

**Is love unconditional?**

**~ U Atreya Sarma**

‘Love is unconditional and self-sacrifice its soul,’ so we hear.

‘Mothers are a symbol of maternal and selfless love;  
and fathers the jealous guardians,’ so too we hear.

An unwed mother dumps her baby in the trash bin.

Is love unconditional?

A destitute mother sells her little child for some pittance of money.

Is love unconditional?

Parents invest in their son with hopes of reaping dividends

in the evening of their lives.

Is love unconditional?

A son has his father raise a loan for his foreign studies...

And on the far-off shore the boy dates and weds

a girl of that exotic clime and culture.

The son, on this awesome occasion, 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 she boos him,

will the spurned lover, without raining her with acid,

turn into her matchmaker?

Will he seek for her a groom of her choice?

Will he bless and send them on a honeymoon -

to prove that love is unconditional?

A satyric father ravishes his own daughter

in a world of topsy-turvy values

where the drain of lust swamps

the protected water of pure love.

Where do we see unconditional love

except in the make-believe world,

except in the mawkish poetry

of the dreamy romantic poets?

If you assert that there are exceptions,

I'll say: They're the god's real progeny

whose tribe must swell and swell

to sweep up the pest of fell felons!

**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*. A few of his pieces won prizes in *Mother India*, *Himmat* and *Deccan Chronicle*.

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 two books: *Memoirs & Musings of an IAS Officer* (2013) by KV Natarajan; *Lung Care* by Dr Shyam Sunder Raj (yet to be published). Right now he is editing the revised fictional autobiography by Gian Singh Shatir (a Sahitya Akademi Awardee in Urdu) and is also on a panel translating *Veyipadagalu*, a mega novel by Jnanpith recipient Viswanatha Satyanarayana into English. His translation of 16 select Telugu short stories by Dr Mallemala Venugopala Reddy has been published under the title *Salt of the Earth* (2013) which has been reviewed in/at *The Hans India*, *boloji.com* and *museindia.com*.

With about 250 poems in English from his pen, he hopes to see his maiden poetry volume *in 2014*.

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