

**Classic Poetry Series**

**C. P. Surendran**  
**- poems -**

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## C. P. Surendran(1956 -)

C. P. Surendran (born 1956) is a poet, novelist and journalist from India.

### <b>Biography</b>

Born to malayalam writer and rationalist Pavanan and Parvathy, C. P. Surendran received his M.A. in English Literature from Delhi University, Delhi and taught for short while at Calicut University before working as journalist in Mumbai for many English newspaper including the Times of India , Times Sunday Review , Bombay Times besides others. He was resident editor of the Times of India in Pune for three years. He is now senior editor with the Times of India in Delhi.

A selection of his poems was included in Gemini II in 1994 . He published an independent collection of poems Posthumous Poems in 2000.

His first novel An Iron Harvest, about the Naxalite uprising, was published by Indiaink. He has also published three collections of poetry. He currently lives in delhi.

# A Friend In Need

He sits in a chair  
Whose fourth leg's his.  
He loves this chair.  
They used to make love in it.  
That was when the chair  
Had four plus two plus two,  
Eight legs. Days with legs.  
Since then there's been a lot of walking out.  
Now the chair's short of a leg  
And he's lending his.

C. P. Surendran

# Curios

It's three in the morning.  
The house rings with alarms,  
There's someone leaning  
On the doorbell. It's her  
After three years.  
He lets her in,  
Puts on some tea.  
She lights a cigarette  
With a match that might set  
The house on fire.  
She unpacks the weather  
Which is New York.  
They sit in silence.  
The room turns into a museum of moods.

C. P. Surendran

# Enemy

I had just fought this war and come back,  
Minding my own business and drinking beer.  
Then I met this girl at Joe's  
Who wrote poems on the back  
Of napkins with ketchup.  
Show me your heart, she said.  
Don't have one, I said.  
She said hearts were what made her go.

Finally, I dug up the old, dark thing.

And she said, oh, but this is a grenade.

I told you, I said, and bit the pin.

C. P. Surendran

## For The Record

A hunt for the royal pun  
Took him around the room  
Which was not unlike a notebook  
Bursting with rough work.  
The trail  
Led him under the table  
Where he found her old letters  
Explaining her love in detail  
Two years before she set sail  
From him. The same day  
He wrote the replies  
And mailed them to himself  
Regretting the delay.

C. P. Surendran

# Luminous

Or consider the way we twine our hands  
Under the wooded night air  
So tight as if they might be chopped at wrist  
By an up-sprung axe unshackled from the bleeding roots.

Or the way you search my face as you kiss  
Deep enough to know what makes  
The leopard's blood leap from spot to spot  
And lean back, wounded cub, shaking at the thought  
This was the rumoured future  
We forfeited  
At assigned gatherings and waiting halls  
Arrivals and departures  
Where the spirit balked  
And braced without hope.

And we walk the back alleys

Of this accidental town,  
Past darkened doorways  
And burning windows,  
Between parked cars  
And empty little restaurants

From future and past  
Return

By land, sea and air  
By sleight of hand  
And turn of phrase  
To this wholly present

Moment of grace.

C. P. Surendran

## Milk Still Boils

He lies in bed, one hand  
Thrown across his eyes.  
This, he figures, is more like it.  
He no longer thinks about her,  
Or him. Just them.  
And the postures they struck  
Just before the milkman came.  
In a minute he will be up  
To put the milk on the boil  
And no one the wiser.

C. P. Surendran



# Prospect

While you were sleeping  
A dog yawned in the sun  
And in the distance,  
A train, blindfolded by a tunnel,  
Window by window  
Regained vision.  
I thought of all the things  
That could happen  
When we are looking away,  
The universe we miss in a blink.

C. P. Surendran

# Renunciation

First light on the kitchen table  
Breakfast for one. Beer and wine.  
Feline eyes kiss fallen tart.

Lunch's a conceit of three. My cat,  
Your snapshot and me. Secret rum  
In mint tea. Invalidation of the sea.

Last light comes to sup. Dinner's a feat  
In Rectitude. Water and Whisky.  
Campaign of shadows. No despair.

A sliver of music around the ankles

In a dream's corridor.  
Endless retreat of inaccessible feet.

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# The Family Court

At the Family Court  
The lift wouldn't work.  
So they walked up  
Four flights  
Of stairs and passed  
On the fourth landing  
Two toilets, one marked,  
For Judges Only, and one,  
For Others. They used  
The first though.  
But no one charged  
Them with contempt of court.  
Later, they sat in the hail  
With some 20 others,  
People come together  
To be separated.  
The four fans in the hall  
Big as windmills  
Breezed past  
Their several lives.  
Late in the noon  
An attendant  
Called out their names  
And led them into a hall  
Where the judge  
They met in the toilet said  
They were no longer  
Man and wife.

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