

An ode

I bear nothing tangible
To offer you
Darling Druvinka
Deserving distinction
And ought to my mind
Is seemingly inadequate,
But I do have
Something
Of high value
Virtuosity and profundity
In intangible form
Love, fondness
Affection and admiration
Which emerging

extemporaneously
From the depth
Of my heart
In a paroxysm
Of surge
Pain would I
Lavish upon you
With the abundance
Of my heart
On your tenth
Joyous birthday
Encapsulated
In this little

Kamal Premadasa

The grand old mansion

The dazzling moonbeams were streaming down
Reflecting the splendour of the grand old mansion.
A palace indeed, I gladly murmured
Sitting on the glossy, green-carpeted lawn.
The creamy coloured walls, with silky, lace curtains
That slowly wavered with the cool night breeze.
The soft, lulling melody from the grand piano
Was creeping through the open windows.
The polished brass hinges, locks that shone
With the falling rays of the golden moon.
Fireflies, glow-worms and nightly insects
Zigzagging through the well-trimmed bushes
The sweet enticing fragrance of the nightly blossoms
Pierced my nostrils with a soothing effect
The flapping of bats, among the mango leaves
Drove away the nocturnal silence.
My eyes were wet, I opened my eyes,
'twas only a dream, I then realised.
'A cluster of cottages,' I murmured to myself
'Stands there now, and nothing else.'
For, the grand old mansion is there no more.



- Lalitha Somathilaka

An ode to freedom

My heart is a harp
Seeking ecstatic joy
Like a carefree bird
Flying towards azure sky
Fluttering its wings
In unison; a rare display
Of nature's pristine beauty
Marvelling all to a pervading
Human spirit of freedom
In contrast
There are gloomy days
Of turmoil
Piercing my heart
With a hunter's arrow of precision
And I cry aloud
In acute pain, mounting fear
And falling headlong to the
precipice of
desperation
Then suddenly
A miracle happens
As destiny predicted
I plan an escape
With a hermit's admirable
Patience and perceptive foresight
Running towards
The heavenly bliss of happiness
Feeling strong
And courageous,
As somebody is
Surely pushing me
Towards the winning goal
And I am convinced
That a benign spirit is
Protecting me from any harm
As I reach the summit
Running faster than the wind
Singing in harmony
A melodious song
Spreading, throughout the world
A long-standing
Human-nature's marvel
Of freedom
Liberating me from all the fetters of
bondage

Ranjan M. Amarasinghe

"Ravana Tales",
A bone of contention no more
'tis neither legend nor myth
The veracity proves beyond doubt.
Ravana,
Grandson of the Maha Rishi Pulasti
And son of Vishravasmuni, alias Vesamuni,
A human offspring was born and bred
In the "Yaksha" clan in the "Yaj"
Spelling much veneration and respect.
As a "Dassis" was he perceived
With ten heads controlling twenty arms
And a boundless intellect and skills,
A human god indeed!
Ravana
His material cousin, his step brother as well
King Kuvera of Sigiriya
He dared dispossession.
The magnificent abode, the
"Alakamandava" and
The aircraft "Pushpaka" he seized,
For his own self the kingship to wrest.
Ravana, the King,
The first of all kings,
The precursor of Lanka's royal dynasty
Thereafter did reign in triumph.
The great king Ravana of Lankapura
In the fortress thus gained
A palatial dwelling created,
Complete with a pond atop the rock.
Amidst a mirrored wall and paintings
To date frescoed resides
The great King Ravana's queen,
Queen Mandodari.
King Ravana the Great
A plethora of evidence to his greatness
Buried within the rocky citadel lies.
The cultural inheritance, a pinnacle
Is Lanka's glorious pre-historic culture
Of that megalithic era of yore.

Trixie Marthenesz

Grandma's kitchen

Grandma the matriarch,
The queen of her realm,
Her country kitchen, a special place,
In her love-washed home.
Bananas, bunches ripe, half ripe,
Gold, green and sometimes red
Flaunting themselves, as they hang,
There, in grandma's kitchen.
Home-made honey from the kitul tree,
Filled in gourds,
Dried breadfruit, jak - *atu-kos*,
Swinging in parcels above the hearth,
From rafters lovingly blackened, with age....
To use on a rainy day!
The all pervading scent,
Of sweetmeats made by grandma's hands,
Carefully stored away
From little prying eyes,
Searching, searching everywhere -
"When can we have some
Grandma?"
Pearly grains of rice
In a village rice-box of a bygone age,
All these treasures
And many, many more,
Carefully stacked away
In grandma's kitchen
This is where we sometimes sat and ate,
Boiled jak, dried fish, scraped coconut,
Rich and spicy curries made by her
And hugely relished.
She is still the queen,
At a sprightly age of eighty-two perhaps,
The scents, the tastes, her proud domain
Still the same
Like her.

Verna L. de Silva

The only thing unchanged



The rolling waters I heard from afar
My mind's eye was recalling the past.
The beach I loved, the one I played
Six decades ago, when I was small.
The incessant waves that rolled along
Encircling my legs with its bubbling waters.
The shivering sands itching under my feet
When the rolling waves, back home they rolled.
Tiny sea-crabs dragged by the waters
Trying to hide in the golden sand.
How we jumped and screamed aloud
When sandy castles were flattened in a flash.
The sound of a wave dashing like thunder
Broke my dream. Back to the earth I came.
Where was the beach? Only dark black boulders
Where the waves dashed and sprinkled around.
Through the tears that filmed my eyes
I saw the big sun mocking at me:
"You too are old; you too have changed,
I'm the only thing that hasn't changed at all."

- Lalitha Somathilaka

Stillness

In one golden dusk,
I walked along the stony ways
Where my ancestors rest
With my shadow trailing behind me,
I read the inscriptions
On each stone,
'May he rest in peace'
'May the angels sing thee to thy sleep'
'May he attain Nibbana'
The years of death and birth writ on them.
Suddenly I heard a soft sound,
Whispering goodbye to me
I turned round to see who he was,
Then saw my shadow leaving me,
Slowly I embraced stillness.

Anula Peramune

Walk softly, friend

Walk softly, friend,
We walk the road to dreams
of yesteryear....
Once childhood friends,
We've briefly met again,
And in between
The waters of so many years
have flowed
Beneath the bridge of life
Walk softly, friend.

Walk softly, friend,
So many things have changed
In this our island home.
The red-earth paths,
Where barefoot once we ran,
Are tar-black roads.
Yet, memories are sweet,
Walk softly, friend.
Walk softly, friend,
Along the maze of time...

Soon we will part - go back to
sterile city lives.
Perhaps, to meet again, who knows,
So fleetingly, another time.
It's good to know
Old bonds have withstood time,
And so,
Until we meet again,
Walk softly, friend.

- Verna L. de Silva

