

# Two Poems

by [Ankur Betageri](#) (August 2018)



*Trespass*, Helen Frankenthaler, 1974

An End to Dreaming

I wish I could live happily  
under the trees  
collect alms  
from loving householders  
and move from  
public park to public park

I wish I could sleep  
sannyasi-like on a park bench  
without police waking me up with a stick.  
I wish I could gaze at the constellations  
at midnight without the dogs barking:  
thief! thief!

I wish I could live  
as if there was no state regulation  
no traffic, pollution, heat and disease.  
I wish detachment and god-love  
could free me completely  
make me immune to cruelty and injustice  
and the work-regime of the world.

I wish my enlightenment  
could end poverty and hunger  
rid the world of slavery and child abuse.  
I wish my under-tree teaching sessions  
could clear a farmer's debt or stop  
the killing of tribals by anti-naxal troops.

I wish punya was bank balance  
and hoarding enough  
opened the doors to heaven  
I wish the answer to world's suffering  
was to call the world false  
and ask to be released from it.

I wish moksha was more than just death  
that it wasn't: ending life utterly and making death eternal  
I wish I could believe what the books say the 'Learned' knew  
and that this poem wasn't a refutation.

Paperweight

Like

from its folded

depths

the sea

exhales

and ripples

through

a crinkly

sail

from the depth

of its wavy

folds

her skirt

blows

a breeze

over my

fevered

eyelids

but when  
from beneath  
the skirt  
her knees  
press against  
the cardboard wall  
of my curt  
replies  
  
paper-thin  
codes  
of propriety  
loom over us  
like a fortress.

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Ankur Betageri is a poet, short fiction writer and visual artist based in New Delhi. He is the author of *The Bliss and Madness of Being Human* (poetry, 2013) and *Bhog and Other Stories* (short fiction, 2010). He teaches English at Bharati College, University of Delhi. His poetry has appeared in *New English Review*, *Mascara Literary Review* and *London Review of Books*.

NER on Twitter