

Ganesha-amma

<i>Ganesha-amma talk to me, From the flesh of the dead Kings made your image, With blood of the living Crimsoned your face, Songs of curse Sung in your name, In waters of sorrow Immersed your fame.</i>	<i>Ganesha-amma talk to me, Do you not flow In every drop of tear? Do you not reach In every scream of fear? Do you not soothe Every father's wrinkle? Do you not hold Every child's tremble?</i>	<i>Ganesha-amma talk to me, Your glory blinds the fire Your compassion feeds each fly Your wisdom deeper than the ocean Your love larger than the sky. Why then do you not see The agony of this mangled earth? Ganesha-amma talk to me, In this din I hear no other.</i>
---	---	---

Sitamata

<i>Wading through water Walking through forests Drenched in rain Cut feet and torn saree. Left alone to face This market, that road This angry, that lewd This rare, kind word. Where did her hair give Way to deep wrinkles? When did a young girl Become a mother? Sew a wedding blouse Sell some pappads Save on book covers Clean some dishes? Ten rupees per child Lead them to the gate Fourteen of the world, Two of them her own Did Raman see her thus? Bent by fourteen bags Sitamata take her Luv and Kush to school?</i>	<i>I worship this mother Bent by fourteen bags Sayeeda takes her Luv and Kush to school. Janaka and little Janaki No water on a Sunday Neither electricity Carried a bucket of water Janaka and little Janaki. To keep up with him Her feet moved twice as fast. Admission to school A nightmare for the family Interviewed the school teacher Janaka and little Janaki. Alphabet in three tongues She recited twice as fast. A self-contained flat A doctor within the colony Neighbours were kind Janaka and little Janaki. Shy at first but soon She made friends twice as fast. Different they were</i>	<i>Not in compassion nor piety Not in love nor sorrow Janaka and little Janaki. Her mother wore the burqua She forgot twice as fast. Worship of a brick A festival in the country Watched from their window Janaka and little Janaki. At the burst of fire-crackers Her heart beat twice as fast. Found a new home Less water, farther from the city Another school and doctor Janaka and little Janaki. Safer to be with kith and kin Her goodbye waved twice as fast. Demons, nay humans, brought Fire and scorched humanity On every home there Janaka and little Janaki. I wonder, if they lived Did her tears flow twice as fast?</i>
--	---	--

S. Kanthimathi