

CLOSED DOORS AND OTHER POEMS

Telugu Origin: Ammangi Venugopal

Translated by: Elanaaga

Seeing two severed chappals
I assume them to be two living feet.
No, not feet – but animated mortals in fact.
Slowly my mind grows restive
My inner soul, considered nonexistent hither to
poses a million queries
I know not whose doors
to knock at for the answers
Any two persons meeting anywhere
are wounding each other with indignation
I dare not ask any frenzied mob
for a trepidation haunts
that it may engulf me.
When the society itself
is changing its address again and again
who cares to reveal the whereabouts
of a lost person?

BETWEEN YOU AND ME

There's an ocean between you and me
If love is shown
a cool sprinkle of generosity is born
But if rage is exhibited
each wave becomes a big storm

There's a sky between you and me
If affection is nurtured it showers moonlight
But if ire is spit
it spreads immense fright

There's land between you and me
If there exists amity
it generates generosity
But if wrath prevails
devastation rages
leaving to destitution

There's a nation between you and me
If fondness flourishes
brothers we are.
But if hatred is harboured
we become prisoners of war

OCEAN

While swimming in it
life, I thought, is a small tank
But when I reached the bank
it became an ocean main
and made me tremble
Getting out of the dismay and fright
I realized it's not a bank
Resuming the swimming
I got the torment's rout
to breathe in and out
The wind is great, so what?
When it stifles me with its deficit
useless it is. Isn't it?
A strong conviction wraps me up
and I scout for way out
A conifer has a black shadow
the tree may be green though.
When my shadow joins me in the swim
boldness burgeons from within
When dark night befalls
each wave roars like a lion let loose
Each ripple rages as a deadly shark
Star pageantries start on the waves then
Breathing in deeply the panache
I inspect around and cherish
Like an unseen following hand
propelling me holding my waistband
the wind walks behind

Redoubled courage animates and stimulates
I regain the paddle
lost in the storm the day before
The awaiting shore ambles towards me
Hoisting the flag of light
the dawn greets with bonhomie
As if a morsel slipped from its hand
the sea seethes with extreme petulance
The mountain that confronted
high tides for eons declares:
“Courage is greater than ocean”

Bio

A doctor (Paediatrician) by profession, **Elanaaga** is one of the well-known poets / translators in Telugu literature. He penned 17 books so far. Eleven of them belong to poetry. They include metered poetry (*Chandobaddha Padyalu*), translation, experimental poetry (*Prayoga Padyalu*) etc. Besides translating Somerset Maugham’s *The Alien Corn* into Telugu, he rendered Latin American Stories, African stories and Somerset Maugham’s stories as well and published them as books. He has also translated Vattikota Alwaru Swamy’s Telugu stories *Jailu Lopala* into English under the title ‘Inside the Prison’.

Nearly a thousand of his poems, essays, stories, book reviews etc. belonging to different genres of Telugu and English were published in various magazines in the last 45 years. He won several state level prizes for his writings.