

A HOUSEWIFE SUPPLICATES...

By U Atreya Sarma

After sipping off your coffee
Put the empty cup into the sink.

After eating your food
Take the plate to the scullery.

When the calling bell chimes
Answer it, without waiting for me.
When I've to fetch a vessel of water
Offer your helping hand.

Do read your papers and books
But don't clutter them around.
When the phone rings
Don't pass the buck
But pick it up.

I don't mind your spend
On your cigarettes and drinks
On your games and parties
On your lavish tips...
But spare me some pin-money
For my simple wants.

Once in two months, take me out
For a cinema, or to a hotel, or on a picnic.
Once in three months, give me a day off

And cook and serve me delicious home-made food
With your handsome hands.

Finally, treat me as your partner
Which I really am. Care for me
The way you care for yourself.
Please, please try to do these few good turns
Before you or I turn out of this world.

Nothing more I desire, my dear!
It's so simple in my small world.
This is my Women's lib
This is my Women's emancipation.

CERULEAN CORNUCOPIA

At six in the evening beckoned the mild sunshine
so I climbed up onto my terrace to bask fine.
I surveyed all around and directed my gaze upward:
Oh, there! Was it the long stretch of a national highway
plucked out and installed in the sky?
Or was it a humongous suspension bridge
joining the horizons of the farthest east and west!

Then there was an astronomically long-curved bow-strip
valiantly stretched across the sky, with the earth beneath.
Her apparent flatness served as the taut, tensile string
and the half-moon took up the role of an arrowhead!

Now I moved my head down the bold skyline in the south.
A lofty mountain chain dwarfed the highest alpine range
with sun-kissed summits of dark-grey, copper and golden tints.
Vast foamy waters streamed forth between two mountains
and rushed down in large and rich-white flooding cascades.

Wow! The monsoon sky! A colourful cosmic cornucopia!
A tonic from the infinite divine pharmacopeia!
I bow to you in speechless awe, oh, the divine creator,
architect, bowyer, fletcher and engineer rolled into one!

(On watching the sky on Monday, July 19, 2010)

FACES OF FRIENDSHIP

(1)

“Shh ...! Shh ...! Hi, chum ...! Here...! Please hear ...!
Pass on that answered sheet: I'll copy it down and return:
Today's exam is quite tough ... Am I not your bosom pal?”
Hesitantly, helplessly, furtively so I passed it on.

“Stop! Don't write anymore! You gave your answer script to him;
It's a grave malpractice. I suspend you,” the invigilator shouted at me.
My burly, brawny, battle-worn, bully stayed on in, and askew he smirked.
Dead scared of him, the invigilator wouldn't touch him with a bargepole!

(2)

“Come on, let's have a boozy binge! Don't say 'No.'
Aren't we buddies real thick? Give us company good”

“Sure, my great guys! Certainly are we friends close:
Then why not give up firewater for this friend’s sake?
Let’s have some soft drinks or milk of tender coconuts...”

Thumbs down! We parted, and are no longer friends!

(3)

“You’re such a genius! None, none ever like you!
And such a dear and bankable amigo to me!
Very urgent please! Lend me just a five grand;
Will repay next month from my insurance proceeds...”

Lend I did, and money I lost, so the friendship too!

(4)

“You’ve bucks, I’ve brains! Great soul mates are we!
Our combo will be synergic, it will shake the market!
You invest just a couple of million, just that little much;
And I, a hundred thousand plus my resourceful mind.”
So did I sign the deal without hesitation, with no second thought...

Yuck! His brains took away, and appropriated my share as well
Bankrupt I turned, falling in his snare that landed me in hell!

Bio:

U Atreya Sarma is *Editor (Fiction & Reviews)* of *Muse India* ezine, the prime organisation behind *Hyderabad Literary Festivals*. He has also edited and contributed to two special sections for *Muse India*: “*A Focus on Telugu Literature*” (Nov-Dec 2011) and “*Adivi Bapiraju: A Versatile Telugu Litterateur*” (Nov-Dec 2013). With *Bharatiya Pragna*, an English monthly and *Cyberhood*, a neighbourhood weekly included, he has sixteen years of editorial experience.

His poetry, views, reviews, articles, and translations – about 450 (including editorials) – have appeared in English print media: *The Hans India*, *Metverse Muse*, *Triveni*, *Business Vision*, *Bharatiya Pragna*, *SBI Hyderabad Circle News*, *Cyberhood*; in anthologies/compilations: *A Posy of Poesy* (2009), *Poets Paradise* (2010), *Celebrating Creativity* (2010), *Viswanatha: A Literary Legend* (2012); on websites: *museindia.com*, *poemhunter.com*, *boloji.com*, *indiavarta.com*, *socialcause.org*, *sulekha.com*. In Telugu print media: *Andhra Bhoomi*, *Nelavanka Nemaleeka*.

He composed in English the profiles of 132 modern Telugu stalwarts for the bilingual book *Marapuraani Maanikyaalu* (2010) (with wordy & pictorial sketches in Telugu by BNIM, a noted writer & artist). He has edited *Memoirs & Musings of an IAS Officer* (2013) by KV Natarajan. His translation of 16 select Telugu short stories by Dr Mallema Venugopala Reddy has been published under the title *Salt of the Earth* (2013).