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**Title: POEMS**

**Imaginary Gains**

**I Don't Know...**

**Time to Break Off**

**We Harbour Histories**

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## IMAGINARY GAINS

Ram Krishna Singh\*

The traps hidden in the candle flame  
are the cages we make and unmake  
to chart the future and yet fear  
the emergency light at night  
dream the concerns of slinky colleagues  
and how to police their freedom  
against owls, monkeys and bandicoots  
that howl at each move to the lee  
and yet pretend our poses intact  
through several byways reach victory stand  
breath by breath conspire against ourselves  
only to hear the echoes that rise  
or die down in silence the twangs  
of memory reveal the pit  
dug over the years or the earth  
fermented with imaginary gains

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## I DON'T KNOW...

Ram Krishna Singh\*

I don't know how to negotiate the long steep trail  
with hidden scorpions under loose rocks  
at home with human muck in a valley existence  
strolling upward through a thicket of TV images  
politics of glory, garbage and god  
the odd arts of money, hierarchy and control  
nobody knows who unmakes whom

I don't know how to follow the ridges  
back to the trail and the dead river  
but stand for a moment to rub the sand from my feet  
before worrying about the lost vitality and fear  
of the approaching night and rising smoke  
dissolving in the sky or conspiring with elements  
hardly in balance but contorting the psyche

I don't know what is there for me to hope  
when the rains rejuvenate and flood both  
the repulsive stench and the loss of pathways  
linger longer than the flavour of the first drops  
under the tree the puddle feeds no sparrows  
but algae that couldn't dry now trap tiny souls  
that fail to swell with heaven's breath

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## TIME TO BREAK OFF

Ram Krishna Singh\*

How long can I grow without roots  
or make way for what is approaching  
in digital noises I can't be  
inheritor of arrant cowards  
smelling the arse on their fingers

nor can I be the priest checking  
the burnt tongues to test criminals  
stiff with cold I'm tired of animal  
struggle for survival and last rites  
in candle light digging cursed  
treasure for night songs others croon

I can't decipher names in smoke  
nor forget the faces emerging  
from the matrix of tremors  
that are islands to shackle  
feet in silence close the cycle  
of waters that feed the sea

I feel lumps hinder and pain  
now it's time to break off and bury  
the ash in the earth and plant afresh  
foliage for rains or sun to nurse  
a destiny I could take pride in

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## WE HARBOUR HISTORIES

Ram Krishna Singh\*

The falsity of the sky is more real than the earth's  
lies can't sustain hope of divinity

we have complicated with poesying  
private hells to mitigate flow of time

that couldn't carve heaven: we harbour histories  
of broken promises and fallen gods

lament men and women buried in light  
now soulless, bodiless, traceless we look

upward and whittle continents from clouds  
hanging generations that may never be

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**Ram Krishna Singh\***, born, brought up and educated in Varanasi, India has been writing poetry in English for about four decades. He has published over 160 academic articles, 175 book reviews, and 40 books. His 17 collections of poems include *I Am No Jesus And Other Selected Poems*, *Tanka And Haiku* (English/Crimean Tatar, 2014), *New And Selected Poems Tanka And Haiku* (2012), and *Sense And Silence: Collected Poems* (2010).

His poetry has been explored in a dozen theses, over 80 articles, and four full length books, namely *New Indian English Poetry: An Alternative Voice* (ed. I.K. Sharma, 2004), *R.K. Singh's Mind and Art: A Symphony of Expressions* (ed. Rajni Singh, 2011), *Critical Perspectives on the Poetry of R.K. Singh, D.C. Chambial and I.K. Sharma* (ed. K.V. Dominic, 2011) and *Anger in Contemporary Indian English Poetry* (Vijay Vishal, 2014), which present a comprehensive picture of his creativity since the 1970s.

Appreciated for his tanka and haiku, R.K. Singh's poems have been anthologized in over a hundred books. His poems have been translated into Japanese, Greek, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Romanian, Crimean Tatar, Bulgarian, Slovene, Croatian, Farsi, Arabic, Serbian, Esperanto, Hindi, Punjabi, Kannada, Tamil, and Bangla.

Well-known as a practitioner of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Dr. Singh is currently Professor (HAG) at Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad 826004 (India). More at: [www.rksinghpoet.blogspot.in](http://www.rksinghpoet.blogspot.in) and [http://pennyspoetry.wikia.com/wiki/R.K.\\_Singh](http://pennyspoetry.wikia.com/wiki/R.K._Singh)