

Montage Poetry



The Month of Esala

Ahala trees are abound with flowers
With yellow flowers cascading down.
Birds and bees are hovering around
Giving the lovely musical background.
The red spiny rambuttan,
Sweet fleshy mangosteen
Along with stinking durian
Are piled on the pavements for sale.
Pageants colourful, bright and charming.
Roaming the streets, the seasonal rituals.
Kandy perahera, Kataragama festival
Marking our isle a tourist spot.
A revival of our traditional dancing
With drummers, in bright beaded costumes.
Richly dresses elephants majestically walking
Along the streets, some dancing to the tunes.
Even the small temples on their own
Come alive with pageants small
With dancing troupes and the 'mal bicycles'
And sometimes with an elephant or two.
A 'Summer Festival' is the Esala month
Isn't it a change from our day to day life?

- Lalitha Somathilaka

The golden sweat

Working in the field
on the road
at building sites
at quarries
in deep mines – and the like,
Men work
under the scorching sun
shedding sweat profusely
that shines
in the scorching sun
that speaks of the volumes
the capacity
they hold
to sustain – the burden
that keeps weight
on their heads
to upkeep the living
amidst
untold strain and sufferings.
The rays of the hot sun
make
the so-called sweat golden
in colour,
In fact,
it is golden – yes, it's golden
in the full sense of the word
as the earth flourishes
when the sweat
producing with
hard labour
mixes with the soil,
that brings
prosperity
that speaks of
great fortune
in my motherland.

- Ajith Karunarathna

Negatives

He was a youth taken to photography
As a profession
Having had potency aplenty,
In his chosen field of art
Was perennially commissioned to cover
Wedding ceremonies in star class hotels
It was on such an event of conjugal alliance
That he met her.
She was very pretty and vivacious
Conducive to be a model for photography
For he reckoned her to be photogenic.
She treated him with a whimsical smile
With a twinkle in one eye
Having decided to catch her on celluloid,
Courtesy demanded his seeking consent
She receded her assent
With a female smile
The elation of the youth being
Dipped in a delightful deluge
For he reckoned that the event was a prelude
To better things to follow,
With circumspection did he work
To record the figure at various angles.
After cautious printing
And bearing in mind the satiation
That his efforts were successful,
He cordially invited the lass
To collect the results of his effort
The invitation was answered with naught delay
He handed over the white cover
Containing the pictures with ebullience
With his mind replete
With hopes and aspirations
Surging in a paroxysm
That his desired and was achieved
She accepted the cover treating
Him with a female smile
Which obviously feigned
And vanished
Never ever to be seen or heard any more.
The youth was left with
only the negatives

- Kamal Premadasa

Mother, an ocean of love



Mother is an ocean of love
Whether human, bird or cow
She would sacrifice her own life
To safeguard her offspring without any gripe.
The Buddha has given the mother the second place
In comparing the loving kindness of his own grace
To a mother her child is her greatest treasure
Her love and kindness to it no one can measure.
When with child a mother undergoes immense pains
Like a drought-stricken one awaits cooling rains
She longs to see her freshly-born babe's writhing face
As if to receive the cup won in a ten mile race
A mother always musters her whole might
To make her child more comfortable and bright
Devoting her entire life for its welfare
There is nothing for her child she would not bear.
When old we should pay back her dues
By loving her as long as she lives
Those who don't treat their mothers well
Will have to suffer for aeons in burning hell.
If you admit your mother to a house of old age
You will be subject to the deities' rage
And will have to undergo punishment untold
Under the hands of your own children when old.
According to our traditional Buddhist norm
Mother is the second Buddha at one's home
So we must pay her due obeisance and homage
And when she is no more, worship her image.

- Davidson Goonatilleke