guffaw  
marks a niche  
of happiness  
full of humour  
laugh  
while you can  
'cause laughter  
makes the better  
part of you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Man And Nature

1.

mad man is shouting  
listening to the night wind -  
waves chase the sea.

2.

he rides a bike  
going down -hill towards home  
wheel and wind silent.

3.

he sits in the dark  
waiting for the light to come  
forgets sleep at night.

4.

birds playing a tune  
he knows only in the spring  
he holds a flower.

5.

sitting on the porch  
waiting for the sun to shine  
snoring with the leaves.

6.

he rings the doorbell  
before six at night again  
a dog greets him now.

7.

he walks to the barn  
before the cows come tonight  
a pail is waiting.

8.

his book is tired  
sitting outside with the trees  
no blood relation.

9.

bench on the sidewalk  
clouds turning grey in the sky  
he waits for the rain.

10.

he sleeps alone here  
birds listen to him snoring  
when does the night end?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Man In The Mirror

Not by chance  
not by design  
fire burning within  
he is only himself  
and does not know this  
yet he looks at him  
from within  
inside out  
vice versa  
as he solicits a smile  
pouts his lips  
lifts his eyelids  
like a surprised host  
then dash  
another furtive look  
and let fingers  
comb his hair  
not a moment to spare  
without realizing  
what he is looking at  
is only himself  
a man in the mirror.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Martians Landing

Martians are coming  
Watch the moon orbiting Earth  
A bright light beaming.

Leonard Dabydeen

# May Day

Let  
us  
make work  
toil and sweat  
with our hands and heart  
fruit of our labour joy of work.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Maybe If...

Maybe if the cows

jump over the moon

tonight

we'll never here the end of it

and maybe if the stars

stop twinkling in the skies

tomorrow

we'll never know what the earth

said to the heavens

darkness will overcome us

our eyes will be opened

yet closed

but maybe if this happen

and we turn on the light

the heavens will open

its doors again

only maybe if ....

Leonard Dabydeen

# Me, Myself, And I

Knitting woven threads  
Of life  
And of death  
I set ground rules  
Layer after layer  
Like Sun Tzu  
I give you a chance  
Only in pretense  
Then prod you  
In offense  
I make the rules  
Take every action  
Watch all reactions  
There is no turning back  
I lay the past  
Like a back-pack  
Let it stay with me  
And I look forward  
Today  
Tomorrow  
Standing my ground  
Knitting woven threads  
Of life  
And of death.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Memory

Rain  
falling  
keeps me wet  
at dawn of light  
to wake the memory that burns inside.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Mind And Body

Beating the mind  
suffocates the body  
to protect itself.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Misunderstandings

What misunderstandings reek the mind  
when parents are unable to decipher  
how their son or daughter is growing up  
how he or she makes decisions that  
rupture their sentiments  
like a cesarean wound? Being too  
sentimental jinks the opportunities  
for laying the deck of cards on the table  
and more like slicing animosities for dinner.

A son's girl-friend or girl's boyfriend  
is not a parent's business  
why should it be?  
and if he or she wants to stay overnight  
it is no big deal for the son or daughter  
(certainly a big deal for the parents  
like night catches day at sunset) .  
Where does the truce come from,  
if sympathies are lost in the dark  
and opinions are strained like porridge?  
Over time (go ahead and work on it)

a level approach is requisite love  
and a balancing act like a juggler  
on a tight rope  
if life must continue in crested partnership  
it must be as a beautiful rose  
on a thorny stem  
to wilt and die in mutual satisfaction  
with tears always lingering  
in the eyes of the relationship  
without a total recap  
of misunderstandings.  
Leonard Dabydeen

# Monsoon Curse

This  
blanket  
of grey clouds  
envelopes  
our land without any warning moon sign.

And the rain comes pouring incessantly  
flooding the land  
nowhere to  
escape  
now.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Morning Vista

I let the door reel on its tracks  
like a push cart at a grocery store  
just to listen to a black-feathered bird  
tweeting  
in her sweet lilting echo;  
her repetitive note is a fluting call  
heralding the flock  
prancing up and down sycamore trees;  
now a racoon comes hopping along  
on top of the fence  
stops abruptly to look at me  
lifting a paw to scratch its head;  
why does it look so puzzled  
I am yet to know  
maybe I look familiar  
who knows what I look like;  
I watch swaying trees  
lulling in cool breeze in the ravine  
where a train track beds on the other side  
where the grass is fresh and green  
I, too, now scratch my head  
it's a morning thing to do  
waiting for a freight train.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Moving On (Tetractys)

I  
shall find  
what I am  
looking for now  
as long as I move forward without stop.

Steady must be my course without failure  
no rhyme, reason  
to hold back  
moving  
on.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Best Friend

8 June is Best Friend's Day

A good friend listens to your adventures, a best friend makes them with you.

My Best Friend

She carries me in her mind  
wrapped in a cozy blanket  
just to keep me warm;  
my secrets I cannot hide  
or try re-inventing  
when her nearness  
exudes a perfume of awareness;  
she knows it all  
sometimes I think  
like a common thief:  
every crevice, crack, and corner  
where I heave a sigh  
she raises a brow -  
I am here for you, she says;  
not only a shoulder  
to lean on, but to embrace  
heart to heart  
as God only knows  
she is my best friend.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Broken World

When the mind is kindled  
with disillusionment  
when the sharp sword of doubt  
cuts slivers of your tongue  
and make you speak  
in languages unutterable  
you become afraid  
that you're losing  
your Being  
your consciousness  
your hope for sharing  
one moment of joy  
one glimpse of comfort  
one gauze of friendship  
all lost in a blindfold  
of a schizophrenic dream.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Faith

I  
come  
with arms  
open wide  
seeking all your help  
my faith lies only in your hands.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Future

Shake  
my hands  
feel the touch  
deep vibration  
a palm reader sees my future with you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Game Plan

My game plan  
is to write you a letter  
while I sit  
in the celestial sky-dome  
each star will twinkle  
brighter than before  
when I form a keyword  
and I don't care  
if I cross t's  
or dot I's  
just because  
I've done that before  
and didn't get  
any better response  
so now I am going  
to make this letter  
in bold ink  
and mail it to you  
in a fortuitous dream  
with a stamp  
from my throbbing heart.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Gray Matter

Crawling in my brain -  
A cockroach takes a good look  
Viewing gray matter.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Loneliness

I sit on the corner of Bay & Yonge  
my double-layered cardboard stool  
squeaking in annoyance at my posture  
and my tattered winter coat  
refuses to complain of the cold  
with its inner lining shredded  
by free-range mice  
my checkered scarf wrapped  
around my neck  
like Dada in Dance India Dance  
and I don't know what my hat  
looks like in its grey-haired nest  
yet feels as if it were an apple  
on my uncombed crown  
and my right hand akimbo  
holding an empty bowl  
preying on each passer-by  
I remain still  
quiet as the night  
nothing happens unless  
you make a move yourself  
my tongue darts up my palate  
as the air becomes tickled  
with the scent of Chinese food  
my empty stomach reminds me  
to keep a tab on my hunger  
with my sluggish eyes brooding  
and saving a thought for  
quake-victims in Haiti  
then I plunge deep into my mind  
to ravage my loneliness  
and feast at every morsel of it  
hoping tomorrow will start a new day.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Own Eyes...

I see spectacles  
when I wear glasses  
but my own eyes are natural

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Pandal (Tetractys)

My  
pandal  
stashed in pith  
Tagore's memoir  
I come to make Mother Durga puja.

In yogi stance my body in loin cloth  
Mother Durga  
comes to me  
as I  
pray.

Leonard Dabydeen

# My Place

My place  
is in the sky  
where my kite  
is flying high  
dressed in rainbow colours  
admiring the world  
singing with the wind  
dancing to the admiration  
of the clouds  
drifting slowly by.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Namaste, Gandhiji

Footprints on the sands of time  
glow with birthmark  
each glittering step  
unshaken and challenging  
not by yielding to temptation  
but thirst for truth  
for the awakening of men  
for soul-searching  
in glimpses of the Transvaal  
for monsoon moments  
in vestibules of maharajas  
turnstiles in South Africa  
under a mango tree in India  
ricocheting in global rumbles  
for peace and non-violence  
and as the wind whispers  
in a stormy weather  
where wars create bedrocks  
for sleepless journeys  
I clasp my hands  
in solemn gesture  
as if it were the beginning  
of the end  
namaste, Gandhiji.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Newtown [tetractys]

Grief  
inside  
difficult  
to let go tears  
Newtown children we pray for you always.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Night

Night  
climbs into my thoughts  
as my mind  
stirs into consciousness  
and I begin  
to sleep-walk  
as I feel the silence of darkness  
cat-walk into my dreams  
and I listen to owls  
day-dreaming  
and conferencing  
about the color of daylight  
so xenophobic  
in their hooting echoes  
and then  
watching the undisturbed sky  
I catapult into the clouds  
just to listen to their watery joy  
as they hide the moon  
from harnessing my dreams  
and then  
with hands akimbo  
I plummet to the stars  
just to catch a glimpse  
of their twinkling beauty  
excited to make new friends  
wherever I go  
until the moon  
goes to sleep  
and I come home  
to let the cows  
out in the pasture  
of untainted joy.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Night (Tetractys Poem)

Night  
whispers  
in the dark  
makes eerie sounds  
with the wind making it so comforting.

I hear night sounds like an owl hooting far  
sitting alone  
in the dark  
moonlight  
still.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Night Has Many Faces

Night has many faces  
they metamorphose  
in the swell of mood-swings  
to conjure images of personhood  
defy even Ovid in his dream-skit  
of a Greek Trojan war  
in a polyphonic gathering  
parched vocals fabricate  
a mind's drumbeat  
to evoke a spirit  
to lure the wetness  
that drench from overflowing tears  
some faces cry with joyful pain  
some faces cry with sorrow  
grief has no fidelity  
joy mocks its fraternity  
with faces alluring waning day  
night changes everything.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Night Never Ends

Night never ends  
where there is no beginning  
dark shadows  
blur starry skies  
blanketing my hopes  
my dreams for a better life  
each passing day  
I feel the bondage  
deep in my bones  
shackles sear my heart  
no tears to well  
I sit in a corner  
comforting grilled walls  
sharing my incessant pain  
someday will come  
from the corner of my eye  
one spark of light  
where my footprint  
will make  
a new dawn  
on freedom  
one step at a time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Night Sounds

Night sounds  
they are  
orchestrated  
with anonymity  
with familiarity  
voices parading  
in the dark  
someone shouting  
beat language  
echoing call of darkness  
spooky  
or blended with child play  
mother and child  
rubber burning  
with screech of traffic  
interstate or highway  
crickets calling  
bloated frogs croaking  
on bedrock by the pond  
in a village yard  
owls keep hooting  
night listens  
to cat calls  
mournful meowing  
dogs down the street  
barking, crying  
and across the boardwalk  
mosquitoes buzz  
and I snore  
relentlessly  
as moonlight  
chases shadows away.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Night Watch

Here  
night watch  
is omen  
a wanderer  
as moonlight scans stained crosses on tombstones.

Stars twinkle eerily on somber trees:  
their whispering  
is about  
broken  
dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Nirbhaya

This  
fanfare  
must not be  
choreographed  
ordeal Nirbhaya suffered in the bus.

Let the eye of India see her bright light  
travesty and shame  
women face  
all the  
time.

No  
hero  
ride request  
gurdwara girl  
full of promises to feel worthy of.

Leonard Dabydeen

# No Answers

I  
grow up  
with questions  
and no answers  
to pursue dreams my father left behind.

Till the end of time I will ponder why  
it happened to  
me without  
a chance  
meet.

Leonard Dabydeen

# No Man Is A Slave

Bonded like wounded animals  
shackled in underground darkness  
a slave song plays in minds  
of victims beyond retreat  
how they dance  
to pimps and peddlers  
to posture in darkness  
to huddle in crowded rooms  
how they gyrate in body grief  
in sweat and tears  
through night and day  
all this must end  
with folded fists to fight  
to slice pitiful penury  
that lures this global game  
like a Roman battle arena  
courage our hope  
strength our destiny  
no man is a slave  
to each we pledge  
to be our brother's keeper  
to unshackle this bondage.

Leonard Dabydeen

# No Moment Lasts Forever

No moment  
lasts forever  
in the vast intensity of the mind  
no shivering hope  
falls behind without notice  
and if dreams  
begin to fade  
this is only because  
faith and trust  
hold hands to cement  
your foundation of love  
watching your every move  
as a challenge to break your bond  
and as this night  
quivers in absence of the moon  
let diyas kindle light  
to harness the beauty of bhajans  
calming the mind  
as each puja  
is flavoured with mantras  
in my temple courtyard  
where Lord Shiva and Parvati  
purify your soul  
with darshans  
as we celebrate  
Maha Shivaratri  
with delightful purity.

Leonard Dabydeen

# No Shame

let me continue  
this clan forever tonight;  
dark clouds have no shame.

Leonard Dabydeen

## No.63 Beach

Atlantic air shifting waves  
rustling the shore line  
sifting  
through coconut trees  
where they stalk the beach  
I sit alone  
on a broken branch  
breathing  
Corentyne sands  
watching seined men  
gathering shrimps and fishes  
as waves caress the sand  
and recede  
like a satisfied lover  
look how frail crabs  
shuttle about  
in no particular direction  
I rest my water coconut  
between my legs  
and cap my eyes  
to peer at the horizon  
with a rising sun  
chasing shadows  
where critters cannot sleep.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Not A Second Chance

Not a second chance to enjoy it:

this life makes me feel

like Robinson Crusoe

sitting on a driftwood

on an island without a name,

watching the ocean

kissing the shoreline-

only to make mockery

of my existence.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Not Such A Bad Idea (Tetractys)

Here  
is where  
I want you  
to sit with me  
so that we can talk about making love.

Perhaps it is not such a bad idea  
that you listen  
to what I  
have to  
say.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Now Tell Me

Now tell me  
what evening romance  
I must endure  
to lust over this magnificent skyline  
and euphoric vista  
in the eye of the storm  
there are grey clouds  
haloed with glowing tints  
luring the cluster of trees  
and innocent brush of breeze  
lull the mind  
like a glass of red wine  
stirring desire  
to cry for more  
I watch in awe  
and crave this view will last  
as long as the sky  
wears new dresses everyday  
matching the mood  
in my being  
I am doused in happiness  
just to view  
the rapture of the evening.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Nuanced: All The Way...

Take your time  
hurry up  
before I'm done  
before you're ready  
before you know it  
before you start  
before it's gone  
before you ask  
before you forget  
before you scream  
before you laugh  
before you slow down  
before you hurry up  
before this is over  
hurry up  
take your time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Ocean With Love

Hash-brown rippling waves  
linger serene  
in silent rush  
to sandy beach shoreline  
the Atlantic salted air wafting  
gently in hymnal equanimity  
and shrimp-catchers haul  
seined catch for new day market  
in breath of Corentyne sands  
this vast expanse of ocean  
a mystical aura  
brings tranquil adoration  
peace and happiness  
ocean with love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Ode To The Moon

I come here every evening this past week  
to sit on this wooden bench, as if invited  
to keep watch on the moon . I do not seek  
for a moment to look at the fleet of united,  
grey clouds saunter aimlessly in the path of light;  
nothing keeps my patience from falling off a cliff  
in the terrains of my mind. I only care for the moon  
to show its emboldened face within my sight.  
Here is where I go into a sweet and enduring tiff  
to make peace with myself, acting like a buffoon.

Yesterday, I brought Angel with me to watch the moon.  
I wanted to introduce her as a friend of a friend,  
knowing that if I returned to my tattered cabin, soon  
I'd have to talk to myself; or it may be the end.  
But my mind sifted through every layer of absence  
that I created in the rule of engagement; then I waited  
to see if the moon would greet us like it did before,  
when it shone its light over the ocean to welcome our presence.  
Angel was so delighted, I felt her happiness was unabated;  
and I, being so excited, couldn't ask for anything more.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Of Peril And Rescue

When  
peril  
strikes the core  
of your being  
you play a fiduciary symphony.

You flail your bare hands without direction  
orchestrating  
aimlessly  
seeking  
help.

Then  
I come  
like Zeus  
to rescue you  
and shore your dreams before the wind is gone.

I unfold this moonlight to see the skies  
sit on a rock  
playing with  
pebbles  
sad.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Of Three Black Caribbean Writers....(Andre Alexis, Ta- Nehisi Coates And Marlon James)

Their  
colour  
raised no doubt  
their inner eyes  
absorbed the rhapsody of all our dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Oh How Love Is Deaf

Oh how love is deaf  
and lovers cannot hear  
the pounding of their hearts...

Leonard Dabydeen

# Oh Valentine! ! !

You are my Rembrandt  
of a beautiful red rose  
your Fibonacci petals  
freshened by wetness  
of pearl-like dew drops  
amor a vida  
raat aur din diya jale  
like a petal chalice  
in heaven's garden  
my botanic crown  
heralded by twittering birds  
sohani raat del chuke  
oh Valentine! !  
Oh Valentine! ! !

Leonard Dabydeen

## Okla. Shelter (Tetractys)

Wind  
raging  
in stupor  
furious force  
not a roof remained standing inside Moore.

Out of this rubble our faith to rebuild  
roof overhead  
new shelter  
standing  
tall.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Okla. Storm (Tetractys)

Storm  
gusting  
raging wind  
ravages homes  
a city whiplashed by tornado gone.

Death and destruction have no faith to claim  
to each his own  
no colour  
nothing  
else.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

In the early Sunday morn  
lighted diyas in your mandir  
bring endless pleasure  
glowing in delight  
and aromatic incense  
entice the air with a holy trance  
of spiritual happiness  
in the secret chambers  
of my heart  
and when your voice  
begins to sing  
a beautiful bhajan  
in lilting purity  
as you make your entry  
a rapturous feeling  
of elation dances  
with elusive joy  
in my mind  
as you chant the names  
of Mother Laxmi  
of Lord Shiva  
of Lord Krishna  
of Lord Ganesha  
performing a pooja  
in my travelling soul  
with unfettered happiness  
and the music soothes  
my inner being  
in prayer as I ask  
what blessing do you seek?  
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Leonard Dabydeen

# On Borrowed Time

We know it  
without the written word  
escalating like a tsunami  
to swallow up our breathless hearts  
complex and compound our genre of hope  
as we burst out  
with a hue and cry  
from the warmth of the womb  
esoteric as always  
in a penitentiary of pleasurable pain  
we cry for joy  
and let our mothers  
impose a smile on their faces  
and with bright eyes  
a dazzling fantasy of life  
changes the echo  
as it ricochets in the wind  
reading our rights  
each of us in a different way  
on borrowed time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# On My Way Home

I see the distance  
from an unknown beginning;  
and I do not see the end  
because it is far, far away  
or enigmatic in some way;  
eyes like sunshine every morning  
open wide as the skies  
watching all the hues and tints of life,  
making sense and nonsense  
in the hub of activities;  
sometimes I gather enough urge  
to tear the road- map I did not get  
and even look for fellow travelers  
making visits just like me  
joining acquaintances  
or peddling friendship  
while I take to the side streets  
on my way home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# On My Way Home (Tetractys)

wait  
for you  
all day long  
at the crossing  
now I am on my way home, too worried.

Leonard Dabydeen

# On The Inside

On the inside life plays a frantic tune  
it may sound like the Requiem by Mozart  
in a mixture of piano and violin,  
Or the resonant Erotica by Beethoven  
or the more recent lilting strut of the sitar  
by the glorifying maestro, Ravi Shankar  
a frantic tune nonetheless that carries  
the sound of your own voice  
on the inside  
you are wrapped in your comfort zone  
within the perimeter of unshaped walls  
without windows and peeping holes  
without knowing what the honking of horns  
sounds like as buses and cars and trains  
and all things mobile do from the outside  
without knowing what it feels like  
as the old man sits on the corner of a busy pavement  
without a definition of homelessness or hunger  
then it happens  
like a sudden tear on the seat of your pants

as the recession takes you to the outside  
where you now see roses with many colors  
and you begin to develop a rash  
for staying too long on the inside  
wiser than a wizard you must take note  
that sometimes, sooner than later, it is  
pertinent to look outside the box  
while you are still  
on the inside.

Leonard Dabydeen

# On This Father's Day

How exalted is your name  
that I feel so proud  
more than a country-side peacock  
to pen it on the dotted line?  
I, too, want to have siblings  
scroll their insignia like a notary public;  
and to feel the enormity  
of this uncanny responsibility.  
Yet, sometimes I feel puzzled  
like a painting of Rembrandt  
embracing a wall  
on a subway station,  
or a splash of color by Picasso,  
to look the stub of an affidavit  
with bare naked eyes  
and to see the titled name  
blunted like a barbeque brush  
raking the charged grill  
of my sacrificed flesh.  
Flesh and blood cannot hide  
not even blotted out  
like a dry- erase on a white board.  
And so if by civil procedure  
you allow yourself  
to act in faith and trust.  
then let God be with you  
on this Father's Day.

Leonard Dabydeen

# On This Path

Tears  
trickle  
down my face  
leaving a print  
to mark scorching heat of pain in my heart.

My trek is long and hard beyond repair  
stained with bitter  
grief and pain  
on this  
path.

Leonard Dabydeen

## On This River's Edge

I search everywhere on this river's edge  
combing wet marsh with bare feet  
driftwood loitering with freckled skin  
wait patiently for the next tide  
evening soon will come  
and this dense forest  
will take my hope away  
I do not want to lose hope  
it took me almost forever  
to nurture it like I nurture you  
If I put a penny  
in your piggy-bank tonight  
will you come out of hiding  
and spot yourself a seat  
where I can sit beside you?  
Please...thank you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# One Day At A Time

You are not alone:  
what you were yesterday,  
made what you are today –  
a beacon-light star-spangling  
with hopes and dreams:  
one day at a time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# One Drop To Start

Just  
water  
to quench thirst  
one dropp to start  
the healing of the dryness in the throat.

Drought lingers one more night to follow day  
waiting for rain  
keep marching  
under  
clouds.

Leonard Dabydeen

# One For The Road

Then I sat on the stool  
with head bowed as if in prayer  
just waiting for it to happen  
as the bartender looked at me  
just one more for the road  
I plea bargained for -  
even if he knew  
every drunk's prayer;  
he stood there  
whispering to his mind  
undecided like a bullet  
in an AK45 in a prison camp  
I shot at him with an eye lid  
to feel his response  
but he knew it was over  
I was just a dead drunk  
no need for the hint  
it will not be  
one more for the road:  
never was  
never shall be.

Leonard Dabydeen

# One Step At A Time

Night never ends  
where there is no beginning  
dark shadows  
blur starry skies  
blanketing my hopes  
my dreams for a better life  
each passing day  
I feel the bondage  
deep in my bones  
shackles sear my heart  
no tears to well  
I sit in a corner  
comforting grilled walls  
sharing my incessant pain  
someday will come  
from the corner of my eye  
one spark of light  
where my footprint  
will make  
a new dawn  
on freedom  
one step at a time.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Onions (Haiku)

Rubbed my watery  
Eyes as if I want to cry:  
The air is pungent.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our Humanity

I bring to bear no secret realm to share  
But human atrocities I most fear;  
Of war zones where death is enemy cry  
As bombs rain from tomahawks in the sky.

Man's grief to man is penchant human foil  
And his loss greater than sum of his toil;  
In his shadows are invisible tears,  
Can he recluse himself in later years?

No sarcophagus will score memory  
Where layered bones are bundled to bury;  
Dust to dust in man's cape he must tally  
And hope for a future to be happy.

Inequality is our enemy;  
Satyagraha is our posterity.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our Journey Is Short

Let  
me  
greet you  
with a smile  
our journey is short  
you may not pass through here again.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our Life Path (Maha Shivaratri)

Enter the nostrils  
blend secretly with the air  
as I breathe  
precious Chandan  
swirling at the altar  
I breathe the musk  
feeling holistic  
and looking at each murti  
as I bow in prayer:  
tat-savitur varenyam  
in esoteric pledge  
asking precious Lord Shiva  
to let the light  
from dusk to dawn  
bring peace and comfort  
as it glows towards  
our journey  
our life-path.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our Only Dream

Together  
we raise a banner  
high above  
faces of the crowd  
and we walk  
this earth  
day after day  
shredding blindfolds  
steeped in torture  
and ignominy of hate  
not watering eyes  
ever watchful  
in faith  
for human rights  
human dignity  
rhapsodies across horizons  
as we carry banners  
and our voices echo  
for ever Freedom  
our only dream.  
(\*Birthday: 50 Years Amnesty International)

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our Own World

Our own world  
was rich in silver and gold  
or so the story was told  
when the morning light  
filtered through our hopes  
and dreams from yesterday  
and Time did not wilt away  
our echoing hearts  
as we buttressed our minds  
like steel welded on steel  
and when the cold wind and snow  
made mockery  
of our tropical attachment  
we smirked in exiled derision  
holstered in a Brampton basement  
many of us looking for a night cap  
uncertain or unwavering  
like roses and thorns  
not knowing how to differentiate  
night from day

and candle light vigil  
and cream-colored walls  
shadowed our existence  
spanning cities  
from Toronto to Ottawa  
a Canadian out-cry  
and a brother's strength  
molding us with rock-like firmness  
in our own world.

(for Cyril, Sept.2/84)

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our True Self

Just  
the way  
it happens  
to all of us  
chromosome cocktail collage confetti.

You and I are made to be who we are  
or who we want  
to be like  
our true  
self.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Our Women

Our women, our mothers  
Our sisters, our daughters  
Our aunts, our relatives  
Our arrival  
Out of their umbilical womb  
We take shape in our mindset  
In their intrusion our blood  
We share their joys and sorrows  
We breathe in their miseries  
Their gender desires and needs  
How they weep for us  
Laugh for us  
Knowing we're not in a Trojan Horse  
In their sleep they dream for us  
Tell us tales to nurture our imaginations  
But we do not wipe their tears  
But we cry  
When they set us free  
We must be their great expectations  
They wish for us to be.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Patience

There  
must be  
a secret  
somewhere nearby  
that will bring the errant mind little peace.

Everywhere all things are lonely tonight  
even the fox  
looking out  
behind  
rocks.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Peace (Tetractys)

When  
silence  
becomes so  
tranquil in dream  
Ganga Mata kinare brings me peace.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Pecan Joy

Tea  
cold  
tonight  
quench my thirst  
wet lips savour taste  
with pecan joy inside clay pot.

Leonard Dabydeen

# People Watching

People watching everywhere

have eyes with stories

far beyond the wings

of their imagination

some eyes look

into other eyes

in a waiting room

trying to decipher

what story brings them

for an x-ray

or maybe a test

for rectal dysfunction

people watching cannot tell

every story is a secret

locked within the retinas

on a bench in the park

people are shuffling

New York Times

looking for answers

in a recession

while pigeons strut  
on the dehydrated lawn  
picking at bread crumbs  
children are playing  
in a school yard  
some ready for a tussle  
to make racial profiling  
another story to tell  
far, far beyond the oceans  
hunger eats away  
at the flesh with plenty  
of water meandering  
where homes were  
like a jewel of real estate  
as people watching  
cannot see hope  
at the dawn of a new day  
but people watching  
must continue  
without falling asleep.



# Philip Moore

PHILIP MOORE

[Tribute]

By Leonard Dabydeen

Close your eyes

go to sleep;

we shall not weep

but lift our heads

up high

to watch this monument

that you built upon

rocks of African slaves;

embellishment -

rising to emancipation glory,

plantation Lilienburg rustling

with breezes across

the Canje river.

And callous hands

stained in brown sugar

Cuffy and Akara

stirring a rebellion

watching

Governor Van Hoogenheim

move house

in the heart of Magdalenenburg,

with a new dawn

for independent Guyana

with Cuffy

towering in the nation's capital:

a monument

at the Square of the Revolution!

Leonard Dabydeen

# Philippines Weeping

When life becomes  
a rubble of stones  
every stone of hope  
is turned upside down  
there is no dampness  
to wet the imagination  
to cool dry faith  
to scurry a dream  
everything is scalded  
by caustic seawater  
among the dead  
I look for teardrops  
and a moving hand  
just one icon  
to ease the pain  
that is stifling  
this hurt inside.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Pious Are Petals

pockets of posies  
plunder the prancing prairies:  
pious are petals.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Please Read Me As I Am

Please read me as I am

a book of words and pictures

a book of people, places and things

a book of numbers and graphics

a book of winds and waves

and journeys of man and animals

hammered in parchment

bonded in erudition

sometimes I can make you laugh

if you have a sense of humor

or make you cry, don't ask me why

or watch you devour me

only to relish more, some more

please read me as I am

let me be your pooja

in an atmosphere

of lavender and jasmine

and capture the evanescence

of our past, present and future

nothing to escape

nothing to hide  
sometimes derisive  
or deceptive and divisive  
a story-teller with a mind filtered  
on pages with numbers  
fingered in enigmatic delight  
under the scrutiny of your kindled light  
you must taste me first  
make certain the palate offers  
sweet or sour approval  
and then some  
as you swallow knowingly  
ingredients oozing enzymes  
with finer prints  
and then some  
for the digestive juices  
to relish in recessed delight  
meanwhile as I play  
with the tourniquet  
of Sir Francis Bacon  
please read me as I am.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Pleasure

The pleasure is endless  
like a swirling aromatic  
incense burning  
in the secret chambers  
of my heart  
when the purity  
of your voice  
begins to sing  
a beautiful bhajan  
as you step out  
of your pristine room  
and make your entry  
into your warm shower  
a rapturous feeling  
of elation dances  
with elusive joy  
in my mind  
as you chant the names  
of Lord Shiva  
of Lord Krishna

of Lord Ganesha

of Mother Laxmi

like an encryption

of a pooja in my soul.

what blessing do you seek?

Leonard Dabydeen

## Poet Rises

Out of yesterday  
where voices are as dim  
as evening light  
their sounds  
blunted by wrong-doing  
a poet rises from ocean depth  
to awaken the world with joy  
one blot of ink at a time  
play words into music  
let the mind solace the body  
in a carousel of happiness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Possibility

All things are possible  
if you can do it  
and I can do it  
they can do it too  
but when Death  
holds the reins  
and you're trapped  
in a tangled web  
of a spider's hold  
you jostle to survive  
twisting, kicking, screaming  
then slowly, slowly  
your mind becomes  
unfettered and free  
your body stays calm  
as Death takes its toll  
ending the possibility.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Pouring Rain

In tiny droplets  
comes the rain  
wetting my face  
as I lay my water-goblet  
among the parched rocks  
no more dehydration  
in the parched fields  
of my mind  
monsoon river  
flows deep inside me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Prism Of Time

Where  
do I  
go from here  
without a road  
this journey is marred with things familiar.

I begin to take broken steps looking  
at the chair and  
coffee cup  
prisms of  
time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Prison Cry

How indefinite is my life  
wreaking with constraints  
here with outstretched hands  
I feel naked with clothes on  
my body ashamed  
of Nature's urgent calls  
let me go  
set me free  
I will not take your food  
I will only  
feed mouths  
you left on pavements  
while you crave  
your rotten core  
of blunted denials  
smelling the stench  
of who said what  
to whom and where  
just let me be  
set me free.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Quarter Moon

Night shadows dance  
in the twilight  
as the moon  
comes from behind grey clouds with a smile.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Raindrops

When  
raindrops  
fall on my  
window at night  
I feel the pleasure like a gifted child.  
My heart is overjoyed with excitement  
at last the rain  
is speaking  
to my  
heart.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Raindrops (Haiku Trinity)

(i)

Effervescence with  
sparkle in tiny raindrops:  
thunder in the skies.

(ii)

Wind begins to read  
monsoon picture in my mind:  
my feet mop the rain.

(iii)

I love the jingle-  
raindrops walking on my lawn-  
enjoy the wetness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Raindrops Our Tears

Raindrops our tears  
we cry from the bosom of our hearts  
shaking like a tremor  
a quake in quantum leap  
puncturing our dreams  
our hopes scattered like a rubble  
death is angry as a hungry child  
planting its presence  
on naked streets of Port-au-Prince  
we do not know where to go from here  
there is no voodoo in our song  
we embrace this moment  
in our own world  
where love needs no rain- check.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Rape If Free

The  
basin  
is empty  
Congo famine  
leaves the bones parched with dry skin and burnt flesh.

The distance to a camp is left open  
for molesters  
rape is free  
on this  
road.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Refuge (Tetractys Poem)

I  
come here  
for refuge  
a grain of salt  
my empty stomach knows all about it.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Refugee (Ii)

I  
sat here  
uncertain  
if this tree- stub  
is all I possess from border-crossing.

With nothing to hide and no shame to sell  
I take my chance  
just waiting  
status  
none.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Remember Tiananmen Square (June 4,1989)

How the student  
left his noodles  
somewhere called home  
just to be here  
no ipod  
nor cell phone  
but just his back-pack  
and a quick mind  
and a high-low monotone  
gathering voices  
like glasnost  
wide as the open sky  
where little birds  
fly hither and thither  
all hoping for change  
all want their voices heard  
free to dissent  
free to agree  
free to disagree  
and placards  
boasting defiance  
to see Hu Yaobang  
with empty stomach  
aching to be heard  
raising hands to protest  
as the Gate of Heavenly Peace  
whispers in aberration  
only to be slaughtered  
or blasted into oblivion  
as the world cries  
like raindrops from the sky.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Remembering Edgar Allan Poe

Just  
one night  
when the moon  
silhouetted  
I listened to sounds of broken bottles.

Poe was mad like hell or drunk to heaven  
because he was  
looking for  
some more  
booze.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Remembering Edgar Mittelholzer (1909-1965)

Not in any paradigm without shadows  
Nor moon-gazing just looking at blue skies  
He lets music in his mind echo  
Like a flute through his writing bones  
Always hearing the Corentyne Thunder  
Even if it means a Morning at the Office  
His pen did not abandon him  
He could not leave the pen alone.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Requiem For Jan Carew (1920-2012)

From the mud-banks  
of our coastal belt  
through washing waves  
of our sea shores  
his voice echoed  
with the wind  
earthy and musical  
resonant and breath-taking  
we listen  
we share  
we sit under coconut tree  
reading page after page  
and now we take  
one last look  
at his name  
to bow farewell  
but never to leave  
his work alone.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Resurrection

It is from this seed I planted  
that a new life is born;  
its shape and form as it tenderly grows  
nurture our heritage,  
and bring with it unique tendencies  
embroidering nuances of its world.  
Sometimes in the endless pace of time,  
where turning back does not mean  
you can start at the beginning again,  
this life is crested on the laurels  
of its magical environment,  
like unsettled water from the ocean  
rushing into the sea  
and drifting into a river -  
each shore as the water settles  
makes the journey different from yesterday;  
and yet in the end  
when this life packs up its suitcases  
and makes a farewell dance,  
somewhere it will plant a seed  
and a new life will blossom  
from an embryonic mystery -  
ready to salute an unchanging heritage  
as it rises again in resurrection.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Retirement Sometimes Comes...

On a cold winter night  
she sits by the fire-place  
nesting her frail frame  
on grandma's rocking chair  
listening to the burning wood  
the crackling sound of embers  
tickle her ears like a lover's tongue  
her brooding eyes focus in deep study  
she is reading Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code  
unmindful of Angel taking a nap  
by the lamp post  
with her cute manicured paw  
balancing her milky face  
empty of purr and punishment  
ears twitching like a disturbed twig  
on a potted plant  
in a moment of broken silence  
my padded feet screeched across  
the oak-finished wooden floor  
proximity of distance where she sat  
is almost measured in six or ten winks  
of my sleepy eyes  
maybe equal to two arms length, not sure  
in my right hand is cupped a soft ball  
with feathered rubber skin  
and just as the night wants to relax  
without knowing the color of day  
I roll the ball across her back  
in sensuous massage meandering  
without knowing the color of her pain  
retirement sometimes comes  
with mysterious prices..

Leonard Dabydeen

# Retiring

Retiring for this day  
I clasp my hands and pray  
and before I lay my head  
on my pillow in bed  
I will look through  
my window for you  
as clouds cast their shadows  
over yonder meadows  
where cuckoos were singing  
early this morning....  
and peace and calm  
will soothe me like a balm  
as you come to my dream  
in the light of a moon-beam.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Returning Home

Bring home a dog  
be like one  
bring home a husband  
think about him  
bring home a wife  
wonder what to do  
bring home friends  
offer them beers.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Rhapsody Of Time

Look at Time with subtlety  
mind over body  
take it vice versa  
what the hell's the matter  
if one's more important  
than the other  
which comes first  
I'd rather  
have both together  
but choice I gather  
leaves me no further  
to differ one way  
or another  
or just bother  
as precarious whatsoever  
about mind over body  
if I may  
look at Time with subtlety.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Ride Of Death [tetractys Poem]

Light  
candle  
let your lamp  
brighten our hope  
to douse the heat of this abhorrent crime.

Freedom from this shameful act is our cry  
justice our call  
show respect  
honour  
us.

One  
bus ride  
final trip  
horrifying  
this heinous act must not happen to us.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Rise Up After The Fall

In the sly hands of the Devil  
a blind man does not walk with a cane  
he is led to the slaughter  
like in a quake  
with tremors more alluring  
than magical witchcraft  
scavengers feast on his inner soul  
corruption smudges his mind  
and guilt knows no shame  
he leaves a smudge of blood  
on every door  
on every house  
on every community  
every dream a nightmare of hoodoo  
horror whiplash every disaster  
no shame no shame  
sometimes we become witness  
to this blind man in each of us  
or innocent if we do not know  
how we do what we do when we do  
all things created for us  
in the end  
Almighty God finds a way  
as it was in the beginning  
to look for us with hands and hearts  
from every passage of hope  
beyond borders beyond oceans  
through the carnage of rubbles  
and concertina of destruction  
as voices echo in prayerful song  
acts of God are showered in the depths  
of our mournful hearts  
in faith is our strength  
in hope is our destiny  
in love is our unity  
in patience is our virtue  
in understanding is our honesty  
in togetherness is our resort  
to rise up after the fall.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Rwanda 100 Days To Remember

As if the world belongs  
to know one else  
but the Devil  
within each blood-thirsty mind  
opening doors with untamed anger  
to clubber  
and create carnage  
of human flesh  
one cracked skull  
one severed hand  
rape and rupture of the womb  
deep inside hollow fear  
of remorseless hate  
how can such act of insanity  
elude us with blind shame  
to let the massacre  
revile in its own dance  
while we sit and wait  
for blood stain to dry  
in our naked hands  
today we remember  
Hutu and Tutsi are brothers too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Rwanda Crying

The battle continues  
as if there is no tomorrow  
wound upon wound  
hurt upon hurt  
how they strive  
on each other's fear  
crawling empty stomachs  
like black ants  
on a ruptured molehill  
do they know each other  
will they ever do  
each passing night  
the moon lights up  
the darkness  
peering at eyes  
without vision.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Sayonara, Sayonara...

This heart is not made of stone  
nor crumbled rock  
to fall off steep cliffs  
where pebbles are sometimes loose  
with the rush of wind  
tender to the glance of your eyes  
this heart is encased  
in the vault of your mind  
and plays a song of sweet echo in the ear  
and on the tips of your dancing toes  
it watches you prance about  
teasing you like it teases me  
more enigmatic in flight  
as if it were sitting on Mount Fuji  
looking for you in the Himalayas  
there is music in the air  
breathing perfume in our minds  
two of us moving in childish excitement  
and Valentine listening with joy  
to our own child-play  
among rose gardens and city streets  
as we look for each other  
singing in exotic delight  
sayonara, sayonara...

Leonard Dabydeen

# Search For Freedom

Hope  
comes  
only  
by your faith  
that change will happen  
in your constant search for freedom.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Search For Solace

Where  
does a person  
find it  
when one needs it  
is hard to tell  
almost like a puzzle  
sometimes born  
fortuitously  
in a Rembrandt smile  
or a reciprocal wink  
textured  
in acquiescence  
or maybe  
at the arrival  
of a bunch of roses  
tagged with your name  
or at puja ritual  
making arti  
chanting bhajans  
evoking spirit  
of omnipresent deities  
or sometimes  
in a serene dream  
where you dance  
tip toe  
tip toe  
like a ballet superstar  
in a Royal theatre  
anywhere  
even among  
Lakeland ducklings  
as they drift  
aimlessly  
as the world turns  
with its own  
fortune  
or freedom  
or failure.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Searching For My Dreams

I, too,  
search for my dreams  
without guidance  
of a dreamer.  
I travel around the moon  
among stars  
(how they twinkle to see me) ,  
float on clouds  
just to watch the blue skies.  
And then...  
I return here  
sipping cammomile tea  
strolling the deck of a cruise ship;  
look around every port  
on the islands –  
even talk to deck-hands  
as they return from the wharf  
on stop-over from Guyana  
(I was born there, too) ,  
even write an email  
to the UG Chancellor  
about stalking at night  
on the long haul to Turkeyen.  
And then...  
In a quiet moment  
I begin to hear beating of drums  
tassa sound like a ritual -  
something like macunaima;  
I see cutlass and sugar-cane  
and a dark-skinned man in soot  
indentureship like a halo around him;  
Demerara rum splashing  
to appease him...  
as I search for my dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Searching For Myself

Searching For Myself

Not hiding  
the gilded truth  
not even faking it  
and calling it a lie  
but knowing it  
to be my umbilical truth  
as I amber along  
dressing  
and undressing myself  
like changing clothes  
and places  
and things to do  
always looking forward  
without seeing  
backward shadows  
to identify myself  
as I am  
as I want to be  
without pain  
of burdened disclosure  
searching for myself.

(Tribute: Jose Antonio Vargas)

Leonard Dabydeen

# Seashore

I  
mimic  
sounds she makes  
as aftermath  
of a playful moment by the seashore.

I comb her lovely hair with naked hands  
her trestles long  
beautiful  
body  
firm.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Season's Greetings

Bring  
with you  
jingle bells  
gifts of true love  
one heart open mind riding down the slope.

Let your praise be like innocent children  
heart full of gifts  
everyone  
share with  
love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Seeing You

When  
I was  
just a child  
I wanted to  
grow up hurriedly to become a man.

I lost my virginity in my mind  
suffocating  
with pleasure  
seeing  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Seeking Peace

Look everywhere  
to find it  
even climb mountains  
layered in shrapnel  
sit there with you  
inside a trench  
pumping bullets  
at imaginary enemies  
sit in a barrack  
with echoes  
of regulated war  
inside my head  
bald as the future  
until time of discharge  
brings me home  
where I listen  
to spiritual music  
where I chant  
mantras  
sing bhajans  
offer arti  
to Lord Shiva  
close my eyes  
in prayer  
for a better world  
for you  
for me  
seeking peace.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Senryu Poems

I sleep to dream  
That someday you will be here  
Sleeping next to me.

I cannot leave home  
Without touching your sweet lips  
You make my day.

Eyes so beautiful  
They capture my dreams  
Before I go to sleep.

The moon speaks to me  
With wisdom of an astrologer  
I am a Capricorn.

I am a slave  
I bow to your beck and call  
Waiting for Freedom.

Roses have thorns  
They prick my mind with joy  
Red is my favorite colour.

Scent of your silky hair  
Perfumes my mind in happiness  
I love you.

Listen to your voice  
And hear the echo in my sleep  
You keep me awake.

Clasp my hands  
I offer prayer in your name  
Om, Sai Ram

Enjoy morsels of food  
Salads, sweets and spaghetti with chicken  
Enjoyable meal.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Share My Dreams

Come  
join me  
on this rock  
and share my dreams  
alone I cannot predict ocean tide.

Just your presence alone excites my thoughts  
let me wander  
far away  
just with  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# She's Gone

She's gone!

What game is this anyway?

sometimes I see you everywhere

and then somewhere else

you're gone like a fluttering butterfly

and appear back again

as if nothing happened;

you must be looking for something

why don't you tell me your story?

everyone has a story

it may not be the same like the others

but it's a story all the same

it has a beginning

it has a middle

it has an end

and if there is no end

then obviously your mind

is playing a double-cross game

what game is this anyway?

will I ever know

when you're gone?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Show Me

Show me the hands  
that gifted me a bomb  
that closed the doors of my life  
just show me  
how they wrecked my freedom  
my voice  
echoing  
for working people  
yesterday  
today  
tomorrow  
show me the lines  
in the palm  
of their hands.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Silent Thoughts

Quiet as a mouse

nibbling cheese

on a wooden trap

innocent of death

my silent thoughts

roam the countryside

beyond the barnyards

and acres of golden corn fields

I watch a tractor roving in the distance

where once I stood

with a pail of seeds

waiting for a farmhand

my silent thoughts drift

like grey clouds in the sky

beyond the driftwood fence

looking at the fresh-water pond

where the little ducklings

flock together for a swimming lesson

and joyful geese quack, quacking

as the evening clasps its hands

in prayer for the end of another day.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Sleep

I find it difficult to decipher  
What trust I should lay  
Upon my feathered pillow,  
Just before day closes  
Its winded shutters  
To night's rhapsody  
Of melodious sounds.

Night heralds the end  
Of a beautiful sunlight day's orange gleam  
With twilight hues -  
So much kaleidoscopic radiance!  
And silently spread  
Wings of cool, caressing ambiance  
To let sheep gather  
For a night's prayer,  
To let the cows moo  
Before repose for one last fodder of hay,  
While chickens take their spot  
On racks in a coop,  
And horses are blessed with one last visit  
From their patron stable ranger.

So when I attempt  
To choreograph my thoughts  
In a ballet stance  
Like a ballerina in full ecstasy  
And close my eyes to sleep,  
I pray for a dream  
Of sweet endearment  
That our world will no longer  
Make more wars to fret each nation.  
Rather as Gandhi would acclaim  
We must seek peace and purity of mind:  
So join me to nurture this sleep  
For a peaceful and progressive world.,  
Let us narrate a prayer.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Smoke

Smoke  
slowly  
swirl upward  
towards the sky  
making shapes like a lonely artist.

I watch the embers of fire in silence  
poking my mind  
making faces  
just like  
dreams.

Not  
a fire  
making light  
only smoke moving  
with shapes making love inside of me.

I stay calm for only as long as I  
watch the movement  
feeling guilt  
sitting here  
stabbing  
me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Snow

Snow  
begins  
to settle  
as we herald  
this season like children again tonight.

And tomorrow when it comes again here  
I will capture  
the flurries  
with my  
hands.

Leonard Dabydeen

# So Nature

Spring flowers glowing  
Rising sun strikes common bond  
Clouds prepare rainfall.

Leonard Dabydeen

# So Tired

Bones  
aging  
and brittle  
from being here  
now almost at the end of a journey.

No calcium treat will relish my staying  
but I am sure  
that I will  
retreat  
strong.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Solitude (Naani Poem)

Whenever time permits  
gather your thoughts  
into dreams  
let solitude be your guide.

All you need  
are quiet moments  
to release your dreams  
let solitude be your guide.

Let your dreams  
take flight  
show what is deep inside your mind  
let solitude be your guide.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Solving Problems

Wake up this morning

listening

for birds to twitter

I hear the cacophony of guns

and the cry of anger

and rich expletives

bellowing from the bowels of hate

and the whack of batons

thumping flesh

fumigating in blood

I lift my arms not with glee

but to gyrate in protest

a street fighter

with bricks and stones

catapulting to break some bones

a dance forever

for the revolution.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Spider And Fly

This silent spider  
waiting in a cast of web  
it catches a fly!

Leonard Dabydeen

# Spring Blossoms

spring blossoms are here:  
hibiscus and daffodils;  
and birds are playing.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Strong

My  
flashlight  
is fading  
battery low  
light will soon turn into darkness again.

After a while new life will form again  
making its way  
like a giant  
Zeus  
strong.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Success

Life's  
journey  
is strewn with  
pebbles and stones  
that can break or build your bones anytime.

Potholes you can fill or boulders remove  
but in the end  
your success  
mirrors  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Suhaag

This  
suhaag  
is a bond  
unbreakable  
even if there is no life after death.

This pledge I hold so sacrosanct for you  
beyond desire  
or a wish  
to be  
free.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Sunrise

Sun  
wakes up  
from behind  
sea horizon  
light dancing with the ripples of the sea.

Waves linger aimlessly towards the shore  
playing with sand  
then recede  
going  
home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Sunrise Along The Danforth

Sunrise along the Danforth  
comes like a night-breaker  
waning evening hustle and bustle  
and reconnoitering sounds  
of laughter and music  
where diners squander their night life  
and ignore taxi drivers and transit buses  
as they filter through avenues  
in their intent destination  
and now grey clouds make polka dots  
on the blue sky dome  
and emblazoned light scorch  
the morning air  
before the sun goes into full glory  
lamp-lights seem to tease the sun  
just before their show is over  
and streets look empty and innocent  
like an open pulpit  
where prayers in silence  
are only for the guilty  
on the Danforth  
and sunrise is filtering light  
like raindrops in specific places.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Sunshine Comes Again

tears of dew drops fall,  
from spring flowers in the night:  
sunshine comes again.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Super-Max

...eerie sounds echo  
through the nostrils  
and the esophagus is cracked  
like old parchment  
body-aches no longer matter  
for pain is like a vial of hope  
as the mind crawls into every  
nook and cranny  
of the tortured walls  
splatter of blood  
smells of anger  
hate and disgust  
worse than a wretched stomach  
draping the eyes to know no remorse  
what manner of God  
must I hold in my sleep  
to be witness of this spectacle  
before my eyes  
are closed.



# Sweet Dreams

The moment you  
begin to be silent  
is the moment  
your earlobes  
come wide awake  
as if you're confronted  
with your own image  
when you're  
half asleep  
and looking at the mirror  
with the other half  
wide awake  
and you listen  
like cat and mouse  
only hearing  
a dog in distress  
mourning  
the night away  
giving you creepy feelings  
like a Halloween dream  
as you close  
your eyes  
to mask the pain  
before the moon  
comes visiting  
your window  
to wish you  
sweet dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Sweet-Scented Perfume

No moment lasts longer  
in our courtship  
than the whiff of sweet-scented air  
that drunk our nostrils  
from the perfume that exudes  
from the silken touch  
of our intoxicated bodies  
sweat in sweet gyration  
saturate the soul  
let the mind dance  
in the ambiance of fragrant  
eau de toilette by Alfred Sung  
or the Obsession concoction  
enthused by Calvin Klein  
deep in our hearts  
drum-beat like a voodoo witchcraft  
pulsate in the rich aroma  
of the wind that cannot read  
our feet moving in perfumed nostalgia  
our hands probe in refreshing sweetness  
our minds responding in nostalgic delight  
Avon-scented oils drench our body parts  
ghosting our presence from night and day  
sometimes the air smells like lavender  
Ralph Lauren musk and Old Spice aphrodisiacs  
you become Lolita  
I am Stetson  
we are a blend of Tabu  
or a mixture of Armani and Givenchy  
in different worlds a whiff of air  
holding us in a hologram  
made of perfume  
sweet-scented perfume.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Swirl Of Kinship

Tonight this swirl of kinship  
moves across my memory  
floating like mystic dark clouds  
deeper than flesh and blood  
inebriating the mind.

In vaulted exile  
my vision is blurred  
like a fetus in a mother's womb  
knotted in umbilical cord  
and I go back in time  
and I watch demented countrymen  
gouge panic and fear  
as if tomorrow will never come  
and people whip-lashed  
through marrow of bone  
moving backwards and forwards  
crisscrossing  
latitude and longitude.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Tetractys Ghost Busters

1

Night  
huddles  
twinkling stars  
spitting fire bright  
drones fluttering in ominous delight.

2

Dark  
shadows  
secretly  
walk the graveyard  
they look for a child crying in the night.

3

Tomb  
broken  
like a vase  
wide open jaws  
spiralling worms feast on rotten carcass.

4

Here  
she comes  
skeletal  
hands akimbo  
broom skirting nook and cranny like a flea.

5

Blood

dripping  
from her fangs  
a vampire night  
eerie sounds bellow from her dark nostrils.

6

Long  
slender  
bony hands  
clutching broom stick  
cob-webby rustic hair rustle with dust.

7

Mark  
this night  
full moon bright  
Isabelle comes  
Knocking at your door with a magic wand.

8

Swirl  
of clouds  
slowly drift  
around tombstones  
marbled crosses begin to drip cold blood.

9

Knife  
in hand  
vampire eyes  
zombie woman  
marking blood signs over my father's grave.

10

Ghosts  
moving  
around in  
slow, furtive drift  
dance under tamarind tree in graveyard.

11

Moon  
glowing  
through the panes  
of my window  
Gremlins are ringing bells under my bed.

12

Knock  
knock, knock  
on my door  
screaming my name  
witches waiting for candy from my bowl.

13

They  
slowly  
move around  
tombstones tonight  
witches marking graves with their bloody brooms.

14

I  
hear them  
singing hymns  
around tombstones

hooded grave snatchers dressed in tattered shroud.

15

They  
will come  
at my door  
these Frankenstein  
with Christopher Lee and Boris Karloff.

16

Sleep  
is dead  
where moonlight  
cannot be seen  
I hear rattling of bones in the graveyard.

17

Hark  
now hear  
Salemities  
singing this night  
the Ides of October come like prayer.

18

Born  
with fire  
in her womb  
she bellows smoke  
I smell fumes as my bed starts to rattle.

19

Deep

inside  
the furnace  
I heard screaming  
the crematorium is drenched in blood.

20

They  
begin  
silent march  
body-snatchers  
walking among graves in the cemetery.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Thanksgiving

(I)

Fight for civil right  
beyond star-spangled despair  
I salute each one.

(II)

Every veteran  
whose embrace of war of old  
stand the test of time.

(III)

This poise I must take  
thankful as the wind that blows  
every passing day.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Art Of Deception

It's not a game  
like any other game  
where a golf ball travels the distance  
and being putted into a hole  
it is only a small white ball  
being lured into a hole  
dark and full of deception  
have you ever wondered  
why the ball is never black?  
the hands that hold the putter  
take a firm grip in a certain art form  
there is positional assurance  
before teeing  
and these very hands  
network with the mind  
in continuance they play  
vicariously with the heart  
and when the world  
is minding its own course  
and waiting for another PGA tournament,  
the greenery is overshadowed  
like a transgressor  
the golfer becomes an infidel  
drunk like a kite in the wind  
moaning in apology  
with numbness on his lips  
making a hiatus  
wider than the golf course  
how to fine tune this art  
with family blunted by fame?  
and fortune?  
and deception?

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Best Gifts

The best gifts  
come from the heart  
rich with eternal love  
like the lotus at the feet of a deity  
like the find of a treasure hunter  
accepting all  
deciphering each piece big or small  
with the same intricate balance  
punctuated with enduring love  
affection illimitable in continuity  
when admiration does not  
engage time in a puzzle  
as the gifts are proffered  
then the joy of receiving  
is more everlasting  
with love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Color Of My Skin

I may bring to your attention  
this posted affirmation  
through the color of my skin:  
that I am what I am.  
Prejudice is an art form  
I cannot share  
nor add to my portfolio;  
I am the color you think I am,  
or must be,  
as you are the paint  
freckled by heartlessness  
or heat from your scaled mind.  
Flowers in your garden  
are more beautiful  
when they capture the  
radiance of the heavens,  
just like the rainbow.  
So let me be me,  
as I let you be you;  
together in time  
our color will never become  
a shameful part of our self.  
\*\*March 21,2010: UN International Day for the  
Elimination of Racism

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Galaxies

&lt;/&gt;Tonight

I open

a conversation

with the stars

asking each one

to tell me

its secret

of courting the moon

only a twinkle

of an eye

text-message

a response

asking for

username

and password

to visit

the galaxies.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Hunt

How can you tell  
what the hunt looks like  
what shape  
or form  
(or is there no shape  
or form to begin with?)  
it will take  
in the winged mind  
scouring the bedrock  
of hope  
of despair  
destiny like a rainbow  
defiant and daring  
yet elegant and inerrant  
the hunt juxtaposed  
between the hunter  
and the hunted  
or the game  
and the gamer  
sometimes you are a victim

innocent as Life

immersed in the hunt

only playing

hide and seek.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Hurt Inside

This  
regret  
does not care  
apologies  
will filter from your mind once more again.

Apology is a fool to accept  
the hurt inside  
God only knows  
how you  
feel.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Innocence Of Dying

To feel  
or not to feel  
is the penultimate decision  
if not the ultimate conclusion  
the mind must analyze forensically  
in this unmitigated meandering of our bodies  
like a tarantula in its readiness for a kill  
bone in  
or bone out  
flesh innocent in its fulfillment  
in the color of our skin  
gyrating in the warmth  
of our time capsule  
waiting for an answer  
to feel  
or not  
to feel  
the innocence of dying.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Night Of Shiva

Night

of

darkness

Phalguna

Lord Shiva Linga

worship with devotion for love

throw ignorance and negativity to the wind

let spring of joy and prosperity unfurl with regal pomp for peace and happiness.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Ocean

I  
stand here  
with bare feet  
and folded arms  
to watch you rush to shore and touch my feet.  
Your horizon is so immense to view:  
I ask myself  
how can I  
be like  
you?

Leonard Dabydeen

# The One I Love

I am happy  
to wake up in the morning  
and listen to your singing  
the echo of your voice  
distils the dream I endured  
the night gone by  
the bhajan you chant  
is more enlightening  
than the sunshine breaking  
the dawn of day  
and my heart beckons  
the images of Lord Shiva  
and Lord Krishna  
and Lord Ganesha  
and Mother Laxmi  
to make a dance  
for the pooja of my soul.  
Leonard Dabydeen

# The Only House I Live In

The only house I live in  
is the house inside of me  
I make it my home  
my personal dwelling  
my beauty  
my charm  
my friend  
when I open its door  
I share it with the world  
I laugh  
I cry  
I sing  
I become moody  
when I want to be fancy  
I dress up  
I play  
I eat at a restaurant  
I cook  
I eat with bare hands  
when it is quiet  
I read  
I write  
I let the world know  
what my home  
inside of me  
looks like  
because my house  
I make my home  
for you and for me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Poet

The poet

speaks with tongues of fire

his balm

of warm air rising

rising with the flow

of blood

caressing

vessels and veins

palpitating

in his burning heart

yearning and dancing

in a ritual of words

glowing

with crepuscular glee

his mind scurrying

scribbling patterns

nibbling ink

red

black

blue

sometimes his naked hands

hurrying

trying to make

images real

in a kaleidoscopic world

of ipods and iphones.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Psychiatrist

What the hell! Oh what the hell?  
Can't sleep at night  
Don't know what the difference is  
From backside to mouth-side  
Looks like the same hole  
Same shit different day!  
All dressed up like a potato chip  
Shirt and tie and suit  
But don't know the time  
Don't know the dollar value  
Somebody stealing my money  
Calling this counsellor, that advisor  
All the same  
Can't remember their name  
No wife, no children, no family  
Watching television with cup of tea  
Oh shit! Nobody told me  
I have to make a list  
And put down name of a psychiatrist.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Shore Line

Once before the shore line  
there were trees and houses  
and streets and places  
where children played  
and now all washed away  
chorus of movie songs  
and prayers in mosques  
where men dressed  
in white cotton fabric  
and filled their hearts  
with richness of Ramadan  
and now all washed away  
in pouring rain  
and monsoon mockery  
floodgates of mud sling  
belch entrails of rubbles  
over places and people and things  
in a deluge of ungrateful piety  
and now all washed away  
today my body is mud  
and I am like swamp  
remembering eating roti  
sitting on a driftwood plank  
once before the shore line.

Leonard Dabydeen

# The Storm

Stormy night -  
Wind blowing fiercely  
Rooftops flying in the air.

Leonard Dabydeen

# There Are Starlit Dreams (Refugees: Waypoint Sudan To Europe)

In the deep caverns  
of their pounding heart  
there are starlit dreams  
they flicker like tiny lanterns  
prodigious with silvery hopes  
like clusters of starry lights  
on a Christmas night  
in a festive shopping mall  
in a city centre  
where drifters scuttle or scramble  
from booth to booth  
fingering coffee cups  
and ice-cream cones  
sometimes tongues keep lapping  
like panting animals  
wet with desire  
in their hearts they know  
mouths to feed  
hunger clings to empty stomach  
like man's best friend  
abuse burns in fiery flares  
full of angst  
full of binge and bile  
so they turn their backs  
in the deep caverns  
of their pounding hearts  
this they know  
there are starlit dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# There Is No Cancellation

Because you do not know  
where he's hiding his calendar  
you can guarantee your heart  
that there is no cancellation  
of his appointment with you  
all along you have been listed  
in the mystical tabloid he keeps  
behind the burning bush  
time is marked with the ink of your blood  
since you're saved  
as his favorite in a new folder  
every listing starts the same  
every path, every action  
and every detour in your life  
transposed in his search engine  
you're never alone  
he feels overjoyed when he sees the love  
you have for yourself  
and how you share that love with others  
a ritual dance  
in the bazaar of life  
every footprint jingles with happiness  
like flowers blooming in radiant colors  
in the spring of life  
intransigent as always with guarantee  
that there is no cancellation  
of his appointment with you  
and when night changes to day  
in his mind's eye  
he watches in glory among the stars  
as you clasp your hands in humble prayer  
Namaste, Namaste  
Ram, Ram.

Leonard Dabydeen

# They Call Me Illegal

They call me illegal  
unwanted in the eye  
blue as the sky  
but only seeing my colour  
my dark skin and I  
they crimp minds with hate  
even fornicate  
their souls to flaming rage  
and yet on impulse  
I smile mischievously  
'cause I am hopeful  
I am like falling rain  
I run in gutters  
I run in trenches  
I put a smile on earth  
trees and plants  
they welcome me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# They Returned

They  
returned  
immobile  
without a voice  
without a sound I watch water recede.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Feeling I Felt For You

I remember now  
how you visited my room  
and touched me with joy

it was heavenly  
this feeling I felt for you  
inside my chamber

ruffled sheets of bliss  
exuded tender loving  
with hands caressing

body, mind and soul  
whispering without control  
it was up to me

for this ecstasy  
beyond all imaginings  
to last forever

and before I slept  
like a little child I wept  
to love you some more.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Field Of Life

It's like an open journey  
you begin to travel  
from the moment  
your shape and form  
were knitted  
with umbilical attachment  
in a mother's womb  
the field of life  
begins with the echo  
of every heart-beat  
every pulsation  
like a rhythmic dance  
and a preparation  
for formative enrichment  
with eyes wide open  
and senses tuned  
to a new world  
you continue your itinerary  
across the landscape  
of earth

of moon

with distances that sometimes

make challenges harmonious

or intimidating

with no scope to hide

or run

there never seems to be

an end

only a beginning

all yesterdays

become today

and all today

roll over tomorrow

making this field of life

a roller-coaster

with endless motion.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Hand That Touches You

This hand that touches you  
walking through your body  
moving and meandering  
in meaningful slow intensity  
without the absence  
of an undulating curve  
now wants to slow down  
feeling the pulse inside  
as if this sentence of love  
needs a period like a full stop  
or more like a comma  
before the continuation  
of a ritualistic conjunction  
it feels like a sentinel  
in a commanding post  
a guardian beyond a balm  
of kinetic pleasure  
each finger tingling the brain  
each different from the other  
each attached to one another  
same hand in oneness  
same hand always  
touching you as you move  
this is the hand of God  
deep inside of you  
this hand touches you  
everywhere, everywhere.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Is Who We Are

She who walks with me  
in the lull evening hours  
when the night is cool  
when tall pines and conifers  
guard red-brick pathways  
as we hold hands  
soul-searching for light  
from the full moon  
and whispering about  
astrological gem stones  
turquoise and purple  
we share a common bond  
we heave and sigh  
at the din of highway traffic  
we ponder about birds  
sandpipers and doves  
nesting in the tall trees  
we lock-tight our frail fingers  
at the thought of hungry children  
in South-Saharan landscape  
refugees on blind march  
away from war-torn Syria  
sad faith without redemption  
yet we hold subtle allegiance  
to each other  
for substance symbiosis  
we have never left home without it  
this is who we are.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Night Feels So Quiet

This night feels so quiet  
as the silence envelopes  
every corner  
of my living space;  
I tune my ears  
like a maestro player of a mandolin,  
orchestrating his skills  
to connect with the band,  
listening intently;  
everything is sleeping,  
even the moonlight casting  
shadows among the trees  
seems to lip-sing the quietude,  
with irritable nonchalance;  
I sit on the patio chair,  
watching with eerie thoughts  
creeping in a vicious circle  
in the crevices of my mind,  
physically challenging me  
to make disturbance of the night;  
loneliness is eating at my bones -  
and this makes me uneasy:  
flesh and fantasy dance  
like a barn-yard chicken  
teasing a fowl-cock to crow;  
I heave and sigh,  
waiting and watching  
as Time tick-tock away  
in every bubble of life;  
morning soon will come  
and the sun will rise again  
to break the silence of the night:  
and a new day  
will make for a new beginning.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Night We Celebrate

This night we celebrate  
festival of lights  
features triumph  
over darkness  
carved by a niche  
in our being  
of who we are  
or part thereof  
what we've become  
glorifying light  
as we gather family and friends  
neighbours everywhere  
spoiling hate and deceit  
fiduciary duty  
tortuous tort in ashes  
and tiny lamps  
brighten every footstep  
challenging our destiny  
our fate  
as promiscuity is sliced away  
like unwanted body fat  
and we nourish promises  
of tomorrow  
always a new day  
as if we belong  
with a lighted torch  
in our Olympian minds.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This Phenomenal Woman

I didn't know  
how often she laughed  
or cried  
while I was sitting  
in a fetal position  
but she knew  
what I was up to  
when I shifted  
even just a little  
this phenomenal woman.

Leonard Dabydeen

# This World

This world takes you under its protection  
while the sun makes your talents shine  
also grants you irresistible energy  
to love and be loved  
you become a compass guiding sunlight  
showing direction among shadows of trees  
Fall leaves still make bed in the parks  
so colourful in gold and rustic bronze  
but this is your moment  
you light the world  
with an aura of splendid moons  
you want to spread Life  
like wings of an eagle soaring high  
and all you desire  
is to enjoy all those who are present  
with you and for you  
yet sometimes keep silent  
as if they are far away  
in a distant dream.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Three Little Words

Three little words  
so full of sweetness  
like honey overflowing  
on my teaspoon;

Three little words  
wrap around my mind  
playing hockey  
when sunshine is blooming;

Three little words  
make music in my ears  
when I say them to you  
more the merrier;

Three little words  
are not afraid of you  
big or small  
only one or too many;

Three little words  
wash away all doubts  
in your poker game  
of life and living;

Three little words  
put smiles on your face  
no global wound forgotten  
in a passage of time;

Three little words  
I will say to you  
no matter what you do  
when dark clouds hover;

Three little words  
you will say to me  
when hopes and dreams  
are fading in the wind;

Three little words  
you and I know  
changes everything  
and no stones unturned;

Three little words  
make our undertakings  
free of cost  
if money is not everything;

Three little words  
beautiful and pure  
each separate or connected:  
I LOVE YOU...

Leonard Dabydeen

# Till The Twain Shall Meet

Mind is so rich  
it bubbles the brain with opportunity  
I keep my hands in my pocket  
feeling the emptiness  
crying to make holes with my fingertips  
but my God-given dream  
does not drift in the falling rain  
intransigent hope dances  
like a star in the bright moonlight  
stirring my faith to move onwards  
to go where I belong  
rich mind and poor brain  
rich brain and poor mind  
till the twain shall meet.

Leonard Dabydeen

# To Be Free

Stop  
this now  
this heartache  
that burns inside  
my children have birthright to this country.

You molest my humanitarian rights  
my dignity  
my longing  
to be  
free.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Tombstones

Curse of the Devil  
in darkness of a graveyard  
tombstones do not lie.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Tonight

Tonight

I look at the full moon  
I gaze in delight over the shadows  
among the tamarind trees  
stray-dogs are crying mournfully  
howling in the heated air  
in the cemetery where the graves  
are silent like the tombs  
coffins do not want to disturb  
the quiet sound of the graveyard  
it is transparent  
xenophobia lingers among the dead  
and silence is golden like a sleep  
without a dream  
I hold the marbled cross  
where a wreath is hung  
and wonder who will die tonight  
I look everywhere for footprints  
where mounds of fresh earth  
care less of the environment  
I will stake-out here like the wind  
until the moon goes to rest  
and dogs no longer chant with the spirit  
and wonder who will die tonight  
every Thursday night someone will die  
so be it, as always.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Tornado (Haiku)

Thunderous applause  
As the lightning strikes again:  
Rain rupturing earth.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Trafficker

You  
touch me  
scavenger  
of my body  
your lust is so bitter with unleashed hate.

I abhor how you ravage flesh and blood  
rape my body  
my freedom  
like a  
curse.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Train Of Thought

In the beginning

I knew they were sober;

they followed the tracks

of my imagination

without a cloud of doubt -

chugging along coherently;

sometimes shifting momentum

like a snail,

then a tortoise,

and now moving

with the pace of a hare;

at every bend sometimes

it pauses momentarily

to diffuse some ideas,

or relinquish a few,

or let the hurried fritters

exit without loitering

on the memory bank;

each station of thinking

harbors more fresh ideas

keeping the momentum  
at a steady pace,  
and embracing divisiveness  
to freely coordinate  
a successful train of thought.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Tribute: Edgar Allan Poe

Back  
and forth  
we can still  
circle his grave  
and wait for his coffin in the moonlight.

I hear an owl hooting on a tree branch  
in the school-yard  
it happens  
to be  
him.

Leonard Dabydeen

# True Friend

I  
happen  
to be your  
only true friend  
I share the dreams you bring on this journey.

My symbol for peace is not a gesture  
composed of fear  
I demand  
freedom  
too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Truth

I  
begin  
to seek an  
exit of hope  
knowing the ocean waves are restless now.

I call upon my angelic spirit  
knowing that truth  
lies somewhere  
inside  
me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Under The Tamarind Tree (St. Patrick's Anglican School)

Under the tamarind tree  
I stand there  
Still as a cross in the graveyard  
I hear bells toll  
In the Anglican church  
Hands cupping salt and pepper  
Mouth salivating  
I listen to rivulets  
Water flowing in Reliance creek  
Wind whispering among the graves  
I feel uncanny  
With my pockets of tamarind  
And my broken slate  
On the ground  
Should I go to school  
On this ck's Day?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Undocumented

Dreamers

undocumented

their backs are sore;  
their pain unhealing truths;  
their lies are what they live for;  
how they sit next to me  
as the train leaves the station  
becomes reality of tomorrow.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Undocumented Woman

Just  
being  
so silent  
is no mistake  
that I condescend solicitation.  
You take my body in witless carnage  
raging madness  
so heartless  
without  
shame.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Unwanted Child

You are unwanted  
doors are closed  
or opened  
only by wind  
that cannot read  
no sign of welcome  
but you know skin-deep  
you are unwelcome  
no tear  
wets the eyes  
that blur a vision  
you chew spittle  
moistening your tongue  
your stomach empty  
you are hungry  
not a crumb in site  
you are unwanted  
how else can the world  
tell you so.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Valentine

Offer

sweet something  
into your lover's ear  
say, 'I love you.'  
in a warm whisper  
feeling her closeness  
with soft lips  
brushing her ears  
as goose pimples stir  
unrevolting love  
immense joy  
pulsating  
a valentine nugget  
of a golden heart.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Valentine Party

Heart on fire tonight  
Flames burning to mind's delight  
And eyes scorching with desire  
Infectious with insidious fire.

Music plays on as heavy metal  
Unwinds crowd before they settle  
And alter ego heats the rhythm  
To eye dancing with `em.

And as the party begins to fade  
So, too, the joyful brigade  
Each on his own soliciting line  
Together with their sweet Valentine.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Vastness Of Life

Watch  
ocean  
tidal waves  
rushing to shore  
I am enthused at the vastness of life.

I watch anemones drift eerily  
meandering  
just like ships  
coming  
home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Verification

How strange life can be  
with the science of verification  
crafted more like an art of deception  
becoming more like science fiction  
suicide bombers teasing airport security  
with their crutches strapped in naked bombs  
if the proof of a pudding  
lies in the eating  
how can we make verification?  
shall we wait for an explosion  
to blast our nation  
city by city  
or let it be  
an enigma of security  
only to gulp in realization  
we lack verification  
in the vagaries of a mockumentary  
with the world derisive of our country?  
huh? need more transparency...

Leonard Dabydeen

# Vignettes Of Life

My  
radar  
is beeping  
in monotones,  
scanning vignettes of life in passing by.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Visions Of You

Like a mirage  
in the distant horizon  
across blue undulating sea  
you rise and fall  
heaving with tidal waves  
your hands flailing  
as if a final goodbye  
is all that matters  
or as if you were waving  
in a beckoning motion  
egging me to come  
to your rescue  
but I keep my distance  
only watching  
only seeing  
only imaging  
the snarl of hope  
growling illimitable sounds  
as I begin to lose  
visions of you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Visitor

I come to see you,  
Because the blue sky is bright:  
Rain is not falling.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Voices Of Conscience

AALL EEZ NOT WELL...a pariah of gloom  
blankets the state of Chhattisgarh; and the village of  
Ittanwali is smeared with blasphemy ...an albatross ...  
(Amnesty International hear my cry! !)

(I)

Rush  
for me  
no betrayal  
to tell the truth  
you who condemn me condemn innocence.

This water before you comes with blessings  
unmarked religion  
purifies  
every  
drop.

(II)

In  
the cry  
for freedom  
your religion  
fails to defend you from this callousness.

Even feeding hungry children to be free  
from starvation  
cheats conscience  
like a  
thief.

AALL EEZ NOT WELL...a pariah of gloom  
blankets the state of Chhattisgarh; and the village of  
Ittanwali is smeared with blasphemy ...an albatross ...

Leonard Dabydeen

# Vulnerable

Prowl  
and prey  
night or day  
vulnerable  
like the open sky I lean on to cry.

I sleep with open eyes and ears to rest  
and seek refuge  
my body  
knows I  
need.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Wanderer

Sometimes  
you find it this way  
and that way, too,  
bone-dried  
or brittle as a bone  
or emaciated as if  
you come to an end  
of a long, winding road;  
even looking in the mirror  
your eyes stare back at you  
with some feeling of emptiness;  
then unknowingly  
you embrace a thought  
cruising through your mind  
like an ocean vessel  
not even realizing  
you are a wanderer;  
you are but a dream  
within a dream.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Watching My Health

Comes  
home  
to me  
late at night  
that I need to lose  
weight for watchers of health programmes  
then it dawns on me I am shedding too much to sleep.

Sleep lingers to watch me close my eyelids so tired now  
as if long ago it did care  
about me and my  
overweight  
watching  
my  
health.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Watching You (Tetractys)

you  
are like  
drifting wind  
across this land  
soothing every living thing that I touch.

Oceans and seas and rivers know that you  
only pretend  
to hate me  
watching  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Waving Goodbye

Feels  
as if  
I must go  
waving goodbye  
to all my best friends at home and abroad.

My world was never short for company here  
oceans of joy  
serenade  
a good  
time.

Leonard Dabydeen

# We Are All At Fault

&quot;Your beliefs become your thoughts,  
Your thoughts become your words,  
Your words become your actions,  
Your actions become your habits,  
Your habits become your values,  
Your values become your destiny.&quot;

~Mahatma Gandhi

We are all at fault  
you and I  
and others too  
in the canon of our trajectory  
catapulting peace over perjury  
harmony versus angst  
no one cooks rice  
without sifting it  
always some undesirables  
within complex webs  
of our minds  
where our karma revolts  
or echoes involuntarily  
in matrix of peace and sanctity  
as we grapple with sinews  
and seek bhakti  
embellishing dharma  
being this change we wish  
for you and me  
immersing melodic stotras  
within gems of Bhagavad Gita.

Leonard Dabydeen

# We Will Remember You

In many different ways. Forgetting will be difficult to remember. Each episode takes another turn in the journey. How memory is so nostalgic is beyond the life of me. Sometimes it is the way you walk, your feet make distinct sounds. Shoes so different from sandals. Climbing the stairs and going to your room. Humming a tune as if singing is your birthright.

In many different ways. Forgetting will be difficult to remember. Each morning the sun hides the darkness of night. You walk among the roses in the garden. Hues and tints linger to watch your pretty smile. You in your petite dress. Your rimmed straw hat makes the color of dried grass shy, yet elegant.. Fruits and vegetables bundle in your basket. You are our mother. Your patronage needs no parenting.

In many different ways. Forgetting will be difficult to remember. You are no longer at home. You secretly gift yourself new real estate. You are going to a distant land. Friendship will now have a new meaning. Everyday we are going to wait for you. Breakfast is at the head of the table. You are not sitting on the chair. We know your are there. We will remember you. We will remember you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What I Eat-1

Fruits

mangoes

and guavas

cashews, jamoons

these are the fruits I am eating today.

I have fruit trees growing in my backyard

fruits fresh as rain

bountiful

always

sweet.

Leonard Dabydeen

## What I Eat-2

Fruits

I eat

seasonal

growing right here

not shipped from far away places unknown.

Why I have to waste what I eat today

because it is

plentiful

is not

smart.

Leonard Dabydeen

## What I Eat-3

Foods

I eat

are enough

to satisfy

my hunger and my desire for supper.

More than I wish to eat will be harmful

will go wasted

in garbage

costly

too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What In The World

What in the world  
have you done  
to my aching heart,  
pulsating it with livid fear  
that Time will not set it free?  
I cannot hold on any longer  
to make-believe that the pain  
will dissipate when my eyes are closed;  
my endurance is slipping away  
just like all the dreams  
I have lost in the mid-stream of life;  
pain has harnessed itself  
in the core of my brain  
and I can feel it torching its way  
in the crevices of my mind;  
and now you've come  
hosting my heart with comfort,  
your arms are harnessed  
with bunches of roses  
to fragrance my soul  
and wipe my tears  
with colorful petals;  
and hope dances  
in the palm of your hands  
to placate my mind once again,  
and egg me to move one step forward  
to go where I have never gone before,  
because Time is not ready  
to set me free.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What Is Love?

What is love?  
if in your waking hours  
you cannot hold it in your heart  
let it be the sweetest thing in life  
God has offered you for living  
makes you happy  
becomes enduring as you share  
each enraptured moment with your world  
in the morning  
you have my permission  
without condition, I guarantee  
never to leave home without it  
open your door like you open your heart  
show the world what love is  
in the beauty of your smile  
in the color of your hair  
in the comfort of your clothes  
in the confidence of your gait  
hide a little in your purse, too,  
let the aroma of your perfume intoxicate  
each passer-by, face about-turn  
look at you! ! look at me! !  
when evening comes  
remember not to give all your love away  
be smart  
secretly cuddle some for yourself  
close your door  
let your evening ride in the tide of life  
whatever happened cannot change  
only focus on the things you can change  
with each footprint tomorrow  
let your night-cap be a prayer of love  
that will grow exponentially  
as you begin your new day  
in love.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What Is Real?

What is real does not turn away  
as if it has a chance to escape  
like the wind in a storm  
dead bodies lying in the street  
cannot move for shelter  
from the rubble  
if you do not find a sanctuary  
to congregate them  
watching dead men walking is not real  
not even for Edgar Allan Poe  
what is real cannot be imagined  
putrid scent from the heated air  
as rigor mortis sets in is what you inhale  
you breathe death  
every which way you turn  
you try to lend support to a body  
sporting a broken limb or other body part  
and you cannot cry in unison  
what you hold and see  
is what is real

hunger and thirst unimaginable

you cannot see, cannot feel

but you know their existence

you only have to believe

I cry for you Port-au-Prince

in my heart I know

what is real

but do you know

what is real?

Leonard Dabydeen

# What Is Yet To Come

In spite of one`s weaknesses  
one`s fallacies  
unraveled in haste  
one`s angst and tardiness  
in moments of peace  
and tranquility  
a resonating sound  
brings unmitigated joy  
with requited love  
rich in harmony  
nurturing the soul  
healing the present  
for what tomorrow brings  
for what is yet to come.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What Will It Be?

If I only mix  
pleasure with pain  
what concoction will it be  
will it be  
a form of happiness  
or joy  
or sorrow  
or will it be  
a grand finale  
of our togetherness  
of our lofty thoughts  
of honeymoon  
over oceans and seas  
and where waterfalls  
flow innocently  
over rocks and pebbles  
and sticks and stones  
what will it be  
if it's only you  
and only me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What Would You Rather?

If  
I come  
and visit you  
when there is an eclipse  
of the moon  
and twinkling stars  
are fast asleep  
and shadows among us  
bow in abeyance  
to the absence of light  
would I be able to see  
the beauty of your face  
and watch the lashes  
of your eyes  
close when I touch you  
and look at your smile  
that so often brings a message  
of love in my heart  
or  
should I just gather  
the moment of meeting you  
into a broadloom of my dreams  
and wrap you into a soft blanket  
to keep you warm  
in my presence  
away from others  
what would you rather  
I do  
before the eclipse  
retires into the sky?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Whatever Must Be

I stand to lose  
if I should choose  
to hide this morning light  
when the sun is in my sight.

I stand to gain  
if I should remain  
within the portal of my dream  
not listening to your scream.

I stand to profit  
if I should admit  
our lives are a corollary  
not to be wasted in a hurry.

I stand to admire  
if I should retire  
all that I accomplish  
according to my wish.

I stand to be proud  
if I should be part of crowd  
knowing you are always part of me  
as I attain my victory.

Leonard Dabydeen

# What's With Us, Anyway?

Wake up smiling  
think for a moment  
there is something unusual  
in the way you nest your face  
on the feathered pillow  
you, too, are smiling  
what's with us, anyway?

Outstretch my right arm  
and pull the soft blanket  
just a notch over your shoulder  
my fingers nibble your ear  
and your forehead registers  
a sharp acknowledgement  
with a frown  
a freckled smile  
I remember well as your insignia  
that something's amiss  
perhaps not an act of mischief  
but it was left for me to decipher  
what's with us, anyway?

I must hurry back to bed  
set my sail of slumber  
without waving to the moon  
waxing and waning  
looking at me  
through fragile window panes  
the ghost of this night in bliss  
soon will pass  
as I yearn for more of this moment  
touch me  
touch me  
what's with us, anyway?

Smile before you ask  
what's with you anyway?  
romancing the mind  
with a cacophony

cover me in this dream  
with your soft blanket  
I must close my eyes  
before I wake again  
what's with us, anyway?

Leonard Dabydeen

# When Day Is Gone

How far  
does night go  
when day is gone  
how much time  
eludes the mind  
to catch  
a shade of sleep  
in the solitude  
of a dream  
birds become silent  
wind makes sound  
among brush and bryre  
no one tells dawn  
to wake up  
owls whoo-whooping  
close to my window  
listening  
to my creaking chair  
how far  
does night go  
when day is gone.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When Happiness Is Illusive

When happiness is illusive

it is like a lingering dream

funny sometimes

to see you cry with a smile

with tears of joy

taking their own directional path

and meandering in happiness

on face and flesh

the tears being born out of a womb

where the story was told

where the echo from laughing

gave birth to a new friendship

a holistic feeling of closeness and comfort

more healing in its creation

laughing forever

laughing while time is not watching over you

laughing is your spirit and soul

echoing with the tears in your eyes

even unable to remember

when happiness is illusive.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When I Speak Of History

When I speak of history I speak well;  
I leave behind the past where broken bones  
Lay scattered on blistering sands to tell  
Of atrocities that are mostly groans.  
While you may feel the pain lurking inside  
With hurt failing any impunity;  
And browse pages upon pages to ride  
This feeling of guilt, remorse or pity,  
It was Columbus sailing the great tides  
Out discovering many a new world;  
And Sir Francis Drake loved the battle cries -  
Chicanery as a new age unfurled.  
The mind finds revelations in the past,  
So meaningful and useful to the last.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When Night Comes

When night comes  
with the cool wind  
combing through the vineyards,  
I heave and sigh in bated breath  
with fresh -scented berries  
filling my nostrils;  
like an opiate in the dark  
I feel the breeze  
sift through my body  
and suturing my soul.

And by this driftwood fence  
where I stand to watch  
this retiring day  
in drunken ambiance,  
I feel the wetness of sand  
soothing my naked feet.

And as if the heavens beckon me  
before the day is gone,  
I lift my hands to the skies  
and wave farewell  
to another day,  
hoping I'll see you again  
standing besides me  
as if it were yesterday.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When Night Comes (Tetractys)

When  
night comes  
with moonlight  
searching shadows  
drifting clouds slowly cluster in a quest.

Gathering in a meeting of the minds  
brush-strokes of light  
etch streaks of  
restless  
clouds.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When Night Goes To Sleep

When night goes to sleep  
and slumber  
stirs a dream  
to unfold a new-born day  
let me wake up  
with bright shining light  
gazing through this window  
with winter storm watch  
no longer□  
on my calendar  
my credential for comfort  
must be reflections  
of your smiling face  
in the mirror of my mind  
with your breath of fresh air  
perfuming every trestle of hair  
on my body  
stirring harmony in my soul.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When The Storm Comes

When the storm comes  
to change the overview  
and the sea is no longer blue  
where tiny fishing boats  
chatter like brown-skinned kids  
playing cricket on a mud-bank  
there will be a special boat  
dancing with the wind  
and waiting for the tide  
that knows the passage of time  
and Indi didi will hoist her sail  
watching excited Sri  
pampering with her jacket  
as she wraps the 'Vignettes of the sea'  
like a pocket charm  
and waving with her left hand  
to a new genre  
bringing poets of the sea  
together  
ever more.

Leonard Dabydeen

# When We First Met

I ain't no Romeo  
& she ain't no Juliet  
but some few scores years or so ago  
'twas on a moonlit Valentine's night we met!

Leonard Dabydeen

# Where Have The Roses Gone

Where have the roses gone from my garden?  
Look how those left freeze in cold winter wind;  
Nothing I can do nor ask for pardon  
To save the lovely petals as they're thinned.

Here in the kitchen I gaze in dismay,  
Looking at the sky with kind entreaty;  
Hoping snowflakes will not fall on this day  
Not till I've picked these roses' beauty.

But soon the snowflakes will come, I know;  
And marigold of bright yellow and pink  
Will shiver and go to sleep in the snow;  
It matters not how I feel; what I think.

When Nature brings forth all its nuisances,  
Our roses must yield up their fragrances.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Where There Are No Mango Trees

I sat on the rubble  
with my back against a shivering post:  
I couldn't care less  
if it were asking me  
to move my behind;  
it felt like there was nothing behind  
to worry about after all this.

My eyes were too frightened to close;  
I wanted to believe they were afraid  
to sleep like everything around me -  
afraid they were not going to open again;  
I was unable to remember  
if there were any tears, too;  
crying was the least of my concern.

I looked at the battered buildings  
along the shoreline -  
so innocent in their crumbled posture:  
through gaping holes of bruised concrete,  
the wind was whistling a sad melody  
as the ocean waves loitered  
aimlessly along the shoreline,  
as if they were guilty of something:  
maybe they were looking at me;  
or for me -  
how should I know.

I stayed in my fetal posture,  
with mournful sounds  
torturing my soul from the pebbles  
and rocks uncaring for company;  
mice scurrying in every direction:  
it felt as if they were being freed  
from slavery and oppression;  
indentureship, too;  
freedom was like blind joy to them:  
can you imagine their diaspora?

Unable to recall how hope  
became my friend,  
but feeling it was all that I had  
from the old fruit-peddler from  
the streets of Chacabuco:  
I stood my ground -until he visited me  
to join him picking mangoes...  
where there are no mango trees.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Where There Is Hate

Where there is hate, the heart has no peace.  
Anger heats up in the gurgling churn  
Of blood palpitating rush;  
The mind is restless  
Like a hungry wolf.  
You can hear the snarl and growl  
Over high rises sitting aimlessly  
Steering at the naked sky.  
What will man think  
When the noise abates,  
To inform the rush of traffic  
It is only an escalation  
Of ruptured blood pressure?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Wherever You Go

I chuckle a lot  
deep inside  
where it amuses me most  
and bring a smile  
to my face  
everytime when I look  
at the caricature of your face  
'cause I know  
where it is  
in my golden archive  
my swaran  
in front of me  
you make me happy  
behind my back  
you make me happier  
let your smile flow  
wherever you go.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Who Are We

I am me  
you are you  
who are we  
you are me  
I am you  
what do we do  
we are option seekers  
filter our dislikes  
shelter our likes  
then drift in rivulets  
and streams  
move around pebbles  
dance around stones  
stop here  
go there  
pause for a moment  
move again  
come closer  
then make a final plunge  
no return.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Who Is She

I  
rejoice  
with pleasure  
in her presence  
like diya burning warmly in my heart.

Happiness is bountiful in her name  
and I delight  
in glory  
touching  
her.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Who's Who

When it is about me  
I am curious  
about us and them  
there is much doubt.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Why, Oh Why

Why, oh why do I ask  
in the tremor of silence  
this body is a prisoner  
in the archipelago of the mind  
body so real  
body so inviting  
sometimes nostalgie de la boue  
sometimes a harmonic rhythm  
in Temples of Gods  
so pure, susceptible to Satanic bier  
and this mind  
it dreams  
oh how it dreams  
so enigmatic  
so rich and illustrious  
manipulative yet trustworthy  
creative, cultural, karmic  
mind sits body  
like a child in mother's arms  
whispering, singing lullaby  
cannot let go  
inseparable like light and day  
prisoner forever  
why, oh why I do ask.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Why?

What is the underlying cause  
of man's curiosity  
to know  
the unknown?

Leonard Dabydeen

# Wings To Fly

Wings to fly  
where man has not gone before  
where angels gather thoughts  
reading biographies and sifting  
through pages of evil and good  
I sit among stars at every night hour  
circle the moon  
combing through clouds  
when the moment is quiet  
I take a swig at peace  
smile at ghosted satellites  
signaling earth to protect our real estate  
from tsunami and angry mud-slides  
come home in the wee hours on a Sunday  
post myself at the front-row pew  
in the cathedral  
offer a prayer for many  
waiting for the bell to toll.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Winter

Trees shedding their leaves-  
Branches lonely in autumn:  
Winter is coming.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Winter (Tetractys)

Toque  
and scarf  
and jacket  
ear muffs and gloves  
see how winter gifted me with snow things.

I play with flurries for fun and frolic  
dancing in snow  
enjoying  
winter  
nights.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Winter Has Gone Home

Birds are on the trees,  
Singing ever merrily:  
Winter has gone home.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Winter Storm (Haiku)

(1)

snowflake unmindful  
of any schedule, makes you  
shovel snow again.

(2)

wind is angry when  
car windows are left open  
and storm is coming.

(3)

overcast cloud is  
nature's way of making you  
know what to do now.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Winter Thoughts

This  
winter  
night is cold  
frosted windows  
are closed to keep the draft from seeping in.

I sit on my rocking chair with a beer  
in my right hand  
thinking you  
will come  
soon.

Leonard Dabydeen

# With The Tip Of My Fingers

You

got me thinking

just looking at different views

of the same picture

or is it different pictures

but with the same view

same person

or thing

not knowing if the mind is set

with fingers

to trace

contours of faces

or places

or feel the caricature

of a picture

immersed in the heart

as a start

then again

the playful sea

splashed a spray

of water  
on my face  
as if it wanted to play  
with me  
as I looked at the pictures  
through the eye  
of my mind  
colours so engaged  
to entice vision  
and I begin to feel  
excited to read comments  
as I move  
every footage  
by just rolling a tiny ball  
with the tip of my finger  
one more time  
before I exit the window  
on my laptop  
and touch the screen  
of the sea  
and climb off the boat

to let it dance

on its own.

Leonard Dabydeen

# With You By My Side

Now your hands begin  
to light fire inside the moon  
glowing in the sky.

And when I wake up  
I see your mystic hands wave  
goodbye to the moon.

And the night becomes  
a journey I must travel  
with you by my side.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Without You

In  
the heat  
of my skin  
my cravings burn  
like rising flame lost in the howling wind.

I watch the sea caress the shore yonder  
unknowing my  
state of mind  
without  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Witness To My Memorial

Late  
at night  
amidst  
thunderous  
applause  
dogs  
evoke  
eerie feelings  
howling  
incessantly  
grey clouds  
drift  
in silent purpose  
as wind  
howls  
against  
swaying trees  
flailing branches  
in fright  
of full moon  
glowing  
in search of  
shadows  
scurrying  
in the graveyard  
my right hand  
holds firmly  
a flickering lantern  
my eyes  
furtively  
scour  
each tombstone  
ratifying epitaphs  
looking  
for a burning  
tabloid  
of my name  
as it is  
written

in palpitation  
of your heartbeat  
my casket  
is yet to come  
as I prepare  
to visit  
the hereafter  
as you become  
witness  
to my  
memorial.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Words You'LI Never Read

Words you'll never read

they hide in the pit of my mind

like a secret in a hidden cave

not so shallow for you to reach

with fragile hands

or limbs akimbo

you'll never know how questions

take root inside of me

as the words are spoken

like whispers in the wind

where pages and papyrus

mystify the soul in fluted conjugation

I dare you to read me

read me as I am

tell me what I am thinking of

as I titillate like a bottlenose dolphin

I have words for you

floating without pages

I know I am what I am

and when you speak to me

your voice will echo

words you'll never read.

Leonard Dabydeen

## Yaksha-Gana (For Didi Indi)

My  
costume  
colorful  
like the sea-shells  
adorning my body for the ritual.

You are the gana I am now playing,  
beating the drum-  
yaksha boy  
dancing,  
too.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Yet We Will Not Falter

Here is our playground  
bigger and better than any golf course  
or football stadium  
where pebbles of our minds are crested  
with opinions and beliefs  
some confessional, some consummate  
each heart in tandem with another heart  
or delighting in some differences  
yet we will not falter  
as we present our pot-luck  
to nourish our ambient souls  
fragrance of pious spices  
wafting like aroma in a buffet  
our round- table larger than a globe  
our seats unmarked, to each his own  
yet we will not falter  
as we partake with love  
encrypted in understanding  
in this delightful game of life.

Leonard Dabydeen

# You And Me

Yes  
something  
so special  
I can relate  
to the world like you are an ocean breeze.  
There is something in the body fragrance  
something about  
you and me  
meeting  
once.

Leonard Dabydeen

# You And Me In Holi Matrimony

you cannot take the rapture  
of this moment away from me  
even though I lingered too long  
in the midst of the chowtal singers

I, too, must play my tassa drum  
I want to compete with chirping  
of song-birds and doves  
as they hop and pop on tree tops

In the midst of the kaleidoscope  
of beautiful bougainvilleas  
and marigolds and cherry blossoms  
azaleas and daffodils  
all rich red, blue, white and yellows  
my heart bursts allowed  
with the herald of spring

I want to come and open your door  
I want to sprinkle magenta powder  
on your lovely white sari  
and pamper your charming smile  
in hues of yellow and red  
and sing and dance in holi excitement

everywhere I watch families colorful  
in their suits of lenghas and kurtas  
like walking Rembrandts and Picassos  
dancing and singing in the streets  
heralding the joy of spring  
in holi mirth and happiness  
you and me  
in holi matrimony.

Leonard Dabydeen

# You Are Everything (I)

What  
do I  
need from you  
when I walk here  
listening to the whispering sea waves?

You are the salted voice preserving things  
living or dead  
or moving  
inside  
me.

Leonard Dabydeen

# You Are Everything (Ii)

What  
do you  
need from me  
as I walk here  
leaving footprints to my destination?

Wet sand on my feet mould my destiny  
as I come here  
looking out  
just for  
you.

Leonard Dabydeen

# You Are My Light

You are my light,  
my kindled lamp of guidance  
like a twinkling star  
at the mercy of a troubled night;  
you take me closer and closer  
to the manger of hopes  
and dreams  
where success rocks in a cradle  
with satiating gifts  
of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

My stumbling path,  
though battered and bruised  
in the nature of things,  
keeps me hurrying along;  
I am unmindful of stumbling stones  
with my heart pulsating through my bones,  
relentless in its pursuit  
to reach for success.

And in the eye of my destiny  
I will watch the vista  
or the panorama,  
with determination not to falter;  
holding on to you  
because you are my light  
my kindled lamp of guidance  
always and always.  
Leonard Dabydeen

# You Hunted Me

You  
hunted  
me like a  
desire in storm  
with your ambition for all to showcase.

I took flight for a reason beyond what  
distance I went  
not looking  
where I  
am.

Then  
you grabbed  
me short of  
breath, panting in  
desperation like a hopeless lost child.

I fell to the ground without a prayer  
with bended knees  
knowing that  
all is  
lost.

Then  
I woke  
hearing a voice  
and thought I was  
hallucinating as if in a dream.

The pack was around me in conference  
with the leader  
holding me  
with a  
smile.

Leonard Dabydeen

# You Will Come (Tetractys)

When  
must I  
go to bed  
to lay my head  
when I am now dreaming only of you.

If I should close my eyes before I sleep  
I pray to God  
you will come  
in my  
dreams.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Your Face Value

when you place a mallet  
in my right hand,  
and a chisel in my left,  
all I need is a block of wood  
to show you  
what is your face value –  
even if you turn sideways.

and as life goes on  
I continue to chip away  
at this block of wood;  
layer by layer  
the contour in my mind  
goes with the grains,  
or sometimes runs cross-ways;  
knots are more difficult to chip.

and as life goes on  
I know it will be a matter of time,  
when the virtual becomes real.  
I will be somewhere  
either inside or outside,  
to show you  
what is your face value -  
and you will no longer  
be able to turn sideways.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Your Light Is Shining

Your light is shining  
with love, through every dark cloud:  
a candle burning.

Leonard Dabydeen

# Your Presence

My desire to fill this void  
beats like a shattered drum,  
as I hear the echo distance after distance  
of your unfettered absence;  
in the quietude of my living room  
I sit on the sofa  
stirring memories of yesterday,  
as I look at your mahogany-framed picture;  
some time in the afternoon  
I lifted your coffee-cup off the table  
where you had your last quench  
of rich cappuccino;  
before I reached for the kitchen sink  
I felt a whiff of emotions  
like a an elated rush of blood:  
and I now hold on to this treasure  
as if it is your presence  
I need more than myself -  
never to let go;  
your presence must never be

just a dream only

on the handle of a coffee-cup.

Leonard Dabydeen

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kyon oh kyon

kyon, oh, kyon main poochh kar  
maun ke kampan mein  
yah shareer ek kaidee hai  
man kee dveepasamooch mein  
shareer to asalee  
shareer itana aamantrit  
kabhee kabhee nostalgiai de la bouai  
kabhee kabhee ek haarmonik taal  
devataon ke mandiron mein  
haan, shuddh paishaachik arthee ke lie atisanvedanasheel  
aur is man

yah sapane  
oh, yah kaise sapane  
isalie rahasyapourn  
itana ameer hai aur shaanadaar  
jod tod abhee tak bharsemand  
rachanaatmak, saanskrtik, karm  
man shareer baithata hai  
maan kee god mein ek bachche kee tarah  
phusaphusa, gaayan loree  
jaane nahee de sakata  
prakaash aur din kee tarah avibhaajy  
kaidee hamesha ke lie  
kyon, oh, kyon main poochh rahe ho.

Leonard Dabydeen