

Identity

by Dilip Mohapatra (May 2016)

How desperately we clutch to our names
and surnames that spell our ancestry.

How fervently we seek out our roots
and draw up our family tree
and perhaps start a WhatsApp group.

How sheepishly we sport a faded T
that carries the crest of the old ship
or the logo of the company that we served
quite some time ago
or use our last few faded visiting cards
with an insertion in ink the word former
and carry an unpolished
relic of the Captain's baton
during our morning walk
that reminds of the glories
in which we once basked.

How expectantly we face the mirror
and seek our bygone youth in the furrows

of the crow's feet diverging
from the corners of our translucent eyes
the youth that has slipped away quietly
like sands through our clenched fist
leaving only few traces
of tiny crystals stuck between the fingers
as cruel reminders
that so very desperately we hang unto
to protect and preserve our virility
and to save us from the insecurities of
greying hair and to
insulate our vulnerability.

Dilip Mohapatra (b.1950), a decorated Navy Veteran started writing poems since the seventies . His poems have appeared in many literary journals of repute worldwide. Some of his poems are included in the World Poetry Yearbook, 2013 and 2014 Editions. He has four poetry collections to his credit published by Authorspress India, and one non-fiction, a book of wisdom titled Points to Ponder. He holds two masters degrees, in Physics and in Management Studies. He lives with his wife in Pune. His website may be accessed at dilipmohapatra.com.

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