



## **Call for a Special Issue of Organizational Aesthetics: Poetry for Organizing**

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.  
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers that there is in  
it, after all, a place for the genuine. – Marianne Moore (1887-1972), *Poetry*.

Marianne Moore's poem on *Poetry* sums up what poetry is for many of us, and the phrase "a place for the genuine" reveals the motivation for a special issue of *Organizational Aesthetics* (OA) focused on the fresh lens of poetry. In these times of fake news, fake scholarly publications, and economic, political and sociocultural divisiveness, a new way to see what is genuine is needed. This special poetry issue of OA with poems and essays related to organizational life will contribute just that.

Poetry is just there, as we experience the world, especially when we are not thinking about it. Most of us will be able to recall the songs from different phases of our lives. Workers are known to have songs for easing their work, be it as sing-alongs to hard manual work or background music for intellectual or creative pursuits. The lyrics are poems, too. There are poems of humor, protest, lament, and love. Poetry allows us to bypass the cognitive filters of our minds to know the world differently.

Many world leaders and managers have confessed to turning to poetry for solace. Former U.S. President Barack Obama, speaking during a National Poetry Month workshop and reading at the White House on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, said:

Poetry matters. Poetry, like all art, gives shape and texture and depth of meaning to our lives. It helps us know the world. It helps us understand ourselves. It helps us understand others, their struggles, their joys, the ways that they see the world. It helps us connect ... I think it's fair to say that if we didn't have poetry, that this would be a pretty barren world. In fact, it's not clear that we would survive without poetry.

Poetry features routinely as revolutionary anthems in organizing social movements. In business organizations, the creative output of poets has been used, for example, to sell products using advertising ditties or to make slogans to popularize strategic direction among employees. Thus, poets play the role of activists in society and are also writing poetry used as a mechanism for organizing. As the world faces many global problems and current institutions are crumbling with the advent of technological age, poetry offers a fresh perspective, one that permits subjective interpretations that are context-sensitive.

For this special poetry issue of OA, the editors are asking for submissions of poems and short essays that inform us, transform us, inspire us, and awaken us to new ways of seeing the world, solving its problems, and co-creating organizations that serve us better. We are

looking to publish poems related to any aspect of organizational and managerial experiences. Topics of how we organize as people, organizations, institutions, communities, and societies are all appropriate. The curated collection of poems will be related to organizing and causes we organize for, such as the topics reflected in business schools' curricula. Poems are sought on the topics of the role of organization in society, management, organizing, markets, leadership, followership, strategy, ethics, marketing, systems, structure, money, and other social issues, say, about managers, policy makers, professors, students, and academic life. Managerial experiences of dealing with eternal dilemmas, ethical issues, balancing individual/personal and collective/professional demands, the trials and tribulations of belonging, relationships at work, the nature of work, creativity and voice, and systemic issues and influences are a sample of topics of interest. We invite poems and articles in the following suggested — but not comprehensive — areas:

- What is organizing, and causes we need to organize for
- What is subtle in organizations and not adequately described in words or prose
- What in organizations is happening in-between the lines
- Organizational experiences through lyrics, chants, and songs
- Use of words in organizations for communication or miscommunication
- Spoken words in various aspects of organizational reality (walk the talk, slogans, strategic mission/vision buzzwords, e.g., customer-first, be the best, etc.)
- Poetry in research – data collection & analysis and communication of results
- Poetry as an arts-based intervention in organizations
- Ephemerality in organizations such as the same words meaning different things to different people or in different contexts
- Implications for organizational studies from the field of poetry

Poems from other languages will be considered with translations (with permission from the original copyright holder or evidence that it is not required). The special issue is especially interested in voices of those who have felt marginalized or see things differently from the dominant narratives. We want to hear from poets and poetry lovers and hope to amplify their voices to make fresh sense of the dynamic forms of organizing, to discover the subtle rhythms, themes, metaphors, and aesthetics. If you have used poems in work, the classroom, or training workshops, we want to learn about that.

A few short essays (under 1000 words) are also sought. Essays may be about a specific poem, a poet, or poetry traditions in general. These may offer a perspective for the use of poetry in organizational life, say, how and why poetry is relevant, how poems are used, or what a specific poem contributes to the practice of management. The purpose behind this poetry issue of *OA* is to have a collection of poetry that offers insights to leaders and managers and to develop a broader basis for this under-explored research field.

- We will accept and review submissions on a rolling basis until 31st July 2019.
- Submit electronically at <http://www.organizationalaesthetics.org>
- All submissions should conform to the OA style guide: <https://digitalcommons.wpi.edu/oa/policies.html#formatting>

### **Special Issue Editors:**

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**Jyoti Bachani** PhD, is an associate professor of strategy and innovation at Saint Mary's College of California. She is a Fulbright scholar with internationally recognized expertise in case-writing. She has been reading and translating Hindi poetry into English for twenty years and in the past four years has brought poetry and improv to the Academy of Management conference. In April 2017, she was a featured poet for U.K. Poetry Society's Poetry@3 at Saint Giles in London.

**Raina León** PhD, is an associate professor of education at St. Mary's College of California, a Cave Canem graduate fellow (2006) and member of the Carolina African American Writers Collective, CantoMundo and Macondo. She has over 50 publications in poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and academic scholarship and has earned several fellowships and residencies with Canem, Montana Artists Refuge, the Macdowell Colony, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, Vermont Studio Center, the Tyrone Guthrie Center in Annamaghkerrig, Ireland and Ragdale. She has a busy calendar of poetry readings.

**Jenny Knight** PhD, is a senior lecturer in organisational behaviour and human resource management at the University of Brighton, and a published poet. She has worked in large public-sector organisations nationally and internationally in areas of leadership development, culture change, performance management, and creating strategic plans.

**Shanta Acharya** DPhil, is a poet and a financial consultant, who has published six collections of poetry and several poems in major publications in the USA, UK and India. Her poems have won awards and have been translated into Chinese and Hindustani. She was appointed the best 'international' poet of 2014 by the International Poetry Translation and Research Centre, the Journal of the World Poets Quarterly and the editorial department of the Chinese Poetry International in China. In 2015, she earned the 'lifetime achievement of excellence as a poet' by Skylark Publications and the Word Masala Project. In 2016, she received the Word Masala Award for Excellence in Poetry at the House of Lords. She is a consultant to institutions and individuals in asset management as well as in the arts, education, poetry and creative industries. She is amongst the Founder Members on the Board of Trustees of the Poetry School and is a life member who has twice served as a trustee on the board of The Poetry Society, UK.

## References

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Zeman AZJ, Milton FN, Smith A, Rylance R. 2013. By heart. An fMRI study of brain activation by poetry and prose. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 20(9-10), 132-158. Read more at [http://medicine.exeter.ac.uk/people/profile/index.php?web\\_id=Adam\\_Zeman#HAdvUVQAYG85eBdC.99](http://medicine.exeter.ac.uk/people/profile/index.php?web_id=Adam_Zeman#HAdvUVQAYG85eBdC.99)

President Obama's quote taken from video clip at: [www.c-span.org/video/?c4541900/president-obama-national-poetry-month](http://www.c-span.org/video/?c4541900/president-obama-national-poetry-month)