

# Paper Boats

by Dilip Mohapatra (March 2015)

Monsoon descends

and the clouds split open

the gutters running parallel

on both sides of

the narrow village gully

swell up in a spate and

bridge the gap

between them

to shake hands.

An endless ribbon of

muddy brown water

slithers on the road

like a huge serpent

after its prey

a faint and translucent sun

swims on its back lazily

a wanton wind whistling

through the coconut fronds.

Tiny dots of paper boats

appear from nowhere

riding the crests and troughs

of the gushing stream

dancing in tandem

to the rhythms of the ripples

wobbling aimlessly

with no compass nor chart

and no harbour to enter.

They set sail on their uncertain course

with no ropes nor even an anchor

and with no cargo in the holds

of their folds

but their transparent rigging

laden with laughter

and cheer and boundless glee

like the trinkets twinkling

on a Christmas tree.

The notebooks become

thinner and thinner

while some topple and capsize  
and some continue to stay afloat  
their keels becoming  
wetter and heavier as they sail by.  
An infinite joy abounds  
in the air and  
spirits soar high.

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**Dilip Mohapatra** (b.1950), a decorated Navy Veteran started writing poems since the seventies. His poems have appeared in many literary journals of repute in India and abroad. Some of his poems are included in the World Poetry Yearbook, 2013 along with the works of 211 contemporary poets from 93 countries. He has two poetry books to his credit: *A Pinch of Sun & other poems*, and *Different Shades*, published by Authorspress. He holds two masters degrees, in Physics and in Management Studies. He lives with his wife in Pune.

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