

The student participants and staff facilitators at the Creative Writing Workshop 2001 sincerely thank visiting writer, Ms. Githa Hariharan, for conducting an enriching workshop.

# Call me there

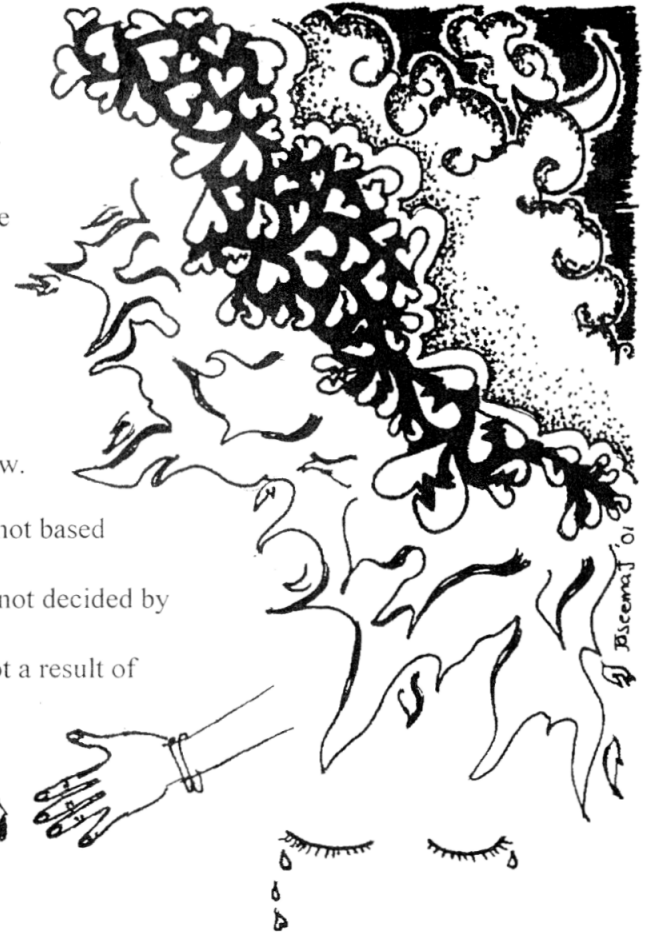
Call me there, for its over now  
Call me there because I want you now  
It's over and done  
It's the end, and now we should be one  
But only if you call me there.  
I know I was reluctant  
But that's the past now  
Just call me there don't ask me how  
Don't question, don't jeer  
Don't mock don't cheer  
Just call me there because it's over now.

I convince myself that my survival is not based  
On your existence in my life  
I say to myself that my self-esteem is not decided by  
What you think of me  
I cry out loud that my decisions are not a result of  
Your affirmations  
I beg to differ that there is a me  
Without you.....  
But I fail.

Please understand that  
My denial and your will  
Your will and my refusal  
My refusal and your anger  
Your anger and my pain  
My pain and your uncertainty  
Your uncertainty and my guilt  
My guilt and your haven  
Your haven and my lie  
My lie and your happiness  
Your happiness and my isolation  
My isolation and your goal  
Your goal and my violation  
My violation any your realization  
Your realization and my Truth.

Hold me close  
And tell me that things will change  
I want to but I can't accept the  
possibility of a change.  
But you are my inspiration,  
Tell me and I'll believe anything  
If I could revere you, I would  
But it would be a blasphemous religion  
The corrupted religion of passion  
Vile passion.

Shweta Modi



## Untitled

I approached him,  
trepidation in my step,  
he stayed wary,  
kept an eye on me,  
but I ignored it,  
observing him,  
naked,  
cold and wet,  
(it was raining)  
shivering and soaked  
to the bone  
I asked him  
if he was alright  
no replay  
I repeated the question  
still no answer  
he eyed me questioningly  
as I took off my trenchcoat  
and handed it to him  
He didn't take it  
so I draped it over him  
watched him sigh shudder  
collapse with exhaustion  
no complaints emanated  
so I walked on  
could've sworn I heard  
expressions of pleasure  
warmth and contentness  
as he at first became drowsy  
then fell asleep  
like a good dog should...

*Alexandre da Costa*



## The Mist

The mist moistens the window pane  
And covers the hills with grace  
My finger traces your name in the glass  
My thoughts turn to you and stay  
If there was some way  
I could interpret my love  
I would show you the mist...

*Jemimah Marak*

## Dream

Fly a kite  
a dream patterned on string tight  
the winds; cherubin stringing thought ephemeral

*Sandhya Mignon Moraes*



## The Thornbush

Deep in a forest somewhere nature gave birth to an ugly little thornbush. As she grew the more attractive plants ridiculed her ugliness and labelled her useless. They boasted of bearing fruit, keeping the soil in place or giving creatures homes and humans medicine. As the thornbush grew she accepted and even worse began to feel bad. A fox came crashing through pursued by hunting dogs. It desperately looked around for aid. The fruit tress could not help, the grass was too short to hide in and the tree with medicinal bark was impossible to climb. Then the fox saw the thornbush and pleaded for help. The thornbush opened her branches to him. With the fox surrounded by prickly branches, the hunting dogs gave up and eventually left the area. After making sure the dogs were gone, the thornbush opened her branches. The fox slipped out and profusely thanked the thornbush. Then it left leaving the thornbush to her thoughts. The thornbush smiled. For now she had realised she was not useless. She was beautiful in her own way.

*Sandhya Mignon Moraes*



## Scar of love

the scar of love is upon us  
people breathing, talking and  
no one listening  
that act of love is graver  
now and forever cameras and mirrors  
bring everything nearer  
deaf tones ringing ever clear  
in the mind of memory the act of touch is lost to us  
digital laughs and brushes and swipes of undecided hands  
the sigh of love is beneath us  
now that time has etched reflection less  
pretentiousness (reigns freely in poetry, I see)  
the life of love is around us  
stealing into our eyes and breathing openly for all to see  
the scar of love is upon us  
bleeding us to tears.

*Fardeen Chowdhury*

## A Sting in the Rain

As Salim trudged through the slushy streets of Mumbai he realized how much he hated the rain. Not wanting to make his new shoes dirty he cautiously jumped over the heaps of cowdung and garbage. He cursed his driver passionately for not showing up. Salim decided to take the short cut home. The road was bordered by one of Mumbai's worst sums. Salim bent down to roll his pants up. As he looked up something caught his eye. It was a piece of paper with Gandhi's smiling face on it, a soggy 500 rupee note. His mind began to wander... This could be useful Should he buy another cricket bat with it or take a taxi home... He scurried towards the note when he noticed a tiny shadow loom ahead of him. A fragile little girl with a tattered dress stood in front. She had no shoes on and the tiny plastic bag on her head barely protected her from the stinging rain drops. As both looked at each other their conflicting thoughts came crowding into their minds. He knew that she needed the money more and she, that he had seen it first, he had right to it. Both looked on as slight monsoon breeze lifted the note into the air.

*Suganya Rajan*

*Kavithalaya 2001*

4

## Alternative Lifestyle?

For one lifetime, I'd like to be a ballpoint pen.  
In those lifetimes they seem to exchange hands  
numerous times and go on what must be epic  
journeys perhaps seeing the whole world, others  
not being so lucky (by being returned to their  
original owners perhaps) only seeing a little or  
meeting their end in the back pocket of an  
unsuspecting student. Perhaps those that see much  
should learn to write.

## Fidelista

January 1st, 1959  
That was the day  
When the knights  
Came from the jungle  
And freed the people  
In the beginning  
There were four  
That tiny haven  
Protected by  
The living two  
For the last forty years  
But now what?  
Our last symbol  
Of true rebellion  
Dies and along  
Goes the world  
  
Without a care  
  
For a bad thing?  
Survival no longer matters  
Rest in peace

*Kavithalaya 2001*

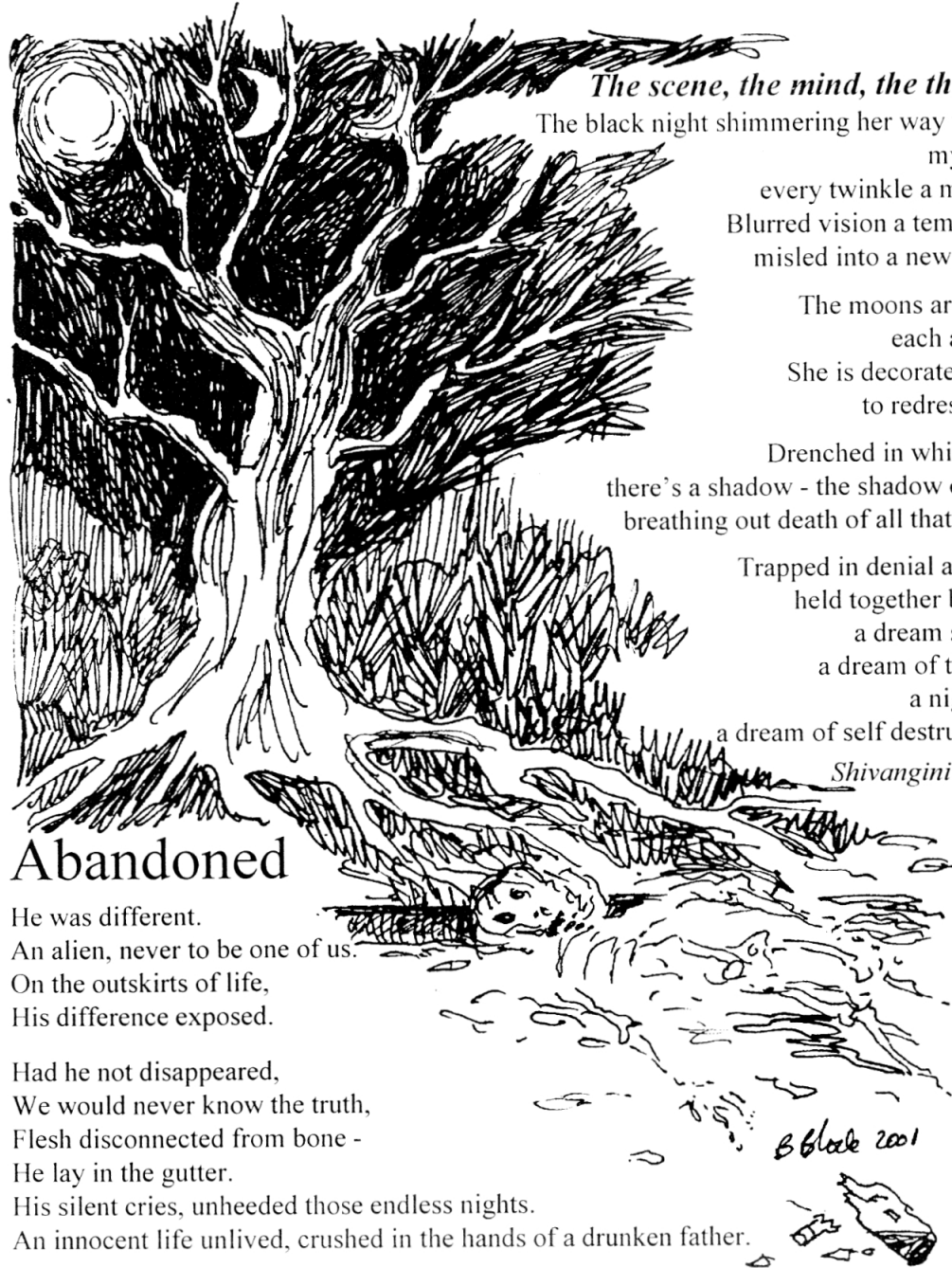
## Rebellion

What is freedom without it?  
Can equality be anything  
without it?  
Our necessity is this  
necessity  
Free yourself from those  
chains  
And make life worth living  
But hate the world as a  
humanitarian  
And fight the oppressor for  
the oppressed  
Until the victory always

*Jai K.*

5





## Abandoned

He was different.  
An alien, never to be one of us.  
On the outskirts of life,  
His difference exposed.

Had he not disappeared,  
We would never know the truth,  
Flesh disconnected from bone -  
He lay in the gutter.  
His silent cries, unheeded those endless nights.  
An innocent life unlived, crushed in the hands of a drunken father.

*Najia Nahid Luqman.*

*Kavithalaya 2001*

## *The scene, the mind, the thought.*

The black night shimmering her way through  
my being,  
every twinkle a memory,  
Blurred vision a temptation,  
misled into a new beauty.

The moons are many,  
each a better;  
She is decorated tonite  
to redress a life.

Drenched in white hope,  
there's a shadow - the shadow of a tree  
breathing out death of all that's alive.

Trapped in denial and truth  
held together by walls  
a dream surfaces  
a dream of the heart  
a nightmare  
a dream of self destruction ...

*Shivangini Tandon*

## Friend

Dearest Friend,

I thank you,  
for yesterday, today and the coming tomorrow  
for I knew that you are here.  
Through days of pondering I realise that I love you.  
I love you because my soul spoke and you heard, my heart cried  
and you knew of my pain and long lasting sorrow.  
She came and I was lost.  
In your happiness and my sorrow.  
I try in vain now failed yet again.  
Should I forget and let you go.

or

Can I be the one you loved,  
A friend you knew a long time ago...

*Najia Nahid Luqman*

## On a soldier's martyr

The dark clouds of faith hung above them  
They had lost the family gem.  
No-one to earn, no one to wait for,  
"Laxmi" had walked out of their door.

Fighting through the shower of bullets,  
Yet paid the enemy their debt  
He gave up his life for the country,  
Only asking for a little care for his family.

Her heart skipped a beat for the worst feared had come true,  
Shivering, she lifted the shroud and recognised the warm face  
with whome she had spent moments few,

She broke her bangles and rubbed off the "sindoor",  
Her mangalasutra was flung out of the door.  
Secretly, she did swear at dusk,  
Her children would complete their father's task.

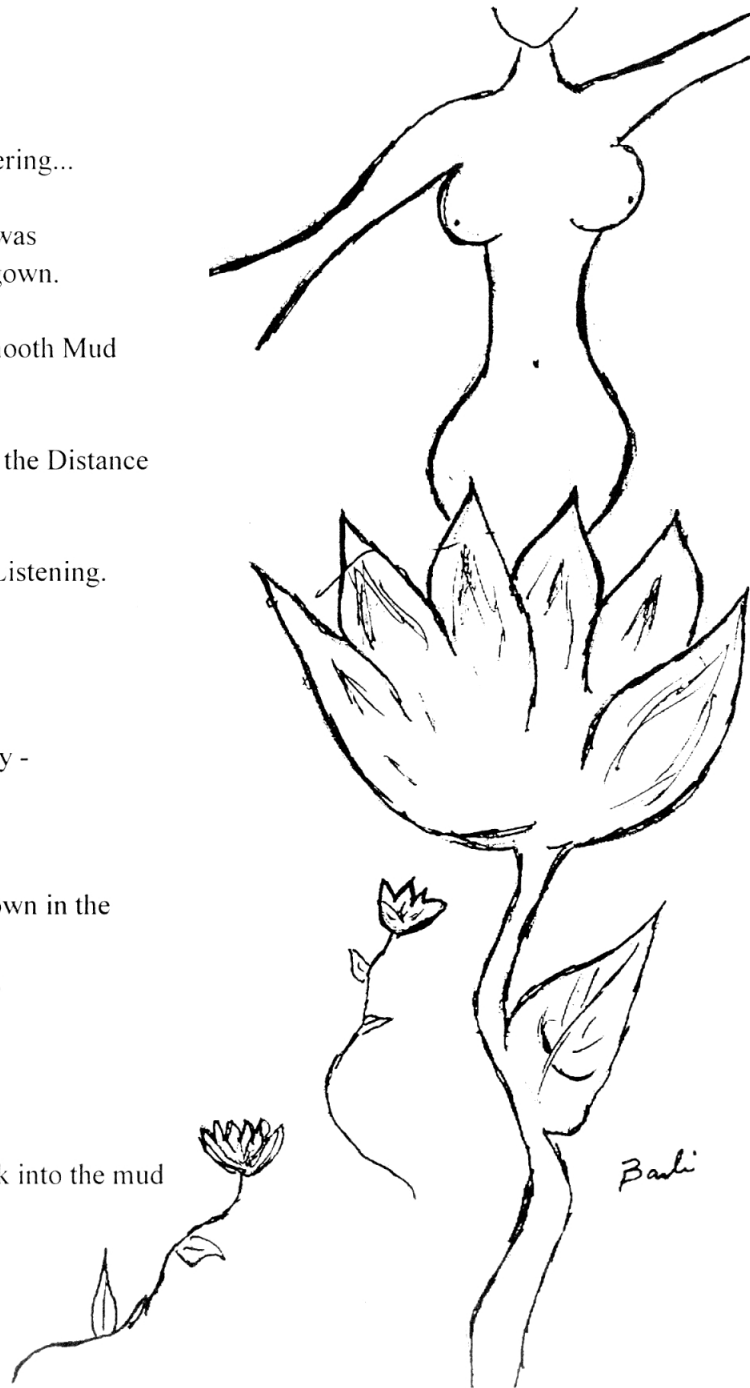
*Sneh Koticha*

*Kavithalaya 2001*

## (She)

Standing, un-steadily  
- or not standing at all, wavering...  
Silently She stood  
Robed in smooth Mud that was  
her very own black Velvet gown.  
Congealed charcoal.  
The voice echoed off the smooth Mud  
Unheard - echoing -  
Yet getting ever Quieter  
like that Scream for Help in the Distance  
one Thinks one hears  
(always getting quieter)  
Scream on, child, no one's Listening.  
Rain poured, thunder struck  
She was  
thunder Struck.  
Slick Slime Slid off  
She stood in her naked Glory -  
glory unnoticed except by  
the smooth Mud.  
No one noticed -  
the Queen who Lost her Crown in the  
Mud.  
She stood there un-Steadily;  
wavering.  
Forever unforgiven.  
  
That lotus in the Mud.  
  
Another crumpled petal sank into the mud

*Romita Rupani*



## The Forsaken Child

"Ding ... dong !!!"

My mom answered the door and returned with a packet of milk. She rushed into the kitchen, taking a quick glance at me. Dad too went into the kitchen to help mom. I saw mom walking around in a hurry. After sometime, they had their breakfast. While dad took care of his last minute details, mom bathed me, fed me and dressed me up. Within minutes we were flying on our two-wheeler. Our destination was the cretche, where I was to be left. Kissing me my mom handed me to the aaya, whome I did not like, and so I screamed.

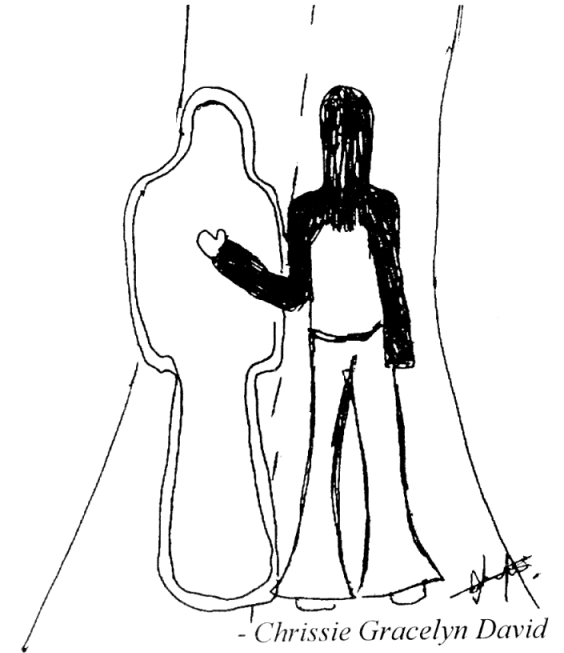
As usual, I was put in the cradle and never bothered about. To me, the cretche was hell on earth. When I wet my dress, it wasn't changed. I wasn't fed when I was hungry. Exhausted, I fell asleep. As soon as I woke up, the aaya stuffed some mushy food down my throat. After this, I was ignored again. Horrified, I watched the little insects moving by my pillow. Though I longed for a loving caress, there was none. So I slept again.

I woke up at evening. The aaya picked me up, washed me, powdered me and dressed me. Soon my mom and dad arrived. We reached home and the routine recommenced. I played with my toys in the cradle for a little while, was fed again. That's all for the day, tomorrow will be the same I thought, as I fell asleep.

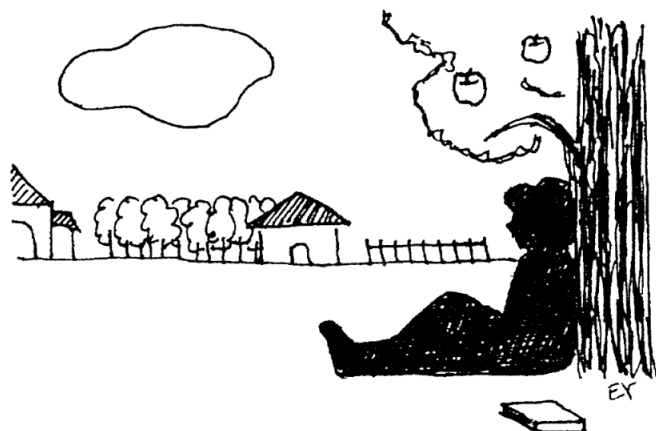
I woke up all of a sudden, hearing the door-bell. It was the milkman. While returning with the milk packet, I checked on my little boy, sleeping peacefully in his cradle.

## My Invisible Friend

Oh! My unseen friend  
I love you.  
You kiss my cheek and pass away  
Expecting nothing from me in return.  
Sometimes I hear you call my name  
But I can never find where you are!  
You soothe my pain and make me fresh;  
When I sleep, you make me dream!  
When you are gentle and mild  
You make boughs sway and leaves rustle,  
Which I love to watch!  
But when you are wild and cruel,  
You make trees uproot and kill living beings,  
And you make me hate you in your ire.  
So gentle 'Breeze', my unseen friend  
Blow kindly and soft,  
And so I will love you forever.



- Chrissie Gracelyn David



## Second Childhood

Outside the hospital appeared  
A fragile shadow.  
Against the resplendent rays of the sun  
Walked the withered woman  
Dolefully along the pavement,  
Searching for a sympathetic face  
To show her the direction.  
She asked a halls guard.  
He upbraided her, for  
She was disturbing the pedagogical delegates  
And their seminar on "The Agonies of the Old".

*S. Christina Rebecca*

## Observations

1) The apple fell  
On Newton's head.  
A single bump for a man.  
One big bump for studentkind.

2) The little frog jumped  
into the pond.  
A million waves  
Jumped out.

3) Discovery!!  
Dark brown earth,  
Bitter, brown chocolate,  
Milky brown coffee,  
Old tan shoes,  
Mottled, brown papers,  
Crackly brown leaves,  
Earth brown terracotta,  
Polished dark ebony,

Do not become the least bit paler,  
Even if you apply Fair and Lovely.

*D.A.*

## Try

Raju stood in front of the coconut tree, bowed his head reverently and stretched out his lean arms. If he had been a man he would have rolled his sleeves up. He saw the villagers cheering for him. At least today he was their sole attraction.

"Will this boy of seven climb a tree and take the bird's nest as his reward?" wondered the crowd. Raju's father was one among them. The swarming crowd twitched its face sometimes, to show its fear that Raju might not win. But he stretched out his hands like a boxer ready to strike down his opponent.

Raju's eyes fell upon the nest and he thought "I will get those little birds which are like me, trying to fly". He thought it would be wonderful to teach the cute, naughty creatures to fly out of their nests. The people around clapped their hands. It was like the drum beat of a regular march. He climbed in rhythmic movements to the clapping. His heart was in an adventurous buzz. He felt elevated, though he was just a few inches above the ground.

He slipped.

Lying flat on his back he saw a young bird perched upon the edge of the nest fluttering its wings, and not yet able to take its flight. The father bird watched its attempts. Raju stretched his head and said to this father, "I will try again".

*C. JOEL GNANADOSS TIMOTHY*

## Life

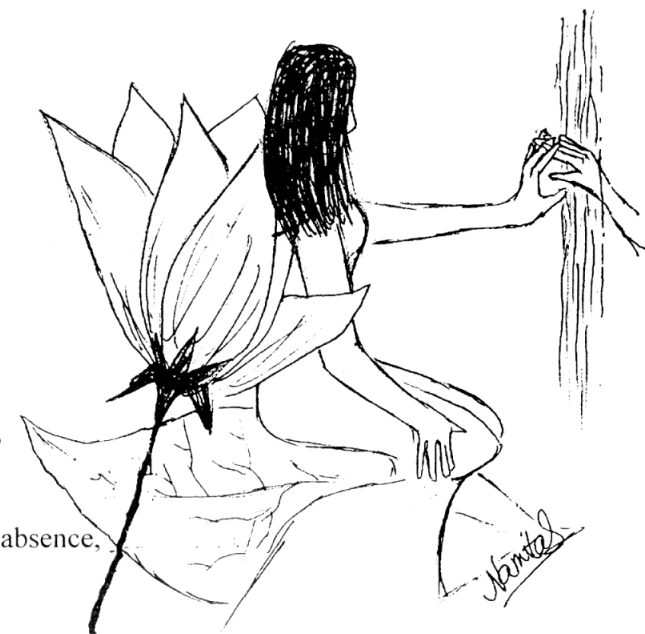
You rain in Winter.  
You scorch in Summer.  
You storm in Autumn  
But still, you do not deny Spring.  
Please tell me  
Who you are? What you are?

*S. PARVATHA VARTHINI*

## Friend

You are a mother to this crying child,  
As a first budding flower is to a tree,  
So is your presence to me,  
But you accompany me even in your absence,  
Yes friend, you are always in me.

*C. CANDACE J. GRACEBA*



# My Little Dead Leaf

Trees!

Give me a leaf  
- a dead leaf

I want to sit over it  
And fly with the wind  
Far away from people  
I will fly.

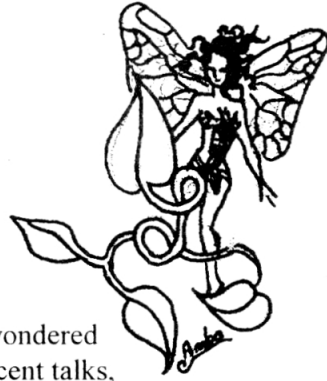
Oh, leaf with you I'll fly  
Fly! Fly! Fly!  
Leaving behind  
The scenes of the past  
I'll fly.

I'll reach a flowery land  
Where flowers never fade.  
I'll reach a land of spring  
Where winter never comes,  
I'll reach a land of children  
Where children never grow,  
I'll reach the land of God  
Where happiness remains forever.  
There in that land my dead leaf  
Will become my wings.

I'll fly forever there  
And crown the trees with flowers  
For the little dead leaf  
They've given.  
My little dead leaf  
- now my lovely wings,  
I'll fly, fly - fly.

## Childhood

You might have seen her  
That sweet little girl  
She is so lovely, so cute.



You might have wondered  
At her innocent talks,  
You might have enjoyed  
Her little mischiefs.  
You might have seen her  
That sweet little girl  
She is so pure, so innocent.  
You might have praised  
Her loving prayers,  
You might have felt happy  
In her loving embraces and kisses.

You might have seen her  
That sweet little girl,  
But where is she now?  
Why has her sweet smile  
Changed into a fixed grin?  
Why have those evil thoughts  
Of lust, anger and pride  
Entered into her heart?

I am searching for that  
Sweet little girl  
But I couldn't find her again.  
I am longing to see her.  
I am searching for her  
... in me  
But I couldn't see her again  
... I couldn't

C. CANDACE J. GRACEBA

# Villanelle

What is the Sun and Moon to me?  
Hollow eyes that wander around  
With nothing above but sky to see.

Does this World house us comfortably?  
Such a place is yet to be found.  
What is the Sun and Moon to me?

How so, God, can such evil be?  
Woe, the hunger of man unbound  
With nothing above but sky to see.

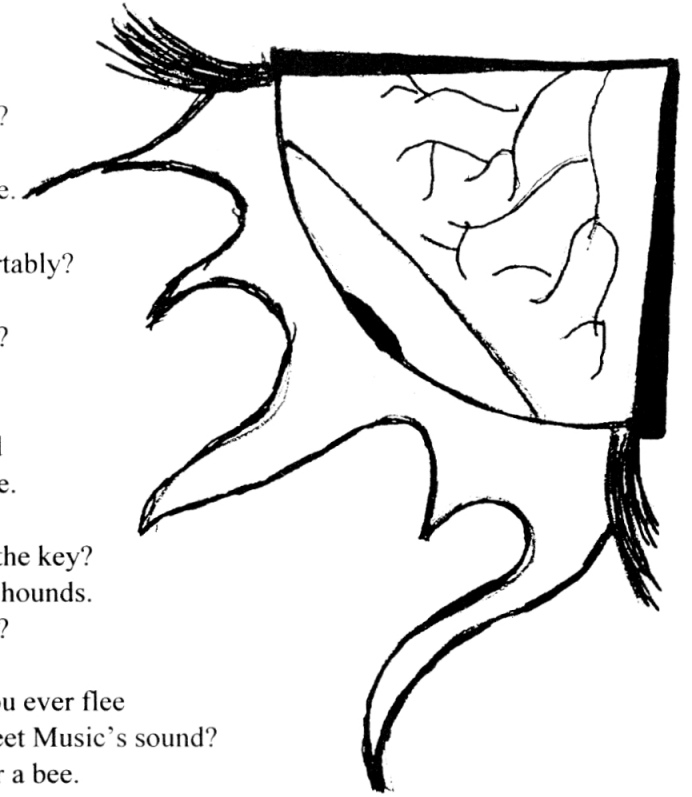
For the door of heaven, who has the key?  
The gates are guarded by hungry hounds.  
What is the Sun and Moon to me?

From this loathsome earth can you ever flee  
To the place which preserves sweet Music's sound?  
You can't, unless you're a bird or a bee.

Where shall I move, if I'm to be free?  
Don't they say that the world is round?  
What is the Sun and Moon to me  
With nothing above but sky to see?

ALLEN D. SAMUEL R.

**Editor's Note :** With a slight variation in the fifth stanza, this poem closely follows the French poetic form of the "Villanelle" : five three-lined stanzas followed by a final quatrain; only two rhymes (the second lines in each stanza rhyming; the first and last line of stanza one recurring alternately as the last line of each following stanza, and occurring together at the end). Of its uses in English Poetry, the best known perhaps is Dylan Thomas's, "Do not go gentle into that good night".



# Urgent Mail

*Dear Mr. God,*

This is to remind You  
Of what You already know.  
Of red eyes, tears and shaky knees  
That force in through the door.  
I request a lock and key  
And a mop to clean to floor.

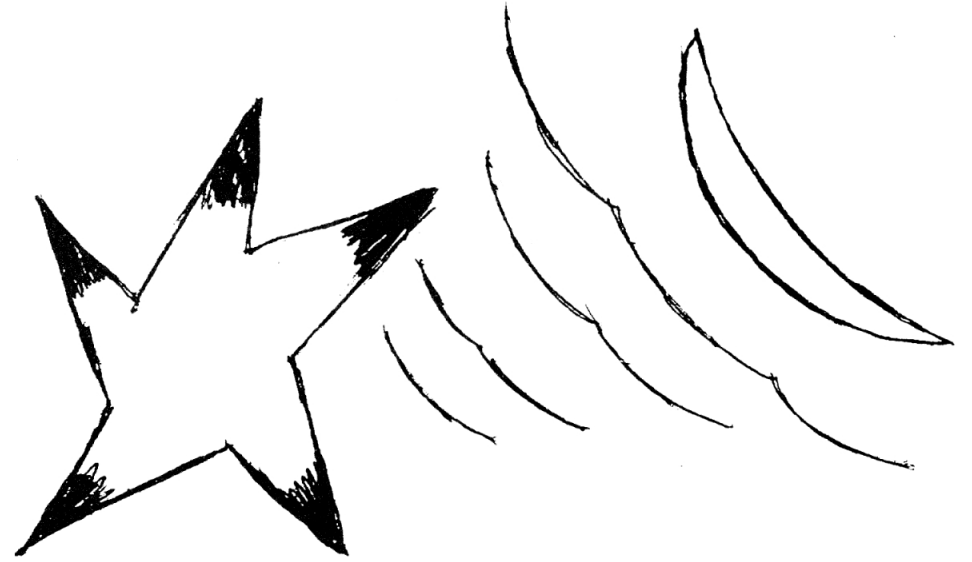
“What’s the lock for?” you may ask,  
To keep them (Red eyes and co.) out for good  
Go on, ask me about the key:  
It’s for You to use as You would.  
Please, don’t laugh about the mop  
It’s a dire necessity.  
I need to swab out the mess  
That these uninvited guests  
Made the last time they were visiting.

Creator and Provider,  
Do send these items through courier,  
(This letter’s marked “No Return to Sender”).  
Thank you for listening.

Yours sincerely,

You - know - who

*HANNAH MOHAN*



## Twinkina

Twinkina was the tiniest star. She was also the darkest -- her twinkle was barely noticeable. All the other stars made great fun when she was around. This made the tiny star very sad. Studded onto the big black nothing, she felt alone and worthless.

One day, the sun paid all the stars a visit. The moon, his bride-to-be, was looking for a nose-ring to wear for their wedding. All the stars were to dress in their brightest and visit the moon, so that she could choose the right only.

At the appointed hour, they all stood before the moon for inspection. When Twinkina’s turn came, she hung her head in shame. “Here I stand, the dullest star ever”, she thought.

But the moon found her to be of the right size, shape and brightness. “My dear Twinkina, you are simply perfect”, she said. Twinkina nearly fainted.

On the eve of the wedding, everyone exclaimed that they had never seen a more beautiful bride, and “O! How that tiny star lit up her smile!”. The moon decided to wear her always. Twinkina beamed like never before. She had finally found where she belonged.

*HANNAH MOHAN.*

## A Tribute to Jawans

And quiet flows the Ganges,  
Without much ado 'bout anything,  
Twining betwixt the ranges  
Now--without much jostling.

Can you recollect that, chum?  
The novel discovery we made!  
Watching the stream, rust-coloured,  
Wondered if water is really red by nature?

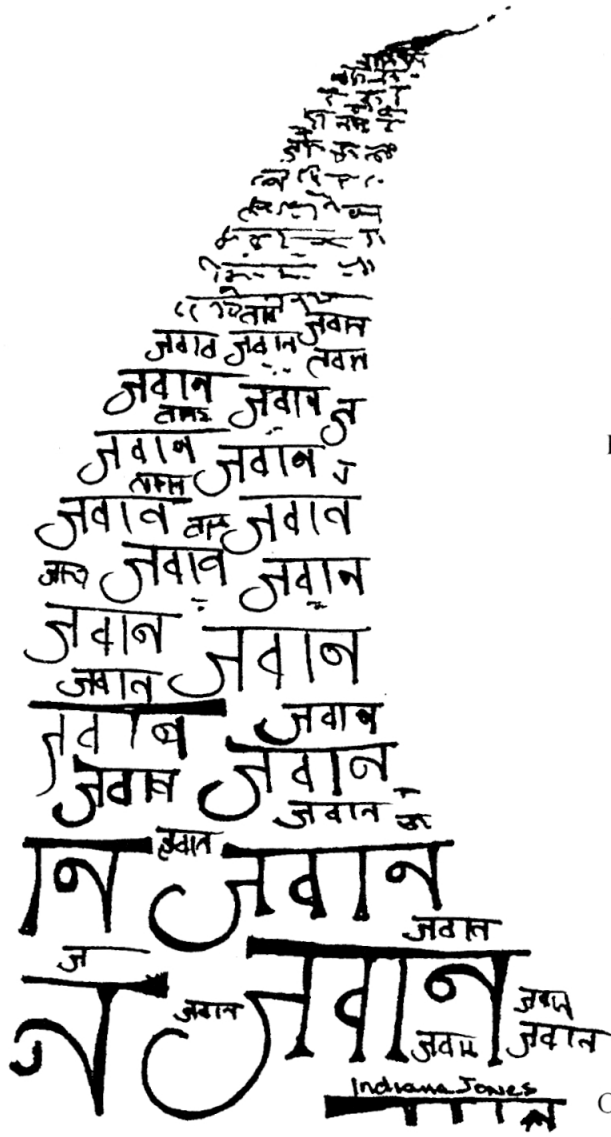
Decades it took for me and you,  
Inseparable as the Himalaya and their hue,  
To decipher, digest and bid adieu:  
The Terror, the Losing, the Waterloo!

Hm! Now that all is over  
Once for all, and, all at once!  
No long would my mind waver  
Knowing the ravages of violence.

Now-see the quiet Ganges,  
And quiet flows the Ganges,  
And clear goes the Ganges,  
And swift rushes the Ganges.

Oh! What is it that comes floating  
Down below the flying raven?  
Yes-it is the corpse coming  
Of the perforated jawan whom I saw alive!

KAMALA. G.



## Ignorance is Bliss

The rain stopped slowly. A rainbow was appearing in the sky. The appearance of the rainbow pulled him towards the window. And as he was looking at it suddenly he shook his head as if he had some trouble. He was plunged into deep thought and completely forgot the rainbow and the world. He began to brood over the origin of the rainbow. Noah came first and the transparent prism next. As far as his understanding was concerned, he believed that God only gave Noah the sign of the rainbow saying that there would be no more flood. At the same time, as he had been taught in science, the rainbow is formed when sunlight is diffracted in the tiny droplets of water in the humid air, just as the prism does when light passes through it. He was both believing and scientific. He could not exactly locate where he was standing. So he was inescapably caught in a dilemma.

While he was immersed in this inner conflict the rainbow felt it was time to say "goodbye", and started slowly disappearing. Much to his dismay, he found the rainbow had already vanished, and felt deeply sorry for ignoring the beauty of its colours. Suddenly he began to understand the proverb, "Ignorance is Bliss".

B. VETRIVEL.

## Who Wrote the Letter?

The flight landed at the Chennai airport one sunny afternoon. Ramya, the only daughter of the Gowtham family had come all the way from Pune to see her close friend Preethi, who was to be married to Arun next month. She rushed in an auto to Preethi's house. But to her great disappointment, there wasn't soul to receive her. Ramya was terribly upset. When she went inside, she found Preethi in tears. She learned from Preethi that they had just received an anonymous letter, which warned that if she married Arun, their marriage would end in a disaster. Ramya was shocked.

Arun, a handsome young man, worked as a marketing manager for Sony Electronics at Delhi. When both the families met, everyone felt both Arun and Preethi would be a wonderful to stay with Preethi in her room.

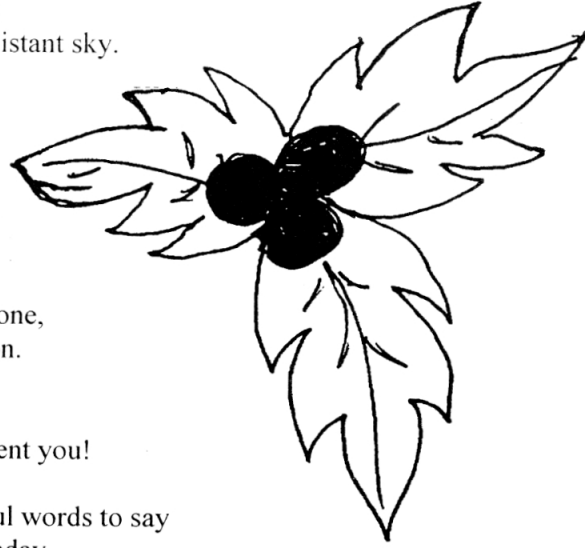
A week after Ramya's arrival, Preethi's parents to attend a funeral. Ramya was taking a bath while Preethi was in the kitchen. Ramya had forgotten to take her towel she found a diary kept inside. To her great surprise, the first line of the diary read that both Ramya and Arun were classmates in the M.B.A. Class and that Ramya was madly in love with Arun. It was when Ramya received the wedding invitation, that the truth was exposed, moving her to tears. Therefore Ramya wanted to stop their marriage. The anonymous letter was written by none other than Ramya herself. Preethi was shocked at first, but later made up her mind to sacrifice Arun to preserve their friendship.

J. MAGADALENE SHEEBA



# On Christmas

God knew we needed  
Someone to lift our hearts and spirits high  
Something more than budding earth and distant sky.  
God knew we needed  
Someone to sit and share our gladness,  
Something to relieve us of our sadness.  
God knew we needed  
Someone to show us a brighter day,  
Something to keep our miseries at bay.  
God knew we needed  
Someone to walk beside us when all are gone,  
Something to lift our spirits and carry us on.  
God knew we needed  
Someone's hand to bless the old and new,  
Something that is his choicest gift, so he sent you!  
I knew you needed  
Someone with brimming heart and thankful words to say  
Something to respond to you on your Birthday; --  
Happy birthday, little Jesus!



## Patience Rewarded and Unrewarded

Not seconds and minutes, but hours to wait, not for my partner, but my carriage which ought to take me to my destination.

It was already 7:30 a.m., but the bus had not arrived yet. My legs cramped and my shoulders ached. All that I could do was to be patient and not to grumble. An old woman came up asking "Are you waiting for the bus child?" (Then what am I waiting for?!)

After two long hours of patient waiting, I saw the bus strolling along the "National Highway". Not an inch to move inside, but I had to manage, because it was time for the arrival of the professor for my class.

Panic Stricken, I kept my foot on the steps and thought how I wished I were a boy. I could cling on anywhere and enjoy the ride at least up to my college. Inch by inch I moved and finally felt happy that I was in a safer place inside. But to my disappointment, I found that just then I had reached my destination.

I got down and made my way the classroom building, exhausting all my energy. But what did I find? My professor had not yet arrived and to my disappointment, it was a holiday anyhow!

*RACHEL M. SYLUS*

*Kavithalaya 2001*

# My Teacher

She was masterly and not masterful,  
She was a master-mind;  
And yet, she suffered from no megalomania  
She made us feel meet,  
But never meek;  
She encouraged us to be medallists,  
But never meddlesome;  
We clung to her all the time  
As one would cling to a mascot.  
She was never a martinet,  
But always a mentor and a loving mother.

*AARTHI S.*

## Casting of a Cloth

My lady wore me only inside the house. An old woman, with murmuring tears, washed me often. I had grown white in the sun. Later I was made into a low-priced saree. I began fading. One day, I was given away to the old woman. The new house was damp and dirty. Soon, I became the school - going girl's skirt, and shift, too. I accompanied her wherever she went. But, I was washed every night.

At an odd hour, while the crimson red was turning into darkness, a strange smell dripped in clots. The girl sweated and grunted. She whispered something to the old woman. Suddenly, the house was filled with many people. I saw them only that time. They gossiped and talked ... and talked. Soon, I was lying amidst a thorny heap at the backyard. I was not used. I felt said, "Do I have to be in pain?" It was not to be.

The old woman brought another woman when dark dried into day. Once again, I was given away, I was washed in the river this time. My house now has braying voices, I was left lying with my likes of all colours and sizes for a few days. I was cut at the bottom one day. Now, I accompany another girl wherever she goes.

Only this time, I visit the riverside and listen to splashings and beatings of clothes. I remain waiting for you.

*P. VELRAJ*

*Kavithalaya 2001*

# Comforts

Sorrows are no stranger to me.

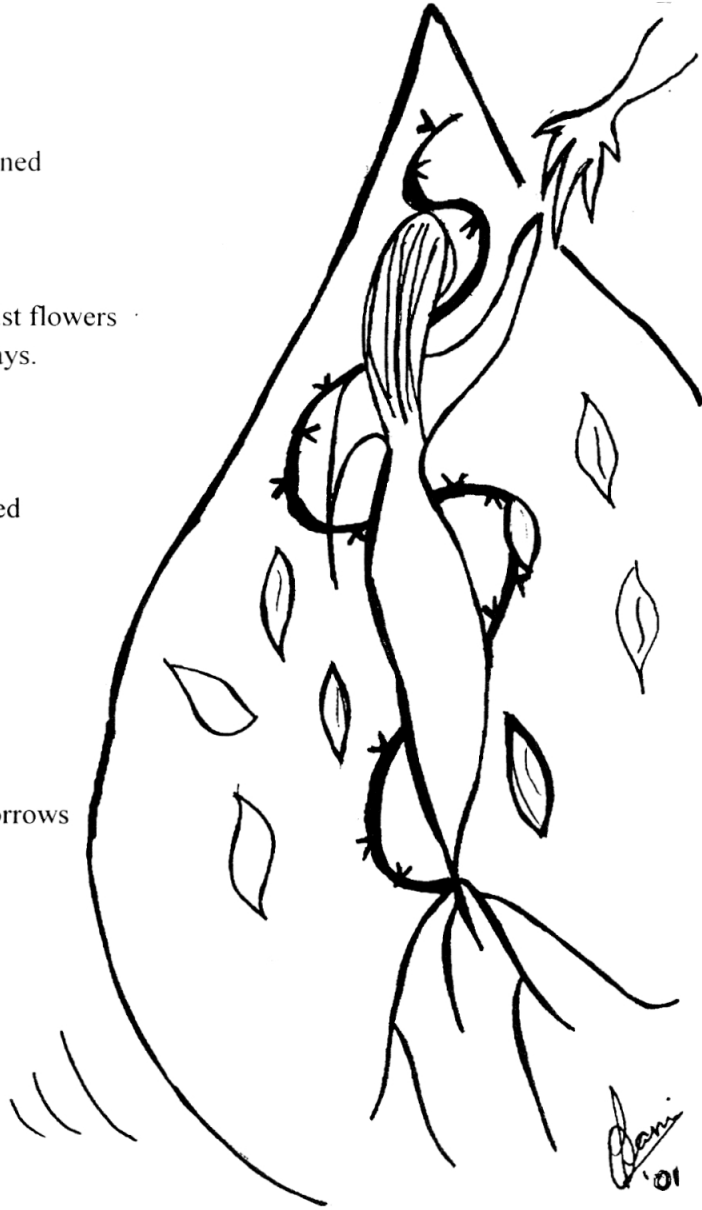
Like a conch that gets purified  
When heated repeatedly  
The memories of you get sharpened  
As fresh shadows of sorrow  
Keep falling on me.

After having been a flower amidst flowers  
I blossom amidst thorns these days.

Every time my petals die  
Due to strong winds, and  
Every time my roots get displaced  
Due to rainy floods,  
I come searching  
Not for you, but  
For your shoulder.

My salty tears drew  
Impressions on you bosom -  
Not just the burden of endless sorrows  
But also  
The pleasurable comfort of  
Having you to weep in.

*Translated by T. Ganesh Babu*



# To Myself

The way for me to live is to have no way  
My only habit is to have none.  
Do not force yourself into one single role  
It would kill your larger part.  
“Next time I will ...”  
“From now on I will ...”  
I am wiser today than tomorrow  
You don't have to judge your day by what other do!!

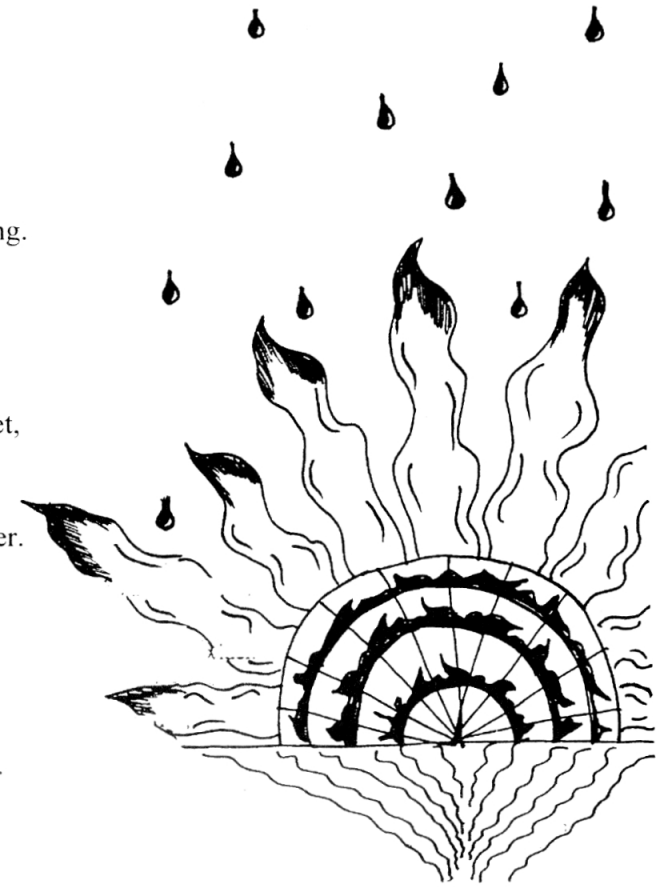
# Silence

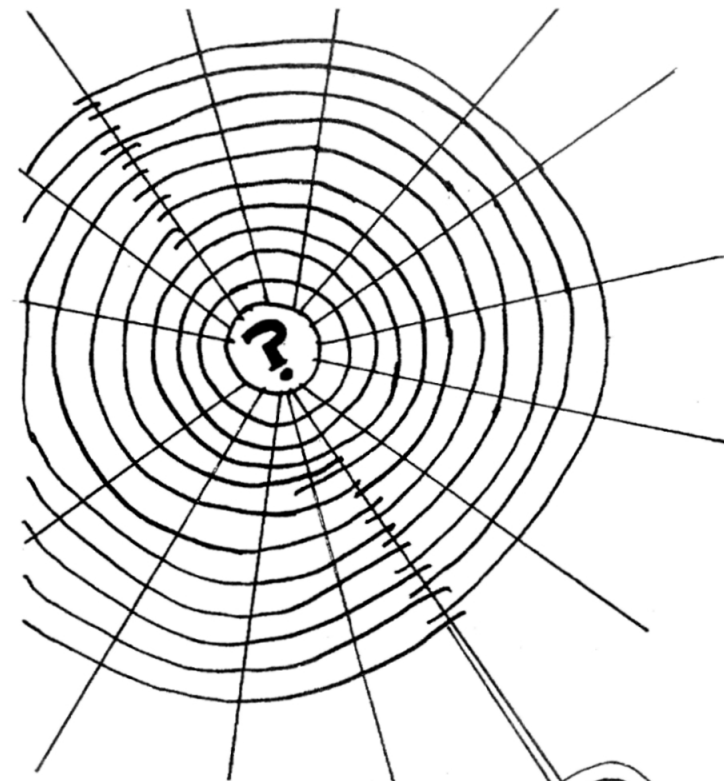
Silence also means confidence:  
I am I and you are you.  
It can mean live and let live,  
An affirmation that we are together.  
I require silence like eating and resting.  
It is healing: it fits my need.

# Life

Ah, life, you may not be always sweet,  
But you are never bitter.  
You may seem to drown a man  
Yet you flow forward wider and wider.  
Sometimes stagnant and waveless.  
Constantly changing,  
There is always fire in your ice,  
Joy in your sorrow.  
Nothing can hold life back.  
Do not weep, for tears disgust a man.  
Let's burst out laughing:  
That is the power of life!

*S. ASHOK SUBBIAH*





Mu. MEHTA

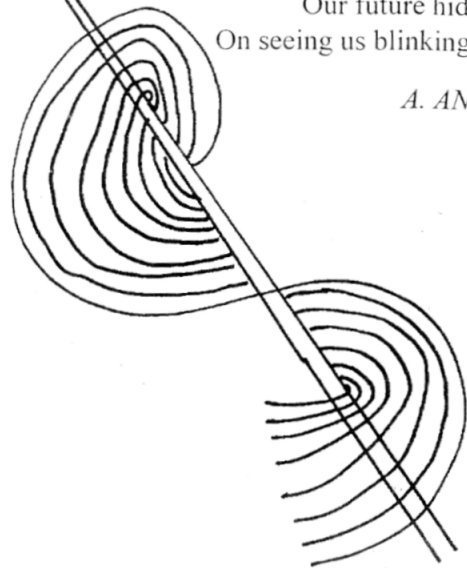
- 1) Which is the flute  
in that bamboo forest?
- 2) Success doesn't know  
my address.  
Misery carries me  
Like a mother cat.
- 3) The chisel pierces.  
Still the stone laughs  
like a statue.
- 4) A road seems  
like some unmade-up actresses.

Translations by R. Sathyamoorthy

## Our Future

You and I  
Blooming guys  
Wandering everywhere  
Knowing not why  
We want to turn right  
Our legs move left  
We want to look up  
Our heads bow down.  
With zest we plan  
To reach our goal  
But often do not know  
What our goal is.  
We decorate our plans  
With endless dreams  
But forget that our dreams  
May be all fancy.  
Pondering over everything  
Satisfied with nothing  
Our future hides and giggles  
On seeing us blinking at each other.

A. ANNAL KOKILA



## My Foe - My Friend

O Friend!  
I belong to you, though  
You are not mine.

I didn't shout to open the windows in your house  
But I open my heart to you forever.

I am the calmness in a spectrum, but  
You expect me to appear as a sharp-edged sword.

You don't understand my song,  
Which can produce a thousand swords.

I don't expect a chance to sing in your school, though  
Your songs will be heard in my academy.

"Who wants your encouragement?"  
Give it to your hypocritical friends.

My writings are not for commerce,  
But they are for your ambitions.

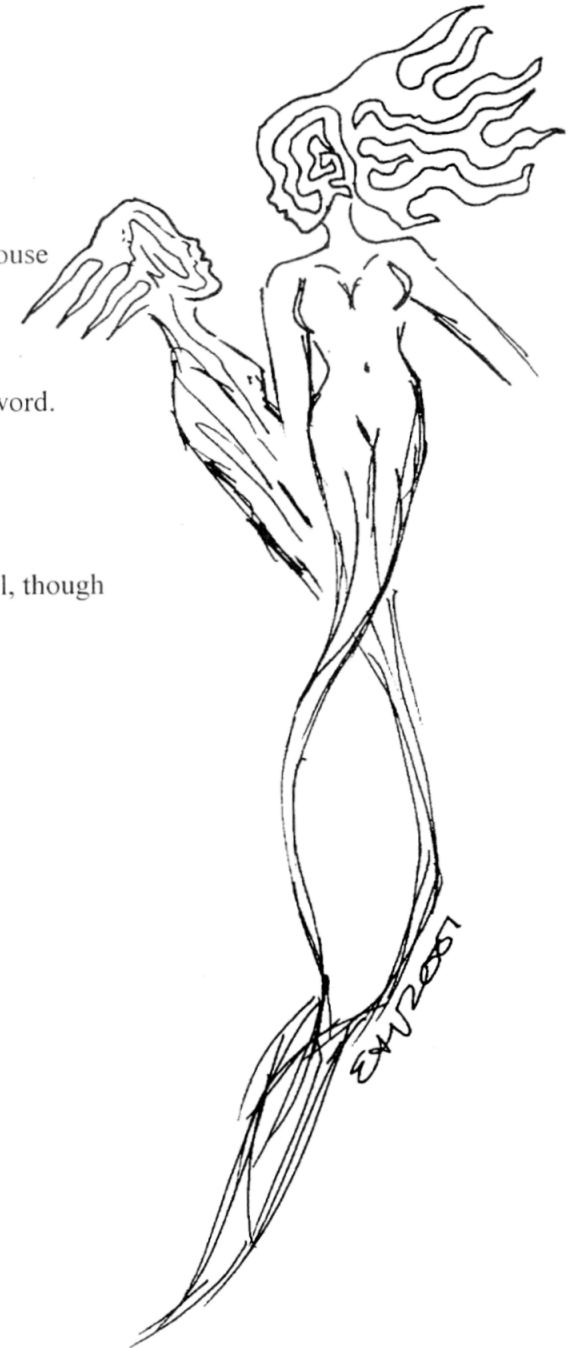
It's my pen which builds and crowns tombs,  
For me and not you.

Though you gather an army against me,  
I only fight against our enemy.

O Friend!  
I belong to you, though  
You are not mine.

Mu. MEHTA

Translated by T. Kasirajan





## Acknowledgements

Nitin Padte, KIS, for the layout and formatting, Barbara Block and her students Donald, Ojashwi, Pinky, Erika, Karin, Jessica, Druyang, Amba, Indiana, Gauri, Meher, Bali, Elektra, Marghy, Jessima, Namita, Tawsein and Sandhya KIS, for the illustrations, Ramesh Hariharan, KIS, for the photograph, Paul Love of the American College, Madurai and David Stengele and Asha Hariharan, KIS, for co-ordinating the production and publication of the Kavithalaya 2001.

