

VOLUME III

DESIKOTTAMA  
DR G RAMACHANDRAN  
1904 - CENTENNIAL - 2004



# G.R, THE POET

*Edited by*  
N. RADHAKRISHNAN  
&  
SISTER MYTHILI

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**MADHAVIMANDIRAM LOKSEVA TRUST**  
NEYYATTINKARA - 629 121,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT, KERALA

English  
**G.R. THE POET**

*Edited by*  
**N. Radhakrishnan &  
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*First Published*  
October 2005

*Price:* Rs. 100/-

*Printed and Published by*  
**Sister Mythili**  
Managing Trustee  
Madhavi Mandiram Loka Seva Trust  
Neyyattinkara - 629 121,  
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

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*Printed at*  
Harikrishnans, Ph : 0471-2725205

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## PREFACE :

Ramachandranji was a great lover of poetry, beauty, flowers, paintings and music even from his childhood. The voracious reader in him gave further impetus to the understanding of masterpieces in poetry, both Malayalam and English. Many of his classmates in his school-days do remember the enthusiastic manner in which young Ramachandran would learn by heart poems of great Malayalam poets.

His meeting Gurudev Tagore in Trivandrum when the poet came down to Travancore was a turning point in his life. Besides kindling in him a desire to study in Shantiniketan under the Poet, this period brought him face to face with one of the greatest geniuses of the twentieth century. If the Sixteenth Century England is described in literary circles as a nest of singing birds, the Shantiniketan under Tagore besides fostering liberal values and vision, individual freedom and opportunities for young mind to interact freely created in Shantiniketan a great heaven of freedom.

The atmosphere in Shantiniketan encouraged Ramachandranji to take a dip in the inexhaustible wealth of beauty, dance, music, paintings, debates and

discussions without fear or inhibitions of any sort. The presence of poet Tagore made all difference. Young Ramachandran who opted for English literature and Philosophy for his areas of specialization had the fortune to have such eminent professors of English as C.F.Andrews.

The Shantiniketan period undoubtedly offered a great opportunity to Ramachandranji to read and enjoy the finest poetry in the world, particularly Indian and English. His understanding of Tagore's poetry was very deep and great Tagore scholars like Professor Amalan Dutta opined that Ramachandranji had an uncanny ability to get into the core of Tagore's poetic world.

Tagore encouraged Ramachandranji in developing his oratorical skills. He recommended Ramachandranji to Sabarmati to study under Gandhiji in Gandhian constructive activities. In the initial days of Ramachandranji's stay in Sabarmati he was known among other ashram inmates, as 'Tagore disciple'. Ramachandranji's love of poetry and Tagore's influence on him inspired him to become acquainted with great English masters such as Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Shelly, Tennyson, Walt Whitman, T.S. Eliot.

Even from his Shantiniketan days Ramachandranji is known to have written short poems of exquisite qualities which he did not want to publish. When once he was asked why he was reluctant in getting them published his reply was that he scribbled poems for personal

satisfaction and not as an utterance meant for public. His diaries and personal journals reveal an amazing number of poems on a variety of topics written at various point of time in his long life.

This collection of poems, selected at random from his diaries of his later years (mostly his post-Gandhigram period) reveal refreshing poetic images and a remarkable vision steeped in humanism. Ramachandranji mentioned in his diaries that three women influenced him in his life. His mother (Madhavi Thankachi), his wife (Dr. Soundaram) and his adopted grand-daughter (Mythili). The poems in this collection are mostly addressed to Sister Mythili whom he designates 'comrade-disciple', exhorting her to be courageous, brave and steadfast in her determination to follow in his shoes and in full spiritual comradeship.

These poems reflect a Ramachandranji whose passionate involvement in Gandhian Constructive Work and educational reforms for over sixty long years grew steadily with assurance and confidence to the ever-inspiring spiritual umbrella. His great ability to harness spiritual insights to social activism and social change can also be discernible in these poems. What one can see in most of these poems is the eruption of lyrical passion into spiritual truths.

Neelakantom  
2<sup>nd</sup> October 2005

**N. Radhakrishnan**

## INTRODUCTION

This volume, the third in the 24 volume Centenary Publication dedicated to Mama Dr. G. Ramachandran, contains select poems carefully copied from his unpublished journals and diaries. "Mamaji", as those around him endearingly addressed him, always loved poetry. He loved to recite Tagore, Shakespeare, George Russel, Whitman, Malayalam poets Kumaran Asan, Vallathol, Changanpuzha and Tamil poet Subramania Bharati. For some reasons, he never intended to publish the poems he composed at various stages.

The editors are convinced that most of the poems, particularly those included in this collection offer a rare insight into the mind of this great Tagore-Gandhi disciple to whom life was an enchanting and creative response to the challenges posed before man by his maker.

Spiritual bonding of humanity through ideal comrade-discipleship is the running theme of the poems in the collection.

N.R

S.M.

## Light of my life

You came like a shaft of light!  
When my life was lonely without  
A lamp to lead me in the darkness,  
Nor a firm hand to hold on in life's pathways.

Nor that I was weak or afraid  
Nor uncertain of the goal ahead.  
I stood unbeaten but without a comrade  
My many sorrows and few joys to share.

It was then Basi, you came into my life  
Radiant with youth, courage and hope.  
You took my hand and made me stand erect,  
Not merely to watch the flow of life

But to plunge into the turbulent stream.  
You came with the promise, you would help  
To do the work I so much longed to do here and now,  
That promise was the nectar for my life .

A thrill that atlast again I had a comrade,  
After my heart's long hoped desire,  
A comrade to hold my hand and walk my way.  
You shared my thoughts and dreams,



And as hand holding hand we together walked  
On the troubled and busy ways of life,  
We knew in our throbbing hearts  
That God's grace was with us ever.

We have now come a long way  
Trusting in God's unfailing mercy.  
Next to God we trust in ourselves  
Knowing that this Trust also comes from above.

Basi, You are the truth in my Soul  
And the faith that never once fails.  
You are the lamp leading me on and on and on.

## At First Sight

A pure face, clean cut, statuesque,  
As in some ancient Greek Sculpture,  
Chiselled chaste lines of intellect,  
Lit up by the halo of the Spirit.

Eyes, deep and dark and sweet;  
The gentle and the firm together in one,  
A sad saint, as it seems, in the making,  
But alas too young for the role.

Will the pellucid streams of her life  
Rich, clear, vibrant and flowing,  
Dry up in some dreary desert sands  
Of premature and tragic negations?

May the Lord God, of Truth and Beauty  
Protect and her tender footsteps guide;  
May He, who moulds every blossom,  
Guard in mercy the flower of her growth.

Lord, I bring this prayer out of  
My deep searching and throbbing mind  
That every talent of her priceless being  
Find uttermost fulfilment within Thy grace.

## What is my dream of you , and for you

A noble, gracious, inspiring personality.

A character at once firm and gentle.

A mind clear without cob-webs.

A will to work and achieve results.

A deep sympathy and understanding of people.

A capacity to attract real friendship and loyalty

Ability to converse clearly and convincingly.

A big mind to understand others difficulties.

A keen intellect to plan and organise,

A woman of few words at proper times of emergency  
but, words of wisdom and sympathy.

A good writer and speaker.

(these are important in public work)

A woman equal of men in courage, capacity and sacrifice

This my beloved Basi is my dream of you and for you.

May God in His mercy grant me my dream.

## Oh! For My Comrade-Disciple

At my age of seventy and three

And looking backward into my life

I see fifty and five years of striving

To know life and to live life vitally.

I have never chosen the easy ways,

Nor ever cared to walk on beaten tracks

Thorns and thistles never kept my back

As I went ever onward on my track.

From books and life I learnt hard

Lessons that gave me strength of mind

And knowledge of the onward road

Running through avenues broad.

Avenues were dark sometimes like hell,

And alit sometimes like a temple

Fire and flood often barred the way

But God's light always showed the way.

I fought every inch of my path

And never once fell back in fear

But with faith in God and myself

Battled with life with all my strength

Did say with all my strength?  
Forgive me my God this arrogance  
Not my strength oh ! Lord, but Thine  
For Thine is the grace which cometh.

Silent and certain like sunshine,  
But sometimes swift like a river in flood  
Sometimes gentle like the rays of the moon  
By always constant and never failing.

But life is moving on to its end  
Without a single moment wasted  
Onward, onward to silence eternal  
To the goal predestined for every man.

And as the journey consummates itself,  
There intervene many slow years  
When our strength surely ebbs away  
And the body and mind weaken every day.

No one escapes this challenge of the end  
Not the strongest nor the wisest  
Neither the most heroic and valiant  
Nor the saint or even the Yogi accomplished.

The eyes will grow dim  
The ears will not hear  
The aging body will totter  
And the very mind slow down.

While God alone can then sustain  
Each one of us as we move and  
A true and devout comrade can  
Add to our strength and to our hope again.

Next only to God and his mercy  
Such a comrade can hold  
Amid the encircling gloom  
Our hand as we stumble on

Only remember I am old and feeble  
And you are young and nimble  
Do not run fast or far ahead  
But in pity keep pace with me.

Let no gap come between us  
As we march on together  
No gap of limbs nor of minds  
We either climb together or not at all.

## Let It Be so Then (I)

Yes, then let it be so, my comrade,  
Our lives are not always our own  
We belong to our world without a doubt  
And this world often binds us down.

The chains are sometimes strong and hard  
And sometimes cruel beyond words  
The weak perish in their coils  
The strong break them at their peril.

Let us harden the muscles of our minds  
And strengthen the nerves of our souls  
To yield is to court death and defeat  
Let us therefore stand unafraid and erect.

We dare not discard all wisdom,  
Wise we must be all the time,  
But let not wisdom turn to cowardice  
Nor may it disown the claim of compromise.

We have to walk on the middle path,  
With our eyes firmly fixed on our goal  
And let us not sway to one side or the other  
Let us guard the inescapable balance in Truth.

There is nothing harder in life  
Nor more perilous in our pathway  
Than the temptation to spring into folly  
Mistaking it for daring or courage.

All moral courage has wisdom at its core  
As all true wisdom holds courage within it  
Let us mate wisdom with courage  
And derive the progeny of fulfilment.

And so let it be so my comrade,  
My beloved companion of the Spirit  
That we in body live alone and apart  
But united firmly in our Spiritual Quest.

## Let It Be So Then (II)

Life has confirmed the reality,  
What ever the mind may affirm.  
Everything may waver or vanish  
But never the stands of facts.

And our facts stand out firmly  
Without a doubt or an amendment  
Must we not face them with courage  
And never quibble over might have been?

They are the will-o-the-wisps of minds  
They will lead us nowhere at all,  
To turn away from reality now  
Will be like running against a closed door.

And that a door with pikes of iron,  
That can wound and make us bleed  
Let us be wise then dear comrade  
And constantly hold reality by the hand.

And so the refrain is as ever  
'Let it be so then' once more  
Let our hearts firmly hold  
This message as we march on.

We shall live apart in the body  
But very close together in spirit  
And closer together in our striving  
To reach the height of God's Grace.

When our aspiring souls are linked  
Whatever can we lose if we live apart  
Let us cast the chaff away  
And to the kernel hold fast.

I shall keep on singing ever  
'Let it be so then,' with no regret  
Yes, without a doubt 'Let it be so then'.  
It is good and proper it is so.

## Hard Journey of Life

Thorns and thistles the path,  
Hard stones sharper than knives  
Sometimes mud and slush come in the way  
And pariah dogs show their teeth.

The onward march is slowed down  
The goal ahead shines right and clear  
The call comes from after like silver bells  
And we must press on as best as we can.

Let our feet bleed and sting,  
Let our clothes become torn,  
And the sweat pour from every pore,  
And our breath come hard and quick.

We will not falter or halt,  
We shall wipe the blood from our feet,  
And wash the sweat from our skins  
With the waters of God's mercy.

We will not look of the beasts  
Which have their teeth of malice  
Nor stop to answer voices of evil  
The echoes of which fill the air.

We will keep our minds pure  
Our devotion to each other and God  
Will be interlinked at the highest level  
For we two grow together in grace Divine.

And so, what matters if the road is hard,  
And thorns and thistles and cutting stones  
And barking and snarling beasts  
Seek to block our onward way?

We shall laugh them to scorn,  
And challenge them to do all they can,  
And show them we march on unafraid  
With resolute will and clear minds.

## Pain And Sorrow

One thing is certain beyond any doubt  
Our souls locked up in our bodies  
Are not free utterly but are subject  
To the laws of Nature and earthly life.

Embodied Souls have limitations  
From which none can escape,  
When souls become disembodied  
The body will not any more live.

Life thus means soul and body together  
And when they part both cease altogether  
The body perishes and becomes dust  
The soul disappears we know not where.

A Yogi's meditation in Supreme concentration  
On the ultimate reality within us  
Can be disturbed by the bite of an ant  
Or the prick of a tiny mosquito

There is thus no escape from the body  
For the Spirit dwelling within it.  
They are bound together inextricably  
By the will of God that reigns supreme.

And so steadfast and unafraid as I am  
Pain can cast its dark shadow  
And sorrow wring my waiting Heart  
And the whole of life becomes truly shaken.

Ashamed I become and self-reproaching  
When some pain makes me cry out  
When some sorrow pierces me within  
When I cannot stand erect and unmoved.

Oh God is it then Thy final decree  
That body and soul live ever together  
And when time is ripe they die together  
Or is this simply our own illusion?

Why does pain cut at me  
And sorrow so cruelly hurts me  
Why cannot I rise above both  
And look at life without flinching

Oh comrade ! Why do you have the power  
To hurt a mature mind like mine?  
To tear my heart with your absence  
And make me sit encased in silence.

I must not in future give you power  
Over the life I must somehow live;  
Alone and uncured for in silent darkness  
When the sun outside is shining bright.

You are careless and unaware  
While I am watchful and awake  
You sleep peacefully in the grace of God  
I toss unsleeping in the grip of thought.

And thought is a dangerous thing  
It cuts through the wall of unreality  
It opens up hidden corridors  
It exposes the raw substance of truth.

And truth itself is a more dangerous thing  
It burns to ashes all chaff  
It scalds the muscles of pretensions  
It tears down the veil of Maya.

Most thoughts lead to pain  
And behind pain comes sorrow  
As I toss sleepless in the lonely night  
These two become my constant companions.

## Let Us Be Unique

Are we just a man and a woman  
Drawn to each other like any man or woman?  
Are we the common dust of world  
Caught up like all in the rat race?

I hope not my comrade - disciple  
I want it clearly otherwise  
And trust with all my faith in you,  
You too without a doubt want the same.

We shall not the common role play  
Like so many made of common clay  
We shall arise, awake and march  
Like pilgrims on the eternal way.

We shall not this life despise  
Nor worship it beyond measure  
We shall love life with all our hearts  
But love far more our life in God.

Shall we not help each other,  
In this uprising of our souls.  
Shall we not challenge each other  
To climb ever higher together?



Let us never pull each other down,  
In the common ways of common men  
Let our eyes seek the distant goal  
Let our feet ever onward move.

Let our thoughts and deeds be  
High and unique beyond all avail  
Let slander die on evil lips  
And malice dry up in evil hearts.

We must scale heights few ever did,  
Let our minds soar into the sky,  
Let our bodiless love purify,  
Every heart of friend and foe.

Thus in the sweet grace of Ambika  
There shall be written a chapter  
Of light in the great book of life  
That will inspire many struggling souls.

## How Lightly You Departed!

Is it nothing to you to go away,  
To leave me here alone so long,  
Just because your sister called  
Or some one else you cared for called?

Is your devotion, of which you boast  
To the man you call your Guru and Comrade  
Much less to you, as the days grow long  
And the shadows of the night deepen

Than your kith and kin at home?  
That when you hold the balance  
They far more outweigh your kinship  
For him to whom you are his all?

What a mighty difference my child  
Between your restless mind  
And mine holding so firm and sure  
To your image and your spirit?

You have so many to love and serve  
Among whom you count me just one.  
Is this the way of our spiritual comradeship  
On which you went to tread in days to come.

It may suit you well perhaps  
It suits me none at all my child.  
You may play hide and seek with me  
But in that game what part can I have?

I go on thinking in my long days  
Of loneliness of my waiting spirit  
And some time I wonder in sorrow  
If what I hold as real is only Maya?

I shall wait in silent patience,  
And watch the tantalising sport  
Which you seem so much love,  
With no murmur from me of my suffering spirit.

## Awaiting Your Coming

I know you are coming soon,  
Beloved Comrade of my spirit,  
The fragrance of your mind  
And the music of your voice have come.

The air is already full of you  
The sunshine is full of you  
And the wind is singing of you  
And my flowers are calling to you.

All these are but external signals  
Your nimble feet are coming running  
Nearer and nearer every moment  
Dancing and skipping through Space.

Time too is running up with jingling anklets,  
With laughter on her rose-red lips,  
Happy hearted as a full-blown rose  
And vibrant as a lotus in the lake.

I remain calm and cool outside  
So that none will know or see  
How my spirit is fluttering within  
And my heart is leaping forward

To meet you as you come smiling  
Radiant as a star in the sky  
With such love in your deep eyes  
As can drown me in their depths.

To meet you as you come quickly  
With that sweet bird's cry  
And the words of true joy  
Trembling through your golden throat.

To meet you as you come bravely  
Frank and open-hearted as ever  
Pledged to a high discipleship  
And equally to a noble comradeship

I shall run to meet you  
With open arms and an open mind  
Like the gleam of a lamp  
Leaping to a glow inside a shrine.

We shall meet in a moment  
What will shine like a gleam  
Through the long days and nights  
Of our lives dedicated to God.

My mind has seen you already  
My ears have heard your music,  
The dear music of your honeyed voice  
Even if your person is yet far away.

Do not tarry any more my comrade,  
Come like the dawn running down,  
The blue sky with its white clouds  
And all the birds singing among them.

My eyes are looking for your face  
My ears are listening for your voice  
My mind is waiting to catch  
The echoes of your child-like laughter

There was never a comrade  
So worth waiting for as you  
And never was there a disciple  
So worth all my teachings as you.

And so, as I wait for you  
Let me thank God for you  
And promise that I shall lift you  
To the Everest of the Spirit some day.

## Him We Surrender

Some days have passed since we parted,  
You to stay and bear the daily burdens,  
I to go to a distant place for rest and cure,  
And this was by mutual consent and desire.

Even so, we have never really parted.  
We remain firm in each other's mind,  
In daily communion of spirits,  
Fondly remembering each other always.

I was with dear and fond friends  
Who cared for me just as you have ever done,  
And you busied yourself every day  
With our work dear to us both.

You bore the double burden cheerfully  
You faced unexpected situations with courage.

I am proud of you my beloved Basi,  
And ashamed I left you alone to shoulder  
The trials and tribulations of these days.

Your courage I truly admire increasingly  
Your loyalty I shall cherish without fail.

A few days more and I shall see you,  
Hear your joyous shout "Mama, Mama"  
And feel the clasp of your dear hand  
And bear witness to that loving smile  
Which has lighted up my soul so often.

The love I have received here in this house  
Has only deepened my love for you Basi.

I realise now, as never before in my life,  
That we are in God's merciful hands  
Mere little instruments of His will.

Let us hold hands and sit in prayer  
In utter submission to that mighty Will.

Let us surrender our lives to HIM without reserve  
Let us do good works in His name

Let us help the poor and needy in His name  
Let us heal wounds in His Holy name  
Let us live to do His will in utter self-surrender.

## Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

No, no it was not a little star  
That suddenly twinkled in my sky  
It was a big and lovely star shining bright  
With the face of a rose and the voice of a guitar.

How did you come and from where  
Through the thick mists of yesterday  
That choaked the truth from our sight,  
And stifled the light in our souls.

I did not know you winged in the sky  
Nor could defy the wrath of kith and kin  
I only knew you once hid your face  
In fear and trembling before them all.

But do you not know the secret  
That when you fell and surrendered  
My soul's strength rose high above  
The frailties of your shaken mind.

I held firm to the pledge given  
I never once deserted your side  
Even without your knowing, all the time  
I lifted you in the arms of my faith.

You lamented I did not rush to your side  
As you lost your strength of mind:  
You waited for me to come in the body  
To uphold you in your weakness.

Instead I came to you in the spirit  
And whispered a mantram in your ear,  
'Wait, watch and pray in patience  
The wheel will turn and bring you peace'.

I too waited, strong and unyielding  
Before every challenge of evil  
Knowing the darkness could not last  
Beyond a few suns and moons.

I prostrate at Ambika's lotus feet  
Every moment to my throbbing heart,  
And felt the touch of her compassion  
Like the flow of nectar in my soul.

I waited and watched for a chance  
To send my quivering arrow of faith  
From the deep depth of my pain  
Into the heart of him you blindly obeyed.

It shook him to his depths,  
I removed the scales from his eyes,  
He woke up as from a dream  
To come to me in a mood of atonement.

From then on, the mists rolled away  
And you came out of the cave of your fear  
You came twinkling like a star  
With thy face of a rose and the voice of a guitar.

I showed no surprise at your coming  
I know you must come without fail  
Your soul and mine had mingled long  
And each did seek the other unflinching.

And so we not again in the light,  
Held our hand a together in prayer,  
And sported in the ocean of our love  
Purer than crystal and whiter than snow.

And so twinkle, twinkle, my big and lovely star  
Up above far in my souls sky  
I do not wonder what you are  
For I know for certain what you are.

## Have The Mists Lifted?

Have the mists lifted at last?  
Alas, I cannot tell for certain.  
They all came smiling and cordial  
They touched my feet and took my blessings.

I roused no issue with them at all  
They had come of their own free will  
In happy humility of spirit  
And I took them in the same way.

I had made the issue clear as crystal  
Before they came with their smiles  
There was hardly any need then  
To reopen the wounds that cried for healing.

To the father I had written unequivocally  
Not to come, unless his mind he cleared  
Of every trace of evil and slander  
He had thrown at me so thoughtlessly.

He had my letter and he knew  
On what conditions he could come  
He certainly did grasp my meaning  
Before he started to come to me.

He was your father after all,  
Humiliate him I would not  
Nor would I make his mission  
Harder than he could bear.

So we said no word accusation  
To each other as we met,  
For your sake, my mind I softened  
Knowing for your dear sake they came.

## **You Make The Impossible, Possible**

Lord I why did you  
Make the impossible, possible  
I never had a hope  
Not even a shadow of hope

I had left life slip  
And my tears had frozen  
And my heart benumbed long ago,  
And now and now

That the impossible is possible,  
My soul burns,  
My body burns.  
But not, that is not

The word--the word.  
Alas! I have no word  
I thought I knew the word.  
But not I knew it not

But now I have no word.  
It is not a burning that hurts  
It is a burning that uplifts  
The soul is sweetened

The soul is awakened  
The soul is fulfilled.  
It is a flame indescribable.  
The body is full of reverence.

It's own desires become holy.  
The soul and body unite  
They become one utterly.  
Lord I have no word  
Give me the word, dear God.

## The Peak and the Pool

I stood on the mountain peak  
And saw below the deep clear pool;  
I saw myself mirrored in it  
And wondered of the loveliness of its lilies.

A big green parrot flew  
And perched on a nearby tree;  
It made strange noises  
That gave me a thrill

I did not of course know  
A parrot's language at all  
And yet somehow guessed  
What the bird was chirping.

"Are you afraid to take a leap  
Into that cool deep spring of water?  
It is waiting for you now,  
Shame on you", the parrot was saying.

I wondered and was hesitant,  
And then suddenly picked up courage  
And took a quick leap  
Head down into the pool.



Deep and deeper I sank,  
I struck no bottom at all,  
It was a bottomless pool;  
But there was no fear in my heart.

And then I thought two hands  
Held me gently and tenderly  
Within the deep blue depths  
And lifted me up skyward

I woke as from a dream,  
I was on firm earth again,  
The peak and the pool had vanished,  
Only the sweet touch of the hands remained.

And then suddenly the parrot  
Gave its cries loud and clear  
From a nearby tree,  
It sounded like glad laughter.

The parrot on the tree was real  
And its cries sounding like laughter  
Ran truly in my ears.  
Were all else only a dream?

Before the sun set in a blaze of colour  
Flooding the vast evening sky  
I searched for the parrot on the tree  
As it rose on full wings to fly.

It flew straight westward  
Drowned in the sunset colours,

And I saw it wing its way  
Into Ambika's lighted shrine.

Light suddenly dawned on me;  
It was Ambika's sacred parrot  
Known to every worshipper at the shrine  
And it spoke Ambika's benedictions.

## June Has Come

First of June has come.  
You wrote the firm promise,  
You would come to me in June,  
To help me and care for me.

The month of May passed cruelly  
Harder to bear than summer's fires  
Than all other tensions of the time  
Than all other miseries put together.

How I had looked forward  
To the quick coming of June  
To the return of the rose of all roses  
To hear the honeyed voice of my comrade.

And now you have come Oh June,  
Without the bells of joy ringing  
With not a trace of the fragrance  
Of the lotus and the lillies of the heart.

Go away, go away June  
And come not back so again;  
Come only with my comrade  
Any my dedicated disciple of the soul.

Come holding her gentle hand  
Come guiding her dear feet  
Come shouting her sweet name  
Come together singing the name of God.

We are afresh with the grace of our dreams.  
The golden basket of our hopes,  
The silver casket of our faith,  
The shining necklace of our promises.

Oh, June, On June, go back  
And recover what appears lost  
Bring back the laughter and the sweet tears  
Which so off filled out days then.

You are the month of our destiny,  
What happens in this fateful month  
Will shape our days to come  
With either take us onward or rearward.

The days of June are replete  
With what will yet be,  
Each day will strike a note  
That will go ringing into future time.

In June will lie the tests  
For us both without a doubt,  
If I am a man worth the name  
And you a woman worth the name.

If the truth and faith in us both  
Will face the truth and grip the faith  
Without which this ship of life  
Will shaffer and sink beyond redemption.

Oh God let Thy grace lead us on  
As hand in hand before the throne  
We stand humble and unafraid  
Holding firm Thy lotus feet.

## **The Sudden Gleam**

Returning home tonight, weary and hapless,  
I received your dear little epistle,  
And felt such a sudden shock of joy  
I nearly went off my head.

You had come when I was away  
And left before I returned home  
You left behind not only a note  
But the fragrance I always knew.

I read your note with a thrill  
I took in every word like drops of nectar  
I read your lines over and over again  
And knew at last God's grace had come.

God's grace had indeed come  
Like a gleam in the darkness.  
It came like rain to the parched mind  
Like manna for the starved soul.

God's grace has descended on me  
When hope was nearly dead  
Hope in the courage of the woman  
I thought did hold that courage within her.

When faith itself had broken  
The pledge that was once given,  
When words had lost their meaning,  
And promises were cruelly shaken.

God's grace did not fail,  
And wonderful are your words  
'I am now a free bird'  
Which means you now can fly upwards.

Into the sky or high learning,  
Into the search for Truth,  
For the accomplishment of Love  
Pure as the blossoms of the Soul.

Come on my noble comrade  
Hold hands again as before  
Let our eyes look ever upward  
Let our feet ever march onward.

A sudden gleam of light  
Has shattered the thick darkness  
Of our night of seeming despair  
It is the gleam of our future life.

Let that life ever rise upward  
In the sadhana of our lives  
Let us stretch our hands  
To win the golden fleece of Truth

Let no clouds hide ever again  
What today is revealed so clear,  
That the grace of God now  
Calls us to live close to His feet.

Let us bend our head low  
And touch those Lotus Feet,  
And become the humble dust  
As they press in mercy on our souls.

## Away with Doubts

For shame, for shame, my mind,  
Are you yourself subdued by fear  
You who preach fearlessness  
To you beloved comrade-disciple?

Is it not enough she herself lies  
In the gutter of fear and shame  
With truth torn out of her soul  
By these uttering words of love

Let them have their own day  
Untruth too has its victory sometimes,  
Till the tempest of Truth arrives  
And shatters it and scatters it.

You at least must not surrender  
To the shadows of creeping fear,  
Shut the door in its dark face  
And throw it out from your heart.

I will keep my courage alive,  
I will never let the lamp of hope

In you and your inner mind  
Be blown out by any passing wind.

You are nobler than you know  
Courageous far more than you feel  
There is in you undiscovered strength  
Which will come leaping yet to life.

Let some cruel time pass  
Let us hold our souls in peace  
And take God's name on our lips  
As we wait for the inevitable dawn.

I will not cast away my comrade,  
Who has faltered and weakened,  
But hold her dear hand  
And charge her with courage again.

She will stand up once more  
And face slander and malice  
Till they take to their heels  
With their tails between their feet.

For shame, for shame my mind,  
Let no fear touch you hereafter  
Nor any doubt assail you  
For BASI in her soul remains unconquered.

She will keep her word unsullied  
She will keep her faith inviolate,  
With every chain they bind her,  
She will inner strength rediscover.

So let the Guru sleep in peace  
With undiminished trust in God  
That Truth will win at last  
And the vile and wicked will meet their doom.

## Where Are You Now?

The festival of light is there  
There is joy in every heart  
Lamps are lit and the sound  
Of crackers everywhere resound.

Children in their new dresses  
Parade and sing and dance.  
Women decked in new sarees  
Walk in pride down the road.

The Deepavali sun shines bright  
The foliage on the trees  
The loveliness in the lawns  
Are velvet green and billowing

The parrots are gathered  
In the branches and the squirrels  
Chose each other on the trees  
And everything in Nature vibrates.

But where are you now,  
And why are you far away?  
Why must I only imagine  
Your presence and not feel it?

Feel it near and close.  
Feel it rich and vibrant  
Feel it throbbing and radiant  
Feel it pulsing with my own pulse.

But I will not quarrel with you,  
You are with your mother  
And father and sisters now,  
Let them have you for the day.

And then all the coming days  
Will be mine with you  
I will look into your eyes  
And hear your voice again.

## Out of Dust

Only when we become dust  
Under your lotus feet  
Only when we reduce ourselves  
To nothing in your hands.

Only when we seek blindly  
In utter darkness of despair,  
Beating our broken wings  
On the gates of your mercy.

Only when our souls cry out  
Like the cry of a child in terror  
Like the young calf's plaint  
To the mother-cow, full of love.

Only then oh Lord dost thou  
Stoop to lift us up in pity  
And this is how very suddenly  
A quick flash of light has come.

A gleam of Thy grace oh, Lord !  
Has touched me into new life.  
The betrayer is now repentant  
And promised to make atonement.

The coward has become brave.  
A message of hope has come.  
It is Thy mercy which has wrought  
This change, this gladsome miracle.

May the change be real  
May the change stand the test  
For the future is not one of roses,  
But beset with many a thorn.

Guide us with your wisdom.  
Uphold us with your mercy  
Help us sustain each other  
And together march on without fear.

## Not Cruelty

No, I will not be cruel  
How can I be cruel  
To one I cherished and taught  
All that was best in my Soul.

The long days and the long nights,  
The running weeks and months  
Did open the golden treasury  
Of all my high dreams and thoughts.

I tore open the throbbing chest  
Of all my challenging philosophies  
And placed them in your hands,  
Never knowing you would betray them.

My thoughts for you lie dead  
My dreams for you lie crushed  
My hopes for your lie ruined  
Under your cowardly tread,

Long ago when I was but a child  
I struck a little girl



Who plucked a rose bud,  
And laughingly squeezed it dry.

I just could not bear to see  
A flower so pitilessly destroyed  
And now can I endure the deed  
By which my heart you have broken.

I know you have your repentance  
Without the courage to repent truly,  
Even your pious regrets therefore  
Lie buried in your piteous cowardice.

Who can help a coward  
Who betrays trust in fear?  
Miserably have I failed;  
Only God can succour me.

And yet I have given you  
One more final chance,  
Yourself in atonement to redeem.  
Your lost honour and also mine.

I cherish but little hope  
You will stand up brave and true.  
Like the woman I once thought,  
In my own illusion, you were.

Any yet truth might still,  
Against all odds prevail,  
And the flame of courage flicker  
Out of the dead embers once more.

For all things are possible  
With God the compassionate  
Out of dust He can shape  
A star still away shine.

## You Want Poems

Are poems so very cheap?  
Is poetry drawn from the gutter?  
There is such a thing as being shattered  
In a battle of sacrifice and courage.

There is also such a thing  
As being dragged in shame,  
The shame of cowardly betrayal  
The infancy of a stab in the back.

Poems are blossoms that can grow  
In sorrow, in defeat, in rejection,  
Even in the agony of a fatal wound,  
Even in the furnace of a torture.

But it never can grow  
In the filthy pool of betrayal  
In the gutter of dead soul,  
And every soul dies when it betrays.

No, fear not my soul.  
That another's betrayal,  
Can ever taint your nature  
It will shine forth again.

In that shining forth, in my soul  
Will come poems like July rains  
But alas, the winds of shame  
Will scatter them every time.

You, my betrayer, want my poems  
You think poems are cheap  
And made to your fancy's order?  
How little you know of the soul of a poem.

But I want to stretch my hand  
And pull you out of the gutter,  
I have named you comrade and disciple  
And that stands, whatever happens.

My faith and my oath stand  
Inviolate before your perfidy  
Rooted in cowardice beyond repair  
You and Your yoga are less than dust.

And yet here is my hand  
Stretched out to you in pity  
In a faith that does not die  
In a hope that does not fade.

I know even this rescue  
Is in vain, is in vain  
Because you are a coward  
And will betray again under duress.

Your spirituality is spurious,  
A matter of deep breaths and loud chants.  
The first flicker of danger  
Will topple it like a house of cards.

And yet I shall strive  
As long as this life lasts  
To mould you in courage  
To shape you in wisdom.

## Kaliakkavilai

Your Express Bus suddenly sped away  
After you and I waved our hands,  
And both had spoken some unuttered words.  
And the early evening was cool and gay.

You went on your way as prearranged,  
I knew there was no help for it.  
And yet as I drove back on the very same road  
Something - I knew not what - plucked at my heart.

Ours is a hard and long way ahead  
Bound by self-chosen disciplines hard  
There will be many partings and returns  
And patches of sunshine and passing shades.

Some great wisdom behind us stands  
Waving often its tantalising magic wand,  
Let us be sure in our own minds however  
That Gods grace will guide us for ever.

The limits set, the boundaries drawn  
Will only open the golden gates wider

For a richer happiness without a blur  
As we move from one dawn to another fuller dawn,  
So, as your Express Bus in the distance disappeared  
Thoughts such as these in my mind arose  
To quicken and enliven the flood of life  
That for a moment looked as if shattered.

## **Come Back Soon My Comrade**

I saw you go only yesternight,  
And this morning I know you are away  
And there was no 'drive' to meet  
Or watch the sun rise far away.

Beyond the blue hills to the east  
The sun of course will rise in glory  
But neither you or I will be there  
On the beauty road to see the blaze.

Of the colours spreading in the sky;  
Or to hear the whispers of the morning  
From the little throats of birds  
Or the whimpering of a dog by the wayside.

How often Basi are we not  
Driven out in the infant dawn,  
To fill our eyes with nature's beauty  
And our hearts with pulsing thoughts?

The dawn today is just the same,  
The sun has in no way changed  
The winds bring the same message  
And so do all the tender voices of the dawn.

The outlines of the blue hills  
Etched against the tender skies  
Remind me as often before  
Of the face and voice now far away.

There is little joy in the morning today  
I have not stirred to see the sun  
Or watch the painting on the skies  
By the great artist hiding in the clouds

For without our sharing mind in mind  
The sight and sounds of the dawn  
Become empty and outward drawn  
With hardly any inner throb.

Come back soon my comrade,  
My companion of the Spirit  
Let the days be short  
And the hours swiftly fly.

## Loneliness

I look around and listen to voices,  
Books and papers are in place,  
The pretty cat is in the chair,  
And the cook as always near the fire.

The clock ticks away the hours  
The squirrels twitter on the trees  
The gardener as before goes on  
Doing this and that and something.

Why do I feel so lonely in this house  
Where nothing is changed at all?  
I have not opened the radio  
Nor listened to songs and news.

I want no news, I want no songs,  
I see and feel the solitude  
I know what is wrong,  
But to whom shall I tell?

To whom shall I tell  
The emptiness in my soul?  
Who will understand or care  
And much less share my sorrow?

I know what is wrong,  
You, my companion, are away,  
Physically away and unreachable,  
Though very close spiritually all the time.

I long for you, my companion,  
I want to see your face  
With its Monalisa smile,  
I want to hear the music of your voice

The snappy little sounds of  
Your bird-like voice,  
Calling over and over again  
Mama, Mama and yet again Maman.

I know you are away on duty,  
I know you here in spirit,  
I know I am with you in spirit  
Any yet I feel a void.

How strange is the human mind,  
It longs for you ever more,  
When you are farther away and  
The need becomes more insistant

Come soon, my companion,  
Fill this void without delay,  
Let me see you again soon,  
And hear your voice once more.

## “Vigilant Ever”

Suddenly our eyes met one morning  
And there was a flash of wonder  
That shoot us and filled us  
With a swift and high tremour.

We both knew this had happened  
But no word was spoken  
Nor was there any other token  
Of the holy fire so strangely lighted

Shaken but vigilant were we,  
We were not common clay  
To become mud in the common way  
We were made of purer metal.

Within the furnace of the mind  
The tempering of the metal  
Was achieved surely and steadily  
We were unafraid but alert.

We searched for a new life  
Not trapped in bodily desires.

We set about lighting a fire  
Fed with the Soul's own aspirations.

We were not immature minds  
Seeking for cheap satisfactions  
We were minds filled with dreams.  
Soaring upward to Divine ends.

We met and talked and meditated  
We searched together earnest minded  
For a new and shining onward way  
And found it was within our sky.

One of us drew a strength unhesitant  
From a long life of sadhana,  
Filled with the sorrows and sufferings  
Filled with every vicissitude of the spirit.

And one of us drew inspiration  
From a life of self realisation  
Founded on humble discipleship  
To one of our great masters of the Spirit

We striking out on a new path,  
Of the high Comradeship of the mind,  
And if the deeper spirit of faith  
And the onward search of the grace of God.

That grace deeper than the ocean  
Within which we all live

And grow and ever upward move  
Never ceasing, never pausing even once.

Ours is a companionship of the spirit  
Sweeter than any other commonly known  
Richer in joys and higher yearning,  
Which constantly challenges us onward.

We shall uphold each other  
Whatever happens now or after  
As we tread firmly and joyously  
The hard and long path leading Godward.

## Prophecy

Spread Oh! your noble wings  
Comrade of my own Questing spirit,  
And wing your way ever upward  
Into the external firmament of the soul.

You are an eagle, none should confine  
In the nest however golden of daily life  
The life of joys and sorrow that pass  
Like shadows over our minds.

The nest of life does enshrine  
Some priceless values of our throbbing hearts  
But the infinite sky above, around,  
Holds greater challenges to our innermost souls.

We shall together nest sometimes  
But never our wings shall we unfold  
From the little joys of our nest  
Into the great open sky shall we leap.

Together into the search for the eternal  
Into the infinite sky of self-realisation  
We shall fly ever upward  
Never resting, never drooping to the earth.

But you are the eagle that must  
Your wings spread wide  
And plunge into the infinite sky  
For you to lead and to all follow.

Let none hold you down  
Let no thought weaken you  
Let no attachment fetter you  
Let your wings find their way.

Some great destiny awaits you  
Swing towards it and not away from it,  
Trust thyself with courage  
And trust God with faith unfalling.



## Be Not Afraid

Courage heart, do not falter,  
Keep the heart pure and unsullied,  
And the mind clear like the sky  
And the will strong as steel.

Look the world in the face,  
Throw no blame on those  
Who oft trade in malice;  
Leave them to a just God.

Shrink not from the world's gaze,  
Let them look their fill,  
Retreat not before ugly minds,  
Lift your own mind sky high.

There is no freedom without courage  
No happiness without risks  
No growth minus constant striving  
No salvation sans climbing hard and high.

Be good without pretensions,  
Be calm against slander;  
Surrender no right to any  
Person or force however strong.

Draw your own strength  
From within your self,  
Put your faith in God.  
And keep your mind untrammelled.

Firm and pure, fear not any shadows  
Clear in mind look ahead,  
There is much good in the world  
Build on it your inner mansion.

Keep alive the noble comradeship,  
Do not let your companion fall behind  
Let your moral strength sustain  
The sweet comrade of your spirit.

## You Went Off In A Flash

The Bus came in a moment to meet you,  
And you sprang in and vanished at once,  
A cloud of dust struck me in the face  
As the driver gathered speed and sped on.

One minute you were with me  
In another you were not with me  
Your seat in the car by me  
Was empty as sometimes before.

I drove home into the empty rooms  
Everything was in place, books and flowers  
Cups and saucers shone on the shelves  
And the play was the same of the cat and kittens

The sun streamed in through the windows  
And the mountain air came in through the doors  
The big lemons hung low on the branches  
And in the garden there was the same green grass.

I wanted to be brave and unconcerned  
I took a book and turned the pages  
It was a false drama played  
For my mind towards you continually turned.

As your bus raced forward to your home  
Did such thoughts assail your mind too?  
Sure I am your mind fluttered like mine  
And you were caught in similar thoughts also.

It was good I heard your voice  
On the phone some minutes before.  
It came like the cooling wind  
From the green slopes of Sirumalai mound.

And just now my cat come to me  
Purred for a moment and climbed  
On my lap and looked into my face  
And the kittens sprang on the bed.

My dog started barking  
For a share in this family gathering  
I had to go to it and pat its head  
Before it lay down again on its own bed.

I took another book to read  
Its contents caught my mind  
A passage said "I and You" are one  
It was the identity of life with God.

What can bind life and God together  
Except the bond of purest love?  
If it can bind me to the Divine  
Our own pure love too can bind us ever.

So you can go in a bus in a flash  
And the bus can throw up a cloud of dust  
But the same bus can bring you back  
And I shall not mind the dust then.

Life is full of comings and goings  
Let us welcome every coming  
And know all goings lead to comings  
And no coming is or can be everlasting.

Cheer you then my going Comrade  
Your next will be "Coming" soon  
I will not anticipate your going  
Let it come when it must.

## **I Am Troubled**

I am troubled now in my mind,  
I see no remedy as I look around  
The will-o-the-wisps of hopes and dreams  
Flutter and beckon but vanish.

Time does not stop for a moment,  
It moves unhurried and relentless  
Its dead leaves are scattered behind  
And those of the new spring do no show yet.

The senses and limbs grow old,  
The mind alone remains young  
And far beneath, the soul stands guard,  
And yet we move onward to the inevitable end.

We play with life with time  
We play our ducks and drakes  
Time never uncoils backwards  
Nor does it for a moment pause.

Hold on with your strength  
To the morning chariot of life  
And is added to the eternal store  
Of all that has been in the past.

That store never opens to give,  
It opens only to receive  
What all you dream and hope  
Are caught and preserved everlastingly.

Let us play not with cruel time,  
For time is the final ocean  
Into which our lives flow  
Like the rivers into the ocean.

Nature has no heart within  
It has just its inherent direction  
We are not consulted as it moves  
Unceasingly to its own pre-ordained goals.

Have we the vision splendid  
The charted paths through times ahead,  
The will to trek firmly onward  
And the faith we shall succeed.

We must therefore take our lives  
Into our own hands firm and free,  
We must not flutter or hesitate.

## The Days Pass

The days come and go unconcerned  
They ask no questions nor answer any  
The days pass one after the other  
And before we know we grow older.

The days are without any substance  
For nothing happens worth the name  
No smiles light the lamp of daily life  
No voice rings the bells of joy or love.

The days now move on feet of mud and clay  
And I keep on remembering how once  
They ran like the nimble feet within the fence  
Filling my heart with throbbing joy.

I wake in the early cold of morning  
With no anticipation of happiness,  
No hope of seeing your sweet smiles  
Or hearing you voice singing a song.

I return to my loneliness at sunset  
After a day's strenuous work  
With only my dear dog and pretty cat  
To gambol and greet me in the falling dusk.

I am not sore with you my comrade,  
I know where you are and why  
You are toiling too in your own way  
To clear the thorny path to my open gate.

I shall wait for your coming  
As long as you need me wait;  
My longing for you I know  
Is just the same as yours for me.

And yet and yet, it is so hard  
To wait so long as the days pass,  
The days that move on feet of clay  
On the long road from you to me.

But long or short, this road will end  
This waiting and watching will not more be,  
And our twin souls shall leap to meet  
In a divine glow that never shall fade.

## Hopes & faith

I woke up from the deep sleep.  
It certainly was past midnight,  
My pretty cat lay curled at my feet  
And silence stood heavy beside my cot.

I did not know why I awake,  
No dream had startled me  
Nor as I found did nay sharp noise,  
On my sleeping ears suddenly smite.

I just awoke quietly and lay  
Wondering whose voice had called  
I heard no voice nor any sound  
The night was still and dark without

I closed my eyes once again,  
And slipped gently back into sleep  
I thought something soft as a feather  
Touches my eye-lids and brow.

I slept on unknowing and unawaken  
And then I heard a distant voice  
Come close and whisper in my ear  
The name by which you call me ever.

In my slumber I saw a face  
I knew and loved so well  
It came so very near my face  
And then vanished like a gleam.

A warmth enfolded my heart  
A peace spread through my mind  
A faint light shone above my head  
This came I thought from too lovely eyes.

All these in a dream as I slept  
And I clung to it with all my might  
Lest I sh'd forget when I awoke again  
As I knew I would very soon

Just then my cat gave a cry  
And sprang from my side  
I awoke with a quick move  
And my senses opened like a lily.

Memory fought back the waves  
Of oblivion lashing on my mind  
I held on to every bit of the visions  
My spirit in my dream did behold

I could not salvage all the beauty  
That had blossomed in my dream  
Nor all the sweetness it brought  
Into the deep caverns of my mind.

But enough I still retain  
Of all I held and lost  
To nourish my hopes and my faith  
That we live not in vain.

## **I Am Here And You Are Not**

I am here and you are not,  
Nothing new or strange I know,  
And yet today I am hurt somehow  
We are not here together here tonight.

There is green grass and fragrant flowers  
And many of fine tree with foliage thick  
And the chain of glittering lights  
On sheets of water cast their silver glow.

I stand on the terrace alone  
And watch the young night  
Throb with shifting shadows  
And whisper its silent secrets.

Boys and girls pass below  
Filling the air with their laughter  
And birds come twittering to rest  
Among the waving branches around.

For away rise the temple towers,  
And there comes the sound of bells  
From the holy shrine of Nataraja  
As worshippers raise their holy chants.

But I am lonely in the midst  
Of all this pulsing life tonight;  
Neither nature nor man is company  
With my Comrade-disciple far away.

When will such loneliness end  
This hunger for a face and a hand  
This longing to hear a voice  
More music than any music in the world.

Nothing is joy unshared  
Nothing is happiness alone endured  
No beauty nor truth is real  
Except in the ruby cup of our twin souls.

And yet what folly is this my heart?  
Why weep for what cannot be yet,  
For this is not, so easily caught and kept  
In our many threaded lives lives apart?

Nothing really priceless is realised  
Without some tearful price to pay  
It matters little who it is what must pay  
Nor who must receive in the end.

## Two Miracles

Miracles! I had all along rejected them,  
Nay, scoffed at that very idea  
Had always laughed them to scorn  
And turned deaf years to their claim.

But stranger still, I did accept  
The whole of Nature and life  
As miracles without a doubt,  
Every blade of grass and speck of dust.

The morning sun, the evening moon  
And every star in the firmament  
Every flower that in beauty blow  
Every bird winging in the sky above.

The restless waves of the sea,  
The surling woods of hills;  
The shifting colours of the clouds  
Were all miracles to my mind.

What then did I reject?  
The miracles of saints and gods.  
And of goddesses in nooks and shrines  
And of saints with long hair on their heads.

Firmly rooted in the philosophic concept  
Of course and effect governing life  
I was firmly of the view  
Miracles were just figments of faith.

I hardly knew in my own mind  
What then I was bargaining for,  
Something was waiting round the corner,  
To pluck the feathers of my arrogance.

In a little shrine of my own making  
Behind silken vells of green  
There sit the radiant portrait  
Of Ambika, my goddess of compassion.

How Ambika stepped into my soul  
And was enshrined within it  
Is itself a miracle in my life  
Wrought by a love, pure and holy.

The more I kept Ambika in my soul  
The wider opened the eyes of my spirit  
And without even my knowing it  
A faith was born and it grew.

I was disturbed in spirit  
That faith was pushing back  
Reason which for long had held  
Such undisputed sway over my mind.



And then Sprang a Situation  
Pleasant and dangerous in the extreme  
Sweet and poisonous to my life  
If my eyes I closed and went in.

I had earlier prayed to Ambika  
To guide my life onward and upward  
To take my soul in Her sacred hands.  
And press on it the signet of her mercy.

As the danger steadily drew near  
Ambika turned her swift and angry look  
At the approaching face of evil  
And lo, it melted away in flash.

The situation broke visibly down,  
Light filled my shaken mind  
The darkness dissolved like mist  
And once more I breathed free again.

My usual sceptic mind awoke in wonder  
At what was so certain and clear  
That some hand had struck away  
The sharp thrust of fateful dagger.

Yes, but some unseen hand it was,  
That intervened just in time  
To save me from a peril as vital  
As any my life had ever known.

I closed my eyes in prayer  
And knew deep within my mind,  
That no other hands but Ambika's  
Could have struck the redemptive blow.

But this was not all that befell  
Something far more startling  
Struck the second blow at my conceit  
That reason cancelled every miracle.

Sitting in Yogic peace before Ambika  
And seeking with all my soul her mercy  
I besought in all true humility  
Your cherished presence reach me once more.

To sit by my side in my worship  
To bend our heads together in prayer  
To take Ambika's name with united hearts  
And be drowned in Her holy compassion.

I sought this gift from thee, oh mother  
I called out for this gift of grace  
And knew without any doubt  
That all things are possible with Her.

And then the gleam of another miracle  
Lit up my life with a joy so strange  
That the lamp of faith shone  
Beyond the frontiers of all my reason.

For before the sun set that day  
You came with a smile so radiant  
And when I took you by the hand  
I knew it was not just a dream

You came in flesh and blood  
In utter loveliness of spirit.  
I heard your spoken word  
And knew again it was no dream.

You and I sat together in prayer  
You and I bent our heads together  
And our souls soared upward  
To where rested the lotus feet of Ambika.

This double miracle has shown  
Beyond every shadow of doubt  
That all things are possible with God.  
As we seek His grace in Truth and in Spirit.

## It Is A Dull Day

There are bright days and dull days,  
Bright sunshine and the sky a deep blue,  
Birds twittering and flowers aflame,  
And lambs leaping among their mothers

Suddenly a day can come with nothing  
To cheer our minds and bring  
Sullen clouds and chill winds  
And sad thoughts filling our minds

Let us not react in ordinary ways  
To these lights and shadows of our days  
Let us cheat up when the sky is dark  
And not be swept away by any the gliffer of the track

Nature and life are intertwined  
Nature is not always wise  
Nor life without slippery sand  
Let us face both with unfailing courage.

To day is a dull day nevertheless  
The senses are not vibrant  
And the chilled mind mirthless  
All life remains dark and silent

I search all around me  
And seek also deep within  
But nowhere do I find a reason  
Nor does any wisdom raise a voice

Away then every weakness of mind  
Every shadowy thought or doubt  
Give a kick with all you might  
To dismal forebodings of every kind.

Pull up the dull day by the hair  
Splash a jug of water on its face  
And land a blow on its nose  
And sing a song in its ear.

And then the dull day will vanish  
And the sun will shine again  
The birds will twitter away  
And our minds will fill with joy.

## The Brook and the Ocean

Rain fell on the mountain,  
And clear water collected  
Inside a pellucid rock-basin,  
Then overflowed and ran down.

Down, down more rocks  
Through hard boulders shining brown,  
Through tough creepers and thorns,  
Through mud and sand and stones.

It spread here into a big pool  
And broke into streams later  
Curved and twisted and rose  
But always flowed on and on.

The brook directed itself,  
Gathered speed as it flowed,  
Was held up at a dam--suddenly,  
And rose in depth and width alike

It swelled and swelled  
Into a mighty rising tide  
And swept down the mountain side  
And flooding a low basin sped on.

It gathered leaves and blossoms  
It sang and danced onward  
Never stopping, never ceasing  
Onward, onward seeking something.

The Ocean was waiting  
With its deep blue waters,  
With its waves lashing in joy  
And opened its arms wide.

In joyous and gleeful welcome  
The depths of the ocean  
Trembled and heaved in ecstasy  
As the river came rushing into it.

They cought each other in their arms  
They kissed ten thousand times  
They danced together to a rhythm  
That resounded across the skies.

The Brook's journey was ended  
In the bosom of the ocean;  
The brook and ocean became one  
Under the great watching eyes of God.

## Two Autumn Leaves

The tree was heavily loaded  
With autumn leaves, yellow and ripe  
And the wind was strong and keen  
As it plucked the leaves constantly.

I watched two golden leaves  
Thick and lushy parting from a branch,  
The wind caught them quick  
And floated them high in the air.

They whirled and flew fast,  
Strangely together, round and up  
Close they flew and closer,  
And neither dropped to the dust.

Whither, oh whither are you drifting  
Torn leaves from the ancient tree,  
To which never again will you two  
Return to your place in the foliage.

The wind has caught you  
And launched you into Space,  
You must float and fly onward  
Or you will drop and be trodden upon

You have no choice now  
Save to soar onward  
And soaring together cling  
Like two eagles in the sky.

Yes, eagles in the sky  
Brave and calm and steady  
In your endless sweep  
Of the white space everlasting.

This is the price of love  
This is token of faith  
This is the lamp of hope  
And this is the throb of fulfilment.

## **The Centre and the Circumference**

The centre is firm and fixed  
Deep inside the luminous soul,  
But far away stretches the horizon  
Where the eye cannot reach.

In the centre are you beloved  
And to you am I chained  
With the gold chain of love  
And the string of our aspirations.

These chains are no fetters  
That downward pull our souls,  
They are pinions of ascent  
Upward to the throne of God.

But my eyes wish to measure  
The vast spaces within the circumference,  
But now can I measure it,  
When the circumference has no bounds.

I know and I hold the finite  
In the firm grip of my mind,  
But as I stretch out my hands  
The circumference ever eludes.

Is the finite untied to the infinite,  
Are they so apart and unlinked  
Are they not both within the leela of God  
The ever beginning and the ever ending?

One eternity, one divine continuity,  
In appearance alone are they two,  
In reality just one everlasting  
Radiance without a start of an end.

It is an unending cycle  
With no beginning and no end.  
In which you and I are particles  
Of the celestial light.

And so the finite centre  
And the infinite circumference  
Are linked and are one;  
There never is a break in between.

And so are you beloved  
My nest as well as my sky,  
And I the fluttering bird  
Nesting sometimes and flying sometimes.

And so my lord of beauty  
And lord of truth are one  
May we do drowned in Thee  
For now and for ever.

## **“Same But Not The Same”**

I drover along the same roads,  
The sky above was just the same,  
The same trees stood sentinel by the wayside,  
And cars and trucks and carts passed as before.

I stopped by the way side at spots  
So well remembered and cherished,  
Curious eyes of cycle riders,  
And lorry drivers peered as before.

I know everything was the same,  
Not a single thing had changed,  
Not even the barking of the dogs,  
Nor the cries of birds flying home.

And yet and yet nothing was the same,  
Some one was missing from the scene,  
A spirit was gone, only some outer shell remained;  
No light of eyes, no smile of lips.

No holy touch of the soft hands,  
No whisper of the gentle voice,  
No glimmer of the sacred vision,  
Of the saint and child in one.

My heart pulsed in silence,  
And deep was my loneliness of spirit,  
My mind fluttered like a bird  
Inside a dim and windowless cage.

The sun set in colours of beauty,  
The stars came our one by one,  
The wind went sighing by,  
The world become lightless.

And I drove back along the same roads,  
The sky and all the rest were the same,  
And yet and yet nothing really was the same,  
Except my sorrowing heart and wondering mind.

## The Heights and Depths

Oh ! Thou Divine Love,  
That creates and sustains  
Our uncertain earthly lives  
Through the tunnels of time.

Now, we so oft defeat Thy purpose,  
Throwing aside our duty  
To keep burning Thy lamp of love  
Mistaking our self-made chains for thine.

We have come from thy Ananda-Leela  
Which has filled all life  
From the least to the highest  
With beauties and hopes infinite.

There are many sins we commit  
But no sin is greater than this  
That we intently run against  
Thy laws of love and compassion.

Love Divine, compassion holy and true  
Brought me to the gates of paradise  
And even took me by the hand  
And led me into the inner Shrine.

I adored and worshipped in the shrine.  
Thy shrine-Oh! Lord of love  
But all at once cruel hands  
Put the lights out and closed the gates.

The hand and mind behind  
Which this fell deed accomplished,  
Claims to take Thy name Oh, Lord  
And to do your sacred will.

Alas, alas, my lord of compassion  
May Thy throne remain in violate  
However hard such hands smite  
Seeking its founts to destory.

Lord, Thy enemies are They  
Who deny you are love,  
You are compassion without end,  
They make your image hard and cruel.

In thy name they attack and torture  
In thy name they denounce and burn  
In thy name they betray and destory  
Ever the simple laws of our human hearts.

Save us from their clutches,  
They have no pity whatsoever,  
They pretend they are thy devotees  
While to themselves only are they devoted.

Their joy is in denials of life  
Their happiness is in self-torture  
And even more in the torture of  
Those who love and seek to serve them.

Save us oh! Lord from these saints,  
From those self-appointed guardians  
Of thy kingdom of love and light  
Whose hearts not even pity can move.

Let us live our lives simple  
In the unending flow of thy Grace.  
The Grace that encompasses  
Our limbs, hearts and souls.



## Step by Step, Oh God!

Step by step, step by step, step by step, Oh God !  
With no material resources but only  
faith in ourselves and in God.  
But God has appeared in unexpected  
expressions of grace.  
These days here were like a voyage of discovery.  
Discovery of young people willing to work in earnest.

I have discovered more of them here in three months  
than in forty years in Tamilnad.  
And one has come for salaries or material returns.  
Fine young people inspired by vision and faith.  
Young men and young women willing to take the  
plunge with me.

A courageous plunge into the unknown and the future.  
And what a fine captain of this team is working by my  
side!  
Mythili keeps the team together happy and hard work.

An old man, I am apt to snap of people  
But Mythili smiles and young people are glad to  
work with ther.

I remember how Gandhigram started its career  
A rich and noble woman stood by me and I by her.

Money had come and the first buildings had gone up.  
The Prime Minister of Bombay arrived to  
inaugurate Gandhigram.  
The whole of Chinnalapatti was awake and ready to  
help.  
There too was a fine group of young people.

But they knew they had a future on which to rely.  
Here no grant has come from anywhere  
No one has been offered a job.  
The inaugural function here was of faith and hope

It was a wonderful function from beginning to end.  
Swathi Tirunal Music Academy furnished a singer.  
His opening prayer song thrilled the big audience.  
Ambar Charka spinners added their beautiful voices.

There was on the platform a galaxy of the devotees  
of the Master.  
There was a sprinkling of friends from Tamilnad  
headed by Bhupathi Bikshu.  
Nagercoil sent a good quota  
The speech of the highest level come from  
Parivrajika Rajamma.

Our old but young Rajamma shaped into a  
Parivrajika by Vinobaji.  
She was the last speaker.  
The audience was by then somewhat tired and  
a little impatient.  
But as the Parivrajika spoke, gently and firmly  
the crowd woke up.

It was she who led in taking the pledge of the Shanti  
Sena, Beautifully worded and pin-pointed,  
it sounded like a Mantram.  
The pledge was drawn up by no less a person than  
Kainikkara.  
There was an original English version as in the case  
of the Gandhigram song.

Parivrajika read slowly and deliberately, word by word.  
It was like the opening of a gate into future.  
This was the first step, the first step,  
the first step, only, in the  
Journey of the many steps ahead in the coming time.

The room in the Madhavi Mandiram in which Gandhi  
lived for a day was remembered.  
The Education Minister unveiled a Brass plaque  
in remembrance.  
And so, step by step, step by step, Oh God!  
With no material resources but only our faith and courage.

A seed has been planted in rich soil.  
It will never die, can never die, must never die.  
Men and women may pass away but this seed never.  
It will sprout, put forth fresh leaves and flowers ever.

The Shanti Sena is the symbol of tomorrow.  
Armies and armaments will fade away as the symbols  
of yesterday  
Onward then soldiers of peace, of the Shanti Sena!  
On ward Comrades dedicated to Gandhian nonviolence!

The world shall not perish because of our inaction.  
The world shall live because we shall act fearlessly.  
The courage of nonviolence alone is courage  
worth the name.  
And so, step by step onward and onward Oh God!

## The Deep Smile of Compassion

I opened the green silken curtains  
Of my little shrine of Ambika  
And as usual touched Her lotus feet  
And looked into Her eyes reverently.

A tremour shock my body and mind  
As I saw emanating from Her divine eyes  
A golden gleam of benediction  
Penetrating the inner recess of my mind.

What a gleam it really was,  
The purest alloy of compassion and love  
For the devotee whose head touched  
The two blossoms of her pearly feet.

I do not know-how do I know  
Why today of all these days  
Her smile swept through me  
Like the magic ray of a golden hope!

Ambika, my beloved Goddess gracious,  
How did I become your devotee,  
Humble as the dust before thee  
My adoring lips on thy lotus feet?

Your portrait is inside my shrine  
But you are inside my soul  
I see your image in all things  
In every blade of grass and hills.

In every grain of sand  
In everything that fills the earth  
You are in the stars above  
And in every throb of my mind.

Thou art my joy and my hope,  
Thou art my deep longings,  
And every pulsing aspiration  
That beckons me ever onward.

All beauty and truth are in Thee.  
You are my ocean of compassion  
You are the highest peak  
The spirit wishes to climb

Gracious Queen of my soul  
Grant me from time to time  
The same golden flash of a smile  
Which today gave me the holy thrill

One smile on Thy Divine lips  
And very sorrow will vanish  
Like mist before the sun;  
Your smile will my life renew.

## The Moon Over The Sea

I went to look at the meeting,  
A crowd of a million waited on the sands  
Of the Marina, washed by the waves  
Of the Bengal ocean, deep blue and ever lashing.

I gaped at the vast and seething crowd,  
A veritable sea of human heads,  
It kept on heaving and swelling  
Like a tidal wave onward rolling.

Just a frail woman was speaking.  
Her words rang out clear and challenging,  
She was no common woman there by some chance  
But the symbol of our destiny and the leader of our land.

My heart beat its rythm in tune  
With the throb and surge of the mighty crowd,  
In the words she spoke I heard the echoes  
Of the revolution remaking my county and my people.

But suddenly the entire panorama vanished,  
Even the stirring voice faded away

My mind turned and took a sudden flight  
To a full moon coming in glory over the sea.

It really was the full moon of the month,  
Gentle and big and glowing over the sea,  
It stood for a moment like silent music  
Like the wordless beauty of a radiant face.

I felt so moved by what I saw,  
I swiftly walked away from the crowd,  
To a point where no voices reached me  
And I remained alone and unobserved.

Now my mind was my own once again,  
It lifted and flew to a distant scene  
When I had looked at this very moon,  
Only a short month ago that now was gone.

I was not alone then,  
I was in the sweet and holy company  
Of a child and saint in one,  
Who too had then looked at the rising moon.

This was the same full moon now  
We together saw a full month ago,  
Under the shadow of trees far away  
And yet why did my heart whisper a difference?

The external world has its rigid laws,  
And so are there the eternal laws  
Of the inner mind of man;  
We know much of one and little of the other.

But both tend towards the Divine,  
The outer and the inner are reconciled  
Without a strain in the vast horizon  
Of God's compassionate and constant grace.

## And Old Man On His Way

Courage, old man, falter not yet,  
There are more milestones to cover still  
Keep firm and steady on your feet  
As with effort you climb your last hill.

Do not look behind for a moment,  
Your past was bright and vibrant  
With many a vital thought and deed  
And you need entertain no regrets indeed.

This last venture on your hands,  
With time swiftly in flight  
And with undiscovered resources  
Can challenge your every effort.

But courage old man, falter not  
Even if it is a leap into the dark.  
Let faith sustain you and hope fail not  
As slowly and step by step your way you trek.

The light beckoning you onward.  
Is a mighty light that never will fail,  
Cling to it with all your will  
And put in it all your trust as you go forward

Your master's steps you will see  
As you march on the way he himself trod  
And this voice will call you onward  
Giving every moment his unfailing guidance

He did produce many beckoning lights  
Even in the darkness of seeming defects,  
He did light the lamps of hope  
Even when around him every hope had gone.

Let me light my little lamp  
From that beacon light of his spirit,  
And snatch the echo of hope undying  
From the voice the world has so oft heard.

I shall to spread his message strive  
As long as my life does last,  
And bear witness to his mighty spirit  
Whatever be the unpredictable sequence.

For success I do not ask nor pray,  
I seek only to walk on the thorny way  
He trod with bleeding feet on his own way,  
Till cruel bullets for ever put his life away.

## Stand Erect

Stand erect, Gandhi's torch bearer!  
Hold your head high before men  
You have walked along on his road  
With nothing but his love to guide you.

Some were there who lay in shadows.  
To trap you as you marched on,  
They would have crushed me  
Without mercy under their feet.

No one knows, no one utterly  
How, awake or asleep all the time  
I hold on to that Grace  
As the only anchor of my life.

After many years of toil  
For the poorest, the lowliest and the lost  
I returned home to find my place  
Among those I trusted most in life.

And found no welcome nor a smile,  
I found every door shut in my face.  
There was just tolerance enough  
Not to show me the door to quit.

I swallowed my poor pride  
I tried to argue and failed  
My words become dust to them  
And my humiliation they did not even notice.

I turned my mind to a new purpose  
Which was truly an old one,  
My hope and dream to build  
The first Village University of my land.

No one knew how I toiled again,  
Hard at work in the hours of day  
Wakeful in thought through many nights,  
Solving problems with patience and foresight.

And God gave me a companion  
Who understood the entire situation  
And gave me comfort and strength  
Not to bend before the storm.

The days passed and the months.  
I had the trust of many good companions,  
And secret derision of the few  
Who were always on their prowl.

Heart breaking delays intervened,  
Doubts were raised again to delay,  
Enemies in the Education Ministry and  
Enemies near home taunted and waited.

Also big minds came to the rescue,  
The Prime Minister making India today  
The Minister building the Education of the Nation  
And the University Commission guarding our credit.

And step by step the idea grew  
And took shape slowly, steadily,  
Till at last like a trumpet blow  
Came the glad news of victory.

I bowed my head before God  
Before the mercy of my father  
A man of truth and of faith  
I touched the feet of my aged mother.

Humbled in spirit I took the blow  
Of this victory with hardly a parallel  
Inspired in spirit I poured my soul  
Before the great Divine Grace.

## To Comrade

Comrade, have we not made our resolve  
And won far it high concurrence?  
Do you not know how I waited  
Not simply waited but watched and prayed?

For the true moment to come  
The moment to take a step forward unhesitant  
No one knows the pain of that waiting  
The ruddles were unsolvable once.

Time alone could show a way out  
And time alone did show a way out.  
The moment I saw that way  
I took my onward stride

And the riddle sorted itself out  
Quietly and firmly with everyone's consent  
What was far thus became near  
And the impossible suddenly assumed possibility

It is thus only that the grace of God  
Works in and through the lives of men  
Nothing worthwhile and excellent  
Comes without the pangs of birth  
Let us chant with Browning's Pipa  
'God is in heaven and all is well with world'.

## Dawning Year

The sun has set for the old year  
And the last night of the year has come  
We shall sleep on the lap of the old  
And awake in the arms of the new.

What tragedies have we not witnessed  
In the last twelve tragic months  
Floods have taken uncounted lives  
And drought devastated half the land.

The anger of Nature was duly matched  
By the anger of man throughout the land  
Not only the poor but even the affluent  
Have risen and shaken the country from end to end.

The floods washed away the lives of man and beast  
And the drought has wrought destruction,  
But our greatest loss in the old year  
Was of values cherished through the ages.

All codes of conduct and honour  
All values of culture and compassion  
Even the love of mother and children  
Have largely died with the dying year.



Alas for the millions of lives lost  
Alas for the loss of character and morals  
Alas for the vile destruction of all that  
Were built and cherished through the ages.

We have felt the shocks in our own lives,  
Evil did spread its net far and wide  
Even over our little lives  
As slander went dancing around.

Like ship-wrecked sailors  
On a desolate island  
We have lived our lives apart  
And dreamt our dreams of times to come.

In this vast ocean of change and strife  
We two have held together.  
Our hands and our hearts did not shrink  
And our voices never died down.

Strong and steadfast we have stood  
Weathering every storm that blew  
Hand in hand and heart by heart undeterred  
By the all-frantic forces of evil all around

Our armour was our selfless love  
And our weapons only those of truth  
And our refuge God's grace alone  
As so we stood erect and inviolate.

We looked towards the dawning year  
With no fear nor hate nor doubts any  
We have filled our hearts with the nectar  
That knows no defeat nor retreat.

## Let Us Not Wait Idly

It was then just a plot of dryland  
And lay adjacent to my own home  
Between us there was just a mountain stream  
Within no water at all except in heavy rains.

I saw a man and woman come and go on the land  
And scratching the earth almost with their fingers  
And then for weeks I forgot about it all  
Then I looked at the land once again

Several weeks had by then run their course  
But what a change green with millet and beans  
And wonder of wonders a small cottage of mud  
and thatched  
Stood in the view towards the foothills.

My mind was roused by what I saw  
And so I watched the goings on the land  
Steadily and steadily the cottage of mud and  
thatched grew

A couple of children played around the hut

And some lambs bleated and cocks crew  
As this little colony of a man and woman slowly grew

Every day more mud went to the making of the walls  
And more coconut leaves to complete the roof

The cold season arrived with its chill winds  
The man and the woman went about their tasks  
With no protection against the winds  
The man wore his loin cloth and the woman  
just a thin sari

The children played in the sun naked and free.  
Slowly and steadily the cottage became completed  
What was going on inside the hut  
I had no way of finding out  
I only knew that bare human hands

Had made a home on the brown earth  
And around the home the land was green with things  
to reep  
The lambs kept on their bleating  
And the cocks and the hens cackled and strutted around.

Mythili and I kept on wondering  
And we talked about what we saw  
We made a sudden and high resolve  
To go and meet the farmer and his family

And give them our greetings of love.  
Our land is full of such people  
Who scratch the earth with their nails and primitive tools.  
They are the self supporters

In a land full of exploiters and parasites  
They are the blood and the bone of our land  
Some day they will know their lot  
And the causes making their lot

And when they know, an explosion will come  
That day they and their law of life.  
If Gandhi wins, the explosion will be written in peace.  
If Lenin wins, it will be written in blood.

The land waits for its destiny  
But let us not wait idly  
Let us try to make Gandhi win  
Can we do so? Will we do so?  
On that answer hinges future.

## Lead kindly Light

Something has to happen for certain,  
For this is a stalemate of pain;  
It is no ordinary pain of life  
But the agony of two innocent souls

Caught in the cruel net of dark mailce  
Distilled by vile and culling minds  
They strike from the darkness of night  
And hidden among the long shadows.

There is a terrible criss-corss  
Of mean and shameful thinking  
And planning of much evil  
And the hidden whisperings of the wicked

And so something must happen,  
What can happen or how  
Or where te hand of God will fall  
Nor I or anyone else can know

This 'stand-still' is explosive,  
For deep within are the stirrings  
Of elemental spiritual forces  
That simmer and upward surge.

These struggle and turn and twist  
For the thunder of an on-coming fate  
No power of evil or hate  
Can withstand God's onslaught.

Let us hold our soul in peace  
For the sure coming of Divine grace  
Let us pray and be silent  
In firm God-will act.

Something has to happen soon  
For this cruel stalemate of pain  
Will break our souls in twain  
For no evil we have ever done.

Innocence is a mighty force  
Like the atom it holds a power  
Which can form a chain  
Leading on to redemption undreamt.



I have had many sincere and loyal men working with me during my long life. Shri. G. Ramachandran was one of the most if not the most sincere and whole hearted of them all. This whole heartedness is in his very nature.

**C. RAJAGOPALACHARI**

*(Statesman and first Indian Governor General)*

Printing is aided by :  
The Office of the Commissioner  
For Khadi & Village Industries  
Mumbai  
Through State Office, Kerala