

WINTER 2021

VOL. 46 NO. 3

# Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER





Earth is the chosen place of mightiest souls;  
Earth is the heroic spirit's battlefield,  
The forge where the Archmason shapes his works.  
Thy servitudes on earth are greater, King,  
Than all the glorious liberties of heaven.

SRI AUROBINDO, *Savitri*, p. 686



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## FROM THE EDITORS

Poetry & Consciousness 6

## POETRY

Joy of Poetic Creation 8  
SRI AUROBINDO

Coming in the Clasp of Divine Grace 9  
DOLAN CHAMPA SAHA

The Lines of Bougainvillea Bushes 10  
DOLAN CHAMPA SAHA

She of the Garment Green 12  
GARY MILLAR

Steep Ravine Trail Song 14  
RICK LIPSCHUTZ

Roadside Haiku 15  
RON JORGENSEN

Love Eternal 16  
ELLEN DAVIS

Three Elements of Poetic Creation 18  
SRI AUROBINDO

All that the Sunset Measures 20  
RICK LIPSCHUTZ

Implosion 21  
DEBASHISH BANERJI

Maps 22  
ELLEN DAVIS

Poetry 24  
DEBASHISH BANERJI

## FEATURES

The Future Poetry in Our Times? 25  
DEBASHISH BANERJI

The Ideal Spirit of Poetry 27  
SRI AUROBINDO

## MORE POETRY

In Horis Aeternum 33  
SRI AUROBINDO

Okawa 1914 34  
DEBASHISH BANERJI

Selected Passages on *Savitri* 36  
THE MOTHER

*Savitri*: Cycle of the Seasons 37  
SRI AUROBINDO

Bride of the Fire 42  
SRI AUROBINDO

Trance 46  
SRI AUROBINDO

## LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

*Collaboration*: Help Wanted 43

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS 44

## CONTRIBUTORS

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ELLEN DAVIS is a transformational mediator, coach, and embodied movement yoga facilitator. A former dancer and choreographer, she founded Yoga of Ballet and has been teaching professional classical ballet internationally for over 40 years, including at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. She is also archivist and manager of an art estate, writes about the creative process, and enjoys photography.

RON JORGENSEN is an everyday mystic. He sees mystical qualities in the common elements of life and always sees the world afresh. His most significant education began in the 1970s during his eight years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville in India, where he studied and practiced Integral Yoga and worked on projects for an Ashram-related group, World Union. Ron makes his home in Enumclaw, Washington, at the foot of Mt. Rainier.

RICK LIPSCHUTZ: What kind of nutcase packs up his whole family and embarks on a pilgrimage from Albuquerque,

New Mexico, to western Massachusetts, believing that in some place called the Pioneer Valley we might find a northeast passage through schizophrenia? A devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, that's who. And one who is engaged, with partner and son, in a pilot project in Open Dialogue Therapy, and continues to write "that novel about the soul" (in fulfillment of his late wife's last words). Now, when he meets with his son, at his son's request, he reads aloud from Sri Aurobindo's poetry. Three portions of *The Soul That Makes Us Matter* and some of his own poems have appeared in this journal. Though officially retired after 30 years in hospital medical transcription, he feels he has come out of retirement and is working as never before on his true vocation.

GARY MILLAR lived at Forecomers in Auroville in 1968. He was admitted as a sadhak into the Sri Aurobindo Ashram by the Mother in 1969 and lived there until marrying and moving to Nepal in about 2009 to research and write his book on finding Annapurna in the Rig Veda. Gary is still living in front of Annapurna.

DOLAN CHAMPA SAHA came to Integral Yoga in her youth in India. An art-lover and scientist with a Ph.D. in microbiology, spirituality tugs at her inner heart—she tries to integrate it into all aspects of life. Dolan recently published *Rays of Inspirations: Through a bouquet of poetry and paintings*, a creative book of prayers, art, and spiritual communions felt in her deepest moments.





#### ABOUT THE COVER

Golden autumn turning to winter. Cover design by Saili Sawant. To learn more about her work and to view her portfolio visit [www.sailisawant.com](http://www.sailisawant.com).

# Collaboration

JOURNAL OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

**PUBLISHER:** *Collaboration* (ISSN 0164-1522) is published by the Sri Aurobindo Association (SAA), a California nonprofit corporation, 2715 W. Kettleman Lane, Suite 203-174, Lodi, CA 95242 USA; email: [info@collaboration.org](mailto:info@collaboration.org). SAA distributes information about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and Auroville, and supports projects related to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville, and Integral Yoga activities in America.

**EDITORIAL TEAM:** John Robert Cornell, Karen Mitchell, Mateo Needham, Martha Orton, Bahman Shirazi. The opinions expressed in *Collaboration* are not necessarily those of the editors or SAA.

**SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER:** Prateek Mehra, [subscription-manager@collaboration.org](mailto:subscription-manager@collaboration.org).

**DESIGN:** Darío Ponce Joshina.

**MARKETING:** Susan Curtiss, Marco Masi, Prateek Mehra.

**PRINTER:** Kalpen Shah, Best Print Graphics.

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*Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA). All quotations from The Mother are taken from *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM).

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** A one-year print subscription (three issues) is \$30 (+\$12 for airmail outside the USA). A digital subscription is \$24 per year. Print + digital is \$36 per year. A discounted digital subscription for individuals with limited financial means is also available. Pay online by credit card at [www.collaboration.org/journal/subscribe/](http://www.collaboration.org/journal/subscribe/) or make a check to Sri Aurobindo Association and mail to: Sri Aurobindo Association, 2715 W. Kettleman Lane, Suite 203-174, Lodi, CA 95242 USA.

**INDIA PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS:** India residents, send Rs. 200 for the print edition in the name of Larry Seidlitz to: Larry Seidlitz, 42 Pappammal Koil St., Anandam Apts. Ground Fl., Apt. 1A, Kuruchikuppam, Puducherry 605012.

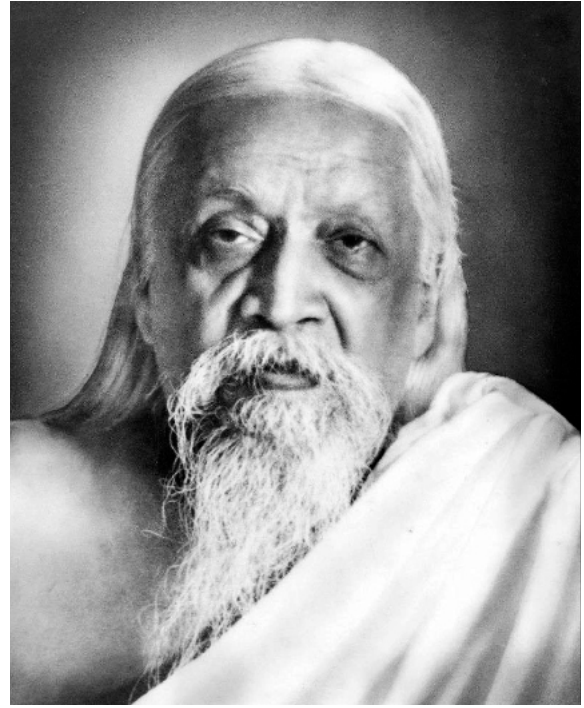
**SUBMISSIONS:** See p. 44. Submit material by email to [editor@collaboration.org](mailto:editor@collaboration.org). *Collaboration* cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of unsolicited material.

**CONTRIBUTIONS:** Donations for the work of SAA, Auroville, and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram may be sent to SAA at the above address. Donations are tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

**SRI AUROBINDO ASSOCIATION BOARD:** Mateo Needham, president; Susan Curtiss, secretary; John Robert Cornell, Jonathan Kay, Lynda Lester, Gloria Sayavedra, directors.



The Mother (Mirra Alfassa, 1878–1973)



Sri Aurobindo (Aurobindo Ghose, 1872–1950)

An extraordinary mystic and spiritual leader, the Mother was Sri Aurobindo's spiritual collaborator. As a child she had a series of spiritual experiences leading to her realization of the Divine. During her young adulthood in Paris around the turn of the century, she became an accomplished artist, musician, and writer. Many of the now world-famous French masters were her friends and acquaintances. During this time she found explanation for her inner experiences in the company of two great occultists, Max and Alma Theon, in Algeria.

In 1914 her meeting with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry, India, became the turning point of her life. Six years later she joined him there where she stayed for the rest of her life to collaborate with him in their spiritual mission aimed at complete transformation of human consciousness.

The Mother oversaw the daily activities of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, founded the International Centre of Education, and in 1968 founded Auroville, an experimental international community devoted to human unity. The Mother's spiritual work was concerned with activation of the highest human spiritual potential and the transformation of the earth and of the physical body at the cellular level. Her complete writings are compiled in *The Collected Works of the Mother* and *The Mother's Agenda*.

Sri Aurobindo was India's foremost philosopher, poet and spiritual figure of the 20th century. At age seven he was sent to England where he mastered Western classical literature and languages. He returned to India at age twenty-one and soon mastered classical Indian literature and languages as well. He was active in the Indian independence movement until 1910, when he moved to Pondicherry to pursue his spiritual work.

From 1910 to 1950 his spiritual practice focused on the reconciliation of the spiritual and material realities, with the ultimate goal of utilizing the most powerful spiritual force (the Supermind) to accelerate and transform human evolution. He recognized that the current human state of consciousness is merely a transitional state with endless potential for spiritual development and called for the integration of Eastern and Western cultural and knowledge traditions.

He rejected the world-negating approaches to spiritual development as escapism and embraced embodied spirituality and the reintegration of the feminine Divine.

His most notable works in prose are: *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, and *The Human Cycle*. His poetic *magnum opus* is titled *Savitri*.





# POETRY & CONSCIOUSNESS

Sri Aurobindo was a political leader, professor, philosopher, and yogi—but he was also a seer poet who felt that poetry could be used as a path to higher consciousness. In that spirit we present this special poetry issue of *Collaboration*.—Editors

POETRY IS AN ANCIENT ART FORM GOING BACK TO EARLIER periods of civilization all around the globe. Oral traditions such as poetry and storytelling were among the main modes of communication before the dawn of rational consciousness and the emergence of language and writing as we know them today. As a language of the soul, through sound and rhythm, poetry has long evoked human imagination and emotions and conveyed meaningful intuitive experiences in ways that ordinary language often fails to accomplish. If poetry and consciousness are intimately connected, can poetry be an instrument for enrichment and evolution of consciousness?

For this issue of *Collaboration*, we have received a wealth of poetry from our readers. So the editors have decided to make this an all-poetry issue, accompanied by some elucidating texts by Sri Aurobindo on the nature of poetry and poetic creation. Among these are “The Ideal Spirit of Poetry” (a chapter from the book, *The Future Poetry*); also a brief exchange with a disciple, titled “Joy of Poetic Creation,” in which Sri Aurobindo speaks to openness to higher planes and his experience of this in writing a poem. In addition, we have included a piece titled “Three Elements of Poetic Creation,” in which Sri Aurobindo describes elements essential for the writing of a poetry that is genuine and not overly influenced by the intellect. Sublime examples are given in the poems by Sri Aurobindo in this issue, including a wonderful fragment from *Savitri* that describes the cycles of the seasons. Other selections from Sri Aurobindo’s collected poems are “In Horis Aeternum,” as well as two poems in which Sri Aurobindo reveals his highest aspirations and

preparedness to embrace the Divine Radiance, “Bride of the Fire” and “Trance.”

In “The ideal Spirit of Poetry” Sri Aurobindo reflects on poetry, its relationship with consciousness, and its role in the future evolution of consciousness. The main question he lays out at the outset is: “What would be the ideal spirit of poetry in an age of increasingly intuitive mind?” To answer this question, he refers to what Vedic poets meant by Mantra, which he describes as an inspired and revealed seeing and visioned thinking attended by a realization of an inmost truth of God, self and man, and Nature and Cosmos. For him, poetry is Mantra only when it reveals the inmost truth and conveys the “highest power of the rhythm and speech of that truth.”

Sri Aurobindo urges us to seek again the truth of spirit now that mankind has found some knowledge of the material world and vital reality of the “Force from which we spring.” This new vision of poetry “will not be as in the old times something hieratically remote, mystic, inward...” Rather, the emerging consciousness will have intimacy with our earth and embody not just the highest philosophical, religious, or artistic ideals, but also those “in the common life and action of man.” He invites humanity to live in a greater truth than what has hitherto governed our lives. The role of poetry is to “express the soul of man to himself and to embody in the word whatever power of beauty he sees.” The ideal poet is a poet-seer-creator who is also a rishi (sage).

For Sri Aurobindo the role of a poet is to interpret or reinterpret the past, point to the future, and in doing so reveal “the face of the Eternal.” The intuitive poetry that



Sri Aurobindo is concerned with would attempt to harmonize five eternal powers: Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life, and Spirit which he refers to as the “five suns of poetry.” The poetry of the future will kindle these five “suns in the heavens of our highest mind.” Such poetry will first be based on intuitive faculties, but has the potential to rise towards a “greater power of revelation nearer to the direct vision and word of the Overmind from which all creative inspiration comes,” and yet, it will not be remote or intangible, but will make the highest gradations of consciousness near and visible.

Among the poems we are happy to publish in this issue is a beautiful one titled “The Lines of Bougainvillea Bushes” by Dolan Saha, who writes about the inspiration she received from rows of bougainvillea bushes when she was studying in Chennai and had recently become acquainted with Integral Yoga. Dolan has introduced this poem in her piece titled “Coming in the Clasp of Divine Grace” by explaining the background and context of its inspiration. While the experience described in the poem took place in another time and place, the poem resonates with the joy of experiencing the Divine in Nature. “She of the Garment Green” by Gary Millar speaks to the immense beauty of the Himalayan region, where he lives in view of the great Annapurna. In this lovely poem Gary describes the realization and expression of the Divine Mother as experienced in Mother Nature. We are also glad to have two poems from Rick Lipschutz, “Steep Ravine Trail Song” and “All That the Sunset Measures.” Both of these deeply expressive poems go beyond describing the experiences they recount and evoke a wider, more expansive experience of the natural world and the divinity within it. Ellen Davis’ poems “Maps” and “Love Eternal” weave together the transcendent and the immanent in mystical experiences. “Maps” takes us through the key landmarks of the spiritual journey: self, time, eternity, form, formlessness, essence and substance, beauty, immanence, transcendence, and unity. “Love Eternal” is an ode to the beloved, the dance between the lover and beloved and the joy of unity, complementarity, and experience of wholeness through spiritual union.

We are also pleased to present an essay titled “The Future Poetry in Our Times?” by Debashish Banerji in which he provides a synopsis of the book *The Future*

*Poetry*, highlighting how future poetry could be an aid in the evolution of consciousness. Among Sri Aurobindo’s key principles, Debashish highlights the power of intuitive speech as a means for union with higher states of consciousness, as well as the power of rhythm to convey the vibrational context for higher states of consciousness. Other key principles highlighted are revelatory power of image, suggestive power of metaphor, phonetic value of words, as well as multiplicity of meanings of words according to different contexts. Debashish shares that his own poetry is an ongoing exploration of Sri Aurobindo’s principles of intuitive poetry along these lines.

The first of his poems is titled “Poetry” which points to the hidden powers of poetry to transcend our ordinary consciousness of the mind and the senses and awaken and elevate us to higher realities. “Implosion” is a somewhat enigmatic poem in which Debashish alludes to the advent of a spiritual figure (Sri Aurobindo) during the later period of Bengal Cultural Renaissance, using powerful images such as *Kal Baisokhi*, violent thunderstorms, winds, and torrential rainfall in northern India, the great beauty of which have inspired poets as well as artists, especially in Bengal. “Okawa 1914” transports us to the time of the Mother’s arrival in Tokyo, where she stayed with Dr. Shumei Okawa, a university professor and leader in the pan-Asiatic movement in Japan who had deep interest in India and had heard of Sri Aurobindo. In their year-long stay, the Mother, Okawa, and others in their company discussed their vision of a new Asia and a new world.

We hope that our readers will enjoy this special issue.

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