



Tribute to Maestro Premasiri Khemadasa

*Blessed with the magic of rhythm and sounds
In your music diverse I found
Committed to the vision and mission you bound
In our minds forever you'll be crowned*

*Composer of opera and cantata
Minds found solace in harmony and sonata
How gracefully you conduct in front of orchestra
Awakening feelings to an emotional optima*

*Brought honour to the country with compositions
Melodies will remain forever through generations
Artists divine in their immortal creations
May you rest beneath the sounds of silence*

- Anuradha Abeysakara

Looking Back

That's my child,
She's cooking
In those tiny pots of clay -
Busily chopping, cutting,
Washing pearly grains
Of rice - and orange grains of dhal,
She cajoled out of me
And my remembered dreams.

It seems I'm looking
At my childhood self,
In the mirror of another age.
The rising steam,
Beneath the small blue lid,
The three small stoves
That make the fire-place,
Where Sellam Bath is made.

I'll share it with
My child - my other self,
And taste again, that other taste
Of food I made,
With my own hands,
Now worn,
But once like hers.

She's left them now,
Those little pots of clay,
Blue, red and green,
She's tired of her game,
She gone to chase
Another dream,
Play another game -
Leaving me memories,
Of long forgotten times,
And long forgotten dreams,
When I was her.

- Verna L. Silva

A Plea for Mercy

That juicy steak which you did taste,
Wafting fragrance from each plate,
Was tainted meat from tortured beasts
Praying for mercy at our feet

No food, no water, through many a day,
Tight-cooped in wagons all the way,
Bludgeoned and beaten, limbs broken in two,
Bound up and butchered to please such as you

Blood-shot eyes and empty bellies,
Throbbing heads and pain-wracked bodies,
Dazed with fear, no strength to fight,
Condemned to die, no help in sight

Wobbling and limping they were brought to die
To be slaughtered and skinned while still alive
Some tottered with age, a few pregnant too,
Many were beaten black and blue

The timorous wait, the slow cruel death,
The pitiful gaze with the final breath,
The turmoil, the terror, the deeds so vile
In the slaughter - houses of this isle

If you lend ear to the harrowing tales,
If you but listen to the horrifying wails,
You will not touch, let alone partake
Of the beef that is put upon your plate.

- Nalini Colonne

Give them a Smile

A soldier pauses,
To catch his breath,
For he has a long journey ahead,
Which he would gladly go,
So that you and I could feel free at home,
With nerves of steel and heart of gold,
Our lads will one day come home,
One day when their duty is done,
Keeping violent evils far from us,

So the next time you see a soldier or two,
An airman or some sailors ashore,
Even a constable or a guard,
Stop for a second and smile,
It won't cost you a dime,
But would make them glow in pride.

- Asiri Fernando

Nameless

A nameless relationship that we had
And you touched my heart in ways
You can never understand
You filled my life with light that can ever last
And the memories are still treasured in my heart

- Bertholameuce Nisansala Dharmasena

Bring the Heaven

Holy Pious, souls good
Come to the fore
Time is ripe
Silence makes
Evil grow

Stretch thy hands
Open thy mouths
Tread the tracks
Nationwide

Teach the morals, courtesy, respect
Shun the evils
Drug abuse
Drinks hot
Licking palms
Division, thoughts
Wars, Plights, quarrels all
Bow to the Law supreme

Lift them up from the abyss
Bottomless chasm deep gorge
Follow the path
Holy, Pious souls good
Bring the heaven
Down to earth

- D. M. P. B. Dissanayake

The Good Old Days

We met and we married 53 years ago,
We were really contented, though salaries were low
Things were so cheap, not much did we crave,
On our meagre wages, we managed to save.

No automobiles, no telephones, no washing machine
Only the radio, but no TV screen
No modern gadgets, no tiles on the floors
But we never did miss a single of those.

Our children arrived, first one, then a pair,
We nurtured them lovingly, with much tender care.
The children were happy in those far-off days
We took them on trips, to many a place.

They enjoyed their childhood, unlike children today
They had time to read books and time to play
Life was uncomplicated, at a much slower pace,
Problems were a few, which together we'd face.

When the children fell ill, to Dr. Silva we'd go,
Just one bottle of mixture, the illness was o'er
No channelling, no waiting for doctors to arrive
No scans, no tests, but we did somehow survive.

Life's hectic years now over
We two are all alone
The children now have flown their nest
With families of their own.

Our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids
Give us much pride and joy
May they be blessed with all that's best
And Good Luck, Good Health, enjoy.

"Blessed are our dear ones who make it known,
That we're loved, respected and not alone
Blessed are they who know the ways
To bring back memories of yesterdays'.

- C.S.W.

The Rainbow

The nature's miracle
Came over the mountains
And smiled just over the lakes,
Rivers, streams and ponds
Setting a vivid view,
Stimulating the receptive mind
To generate creative thoughts.

Like a curved ladder
As if inviting to ascend
To heaven for divine comfort
You stayed there for some time
And disappeared leaving no trace.

Your presence I hardly see now
And rarely I set my thoughts
In a creative meaningful manner
For, in your roaming locations now
The concrete forests do stand
And the oasis of my creative field
Is dried up by the heat of hectic life!

- A. Jayalath Basnagoda

A Mother's Anguish

You were wholly my inspiration my child,
That was three decades ago.
When you met your beau,
I did not object to your choice of way.
On your wedding day, you did not see your mother's joy;
But silent tears I shed on your going away.

I bestowed you my property and wealth,
So that I could be with you till my death.
I was wrong to have given you everything I had;
Instead it has brought me much remorse.
What made you think I was an obligation,
To send me to an elders' home.
Nay my child, I do not grudge you,
I always thought of your happiness.

My days are numbered and my vision impaired;
I am very frail now with unsound mind,
A good Samaritan has sent me a prayer book and counting beads,
Praying all the time gives me inner sanity.
My friend at the next bed keeps me company,
Her plight is the same as she too is destitute.
Think my child you are my only kith and kin;
Your money and clothes are not my essentiality,
I appreciate your frequent visits, this would give me much delight.

- Yasmin Jaldin

Sins are counted

God gives man a date,
Either early or late,
To reach him one day.
For life ends that way.

Knowing not life is worthless,
Man behaves as if heartless,
He harms his own brothers,
Sisters, parents and others.

He will gather excess wealth,
And also maintain well his health,
As if to live here forever,
But death leaves him never.

When one is born he cries,
For he knows he certainly dies,
Others around him enjoy foolishly,
At last when dead weep bitterly.

Man's cruel sins are counted,
And suitably his death is adjusted,
So before he died undergoes pain,
Oh! A human life suffers in vain.

It's fortunate to live long,
Without doing to others any wrong,
God is great only fear him,
Your life will never become dim.

- Nazly Cassim



Picture by Saman Sri Wedage

Through a window
I watch, windows are
For watching
Square pieces of life
Ever changing
- Donovan Holtz