

## Poetry Series

# Sandra Martyres

- poems -

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### **Sandra Martyres (5th October)**

I hold a Master's Degree in Economics and work for an International Financial Institution. I enjoy writing Poetry more as a hobby, a form of expression and relaxation. Other interests include Reading, Philately, Theatre and Travelling.

**# A passing Cyclone...(Senryu)**

A Cyclone would pass  
The coast - said the weather men  
But it by passed us

Sandra Martyres

## **# An Artist's view**

On a cold wintry evening marked by clear skies  
The image of a golden ball shines on the ocean  
The young artist concentrates on the water  
And keenly observes the changing colours  
From bright yellow to deeper shades of orange  
Every detail of which is reflected in the sea mirror  
He notes the fading rays turn to deep red welts  
Cutting across the darkening skies  
And the new moon struggling slowly to rise  
He soon picks up his brush and paints vigorously  
He has to capture this special moment on his canvas  
Before night falls or else this beautiful moment  
A miracle of nature will fade into oblivion

Sandra Martyres

## # Black Memories

He carefully placed a black rose on her grave  
It was perhaps his way of saying goodbye  
He also added a card with a black ribbon that read  
"For my departed wife as she embarks on a new life"

Back home he ripped up the wall paper  
The pale pink colour reminded him of her  
He gathered all her clothes and cosmetics  
And sent them in a sealed bag to a local charity

When the house was rid of every memory  
He brought in designers to refurbish it  
With new furniture upholstery and wall paper  
He wanted nothing to remind him of her

The neighbours watched the happenings  
With more than normal neighbourly interest  
They wondered why he had painstakingly  
Eliminated even the faintest memory of her

Their curiosity was satiated a fortnight later  
With the arrival of two detectives at his door  
They spent an hour or so apparently quizzing him  
And then came the verdict -he had killed his wife! !

Sandra Martyres

## # Bureaucrats

Bureaucrats everywhere are a special fraternity  
Who manage to make the possible impossible  
And then take pride in this achievement  
They ought really to be eliminated permanently  
From every self respecting country  
Especially one raring to go ahead  
Ours is a nation of hungry young tigers  
Waiting to be unleashed to show  
Their power and prowess in every domain  
Instead of which they find themselves  
Permanently in shackles thanks to the famed  
Bureaucratic browbeating – these revered gentlemen  
Are feared by one and all including the Ministries  
To which they actually belong and for whom they work  
These august individuals never miss an opportunity  
To get their pound of flesh when the going is good  
Exceptionally, they could settle for half a pound  
In these days of recession and tough times  
Any offer of less, would be considered an insult  
To their sense of self importance and propriety  
Exercising caution when dealing with them  
Is quite obviously the only way to play their game  
Challenging them would be absolutely insane  
We may carp all we want on this painful issue  
But the fact of the matter is that they are here to stay

Sandra Martyres

## # Business is Business

A long colourful serpentine queue  
Of sincere and faithful devotees  
Glides up the hill at snail's pace  
To spend a few precious moments  
Paying homage to a miraculous deity  
Lodged in the small temple  
Atop a once beautiful hillock  
Now shorn of its verdant beauty  
Thanks to the trampling by  
The many overzealous pilgrims  
Anxiously trying to reach the top  
By avoiding the beaten track

The base of the hill is home to  
Enterprising hawkers and money makers  
Always on the prowl to make a quick buck  
They sell flowers, coconuts and other items  
To be offered in the temple  
Some even dare to advise the pilgrims  
About the Goddess' preferences  
While the devotees display of faith is touching  
The business acumen of the hawkers  
Rises to another level altogether  
For them 'Business is business'  
Irrespective of the place or situation

Sandra Martyres

## # Cut and Paste

No more burning the midnight oil  
And pouring over tomes to find  
Information or do research on  
Any person, place or subject  
The life of the student has changed  
And it is all thanks to the Internet  
That virtual fount of knowledge  
Available at the click of a mouse  
From one's very own house  
But alas there is a negative side  
To this life of comfort and ease  
Student have become past masters  
At the infamous routine of "cut and paste"  
Originality, presentation and writing skills  
Treasured and propagated by the likes of me  
Are no longer valued and considered passé

Sandra Martyres

## # In times of gloom and doom

It is not all gloom and doom  
For hope there is always room  
Look at the beggar across the street  
He does not beat a hasty retreat  
When a mean and miserly passer by  
Shouts an expletive on hearing him cry  
He believes that behind every mean guy  
Lurks someone with extra food to supply  
Neighbours have watched this man for years  
And often worry when he disappears  
They perhaps cheer when he re-appears  
After seeing him around for so long  
They know that to their area he belongs  
They do not allow him to stray too far  
When the going on the street gets sour  
They get together and donate veggies  
To keep him from getting too edgy  
Hence their motto for the current recession  
Is not to avoid going into depression  
They need to do all that they can to stay afloat  
And if unaffected they would not gloat  
They always keep the lowly beggar in mind  
After all he still manages to find  
Sustenance from the big hearted and kind  
Begging for them is obviously not a possibility  
There are other ways of facing vulnerability  
Rolling up ones sleeves and mucking in  
While the going gets tough will bring a win  
Their idea is to use all the resources available  
To find a financial solution that is suitable

Sandra Martyres

## # The Power of Pink

### The Power of Pink

A dainty little girl skipped across the park  
Dressed in pink from ribbons to shoes  
Her Mother followed close behind  
Not many people cast a glance at them  
All were busy with their own wards  
There was however a man in a wheelchair  
Who seemed completely fascinated with her  
His eyes were focussed on her intently  
His attendant did not appear to notice  
That a sense of calm had descended on him  
There was even a hint of a smile on his troubled face  
'Alisha' – he finally shouted to everyone's surprise  
For he had not uttered a word in years  
Now he was calling his young daughter long dead  
In a fatal accident along with her mother and brother  
He, the father managed to survive or just about  
For he was crippled and he had lost his speech  
But the little girl in pink seemed to have changed that  
She reminded him of his very own child and the fact  
That she turned around and gave him a big angelic smile  
Only convinced him further that there was life after death  
That Alisha was reborn in a new family, was a happy thought  
Much later he did comment that – it was the power of pink  
That changed his life on that fateful day in the park.

Sandra Martyres

## **A Banker's Prayer**

Dear God,  
Let our borrowers pay us back  
We can take no more flack  
We have to remain on track  
Or face the inevitable sack  
Governments, tax payers, citizens  
You name them  
They are watching us  
With focussed eagle eyes  
We are literally surrounded by spies

Any whiff about a distressed asset  
Or a loan turning toxic  
Even if it is only an empty rumour  
Is enough to send our stocks south ward  
And of course provide the usual fodder  
For dinner time conversations  
Which continue to dwell unendingly  
On the familiar greed narrative

Bankers' bonuses and compensation  
Are believed to have been the cause  
Of the recent financial crisis  
Apparently we did deliberately  
Court disaster by  
Totally disregarding long term risk  
Just to take home meatier pay packages  
Dear God it this were really true  
We would not be here now  
Offering this fervent prayer to you

Sandra Martyres

## A Bygone Era

I look back on the days  
When children attended school  
For an all round education  
When bankers were respected people  
Who accepted deposits and extended loans  
When cricketers were considered gentlemen  
Who played the game sportingly  
To extol their batting style and bowling accuracy  
When music was played on a gramophone  
Or listened to from a radio station  
When all it took to bring a smile on a child's face  
Was a visit to an ice-cream parlour to  
Taste the latest Sundae on the menu  
Today, I look back at the past  
With a sense of nostalgia and  
Perhaps with a little bit of regret too  
But we have to live in the present  
We have to transform ourselves  
Or risk being treated  
As fossils or relics of the past  
So I try very hard not to bat an eyelid  
When I see children wasting their spare time  
On their play stations instead of  
Reading a book or enjoying outdoor games  
When the Twenty/ Twenty cricket team easily  
Sets aside the image of the Gentleman's game  
By playing instead for power and endorsements  
When reading novels is considered passé and libraries  
Have no takers – they wear a deserted look  
When education simply means getting ninety percent  
By attending coaching classes who guarantee  
The desired percentage for a handsome fee  
But I do find it difficult not to squirm at the new role  
That the once respected bankers play  
Financial intermediation they call it which means  
Matching borrowers and investors,  
Structuring exotics creating tailor made products  
For the so-called financially sophisticated.....  
It was all this unfettered exuberance that  
Led to the sub-prime fiasco, forcing  
Governments into overdrive mode to  
Recapitalise unviable banks and take drastic steps  
To put the economies back on track  
Amidst at all this chaos and confusion  
I long to go back in time to the bygone era.

Sandra Martyres

## **A candle goes out**

When the cruel winds of change  
Blew over his household  
Leaving the family in dire straits  
He never once grumbled  
His spirit resembled a candle  
Blowing in the wind  
Defying all the negative forces  
His light never blew out  
It may have dimmed  
But only to brighten again  
He lighted up the lives  
Of his near and dear ones  
And those of his neighbors too  
He gave hope to the hopeless  
Helped feed the hungry  
Placed a friendly arm around the lonely  
Dried the tears of the unhappy  
Now his candle has finally  
Blown out completely  
But his life's good work will  
Like a legend will live on...

(Inspired by the passing of a very good man and Elton John's - A Candle in the Wind)

Sandra Martyres

## **A Candlestick**

A burning wick  
A bright yellow flame  
Flickering bright  
A little candlestick  
Helps to light up her life  
Through the long and dark  
Cold winter's night.

Sandra Martyres

## **A celebration gone wrong...**

A trendy new restaurant  
In a chic part of the city  
The family was celebrating  
The arrival of their new puppy  
"Dogs are not allowed"  
Read the restaurant Notice Board  
So the puppy had to be despatched  
Reluctantly of course  
Back home to his new kennel  
Some of the evening's pleasure  
Was definitely lost  
The children were not happy  
How could they celebrate  
Without their new pet dog  
That triggered a family debate  
Should they go ahead and sup  
Or return home to be with the pup  
After much discussion  
They decided to set aside thoughts  
Of a whining puppy and have dinner  
Menus changed hands  
Animated discussions ensued  
About the choice of some delectable food  
In the midst of the ordering  
They heard an explosion  
All jumped up in the confusion  
Only to see two gun totting youths enter  
It was perhaps they who'd fired the shots  
"Hands up everyone" they screamed  
In a petrified voice little Johnny said  
"Thank God the puppy is not around...  
He has no hands to put up..."  
That was the last time they heard his voice  
A stray bullet from the terrorist's gun  
Just hit him and he was down  
His Dad bent down to pick him up  
But again he could not  
This time the terrorist's gun  
Was carefully trained at him  
And then he too caved in...  
The other guests watched helplessly  
While the terrorists pumped bullets relentlessly  
Soon there was no one left to tell the tale  
The gun totting youths hurried away  
Before the cops could block their way  
Another case of mindless carnage  
Life and property destroyed  
There were only unanswered questions  
On everyone's mind  
Why did they do it to innocent people?  
And what did they hope to find?

Sandra Martyres

## **A haiku selection**

A gentle wind blows  
Across the meadows and fields  
Tossing leaves around

Dark black stallions  
Run miles across the farm land  
Majestically

The squirrel hides nuts  
In the hollows of the tree  
For a rainy day

Sandra Martyres

## **A humble poetic tribute**

Just a word of sincere thanks  
To a friend I met on PH  
One to whom I owe a huge debt  
Not of the current toxic variety  
But one that I can never repay  
He has always been a positive critic  
Making me aware of poetic logic  
And the nuances of this fine art  
All of which are truly important  
For the uninitiated making a start  
I am now encouraged to explore  
New techniques and to read more  
As I am clearly and reasonably convinced  
That if the right interest is evinced  
Even a mediocre poet can aspire  
To bring into his poetry some fire  
Thank you Michael  
For this poetry lesson

(Dedicated to Michael Harmon - a very talented poet on PH)

Sandra Martyres

### **A little ditty**

He was caught looking at a hooker  
It landed him in a pressure cooker  
With his wife letting out the steam

Now he is under house arrest  
Until he can pass the roving eye test  
With his wife as the examiner

Three weeks have passed uneventfully  
He is the dutiful husband, yours obediently  
With his wife still watching over ominously

Sandra Martyres

## **A lost Poodle**

He walked through the woods  
With a flickering lantern  
In search of his white poodle  
The little dog had strayed away  
Each step that he took, seemed to echo  
The more silently he tried to walk  
The louder the crackling of dry leaves  
Sounded in his ears raising more fears  
He tried calling out to the poodle by name  
'Tipper- Tipper' he shouted louder and louder  
But to no avail – the pooch did not respond  
The woods became darker and darker  
And his lantern dimmer and dimmer  
Soon he felt warm winds pass slowly  
On either side of him and then  
A strange sensation overcame him  
He broke out into a cold sweat  
Wondering if it were a ghost haunting him  
So terrorised he was, that even when  
He shouted the dog's name again  
No sound could be heard  
After that he lost track of what happened  
Until he awakened to see his anxious Mother  
Peering down at him in complete dismay  
With Tipper right behind her wagging his tail  
He sighed with relief when he realised  
That he was in bed and it was just a bad dream...

Sandra Martyres

## **A Mysterious Neighbour**

Sprightly and very much alive  
For someone seventy-five  
Wearing her trade mark sunglasses  
To hide any trace of wrinkles  
Are these accessories  
Armour to preserve  
Her ever youthful image?  
Every gesture  
Is carefully choreographed  
To leave behind an aura of mystery  
No one knows her history  
Some think she may have been  
A fashion designer or a  
Classical dancer of yesteryear  
Which she neither confirms nor denies  
All this conjecture perhaps  
Stems from her own wild imaginings  
She drops little hints while talking  
Leaving people to conclude  
That after an illustrious past  
She has settled down  
In the vicinity to a more  
Peaceful and relaxed existence  
Yet no one dares question her  
Fearing her sarcasm  
With haiku-like concision  
While fielding difficult questions  
From curious neighbours  
So she will continue to be an enigma  
Until someone uncovers  
Her true story –if there is one

Sandra Martyres

## **A sip of wine**

The little boy's eyes followed  
The wine glass as its level dropped  
He wondered what it tasted like  
His Mother seemed to savour each sip  
She always seemed happy while drinking  
Quite unusual given her sad disposition

Today he decided he must taste it  
A longing that he could not control  
So he focussed his attention on the glass  
Waiting for her to leave it unattended  
So great was his concentration that  
He did not notice if anyone else was watching

Finally his moment of happiness did come  
Someone called out to his mother  
She placed the glass on the mantel piece  
And walked in the direction of the caller  
The young boy seized the opportunity  
He leapt over a footstool and grabbed the glass

Just as he was about to take his first sip  
Something strange happened a picture fell  
From the wall with a loud thud and so did the glass  
From his shaking hand - he watched aghast  
As the burgundy coloured fluid flowed out  
Onto the white marble flooring staining it

He was tempted to lick the ground but  
Seeing his grandma's photograph in the broken frame  
He desisted, overcome by a sense of guilt and fear  
By which time his mother was back on the scene  
Pointing an accusatory finger at him for not only  
Spilling her wine but for the two breakages as well

Sandra Martyres

## **A special prayer**

To you O Lord we send  
Up a special prayer  
Shower your blessings aplenty  
On this young and lovely lady  
Rid her of her pain and suffering  
And peace and happiness to her bring  
Give her life a second lease  
Free her from this dreaded disease  
Put a smile back on her face  
You can do it all with your loving grace  
Amen

(Specially written for Jon's young friend who is suffering)

Sandra Martyres

## **A Spooky Evening**

The little dog barked at the moon  
While the green ghosts flitted around  
The dimly lit spaces in the compound  
Everything seemed and looked spooky  
Even ordinary people walked about  
Clad in strange white long robes  
Wearing black masks over their faces  
Leaving only their eyes clearly exposed  
Had they turned into spirits suddenly  
'Is this for real?' murmured the visitor  
He felt as if he were in a dream  
Which he likened to the famous  
Ides of March in the days of Caesar  
'No silly today is Halloween' cried the child  
'Now will it be a trick or a treat?'

Sandra Martyres

## **A Vegetarian's Nightmare**

Ram the ever affable Indian  
And a very strict vegetarian  
Courageously agreed to dine  
With his overseas colleagues  
At a popular Chinese Eatery  
Situated in the heart of the city

He had no idea what to expect  
To his complete and utter dismay  
On entering the stylish restaurant  
While strange flavours greeted him  
His dining partners seemed at ease  
They did not even notice him squirming

As they waited to be seated  
Ram noticed a waiter approaching  
A nearby table with a live wriggling crab  
That fascinated the children who kept  
Touching it against parental advice  
Ram was clearly in the wrong place

His dining nightmare had just begun  
His first reaction was to up and run  
But given his over polite disposition  
He shut his eyes and sat at the table  
Pleading with all the Gods that  
There would be no more live crab calls

Soon he was shaken out of his reverie  
When asked to place his starter order  
The Steward recommended shark fin soup  
Ram, in an embarrassed voice mentioned  
That he was a pure vegetarian and after  
A lot of explanations the steward left

While the group waited to be served  
Animated conversations followed  
Chinese food being the topic for discussion  
Ram tried to distance himself from the subject  
Until someone described a monkey brain delicacy  
With all the gory graphic presentation details

The speaker got carried away and continued  
Speaking unendingly on this culinary rarity  
He aired his views and those of his friends too  
By which time Ram was absolutely appalled  
He forgot about being polite and literally  
Jumped off his seat and ran for his life

Sandra Martyres

## **Abracadabra**

Abracadabra, all I need is my magic wand  
To take me away from chaos and danger  
So that I will no longer need to wander  
In search of a new home and a new wife  
I will be able to lead a different and better life

Abracadabra, where is my magic wand  
I am still leading the life of a vagabond  
With my sack of worthless bonds  
Like all other aspirants to the world of riches  
I fell for Investment Bankers' sales pitches

Abracadabra, I am still parted from my magic wand  
I cannot turn back the clock  
There are no more hidden resources to unlock  
As my financial status gets weaker  
My future really looks bleaker

Abracadabra, now with the new Presidential savior  
The financial tricksters will be in the slammer  
And the tricked ones like me can hope with a tad of glee  
That TARP will bring us financial peace and harmony  
Maybe I will soon my house recover  
And with it, a new and attentive lover

Sandra Martyres

## **Accused (Senryu)**

Bernie Madoff is  
Accused of making off with  
Investor's millions

Sandra Martyres

## Alphabetic Inspiration

When all else fails  
The Economists look to  
The alphabets for inspiration  
Will the economic recovery be V shaped?  
Yes indeed, say the very optimistic  
With the stimulus package  
There is only one way  
That world economy can go and it is up  
Not really, say the less convinced  
It will probably be U shaped  
The down-turn will stay for sometime  
Before it slowly climbs up once more  
Then come the zigzag theorists  
The shape is more likely to be a W they cry  
The economy having gone down  
Will first go up and then down again  
Before moving up with more confidence  
Last but not least, are the die-hard pessimists  
They believe that the mother of all depressions  
Will not end in a hurry and have forecast an L shape  
Meaning that, having gone down  
The economy will stabilise at the current bottom  
Given that the theories have so far  
Centred around only four  
Of the twenty-six alphabets  
There is still plenty of scope for further  
Alphabetic inspiration.

Sandra Martyres

## **And life goes on**

Daily at the crack of dawn  
He would sit in his armchair  
Sipping a cup of  
Cloyingly sweet tea  
Not to displease  
His granddaughter  
Who had prepared it

For him it was just  
Another uneventful day  
With the birds as usual  
Singing in the trees  
And the dog lazily  
Slouched on the floor  
Right beside him

Occasionally he would  
Look towards the sky  
As if to thank God  
For all the blessings received  
Life was not unpleasant  
Despite his loneliness  
Following his wife's death

He would spend long hours  
Talking to the plants  
Believing that kind words  
Made them grow better  
Similarly he would entertain  
His grandchildren with  
Tales from the days of yore

His neighbours envied  
His peaceful life style until  
It struck them one day that  
He always seemed confined  
To his armchair, only then  
Did they realise that  
He was completely blind.

Sandra Martyres

## **Another face in the crowd**

Long sinewy fingers  
Typing furiously  
E-mail after e-mail  
On a laptop  
That is falling apart

He happens to pass by  
He exchanges a pleasantry  
She does not reply  
Just continues typing  
He feels slighted  
She does not know  
Her mind on the word flow

Minutes later  
His patience wears out  
He begins to shout  
She seems not to care  
Or remains unaware  
That he is around  
Waiting for a voice a sound  
Other than her fingers  
Tapping on the laptop keys

Finally she is done  
She shuts the laptop  
Places it in the case  
And, as if in a hurry  
To run a race  
Moves fast across the floor  
Heading towards the door

He chases behind her  
But she is too quick  
On the street  
She beats a hasty retreat  
And like a phantom  
She vanishes into the crowd

She is nameless  
One more of Mumbai's  
Unknown working Moms  
Leaving home early  
Returning back late  
Only to start working again  
For her children and her mate  
She has no time for pretensions  
Or his unsolicited attentions

Sandra Martyres

## **At War**

The sound of guns  
Could be heard everywhere  
There was no immediate hope of peace  
Neither for the young nor for the old  
Shivering out there in the cold  
Even in the dark and dank air-raid shelter  
The frightened people ran helter-skelter  
Fears and tensions rose high  
As military flares lit up the sky  
This was no firework display  
But an attempt to keep the enemy at bay  
The aged and children were readied for flight  
While the rest could only moan their plight  
Nothing seemed remotely right  
With neighboring countries determined to fight  
This exchange of gunfire when finally done  
Will leave behind human debris by the tonne  
And will then perhaps go down in history  
As just another avoidable catastrophe

Sandra Martyres

## **Bankers and Haircuts**

Bankers in trouble  
Borrowers on the double  
No hair left to cut.

Sandra Martyres

## **Battered (Senryu)**

Black eye broken nose  
Battered housewife sobs alone  
No one to help her

Sandra Martyres

## **Birds**

Soaring high  
Birds of the sky  
You know your way  
Across continents  
No maps  
No compasses  
Just the seasons  
To guide you directly  
To warmer climes

Sandra Martyres

## **Black Monday (Senryu)**

Black Monday followed  
A very happy weekend  
Enjoyed with good friends

Sandra Martyres

## **Black Ribbon**

A little packet arrived  
Tied with a black ribbon  
An ominous sign it bore  
The name and address  
Was almost illegible  
Yet the young girl  
Accepted it happily  
Assuming that it  
Was a birthday gift  
From her missing Dad

He had been gone  
Mysteriously for  
A very long time  
And her Mom had  
Not offered any  
Kind of explanation  
She just refused  
To talk about him  
Leaving the little  
Child bewildered

Not waiting for her  
Mother to return  
She carefully untied  
The black ribbon  
Unwrapped the  
Brown paper  
To find a little  
Black box and in it  
Was a tiny locket  
Pinned to an untidy note

But before she could  
Open it there was  
A knock on the door  
The courier man  
Completely shaken  
Had returned  
The box was not  
Meant to be delivered  
To her but handed over  
Only to her Mother

The little girl refused  
To return the box  
She gripped it firmly  
And screamed aloud  
That it was a present  
From her dear Dad  
He had never  
Forgotten her birthday

So it just had  
To be for her

The Drama continued  
Until her Mother  
Returned home  
And took the parcel  
Now it was her turn  
To cry out aloud  
The locket contained  
No picture, just a few  
Drops of what looked  
Like dried blood

The scribbled note read  
"By the time this  
Reaches you  
I will be dead  
Ensure that  
Our little girl  
Knows nothing  
And remembers me  
Always as her dear  
And loving Daddy"

Sandra Martyres

## **Buried**

She carefully arranged the  
last remains of  
her poetic ambitions  
while he helped to drive  
the last nail into the coffin  
with his sharp tongue  
drill bit  
No one attended  
the funeral  
She was out there alone  
There were no tears  
except perhaps her own  
She carefully lowered what  
she considered to be  
her works of art  
into the earth  
for all time to come  
hoping desperately that  
the creatures of the ground  
would feast on the paper  
leaving no traces behind.

Sandra Martyres

## **Cash for clunkers**

Its cash for clunkers  
So the advertisement read  
He abandoned his jalopy  
Hurriedly on the sidewalk  
And drove out in a new sedan  
Parked in the showroom  
Sure he was stopped  
Soon enough by the cops  
Surprised he glared back  
And pointed to the hoarding  
He had not noticed the fine print  
'Conditions apply'

Sandra Martyres

## **Cherry Pickers (Haiku style)**

Deep red and luscious  
Cherries too tempting to leave  
Hanging on the tree

The children were quick  
To fill their baskets with speed  
Before dawn could break

The trees were soon bare  
When the farmers awakened  
They just stared in shock

Sandra Martyres

## **Cinderella**

It's Midnight my love  
Its time for me to disappear  
And leave behind my  
Golden slipper  
For you to find  
Making sure that  
There will be another  
Evening of pure delight

Don't stop me my love  
It's a written rule from above  
That your Cinderella  
Must leave no matter what  
At midnight on the dot  
For if she does not  
Yours will not  
Be a happy lot

Please turn around my love  
Cast a glance at the  
Beauty that abounds  
In this lovely gathering  
Of dolled up ladies waiting  
To play the game of mating  
While you do that  
Like lightening  
I will be gone  
For now  
but I promise  
I will come back again

Sandra Martyres

## **Come in I'll give you shelter from the rain**

A storm was brewing and I was lost in the woods  
Dusty clothes brambles in my sandals  
Matted hair I had lost my comb  
A dirty face as the water had run out too  
Just as I was about to despair I heard this voice say  
"Come in, I'll give you shelter from the rain"  
I turned around and was surprised to see  
A rather comely lady neatly dressed  
I followed her limping along the beaten path  
To a cottage on the edge of the woods  
As she opened the door I could have sworn  
The place was haunted – an owl perched  
On the roof was eyeing me stealthily  
A black cat ambled across the floor  
Towards his mistress almost listlessly  
I took two steps back and headed for the door  
My hostess said disdainfully "Why young man  
Is not this place good enough for you?  
Remember I promised you a shelter from the rain"  
Before I could reply the sound of thunder  
Ranted the air leaving me terrified  
I quickly stepped back in and took a deep breath  
Hoping to calm myself instead of which  
I inhaled strange particles that I could not identify  
I almost choked but was afraid to ask for water  
Unperturbed, my hostess offered me a tumbler  
With a concoction that was good for the throat she said  
I thought to myself- In for a penny in for a pound  
Just swallowed the stuff as fast as I could and that is  
All that I can remember about the lady's shelter  
The following morning I was picked up by a search party  
Ambulance – lying unconscious under a large tree  
They also opined that I was probably hallucinating  
As there was no woman and no sign of a cottage.

Sandra Martyres

## Corporate Boards and Lessons

The Board Members never did realise  
The effort and patience that went into  
Keeping the dying embers of ambition alive  
When they closed all the business doors and  
Barely left half a window open with slow decisions  
And a tepid interest in the welfare of the stakeholders  
Fresh air and ideas were soon in very short supply  
Almost everyone was gasping for breath  
The place was also slowly getting infested with  
Negative creepy crawlies who began to occupy  
Every available vacant space with intentions  
To devour the minds of the more healthy staff  
A fog of lifelessness and inertia covered the area  
The usual heated internal debates among staff  
Became less audible as the lone loud voices  
Were seemingly stifled by vested interests  
Despair took the place of hope and enthusiasm

It was only when a neighbouring business  
Declared bankruptcy and went into liquidation  
That the Board finally awakened and began  
Moving away from its complacent stand  
Admitting grudgingly that they still had a team  
Who with the right dose of encouragement  
Would seize new opportunities and produce results  
Fortunately, this time the board did not fall prey to  
The too little too late syndrome  
Instead they opened the doors wider and  
Let the fresh air in giving one and all  
Adequate time to adjust to the new climate  
Revive the company and its bottom line  
Moral of the story – It is not always that  
A competitor goes bankrupt at the right time!

Sandra Martyres

## **Dad**

Dad, we watched you wither away  
All of eighty kilos by night and day  
The one and only saving grace,  
Was your ever smiling face.  
While we reached the depths of despair,  
You calmly declared that life was not always fair.

Despite the breathlessness and the pain,  
Never did you really complain.  
You bore it all stoically  
Telling us it was but folly  
To keep visiting doctors to find a cure  
For a fatal illness that you just had to endure.  
But we refused to believe -  
That eventually we would have to give up and grieve  
We continued our search for newer medication  
With an even greater sense of determination  
Alas! Despite the doctors' skills and our dedication  
You quietly left us in search of a new destination.

Sandra Martyres

## **Darkness (Senryu)**

No stars in the sky  
Moon hidden by dark grey clouds  
Heavens mourn quake victims

Sandra Martyres

## **Dawn**

At the break of dawn  
We awaken to the music of  
Migratory birds chirping away happily  
These colorful little creatures  
Perched high up in the trees  
Call out to their mates so lovingly.  
Having left the freezing zones  
Of the north they have headed south  
To regions with milder winters.  
Truly a lovely way to welcome the start  
Of another, otherwise routine day.

Sandra Martyres

## **Death (678 Style)**

Death is recession proof  
Bringing in new business deals  
For Insurers and Undertakers

Priests and florists too wait  
Along side the grave-diggers  
To ride on death's rich gravy train

Remember the tourists  
Death leaves something for them too  
Monuments like the Taj Mahal

Sandra Martyres

## **Death (Senryu)**

The death of a friend  
Can leave one devastated  
Fate is often cruel

Death robs you of friends  
When you least expect it to  
Anger fills the void

Why do the good guys  
Have to suffer and die young  
While the crooks survive

Sandra Martyres

## **Depression (A senryu)**

Depression results  
When ideas are suppressed  
and feelings ignored

Sandra Martyres

## **Destiny**

We plot our own destiny  
Be it the path to happiness  
Or the road to ruin.  
Despite the highs and lows of our lives  
It is we and we alone  
Who plot our own destinies.

We can choose to be changed  
Or be the agents of change  
We can remain chained  
To the taboos imposed by society  
Or we can unchain ourselves and be free  
Whatever we chose will finally  
Make or mar our destiny.

Sandra Martyres

**Dew dropp (haiku)**

A little dew drop  
Standing on a yellow leaf  
Whose thirst will it quench?

Sandra Martyres

## **Dictionary (Senryu)**

Dictionary fear  
Bad English and wrong spellings  
Earn the teacher's ire

Sandra Martyres

## **Dining Out (Senryu)**

Wining and dining  
At the Ritz Carlton Hotel  
Sign of affluence

Hamburgers and fries  
At the swank new McDonald's  
Sign of teenage greed

Slurping tea slowly  
At a Mumbai pavement stall  
Sign of being hard up

Sandra Martyres

## Diwali

And God said  
"Let there be light"  
And there was light  
To conquer the darkness  
So too at Diwali  
The little oil lamps  
Adorning every home  
Help to keep out the  
Dark and evil spirits.

The fireworks light  
Up the night skies  
A feeling of love  
And Camaraderie  
Descends on one and all  
The "lets celebrate "  
Contagion effect is felt  
Across the country.

Greetings are exchanged  
And sweets distributed  
Generously to everyone  
Both the rich and the poor  
Experience the joy  
That comes out of  
Giving and sharing  
Even in recession times

Wishing all PH members a happy Diwali

Sandra Martyres

## **Down Memory Lane - in a local train**

It was a trip down memory lane  
My journey on a Mumbai local train  
Boarding the Ladies Compartment  
I managed to land a window seat  
Which in my younger days  
Was considered the veteran's treat  
As only the fleet-footed and the agile  
Were able to leap into the moving train  
For these coveted seats to stake their claim

I watched as the passengers boarded  
Most with household provisions loaded  
But each with her own seat preference  
Some chose to sit in the direction  
Of the moving train  
While others opted to be with friends  
The short distance travelers  
For convenience, just stood near the door

If you are a regular train commuter  
You will probably wonder  
What's so special about this mundane routine  
But believe me it is not as boring as it may seem  
A journey on a local train can be quite an experience  
The chatty ladies provide entertainment and education  
All you need to do is to keep your eyes and ears open  
To treat yourself to fun and free advice on any and everything

You can hear hot tips on the stock market  
Get free lessons on bringing up children  
Easy recipes for their teatime snacks  
Quick home remedies for coughs and colds  
On the lighter side there is the latest gossip on the stars  
And opinions galore on the current TV soap operas  
If you are lucky you may even get a slice of cake  
In case a passenger decides her birthday to celebrate

I savored every moment of the trip  
Listening attentively to all the ladies around me  
Not being a regular I did not have my own clique  
So I was free to choose and spent time listening  
To the many animated discussions  
Ranging from politics to children's obsessions  
All in all by the time I reached my destination  
I had the sensation that I was wiser far than when I started out

Sandra Martyres

## **Dress Code (Senryu)**

Draconian dress codes  
Deny college girls their rights  
and protect the villains

Note: A reaction to a recent diktat issued by some Indian States preventing College girls from wearing jeans to avoid Eve- Teasing! !

Sandra Martyres

## Earthquake

The earth rumbled  
Buildings by the dozen tumbled  
With the hundreds trapped under the debris  
Wailing like the proverbial banshee  
Pathetic and tragic scenes did emerge  
The entire nation experienced the scourge  
The screams for help and shrill cries  
Desperation writ deep in people's eyes  
All the acute suffering and pain  
Was driving even the survivors insane.  
The questions uppermost in their mind  
How much life, would they, in the ruins find?  
Would the relief supplies arrive in time?  
Would the sniffer-dogs smell or hear the living whine?  
How many would be extricated  
from the rubble before getting asphyxiated?  
And finally when would the tremors cease  
To give people time to grieve and their tension ease.

Sandra Martyres

**Ego (A senryu)**

A little ruse and  
His ego was badly bruised  
Not much left to lose

Sandra Martyres

## **Elections**

What won't a politician do to get votes  
He'll sell his soul and even distribute currency notes  
He cares not a fig for the admonitions  
Of the sometimes overzealous electoral commissions  
He always manages to find the right excuses  
To condone his Election Code abuses

The educated class remain passive spectators  
To the unacceptable behaviour of these traitors  
Then absolve themselves by claiming  
That there is no candidate worth pursuing  
They do not exercise their franchise  
Since all the candidates proclaim is a pack of lies

I dream of the times when an Election  
Will become a time for reflection  
When the educated electorate will open their eyes wide  
Exercise their franchise using their intellect to decide  
Whether the candidate has the right stature  
To merit being part of the government or legislature  
Only then can the country hope for good governance  
And with it the happiness and progress of its citizens

Sandra Martyres

## Elixir

He sipped the elixir  
With the same degree  
Of guilt or satisfaction  
That Adam had  
When he bit into  
The forbidden apple  
Offered to him by Eve

What followed was really  
Quite unimaginable for him  
He slipped quietly  
On to the cold floor  
And went into a stupor  
And remained so for  
Several hours to come

He was totally clueless  
That the surrounding tribals  
Were furiously beating  
Their home made drums  
To revive him or awaken him  
But right through the ritual  
He just remained comatose

His friends looked on  
In total fear and dread  
Of the weird tale that  
They would have to weave  
To explain to his folks  
That his condition was  
The result of a silly bet

Then all of a sudden  
Like a breath of fresh air  
In a room of tensed people  
Something strange occurred  
A large vase of flowers  
Fell mysteriously  
To the ground

The deafening sound  
And the cold water  
Splashing all around  
Seemed to have stirred  
The lifeless young man  
His eyes opened wide  
And he attempted to rise

He friends still suffering  
From shock first stared blankly  
Like paralysed zombies

Then quickly smashing the glass  
Containing the remaining  
Elixir they fled the place  
Carrying him with them

Sandra Martyres

## **Enchantment (Senryu)**

She truly believed  
That distance lends enchantment  
And distanced herself

Sandra Martyres

## Entangled

O what a tangled web we weave  
When we choose to deceive  
Or to be deceived  
We need to realise that we receive  
What we as ordinary mortals choose to give  
Let us not, therefore, live  
In a state of blissful ignorance  
Of the rest of the world and its tolerance

Just yesterday you did loudly cry  
That to her letter you did not reply  
So now you need to explain why  
The problem has been raised to the sky  
If only you had been frank and told the truth  
You would have spared yourself and Ruth  
All the pain and the disharmony  
Including having to face so much ignominy

Her paranoid father and ruthless brother  
Taunting you and your poor harried mother  
About the love letter that you wrote to her  
Such emotional outpourings are best kept verbal  
Since the written word is considered immoral  
Remember that in our hypocritical society  
It is only the high and mighty  
Who can get away with just anything  
While lesser mortals like you will always feel the sting  
Of the shame that even innocuous actions can bring

Sandra Martyres

## **Fat Finger (Senryu)**

Fat finger syndrome  
The bane of many writers  
Often causes heartburn

Sandra Martyres

## **Fire Cracker (A senryu)**

A bright fire cracker  
Sped across the skies leaving  
Trails of coloured stars

Sandra Martyres

## **Fist Bumps (Senryu)**

Hugs and handshakes are  
Passé in pandemic days  
Fist bumps replace them

Sandra Martyres

## **Floppy - my mascot**

Every day after you walked out on me  
I hoped and prayed that I could flee  
Flee from the city I shared with you  
Flee from everything that reminded me  
Of the long evenings spent together  
Sharing views on everything even the weather  
But alas that was not to be  
I could not leave this riveting city  
So I continued to feel only loneliness and pain  
More so when there was torrential rain  
This went on for a very long time  
I lived with my fears and unsung rhyme  
Till the day I met Floppy a street dog  
He wagged his tail so lovingly  
The very first time he set his eyes on me  
I took him home and he made my day  
Since then he's been my mascot  
And never has he strayed away

Sandra Martyres

## Flu

Beware all you carnivores  
Flu is adding to your sorrows  
We first heard of Foot and Mouth disease  
The one that finished sheep with ease  
Then came Mad Cow Disease  
Or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy  
And its human version Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease  
Beef went off the restaurant menus  
MC Donald's and Burger King  
Really felt the beef sting  
When their cash registers ceased to ring  
Soon suspected herds of cattle  
Were unceremoniously destroyed  
And governments declared using all their gumption  
That beef was safe again for human consumption

Just when we thought CJD menace had ended  
Another even worse virus on us descended  
Avian Flu or Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome  
Took the world by storm forcing people to stay home  
Masks, disinfectant soaps and vaccines  
Were the order of the day  
If someone sneezed you just ran away  
Travel advisories were quickly released  
Each time a new locality  
Reported a case of the disease  
Medical Researchers worked night and day  
To produce vaccines that would keep the Flu at bay  
The incidence of the disease had begun to decrease  
And everyone looked for some peace

Then came a new version - the infamous Bird Flu  
Chickens were slaughtered by the score  
To ensure that the virus did not spread or grow  
Imports of bird meat came to a virtual halt  
The prices crashed, chicken farmers went bankrupt  
There was a clear fear psychosis  
That quickly led to a kind of neurosis  
But with all the preventive measures and costs incurred  
This epidemic too was controlled and normalcy returned

Today Flu has been taken to a new level  
The pig or the swine is the latest devil  
The virus was reportedly born in Mexico  
But no one knows for sure  
Governments are not taking any chance  
Quarantine Zones are being set up to enhance  
Awareness and to identify possible carriers  
At airports, seaports and all other travel queues  
Of course bacon is going off the breakfast menus  
And no one talks about Porky the cute little Pig  
He is now referred to by the swear word swine

No longer can we dismiss this problem in lighter vein  
Swine Flu is causing even stock markets some pain  
The Sensex, the Dax and the CAC are all on the wane  
For which the blame is pinned on the spreading swine flu  
No one knows the damage it will finally do  
To the world's tottering economies  
Already grappling with other crises

Sandra Martyres

## **Freedom is all I want**

Set me free set me free  
I was never meant to be  
Confined to a bird cage  
In a concrete jungle  
I need a more conducive habitat  
To be able to make a new start  
Neither the cable not the internet  
Can curb my frustration or regret

I have to insist that I want to be free  
You my dear, are also free to decide  
Whether you want to accompany me  
Or remain in this world of make believe.  
Myself, I can no longer stay cooped up  
In this place you call a condominium  
Do not lecture to me on the premium  
You you had to pay to keep out the crowd

I need my freedom to explore  
The nooks and crannies of the world  
To experience the beauty of nature  
To discover new features  
And find my place in the world  
Will you continue to deny me this request  
Would you rather I stay behind  
And shrivel up in this plush prison?

Sandra Martyres

## **Geriatrics Club**

Septuagenarians & octogenarians aplenty  
No one's glass is empty.  
There is enough food and wine  
For all in style to dine  
The party is in full swing  
Everyone is having a real fling  
No semblance of fatigue or fear  
An ambience of camaraderie and good cheer  
No sons and daughters to fret and fume  
No grandchildren to complain about  
There is no mention of pain only pleasure  
To be shared with each other in full measure  
Is a time to celebrate and not to debate  
About the future which they await  
It is New Year's Eve at the Golden Fern  
The Senior Citizens' preferred Tavern.

Sandra Martyres

## Goldilocks

Goldilocks, of fairy tale fame  
is now no longer  
only associated  
with having strayed  
into the neat home  
of the three bears.

Our versatile banker friends  
those over-imaginative  
investment geniuses,  
always on the prowl,  
to uncover a new theory,  
have coined a fresh one  
"The Goldilocks Economy".

It has nothing to do  
with either her golden locks  
or with the three bears.  
Surprisingly, it refers  
to the near perfect  
temperature of  
baby bear's porridge.  
Not too hot and not too cold  
Our luminaries have hit  
upon a new inflation measure

A Goldilocks Economy  
is a benign one  
where inflation  
moves in a narrow band  
Of two and three fourths percent,  
Dodging fears of deflation  
and ofcourse hyper-inflation too  
Put simply - It is as ideal  
as the temperature  
Of the porridge! !

Sandra Martyres

## **Good Old Donald Duck**

He is still quacking aloud  
At the age of seventy- five  
He is Donald Fauntelroy Duck  
Of Disney fame  
Recently described as being  
Irascible yet innocent  
Clumsy but elegant  
Stinky but lovable  
in the Deutsche Presse-Agentur

We all agree that Donald  
Has served his country well  
From the troubled days  
Of World War II to the present  
He has entertained people of all ages  
And starred in several  
Propaganda shorts too  
He even won an Oscar  
In nineteen forty-two  
For his scintillating performance  
In Der Fueher's Face

Despite all this hectic activity  
He has aged very well  
Surviving many appearances  
In films, TV serials and now  
Even popular video games  
Donald keeps changing  
with the times and keeps pace  
With technology too  
Let's raise a toast to him  
On his platinum jubilee and wish  
That he makes it to a century

Sandra Martyres

## **Goodbye**

So you needed a subject to call,  
Then, I guess that will be all.

Goodbye, my erstwhile friend,  
There is nothing left to mend.

Backwards I did bend,  
To be a kind and dear friend.

But alas, I suppose that is life  
One long battle against strife.

Let us bid farewell and call it a day,  
Wish each other well and go our own way.

Sandra Martyres

## Goodbye Mom

To the tune of "Nearer my God to Thee"  
Did we try and set her spirit free  
Tears streamed down my face  
As they covered hers with white lace  
Then came the nailing down of the coffin  
I would no longer watch Mother's frame stiffen  
Gently the casket was lowered into the ground  
While the mourners stood solemnly around  
The priest then signaled to us  
To shovel some mud into the grave  
"You have to truly bury the dead"  
Was what he seemed to have said  
We bid our last farewell to Mummy  
Along with our friends and family  
Funerals are always so emotionally painful  
Although we do know that death is not final  
It is only the spirit of the dear departed  
That is really freed and liberated  
And even as her mortal remains perish in the earth  
There will be another birth.....

Sandra Martyres

## Goodbye Mr. Taxman

Wearing a face  
Like a tranche of steak  
Injected with Botox  
He dueled with the guys  
He looked upon as captors  
The infamous taxmen

He flung a sheaf  
Of financials at them  
With a vicious challenge  
Should the blood suckers  
Find any irregularity  
He would be prepared  
To auction his last shirt  
If need be to pay the fine

The tactic seemed to work  
The menacing looks melted  
They stopped the posturing  
Stance and reverted  
To a more acceptable  
Politer tone  
Being a veteran at the game  
He went on undaunted  
Maintaining his tough  
And unshaken honesty stand  
That he deserved the respect  
Of even the incorrigible  
Disgruntled, obnoxious taxmen

After several hours of  
Peering over his numbers  
And the punching in of figures  
Into their calculators  
The unwelcome intruders  
Seemed convinced that he was  
Not one of the evaders  
They walked out more  
Silently than they had entered

Mr. Good Citizen  
Immediately shed  
The bloated Botox look  
Sighed a sigh of relief, smiling  
The sweet smile of success  
At yet another of his  
Successful and  
Scintillating performances.

Sandra Martyres

## **Grandma is lost**

Dark clouds on the horizon  
As the family assembled  
In their ancestral home to  
Visit their octogenarian Mother  
An old lady with deep wrinkles  
Sad eyes and sagging cheeks  
Seated on a cushioned cane chair  
She just glared stubbornly at them  
Holding a spoon firmly in her hand  
Vehemently refusing to touch the soup  
In the plate placed before her as  
She believed that it had been poisoned

All the coaxing and cajoling  
By each member of the family  
Both individually and collectively  
Was of absolutely no avail  
She just seemed to be repeating  
That her family wanted to be rid of her  
So that they could get access  
To her substantial savings  
Her children looked on in shock  
Their Mother always a gentle lady,  
Had suddenly undergone  
A personality change

The youngest granddaughter  
Began to weep uncontrollably  
Something strange had happened  
Her grandmother was not the same  
The old lady no longer had kindly eyes  
Instead she wore a haggard haunted look  
Like the cruel witch in her fairy tale book  
The doctor was finally summoned  
To explain the horrible change  
One look at the lady and  
He did calmly proclaim  
That she was just another victim  
Of the infamous Alzheimer's disease

Sandra Martyres

## **Grey Matter**

Grey matter remains  
A scarce resource rarely found  
On political ground.

Sandra Martyres

## Haiku -2

Black birds on a tree  
Singing melodiously  
'Tis good to be free

Dark clouds looming large  
Heavy rains are being forecast  
Will the ducks arrive

The garden beckons  
The air carries their perfume  
Roses in full bloom

Sandra Martyres

### Haiku -3

A lonely sparrow  
Hopping on the window sill  
Crumbs filling his bill

In Kenya's Masai Mara  
Hungry lions lie in wait  
Preying for a bait

Dolphins leaping over  
The waters of the river  
While other fish quiver

Sandra Martyres

## Haiku -4

A bird flies across  
The grey skies flapping its wings  
To beseech rain Gods

At the end of May  
The tulips of Amsterdam  
Will bow down and die

First monsoon showers  
Ushered in with mirth and glee  
Trees too are dust free

As May fades away  
Cherries berries and other fruit  
Are sighted in June

Sandra Martyres

## Haikus - some new

Moths sat up all night  
In flickering candle light  
Seeking storm respite

Summer is right here  
A profusion of marigolds  
Golden days unfold

A bright red carpet  
Of fresh gulmohar flowers  
Welcomes the monsoons

Coconut palms sway  
All along the lovely bay  
Gently with the breeze

Sandra Martyres

## Handicapped

He loathed it when he had to go out;  
he was the one whom the boys  
laughed and joked about.  
Here comes our three-legged stool!  
they jeered from the nearby school.  
Being handicapped and lame  
brought their insults and to him shame.  
He shuddered, holding back a tear,  
and hobbled away in absolute fear.  
They considered him an easy prey.  
They almost always got their way.  
His own disability he could not fight.  
They took advantage of his plight.  
He often questioned their nastiness:  
Why deny a lame boy happiness?  
It did not change their vicious ways;  
he hobbled on through troubled days.

Sandra Martyres

## Happy Days

Happy days are here again  
As we say goodbye to torrential rain  
The sun shines again in bright blue skies  
Migrant birds are chirping in the trees  
New Butterflies keep flitting around  
The park is alive with nature's sounds  
Winter flowers are now in full bloom  
Quieting hopefully the prophets of doom

Sandra Martyres

## Hard Times

The company was downsizing which they  
Euphemistically described as right sizing  
The Management casually brushed aside  
All signs of employee antagonism  
And for those who were to lose their jobs  
They deliberately ignored the fears and sobs  
Making insensitive comments that the staff  
Could even benefit by catching up on lost sleep and  
Seize the opportunity to relax in the coming months  
As there would be no need to rush to be in time  
To swipe their access card sharp on the dot of nine  
This callous Management attitude just exacerbated  
The anger of the staff already frustrated

During recession times no matter the effort put in  
New jobs are hard to come by  
And the fear of failure increases with every try  
Ill health and insomnia become common  
Worry begins to paralyse the jobless ones  
As they think about daughters and sons  
Apart from having to face nagging spouses  
And landlords driving them out of their houses  
All this misery because some moneyed nerds  
Knew not how to manage their herds  
Had they followed the proper ethical business path  
They could have avoided this dreadful aftermath.

Sandra Martyres

## Haunted! !

After ten long years  
Johnny returned home  
Everything seemed unchanged  
The Aged father sat  
in his usual garden chair  
Johnny rushed forward to embrace him  
But his father looked away  
Did he not recognize his own son?  
It really seemed that way  
He screamed out to him  
But he continued to look away  
So he shouted his own name  
But the old man still looked away  
Father, have you forgotten me?  
He asked him finally  
This time he stared blankly  
Johnny panicked and rushed inside  
He found his mother seated  
Serenely in her usual chair  
She did not recognize him either  
When he tried to greet her  
She just looked into space  
And then quietly disappeared  
He ran outside again  
His father was no longer there  
Johnny was at a total loss  
He leaned across the wall  
And asked a neighbor in a voice quite meek  
If his parents often played hide and seek  
The neighbor glared at him in shock and disbelief  
Then in a calm voice announced  
'As you were pursuing your career at sea  
You heard not your helpless parents' pleas  
They succumbed to a dreadful disease  
You should visit a shrink immediately  
This house has for over four years been empty'

Sandra Martyres

## **He relied on his sense of touch**

He relied on his sense of touch  
Without having to say much  
Randy was a young blind child  
Brought up almost in the wild  
Surrounded by illiterate lads  
Who looked and behaved like little cads  
Yet he was always very mild  
A very gentle and well mannered child  
Walking and feeling his way around  
Which did everyone astound?  
People would keep watching in awe  
As he ambled towards the door  
He did not trip  
He did not fall  
Nor did he for any help Call  
He had no white cane  
He simply used his alert brain  
Then came his real test  
He had to go to school like the rest  
No teachers wanted him in their class  
They feared he would never pass  
If he from birth could not see  
How would he even imagine a tree  
Or learn the alphabets  
He would be a drag on the other children  
But the world is not short of good Samaritans  
One came forward like an Aladdin  
He led the boy to a distant cave  
And with clay models and Braille  
To him the required knowledge gave  
Soon he gained enough confidence.  
In his mentor's loving care  
he was able to shed his diffidence  
He went back and joined school  
Today he is looked upon by all  
as a model child who answered his call  
One who gives to hope  
to all physically challenged children  
That even in this tough and cruel world  
Given a chance they will be able to cope.

Sandra Martyres

## **Heart Break (revised)**

He broke her heart  
He tore her apart  
He crushed her ego  
He shattered her dreams  
Coz he felt threatened  
He then took an impulsive  
decision to change jobs  
And had the audacity  
To think that she'd  
Follow him to another city

She had had enough  
There was no way  
She would follow him  
Teary eyed she packed  
All her belongings  
And walked away  
But not before telling him  
That he'd have to look  
For another partner  
To dance quietly  
To his miserable tune

Sandra Martyres

## Her Sea Tale

Her tale is really a very unhappy one  
She married a Captain hoping to have fun  
She wanted to discover the world with him  
Instead of which she only saw the ocean  
For he always made sure that  
She stayed back on board at every port

In sheer desperation she took a decision  
At one such port she stealthily disembarked  
And hid herself in an empty warehouse  
Just before the ship was set to sail  
She watched her husband on the deck  
Talking animatedly to a fellow crew member

He was totally unaware that she was ashore  
As the vessel sailed she waved it goodbye  
Remaining riveted to her hiding spot  
Until it was completely out of sight  
That was the last she hoped to see of him  
Her ex-husband the mean and captain

A sense of peace then came over her  
The worst was finally coming to an end  
No longer would she in loneliness whinge  
Every time her husband went on a Binge,  
Leaving her to her own devices  
While he indulged himself and his vices

Now she hopes to lead a more normal life  
At the port, taking up odd jobs to support herself  
While continuously hoping always that her husband  
Will never return to claim her back  
So that she can enjoy her new found freedom  
And be relieved from a lifetime of boredom

Sandra Martyres

## **His lovely lady**

Dark almond shaped eyes  
Delicately shaped eye brows  
Long brown eye lashes  
A flawless skin  
and her perfect face  
She carries herself  
with enormous grace  
He is indeed obsessed  
with his beauteous love  
Each time she passes him  
He stares back at her  
in sheer agony  
He wants to hold her in his arms  
Reassure her that with him  
She has nothing to fear  
As he will always remain beside her  
To love, protect and guard her  
But he have been warned  
That the slightest hint  
of any advances  
Would absolutely  
ruin his chances  
To win her over he needs  
to wait patiently  
Until she decides  
to reach out to him  
But inspite of her  
seemingly indifferent nature  
He still craves this beauteous creature  
So will someone tell his lovely lady,  
That her silence is killing him

Sandra Martyres

## **Hitched (Senryu)**

A gold wedding band  
Flashes on her ring finger  
Too late to back out

Sandra Martyres

## Home stories (Senryu)

Milk can overturned  
The neighbourhood cats slink in  
And lick the floor clean

A full cookie jar  
Mother has excelled herself  
Daughter overjoyed

A posie of flowers  
Gifted by her little boy  
Mother's heart just melts

Sandra Martyres

## **Hunger (senryu)**

He stood on his head  
Hoping someone would give him  
A slice of fresh bread

Sandra Martyres

## **I cannot.....**

I cannot relax and read a book  
There is always dinner to cook  
I cannot think of staring into space  
I may miss a chance in the rat race  
I cannot sit back and read a novel  
There will be snow in the pathway to shovel  
I cannot spend an extra fifteen minutes in bed  
There is always breakfast to be prepared  
I cannot invite friends on weekdays to tea  
There is always kids' homework to oversee  
I cannot, I cannot, I cannot  
I am tired of being that super robot  
I now need to break free from this drudgery  
And stop feeling guilty endlessly

Sandra Martyres

## **I don't know why**

I don't know why we are the way we are  
Why we lie when the truth is often easier  
Why we walk past a beggar untouched  
When all that it would take to change his mood  
Are a few rupees for him to buy some simple food  
Why we crib about the state of the nation  
Never admitting that it is partly of our creation  
Why we choose to believe that the country's ills  
Are generally caused by other people's feeble wills  
Will we ever try to understand  
That no one can clap with only one hand.

Sandra Martyres

## **I have decided**

Each time I try to show you  
A better way to do  
Something or  
To deal with  
Someone  
You retaliate with  
A nasty repartee  
So from today  
I have decided  
To leave you  
To your own devices  
My advice I will only  
Share  
if you care enough  
to ask for it,  
or if you dare

Sandra Martyres

## **I often wonder**

The dizzying city lights  
The speeding trains  
The unending queues  
Of people in a mighty hurry  
I watch them all  
From my little seat on the wall  
Nothing surprises me any more  
Neither the scams nor the scandals  
That are regularly reported in the journals  
Stories of men and women  
Whose only creed is unabashed greed  
They have no time to dwell on the means  
For them it is only the end that counts  
They do not ask why they need the millions  
They concentrate on how to make them  
For them talks about simple living  
High thinking or even just plain ethics  
Are considered to be  
The idle pastime of neurotics  
In this environment I often wonder  
If there is any scope for improvement  
Or will we just drift with the tide  
And await a providential denouement.

Sandra Martyres

## **I searched for you**

I could not bear  
The thought of you  
Not being there  
So I searched for you  
Everywhere

I walked the streets  
Searching for you  
Asking people along the way  
If they had seen you  
But no one seemed to know  
Where you had gone

I left the city  
In search of you  
I walked miles and miles  
Through rugged terrains  
Asking and seeking  
But I could not find you

Now I am old and weary  
I can no longer search for you  
I can only your picture carry  
In my wallet  
So that I can always remember you  
The way you were  
When you left

Sandra Martyres

## Images

At the break of dawn each day  
when I awake  
my eyes invariably stray  
to that niche in the wall  
where a portrait used to hang  
a hook  
rusty with the ravages of time  
still there  
and while I stare  
the wall  
is suddenly no longer bare  
the image of a face appears  
with those piercing eyes  
as always so endearing  
and that proud smile  
of a young ambitious man.

Gradually the image changes  
a receding hairline  
graying whiskers  
a wiser look  
a kinder smile  
yet in those eyes  
something seems amiss  
I see a sadness that never used to be.  
And as the image slowly fades  
as always  
and the memories of a lost decade  
invariably remain  
I wonder why.

Sandra Martyres

## **In my dream**

I danced with you - last night  
In my dream  
It was our favourite - the Viennese Waltz  
In my dream  
I sipped some heady wine and clinked glasses with you- last night  
In my dream  
I dined with you at our special bistro -last night  
In my dream  
I loved you like I have never loved before- last night  
In my dream  
Now I am awake at the crack of dawn  
Alone again and forlorn  
My dreams like you must disappear  
As I face another lonely day and suppress a tear

Sandra Martyres

## **In-laws**

I never cease to be amazed  
By the manner totally unfazed  
Of recounting dreadful tales about in-laws  
Most of which resemble the behaviour of out-laws  
We are obsessed with the mother-in-law syndrome  
With unending woeful stories told from many a home  
To make bad matters worse even the most popular TV serial  
Focuses on exactly the same subject material  
And despite the reams already written  
The average Indian woman is still smitten  
By the mother-in-law / daughter-in-law equations  
That have been carried down to her over generations  
Given that more women are entering the work place  
We can only hope that this family centred menace  
Will ultimately get watered down  
And that such tales will not only draw a frown  
But disappear completely over time  
Leaving women a happier social code to define

Sandra Martyres

## **It ended with a sandwich (Revised)**

Like a green caterpillar  
Trying to hide  
By balancing on a stem  
Between two green leaves,  
She stood in the park  
Between two large croton bushes  
With lemon and brown leaves  
Matching the colours of her clothes,  
What looked like  
A once-floral dress.  
Taking care not to draw  
Attention  
By the rustling of leaves,  
She sat on the ground,  
Unwrapped a packet of sandwiches,  
And began to devour them.

Then, out of nowhere,  
A little boy appeared  
Crying loudly that his lunchbox  
Was empty, that he was  
Hungry.

They found her lying  
In a heap on the ground,  
Beside a half-eaten sandwich.  
The dress she seemed to be wearing  
Was really a worn and dirty  
Blouse and skirt.  
In a hurry to finish,  
She had choked on the food,  
The first she had eaten  
In days.

\*Inspired by an article in a magazine

Sandra Martyres

## **It is time to thank you...my PH friends**

I start with my countless dear friends and poetesses  
Meggie, Karin, Marilyn, Fiona, Catrina, Christine, Naidz  
My namesake Sandra Fowler, Carol, Fay, Allie, Jasmine  
Mamta, Amary, Anjali and Roshni just to name a few  
I can count on them for a word of advice or two  
Every time I post a poem or try out something new  
They are the reliable rocks on whom I test my talents  
And till today they have never played truant

Next come the three stalwarts from the sunny South  
There's Kesav, Samanyan and Sathya  
Also my regular readers Leslie, CP, Jon, Shan,  
Ahmad, Lawrence, Vijay, Alf and Dr. Sheth  
On whom I also bounce off my poetic ideas  
And eagerly await their reviews and comments  
To be sure that the other readers will not lament

The two Indiras – outstanding poets in their own right  
Reading their work is a poet's delight  
They give an insight into the real and the surreal  
Many of their works are poetic pearls  
When they review a poem they do so with a focus  
If the works are not up to speed, the writers gets pilloried

It would be totally ungrateful of me  
If I were not to make special mention of ye  
Michael, Carl and Kesav on whose talents  
I take the liberty of drawing frequently  
To improve my poetry presentation or seek an explanation  
To get a better understanding of a new poetic form

And finally to all my friends whom I may not have named  
Specifically in this little piece of poetry  
I would like to thank you for reading and commenting  
So generously on all my good and not so good efforts  
Thanks to all of you I am almost glued to this site  
Reading and sharing your work has been a real delight

(Inspired by Karin Andersen and Meggie Gultiano)

Sandra Martyres

## **Justification**

A housewife's nightmare  
Justifying daily each and  
every rupee spent

Sandra Martyres

## **Knowledge (Tanka)**

Her colleague explained  
That knowledge was her power  
Dissemination  
Of which would empower others  
She ignored him and prospered

Sandra Martyres

## **Lady Godiva (Senryu)**

Lady Godiva  
Today enthral the whole world  
On chocolate boxes

Sandra Martyres

## **Lenders - a tanka**

Lenders chasing dues  
Are like hungry lions in wait  
Swooping on cash flows  
Just as the preying creatures  
Bite into their victim's flesh

Sandra Martyres

## **Lenten Thoughts**

A time to reflect  
On our lives  
A time to deflect  
Attention from mundane things  
A time to repent  
For all our misdeeds  
A time to make peace  
With our misguided friends  
A time to abstain  
From food and wine  
A time to pray  
For those in pain  
A time to thank God  
For all that we have  
A time to pledge ourselves  
To doing good whenever we can.

Sandra Martyres

## Letters

Dear Mom and Dad,  
I need just one more drag  
On that glorious fag  
I do not have the money  
I realize you do not think it is funny  
I will definitely repay you  
If not in cash then in kind  
But right now I need to sniff the stuff  
Please, all I ask for is for a single puff  
As parents you are a parsimonious pair  
You claim that for me you really care  
But if you really did  
You would part with the quid  
And of me and my problems you'd be rid  
I do not know how to sound convincing  
Since your threats and your ranting  
No longer bother me  
I will be as I want to be  
And to hell with you and your kind  
With one puff I can easily unwind

Dear son,  
You think that it is fun  
For us to try and manage an adult's life  
And with it, all the attendant strife  
Over the years we have had but one aim  
Caring for you and bringing you to fame  
From the time you took your first independent baby steps  
Until you successfully cleared your high school exams  
We stayed by your side  
As parents, friend and guide  
Now everything seems such a sad shame  
Where you are concerned, we are the only ones to blame  
Our responsibility does not end  
We seem to continuously have to defend  
Our reasons for refusing late nights  
Even though we are well within our rights  
To stop you from smoking and ruining your health  
Inhaling dangerous substances with such stealth  
It is now time that you come to terms with life, get sane  
Shake your self out of your reverie and start living again

Sandra Martyres

## Life in the fast lane

In my new job I speed across the Expressway  
From Mumbai to Pune and back every other day  
I think it is a privilege to live "in the fast lane"  
Despite warnings that life would never be the same  
Father regularly raised the alarm  
That to my private life I was doing only harm  
But I chose not to pay any heed  
And focused on the corporate creed a.k.a. greed  
Now my wife is talking seriously about separating  
None can change her mind not even parental berating  
My children say life will be fine without their dad  
They care not if their decision is good or bad  
As I am never around when they need me  
And to them all that I seem to hanker after - is money  
My troubled river looks to be in full spate  
But again father tells me it is still not too late  
All I need to do is change gears  
Altering my course will chase away everyone's fears  
I must lessen the pace of my work life  
Give quality time to my children and wife  
But it will be difficult for me to play this new role  
It is like asking me to vault from pole to pole  
I have not done this family bit in years so I'd rather  
Not be the doting husband and loving father  
I prefer to stick to the fast lane and risk the pain  
Of possible loneliness even if it drives me insane  
After all that is what a great career is all about  
In the corporate world you cannot reach the top  
If you get all mushy about family life and stop  
I am sure that they will soon wake up and realize  
When the cash dries up and they have to economize  
My wife and children will look at a picture much wider  
And accept me as their much needed sole provider  
So Dad it is not that I disregard your precious advice  
I am ambitious and if need be, I am willing to pay the price.

Sandra Martyres

## Lizzie's Kitchen

is bare  
nothing to cook  
no LPG to keep the flame burning  
with a cold and hungry look  
children huddle there

Lizzie stops at the food stores  
on one street  
to buy  
on credit  
something to feed them

But storekeepers are blind  
to her, are deaf  
to her pleas, unconvinced  
by her promises to repay.  
They seem to forget the children  
she speaks of are  
not her own,  
but other peoples' children,  
abandoned,  
and wandering the streets.

but Lizzie will not give up  
dismay on her face  
she turns away  
heading for the next street  
hoping she will not meet  
there  
the same fate  
to touch the right chords  
and return home with something  
for them to eat  
this time  
she begins a new refrain

who among you will watch  
your children go to bed hungry  
if you rich folks cannot and will not  
then why should poor me be different

Sandra Martyres

## Loneliness

Humans were created  
To be related  
To stay united in families  
And for the families to live  
Harmoniously in communities  
It happened systematically in the past  
When dependence levels were high  
And relationships were made to last  
Now older people look back and sigh  
For today things have changed  
Each individual is an island unto himself  
Considered capable of meeting his own needs  
Both temporal and intellectual

There are jobs, books and the media  
To educate him and keep him busy  
There are restaurants and fast food joints  
To cater to every pocket and palate  
Bars, night clubs, theatres and all else  
To entertain him but after that - what  
Every man and woman needs to return home  
To people who value and care for him or her  
This is what is really beginning to disappear

The resultant sense of loneliness is a killer  
Here is where people lose out  
Staying in the perennial rat race  
Looking for more material comforts  
And that illusive state of mind  
Commonly referred to as their own space  
Societal recognition is their only ambition  
Selfishness takes over and they are  
Unable to stay connected to each other  
Broken homes strained relations  
Are not uncommon thereafter  
Is this the way we want to stay?

Sandra Martyres

## Lonely Lady

I need you dear to patiently listen to me  
I am just an old and lonely lady.  
Indeed I do have family living around me  
But none has time for me, a poor old lady  
My children and grandchildren are always busy  
Their life style leaves me feeling dizzy  
They zoom around in their fancy cars  
They say they need to reach out for the stars  
In their high speed rat race and money chase  
For me there is neither a role nor any place  
My presence is cramping their life style  
I need to leave and go away for a while  
Then perhaps if they do miss me  
They may even change their attitude towards me  
If they do not, I will no effort spare  
To find another home where people care  
Hopefully I will then be more at ease  
Among caring people, less difficult to please.  
But for now my dear please sit right here  
And help me to overcome my depression and fear

Sandra Martyres

## **Lost Love**

I stand at my window  
Watching her from across the road  
Deftly move around the mom and pop store  
Each customer that she serves  
Touches in me a raw nerve  
Had I been a bit less chauvinistic  
I would not have lost my beloved little mystic.  
She has now to work for a livelihood  
Her pride would never have withstood  
My arrogance and my family's haughty gaze  
Directed at her humble origins and simple ways.

Sandra Martyres

## **Madoff LLC**

Bernie Madoff has become a household name  
And the questions raised are the same  
How did he manage to gain so much clout  
With large investors without raising a doubt  
How could he have for so long and so blatantly  
Abused the trust of the rich and the gentry  
After all he had used the age old Ponzi Scheme  
To put paid to many a client's financial dream  
Were the regulators napping at the wheel  
While Madoff LLC diligently set out to steal  
For the common man what is even more amazing  
Is the ease with which the billions went missing  
There are still no clear explanations or indications  
As to how or why the fraud went long undetected  
But finally when an insider spilt the beans  
The authorities quickly and efficiently did intervene  
Reams of paper evidencing fraud and client records  
Were produced before the courts along with witnesses  
The Judgement was clear despite his advancing age  
And his apology he will spend his life confined to a cage

Sandra Martyres

## Managers

In these recessionary days  
Managers are looking for ways  
To pressurise the employees to deliver  
It is almost like they have a viral fever  
I want more meat on the bone  
He consistently and loudly seems to moan  
He is another Manager of a large corporation  
Who drives the employees to frustration  
Precision and decision-making are not his talents  
He can never strike the much-needed balance  
Between his management role  
And reaching the corporation's business goal  
So he just barks and screams hoping to redeem  
His own confidence and self-esteem  
But alas what does he achieve  
Not much even by way of reprieve  
The Directors no longer in him believe  
And the poor unfortunate will soon be forced to leave  
Either to join the ranks of the unemployed  
Or find another job where his skills can be deployed  
The legacy he leaves behind is a demotivated team  
With scant hopes of ever achieving their career dream.

Sandra Martyres

## **Markets (Senryu)**

For stock investors  
Calculators and cell phones  
Are still their life lines

The bulls and the bears  
Squabble over market shares  
Leaving banks cringing

The stinging truth is  
That manipulators drive  
Thrive and stay alive

Sandra Martyres

## **Marooned**

They placed their ears to the ground  
to pick up the slightest sound  
A nomad family was in the desert marooned  
for days at the mercy of the sun and moon  
They hoped for a caravan or a camel cart to pass  
that could help deliver them from their morass

But for them fate had decided otherwise  
They remained alone under the burning skies  
For their aged father dear it became too late  
He could no longer for any succour wait  
silently he lowered his head and died  
A tragic end to his long and painful ride.

The nomads took his death in their stride  
And chanted to keep his spirit on their side  
Perhaps they were right to do so  
they did not face a second death blow  
Help arrived in the form of a straying camel  
They rode to freedom on this loving animal

Sandra Martyres

## **More Views (Senryu)**

Insanity runs  
In the Duckworth family  
Bernie cooked his cat

Very low morale  
In the firm does not augur  
Well for the future

When schools do become  
A breeding ground for racism  
Education stops

Sandra Martyres

## **Mother**

Mother dear  
With you around we had nothing to fear  
You could easily dry every tear  
With just an encouraging word, and a little fuss,  
We still wonder how you managed all of us  
Six noisy, hungry, thirsty children  
Vying unendingly for your attention  
Of course it was not always hunky dory  
The solution for you was a simple story  
We listened to parables, fables and other tales  
That were meant to teach us to smoothly sail  
Through life's trying situations  
The old adage -Spare the rod and spoil the child  
Was impossible to follow for someone so mild  
We were merely told a story & admonished to be good  
If not, we risked missing your charming smile and good mood  
We lack your simple wisdom  
When dealing with our own children  
Without your unending repertoire of stories  
That told of great persons and their past glories  
We cannot discipline them with your degree of finesse  
It is something about which we can only reminisce.

Sandra Martyres

## **My Grandmother's Gift**

These are the poems I have read over the years  
They gave me solace and stilled my tears  
When my faith in human kind was shaken  
When my ego seemed completely broken

These are the poems that gave me self-confidence  
When I was overtaken by a sense of diffidence  
Restored my belief in myself  
Helped me overcome my grief

These are the poems that reminded me  
That relationships are just transitory  
They are meant to be savoured as long as they last  
And then consigned to memories of the past

These are poems I leave to you my child  
Tattered and torn but carefully filed  
Treasure them like I have, over the years  
They will help you shake off your fears

Signed - Your loving Grandmother

Sandra Martyres

## **My humble abode**

Money, money, money  
In a rich man's world  
Honey, honey, honey  
I don't belong there  
You have to understand  
I won't do anything underhanded  
Even if it means losing you  
To one of the spoilt and rich few  
True it will break my heart  
And perhaps I will never make a new start  
But I have my principles and taboos  
And you need to respect them too  
I prefer having less but staying peaceful  
Rather than being rich and feeling miserable  
If you think you can share my views  
I will be more than willing to welcome you  
To share my humble abode  
Located on the next parallel road

Sandra Martyres

## **My Little Blue Angel**

My little blue angel  
He always watched over me  
Right through my childhood  
He kept me out of trouble  
I always knew what to do  
And when to do it  
I was the envy of the class  
With seemingly little effort  
On my own part  
I touched everyone's heart

My parents told me  
Never to fear the truth  
As my little blue angel  
Always knew what  
I had or should have done  
Sometimes it was not fun  
It made other kids angry  
For them I was a spoilsport  
But even that did not deter me  
From following him faithfully

Now I need to tell you  
Who the little angel was  
He was my baby brother  
Who always smiled at me  
His elder sister ever so lovingly  
Until the day I saw Daddy  
Take him away in a little box  
And Mummy tearfully explained  
That he had gone to heaven  
As a little blue Angel to love and protect me.

(This story was told to me by a young girl)

Sandra Martyres

## My Story

I walked out on her twenty years ago  
Although I had nowhere to go  
I was young and brash  
Tired of listening to unending lectures  
On how I should be living,  
Or how much attention I should be giving  
On whom and when I should spend my money  
Enough was enough – that's what I said  
The day I decided to break away

I traveled for miles and miles  
To find a suitable lodging  
After a harrowing search I ended up in a dingy flat  
Dimly lit and smelling musty  
Reluctantly I laid down my bag  
And fell asleep on the creaky bed  
From that day on there was no turning back  
I did not return Mother's calls  
I let the mobile ring and clock  
Hundreds of missed calls  
She seemed never to give up  
But I did, I changed the number

That was twenty years ago  
Much water has since flowed down the river  
I look back with a cold shiver  
Now Mother is dead and gone  
I return home to manage her estate  
Her Lawyer summoned me via an advertisement  
Placed in a local newspaper  
The house is the same - almost the way I left it  
Of course it cries out for repairs  
The once highly polished stairs  
Now look old, dull and worn  
I can almost, on Mother's face see scorn  
For her everything had to be just perfect  
She would not have it any other way

Mother's desk in dark mahogany well crafted  
Where she her literary works had drafted  
Books about which I often dreamed  
Maybe Mother was not as bad as she seemed  
That thought crossed my mind  
As I opened the desk from behind  
Like a tornado a flood of envelopes fell out  
Each one bearing my name  
Written in her meticulous hand  
I selected what appeared to be the latest one  
An envelope that was whiter than the rest...  
The note inside read – "My son it is a pity  
That you will see this when I am gone  
I just want to say that

What ever I did or did not do  
Was only meant to protect you  
You father disappeared leaving us penniless –  
But I let you believe that he was dead  
To tell you the truth I was scared  
Trust you will now forgive me  
And let my soul rest in peace  
To you I bequeath my life's savings  
A million pounds in stocks  
Plus the royalties on my books  
My penname is Helen Oaks –  
And my Book Different Strokes  
Won a literary award  
Despite the accolades and felicitations  
For me there was no real celebration  
As always I was alone  
'Your Mother'

Sandra Martyres

## **My tryst with a parasite**

A parasite visited me  
And did climb up  
My leg gingerly  
By the time it reached my knee  
I began to feel very uneasy  
But there was precious little  
That I could do  
Seated in a theatre  
Attired in a pair  
Of slim fit trousers.  
Then as the little creature  
Wended its way higher up  
I avoided a scream and  
Did unobtrusively try  
To trap it  
And keep it wedged  
Firmly under my knee  
To prevent more discomfort  
And just when I did think  
That I had achieved the feat  
Of cornering the little devil  
Under my trouser leg  
With my finger nails  
I had to quickly concede defeat  
It had escaped my clutches  
And was back upon my knee  
So engrossed was I  
In this disturbing activity  
That I failed to observe  
My curious neighbor  
Intently watching me.  
Embarrassed and red faced  
I requested him to  
Focus on the stage play,  
And to stop staring at me  
And my antics with a flea  
To my complete dismay  
He dismissed my comment  
With a sleight of hand  
"Dear lady, " he said  
"I hope you realize  
How much I despise  
The likes of you who  
Come to theatres  
And spend their time  
Adjusting their clothes"  
By this time I had the  
Parasite firmly in my grip  
"Don't worry gentleman"  
I retorted, "The object  
Of my anguish is about  
To be destroyed

Then you will be able  
To regale your friends  
With a comment like  
You had paid for one ticket  
But were able to watch  
Two performances"

Sandra Martyres

## **My Valentine**

Your innocent look  
Your piercing eyes  
Always leave me mesmerised  
Your straight long black hair  
Tossed about with a nonchalant air  
A pretty girl without a care  
Your perfectly chiselled nose  
Gently sniffing at a red rose  
Your Cleopatra neck  
Adorned with a diamond speck  
I think of you by day  
And dream of you at night  
You are my perfect Valentine  
You will make me feel divine  
Only if I can be your Valentine

Sandra Martyres

## **Native Belief (Senryu)**

Most natives look on  
Cadillacs and Hamburgers  
As US symbols

(inspired by Josh Ozersky Yale's article on The Hamburger)

Sandra Martyres

## Neighbours

In metropolitan cities they say  
It is easier to walk out on a bad marriage  
Than to be rid of a bad neighbour  
The former is resolved by separation or divorce  
But the latter means running an unending rocky course  
Since good apartments are difficult to find  
We found ourselves in a dreadful bind  
Everything we said was twisted around  
Making us wonder if we were going unsound  
Any simple act of neighbourly kindness  
Was interpreted as a sign of weakness  
The unpleasantness got louder  
And neighbourly interactions rowdier  
We experienced this for two long years  
Living in a state of stress driven by all kinds of fears  
Till one day when we could stand it no longer  
And stepped out to show them who was stronger  
We approached the local law keepers  
And recounted all our grievances  
Without omitting the details of our horrific experiences  
Immediate action was taken  
Our recalcitrant neighbours were summoned and berated  
That no further complaints would be tolerated  
That this was their final chance to reform  
Or else they risked facing societal scorn  
Hopefully they will from ignominy now refrain  
And let us lead normal lives again

Sandra Martyres

## **Observations..(Senryus)**

Solar energy  
Lights up the village homesteads  
Not electric lamps

The blind student cries  
He does not need a text book  
He reads only Braille

Inebriated  
Another glass of whiskey  
He gets less frisky

Sandra Martyres

## **On being diplomatic**

He grits his teeth  
And bites his tongue  
To calm his nerves  
And keep remembering that  
He has to be diplomatic  
Irrespective of the nerds  
That surround him  
Or their idiosyncrasies  
That hound him  
He has to be diplomatic  
He does not utter a word  
That could be misconstrued  
Leading to a long and painful feud  
He has to be diplomatic  
Even if practices around him are unfair  
Causing him a further loss of hair  
In addition to other health scares  
To challenge them he will not dare  
He has to be diplomatic  
So what is diplomacy all about?  
Quite simply he will shout  
It is about being a hypocrite  
Someone who refuses  
To call a spade a spade  
And instead concentrates  
On mouthing meaningless niceties  
Instead of some well deserved profanities  
That would have gone a long way  
In keeping the pigs under control and at bay

Sandra Martyres

## **On throwing a shoe or two**

The Simple art of throwing a shoe  
Has really caught the imagination  
Of quite a few  
History says that the Russians were  
The first to uncover its alternate uses  
When their President made a shoe point  
At the UN, to express his displeasure  
More recently, the US President got a scare  
But managed to duck in time to avoid the pair  
Of shoes aimed at him in quick succession  
At one of his Iraqi press sessions  
Our local journalists not to be outdone  
Have also joined in shoe shooting but not for fun  
The Home Minister being the latest target  
Of an unhappy pressman's shoe attack  
But he rather quickly and graciously  
Accepted the Newspaper's apology  
And forgave the impulsive journalist  
For this act of indiscretion  
Soon thereafter, a leading daily  
Carried an article on the art of aiming shoes  
It strongly advised practice sessions  
Stating that the purpose is not to let the shoe  
Make contact with the targeted politico  
Rather the intention is only a moral point to score  
The right approach is therefore to leave a margin  
Of at least twenty inches and aim for the wall  
As politicians are not known to remain  
Riveted to a single spot they keep moving about  
And the last thing a shoe thrower would want  
Is for his sole to actually wound the targeted soul  
But the older and the smellier the shoe  
The greater the impact in terms of a moral blow  
The gender of the shoe does not matter  
Looked at from an economic and utility point of view  
One could always choose a lady's shoe  
As she generally has a surplus pair or two  
And the heels will act as a great deterrent  
Especially when the target is grossly errant! !

(Inspired by an article that was published in the Times of India recently)

Sandra Martyres

## **On Tigers and Owls**

A hungry tiger  
On a moonlit night waiting  
For a tasty bite

The wise old owl howls  
A cyclone is on its way  
Tomorrow for sure

Sandra Martyres

## Page Three

In our current  
Celebrity obsessed culture  
Many people establish  
A symbiotic relationship  
With popular dailies.  
A snapshot on page three  
Is also the ambition of  
Many a wannabe  
The skimpier the outfit  
The flashier the jewelry  
The greater the impact  
Is the general belief  
Many a cute young thing  
Sporting a little black number  
Would be delighted to  
Feature on page three  
For if she does succeed  
All her dreams would be  
Fulfilled  
As there is nothing more  
Satisfying than arriving  
At a Page Three do  
Hanging on to the arm of  
A guy featuring in "Who's who"

Sandra Martyres

## **Parakeets (Haiku)**

Nature's aggressors  
parakeets are green meanies  
with fetching plumage

Sandra Martyres

## Politicians

The political fraternity is an expendable race  
Often the cause of a nation's fall from grace  
They never miss an opportunity to spread across  
Every available nook and corner of the country.

They assiduously work towards building a group  
Of sycophants to satellite around them and cater  
To their every whim and fancy no matter how  
Ridiculous and inappropriate it may seem

Then pretending to be agents of change they  
Get involved in phoney philanthropic activities  
Hoping to touch the hearts of the poor gullible  
Man on the street by making false promises

If elected, they would ensure that homeless are  
Given a roof over their heads and the hungry  
Are assured of at least two square meals per day  
What more can the have-nots aspire for from a leader

The tale changes post the election celebrations  
They gracefully accept the congratulatory messages  
Then go into the ceremonial huddle to supposedly plan  
The best way to address the electorate's demands

After weeks and months of planning not much action  
Is really visible from the ground apart from a few crumbs  
By way of policy decisions to keep the common man quiet  
Then the excuses coming pouring in with a vengeance

Soon one begins to notice their families appearing  
In all public places demanding special treatment  
Like VIPs they have to be boarded first on aircrafts  
Trains are delayed to make way for them when they are late

These are just some innocuous requests taken for granted  
They can get far worse and woe betide the one who refuses  
To toady to their wishes - veiled threats follow and it is  
Only then that realisation dawns - never trust a politician! !

Sandra Martyres

## **Prison Dreams**

Madoff and Stanford  
Leaving wealth and luxury behind  
Now dream in prison

Disgraced Ponzi kings  
Sleeping in musty jail cells  
Dreaming of old friends

No more caviar on toast  
No more uncorking champagne  
Just sharing dreams with fellow gaol birds

Sandra Martyres

## **Punished**

Tears rolled in rivulets  
Down his grubby little face  
A punished school boy  
Standing in disgrace  
His only fault  
If it could be so called  
Was his inability  
To correctly spell  
A fault that did not go well  
With his school teacher  
A strong believer in  
The merits of the age old theory  
That sparing the rod  
Always spoilt the child  
So he did just that  
In the fervent hope that  
His student would remember  
That pain always followed  
Every spelling memory lapse  
Little did he realize  
That all he had succeeded  
In doing was scarring  
The young child and  
Developing in him  
A fear of the language  
And the School Master

Sandra Martyres

## **Purrfect**

Purrfecting the art of purring  
She does exactly that  
our dear imaginative  
and near perfect pet cat  
We notice that each time  
she wants something  
the volume and tone of her purr  
changes to reflect  
her sense of urgency  
The higher the pitch  
the greater is her need  
to spur us into action  
to provide her with  
the object of her desire  
A piece of fish  
generally exacts the  
highest decibel purr  
Its flavour drives  
her almost crazy  
The purr frequency is lower  
for a saucer of milk or water  
So the greater the urgency  
the less pleasing the purr.

Sandra Martyres

## **Quiet Acceptance (Senryu)**

His wife sings aloud  
Songs about old love affairs  
He listens and sighs

Sandra Martyres

## Rain

The skies are overcast  
But will the clouds last?  
Or will they slide across the sky  
And simply pass us by  
To settle over another village or town?  
Our land is parched and brown  
The cattle are lean and hungry  
The wells are empty  
The village is almost deserted  
The villagers have started moving away  
No longer can they stay thirsty.  
But I see the skies are getting darker  
I can feel raindrops  
Am I imagining?  
No it is truly the rain  
I see the drops sliding  
Down my window pane.  
I smell the delicious smell  
Of wet earth  
All will soon be well.

Sandra Martyres

## **Rain (Senryus)**

1. The Rain Gods relent  
Opening the heavens flood gates  
To water the earth
2. Children love the rain  
Just splashing in the puddles  
Their favourite game
3. Barefoot in the rain  
But beggars do not complain  
No rain means more pain

Sandra Martyres

## **Rains 2 (Haiku)**

The heavens relent  
Clouds burst with torrential rain  
Watering the earth

(for Indira Babbellapati)

Sandra Martyres

## **Ravens**

O black birds,  
Flying high  
Across the sky  
Come not nigh  
You bring ill-luck  
With all that you pick up  
On your daily jaunts  
To your favourite haunts.

Sandra Martyres

## Regret

The seas were beckoning him  
Or so he genuinely believed  
They helped him introspect  
About his present loneliness  
He spent hours sitting on a rock  
Focusing on the regularity and rhythm  
Of the waves as they lashed the shore  
Trying to forget his lost love  
The sprightly young woman  
With a shock of curly red hair  
One who had brought meaning to his life  
Regretfully he had been ignoring her  
In his constant search for power and pelf  
He spent more time hobnobbing  
With the rich and famous while his  
Lady love spent long evenings alone  
And just when he thought that  
He had achieved all that he wanted  
She decided to call it a day  
Packed up her belongings and  
Left for an unknown destination  
He wondered unendingly if it was  
Another man who was the driver  
Of her decision to leave him  
One who had showered her  
With his undivided attention  
But he will never really know  
As her parting note was terse  
"While you continue your single-minded  
Search for both power and pelf  
I am embarking on a search of myself  
Please do not bother to look for me  
Goodbye and good luck"

Sandra Martyres

## Reminiscing on Mother's Day

Torn between my Blackberry  
And my little baby  
Is already a tough call  
But that is not all  
As a working Mom  
My cup of woes  
Often overflows  
A sulking husband  
A whining baby  
And to top it all  
A very demanding Boss  
Leaving me at a total loss  
My head spins not knowing  
On whom I should focus my attention  
Indeed I must admit  
It is to my baby that I generally submit  
He who makes the loudest sound  
Is bound to make me turn around  
Between husband and boss  
It is often the lucky toss  
In no particular order  
Husband can be chided even derided  
For not taking up his share  
Of responsibility to manage our baby  
This baby line does not work with the boss  
He never stops reminding me  
About the human approach of the company  
In allowing me working hour flexibility  
In order to support top table diversity  
Never a thought for my high levels of anxiety  
So in the interest of propriety  
I try to do my bit for my family and society

Sandra Martyres

## **Retired Dad**

Whiling away his time  
Crushing dry toast and  
Spraying the crumbs  
In the porch  
Watching the birds  
Pecking at them and  
Calling their friends  
To join in the feast  
Truly a delightful way  
To start off the day  
As a retired Dad

His wife watches  
With an irritated look  
On her ageing face  
She says nothing  
But he is sure  
She is wondering  
Who will clean  
Up the place  
When he is done  
With playing games  
On his first day  
As a retired Dad.

Sandra Martyres

## **Sailor Man (Senryu)**

Goodbye sailor man  
Our short lived friendship ended  
When you jumped ship

Sandra Martyres

## **Saved! !**

As the speeding train passed by  
There was a sharp shrill cry  
Followed by a morbid silence  
A young man was found  
His head facing the ground  
With a bleeding eye and a fractured nose  
Broken spectacles and torn clothes  
A pathetic sight he was

Fellow passengers merely walked by  
Leaving him alone perhaps to die  
People passed around him  
As if they did not see him  
Focusing instead on a fallen tree  
Sadly, his condition did not inspire them  
Basic human kindness did not stir them  
To lend a helping hand to the injured man

Hope came in from an unexpected quarter  
A young shoe shine boy seeing him  
Let out a loud cry and rushed to a call box  
With the speed of a wily little fox  
And soon there was an ambulance hooting  
With a medical team to the rescue  
The young man missed a date with fate  
Thanks to a kind hearted shoe shine boy

Sandra Martyres

## Seashore

Sitting alone at twilight  
On the waters edge  
Watching the waves  
Lash the shore  
And slowly recede  
Each water crest  
Brings back memories  
From the past  
I recall my school days  
When I'd rush back  
Just to scour the beach  
For unusual coloured shells  
A beautiful collection I had  
Then came my College days  
When we argued in groups  
Sitting on the shore  
About the advantages of  
Socialism versus Capitalism  
Whether Keynesian Economics  
Had lost its relevance etc.  
I was soon into my first job  
Total commitment meant  
No time to waste on the seashore.  
A couple of years later I met  
The man I meant to select  
As my life partner  
And was back again at the seashore  
Spending long evenings  
Hand in hand talking animatedly  
Of a bright and happy future together  
But alas that was not to be  
We were forced to part  
And went our separate ways  
I stopped visiting the seashore  
For many years thereafter  
I did not want to remember  
What I wanted to forget  
But today I feel differently  
The hurt and the pain  
Has lessened with time  
I can sit in peace  
Reminisce about the past  
Enjoy the cool breeze and  
The rhythm of waves lashing the shore  
Alone....

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryu - A few**

Anger hath long life  
Coming back time and again  
Just to inflict pain

Stock markets bring gains  
But with it comes lasting greed  
And corruption breeds

Friends reunited  
Old fires reignited  
Leaves them delighted

Bring in the moolah  
Be careful about how much  
Greed is not a crutch

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryu - a few more**

Gold fish swim around  
the glass fish tank peacefully  
teasing greedy cats

A bouquet of red roses  
for his special young lady  
instead of a ring

Opt for cloud seeding  
to save the withering crops  
as rains play truant

Sandra Martyres

## Senryus - 2

Bees are a buzzing  
Do avoid all that fussing  
Fresh honey is at hand

A tiny rain drop  
Balancing on a big leaf  
Can evaporate

A peach and a pear  
Juicy tasty monsoon fruits  
All ask for a share

Sunlight gets dimmer  
Large clouds on the horizon  
Farmers prayer answered

Luscious red apples  
Hanging from a GM Tree  
Are they safe to eat?

The forbidden fruit  
Attracted Adam and Eve  
And God was deceived

Sandra Martyres

### **Senryus - 3**

Everyone competes  
His energies to deplete  
Or others defeat?

A fresh cricket match  
One untimely boundary catch  
Team hopes badly dashed

Starting late daily  
Facing the traffic melee  
Life remains unchanged

Success is his guide  
But it must be bona fide  
Else he feels defiled

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryus - 4**

A slice of pineapple  
Juice drips down his grubby face  
Flies too want a share

He smokes cigarettes  
Lying in a pensive mood  
Life is not easy

Cars zoom up and down  
At midnight in the big city  
Insomnia thrives

Books are quickly closed  
Knowledge stays between the covers  
Ignorance prevails

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryus - 5**

Sell not your poor soul  
Popularity cannot  
Be your only goal

Morals disappear  
As wealth doth accumulate  
And new friends pile on

The new Government  
has too many Ministries  
decisions could freeze

Chant mantras slowly  
The Gods are in no hurry  
To answer your prayers

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryus - a Collection**

Another Village burns  
Terrorists on the rampage  
Who will capture them?

A sudden buzzing sound  
A large bee-hive looms ahead  
Honey is at hand.

Walking in the park  
Approached by a young trickster  
Wallet disappears

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryus -7**

His leaky pen moves  
Across the blank white page like  
A confused cockroach

Mourners assemble  
Resembling a long black snake  
Waiting for a take

Lively banter heard  
Holiday makers are back  
Summer has ended

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryus -8**

The automobile  
Industry is in shambles  
It needs a driver

He who jumped the gun  
Apparently for some fun  
Now stretches in jail

Winner or loser  
It should not truly matter  
If you played the game

Sandra Martyres

## **Senryus -9**

Church bells are pealing  
Calling the faithful to pray  
The donkeys just bray

Sandra Martyres

## **Serenity (Senryu)**

The face of Buddha  
Depicting serenity  
a great stress buster

Sandra Martyres

## **Serious thoughts**

Run the marathon  
It will help you regain form  
To face life's tough race

In a pensive mood  
Looking for inspiration  
Or just time to brood

Do not over-eat  
Your neighbour could be starving  
Share the extra meat

Sandra Martyres

## Simple Life

Life is a beautiful dream  
Though it may not always so seem  
Look at the flowers that surround us  
They appear and disappear without a fuss  
As do the birds in the sky  
They just continue as long as they can to fly  
I watch in awe as the cows lazily graze  
They are in no hurry to reach fields of maize  
The juicy grass is good enough  
They are not chasing after better stuff  
It is only we who are not satisfied  
Until we have all life's luxuries tried  
We go far and wide in search of fun  
And when we face problems we just run  
This is a lesson we need to learn  
From lesser creatures how to earn  
Happiness from the simple things in life  
Leaving aside complexities and strife

Sandra Martyres

## **Slum Dog Millionaire**

We keep asking why so much fanfare  
About the film –“Slum dog Millionaire”  
This is not an attempt to sound grim  
About the popularity of the now famous film  
But to understand why the world only applauds  
Films on poverty and its dark innards  
Signifying that only the worst side of the city  
Brings out feelings of sympathy and pity  
Could it have not portrayed a more  
Balanced image of India to even the score  
There are definitely pillars of great progress  
The burgeoning middle class who sincerely stress  
On good moral values and the importance of education  
Giving us pride of place and a high degree of perfection  
In many areas involving high technology  
We can seriously claim to be the best globally

But of course on the other hand all is not bad  
There is even reason to be glad  
Danny Uncle has won the heart of many a slum kid  
Thanks to him they will from their poverty be rid  
They can even harbour dreams of entering Hollywood  
If not, at least they can aspire for a career in Bollywood  
These natural little actors would have remained inconnu  
Had they not been selected to be part of the Slum dog milieu  
For that they have to thank Danny Boyle  
Who tirelessly worked with these little sons of the soil  
But we like many others too would have been a lot happier  
Had the movie had painted a less bleak picture of India.

Sandra Martyres

## **Snakes and Ladders**

In this wild corporate jungle,  
You just cannot afford to bungle.  
It is a dangerous game of snakes & ladders  
The players being cobras or even worse - adders?  
The reptiles wait in the wing  
To seize any opportunity to sting  
All you wannabes on the ladder aiming for the top  
Should be prepared for an unplanned stop  
You will hear wagging tongues and hissing sounds  
As the slimy creatures make their rounds  
They keep planning their moves and counter-moves  
Hiding in the building's numerous grooves  
Should you one day find a snake coiled around your chair  
You can no longer stand by shocked and blankly stare  
Cause if you do, you risk being swallowed alive  
In the corporate jungle only the lean and mean survive

(Written prior to the sub-prime debacle - when the sharks were at their meanest best)

Sandra Martyres

## **Standing Tall after a Fall**

You will my friend recall  
The day you made me fall  
O what a terrible fall it was  
When I realised the cause  
Your Mother had chosen for you  
Which is what most good Mothers do  
A gentle, obedient and perfect bride  
She left you no choice but to quickly decide  
That our friendship had to be set aside

Of course you tried to explain to me  
That I could never hope to be  
Fully accepted into your family  
Being a foreigner and well-educated  
I was a bit too liberated  
To ever get integrated  
Into a conservative Indian household  
Where women do whatever they are told

So your promises had to be broken  
And the price you paid was just a small token  
To meet a really noble cause - your filial duty  
For which you said God would compensate me  
There was no need for me to be upset  
I could my eyes on another more eligible guy set  
And with those comforting words you disappeared  
Leaving me teary eyed, shocked and deeply disturbed

Now after all these long years  
I no longer shed for you any more tears  
In fact I even thank you for dispelling my fears  
For leading me to discover new friends  
Who happily did a helping hand extend  
To pull me out of a state of despair  
And help me my broken heart to repair  
That terrible bad dream I no longer recall  
I am now standing tall after the fall

Sandra Martyres

## **Strategy (Senryu)**

Shampoo Strategy  
Lather, rinse and then repeat  
Works effectively

A simple smile can  
Win the hearts of one and all  
No reason to frown

Culprits must beware  
The long hand of the law can  
Reach them anywhere

Sandra Martyres

## Street Children's Painting Dream

It was the Mumbai Street Children's  
Talent scouting evening out  
We gave them a canvas,  
An easel and a box of paints  
Told them not to exercise  
Any restraint  
The picture was theirs to paint

Hectic activity followed  
Vibrant colours were mixed  
In the palettes before the brushes  
Went into use  
Some went for bold strokes  
Others used pastels and  
And went for milder strokes

We watched the transformation  
Blank canvases soon took colour  
The pictures ranged from  
Sunny skies and butterflies  
To moonlit nights and fireflies  
Some did give nature a pass  
And opted to paint the school class

After working for an hour and half  
The pictures were ready for display  
The children proudly handed in  
Their very own works of art  
And anxiously awaited  
As the judges went on stage  
To review the paintings and  
Make their choices known

For the young artists  
It was a defining moment  
As they waited for the results  
Three of them would be selected  
To represent Street Children's Block  
At the Inter-school competition  
This would help them pay  
For their further education  
Without having to rely on families  
Already suffering deep deprivation

The prizes went to the three best  
Original paintings and for the rest  
We have made it our life's mission  
To try and find for them admission  
Seeking corporate sponsorships  
And wherever possible even scholarships  
So that they can realise their dreams  
Without making any parents scream.

Sandra Martyres

## Style Statement

A near perfect face  
Exuding a touch of grace  
A Cleopatra-like long neck  
Enhanced with delicate jewellery  
A long flowing black gown  
Falling loosely over the tall slim body  
Long well manicured finger nails  
Bright red painted toe tails  
That is her style statement.  
And a good one too.

No one knows who she is  
Or from where she comes  
But who cares  
With her stunning good looks  
She is always surrounded  
By tall handsome wannabe guys  
Craving her undivided attention  
And eager to have her hanging on their arm  
But will she or wont she  
Make a final choice of a guy?  
Or will she continue to play  
The hard to get game?

Sandra Martyres

## **Sub-prime**

He is a victim of the infamous sub-prime  
More by default than by design  
He kept lending money and more money  
At interest rates that were not funny  
Revenues seemed to be accruing  
No one sensed the trouble brewing  
And they egged him on - his bosses  
But that was way before the losses  
Now he faces a court of enquiry  
To establish that he acted without authority  
By throwing caution to the wind  
While granting loans he could not rescind  
But no one, least of all his bosses will admit  
That driven by greed they too did covertly commit  
The company's precious resources to NINJAs  
The guys with no income, no jobs and no assets  
Now, he can only hope that the court will reveal  
What his bosses have sought to conceal

Sandra Martyres

## **Sunbeams (A haiku)**

A blanket of snow  
Covers the river valley  
Sunbeams dance on it

Sandra Martyres

## **Systemic Risk**

A term frequently touted  
By the now over-zealous  
Regulators, the world over  
An easy excuse for them  
To explain the spawning of  
Crooks like Bernie Madoff  
In the developed world  
And of course closer home  
The crooks of yester years  
Not forgetting the present  
Mother of all financial crises  
Caused by the Sub-prime excesses

The question on everyone's mind  
- the exact meaning of systemic risk  
Well it is actually a poor reflection  
On a benign regulatory regime  
That is known to turn a Nelson's eye  
As long as the economy is in fine fettle  
With the stock markets booming  
It is during such heady days that  
The market watch dogs are often  
Caught napping at the wheel,  
The global arena soon becomes  
A very fertile ground for the more  
Imaginative financial players

Some get into a huddle while  
Others act independently  
And come up with ingenious ideas  
To keep the market befuddled  
Until they grab the first rich pickings  
And then make a sly and unsung exit  
By the time the authorities react  
The worst has already happened  
Several investors who have been  
Relieved of their earnings or fortunes  
Cry foul and ring the alarm bells  
It is then that the blame game starts  
Each side keeps berating the other, but  
Ultimately the hammer falls on the system  
And the result is filed away as a systemic risk  
To be addressed by the now fully awake  
Regulators! !

Sandra Martyres

## The Aftermath

The town wore a deserted look  
Rubble scattered and piled  
All around the skeletons  
Of the once beautiful buildings  
The wrath of the Gods was evident  
From the trembling of the earth  
And the loosening of the grounds  
That for centuries had supported the town

Traumatised children covered with dust  
Rummaged desperately through the debris  
To recover their toys and prized possessions  
Some adults went in search of fresh water  
While Others shell shocked sat around in groups  
Speaking in muffled voices of the quake  
It was as though they were afraid that noise  
Of any kind would bring on more tremors

Rescue workers were still trying desperately  
To reach the town which had been cut-off from  
Civilisation after the main bridge collapsed  
Then something unusual happened  
There was a strong wind which blew across  
The affected area taking with it the dust  
The survivors seemed to look cleaner and  
Could even identify some scraps of food  
Like biscuits and bread which looked edible

They called out to the children more audibly  
And started rationing out the morsels of food  
As well as sips of juice from the cans  
Which were found intact in the rubble  
Soon signs of hope returned into their eyes  
Amazing how a little food can help boost morale  
Even in desperate circumstances like earthquakes  
So until the fresh supplies and aid reach them  
They can only hope that another holy wind blows by

Sandra Martyres

## **The Baker's Boy**

Pedaling furiously on his bicycle  
At the crack of dawn  
Is the the baker's boy  
Delivering freshly baked bread  
To the village folk as they get out of bed  
He is being chased by a horde  
Of crazed little street dogs  
All trying to get their teeth  
Into his basket of warm bread  
It is a battle of wits for this sleepy head  
As he tries to avoid the quadrupeds  
And save his precious bread  
This only increases their determination  
To sample the baker's tasty creation  
By which time boy is wide awake  
The canine interest he needs to break  
After a moments thought  
He casually whistles to the dogs  
And throws a bun afar  
As they all chase the rolling bread  
He pedals hurriedly straight ahead  
Taking advantage of the minor respite  
Steadfastly he rings his cycle bell  
The children - their orders happily yell  
He hands over the bread -collects his charge  
And by the time the silly dogs have returned  
He has, his days wages, already earned  
His bread basket is empty  
But his pockets are full  
With a smile on his face  
He heads back to the bakery  
To plan for the next day,  
His street dog strategy

Sandra Martyres

## **The Barefoot Boys**

The hot sultry day  
Does little to stop their play  
These barefooted boys  
Who have never played with any real toys  
Are happy to use the cricket ground  
When the more fortunate are not around  
To bully them and monopolise the pitch  
Making it look like the privilege of the rich  
They use broken pieces of bamboo  
As makeshift wickets  
Their bats are carved out of plywood  
The ball however looks authentic  
Probably a cast away of a cricket maverick  
Maybe some day one of these little prodigies  
Will proudly represent his country  
Either for a test match or a twenty/twenty  
Indeed it is their most cherished dream  
To be selected for any state level or national team

Sandra Martyres

## **The Competition**

As an aspiring poet  
He was determined he'd win  
He just had to meet the challenge set for him  
So frantically he did scribble and scratch  
To find words that would rhyme and match.  
He worked tirelessly for hours together  
Sparing no thought for the ugly weather.  
He ignored the winds and stayed focussed  
Concentrating on the work lying before him.  
He was almost confident that he'd win  
The first prize at the competition.  
Then came the thunder and the rain  
And he wondered if he'd worked in vain.  
He listened impatiently to the clock chime  
Realising he was running run out of time.  
He would never reach the venue  
At the appointed hour to recite his verse  
And just as he was beginning to despair  
A kindly neighbour explained with care  
That there'd be other chances  
To publish his poem and win acclaim  
After all it is not every day that there is rain.

Sandra Martyres

## **The Conch**

The music of the seas  
The rythm of the waves  
The diving of the sea gulls  
The sounds of the the fish  
Swimming across the waters  
All this and more I heard  
As I placed the conch to my ear.

Sandra Martyres

## **The Hummer (Senryu)**

In America  
The Hummer will stop humming  
It will in China

Sandra Martyres

## **The Lesson**

All dressed up and no where to go,  
This is the story of Nina Row  
For weeks every evening,  
She has been standing  
Waiting for her fiance to dropp by  
Her long waits just end with a quiet cry.  
For he does not turn up at her door  
Little does she know he is settling an old score  
She had won the top award at a Music rendition  
A feat that perhaps diverted his attention  
The surprise that she could challenge him  
In the world of music, greatly angered him  
And in his jealous mind he did contrive  
The best way, his point home, to drive  
Would be to keep her unendingly waiting  
With promises that would come back a courting  
While he is busy massaging his wounded ego  
Her young radiant face is beginning to lose its glow

Sandra Martyres

## **The lure of Lucre**

Money they say  
Entices almost everyone  
Especially those who believe  
That unless they have it in plenty  
They are lesser humans  
For them, in the early stages  
The hard work may seem like fun  
When raking in the moolah  
In the form of higher wages  
But that could change  
All too soon when greed  
Begins to take over  
When the lure of lucre  
Becomes difficult to ignore  
When they just stop living  
And focus only on earning  
Never mind if it is ill-gotten  
Leaving them no time or energy  
For their folks back home.  
The families feel the change  
And begin to yearn  
For the days long gone  
When there was less lucre  
But more time and affection  
For sharing with one and all

Sandra Martyres

## **The Manipulator (Senryu)**

A smile and a chuckle  
Greet the manipulator  
Trying to strike a deal

He shrugs his shoulders  
Pretends to abandon it  
We wish him goodbye

He learnt his lesson  
He will not repeat that stunt  
At least we hope so

Sandra Martyres

## **The Mocking two...**

You mock me  
Because I am not pretty  
You mock me  
Coz your friends are more witty  
You mock me  
For singing this little ditty  
But I mock you  
Because you are not true  
I mock you  
For putting me in this stew  
And I mock you  
Because you are you  
About that there is  
Nothing you or I can do

Sandra Martyres

## **The Old Man and the Pickaxe**

He spent his life wielding his axe  
In the hilly region of the Nilgiris  
Cutting wood to pay for his food  
And that of his growing brood  
His home was the one place  
Where a hungry child was assured of solace  
The numbers kept growing as the word spread  
About his generous heart and his tasty bread  
Till one day when at the break of dawn  
The woodcutter's pickaxe was not heard  
The news spread like wild fire  
And the villagers rushed in to enquire  
To their consternation there lay before them  
The tired old man lay slumped over his pickaxe  
Although no more trees or wood would he fell  
He left behind a beautiful tale for villagers to tell

Sandra Martyres

## **The Oppressed**

The have-nots world over are increasingly  
Choosing the path of violence  
To address their never ending woes  
This is a very worrisome trend  
In countries with teeming millions  
Caught in the quagmire of poverty

Thanks to the regular oppression  
Displacement and dispossession  
Of the poorest of the poor  
By the rich and privileged classes  
Certain segments of the population  
Even believe their lives are expendable

They are willing to join forces and  
Are prepared to risk their lives through  
Armed attacks or suicide bombings  
Especially if they can take with them  
Their well-heeled tormentors -truly  
A case of sweet revenge worth dying for

Can the so-called educated classes  
The backbone of most populous countries  
Wish away these unfortunate multitudes  
As an ugly blot on their social fabric  
Not at all they have waited long enough  
For basic social justice and they deserve it

Merely holding symposia on subjects  
Like financial inclusion and human rights  
Will not placate or help the affected people  
Both the authorities and society in general  
Need to take steps to tackle the disease  
Instead of merely focussing on the symptoms

(Inspired by an article that I read in the press today)

Sandra Martyres

## **The Passing of Grandfather**

Out there in the freezing cold  
Lo and behold!  
Stood our dear old grandfather  
He seemed to be waiting for grandmother  
Though she had passed away a while ago  
But our aged grandfather remembered not  
He thought she had as usual wandered out  
So he cried out her name  
Lest she get lost in the fog  
While she went wood picking in the bog

I gently touched his shoulder  
And bid him return home  
To wait for grandmother  
Reluctantly he followed me  
As we entered the room  
I saw that special smile upon his face and  
Could have sworn that grandmother  
Was in our midst...

He slowly lowered himself into a chair  
Right beside her empty one  
Then extending his hand  
As if he were clutching hers tightly  
Peace and serenity writ all over his face  
Closing his dark brown eyes  
He softly murmured – My dear I love you  
Never will we part again...  
His tired body slumped in the chair  
We almost felt his spirit leaving the room  
As he was reunited with grandmother

Sandra Martyres

## **The Power of Prayer**

Each time I am depressed  
Or feeling low  
I turn to God  
I send up a little prayer  
To Him to help me keep running  
So that I not have to stop

Each time I am physically exhausted  
Or really low on mental energy  
I turn to God  
I send up a little prayer  
To Him to keep my morale up  
So that I not have to stop

Each time I am hurt  
By a friend or foe  
I turn to God  
I send up a little prayer  
To Him to keep my head high  
So that I do not have to stop

Each time something goes wrong  
Owing to an action of mine  
I turn to God  
I send up a little prayer  
To Him to help me rectify the error  
So that I do not have to stop

Each time I have sent up a prayer  
For whatever reason  
God has turned back to me  
And smilingly if not answering it  
Has given me the courage and strength  
So that I have never had to stop

Sandra Martyres

## The Prisoner

As the gas chamber is getting readied  
The prisoner's blood pressure cannot be steadied  
Although the Supreme Court judgment is still awaited  
The wardens are sure that this inmate's future is slated  
He will get what he deserves - capital punishment  
They set about preparing him up to meet his end  
They tell him about last wishes the normal court trend  
He appears repentant and still hopeful  
He even claims that given a chance  
He will mend his ways, sever his ties with the underworld  
He will don the mantle of a good citizen  
And will honestly complete an additional term in prison  
When released he will work for social upliftment  
Of the underprivileged members of society  
For the prison wardens his promises are  
Merely prevarications as he just wants his freedom  
So that he can go back to exactly from where he has come  
Only this time he will make sure he is not caught  
Leaving his family destitute and distraught'  
The courtroom is tense as the judgment is delivered  
The prisoner looking wan just shook and shivered  
As he learns that he has been awarded the death penalty  
An order delivered by the judge with an air of finality  
And no further appeals would be allowed  
So with his head lowered he enters the gas chamber  
He will not be heard of again, no one will mourn his death

Sandra Martyres

## The Prodigal Son

It was after dusk, there was no one else around to see  
The crime scene with the villain trying to flee  
Except the young lad clicking on his camera furiously  
Hidden in the shadows and moving noiselessly  
He captured every movement of the criminal's  
Attempts to escape  
His pictures would soon flash on the TV screens  
Shattering the villain's dreams  
The whole town would be on high alert  
Searching for clues and the blood-stained shirt  
No efforts would be spared to track down the man  
Every nook and corner the police would scan  
How could a crime like this go unsolved?  
A common cheat, a liar, someone gone astray  
He would stoop to any depth to get his way  
Yet until now he could not be caught  
As everyone just feared his father's wrath.  
But today with all the photographic evidence  
It will be difficult for him to feign innocence  
Besides he no longer has father's protection  
To save him from prosecution  
Father himself has fallen from grace  
He no longer enjoys political clout and space

Sandra Martyres

## **The Silent Beggar**

He stood quietly by the door,  
Every bit of clothing he possessed he wore  
He was a pathetic sight  
He brought human misery to light  
His dark brown eyes said it all  
There was no need for any begging call.

But they just pretended  
That on them he had not descended  
It was as if he did not exist  
They passed by ignoring his open fist  
Has the world become so terribly uncaring  
That we can pass a poor man with such daring?

Sandra Martyres

## **The Star (Senryu)**

A star crossed the skies  
With my dreams hidden inside  
Darkness reigns supreme

Sandra Martyres

## **The Stranger**

The train is late  
It will be a long and tedious wait  
At the little village railway station  
The stranger finds a vacant seat  
Next to an attractive village belle  
He pulls out a newspaper  
And slowly lights a cigarette  
Seconds later, he finds her staring  
She has never seen a Caucasian before  
He smiles, she looks away embarrassed  
The colour of his skin is unusual  
He appears paler in his grey clothes  
When compared with her colourful skirt  
And even more brightly coloured bangles  
The contrast is striking  
She looks at her own sunburnt brown skin  
And then shyly glances at him  
Will she or won't she ask  
A question about his origin?

Sandra Martyres

## **The Thief (Senryu)**

Kneeling in the pew  
Eyes lowered in devotion  
Who would suspect him?

Sandra Martyres

## **The Toxic Asset Boom**

In these days, with investors so blind  
Only one thought crosses the mind  
When there is an untimely death and attendant gloom  
Is whether, he is another victim of the toxic asset boom  
Just a short while ago, there seemed to be no room  
For any economists, warning of the impending doom

The markets were awash with liquidity  
There was not a single doubt about serendipity.  
Sub-prime borrowers were, by bankers, eagerly sought  
For the opportunities, to create wrappers, that they brought  
Caution, credit scoring models were thrown to the winds  
With structured product sales, the banks' coffers were filling up.

Sins of extravagance were blissfully ignored  
And bankers unceremoniously cut-off the umbilical cord  
To release themselves from the safety of the Basle 2 womb  
Only to realize that they are moving towards their career tomb  
Pension and Hedge Fund Managers are no longer head-hunted  
They all seem to have been, into some kind of oblivion, shunted

Big bonuses and celebrations are things of the past  
Some are now hoping that at least golden parachutes will last  
So that they can go out in search of other greener plains  
Leaving their successors to pick up the messy reins  
But if their companies are beneficiaries of the TARP  
They can, at best, aspire to join the angels with a harp

Sandra Martyres

## **The Train Bombing**

Over a year has gone by  
She was on that train  
She heard the blast  
But she was riveted to her seat  
She could neither shout nor move  
She was choking  
Like she had swallowed her own tongue  
A feeling of numbness had gripped her  
Everything went blank she later said  
When she woke up in a hospital bed  
Anxious doctors were peering into her eyes  
To look for some signs of consciousness  
She slowly stared back at them  
She still could not speak  
Then the tears flowed freely  
And only her mother's voice could be heard  
'She's alive, thank God she's alive ' she cried  
This is the miraculous story  
Of Anita -my dear friend  
I too whispered a silent prayer  
To thank God for having saved her  
From the terrorist's master-minded disaster.

Sandra Martyres

## The Veil

At the tender age of fourteen  
She was summoned to appear before  
The senior women of the clan  
All dressed in their traditional long cloaks  
With only their faces exposed  
She approached them in fear  
Afraid of what she might have to hear  
But, they in one voice without faltering  
Did solemnly declare that no longer  
Could she walk around freely  
She now needed observe the social taboos  
Whenever she ventured outdoors  
She would have to cover her head  
With her late mother's long veil  
That they so graciously presented to her  
It was made of satin and had what looked like  
Embroidered mesh on one side  
They declared that as the senior women  
It was their duty to initiate her  
Into the accepted tenets of clan behavior  
She had reached the age of puberty  
And like all good women in the community  
She would have to follow the rules  
No more kicking footballs outside school  
No more talking to strange boys  
She needed to hide herself under the veil  
Which they carefully draped around her head  
The only light she could see was through  
The mesh that covered her face  
At home she could still move around  
With her face exposed  
On hearing the stringent code of conduct  
She cringed but spoke out aloud  
That she was a modern young woman  
She was educated  
Why should she be forced to follow  
Archaic rules framed by some old fashioned men  
Just to show their power over women  
The elders stared back in shock  
No one had ever dared to raise such questions  
And then they all spoke out in unison  
Child –we women have no right to talk of freedom  
That is the way it was and that is the way it will be  
There are no exceptions not for you and not for me

Sandra Martyres

## **Tobacco (Senryu)**

Chewing tobacco  
Passtime of the unemployed  
Nightmare of the state

Sandra Martyres

## **Tsunami? ?**

He tickled my face with a feather  
I smiled back  
Lying blissfully on the sand  
We were on our honeymoon  
Sunbathing on the sea shore  
Life seemed so wonderful  
Too good to be true  
I thought - if this is what  
Marriage is all about  
I should have married earlier  
He seemed to read my thoughts  
He moved closer to me  
And brushed his lips on my forehead

Just as we were about to embrace  
I felt the sand under me rumble  
I shuddered and deftly turned the other side  
Then the ground beside me opened  
And swallowed him up  
I screamed but no words would come  
I tried to dig him out  
But someone pulled me away  
I have no idea what happened thereafter  
I found myself in a hospital bed  
With a bandaged head,  
Heard people buzzing around and  
Talking about a new Tsunami in muffled voices

Again, I tried to call out,  
But I had lost my voice  
All I wanted to know was  
Whether they had been able to save  
My beloved.  
A kindly nurse bent over me and muttered  
That the Almighty had been merciful  
He had saved me from the earthquake  
And the giant waves that followed it  
I described my husband and  
I asked if she had seen him  
She did not reply  
But from the look in her eyes  
I knew the answer  
I had lost my beloved to the  
Wrath of the seas....

(This is not an autobiographical poem...it is the story of what happened to a dear friend)

Sandra Martyres

## Twilight

Lying on a beach in silence  
Watching the setting sun as  
Shades of orange and red  
Flash across the grey skies  
Which grow darker as the fire ball  
Touches the horizon  
And gently disappears behind it  
The village musician  
Captures the moment  
On his flute and the air is soon  
Filled with a soft melody  
That transports  
The listeners on the ground  
Into a whole new world  
Of peace and harmony  
All earthly worries and troubles  
Are absorbed by the sands  
And washed away by  
The waves lashing the shore  
With a steady rhythm in tune with  
The musicians flute  
The stars make an appearance  
As the skies get blacker and  
Twilight turns to night

Sandra Martyres

## Twitter and Tweeting

Being all of a twitter  
I went about tweeting  
And was surprised  
With all that I found  
Snippets of valuable and  
Important information, but  
I also discovered  
Soon enough that the wags  
Had been there too  
Juicy gossip was doing  
The tweeting rounds  
In compressed form  
The tweeters are often  
Like quacking ducks  
In a pond of murky water

I just wonder whether  
All the non-tweeters know  
What the wags  
Are talking about  
Tweeting can be fun  
But it can be scary too  
One or two line pieces on  
Presidents and PMs  
On Royalty and Chancellors  
No one is spared by  
The tweeting community  
They seem to work overtime  
Recording every line  
And in so doing, ofcourse  
They boost their chances  
Of increasing their followers

Sandra Martyres

## Unemployed

He said that he always lacked a sense of real greed  
His conscience did not permit a spirit freed  
Despite several visits to and discussions with his peers  
He could never rid himself of the his unending fears  
He could not conceive breaching the rules  
He lived strictly by the values learnt at school  
But respecting rules seems to have been a show-stopper  
Since he claims that he is still just another pauper  
As he could never adopt the young MBA flashy style  
Although on the job he always ran the extra mile  
He despised them as belonging to the arrogant lot  
Waiting like hawks for an opportunity to spot  
They did not hesitate to break the rules  
Especially when it helped to increase their bonus pools  
They scoffed at his references to values and ethics  
Dismissing them as holy noises made by spineless lunatics  
So today he has joined the ranks of the unemployed  
Not knowing if and where his skills can be redeployed

Sandra Martyres

## **VIBGYOR - A splash of Colour**

The lovely fragrance of flowers  
Pervades the whole atmosphere  
Ceramic pots of little violets hang  
Against the indigo coloured screens  
Adorning the living room while  
The blue bells thrive in the garden beds  
Alongside pleasing green ferns  
The yellow buttercups do attract attention  
As do the orange marigolds in full bloom  
But in this colourful garden  
The deep red rose still retains  
Pride of place

Sandra Martyres

## **Victims and more (Senryu)**

He is a victim  
Of pure greed - he ate his way  
To the cemetery

The ambulance stopped  
To carry away victims  
Of failed traffic lights

The baby did scream  
perhaps he had a bad dream  
Or was he hungry?

Sandra Martyres

## **Walking in the Rain**

Walking in the Rain  
Sharing an umbrella  
A chance to get closer  
And cling to each other  
Without attracting the  
Unwanted attention  
And comments from  
The city's idle passers by  
Whose furtive glances  
Can spoil all chances  
Of enjoying some quiet  
Moments of togetherness and fun

Sandra Martyres

## **Water thoughts**

Huge waves approach us  
Menacingly from the seas  
Like a tsunami

Monsoons lash the door  
Creating panic inside  
Will the rain enter

The seas beckon him  
Miles of clear deep blue waters  
But he cannot swim

Sandra Martyres

## **Where has all the Music Gone?**

Where has all the music gone?  
The singing birds  
The humming bees  
The quacking ducks  
The noisy geese  
The village crooners  
Have all been silenced.

Instead we have the screeching sound  
Of industry's wheels as it turns around  
Production is in full swing  
But little pleasure it will bring  
To the villagers who have been displaced  
Their simple faith and trust was misplaced  
To make way for wannabes to occupy their space  
And make their mark as they enter the rat race  
Like the birds the village voices have been stilled  
Just as their land grabbers had probably willed

Sandra Martyres

## **Who am I**

Who am I  
A news maker  
A political shaker  
A conscience waker  
No I am none of them

Who am I  
A struggling writer  
A diehard idealist  
A social activist  
Perhaps I am a bit of all

As I discover myself  
I put my fears and failures on the shelf  
Go to enormous lengths  
Working hard on my strengths  
To start living and stop worrying  
About who I am

Sandra Martyres

## **Windswept**

Her long tresses tossed in the air  
Gave her a rather unkempt look  
As she raced across the sands  
In a daring attempt to challenge  
The elements irrespective of  
How strong they appeared  
To the less adventuresome

Passers by clinging to each other  
To avoid being blown away  
By the treacherous winds  
Stared in amazement at  
The diminutive figure as she  
Appeared to be racing against time  
Defying the strong northerly winds

The seashore wore a deserted look  
Apart from a few stragglers  
Trudging along cautiously  
But that did not deter the young lady  
She continued with what looked like  
A suicidal mission as the dark clouds  
And huge waves made their appearance

When night fell she was less visible  
The life guards were called in quickly  
To make sure that she was not drowning  
Huge flash lights and police cars  
Appeared on the shore to confirm  
That the young woman was still alive  
But she seemed to have vanished

The rescue team opined that even  
If she were drawn into the waters  
The incoming tides would have returned  
Her alive or dead to the seashore  
In the distance they spotted an elderly man  
Dressed in a well worn leather jacket  
Sitting on a cliff smoking a pipe

The life guards rushed towards him  
Hoping that he may have noticed her  
But he merely raised his wrinkled face  
To announce that their rescue operation  
Had come twenty years too late  
His daughter who had been swept away  
By the seas usually visited him on a windy day

Sandra Martyres

## Women's Day

Life is a real drudge  
Yet I, a poor housemaid, try not to bear any grudge  
You, my lady, have led a relatively sheltered life  
You have no idea what it is to be a battered wife  
You have never known frustration and anger  
The kind one feels when one cannot satisfy a child's hunger  
Yes I am the voice of dissension  
Against any Women's day celebration  
I am that perpetual underdog  
The one who is expected, in all weathers, to slog  
With no hope of any respite  
Always having to put up a very tough fight  
To protect, at least, my children's rights  
I will never have the possibility nor the luxury  
Of being able to discover the real me  
As I continue to be a victim of deprivation and poverty  
The day I am able to see some light in my life  
The day I stop being a good-for-nothing's wife  
I will join in the Women's Day Celebration  
I will salute the world and our great nation  
Jai Ho

Sandra Martyres

## **Work-Life Balance (Senryu)**

A work-life balance  
Management gurus spiel meant  
To placate the staff

In truth this remains  
A plain and simple gimmick  
Just another trick

Jack Welch too did say  
Work-life balance dreams display  
Lack of ambition

Sandra Martyres

## **Workplace (Senryu)**

Piles of papers stacked  
For review and approval  
His pen is missing

The empty cabin  
heralds another lay-off  
Cleaner starts sweeping

Do as I tell you  
yells the Boss impatiently  
and resumes his game

Sandra Martyres

## **World Environment Day**

The fifth of June is  
A memorable day for  
All true nature lovers

World-wide most people will  
Raise a toast to Nature on  
Environment Day

Please save the green trees  
They are our present and future  
Natural health source

Sandra Martyres

## **Writers' Block**

The blank screen  
Stares me in the face  
What should I write about  
A poem on love  
Or a story on the same subject?  
Ideas rush through my mind  
At the speed of light  
My fingers cannot keep pace  
As the thoughts just race  
Then all I see is only a confused mass  
Of stray ideas that make neither  
A fine poem nor an interesting tale  
So I need to fold up my laptop  
And type again at a later date  
When I have a nice poem to recite  
Or a proper story to relate

Sandra Martyres

## **You are gone forever**

Why did you do this to Aryan and to me  
Just yesterday we were one happy family  
Then almost suddenly  
God decided that you had leave us and flee  
Neither He nor you seemed to care  
That without you  
Our hearth and home would be bare  
Why were you in such a mighty hurry  
To abandon our young son and me  
You left, behind, for us, just the key  
To the remains of your inert body  
I looked into little Aryan's eyes  
To comfort him as he silently cries  
He knows not that you are gone forever  
He weeps because you do not answer  
I tell him that you have become a star  
And that you will always watch over us, from afar

(a poem dedicated to a young colleague who lost her husband last week)

Sandra Martyres