

Castles in the air

Montage
Poetry



Sitting on the beach at sunset one day,
I watched the others, how they enjoyed the day.
Children were rolling, running and playing
How fresh they look! What a lovely sight.
A little away where the waters invaded
Some were making a sandy castle.
Parents seated on the golden beach
Watching their children running and playing
They too were making castles in the air
About their heirs, what their futures would be.
Happily seated were some couples on the boulder
With open umbrellas giving them shelter

Unaware were they, of things happening around
They too must be making castles in the air.
A wave invaded the sandy castle
Down came the structure, pillars, dome and all
Happily shouted the children who made it
To see their castle being washed away.
But if,
The castles made by the parents, the couples,
(Although they make them only in the air)
Tumble down and vanish away,
Would they too enjoy like those happy kids?
- **Lalitha Somathilaka**



The lost landscape

Break of day dawns to the cool warmth
Of the tender eye of heaven, struggling
To ripple down through the lush florescence of arboreal mon-
archs.

The green carpet of the sprawling paddy stretches
Swaying and dancing to the tune of the rustle
Of leaves and the medley of music
Unleashed by the winged-ones, promising a smile
Of contentment on the lips of those who
Sweated and pined on the parched land
But this is the time when the brimful tanks
kiss and caress the shapely bodies of pretty lasses
Darkness invades, the sporadic silvery patches of light
As those on the body of a leper!
Frightening silence pierced by the
Growling howling, groaning and roaring
The wailing cry of the Ulama
As of a woman weeping, breaks the silence
Some startled out of their messa
Helplessly hearken!
In this weird and hellish backdrop
Whose war cries and yodels resonate the landscape
In tune with the ulama's song?

Not of the "Devils Disciples" in
Roaring, rolling, bones cracking, body crushing
Devils on wheels
Spouting fire and death to everything and everyone all around
Not of the silvery devils spewing
Fire, death and carnage from the sky !
Whose war cries and yodels
Resonate in the landscape
In fusion with the songs of angels?
They are of those combatants
Whose sinewy arms, nimble feet and
Dare devil spirit did not wait in hiding
For the foe
But flushed him out and went for the frontal attack
Those hardy handsome men
Won
Not with the twist of a finger
But with a jerk of a muscle!
The lost landscape!
The Promised Land?
- **H.A. Siriwardena**
Ulama: a bird whose midnight cry presages disaster
Messa: a wooden platform in a chena used as a bed