

The snake

“A snake! A snake!”
 I heard some urchins shouting on the road.
 A snake was challenging them.
 Its hood was open; its beady eyes were glittering.
 “What harm has it done?” I wanted to ask.
 But - A poisonous snake is not to be spared,
 Isn't that what we believe?

A cheer from the crowd! The fight was over.
 An ugly black snake was lying inert
 Still wriggling, trying to breathe.
 Death, even to a poisonous snake
 Is not what its owner wishes,
 “To live” is what he wants.

How many humans worse than poisonous snakes
 Do we encounter in our lives?
 Without the word “poisonous” prefixed to them
 They all survive.
 Dear snake, with that prefix marked on your head,
 You are doomed to die.

Why did you come out of your hiding place?
 If not, you'd be still living.

- *Lalitha Somathilaka*



The welcome shower

Lightning flashed across the sky
 Stormy clouds floated by
 Rolling thunder, roared on yonder
 Will the heavens melt, one wonders!

Suddenly, swiftly came the rain,
 Gurgling merrily down the drain,
 Beating on the trees and leaves
 Pattering on the roofs and caves.

The searing drought,
 The crackling heat,
 A menacing blackout
 The rain did beat.

Like the fairy's magic wand
 Changed the face of mother land
 A heavenly smell did surround
 Every lived, thing around.

Crawled the slugs and snails and snakes,
 Shining in their coats of slime
 Sang the birds, in gleeful rhyme
 For the rain, that filled our lakes.

- *N. Mukthar*