

NOT FOR THESE..., AGÁPĒ

By U Atreya Sarma

They say,
Love is unconditional.
So they extol
Self-sacrifice and *agápē*

An unwed mother
A symbol of “maternal love”
Dumps her baby
In the trash bin.
Is love unconditional?

A destitute mother
An example of “selfless love”
Sells her little child
For some pittance of money.
Is love unconditional?

Parents invest in their son
With hopes of dividends to reap
At the evening of their lives.
Is love unconditional?

A son has his father raise
A loan for his foreign studies.
On the far-off shore he dates and weds a girl
Of an alien tongue and culture.

On the awesome occasion

The son sends a gift to his parents –

A remittance and a paid receipt

To “immigrate” to an old age home back at home.

Is love unconditional?

A boy woos a girl, and if he is booted,

Will the spurned lover turn into a matchmaker?

Will he seek for her a groom of her choice?

Will he bless and unite them both?

Will he send them on a honeymoon –

Because we say, love is unconditional?

Where’s this unconditional love

Except in the make-believe world

Except in the mawkish poetry

Of the dreamy romantic poets?

Bio

U Atreya Sarma is Chief Editor of the *Muse India* e-journal (www.museindia.com) for which he handles Fiction, Reviews, News & Events, and Telugu Literature, U Atreya Sarma is freelance editor with 18 years of experience.

He is into writing poetry, freelance editing, book-reviewing and translating. His output – more than 250 poems and 450 writings (articles, editorials, reviews, forewords, translations) mostly in English and a sprinkling in Telugu – has appeared in various print/online media and anthologies. Earlier he was the editor of *BharatiyaPragna* (a socio-political monthly) and *Cyberhood* (a neighbourhood weekly). He has also brought out four Telugu literary features in *Muse India*.

His maiden collection of poetry is *Sunny Rain-n-Snow* (May 2016).

He has edited six books: *Lung Care and Long Life* (2012, by Dr Shyam Sunder Raj); *Memoirs & Musings of an IAS Officer* (2013, by KV Natarajan); *Turquoise Tulips* (2015, Collection of short stories the USA-based Dr Ashok Patwari); *Prolegomena and Transformative Articles on Literary Translation* (2015, by Dr VVB Rama Rao); *Femininity: Poetic Endeavours* (2016, by Dr VVB Rama Rao); and *Gian Singh Shatir* (a revised eponymous fictional autobiography by Gian Singh Shatir, Sahitya Akademi Awardee, Urdu, awaiting publication).

He has translated two books from Telugu into English: *Salt of the Earth* (2013) (16 Telugu short stories by Dr Mallemala Venugopala Reddy); and *Thousand Hoods* (2015) (Chapters 9 to 14) (Jnan Pith laureate Viswanatha Satyanarayana's Telugu mega novel *Veyipadagalu*).

The bilingual book he collaborated on is *MarapuraaniMaanikyaalu* (2010) (for which he provided profiles in English of 132 'Unforgettable Gems' – modern Telugu stalwarts – with wordy & pictorial sketches in Telugu by BNIM, a noted writer & artist).

Atreya Sarma has been featuring and encouraging poets from across the country through his weekly column 'Wordsmith' in *The Hans India*, a Hyderabad based English daily since 2013. He is also an official critic with *Metverse Muse*, an international print journal of metrical poetry published from Visakhapatnam.

Atreya Sarma holds an MA (English Litt) and a PG Dip (Mass Communications & Telugu Translation Techniques), backed by a basic degree each in sciences and arts, and a banking qualification with mid-level managerial experience in SBI. He lives between Hyderabad and Pune.

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