

The Uniqueness of our Lovers

Our pair of lovers had grown long legs to run
into the great woodlands of lovemaking for making love.
A sprint to escape the chase of head-slashing swords.
From one far end to the other in the earth's direction.
From one frontier of a direction, to the farthest corner of the other.
Running with a tilt as if having mastered
the art of tilting the axis of the globe.
Through the cold breeze-penetrating great woodlands,
against the challenging waterfall spray,
with hands held tightly together
to pierce into the radiation of fear.
From that tall crest they jumped
only to experience the ecstasy of
meeting death with their heads intact.
Looking into the deep chasm of centuries
they ran and jumped with the half-hearted hope of
getting back to another life.
They jumped with their mane of love held high.
But the scythes and the swords
thirsting for hecatomb jumped even before them
and severed their heads.

The Trees of our Land

Men and women in our land loved each other,
 only to be hanged like bunches of
 bananas on trees.
 Feeling the hot kisses of the previous night
 still warm on the lips,
 staring at the mastwood tree her mother
 used to say is her elder sister¹,
 while crossing the woods,
 a sister, a sister she etched in her heart,
 the gigantic tree.
 Setting a branch aside for her older sister too,
 she and he dried themselves with the body-stripped dress of the tree,
 even before the sun could see the world.
 The tree wept thinking of the mother seed.
 The hidden roots wailed in memory of the wind
 that had swept it there.
 And they groaned with an exaggerated fatigue.
 The aging tree,
 rediscovered as history,
 would go buried deep into the soil as a fossil.
 The trunk that looks large like a pregnant waist
 has to bear a weight immeasurable in words.
 For him who came closer
 fondling the tender breasts of the younger sister
 who imagined the feet that raised above as flowers,
 it burnt prematurely even as he kissed her.
 The tall trees at the crossroads
 wait for lovers
 to hang from them.

¹ A reference from Natrinai, one of the branches of Tamil Sangam literature.

My Language, my Palm Wine

My language is my palm wine.
 My body is a huge harp².
 Breasts that music and music and multiply.
 The music that conduces to the
 tenderness of fingers.
 The language that conjugates
 for all the six seasons, the six periods of a day,
 and the five-fold land
 is my palm-wine.
 On days my mania peaks,
 my huge harp sings with all its strings quaking.
 Why, even as the entire cosmos quakes.
 It was this way, Avvai³ was born.
 The huge harp grows and grows as all the blood vessels tremor,
 and at night the palm trees tremble and moan.
 Thence my language is my palm wine.
 Our Isakki⁴, with her never ending youthfulness,
 would get into my dream
 and breastfeed me.
 My huge harp has never been anything else
 other than a woman.
 And today a man brought back
 the time notes and the unwearied memories of the bloodstream music
 with his fingertips.

² In Tamil, the source language of the poem, it is Periyaazh. A periyazh is an ancient stringed instrument mentioned in old Tamil Sangam literature. The two-part treble-bass instrument had 21 strings.

³ Avvai is an eminent female poet of the Sangam Age in Tamil literature.

⁴ Isakki is an ancient goddess of the Tamils