

Neeraj Desai

KNOWLEDGE

From the work we leave behind
someday, someone seeks and finds.

I live my life with minds of the past,
seeking, finding, learning
new things to be of use someday:
great minds are ever valuable,
but also I pray, may lay within
the die in me that's not yet cast.

I begin to know them as friends,
these minds, sharing jokes and talking literature:
but creative assurance ultimately rests in me
for I join them in death when my own life ends.

I am indebted to them --
almost beyond all measure:
the only offering to satisfy
is work like theirs, out-beaming like a gem:

For each thought I too leave behind:
may there be someone to seek and find.



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The Sounds of Silence

I REMEMBER the first time I saw Jon. It was at our youth group. He looked like one of those typical California guys; you know, big and with buff tanned body. He wasn't the "big" kind of guy that I dislike: in fact I liked his kind of "big" too much. He was holding the hand of a young, tall, slim, beautiful girl -- was I ever envious? yes, (I tell you: "if looks could kill") because they looked like a perfect couple. One thing was odd though, the girl seemed to be leading big Jon everywhere, and he was letting her. He seemed indifferent to appearances.

After our group discussion our youth leader told us to go move around and interact a bit. It was our first meeting since school began and we were all quite shy, so he ended up having to split us up into groups. I was in a group which included Jon and the girl, whose name I later learned was Tammie. As usual for me in groups I did most of the talking while all that dreamboat Jon did was nod "yes" or shake his head "no". Jon's hand which Tammie continued to hold was half hidden in hers behind them.

Finally I asked Jon to please say something. Tammie answered for him, saying that Jon wanted to ask, "How are you?" It was then I realised that he was not only blind but deaf and dumb. Tammie was his assistant nurse who was subbing in for his regular one. Holding his hand Tammie could translate for Jon and for whoever he was trying to communicate with through a sign language of touch.

As time went on Jon and I got to be really close; in fact we became best of friends. I learned how to communicate with him through touch so that eventually when we were together we didn't need any one else to translate or be his eyes and ears. As I got to know him, Jon became more talkative with me. I began to forget that these were not vocal sounds. A lot of times he became very philosophical, since everytime he converses, it is important.

But I believe, and I am sure Jon will agree with me, that the most important thing he asked me was to marry him.

It has been some time now since we've had a nurse or attendant for Jon. We have two great kids -- who have no difficulty making themselves heard! But for all of us, being with Jon only increases our happiness as we're enveloped by love in the sounds of silence.

Priya Mathur

Innocent Child

Above the ordinary realms of life I see
my angel's face beyond the boundary of time.
I hear her calming voice within the trees.
Against the ripples of the water
Her smiling disposition watches over me.
She's there: my underlying shadow:

A picture of wisdom of comfort through pain,
a mother so full of love, my guiding voice.

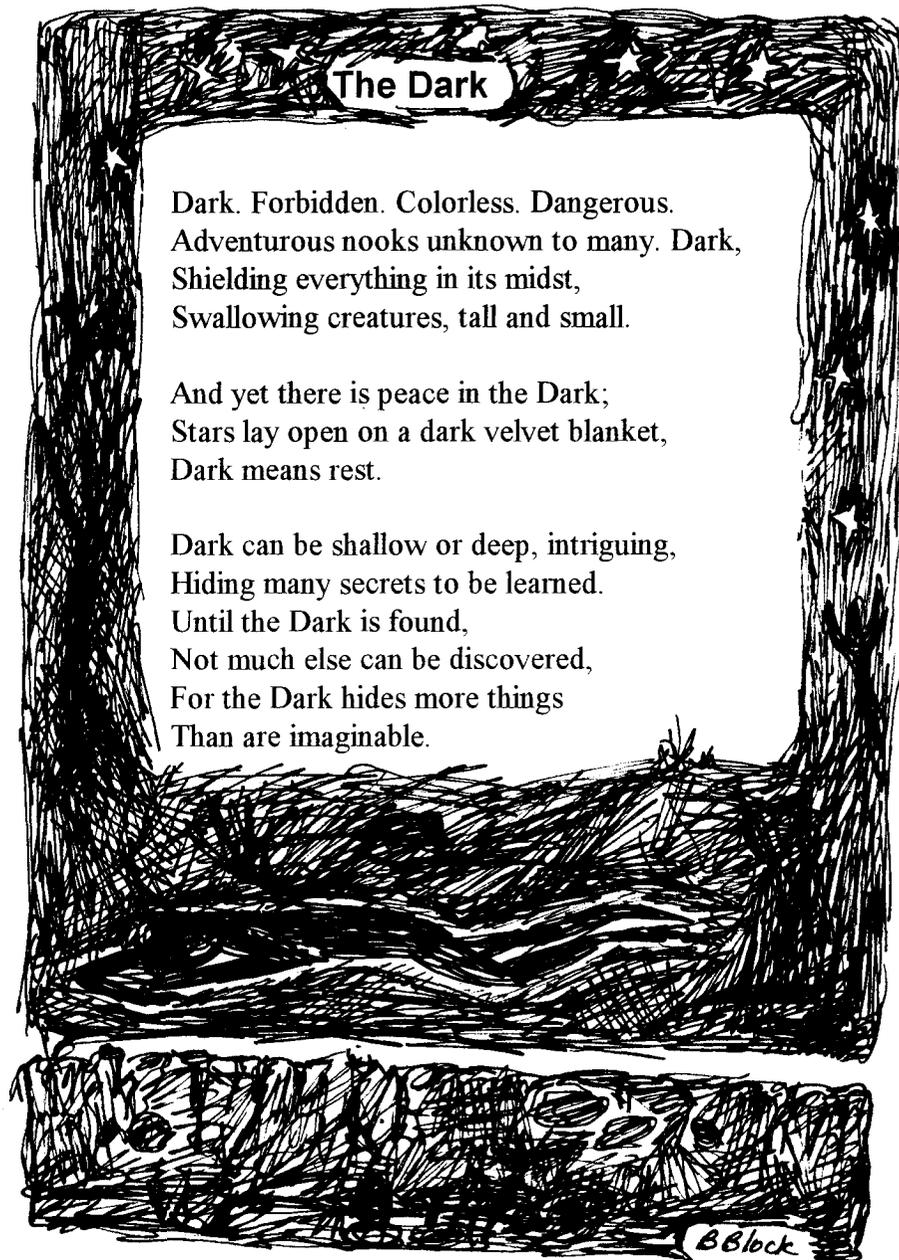
An innocent child playing the game of life
tries her luck at the risks of our world;
sometimes seeking sometimes finding
mostly losing the battles of love.

But someday will be her day
and I will shine
as the light in her life
she will shine,
we will shine . . .

*Poem by M. Metha
Translated from Tamil
by T. Ganesh Babu*

Opportunity

You walked all the way
In search of a little lamp:
To understand the Full Moon
That entered your house.
You walked all the way
In search of a little lamp!



*Poem by M. Metha
Translated from Tamil
by T. Ganesh Babu*

Peace

I opened the white umbrella
Only to find a thousand holes in it.

Pratap C.

Rage

Broken windows, raging flames, blood decorates the marble floors.

Visions of angels, in black robes laughing.

Cracking the silence like eggs, shouts of anonymity crowd the hollow walls.

Pillars of purgatory shoot up like vapors obstructing a passage to happier worlds.

Conversion

THE GATEWAY to the unknown land. The waters of the endless sea. Full of promises the hand beckons not to the others, only to me. Do I dare accept the challenge? A promise of Freedom, an immortal Mirage? yet one that removes anger and vengefulness once cursing me to rage.

THE SUN spreads its glow, awesome, strengthening a weakened spirit, relighting life's bright flame of hope. Awaken with the waters healing. Despairing rivers cease to flow. My arms stretch towards the sea, There's no more powerful feeling than soaring towards immortality.

M. Muthu

School

A Divine place
That Stimulates
Not the Nerves but
The Minds of Kids.
A Holy Fire
That softens Innocence
To show Reality.
An Eternal Brightness
That screens
The Facts of Nature.
Kids come carrying
Not only Books but Dreams,
Of Parents, of Nation.
They concentrate
With different Thoughts,
The Target is One --
Humankind.

J. Jeyakumar Jeyaseelan

Nature

I failed to love nature
As a science (Botany).
When I entered College
I was taught to love nature
as an art. Wordsworth, Keats,
Shelley being favorites;
Of course, not for me
But for my Nature teacher
who said,
"I love Nature" --
Smoking his cigarette.

Rajni George

They Left the Pins Behind



People leave their cars in parking lots. In these cars they leave books, letters, a little make-up, a hairbrush, -- just in case. If someone looks through the car window, even through tinted glass, they see these things, trails left behind by careless, snail people. The trail of a snail is slippery and glistens when caught in the right light -- but these do not glisten are not slippery are not wet. Both snails and people have shells, and are soft, jelly-like underneath (also transparent). People leave their shells behind when they die as snails do.

Enough with snails! A woman pulls up, swerving in past rows of cars, maneuvering herself into a narrow space, which upon accomodating the vehicle would let her door open too thinly to let her out of the car; she breathes shallowly as if corseted.

This is an old car, a veteran in a world of traffic lights and gravel that becomes warm in the intense heat of friction. And in some ways the passenger is a veteran too. She lives in a red brick building, a house that links a legion of those stilled breaths with those of racing pulses and thudding footsteps. The red brick building was once a school the first floor now accomodating strangers who spend restless nights listening to the hoots of owls; here and there are traces of the children who sat like sardines in tins, sardines with pencils and sharpeners and erasers. Their laughter echoes when people listen carefully, laughter that the bricks have soaked in, the bricks now saturated [with the past]. When the woman comes at last to sit on her own bed -- a bed so high (too high for her) -- she hears the laughter too, sometimes.

Sitting on that bed she reads in fits, like an insomniac catnapping, swaying attention span. She looks out the window when she awakens a window that is built lower than the high bed. (Why is this bed here? asks interior designer). Outside the window, outside the red brick building there

Rachita Kumar

Light

*Heaven is a place for some -- far yet near; there are tulips,
and orchid, honeybees, whose sting I must fear.*

*A question arises, Is he there amongst other heavenly
gardens in a subtle realm?*

*He was my shadow and still is; he is my light that never
deserts me. As I wait here in the dark, his light overcomes
me, carrying me through.*

*He once told me, "Life is replete with challenges." In
that moment I did not understand. As I stand here today
solemnly still, -- there is a feeling of incompleteness of
challenge without him.*

*He is the candle of my life that shall never fade. His
spirit cradles me, like a mother her child.*

The garden is real.

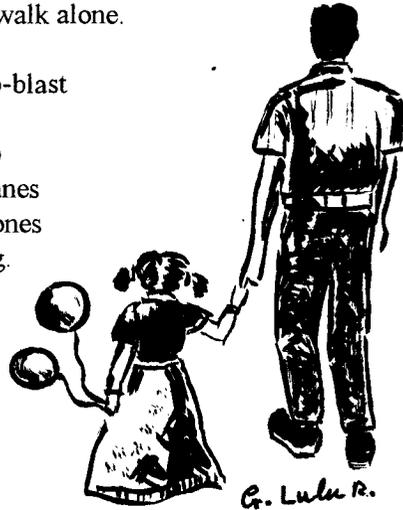
G. Lulu Robin

A Stroll

My shadow falls on the lonely lane,
Without my father's hand holding mine.
He taught me to walk, but often I fumbled,
Fell over road blocks.

And so he held my arm tight, and walked with me.
For long years I dared not walk alone.

One doomed day in a bomb-blast
I lost my father.
Left alone and without help
I walk now in these quiet lanes
Full of thorns and sharp stones
Without fumbling or falling.
I have learned to think
That there is my father
Holding my hand
Walking with me
Always.



Abdul Rahman
Transl. from Tamil
by R.N. Brinda and E. Jeyapaul Asir

Mystery

Trishul and sword
Undo India's Fate.
While darkness reigns,
Brothers take on Brothers
Killing blindly.
Who's killing whom?
The mystery's still unsolved.

*Poem by M. Metha
Transl. from Tamil
by R. N. Brindha*



August 15th:

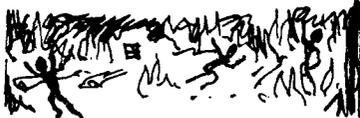
We got it in the night.
We're yet to see the light.

*Poems by Metha
Transl. from Tamil
by T. Ganesh Babu*



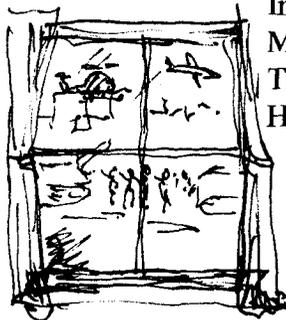
Dancing Fire

We only permitted you
To burn the dead bodies!
Who gave you the right
To burn them alive?



The World Tomorrow

Procession of arms
In the international streets . . .
Man peeping
Through the window
Hiding in his house . . .



Abirami Varatharajan, continued

True independence begins by learning to accept self, and learning oneness with soul regardless of the circumstances.

As a Samana I now know what it is to be independent, to live without food or water for days on end, to walk for long hours in the blazing sun. Through meditation one finds independence. No-one is independent until free of control by everything including overpowering desire and greed. The day each one of us overthrows greed and frees himself of the fire of desire, is the day there will be universal freedom from suffering. . . .

Velan Mudaliar

Who Am I?

At the darkest hour
 I pursue innocence,
On the darkest plane
 I seek the blue flame of freedom.
Within the darkest shadows
 I energize my soul with
 Visionary dreams.
At the brink of twilight
 I breathe the crisp air
Of endlessness: Eternity.

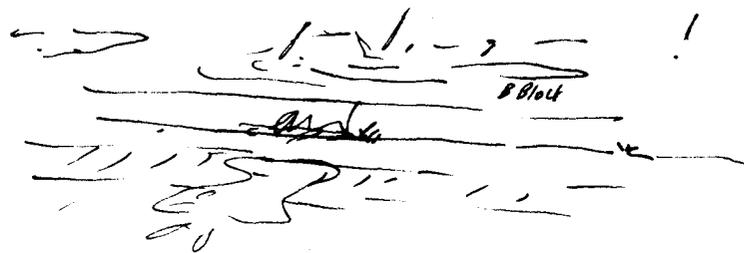
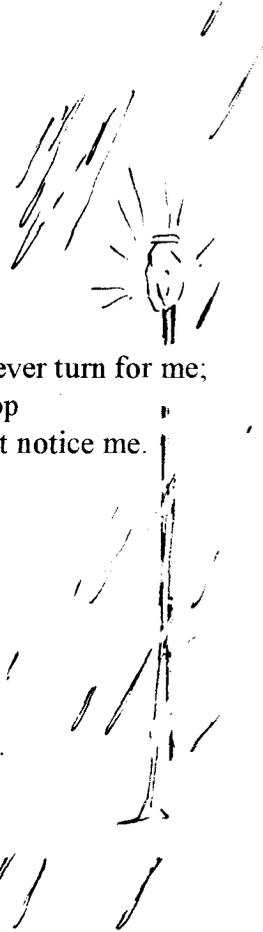
HardWood

Where I go, I know not:
I walk alone
not trusting myself. I move
heavy with rain in my heart;
street lights flicker, so does my soul.

Doors on either side care not for me,
night stall holders in their busy work never turn for me;
a few men now I see from the wine shop
but they're on their own way, they don't notice me.
Flying buses' bright lights disturbing
none but me.

A mixed world now.

I go along with it:
my part here will end
when the music of my heart finally dies.
I will make now a promise;
I will face this disturbed life
whatever pain it brings me,
with a smile.



Velan Mudaliar

The Unforgotten Realm

In the realm of absolute love
 Roses are indeed not red:
Violets are obviously not shaded
 With their cold color of blue.
Love is not tinted with
 Man-made metaphors of grace,
Nor is it transparent the way a window
 Is to an infinite vortex in space.
Within the realm
 Of absolute love
There is only bliss;
 Bliss is the saviour of all
That is gentle and sweet,
 All that is passionate.

John Thomas

My Society

"Alleluia!" shouted a tense preacher
through A LARGE LOUD SPEAKER.
while the public responded
in spasms like epileptics.
And some said, "They received the holy spirit."

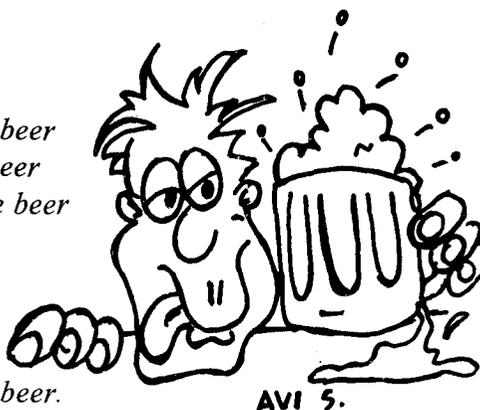
"Give me bread," cried the beggar
with worn-out vocal chords.

But the people's response was
that of the Priests, the Levites.
The beggar left, going hungry,
the poor Carpenter crucified
on yet another hour,
on yet another day.

Kauzian, recites and writes:

Tonic Sol Fa

Do - The stuff that buys the beer
Re - The guy who sells the beer
Me - The guy who drinks the beer
Fa - A long way to get beer
So - I'll have another beer
La - Jaldi do mera beer
Ti - Not tea just beer
Do - That brings us back to beer.



Kauzian's Request
Heaven of love, heaven of hate
mould me into a hardened state
into a man who neither loves nor hates
to whom sentiment is an unknown word.

Let my vicious intellect overpower intuition,
for intuition is the killer of sanity, killer of soul,
and above all killer of virtue, it's the killer within!
O heavens, now let me think, and think, and never grin.

found on the
internet.

Poem by Abdul Rahman
Trans from Tamil
by R.N. Brindha

Waiting

Every dawn, I wait
To eye the profile
To be chiseled, in me.



Pratap C.

TECHNOLOGY

*I am a real cool guy,
Come give me a try
Look me up
Hook me up.*

*Book a flight
Or fly by night
Shop 'till I drop
Order a chop*

*Ready set and go
Bit by byte
Play a game
Make me a name*

*Make war or Peace
Visit Turkey or Greece
Write an essay on Bill Gates
Shakespeare or Yeats*

*Read or write
Just paint a kite
Open a file
An inch or a mile*

*Navigate a ship
Without any trip
Play on the flute
Piano or lute*

*Play a tune
Or ride a dune
Seek or hide
Be my guide*

*See or hear
Play or cheer
Pay the bills
Experience chills*

*Make a match
Fix a latch
Call a friend
Borrow or lend*

*Hoist anchor set sail
Fax, or E-mail
Surf the Net
Win the bet!*

*Meet the deadline
Make my headline
Create a new head
With a zee or a zed*

*A real cool guy
Is worth a try
Come on, look me up!
Hook me up!*

Poem by Sirpi
Trans. from Tamil by
K.S. Jayaseelan

Straying Mind

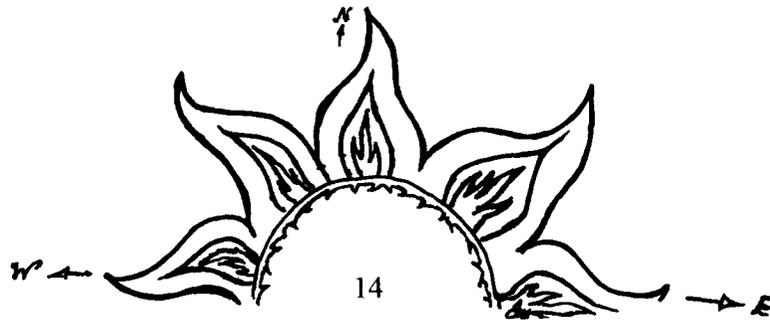
**When you and I
walked in the West
North blacked out.**

**When you and I
Mingled in the North
East stiffened.**

**When you and I
Forgot ourselves in the East,
South stared at us.**

**When you and I
Melted in the South
West reddened.**

**When you and I
Forgot the directions
The sun rose on all sides.**



Neeraj Desai

Memories

As I stare through the window pane
thinking did I lose or gain
wondering in this rain
how you went away.

When only yesterday
I heard you laugh, and laugh away,
and thought I heard you plead
that you would always stay.

With your arm upon my sleeve
Nervously I thought to leave
But you made staying worth my while
(even though 'twas not my style).

But then, when you had changed me
into someone wanting to play your way
You decided to go away
And left me "Cryin'in the Rain."

But I remember all the things
we did so well together:
memories that produce a smile,
making such pain of love worth-while.

Heavenly Objects

The moon is beyond our reach
The sun even further
The stars, light years distant
The sky limitless, unbounded
even to the imagination.

Instead of gazing
At these far distant objects
Look down: you will find
Flowers crushed under your feet.

Endless

The waves of the lake reach
The bank and die beside it.
So high the trees are to reach the sky;
Aimlessly I walk along a path
Which seems endless.
I doubt the way is right but I
continue onward, -- doubt
will only raise fresh fears.
So, with hope I pursue
The way, 'till it ends

or ends me!

PEOPLE ALWAYS WUNDER how cum I don like lipstick and ishadowh and all that stough. I wunder why too actully. I think its because most of the ladies I know waring makeup look awful. Asha duzn't think so, tho.

Asha's foreteen like me but she duzn't spel as bad as me. She likes to ware western clothes -- too much, her muther thinks. Asha hates to ware salwar kameez and sareez, but her muther is conservateve, so she *haz* to. Appa sez that meens "old fashunned," someone who duzn't like changing or westimization. I saw a sho on westernization (Amma sez thats how to spell it.) It's called "The Indian Sho"

They tokked a bout lots of stough, like to many foren shops and foren infloence. I donknow abowt that, tho. I like Kentuky Fride Chiken and Pidza Hut. One man sed its wrong, but. Im knot sure exaktyly what he sed, but thats ok, since I didnt unnerdsatnd anyway. My favrite part of the India Sho is when they tokk about moovies and akterr. Amma sez the word for it is "glamerrous." i like the moosik in the moovies, because it is verry nice and eazy to dunce to. The peepul who akt on it ware weired clow this, tho.

My favrite aktress is madhri Dixet because she is so pritty and has abyootiful Smile. I watch many of her moovies, since Im her biggest fan. The onlee bad partt of watching lots of moovies is gettinghed-akes. Why I get em I dont no, tho, since *Asha* watches so many moovies, sometimes fore in a row and duznt hget hed akes. Matybe she has speshul eyez. My parents Amma and Appa have speshul eyez, sumtimes they stay up the hole nite thru and watch TV. Maybe I'll get these theez spoeshul eyez too when Im older. But . . . Asha is my age and has speshul eyez alkready . . . Well, I don 'no, maybe they got my age wrong.

I asked Asha, does shje think she's too westernized? and she got very angry. I dont know why she got mad, but she did. She sed she wuz a troo Indian and very patreeotic, why else would she ware all thoze salwear kameez? and if I cudnt see that, I wuz thik. Why does thik mean stoopid? If my hed wore thikker, as Asha sez, it meenz I have mor brains, rite. I think so, I dont no, only dokters no .

Dokters no everything, their sekund best at noing everything, next to Gawd, i think. My doctor no's what mediciene to give me for my hed problems. Its not serius he says smiling like on the tuth payste ads. They shud be smiling, with all thoze toobs running around into each uther like a bowl of spagetee. -- I askt the dokter abowt Asha, abowt wye peepul get mad when you ask em are they too westernized?

"Its human naturr," thats what the doctor sed, I think. ◆

Mani Kehler, continued

January

Cold. Clammy. Harsh. Forbidding. Death unleashed
On every side; hopelessness, starvation.
Snow crisp falling slowly on my hat and gloves.

A time when all depend on one another to survive,
To be proud of survival; from within my fireheated home
I look out at the snow, as cold and forbidding
As I am safe and warm

April

A new life and chance to grow, young shoots
Sprouting, rosebuds peeping, fresh warm air
Good weather and health to all, how beautiful!
The spring and brook babbling up cool fresh water,
The wildlife awakening from hibernation,
The conquering smells, the sweet gentle breezes
Brushing the hair from my face, as I walk
In our garden of crocuses, blue, white and purple.

Ruchira Menka Jha

There to There (Civilisation to Realisation)

AS THE CAR bumped along the uneven roads of Bihar, my mind began to wander back. Nine years had passed since I had seen Dhanga, my village, and my thoughts were misty and ambiguous. The journey seemed so different. I gazed at the once familiar landscape dappled with trees swaying, and the colorful women carrying waterpots, sheep grazing on the



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Contributors:

Terah DeJong.....	4	R. N. Brindha.....	19, 27, 29
Mani Kehler.....	5, 38	Kartik Raj.....	19, 37
Ruchira Menka Jha.....	6	Velan Mudaliar.....	20, 25
Rajni George.....	8, 32, 41	V. GuruDevRajan.....	23
E. Jeyapaul Asir.....	9, 28	Abirami Varatharajan.....	23
P. C. Durai Rama		Tushar Irani.....	25
Chidambaram.....	10, 15	T. Ganesh Babu.....	27, 28, 37, 41
John Thomas.....	11, 20	G. Lulu Robin.....	28
S. Lawrence.....	11	Diksha Dua.....	30
Neeraj Desai.....	12, 21, 44	Rachita Kumar.....	30
Robbie Jenks.....	13	M. Muthu.....	34
K. S. Jayaseelan.....	14	J. Jeyakumar Jeyaseelan.....	34
Pratap C.....	16, 31, 36, 39, 43	Nitya Nair.....	35
Gaurav Monga.....	17	Priya Mathur.....	40
Kauzian.....	18	Ekta Kumbani.....	42