

Below the Bench

Mounted on the Bench I can see the drama
 Below the Bench.
 Standing in the dock facing me is the accused,
 With a charge of murder hanging over his head,
 Pleading 'not guilty'.
 Seated in the well of the court is the Public Prosecutor,
 Brimming with confidence to secure a conviction
 Behind him sits the Defence Counsel looking serious though smiling,
 With his juniors carrying the law books
 His eyes fixed on me hopefully to get an acquittal,
 And set the accused free.
 To my left standing in the witness box is the witness,
 Making his vow to tell the truth and nothing but the truth.
 To my right in the jury box sit the seven jurors, the peers,
 Awaiting anxiously to know what the law is all about.
Fiat Justitia ruat caelum
 Let justice be done though heavens fall.
 Mounted on the Bench I could see the drama,
 Below the Bench.

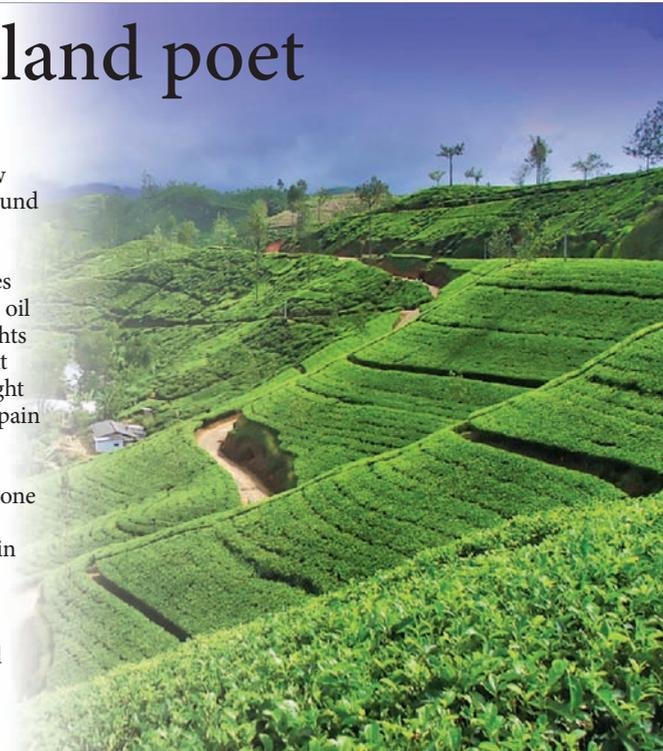
Justice P.H.K. Kulatilaka,
Former Judge, Court of Appeal.
Former Director, Judges' Institute.



An upland poet

Living besides
 Steep that incline
 Where winds blow
 Rain pelt on ground
 Bright sunshine
 Ravaging winds
 Move the giant tees
 Burning midnight oil
 Penning on thoughts
 Verses that delight
 Flow out such bright
 Words filled with pain
 Lines of sorrow
 Themes make sad
 Self-solitude, all alone
 Words pacify
 Success prints again
 Rare is his chance
 As elegy strikes
 Reaching all stars
 Poet in the upland
 Await his chance

Miran Perera



The trap

Strolling downhill one tranquil night
 With the beaming moon giving me its light.
 Whence, I heard the rustle of branches, and
 The patter of running feet from the yonder woods.
 Pausing to listen to the sounds once more,
 When reverberating gun shots were heard disturbing the reverie;
 He is dead, a trap laid for a poacher someone said,
 Who is the victim whispered another,
 Oh! caught in his trap it is the master, they chorused together.

Yasmin Jaldin

Life's vicissitudes

Kindness and affection
 Come from the heart
 For those you like and love
 Without any reservations
 I walked through life
 From youth to old age
 Fighting many battles
 For me and them
 I spent many a time with wounds
 Mingled with fears and hopes
 I have shed tears
 Fearing for their lives
 If I failed to hold on
 Time is overtaking me now
 I did my best
 With what I could
 I lost many a battle
 And won a few
 But I have failed all those whom I love
 Because I have nothing left to give
 Or leave behind
 For them to remember
 When I am gone

T.M. Ariyawansa Rodrigo

