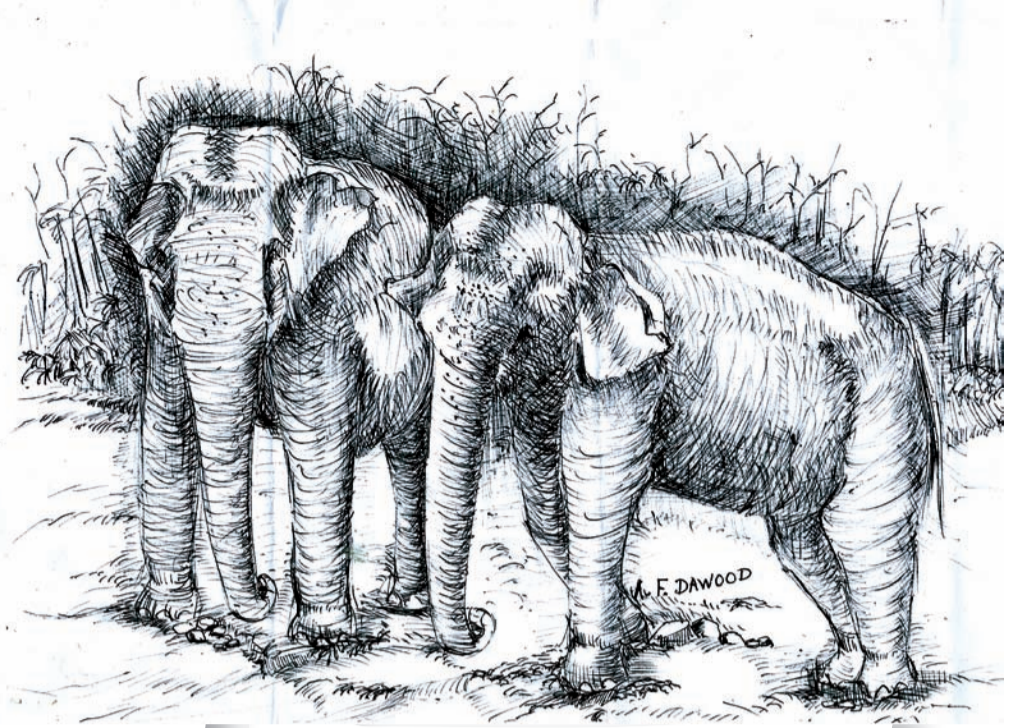


Voice for the voiceless, a brave heart speaks

Montage
Poetry

Elephant-human conflict

Jingle bells jingle bells jingle all the way
Though he shouldn't be distressed by my distress
Poor me, grand Santa Claus will never come in my way
My eyes rain tears of blood for thee Baby Jesus
Poor me, I'll never be able to enter your abode as a nun. The dream of my dreams.
Now the doors are all shut for me. Not my fault.
It was that brute the sinner who destroyed me.
My world goes black when I recall that dreadful night.
My father was a fisherman but when the sea goes rough he was penniless.
My kind mother used to feed us with crumbs of bread and leftovers.
I was a child of ten but my brother was seven a little more than a toddler.
We went to the church school just across the road.
We loved to play with kids who were alike. Those beautiful childhood days.
Jingle bells jingle bells jingle all the way
Poor me, Grand Santa will never come in my way.
My eyes rain tears of blood for thee Baby Jesus.
My beloved mother took wings to the 'Middle East a heaven on Earth they say.
Earn a quick buck to give us a better home full of sweets bread and butter;
Trusting our father will look after us, protect us from the vagaries of salt waters
sharks and tsunamis until she was back with us.
Albeit, it was not to be. Nights were to be lonely nights for me;
What might happen one such night I shuddered to think.
Jingle bells jingle bells jingle all the way
Poor me, Grand Santa will never come in my way.
My eyes rain tears of blood for thee Baby Jesus.
Money she earned shedding sweat and tears was sent to him
to feed our otherwise empty stomachs,
Was lavishly spent to fill the stomachs of his buddies with liquor and eats.
My father became a drunkard
Who were at fault? I don't know. My brother and I were left in the midstream stranded.
Nonetheless, every morning I found peace and comfort for my soul
By watching the nuns gleefully and gracefully stepping into the abode of Jesus
Can I ever be a nun. Was it merely a dream?
It was a moonless gloomy night.
My father started partying with his buddy friend. I sensed that Satan was around
Liquor was flowing in plenty;
Barbequed pork and chicken smelling fishy
Drinking, drinking and drinking non-stop,
Deep into the night.
Laughter sounding eerie and frightening.
A melancholy feeling hung in the air.
As they reeled drunkenly,
My dear brother and I stole into our room shivering.
I heard the midnight church bell hooting
In the dark I felt that Satan my father's demon buddy friend was around
He squashed me, crushed me and destroyed me.
I swallowed my tongue to save my brother
who was lying asleep by me.
It was devastating. It was horrible. I was battered, I was violated. I was totally lost.
Whole world went black for me.
Jingle bells jingle bells jingle all the way
Poor me, Grand Santa will never ever come in my way.
My eyes rain blood for thee Baby Jesus.
- Justice P.H.K. Kulatilaka
Former Director of Sri Lanka Judges Institute
[Based on a true story]



The purity of life



After day's silent work
The untiring sun kisses the horizon
And requests the moon
To reflect soft light
To the humans of Earth.
Now the sea is calm
A little girl child,
With the flower of smile
Blooming on the innocent face
Is riding a paddling bike
Along the beach road.
She is simply attired - unassuming
Barefoot and hair is undone.
With unsophisticated facial expressions,
Is the centre of attraction
Of the passers-by.
Her carefree movements
Are the natural rhythms of life.
She is not conditioned
By the social norms and values.
She is the purity of life
with no division whatsoever.
She is ego - free with joy causeless.
She is simply life.
Her beauty is beauty of life.
She has no divisive knowledge.
To divide mankind into ideologies.
'Vedanta' being the ending of knowledge
Is the beginning of wisdom.
With the wisdom - love is born.
With love no problems can exist.
Love is the supreme beauty of life.
The child rode her bike
On the long journey of life
With the story of mankind
And that never ends!
- N. Widanagamage

Biggest herbivore on earth,
Elephant is Sri Lanka's pride;
Stands supreme in the forest
For its majestic bearing.
A lord of the jungle, the beast
Abuses not his mammoth size
To dominate other small beasts,
But co-exists with all in the wild.
From days of yore have elephants slaved
To serve man in manifold ways;
Logs and rocks to work site conveyed
Temples, tanks built with pachyderm help.
Elephants figured in warfare
On them rode the kings of yore;
One such beast is "Dutu's Kandula".
Elephants' labour found in Lanka's ruins
Parakrama Samudra, Kalawewa
Would not be nor the dagobas
Abhayagiri, Mirisawetiya or Ruwanweli seya
In modern era Kandula's progenies
A major tourist attraction;
Elephant bath, dance and circus;
Sacred Tooth Relic on caparisoned tusker
Strides in Esala perahera.
But fall a prey these harmless beasts
To poachers' bullets for selfless gain;
Subject they the beasts to lingering death
And take the tusks from the bloody skulls,
Or drug the mother to rob the calf.
Prevails "man and elephant" conflict
For encroaches man the jungle domain
And shrink the jungle by human habitation.
Invade the elephants man's hovels-
Their revenge against mankind
For all the misdemeanour done to them;
This conflict between man and elephant,
Definitely, a precursor to elephant extinction.
(Note: "Dutu's Kandula means King Dutugemunu's
elephant Kandula)
-A.F. Dawood

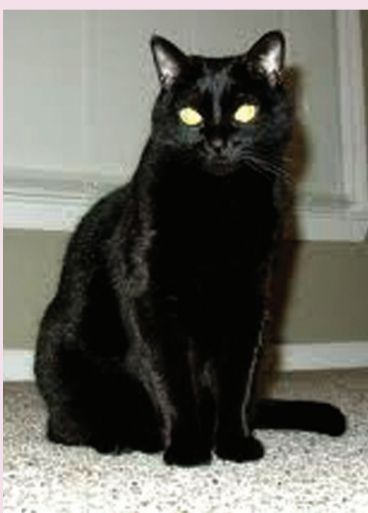
Easter

A decisive hour
Atop Calvary
The gibbet
Beneath skies
As it trembled
News spread
Jerusalem wept
Clinging to life
Precarious end
As God offered
Life in favour
Change salvation
Locked doors
Deserted houses
Pin drop silence
Then trembling again
Satan avenged
Infamous Jerusalem
Sealed the end
As world embraced
Christ our Lord
- Miran Perera

A fervent wish

'Midst thunderous burst of crackers, song and dance
And revelry galore another New Year has dawned
And deep in the core of the heart and mind
Of every fellow countryman
There lingers this wish for abiding peace and
contentment
In our native land.
Then what shall we wish for thee
Loved land of our birth
'Midst this uproarious gaiety, rejoicing, merriment
and mirth
What, but that thy children be united evermore
Serene in peace and contentment
A New Year raises hopes and aspirations high
That the mystic aura of a brand New Year
May not our hopes belie.
- Jeannette Cabraal

The hunter



The moonbeams were pouring down from the sky
They shredded through leaves making intricate designs
I watched them tremble on trees and bushes
And make them glisten with the golden rays.
At once I saw some leaves under a bush
Wavering slowly in a different style
Neither the moon beams nor the winds
Made them so: Then who was it?
Two green eyes were dazzling through,
A black, shining fur was slowly moving,
They revealed who this hunter was
Approaching slowly a hidden target.
Inch by inch it steered forward,
Suddenly it darted. Oh, what a screech!
Out of the bush the hunter sneaked
The gasping prey was hanging from its mouth.
Alas! It was a little grey mouse
Who was enjoying some rubbish underneath.
Caught as prey by a big black cat
Black cats are good hunters, I've always heard.
- Lalitha Somathilaka

Eternal delights

Being enamoured with nature
Culling the prettiest of flowers
Noblest and sublime desires
Slake our deepest of passions
Concealed are sublime wishes
In our innermost being and ethos
Each one seeks the highest
To achieve the best in life
All glamour, power and pelf
Vanish with the climax of life
All things pass away in due course
Ephemeral are fleeting pleasures
Why seek material possessions
The transitory, momentary in life
Celestial delights are everlasting
We yearn to gain eternal bliss
- Christie Fernando



Crushed hopes

Speelbound was I,
Seeing the mosaic
Of a myriad dew drops
Once glistening in the morning glow,
On a bud yet to bloom to the day,
Little but I knew then
Of the wrath of the noon day rays;
That robbed mercilessly
The gleeful youth
Of a little bud brimming with life.
- Chanakya Liyanage