

POEMS



Memories

When the wind blows
And the *Koha* sings,
My mind goes back to days of yore.
The aroma of *Kevums*
The trays of sweetmeats,
The sound of crackers,
The glistening of *fire sticks*,
The speed of the *Catherine Wheels*,
The little ones so jubilant,
Clad in new clothes,
A New Year has dawned!
Visiting elders, offering betel,
Receiving gifts,
Welcoming visitors - an open house,
Age old customs observed.
Time has swiftly flown
Robbing them of their carefree days.
They're all grown up, and over the seas,
And when the *Erabudu* blooms
And the *Koha* sings,
Treasured memories come gushing in.
To them, when *Avurudu* dawns,
Their hearts come home to me.

- Rupa Wijesinghe



The potter woman

Too old she was to work anymore
She spent her day squatting on
the floor.
Her young granddaughter she
saw at the wheel
A beautiful pot she was creating.

Her wrinkled face covered up
with smiles
Her mind travelled back to her
own young days.
When the glaring rays of the
scorching sun
Had poured down and dried up
the tanks

Raw soil from their naked beds
Supplied the source for their live-
lihood.
Seasoning the soil with sand and
water,
Slicing, kneading while mixing
with their sweat.

Their creative minds moulded
new pots
With the soft clay that they have
fashioned
The '*sakaporuwa*' how actively
she spun!

The turning wheel that made the
pots

When a new creation appeared
on the wheel
Around her lips played a thin
smile
"No more will I have that smile
again,"
She soliloquised with a deep sigh.

Drying, burning and packing for
sale
How carefully they worked, she
well knew.
Smooth and delicate their crea-
tions were
A slight mishap may ruin them
all.

"People admire the smoothness
and beauty,"
Smiling softly she said to herself.
"Difficulties and hardships we've
faced,
Hardly had they ever realised."

- Lalitha Somathilaka