

YASHODA

and other

MARCH 8, POEMS

Mysore Diwa Swapna

YASHODA and other MARCH 8, POEMS

A collection of poems on women

by M.D swapna

poems W1 to W50

Typesetting and Image alignment

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A5 size –VII + 78... pages

February, 2023 CE, July 2025

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## PREFACE

March 8, every year is observed as International Women's Day. This author had just written a few pieces per year –and kept- never published nor sent privately to persons. Now those poems from the old diaries were compiled under the general title of ' MARCH 8 POEMS' They can come under any other category such as 'mother's day', ' victim's or domestic violence etc.

Readers please ignore lapses in punctuation including upper and lower cases

Wherever local [Indian] words, ideas, proverbs are used , brief notes are given.

Readers' feedback will be highly appreciated . Email ids and whatsapp number are given on the copyright page.

Mysore.D. Swapna [penname] February. 2023

I suggest to those readers who would like to compare, to go to the best poems on the subject and come back to read ours.

One is a poem titled '**I Am Not That Woman,**' by Kishwar Naheed. Another titled '**Still I Rise**' by Maya Angelou I give a few lines from each of the above.

*I am the commodity you traded in,  
My chastity, my motherhood, my loyalty.  
Now it is time for me to flower free.  
The woman on that poster, half-naked, selling socks and shoes-  
No, no, I am not that woman!*

*You may write me down in history  
With your bitter, twisted lies,  
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*You may kill me with your hatefulness,  
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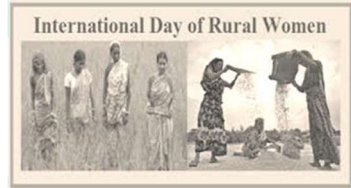
**W 1** *Relevance of this day for rural / urban Indian women indicated*

1

## **WOMEN'S DAY (8, MARCH)**

It is wonderful  
to have a women's day.

It **was** wonderful  
in **olden days**  
women calling one another



for wash and bath before dawn  
together in the river or pond.

to celebrate and spread the message  
of a new girl, coming of age.

for giving support in multitude  
to an impending new motherhood.  
to make preserves, pickles and papad  
collectively for the full year ahead.

to decorate the street with rangoli  
for anyone's function, social or holy.

It was wonderful  
That their days were full  
With umpteen acts of this kind  
Without a day for womankind,  
not for money,  
but for company  
and camaraderie.

Pray tell me,  
What else they would have done  
On a special day of their own?

It is wonderful  
to have a women's day.

**It is wonderful**  
**in modern times**  
women calling one another

for sharing a cup of tea,  
and office gossip, if any.



to have a pizza, pudding or pie;  
and to know what and where to buy.

for knowing the latest tally  
of the number of sons in silicon valley.

for domestic help that is reliable;  
for gadget brands that are viable.  
for the summary of a missed TV soap;  
or compare an occasional horoscope.

It is wonderful  
That the days are full  
With activity of this kind  
Without a day for womankind  
not for money,  
but for company  
and camaraderie.  
Pray tell me  
What else would all of us do  
On a special women's day or two?

It would have been nice  
in the day's gone.  
Even now it is nice to have  
a day of your own.

**Thoughts on March 8, 1999 [ or]  
Isn't it everyday a women's day?**

Be it now  
Or five years before  
Or fifty years ago  
Or 500 years past.

**Isn't it everyday a women's day?**

Who makes a house a home?  
Whose are the chores ?  
Who makes intakes wholesome?  
Who removes the eyesores?

**For the woman** from a village  
Duty begins from young age

Who makes the water reach the pot  
Walking miles, rain or drought  
Who makes shining cowdung floor  
Who stores grain, grinds flour

Who waters the vegetable patch  
Who mends the ripped thatch  
Who cares for the food and feeds?  
For both animal and human needs

Who looks after siblings of one , two or four  
Even if she herself is only ten years old  
Who, having seen it all before  
Has learnt , no need to be told.

[ *notes: cowdung floor – instead of cement or tiles. Thatch – usually made from coconut fronds, in place of roof* ]

Who labours for those around her  
     Who plans for her own day of labour  
 Even knowing more work will surround her  
     Looks forward , her motherhood to savour

Who never drinks other than milk from her cattle  
 But is a victim of boorish slave of the bottle  
 Who has inherited thrift as maternal gift  
 But a victim of gambling spendthrift.

**For the rural woman**, unlettered or not,  
 Chores to do, day after day, is her lot.

**For the urban woman**, poor or affluent  
 I don't see the scene any different

Who makes the purchase lists  
 And pleases even the uninvited guests  
 Who takes subtle hints, messages  
 And minor family feuds, assuages

Who keeps the supply steady  
     for the family and the guests  
 Who keeps the hot tea-pot ready  
     for the unquenchable thirsts

Who has to run double quick  
 when anyone suddenly falls sick  
 Who is a nurse, though without training,  
 for the aged and the chronic ailing?

Who brings up the children  
     who is on the static run  
 until to school they're packed and gone  
 and see before their return all work is done

Who starts the bed-tea's fire  
 and who is the last to retire  
 who answers the phone or the door  
 who's on the move until she can move no more

Isn't it everyday a woman's working day  
 whether she is living  
*in the ancient or modern days*  
*in the rural or urban ways?*

Whether she is a rural or urban woman  
 constant toil seems to be common  
 Week days or week- ends  
 woman's work never ends.

Does the sun stop shining on a Sunday?  
 Can a woman waive working on women's day?  
 So  
**Isn't it everyday a women's day?**

**W 3** *The author imagines a ‘social bonsai’ – true agri, horticulture for fashionable women and fancy gardening to rustic workers*

## BONSAI



“ Society ladies!  
Learn to use  
Mud and manure,”  
Said the gardening guide. So,

Society ladies have learnt to become inure  
To the sight and smell of mud and manure.

Muddy feet and hands  
Give help to green fingers,  
The herbal heritage of our lands  
Nurtured, lasts and lingers.

Beautiful trees , bonsai in miniature,  
Though pigmies, they are giants in stature.

Soil is a leveller; Toil is a tamer;  
Grower is a giver ; User is a customer.

Sons of the soil, including women  
Being honoured is a good omen.  
Hail our direct dealing days  
Bring back our barter bargain ways.

If our high class ladies have the will  
To learn to transplant and till  
And teach Gangamma the ‘art’ of gardening  
I will call that awesome awakening.

Gardeners to the field,  
Peasant to the orchard;  
It is pleasant to feel  
Even if mentally pictured.

Am I being naive or coy  
Dreaming of **social bonsai**?

Soil, water and air to a living plant  
To us and the rest of the biomass  
Seen only on this unique planet.  
Abuse this, it will be mankind's loss.

*[note; Gangamma- common given name –  
here it represents peasant class woman ]*





*W 4 Poorer sections of the society's major worry is: marrying off the girl*

### **WOMEN'S DAY IN JANATHANAGARA**

Eighth of March , 2004

Is only one day in a year.

Women of Janathanagara today

Are waiting for that one day

Which they hope, will be near.

Muthamma is waiting for the day

her convent going grand-daughter to 'major'

since she has the money to engage her

to the village boy coming asking for her.

Saakamma is waiting for the day

to stop her daughter unnecessarily going to college

even many months after her coming of age

And to initiate steps for her marriage .

Sevamma is waiting for the day

to send away , from her lord's leering eyes

her sister of sixteen but looking bigger in size,

and to a match with one of their own guys.

Obbamma is waiting for the day

when her late husband's pension will start coming ,

so that she can persuade her old mother, if she can,

to split away from her chronic alcoholic man,

and to plan for her permanent 'home-coming'.

Eighth of March is only one day in a year  
With nothing to remember., see or hear,  
Except high-sounding empty words.

Women's day in Janathanagara  
Will be that day when  
Child marriages will stop , voluntarily.

[ notes: janatha - common people  
Names of women here are usually given in lower class  
society]



**W 5** *The grandeur given to festivals just by the presence of women is indicated with an example*

### UGADI POEM

All women appear, nay, are beautiful  
In the early morning of Ugadi festival.  
Never can one see

Except on a festival or Ugadi  
All the neighbourhood women  
In their natural nascent shine.

Irrespective of age, colour or size  
All the girls and women are neat and nice.

Today is the head-bath day  
With or without  
Simple turmeric powder  
Or home made sandal paste  
Or commercial shampoo.  
The hair washed and spread today.



In its own natural colour  
The clear faces  
Rimmed by black or white (grey) hair  
Topped up by a knotted towel  
( Mostly white Turkish type)

All of them as if ordered  
By an autocratic leader  
Or a charismatic amma  
Or a bald or bearded guru  
Or any backstreet baba



Uniformly similar but sensible  
[voice in the background:  
Why do we need any person to order us?  
We are bound and also honoured  
By custom, tradition , rituals  
And practices learnt from grandmas]  
Our festival spirit

Begins with a leisurely head bath;  
 Towel-tied or free drying  
 As long as we like  
 Unplaited, free for us to feel  
 And free for all to see  
 Oiling, combing come later  
 Adorning with flowers soon after.

On Ugadi day all women are seen  
 As they are, in their nascent sheen chic and clean.  
 O man! Those of you  
 Who have none of our  
 Kind, women at home, poor  
 You! What will you do  
 On an auspicious day like Ugadi?

[Notes :

*Ugadi -New year-lunar - many parts of India.*

*Line 9. Head-bath – women once a week or more often  
 wet and clean their hair during bath.*

*Line 35. Hair plaited is the traditional way*

*Line 37. Coconut oil used on hair*

*Line39 . Flower is a must in any Festival ]*

**W 6** *Human affections and relationships are the greatest gifts given to us or we can give*

**GIFT [1]**

You say you brought me a gift.  
Thanks if I had sought and wished for it.

I don't recall if I even did ask  
But my memory is erratic and eroded  
A gift, I think, is a gilded cover to mask  
Any ill-wills with which the mind is loaded

So leave your gift outside  
Come, my dear, sit by my side;  
Let me your nearness and words feel  
Let hidden, past wounds heal.

You have come all the way;  
Don't cry, listen to what I say  
I am sorry, if had said or done  
Anything to hurt my loved one.  
Knowingly or unknowingly in the past

Whether I am to you or not  
You.. you are the gift from above  
I am glad even to this day, I got  
From you and the world, pure love.

**GIFT [2]**

Our own, other's visiting girls or boys  
Any child is a gift from above  
Give them gifts, eats, wares, toys  
Above all show them that you love

"Don't talk to strangers;  
Do not accept anything"  
Mothers are aware of the dangers  
Urban antisocial elements bring.

A poor begging child is branded as urchin.

I don't; I am aware of dangers to them lurching  
Those children who call you uncle or aunt

They too will love your gift  
Given out of your affection, not for their want.

### **GIFT [3]**

One who, on his own, gladly gives

Does not expect any gratitude  
His life, an ideal way he lives  
With affection, action and attitude.

Does the receiver respect

The sacrifice made by the donor?  
Even though the giver does not expect  
Any returns, does the taker revere or honour?

Bestowing to one's one family is not charity

But the donation, not for the name or fame, is a rarity  
Can the fortunate and the forlorn be like a family,  
Giving and taking, sharing quite happily ?



**W 7** *Women are the anchors of culture – both rituals and richness of content*

## CULTURE CARRIERS

She seems to be the only one  
In this neighbourhood  
Who is the symbol of own  
Old classical motherhood

No one could have seen  
Her even in the house  
Except in a saree and tight half sleeve blouse  
Combed oil-washed hair in a bundle or bun  
And on the forehead Kumkum,  
Size of a rupee coin

She is known as Ajji, a general word  
For an aged lady in this region  
Not just by children but also referred  
By all admirers who are legion.

Each house with its festival signs  
Drawing on the floor, flour designs  
Mango leaf strings over the door to be hung  
Appropriate songs on the occasion to be sung

For each of these and many more  
Like nuances in each daily chore  
What and how to cook and offer  
To deities and guests in the proper order.

Ajji's of all ages in each household  
In this (perhaps all) Indian neighbourhood  
Are the anchors of continuance of culture  
Here and wherever any Indian may go in future.



Each one of the rites was in the ajji's domain

Of excellent age-old customs which still remain

As part of culture, religion and tradition of the land

Thank God our own Ajji is available at hand.

The symbols and rituals are solid and visual.

For women it is one more chore as usual.

Yet the spirit, intent and the mind behind

Can be continued and carried on only by womankind.

[ Note : Ajji = Grandmother (Kannada); also any senior lady]





**W 8** *An example of the rich diversity of Indian cooking is attributed to traditional transfer by women – as anywhere in the world*

## WOMEN CHAIN

Eating out is no sweat.  
If you can pay, you try out.  
Men or women, eaters are equal

Gender and culture matter  
When it comes to making food  
You see the women-chain



In the art of gourmetdom. It is always  
Mother to daughter, mother-in-law to daughter-in-law  
Aunt to niece, eldest sister to the rest of the girls  
Grandmother to neighbourhood women

It is this transmitted info and skill by women-chain  
Which works in making and liking gourmet food.

Otherwise how do you account for  
“It is beautiful shrikhand today ” in flat 1A  
“chee,chee, who will add sugar to dahi?” in flat 1B  
of HIG colony in Oshivara, Mumbai?

[ *note: shrikhand – a sweet dish made by adding sugar to dahi, which is curd*

*Gourmetdom – author’s word for culinary ability*

*HIG etc – High income group housing in a suburb of Bombay city*

*Chee- derogatory expression ]*

## **WEAR**

If Sultan wears a burqua , will he become Sultana?

If Robert wears a dress, will he become Roberta?

If Raam wears a saree, will he become Rama?

No,NO,no. What is the ans? Perhaps a trans .

*[note: ans= answer; trans= transdresser]*

If Smith wears a simple gown

With or without a bra, will he be called Smitha?

He will get a double-word expresser

He will be called a cross-dresser.

If Smitha is weary, of wearing a saree,

Or dislikes today's , salwar and kameez,

A denim in place of skirt, wear on top a T-shirt.

Yet, she will be called a decent Smitha.

Yet the women swear they have no freedom.

While flaunting menswear, in front of men mute and dumb.

Men have the 'freedom' to adhere

To their code of decent wear.

*[ notes: burqua- covers almost the whole body , usually worn  
by Muslim women*

*Saree, salwar, kameez- women's traditional wear in India ]*



**JOKER, NO, NO**

Dressed as a funny clown  
He travelled all over the town.  
Raj Kapoor in his movie went  
Clumsily but boldly out of the circus tent  
And sang and danced  
And even romanced.

If my boy, also on his own  
Wants to go all over the town  
If he wants to go free and move  
Out of the home and family groove,  
I would gladly give him a chance  
Even if he may get into a romance

Instead , if my girl, on her own  
Wants to go, even to a place known;  
If she wants to move and be free  
From the rut and groove of the family  
Why do I detest, protest? Perhaps  
I am afraid of romantic traps.

For a mother, it does exist  
The gender bias in her mind  
I am neither archaic nor sexist  
But I know; girls can never, a true mate, find.

All the male world is full of deception  
Though my son is a sole exception .  
Machos are waiting to maul the pray  
All men are rapists, unless one is gay.  
Even if she could evoke laughter  
Joker or comedy is not for my daughter.



[*Note: Reference to Raj Kapoor- his movie  
“Mera naam joker”*]

**W 11** *The author says: Anyone  
who cares for a child, is a mother*

### **YASHODA**

All the young ones all over the world,  
It appears, can be covered by one word:  
“CHILD”. Say it in any language you know  
Dependence and innocence it will show.

A child is no more called one  
If it can manage all its needs on its own.  
Personal hygiene, daily needs and care  
Thank goodness, to give them all, I am there.

Even among women, Yashoda was the one  
Chosen to be the foster mother  
To nurture the naughtiest infant born  
But any woman can be Yashoda to her son

Parents have to learn at first  
That the issue could be Krishna or Christ  
From the day the infant came to this home  
I knew how melodious is the word ‘mom’  
Even if I live in a hell hole  
If there is a sincere soul  
Anywhere on the earth to call  
Me the ‘mother’, that is all  
I may want and be happy with  
Than a fortune anyone can bequeath.



Women’s day in the month of March  
Or a mother’s day sometime in the year  
I can join the bearers of the torch  
Of freedom and choice for us without fear.

Free to earn, free to spend  
Free to think, free to love  
Looks like demands without end;  
But is there any other way to live?

**W 12** *The author acknowledges the  
sanctity of a family – warns against external  
interference, wanton or well-meant*

**KEEP OFF[ 1]**

I would be irritated at him or her  
But no one else can butt in;  
We have our own spring or summer  
But do not bring winter within.

We have our own troubles and tiffs  
But outsiders are not welcome;  
to get in and question: “What if”  
We will face the final outcome.

It is a dull house, not a home,  
Which runs like clockwork, ‘tic-toc’  
In case some disorder does come  
It has to be patched quick.

Ego clashes, dominance issues, between spouses  
may go wild, fostering tension, in all houses  
Occasionally occur, or frequently in some  
Showing, it is not a lodge, but a home.

Where there is affection, there is tension  
Of some kind embarrassing but not evil  
Like a mother showing too much attention  
We ourselves can manage, we will.

Activists, agitators, advocates, judges  
Or any pal or kin who prejudges  
Are not welcome, you can’t solve  
A case demanding lots of love, not resolve.

**W 13** *Devices can be made to cater to curiosity  
while containing the 'modesty'*

### **SEE, NOT BE SEEN**



Hawamahal in Jaipur  
Is a heritage structure  
On any day tourists galore  
Inspecting every fixture.

Up and down the visitors go  
Some fast, some steady and slow  
Men move, the monument stands  
Reminding us of the richness of our lands

Hawamahal is grand, not a marvel  
It is a show- piece as of now  
No doubt it is great and done well  
It is a symbol of artiste's know- how.

It was a structure of intent  
Compatible with our cultural content

To get breeze and light  
To have sound and sight  
By the women from private windows  
to witness public events and shows

'See Not Be Seen'  
Yet be part of the scene.

**W 14** *The elderly author empathises with  
a girl of this century*

### **W 14 SEEMA'S DILEMMA**

For an average middle class girl, 'dates'  
Are seen in diaries, calendars and a tall tree  
An average decent boy also hesitates  
To ask, "Will you marry me?"

*[Note: for an 'average' Indian: 'date'  
is a new word for an artificial  
'boy meets girl']*

On the flipside of dating:  
Bold girls get into problem  
News reports are full of them

Another word, 'live-in relation'  
Is flaunted as a new fashion.



But in India today, it is extremely rare  
To find a decent girl dare  
And agree to a 'live-in' life  
Before actually becoming the wife.

Millennial women! I truly empathise with you  
The only questions to ask you and we knew  
About your BF were just about income  
And nothing about habits, education. How come?

*[Note: BF-boyfriend]*

Now that dating is becoming a norm,  
Listen to me, listless little one!  
Learn to elicit more data, truth  
About the multi-faced middle-aged 'youth'.

“What about the heart  
that beats?” you may ask  
My answer is neat:  
‘Taming it is your task’.

You, the girl of the dating dilemma!  
I have given you the name, Seema.  
For casual fun or flirting you may date.  
Beware! Any date may not offer a mate.

Live up to your name Seema dear!  
Deception and disgrace any girl must fear.

*[Note: Seema – border, limit(Hindi)]*





### NOTE – ANTIDOTE

I have a child as my daughter  
Who has a child who is full of laughter  
My daughter since she was a child  
Never knew how to be gentle and mild.

I was perhaps harsh and stern  
Which had made her stubborn  
Daughter she is to a disciplinarian  
I, who is not even a veterinarian.

Even vets, are sometimes soft  
In between their stick and command;  
My daughter, I have never taught  
How to hold love's magic wand.

I knew, my daughter one day  
Will become a self-made woman  
She knew that every word I say  
was not just advice but an order to obey.

I knew I was the one always right  
Principles for which I stood made me proud  
Bringing up child to be always upright  
Greatly motivated me and I felt good.

Was there affection?  
Was there love?  
I do make a confession;  
I did not know how

to show the affection hidden  
In my interior, my heart  
My ego and pride had forbidden  
Overt expression of any sort.



One day, reflected in the mirror , I saw  
Both of us together; what a replica?  
Her way with her child, strict and stern  
Is nothing new; it is what I made her learn.

There was no one, then, to save  
My child from me, a single mother  
But her child surely must have  
Other people who would gather together.

But why? Why make a search  
for kind people from other than the kindred?  
My arthritic knee, though weak, can be a perch  
For the little one, unless her mother hindered.

If she did, I can give an order  
And compel my daughter to keep off !  
O, my helpless grandchild! To guard her  
I will wilfully scold, with an inward laugh

I was a mother all alone  
With the only daughter, a burden;  
But her daughter has her own  
Parents, mothers and others to dote on.

Lucky little one! You may jump on my knee.  
My heart will jump with glee, guilt-free.  
A few hours' massage will lessen the knee-pain;  
But the happiness of the heart will forever remain.

## W 16

*Matrimonial ads is old story.*

*Websites have modern glory.*

*In this field I have no role to play*

*But I am a spectator, by hearsay.*

*I have heard of missed catches*

*And lost matches and hence*

### ADVICE TO BRIDES

Delete the dross, Gather the gross

data from the file, also person's profile

Cut out the clutter, make out data that matter

Just focus on the job on hand

Ignore and delete all the grand

claims of the applicant

Who thinks he is Cary Grant

Find some of his friends

who can tell about his trends.

Is his black hair dyed?

His fancy neck-tie, who tied?

Where did he get a B.Litt. degree

In chemistry and a post in military

Engineering corps?

A cheat or chor

Or a man of multi-talent?

All these are quite irrelevant.

When in doubt

Kick him out

Because, the victim is

the weaker sex always

### BEWARE OF ONLINE FRAUDSTERS

(Till *May 31)	2019	2020	2021*
Fake social media profile	65	30	19
Others	2,453	1,515	882
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,518</b>	<b>1,545</b>	<b>901</b>

(Others include fraud through FB & other social media; credit/debit card fraud; obscene email, SMS, MMS; phishing/hacking/Nigerian fraud; spoofing mail, tampering of source code)



**Advisory**

- Don't accept friend request if you do not know the person personally or professionally
- Be careful while posting private matters, keep profile access private
- Don't post information that could be used to find you offline

[ note: chor- thief, Hindi]

**W 17** *Women must adjust, attempt to cope,  
Only if no use, quit*

### **ADVICE TO A GIRL**

One in three men is a sot  
The second is used to pot.  
Be glad with what you've got.  
No girl ever got what she sought.  
*[note: no statistics available]*

If you think you have got a gem  
Hang on, never lose him.  
If you can cut and polish, it is fine.  
You can add glitter and some shine.

You and I, can ask why  
Why should they produce and sell  
Products like liquor and drugs?  
Drugs as medicines make a patient well  
The other type makes men into thugs.

When the symptoms show  
That the evil shadow  
Starts to fall on the children  
No advice, that is when  
It is time to act  
If I want to be exact  
I would say pack up and leave

**W 18**    *The author stresses the importance of being a  
strict parent- warns against pampering*  
**GOING , GONE, or RETURN?**

What has happened  
     has already taken place.  
 Let go, do not spend  
     Any more energy and grace.

Right at the moment the event took place  
 Dead on the spot and the time of your disgrace  
 You could have acted on your strong reflex  
     You cried, argued, allowed to become complex



When the drunken disorderly son  
     Asked for an audacious amount for drugs  
 You tried to advice, give a sermon.  
     One slap, one curt word, would have helped.

Or one last one thousand bucks  
 would have helped; lady luck  
     might be nice to both of you  
     Parents can't be harsh, it is true.



Next time the fellow flounders in  
     Give him food and shelter, let him sleep  
 If he is embarrassed about his sin  
     Be strict, say no repeat, do not weep.

Finally fast action you must take  
 Even at the risk of a permanent break  
     Past events be forgotten, gone  
     Don't let even a bit to return.

**IGNORED**

I don't need a thesaurus  
My best friend of 15 years will do

She neglected to tell me  
Ignored telling me  
Chose not to tell me  
Purposely did not tell me  
Avoided telling me  
Told everyone except me  
Tried not to let me know  
When asked, was beating around the bush  
Evaded the enquiry  
Avoided my asking  
Stalled any communication  
Got up to go when I entered  
Distracted with a different topic  
Just didn't say rudely "shut up"  
"Let us not talk about it" is her refrain  
Belittled the topic  
Pretended that the elephant was not in the room.

If I were a male  
I would ask for sympathy.  
Assuming I were a jilted victim.  
For being ignored, gender is no factor.

Sixteen year old girl is a teen  
Ready to enter adult world unseen  
Do not probe, nor encourage, I learnt  
From her indifference; for me to be sane.

**W 20** *A female learns to lie low and be docile  
- or she is shown how to be so*

### HUMBLING TIMES

She ate the humble pie  
at age eight when her mother  
made her iron the shirt and tie  
of her office- going brother.

She was eating the humble pie  
Every day of her married life  
Doing all the duties she can't shirk  
And went every day late to work.

She is eating the humble pie now  
In her old age, stricken and slow  
When she hears her daughter-in-law and son  
Whisper: "She can hold on until we return"

She will eat the humble pie again  
When the relatives will seek her sign  
To let off the single property of hers  
Even before her last day in the house.

Being humbled is the brief tale  
of anyone who was born a female  
daughter, sister, wife, mother  
she is a born slave, none other.



**W 21** *A care-giver bemoans the social and educational system which is loaded against free thinkers*

### OFF-LOADED- WHEN?

I took his load  
He happily ran ahead.  
I couldn't keep up .  
Or didn't I want to ?

So, I gave him half his load.  
Even that was enough to make him stoop.  
Now,  
Equal we are in load and stride and in slow 'progress!'  
Gone is his gambol. Gone is his childhood.

Alas! If only I could get  
The load off both of us,  
We may even try a little  
Hopping and jumping together.  
But even if I could, I dare not to  
get the load off both of us.



Free of the load  
We may hop and jump  
We may stand and stare  
Walk free, think free, live free  
But that will not be called  
academic or any kind of achievement.

Some day, even if I did dare  
To get the load off both of us  
Who knows?

Both of us may be **off-loaded** by the system  
which is heavily loaded against non-achievers.



**W 22** *The joy the company of children can  
give to anyone, young or old is illustrated*

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### **PRE-SCHOOLERS NEED PEOPLE**

Mas, grandmas! Come  
Let us all become  
Children again, forget  
Your age and get set.

Pas, grandpas come  
Sit down and become  
Children again  
Sit down on the floor  
We are adults no more

In speech they copy you;  
In agility you imitate them.  
Without being told, they run.  
You too run; it will be fun.

Hands and knees touching ground  
The towel from head, hanging snout  
Uncle is an elephant  
On his back is the infant.

A child sitting on brother's back  
Using an imaginary whip, "Whack!"  
Hearing the sound "hi, hi"  
The teen horse should neigh.

Tiny toddler climbing, see!  
Tall uncle is the coconut tree.  
If grandma is able  
Her lap will be the cradle.

Make ten member mixed chain  
Koo, kook, chuck, chuck goes the train.  
Sitting astride on an elder's head  
This kid is for sale as Goat's kid.



Starting a race, toddlers know  
Get, set, ..., ready,... , and go.  
Running on one leg is hop, hop  
Uncles “you may fall” “stop, stop”

Walk on all four  
On the ground or floor.  
For toddlers it is easy.  
The thought makes us queasy.  
Frog jump is fun  
Only for children

What is this?  
A rolled bed sheet  
Pull one end and leave  
See a child roll on the floor.

What is this?  
A fat-looking sack.  
Set it upright and kick  
See the sack hop and move.

Mom’s feet turn and turn  
Child holding goes around  
What a merry-go-round!  
Rope goes round, swish, swish  
Alert feet go up skip, skip  
Skipping rope is fun  
Even if one falls down.

Children’s games are plenty  
If only adults give company.  
Play with or without a toy or tool  
Until the child gets out or sent to school  
Pre-schoolers need people  
who could come down  
to their level in action and sound.

## SINGLE, BUT NOT SAD

I am single, but sure to mingle  
I do consider, myself singular.

Mingle with the married  
And 'happy' family crowd  
pretend not to have heard  
the whispers that are loud,  
enough reach me.

Was it to teach me?  
Why should I care  
For any comments, unfair.

I chose to live alone  
For reasons of my own.

I didn't have to deny myself comfort  
So as to leave wealth to hereditary heirs.  
Married men had no other purport  
In life than to beget sons  
And through them enjoy heavenly fairs.

I don't owe to the human kind  
Any of my genes to be left behind  
I have given enough of my wit and mind  
Which, those who seek will certainly find.



**W 24** A single woman considers herself 'singular'  
and fortunate – in a south Indian setting

### COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS.

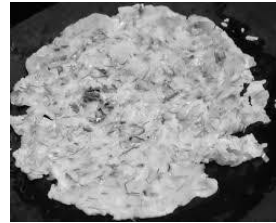
I am luckier than many other women  
I am luckier than X, Y or Z  
I am luckier than surely Saakamma  
Who in her 10 years with Maarappa, has felt  
In each and every part of her body  
Almost each and every day  
Touched by the drunken belt  
Of the daily wager's dirty hands.



I am a luckier than Saakamma  
Who never said, "Saakappa, Stop"  
Who never said, "Bidappa, let me go"  
Who never said, "Hogappa, get out"  
Instead she made Akki roti  
With her swollen hand  
And served hot  
To the sot.



I never told a bull  
"come gore me"  
I am a singular, I am luckier.



[ Note: Kannada words used  
Stanza 3: Hindi proverb.  
"singular" Is correct]  
Saaku + Amma = enough  
Bidu + Appa = leave  
Hogu + Appa = go  
Akki roti = rice dosa – a dish  
"aa byle , mujhe maar" – inviting trouble.]



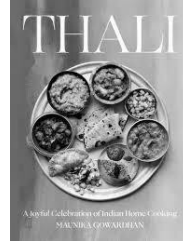
## W 25 One 'single' woman empathises with another

### ALONE ?...NO

If you are happy and you know that  
Whether your hands clap  
Or not, send me a social app  
Or say it in a web-clip or book  
For you, I will open and look.



If you felt good  
Cooking festival food  
And ate it all alone  
There's nothing to moan  
about. Just send me a pic  
I will do a virtual lick.



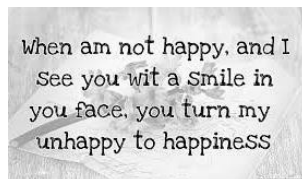
If, one day you wore  
The zari sari of days yore  
And none came to view;  
I am there a fan of you.



Gas was delivered the day you booked  
Try giving the man what you cooked  
If you see him accept  
with thanks and respect



It is not silly, It is info ... tell me  
Those who scolded more than teach  
Never showed you the figure of speech  
In well-known nursery rhymes  
at those severe school times,  
Send me your discovery  
I will spread the story.



Each one has to learn  
to manage herself alone  
In order to study or earn  
Stand on your feet, your own.

**SPINSTER**

I tried to woo a f f e c t i o n and love  
Assuming the two go as twins on the move.  
I thought love I got  
From a flattering polyglot  
What a fool I am! I forgot  
His language changes a lot.

Soon I savoured the attention  
Of a six-foot, six-pack athlete  
It was not long, to see the pretension  
Of muscle in place of a mind incomplete

A filthy rich fellow, I made bold,  
To ask what is planned for me  
I found he would put me in a cage of gold  
While he searched for sex, paid or free .

I met a proverbial absent-minded prof  
I wouldn't have minded being a home-maker  
A candid discussion could call his bluff  
He had a sec, for sex and needed at home a house keeper.  
*[Note : Prof. -Professor, sec – Secretary]*

The ticking of the 'biological clock'  
is heard by the elders of the land  
Also by felons and rowdies of the flock  
uncouth hooligans dared to ask for my hand.  
Wait I must for the right mixture  
of love, affection and respect  
Even young monkeys have a texture  
But finer qualities how can I expect?

It is too late to be worried  
Being called a spinster, unmarried  
Yet this is better than the evil  
Of being tied up with a donkey, monkey or devil.

**W 27**    *The dilemma and anguish of an affectionate and duty-bound daughter is highlighted*

### **CAGED BIRDS**

The ticking of the biological clock  
is heard by the aunties of the block  
And also, shall I say, O My God!  
By all the kith and kin abroad.

Except my parents, everyone hears  
Which confirms my often-felt fears;  
Does my family foster my spinsterhood  
So that, assured will be THEIR livelihood?

Is the ticking of the clock  
too faint for those who are near?  
Or , are they wearing ear plugs to block  
Any embarrassing noise from reaching the ear.

A working woman, that is me,  
Toils to be independent and free.  
How come I got, in this homily?  
Caught, supporting my birth family?

Am I a hen that lays the golden egg?  
Without me, will my family beg?  
Or just leave luxury, habits, things  
Like silk sarees, trips and diamond rings?

When will I learn  
that what I earn  
goes to vain vanity?  
Will I ever save my sanity?

Will I elope with the first macho  
who sees me as a woman?  
Or just wake up and go  
Feast with fairies or dare my demon?

My elder brother doesn't help; it's fine  
 since he has wife, child and a canine.  
 Another boarded a train, without ticket, to Bombay  
 My parents may not know, his address or may.

Daughters of a modern family are caged  
 birds, born with the fear of the outdoors  
 Middle class women have mortgaged  
 Their salaries as well as life to a home called yours.

Homes, shelters, ashrams and institutes  
 are there for victims of violence and destitutes  
 Don't we need a home of safety  
 for us, the victims of affection and duty?

*[Note: Bombay: Boys who ran away from family usually  
 ended up in Bombay ( Mumbai )]*

- The biological clock of the human body is responsible for governing and regulating a variety of systems in the body. This includes the sleep-wake cycle, hormone secretion, metabolism, certain behaviors, blood pressure and even our immune system.
- Some of our occupations are increasingly impacting our lifestyles in a variety of different ways. These changes get reflected in our biological clocks, especially when it comes to the times we wake up, sleep, rest or/and eat. If the timings aren't right, it could result in a greater risk of various health problems.

Here it refers to anxiety to get married before the woman is considered 'old'



**W 28** *The author forcefully feels that the atrocities on women are due to bad upbringing of male issues by the parents*

### **JUVENILE CRIME**

Baby or child of either gender  
Is safe and secure with women  
Every male is a potential offender  
Even boys cannot be left with men.

What news! What a shame!  
Five year old was misused  
It is a crime; not a game;  
It was not verbal abuse.

How can I tell a five-year old  
The danger of sitting on the lap of anyone?  
Will she understand even if I told  
Not to do a natural act of frolic and fun?

Always a few anti socials  
are the bane of our beautiful nation,  
Adding to all other local ills  
Is it due to urban culture's creation?

What happened to peer pressure  
To toe the line of the righteous?  
What erased the family's fear  
Of being outcast, if not virtuous?

You brought up a demon  
You haughty shameless mother!  
Now that he is a fugitive felon  
What face will you show to others?

Yet it is not too late  
You, parents of the criminal juvenile!  
Let him feel and face his fate  
If you hand him over to law and justice.

Make your heart a proverbial rock  
O, mother of the wayward child!  
Think of the poor victims, and their flock.  
Hard justice is the only way, nothing mild.

If the police could not catch, parents can  
Please do not attempt to patch, do not be a criminal clan.

You never pardoned a petty thief  
Yet, you condone a killer, your son.  
Think of the victim's loss and grief  
The mother of the demon, you are the reason.

You bribe the police and criminal lawyers you knew  
So that you can continue to shield your rapist son  
If murderous sons like yours in the society grew  
Raped and murdered will be your daughters, later or soon.



**W 29** *A hopeless association, be it marriage or  
other bondages , are not worth continuing,  
says the author*

### **BAD EGG [1]**

If you had broken the eggs  
and if found rotten  
you need not make omelette.  
If boa is around your legs  
and even if it is a pet  
you fight it with whatever you get.



Even if you had a raw deal  
you need not carry a broken egg.  
Do not worry about what anyone will feel  
Try to hit at the bad boa's head.



If you have dived at the deep end  
and sure to sink  
shout for help; don't pretend.  
If in the lifebuoy you perceive a puncture  
and the coach is missing  
hold tight to anything at that juncture.



If the married life is at an end  
Don't say, "it's ok", don't pretend.  
A lifesaver, if not seen in your mother  
Get off, go to friends, or any other.

*[ note lifebuoy here is the spouse]*

## BAD EGG [2]

A Tamil proverb:

If omens and signs, you believe in  
you can't keep, in your lap, a feline.

If you face, in front of you, a jackal  
Why guess what it might do,  
Let it just go after all.

Sayings and proverbs are old  
Many a time, by many told  
Meaning is forever loud and clear  
Humpty Dumpty cannot be put together.



Yet my sisters, until their old age  
Continue to adjust, adapt, yield  
to this charade called marriage  
whereas long ago,  
They could have quit the field.

If you are a victim  
of violence, of domestic violence  
No use for any fancy, any whim  
No silence, never suffer in silence



Decide soon, discard any dilemma,  
You're welcome, of course, come to mama.

Enough news of murder or suicide  
Result of feminine weaker mind  
Strong will and reason will help to decide  
Amidst mayhem, proper solution to find.



Come home, my child  
Come back home.  
I beg your pardon  
If I had considered you a burden.

Come home, my child, learn to be bold  
Come back, my hand is there to hold



But not before  
Contacting in front of the cruel tormentors  
Women's cell police  
And sympathetic neighbours and mentors.  
Pack your valuables, come away  
Bundle up children, get out.  
Bring mobiles laptops  
Do not leave any apps  
Beware, wily men can always manipulate  
Come away after complaint, and then we contemplate.

**W 31**     *A mother always adjusts to her adult daughter's wishes or choices, even when the man and relatives are stern*

### MUNNI [1]

My only daughter  
Full of laughter  
Even as a child  
Always calm, occasionally wild



Latch on to anybody's finger;  
Was an untrained singer  
Jump into anyone's lap  
Sit or lie supine and clap



In fancy dress she was always cute  
Pretending to pose as Krishna with a flute



Wanted to be lifted up and held well  
So that she can ring the temple bell  
No problem chanting 'Jai Sri Ram'  
louder than her pious pop and mom

Are you asking for her name?  
We used to call her Munni.  
Or any fond name even if funny  
Even at twenty she'll be Munni for me.



Her father has forbidden anyone to utter  
Her name in this house anymore  
Please do not look at my teary eyes.  
Don't try to be diplomatic and say anything nice.

Her father tells all, he has issues  
Meaning we are childless but he has  
Really only I have no issues  
Wishing her to be as happy as she was.



**W 32** *The mother supports her daughter and forgives  
and welcomes- but worries about girls in  
haste making mistakes*

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**MUNNI [2]**

Her new name I did not enquire  
‘My child’ is all does a mother require.



My arms are wide open  
To embrace her if she chooses to visit  
I can't vouch for what will happen  
Many from kith and kin may resist.

Her son will be another Munna for me  
Even if she had named him Gazni or Gori



Girls have to be taught  
What is fancy, what is not  
Teens may feel love's first flush  
It may just be a hormonal rush.

Life's mistakes are tough to correct  
Soon she may regret her haste or taste  
Rest of the days may remain to reflect  
And regret her life, laid to waste.



I fear it may happen, but I hope not  
My daughter must have better luck  
than those wayward girls a whole lot  
Ever happy I wish her to be, never grief-struck

Her mother waits with open hands  
Oh! My daughter! You are welcome.  
Your mother's hearth and heart  
Are always open for you to walk in.

**W 33** *The mother while approving individual choice  
of the girl, expresses her concern regarding  
any organized efforts*

**MUNNI [3]**

It may turn out to be a revolution

First step to a final solution

To society divided by distrust and hate

And share the benefits from the same plate.

The numbers named as even or odd

Are equal in a large sample

If seven ate nine it is a fraud

Or a simple act of aggression by the odd.

One's life cannot be a number game

Munni thought she chose as she willed

What she caught was a bait, or her own find

She doesn't care, she is out of her own mind

Thank Almighty she is not leading a movement

To abandon austere home and be a second wife.

and illusions of ideals or social improvement

Thank God, she is only one odd, only one life.





**W 34** *The author is happy that self-help groups of women are being formed all over India, even rural*  
**NAARI SHAKTI or WOMEN-POWER**

If he is cruel, kill the man  
 You will hang or go to jail;  
 Kill the system, if you can.  
 Let us wait and see what will  
 Happen to you or the rest  
     of worried, wearied women at the behest  
 of brainless brute called your spouse;  
 deserves no more respect than a louse

Kill or simply quit  
     Don't waver or wait  
 The bottle or machete in his hand  
     On your body, never let land.

Even before his evil act  
     Be ready with your own tact  
 Never hesitate a bit  
     To parry and strongly hit  
 And if needed, just quit.  
 If the devil dead or gone  
     Out of your life that remains,  
 Assume that a bright dawn was born  
 If not you, womankind gains.

All ye sisters!  
     Keep a dress, saree or a set  
 Of clothes, black or any hue  
     If any woman beyond tolerance is upset  
 Let him know that  
     The colours will beat him black and blue.



There is a gang of women in India that go after abusive husbands and fight to stop child marriages.

**T**he obnoxious system of dowry has ruined the lives of many families. The female foeticide is directly linked to this 'cultural practice' along with the 'big Indian wedding' that renders the bride's family bankrupt. The woman's life is valued based on the weight of the gold she brings, literally. Recently, a spate of dowry-related deaths have been reported in Kerala, mostly from the upper echelons of the society. The perpetrators are from highly qualified and affluent families and the victims are well qualified. The dowry prohibition act alone is not going to stop this menace. The women alone can stop this. If a man can value you only by the car, cash, house or gold your father can gift him, that man is not looking for a partner but a cash cow. And he will treat you like a cow — another of female gender that is elevated to the status of Goddess. There is nothing wrong with remaining single if you can't find a man who values you, or being divorced, than being a slave to such a greedy swine. It is time to tell the 'Sanskari' uncles and aunts to stop worshipping women as Goddesses. It would be a great step forward if our rotten society starts treating women as humans. — Anand Neelakantan in The New Indian Express



**W 35** *A woman's job is never done- hers is a 24/7 job*  
**SUNDAY, FREE?**

49

If only you think deep each day,  
You will not sink into deep dismay.

Today is Sunday, a holiday  
Thank the Christian God for this day  
Far into the future, He did see.



Of course, for me  
and my fellow females  
All days are the same  
Freedom is only what one feels.  
One-time house was made by the mason  
Daily home is made by me and you  
Building / owning a house was the reason  
Female fettered herself, nothing new.



Sunday can be slow  
As all of us know  
Females cannot fly away  
From the chores of the day.



**FREEDOM : MISUSED, MISSED.**

When I was born  
I knew I was hated  
By my own dear 'daadi'  
Who herself was hated  
For being born as a 'she'



*[Note : daadi-grandmother, Hindi]*

When I was one year old  
It seems I cried and cried  
Long and loud; stop without being told  
Nor fed nor in any way pacified.



No sofa, no mattress when two year old  
I could jump and play on river sand  
Like boys I was also quite bold  
To dive into water avoiding land.

When I was three years old  
Like other girls I was not allowed  
To touch scooters and other toys  
Yet I was better than the boys  
I had my own riding bid  
I could run holding on to a kid  
*[goat's kid, stupid readers!]*



When I was four years old  
It seems I was quite bold  
To hide behind a cud-chewing cow  
The other players were afraid or slow  
In the juvenile game of hide and seek  
Considered fit for those who were weak.



When I was older and going to school  
 Social class was seen; I was no fool  
 Not to see; our songs were childish  
 In front of imposing rhymes in English.  
 Even before the age of ten  
 Gender difference showed up often

After primary school,  
     No more uniform  
     No more books or pens  
     No more reading and writing  
 But, plenty of daily chores of washing, drying and ironing  
     of clothes big, small, mini  
 scrubbing, rinsing and wiping  
     of vessels big, small, mini  
 sweeping, mopping and drying  
     of rooms big, small, mini  
 making, taking and serving  
     buttermilk, snacks or tea  
     to foul mouthed males  
     big, small or meany.



“Independent India” came to be  
 Indians, it seems, became free .

Free to sweat and toil for a pittance  
 Free to leave if you don't like the wages  
 Free to work as bonded labour to loan-sharks  
 Free to flee from your forefather's home  
 fearing frenzied mob's rioting and arson.

Women too were free to go to a job  
 Bringing bread to spouse and a mob  
 of drunks, and gamblers and betters.

## DUTY

Days progress, Senses regress  
Even as my body and mind  
are steadily on the downward trend.  
I have myopia with which to battle  
In spite of donning a soda bottle.



Sitting across my window  
I see a cuckoo. Or is it Myna or Crow?  
It may even be a Bulbul with a Crown  
I have to consult; I don't know on my own.

When I had my senses sharp  
I just read required reading  
Pass the tests, pass the mark  
Life was just biriyani and breeding.  
I did not have any hobbies  
Except caring for babies  
Outside world was only office and wage  
Bound to home, till I reached this age.



Kitchen was my shelter  
Guests were happy  
Woman is the toiling 'sweat-er'  
No male will change a nappy.  
[sweat-er - author's word  
– one who sweats]



Care for the sick  
Made me miss all music  
Care for the oldies until their end of life  
is the duty and responsibility of me, the wife.

Oldies are gone one by one  
Then came the turn of the son  
Gone due to overdose of the bottle and glass  
No one, including me, ever felt the loss.  
Life spent for the lowly swine  
Depresses and eats you from within  
No hobbies, no aims, nothing to call mine  
Even now dreary days; old age is sin.

53

Sitting across my window I see  
Bickering birds as a blur;  
I never consulted Audebon or Ali  
In my abler days of yore.



Coming generations of girls! Beware  
of overbearing affection and home care  
Clever clergies have given a different name  
Duty and bonded labour are one and the same.

[ Notes:

*Stanza 1 = 'soda bottle' – thick spectacle for correcting short sight.*

*Stanza 9 = Audebon – An association of bird watchers  
Ali – Salim Ali – Indian Ornithologist]*

## PESTS

Intelligent, do you say?  
    Yes, it is the fly  
    Crafty and sly.  
It knows by the spread  
That the paper is being read  
    And on the nose or brow, sit  
It knows, I won't myself hit.



When I am ready and set  
With a newspaper rolled  
It is nowhere near, I bet,  
    It is hiding in my saree fold



The wily fly is not the only one  
To surround and tease a woman;  
The mosquito a mob or alone  
    Whistle, whisper and do antics, wanton.

The group of insects is not the only one  
To surround, touch and tease a woman  
The treacherous male as a mob or alone  
Seduce, cheat, woo a woman who is prone



Animals, pets in human form outside  
Pests and irksome insects indoor  
Islam is the best for me to hide  
Inside a hijab and fret no more.

I have to confine myself all day in  
    To escape the human pest and vermin  
Hijaab may prevent pests that fly.

    Will it work against pests that pry?  
[Note : Hijaab – A garment for woman]

**BOYS WILL BE BOYS**

Boys will be boys Whatever be their age  
Or religion, caste or nationality  
Or social or political status  
Only outer appearance will vary  
Girls? Where are the girls? There are no girls.

A female person  
She is either a child  
Or suddenly a woman

Or she is referred to as,  
'maal' like an item on display in a Mall  
'sarakku' like a commodity sold in a shop  
Among foul-mouthed ill-clad lowly males

Any female of any age  
Called as 'girl' or 'my girl'  
By bosses or colleagues  
Among well-dressed but low-class males

There are no real girls  
Except in the registers  
Of schools and colleges.

Elsewhere boys will remain as boys  
For, as long as they are eligible  
'suitable' and sought after  
in the marriage market.



In Bihar though 'boys' will be boys  
Can rape, misbehave and escape  
Since they are only boys.

[Notes: *maal*=commodity (Hindi-slang-impolite)  
*Sarakku* = item (Tamil-slang-impolite)]



## GHOSTS.

Raised machete, cruel eyes, victim's call  
Splattered blood, patches on the wall  
Cans, bottles, fiery liquid being thrown  
The victim could not dare to see the face, her own.

Simple saree, silent ceiling fan, as aids  
to raped, seduced, suicidal minds  
Any day, anywhere in India, same story  
of silently suffering female throughout history.

Painful memories of penury and hunger  
Merciless killings in the days when younger  
For the family 'honour' which does not exist.  
Even if she is the victim, patriarchy persists.

Ghosts do not go away  
They hang around to haunt  
The females of the family  
Whether or not, they want.



## PREGNANT WOMAN-1

As they say politely, I am 'expecting',  
Yes, I do and soon it will show.  
Yet I did not expect the details of directing the  
potential mother about what to do or no.

Months before the usual rituals began  
my mother-in-law was anxious  
To take me stealthily to make a scan  
For she wanted to test the foetus.

Like my mother wonders  
I will also like to know  
Whether ultra scan would show  
Right info without blunders.

Will the birth be right?  
Will it be bonnie and bright?  
Will the child have a broad brow?  
Physically alert, mentally not slow?

Questions so many  
Will it have big black or brown eyes  
Will it have the correct weight or size  
Will it have India-black hair  
And skin, not jet-black, but fair.

My mother-in-law has brought me  
To this alley den of a clinic, to see  
If her first grand-child's gender  
right? A female will be an offender  
to her hope and ambition of kith and kin  
for whom, abortion of female foetus is not a sin.



**W 42**    *A woman goes to a doctor for  
'Family planning' purpose*

### **PREGNANT WOMAN-2**

This college-educated friend of mine  
Is married to an engineer in town planning  
The couple have followed family planning,  
They are liberal, boy or girl is fine.

Her pregnancy also was well planned  
After his promotion; after their vacation;  
Now astrology and almanac they have scanned  
For selecting a superior time and location.

They know, the time and place of birth  
Have bearing on the whole life  
Of the child, as per religion and faith  
Astrologers can predict any event or strife.

She wants to know and plan the delivery date  
She knows it need not be God's will or fate  
Modern medicine can guess, though not accurate.  
My friend does not want to gamble or speculate.

She has seen panchangas and planet positions  
Astrologers have already made horoscopic compositions  
Based on the date and time of delivery  
Most auspicious for her and the baby.

Now she is here for a deal  
With gynecologist's skill and zeal  
Money, if needed, can be arranged  
If delivery time can be suitably changed.

Someone asks:

Who can meddle with God's will?

Answer comes:

Yes, gynecs and modern medical skill



Biology which began with dissection  
has advanced to optional C-section.

The couple wants the doctor to suggest  
The place for the operation the best;  
As for the date, will he consult the astrologer  
And both can put their heads together.

So, it was C-section  
As easy as an injection  
No anxious waiting  
For start of labour pain.

Astrologer is rich  
The clinic is richer  
Gone to the ditch  
All laws of nature.



[Notes :

*Panchanga – Indian almanac- gives day, date, phases of the moon, Zodiac and stars data.*

*Horoscope – a chart exclusively made for an individual- based on the accurate time and date of birth.*

*Gynec- short form of gynaecologist*

*C-section - Caesarean operation]*



### SCANNING

Haai Raam! Raama Raamaa!  
Is it my fate? Is it my karma?  
I brought an urban beauty for getting a grandson  
There is no hope for one; she turned out to be barren

Is it the fate written on my forehead?  
I wanted a grandson before I am dead.  
I brought a rustic teen for my second son.  
She is now carrying, my worries have begun.



My mother and others, with bated breath  
Used to wait at home for the child's birth  
If it was a female, it was quietly under the earth  
Buried and no celebration, joy or mirth.

Hai Raam! Raama..Raamaa!  
You know, I know, I am observing *kuldharm*.  
If the scanning shows female foetus  
It has to go, O God! Pardon us.

Why did I live and said my prayers,  
O my god Raama! For these many years?  
To long for the male heir, is it a sin,  
to carry forward the blood line of kith and kin?

[Note: many Sanskrit based Indian words are used  
*kuldharm*.- tradition

*Raama- god's name – here it is Oh My God]*

**W 44** *It is unfair to have bias for 'fairness' of skin  
– for female child- and against black or brown which is the  
predominant skin colour in India- expressed by a plant*

**GURU ALOE VERA**

When I woke up after the sun beam gave me a few kicks  
I saw, a girl was silently sitting on a pile of bricks  
For her it may be considered equal to a garden chair.  
She was neither young nor old; neither black nor fair.

She was neither smiling nor tearful  
But certainly she was far from cheerful  
She was out neither for rest nor for a morning walk  
She was alone with none to listen to or talk.  
Me too, I am neither old nor mod;  
To be here it would have been odd,  
I, a plant, neither for show nor for God  
Yet I am cared for by this landlord.



“Hey, look! What is here in this pot?”  
I looked up, elated by the attention I got.  
Voices said “Aloe Vira! Aloe Vira! See”  
I said, “Thanks a lot, all of ye”.

A thought came to me like a spark  
Perhaps this teen needs someone to talk  
So, I said to myself, I’ll break the ice  
A chance to be somewhat useful and nice

“Hey, Bangaramma!, I like your anklet  
May not be pure gold but it shines yet”  
She sure was baffled by a babbling bush  
She neither froze, nor got up to rush.  
[Note: Bangaramma-(Telugu) Golden girl-pet name]

As she watched me well and came near  
To assure who it was she happened to hear  
I said, “It is me, bushy cactus;  
I won’t prick, can we be friends? Let us”

“Your anklet is fine,  
 It exhibits a shine,  
 Your shiny skin that is brown  
 Both not borrowed; your own”

She said in a level tone  
 Showed that she was forlorn;  
 “My anklet is brass  
 My complexion is gross;  
 Neither is worth  
 Being on this earth”  
 I said in a voice equally calm  
 “Listen to me; I can be your mom”



Hearing me, the little one shouted.  
 “You Ignorant, you thorny goon !”  
 I froze, to the pot, grouted  
 Waited for more to come, soon.

The girl said, “My mother,  
 Much worse than any other;  
 Always commenting on my skin  
 She’s the one, my enemy from within.

I said: I think your mood is due  
 To the human prejudice around you  
 Branding persons by the colour of their skin  
 Even by your mother and other kin.

I too belong to the oppressed class  
 While jasmine and rose were top brass;  
 Until men discovered qualities of mine  
 Safe, sure, innate in the sap within.

My sap is medical and it is innate, natural  
 So is my thorn and no fragrance, it’s factual  
 Your skin colour is neither good nor bad  
 People have prejudices, a fact, it’s so sad.

If People care to see the qualities within  
 They would realise it is a sin  
     To prejudge persons by any random yardstick  
     Even to think of it makes good persons sick.

Yet, between humans and the rest  
     Of the species, there is a gap  
 Between an individual and the rest  
     Qualities, unlike a plant and its sap.

Your inner qualities you have to develop  
 Everyone of this earth you have to envelope  
 In your circle of the admired and loved  
 Like the sages who taught or just lived.

Once people find your mind  
 They sure would be more kind  
     But, by that time you won't care  
     For such people whether unkind or fair.

I 've said much; I'll stop  
 My sap talk is not just sop.  
 Remember ! Resolute you can rise  
 above all men's mean prejudice.  
 The teen got up and almost kissed  
 me, but due to thorns, her kiss I missed.  
 She said: "In me you are able to see  
     Yourself though you are plant family"  
     My mother should inspect in a mirror  
     To see the colour I got only from her  
 Thanks, my friend cactus  
     You are wiser than us  
 'Coloured' humans full of lies  
     Tongue talking of equality mind full of bias.

Hay, Aloe vera! Your words are soothing  
 To me and every ugly duckling!  
     You have thorns around you  
     But inside you have the wisdom of a guru



### JUMPING JOY

From supine, lying on the back on the mat  
To jump to prone position belly flat  
Doing this in one swift move. Is it an *aasan*?  
I don't know. The doer is my young son.

How old is he? Perhaps five  
I don't remember, though together we live  
He was doing it even when he was less than four.  
Do you find it strange? Let me tell more

Monkeys of the nursery rhyme  
Broke their heads one at a time.  
The good doctor said  
"No more jumping on the bed"



My son of four years, along with a pal  
Does tricks on the sofa in the hall.  
Jumping on the spring loaded long sofa  
Was not a taboo in this house so far.

Treading as in a trampoline  
Was not enough for the monkey twin  
Letting them do flip and somersault  
Was the elder's and more basically my fault.

Standing, bring one's head to supine  
Slow or fast could have been fine.

But standing firmly on two feet  
Suddenly fall to the position prone  
Only my son could dare and do it neat  
In yoga or acrobatics it is unknown.'

Except him and me, no one knows  
The role of two thick but soft pillows.

These, once a visiting aunt had silently taken.  
My son's neck, thank god, was not broken  
Aunt was not vicious. She did not put stones there  
where the impact-absorbing pillows were

One good effect of the aunt, not so vicious  
is that my son, now bigger, is quite conscious  
of what he does and sees whether  
the safety gear are in the place and put together.

Before I too jump ahead in the story  
Let me confess; this is no true history.  
Call it confession; call it reflection;  
Story-telling is not my profession.

Before my son would  
Break his head on the bed  
I took him to the pool  
Since I have once read  
It could do more than just cool.

Now, putting my back on my easy chair,  
I steadily into vacant space stare.  
Oh! Do you see my son in neat uniform  
Doing police duty in calm or storm.

Next, do you see him on a ship  
In all-white attire and a stiff cap  
I did not find the police able  
After horses flee, they lock the stable

So I made him join the naval force  
Swimming pool lessons helped of course.  
My blessings, my son! Yet you keep  
Safe since pressure is high in the deep.

Next time I woke up from my reverie  
I was not alone, I had company.  
Someone asked, do you really know  
Where your son can be, just now

I said, I am just a mother  
Who from the time the umbilical cord  
was cut, worries. But the other  
has its own life. No more the ward.

He might have left  
The sea, navy, water  
Since he would have felt  
He was due for something better.

When he was a bonny boy  
He was my jumping joy  
I let him jump and feel free  
To do, become- what he wants to be.

Will he next go up in the air?  
To do any flying manoeuvre?  
He and I both have to wait  
Until he trains to become a pilot.

Commercial flights do not permit  
Any tricky turn from the cock-pit.  
So I think he voluntarily chose  
And they let him join the Air force.

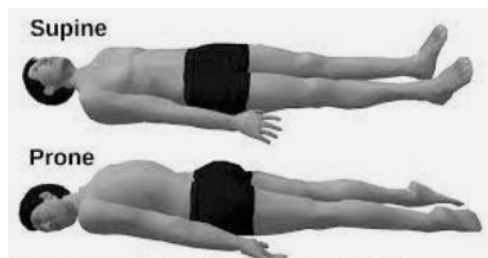
The daring dives done by my son's jet  
On the last Republic day fly-past  
For many days will linger and last  
In my mind; never to forget.

The best adventure will be  
 To jump where there is no Gravity  
 So my restless son had thought  
 To try and become an astronaut

In a moment of Out-of-Guard  
 Did he let go the umbilical cord?  
 But the bond which connected me  
 To my son will ever be in my memory.

See the cursed sofa near the fence  
 from which he did his last bounce  
 Overgrown with grass and weeds  
 Such a killer furniture who needs?

It all started with a spring  
 an absolutely a harmless thing  
 Yet I hate anything that bounced  
 from the day I heard  
 'Brought to hospital, dead'.



W 46    *The silent revolution of  
the older generation is acknowledged*  
**ODE TO AJJI or WHO IS AJJI?**

Who is Ajji? You (arrogantly) ask me,  
You, young chit of a teen!  
Ajji was a teen like you, and a free  
Soul then on the south Indian scene.

She was a star then in Sangeetha kala;  
You will never know. You are deaf  
What with the din and noise you call gala  
massive noise passed off as art stuff.



Have you ever heard a single pure note  
From the singer's belly, lungs and the throat  
Reaching the octave and above and suddenly  
come down to the cadence evenly?

Ajji was a performer  
Singer, actor; vocal and mime  
She was also a transformer  
Of archaic norms of that time.

Ajji allowed Amma to fly free  
And high as much as she could  
The results of which we now see  
In your generation's motto and mood.

'Modern' does not mean the old  
was no good and so to be shunned  
You teens have to be told  
And your closed eyes to be opened.

Ajji was those days' AI  
Before you say 'artificial' may I  
explain? It is Ancient Intermediate between  
Pure patriarchy and the aspiring female teen.

‘Who is Ajji?’ you dared to ask  
 The freedom in which today you bask  
 Is the fruit of the silent effort and protest  
 She and her genre, made just with jest.

Does anyone any more try to guess  
 When is your days of monthly curse?  
 Do your elders try to eavesdrop, overhear  
 When you answer a call from anyone dear?

‘NO’ to both you should say  
 Since that is the truth of today.  
 If it were otherwise it would be  
 Ajji who would be on your side

Now you approach ajji and say  
 “Thanks for your affection and advice”  
 She sure will understand and may  
 Even give tips to camouflage  
 white lies

[Notes : Ajji – Grandmother – Kannada  
*Sangeeta kala* – art of music  
*Amma* – mother, all South Indian languages  
 ‘days of curse’ – In south India, women were  
 kept out of the kitchen, during.]

**ATTIRE [1]**

1. Looking around in my village  
    At my sisters, and aunts of any age  
    The impression, it was, at my tender age  
    Any female person with a certain image.
2. As I viewed from my full four feet  
    of height, upon the grown-ups  
    I wondered how men were trim and neat  
    When they go to catch a bus to work.
3. The same uncle when at home  
    Lounging in a lungi and vest  
    Much worse some others who roam  
    Unsteady, dirty, smelling worst.

*LATER IN LIFE*

4. Boys in all white on the ground  
    Playing cricket in the school team  
Girls, if at all they are around,  
    Were there for watching it'd seem.
5. Mathematics teacher with a coat and turban  
    Sanskrit teacher in Dhoti and pigtail  
Both of them were objects of fun  
    Among boys, with secretly told jokes or tales.
6. The head master was the ultimate idol  
    For all of us, wide-eyed boys  
    Boot, coat, tie and in every detail  
    His attire was the dream in their eyes.

[ *I was yesterday's child.* ]

7. Let me come to the topic  
       before I digress too far away .  
 Men had use, style, attire to pick  
       And choose for their work or play.  
 Except for nurses who tend to the sick  
 All women were in sarees  
       whether work, sleep or pray.

### ATTIRE [2]

[*Today's child*]

1. My uncle was mad with anger  
    He had kept his T-shirt on a hanger  
 Hanger is there ; shirt is missing;  
    Uncle shouting, searching, cursing.
2. Comes in clumsily the athletic aunty  
    her T-shirt, wet, dirty, sweaty.  
    Her T-shirt? Uncle's search is in vain  
    The sweaty shirt is his, it is plain.
3. Aunty's clothes are hers;  
    Uncle's clothes too  
    Perhaps helps their purse  
    One set for users two.

*GENERAL:*

4. Times have changed,  
    The society is different.  
    Women vie with men;  
    They dare in every front.
5. The good side is this :  
    Two uses for one  
    Both can have fun.
6. The flip side is this :  
    If you want a good thing for you.  
 Dear uncle! Better buy and keep two.



**W 48**    *A son and his wife apologize to  
the elderly father/father-in-law*  
**TO A STUBBORN FATHER**

Son:

I came back to fall at your feet,  
To ask for forgiveness, pardon;  
Your ego never moved from its high seat  
You said “You shameless! Pardon? Never done”

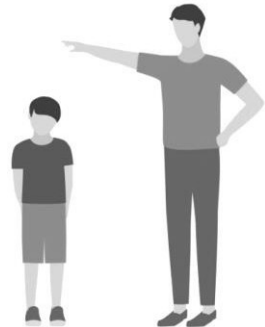
I knew I got everything from you  
I wanted to acknowledge, revere;  
I see only the sole of your shoe  
You are full of grudge, as ever severe.

At the turning point of my life  
You could have said “wait stay”  
You even gagged my mother, your wife  
You shouted, “Get out! Go away”



No way beyond you, to my mother,  
I had go into the wilderness  
Or seek a safe shelter in another  
leaving decades of togetherness.

The words you use most  
often were : “Get out! Get lost!”  
I came and see only the same very  
words from your vocabulary.



*Son and Daughter-in-law :*

At least after you are declared unwell  
We thought your manners will mellow  
Instead , we see your ego swell  
so big, it will yourself eventually swallow.

*Daughter-in-law :*

I will prostrate, bow, even hug  
 If only you will let me near  
 He is just your son, not a thing  
 How much more loneliness you would bear?

Son: I knew you want everyone  
 Near you at your last hour;  
 Give me the right as your son  
 to sweeten the relation that had gone sour.

Both : Let your eyes, head or hand  
 Give a hint that you've pardoned  
 us and those whom you disdained  
 A place in the haven of  
 our hearts you would have gained.

You have never learnt to forgive  
 As long as you were lucky to live  
 Regret and reconcile are some of the ways  
 by which WE can ease your last days.  
 If you too adopt the same path  
 It will sure be heaven for us, both

Son: You never knew you too  
 suffered when you made us suffer  
 Open your eyes and see who  
 are near you in your last hour.

Both: We do say "we are sorry"  
 Do you say, " I too am sorry"  
 No papa, no! you just nod your head  
 We'll assume you have said

GENERAL:

May the man's soul rest  
 in peace; but let's not forget  
 'In all of us, ego causes worry'  
 It can be quelled by saying "I AM SORRY".

**W 49**     *How can we hear the true victim's woes?*

## PEASANT

Dangling and undulating  
     like her ear rings  
     in her newly pierced ears;  
 Like the hand made threads of leather  
     hanging from the bosom of her outer coat  
 Her views are visible and well shown and seen.



Dense and complicated  
     like his beard and dishevelled hair  
 Like his lexicon neither lucid nor logical  
 His views are visible and well shown and seen.



What are the thoughts of  
     the classical mother  
     bringing up her four children  
 and caring for unemployed drunkard husband?



How to hear real people?  
 We are told what their views are by.....

By denim wearing denizens from street corners  
     or from those high pedestals  
     of the church / or the senate/ or the courts/  
 Political niches and clichés  
 or civil and governmental agencies.

The poor peasant in me  
     likes to know and hear first hand  
 other poor peasants like me.



**W 50** *The unqualified author dares to think he can guess  
what Darwin failed to state- about gender behaviour in  
mammals*

### **THE PLOY IS IN THE GENES**

Someone asked , why is the sky blue?  
Prof. Guide said, physics long back knew.  
Let us ask: Why leaves are green?  
Prof. Guide will say, chemists have already seen.

Why does the moon wax and wane?  
Even geography teacher can explain.  
Why does an apple fall to the earth?  
Your question tickles me to death.

Why is the setting sun red?  
The chapter on scattering is to be read.  
How, why and when does a volcano erupt?  
For geology it is an introductory subject.  
Why is the sea water salty?  
Knowing the answer you ask, naughty!

Here is a topic I suggest for research;  
To a big thesis it may not mean much;  
But it may be a challenge to a team  
of biologists who think and dream .

Why is the female weak  
only in the mammalian order?  
Can the answer once for all break  
the ego of the male overlorder?

*[Note: overlorder- author's word -for rhyme]*

Look into some 'somes and more  
 Cellular reasons you can explore.  
 See if nature has shown 'some bias .  
 Is DNA the reason for all the chaos?

*[note: 'some- chromosome;*

*DNA- genetic molecule not known in Darwin 's time]*

Or, has 'nurture' or social norm  
 made the female underperform?

Or,

for the prolongation of the species she  
 accepts the position as it is?

*[note: nature and nurture were Darwin 's concepts]*

'The homemaker we know also makes  
 the future generation. Also it takes  
 much more than macho and muscle  
 to cope with the 'survival' tussle.



A feline mother will fight with a strength  
 you never knew she had in her length;  
 To save her cubs she would fight  
 a mammoth villain with all her might.

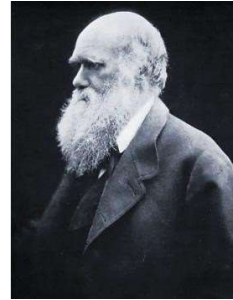
Or else, the mother may just sneak away  
 carrying her cubs out of harm's way.  
 You may say it is weakness; I'll call it tact;  
 Ask a cat-lover. She will accept it as fact.

If a female mammal could read my piece  
 She would read it to her species :  
 " Valour lies not in winning , but live,  
 Smile, survive, serve with tender love."

Darwin knew what I just said  
 But did not elaborate or theorise;  
 Basic and novel concepts having laid  
 He thought why give room for doubt to rise?

A poet need not be afraid  
 to imagine and speculate .  
 Any way his theory will lie unread  
 since no one reads anything , of late.

My theory will get support only when  
 Another Alli Rani's empire had done  
 well for itself and the [wo]mankind  
 Leaving patriarchal pride far behind.



1809 –1882

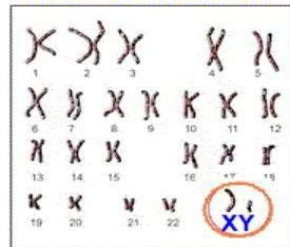
*[note; Alli Rani- a queen in oral history –folklore- of  
 Tamilnadu whose army had only females]*

Pretend to be powerless  
 Pretend to accept defeat  
 When time comes nevertheless  
 See her rising with mood upbeat.

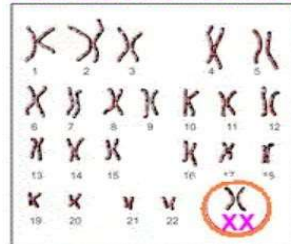
Concerns of commerce and cash  
 Efforts ending in ego-clash  
 Are all matters left for men  
 As long as the family is run.

Female's faces are many  
 Since she does multi-tasking  
 Activists who call it her destiny  
 Are also adepts in masking.

#### MALE chromosomes



#### FEMALE chromosomes



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