Classic Poetry Series

Kalidasa

- 21 poems -

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Kalidasa (4th Century - 5th Century)

Kalidasa (Devanāgarī: □□□□□□□ "servant of Kali") was a renowned Classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist in the Sanskrit language. His floruit cannot be dated with precision, but most likely falls within 4th Century AD.

His plays and poetry are primarily based on Hindu Puranas and philosophy.

Life

Nothing apart from his works is known with certainty about the life of Kālidāsa, such as his period or where he lived. Little is known about Kālidāsa's life. According to legend, he was known for his beauty, which brought him to the attention of Princess Vidyottama and she married him. However, as legend has it, Kālidāsa had grown up without much education, and the princess was ashamed of his ignorance and coarseness. A devoted worshipper of Kali (by other accounts of Saraswati), Kālidāsa is said to have called upon his goddess for help when he was going to commit suicide in a well after he was humiliated by his wife, and was rewarded with a sudden and extraordinary gift of wit. He is then said to have become the most brilliant of the "nine gems" at the court of the king Vikramaditya of Ujjain. Legend also has it that he was murdered by a courtesan in Sri Lanka during the reign of Kumaradasa.

Date

A terminus ante quem is given by the Aihole Prashasti of 634 AD, which has a reference to his skills; and a terminus post quem can be presumed from his play Mālavikāgnimitra in as much as the hero, King Agnimitra of the Shunga dynasty, assumed the throne of Magadha in 152 BC. The linguistic features of the Prakrit dialects used by some of the minor characters in his plays have been adduced to suggest that he could not have lived before the 3rd century AD. There has been great ambiguity regarding the exact date of Kālidāsa but in 1986, Sanskrit scholar Ramchandra Tiwari of Bhopal claims to have conducted a thorough research on Kalidasa and after analysing 627 archaeological evidences which included 104 sculptures, 30 pictures and 493 scriptural words determined that Kalidasa lived in the period 370-450AD.

In his works, Kālidāsa did not mention any king as his patron, or any dynasty other than the Shunga dynasty, but several historians have credited the traditional account of Kālidāsa as one of the "nine gems" at the court of a king named Vikramāditya. There were, however, several kings in ancient India by that name. One among them was the emperor Vikramaditya of Ujjain who founded the Vikrama Samvat following his victory over the Sakas

in 56 BCE. Scholars have noted other possible associations with the Gupta dynasty, which would put his date in the range of 300-470 AD:

* His play about a couple in Vedic Puranas, Pururavas and Urvashi, being titled Vikramorvashīya, with "Vikram" for "Pururavas", could be an indirect tribute to a patron possibly named Vikramāditya.

* Kumār Gupta I was the son of Chandragupta II Vikramāditya. The title of Kālidāsa's epic poem, Kumārasambhava, about the begetting of Kartikeya, the god of war who was the son of Siva and Pārvati, could be an indirect tribute to either of these royal patrons.

* The mention of Huns in his epic poem, Raghuva□śa, could be a veiled reference to the victory over them in 455 of Kumāragupta's son and successor, Skandagupta. Alternatively, the campaign of Raghu in this poem may have been modeled on the celebrated campaigns of Chandragupta II Vikramāditya's father, Samudragupta.

M R Kale in the introduction of his translation of Kumarasambhava and Saradaranjan Ray in his introduction to the translation of Abhijnana Sakunthalam places the date of Kalidasa to be about 56 BC or earlier. The main evidence comes from the works of philosopher-poet Aśvagho□a whose date is in 1st century AD. Aśvagho□a has used many passages similar to that of Kalidasa. Since Kalidasa was an original poet, it is extremely unlikely that he borrowed from Asvaghosha being a philosopher and mostly considered an artificial poet, and with a much more chance would have done so. Kale also adds that some aspects of language used by Asvaghosa seem to be later and the similarities in the styles suggest that their dates are not widely separated. Kale also gives much additional evidence that can be found internally from Kalidasa's works to substantiate his claims. These claims, together with the facts of king Vikrama, Kalidasa's love and knowledge of the city of Ujjain, suggests that Kalidasa was probably with Vikramaditya of 1st century BCE.

Location

Scholars have speculated that Kālidāsa may have lived either near the Himalayas or in the vicinity of Ujjain or in Kalinga. The three speculations are based respectively on Kālidāsa's detailed description of the Himalayas in his Kumārasambhava, the display of his love for Ujjain in Meghadūta and his highly eulogistic quotes for Kalingan emperor Hemāngada in Raghuva□śa (sixth sarga).

Works

Kālidāsa wrote three plays. Among them, Abhijñānaśākuntalam ("Of Shakuntala recognised by a token") is generally regarded as a masterpiece. It was among the first Sanskrit works to be translated into English, and has since been translated into many languages.

Mālavikāgnimitram ("Mālavikā and Agnimitra") tells the story of King Agnimitra, who falls in love with the picture of an exiled servant girl named Mālavikā. When the queen discovers her husband's passion for this girl, she becomes infuriated and has Mālavikā imprisoned, but as fate would have it, Mālavikā is in fact a true-born princess, thus legitimizing the affair.

Abhijñānaśākuntalam ("Of Shakuntala recognised by a token") tells the story of King Dushyanta who, while on a hunting trip, meets Shakuntalā, the adopted daughter of a sage, and marries her. A mishap befalls them when he is summoned back to court: Shakuntala, pregnant with their child, inadvertently offends a visiting sage and incurs a curse, by which Dushyanta will forget her completely until he sees the ring he has left with her. On her trip to Dushyanta's court in an advanced state of pregnancy, she loses the ring, and has to come away unrecognized. The ring is found by a fisherman who recognizes the royal seal and returns it to Dushyanta, who regains his memory of Shakuntala and sets out to find her. After more travails, they are finally reunited.

Vikramōrvaśīyam ("Pertaining to Vikrama and Urvashi") tells the story of mortal King Pururavas and celestial nymph Urvashi who fall in love. As an immortal, she has to return to the heavens, where an unfortunate accident causes her to be sent back to the earth as a mortal with the curse that she will die (and thus return to heaven) the moment her lover lays his eyes on the child which she will bear him. After a series of mishaps, including Urvashi's temporary transformation into a vine, the curse is lifted, and the lovers are allowed to remain together on the earth.

Kālidāsa is the author of two epic poems, Raghuva□śa ("Dynasty of Raghu") and Kumārasambhava ("Birth of Kumāra"). Among his lyric poems are Meghadūta ("Cloud Messenger") and □tusa□hāra ("The Exposition on the Seasons").

* Raghuva□śa is an epic poem about the kings of the Raghu dynasty.
* Kumārasambhava is an epic poem which narrates the birth of Kartikeya, Parvati being sent by her father to serve the meditating Siva, Manmadha attempting to create love in Siva for Parvati, Siva destroying Manmadha in his fury, Parvati's penance for Siva, Siva agreeing to marry Parvati, Siva and Parvati living in marital bliss, etc.
* □tusa□hāra describes the six seasons by narrating the experiences of two lovers in each of the seasons.
* Meghadūta or Meghasāndesa is the story of a Yaksha trying to send a message to his lover through a cloud. Kalidasa set this poem to the 'mandākrānta' meter known for its lyrical sweetness. It is one of Kalidasa's most popular poems and numerous commentaries on the work have been written.

Style

Kālidāsa's poetry is celebrated for its beautiful imagery and use of similes. The following are some specimen verses from his works.

One celebrated example occurs in the Kumārasambhava. Umā (Parvati) has been meditating even throughout the summer, and as the monsoon arrives, the first raindrop falls on her:

"Nikāmataptā vividhena vahninā
nabhaścare□endhanasa□bh□tena ca □
tapātyaye vāribhir uk□itā navair
bhuvā saho□mā□am amuñcad ūrdhvagam □

Sthitā□ k□a□a□ pak□masu tā□itādharā□
payodharotsedhanipātacūr□itā□ □
valī□u tasyā□ skhalitā□ prapedire
cire□a nābhi□ prathamodabindava□ □"
— Kumārasambhava 5.23–24

"Still sat Umā though scorched by various flame
Of solar fire and fires of kindled birth,
Until at summer's end the waters came.
Steam rose from her body as it rose from earth.

With momentary pause the first drops rest
Upon her lash then strike her nether lip,
Fracture upon the highland of her breast,
Across the ladder of her waist then trip
And slowly at her navel come to rest."
— translation by Ingalls

The beauty of this verse is held to result from "the association through suggestion of numerous harmonious ideas". Firstly (as described in Mallinatha's commentary), the description suggests signs of her physical beauty: long eyelashes, pouting lower lip, hard breasts large enough to touch each other, deep navel, and so on. Secondly (as described in Appayya Dikshita's commentary), it suggests her pose as a perfect yoginī: her

motionlessness through pain and pleasure, her posture, and so on. Finally, and more subtly, in comparing the mother goddess to the mother earth, and the rain coursing down her as it courses over the surface of the earth, it suggests earthly fertility. Thus the verse harmoniously brings to mind beauty, self-restraint, and fertility.

In another work, King Aja grieves over the death of Indumati and is consoled by a hermit:

"na p□thagjanavac chuco vaśa□ vaśinām uttama gantum arhasi □
drumasānumatā□ kim antara□ yadi vāyau dvitaye 'pi te calā□ □"
—Raghuva□śa 8.90

"O king! you are the finest among men with self-control. It is not fit of you to be struck by sorrow like the ordinary folk. If a great wind can move a tree and a mountain equally, how is the mountain better?"

Dushyanta describes Shakuntala to his friend:

"anāghrāta□ pu□pa□ kisalayam alūna□ kara-ruhair
anāviddha□ ratna□ madhu navam anāsvādita-rasam□
akha□□a□ pu□yānā□ phalam iva ca tad-rūpam anagha□
na jāne bhoktāra□ kam iha samupasthāsyati vidhi□□"
— Abhijñānaśākuntalam 2.10
"She seems a flower whose fragrance none has tasted,
A gem uncut by workman's tool,
A branch no desecrating hands have wasted,
Fresh honey, beautifully cool.

No man on earth deserves to taste her beauty,
Her blameless loveliness and worth,
Unless he has fulfilled man's perfect duty—
And is there such a one on earth?"
— translation by Arthur W. Ryder

At Indumati's swayamvara, princes are downcast as she passes by without showing interest:
"sa□cāri□ī dīpaśikheva rātrau
ya□ ya□ vyatīyāya pati□varā sā□
narendramārgā□□a iva prapede
vivar□abhāvā□ sa sa bhūmipāla□ □"
— Raghuva□śa 6.67

As Indumati walked past each king and went to the next king (in a ceremony of choosing her husband), the king's face would turn bright and then pale. It was like watching a line of houses in the night as a dazzling lamp passed by.
— literal translation
And every prince rejected while she sought
A husband, darkly frowned, as turrets, bright
One moment with the flame from torches caught,
Frown gloomily again and sink in night.
—Ryder

Dasharatha's hunt:

api turagasamīpād utpatanta□ mayūra□
na sa rucirakalāpa□ bā□alak□yī cakāra□
sapadi gatamanaskaś citramālyānukīr□e
rativigalitabandhe keśapāśe priyāyā□□
—Raghuva□śa 9.67

Dasaratha saw many beasts as he was hunting. Although he saw a peacock fly very close to his chariot, he did not shoot his arrow. For, as the peacock spread its tail feathers before him, it reminded him of his wife's hair adorned with flowers of different kinds and how it would become disarranged during their lovemaking.
Rama's coronation is announced:

sā paurān paurakāntasya rāmasyābhyudayaśruti□□
pratyeka□ hlādayā□ cakre kulyevodyānapādapān□
— Raghuva□śa 2.13

The news of the beloved Rama being crowned as king gave special joy to every citizen, like a stream that wets every tree in a garden.

The loveliest verses of Kalidasa, are found in Meghadūta, which are given as follows -
"twāmālikhyat pranayakŭpitā dhāturāgai shilāyāha□
mātmānm te charanapatitam yavdichhami kartum□
astraistravanmuhu upchitairdrushtirālŭpyate me□
krurastasminnapi na sahate sangamam naŭ krutantāh□"

- Meaning:
when I try to draw your picture and show in it that I am bowing at your feet, with a 'kawa-a type of chalk', on the rock; due to emotional outbreak, my eyes get wet. The 'Krutāntā or Yama' himself does not wish to have our meet in the picture itself...

Similarly the beauty-symbols of a woman has been so beautifully shown in a verse of Kalidasa's Meghadūta as follows -
"tanvi shyamā shikhari dashanā pakwabimbādharóshthi□
madhye kshāmā chakithariniprekshanā nimnanābhi□
shronibhārāt alasagamanā stoknamrā stanābhyām□
yā tatrasyatdyŭvati vishaye srushtirādyev dhatooh□"

-Meaning:
This verse is as such that its meaning can only be understood word-wise, given as follows -
tanvi - slim shyamā - 'aprasuta bhavet shyama, tanvi ch navayauvana - comment' - a grownup woman who has not yet enjoyed the sex with some male and thus has not yet any experience of pregnancy and the like...
shikhari dashanā - a woman having, well arranged clean white teeth
pakwabimbādharóshthi - having the color of her lips like the color of a morning reddish Sun
kshāmā - having her waist so short
chakithariniprekshanā - having the glimpse of a frightened deer
nimnanābhi - having a deep navel
shronibhārāt alasagamanā - a slow walker, due to heavy hips
stoknamrā stanābhyām - slightly bent forward, due to good enough weight of her grown up breasts
and for the last line the meaning is: such a woman is the idol of beauty for any woman.

Kālidāsa in Later Culture

Many scholars have written commentaries on the works of Kālidāsa. Among the most studied commentaries are those by Kolāchala Mallinātha Suri, which were written in the 15th century during the reign of the Vijayanagar king, Deva Rāya II. The earliest surviving commentaries appear to be those of the 10th-century Kashmirian scholar Vallabhadeva. Eminent Sanskrit poets like Bā□abha□□a, Jayadeva and Rajasekhara have lavished praise on Kālidāsa in their tributes. A well-known Sanskrit verse ("Upamā Kālidāsasya…") praises his skill at upamā, or similes. Anandavardhana, a highly revered critic, considered Kālidāsa to be one of the greatest Sanskrit poets ever. Of the hundreds of pre-modern Sanskrit commentaries on Kālidāsa's works, only a fraction have been contemporarily published. Such commentaries show signs of Kālidāsa's poetry being changed from its original state through centuries of manual copying, and possibly through competing oral traditions which ran alongside the written tradition.

Kālidāsa's Abhijñānaśākuntalam was one of the first works of Indian literature to become known in Europe. It was first translated to English and then from English to German, where it was received with wonder and

fascination by a group of eminent poets, which included Herder and Goethe.

Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres,
Willst du, was reizt und entzückt, willst du was sättigt und nährt,
Willst du den Himmel, die Erde, mit Einem Namen begreifen;
Nenn' ich, Sakuntala, Dich, and so ist Alles gesagt.
—Goethe

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline
And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted, fed,
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name combine?
I name thee, O Sakuntala! and all at once is said.
—translation by E. B. Eastwick

"Here the poet seems to be in the height of his talent in representation of the natural order, of the finest mode of life, of the purest moral endeavor, of the most worthy sovereign, and of the most sober divine meditation; still he remains in such a manner the lord and master of his creation."
—Goethe, quoted in Winternitz

Kālidāsa's work continued to evoke inspiration among the artistic circles of Europe during the late 19th century and early 20th century, as evidenced by Camille Claudel's sculpture Shakuntala.

Koodiyattam artist and Natya shastra scholar Māni Mādhava Chākyār (1899–1990) choreographed and performed popular Kālidāsā plays including Abhijñānaśākuntala, Vikramorvaśīya and Mālavikāgnimitra.
Mohan Rakesh's play in Hindi, Āshad ka ek din (1958), tries to capture the conflict between the ethereal beauty repeatedly portrayed in Kālidāsa's works and the harsh realities of his time.

The Kannada films namely Mahakavi Kalidasa (1955), featuring Honnappa Bagavatar, B. Sarojadevi and later Kaviratna Kalidasa (1983), featuring Rajkumar, were made. V. Shantaram made the Hindi movie Stree (1961) based on Kālidāsa's Shakuntala. R.R. Chandran made the Tamil movie Mahakavi Kalidas (1966) based on Kālidāsa's life. Chevalier Nadigar Thilagam Sivaji Ganesan played the part of the poet himself.
Surendra Verma's Hindi play Athavan Sarga, published in 1976, is based on the legend that Kālidāsa could not complete his epic Kumārasambhava because he was cursed by the goddess Pārvati, for obscene descriptions of her conjugal life with Lord Shiva in the eighth canto. The play depicts Kālidāsa as a court poet of Chandragupta who faces a trial on the insistence of a priest and some other moralists of his time.
Asti Kashchid Vagarthiyam is a five act Sanskrit play written by Krishna Kumar in 1984. The story is a variation of the popular legend that Kālidāsa was mentally challenged at one time and that his wife was responsible for his transformation. Kālidāsā, a mentally challenged shepard, is married to Vidyottamā, a learned princess, through a conspiracy. On discovering that she has been tricked, Vidyottamā banishes Kālidāsa asking him to acquire scholarship and fame if he desires to continue their relationship. She further stipulates that on his return he will have to answer the question, Asti Kashchid Vāgārthah" ("Is there anything special in expression?"), to her satisfaction. In due course, Kālidāsa attains knowledge and fame as a poet. Kālidāsa begins Kumārsambhava, Raghuva□śa and Meghaduta with the words Asti ("there is"), Kashchit ("something") and Vāk ("speech.")

Dr. Bishnupada Bhattacharya's "Kalidas o Robindronath" is a comparative study of Kalidasa and the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, Mahakavi Kalidasu (Telugu, 1960) featuring Akkineni Nageswara Rao were based on the Kālidāsa legendary life and work.

Autumn

HE autumn comes, a maiden fair
In slenderness and grace,
With nodding rice-stems in her hair
And lilies in her face.
In flowers of grasses she is clad;
And as she moves along,
Birds greet her with their cooing glad
Like bracelets' tinkling song.

A diadem adorns the night
Of multitudinous stars;
Her silken robe is white moonlight,
Set free from cloudy bars;
And on her face (the radiant moon)
Bewitching smiles are shown:
She seems a slender maid, who soon
Will be a woman grown.

Over the rice-fields, laden plants
Are shivering to the breeze;
While in his brisk caresses dance
The blossomed-burdened trees;
He ruffles every lily-pond
Where blossoms kiss and part,
And stirs with lover's fancies fond
The young man's eager heart.

Kalidasa

Look To This Day

Look to this day:
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course
Lie all the verities and realities of your existence.
The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendour of achievement
Are but experiences of time.

For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision;
And today well-lived, makes
Yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well therefore to this day;
Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn!

Kalidasa

Seasonal Cycle - Chapter 01 - Summer

"Oh, dear, this utterly sweltering season of the highly rampant sun is drawing nigh, and it will always be good enough to go on taking daytime baths, as the lakes and rivers will still be with plenteous waters, and at the end of the day, nightfall will be pleasant with fascinating moon, and in such nights Love-god can somehow be almost mollified...[who tortured us in the previous vernal season... but now without His sweltering us, we can happily enjoy the nights devouring cool soft drinks and dancing and merrymaking in outfields...]

"Oh, beloved one, somewhere the moon shoved the blackish columns of night aside, somewhere else the palace-chambers with water [showering, sprinkling and splashing] machines are highly exciting, and else where the matrices of gems, [like coolant pearls and moon-stone, etc.,] are there, and even the pure sandalwood is liquefied [besides other coolant scents,] thus this season gets an adoration from all the people...

"The beloved ones will enjoy the summer's clear late nights while they are atop the rooftops of buildings that are delightful and fragranced well, while they savour the passion intensifiers like strong drinks and while the ladylove's face suspires the bouquets of those drinks together with melodious instrumental and vocal music...

"The women are ameliorating the heat of their lovers with their chicly silken coolant fineries gliding onto their rotund fundaments, for they are knotted loosely, and on those silks glissading are their golden cinctures with their dangling tassels that are unfastened on and off, and with their buxom bosoms that are bedaubed with sandal-paste and semi-covered with pearly strings and golden lavalieres, and with their locks of hair that are sliding onto their faces, which locks are fragrant with bath-time emulsions, which are just applied before their oil bath...

"Brightly coloured with the reddish foot-paint that is akin to the colour of lac's reddish resin, adorned with anklets that are festooned with jingling bells, whose tintinnabulations on their stepping after stepping mimic the clucks of swans, with such feet those women with bumpy behinds are rendering the hearts of people impassioned, in these days of pre-summer...

"These days the bosoms of womenfolk are bedaubed with scents and sandal-paste, and they are given out to snowily and whitely pearly pendants that are sported on those bosoms, and even their hiplines are with the dangling golden griddle-strings, with such a lovely ostentation whose heart is it, that does not fill with raptures...

"The seams of limbs of ladies of age are conquered by the often emerging sweat, thus those peaky bosomed lustful ladies are presently banding their bosoms with softish fineries, casting aside their roughish apparels ...

"The rustles of air comprising the aroma of watered sandal-paste, blown off by the fans with peacocks' plumage, and the rustle of strings of pearls when the roundish bosoms of loves are hugged, together with the subtle melody of string instruments, and subtly sung intonations of singers, now appear to awaken Love-god, Manmatha, who is as though asleep after his manoeuvres in the last spring season...

"On leisurely seeing the faces of the maids that are comfortably sleeping well on the tops of whitish edifices, the moon of these nights is highly ecstasized, for he is unpossessed with any such flawless face, as his own face is flawed with rabbit-like, deer-like foibles, and when the night dwindles, he doubtlessly goes into state of

pallidity, as though ashamed to show his face to the flawless sun...

"The intolerable westerly wind of the summer is up-heaving the clouds of dust, even the earth is ablaze, set by the blazing sun, and the itinerants whose hearts are already put to blaze by the blazing called the detachment from their ladyloves, and now it has become impossible for them even to look at the blazing earth, to tread further...

"The reigning sun's torridity rendered the animals parched, and with unquenchable thirst highly shrivelled are their tongues, throats and lips, and on seeing kneaded blackish mascara like mirages on the sky in another forest, that are cloudlike in their shine, those animals are rushing there, presuming them to be water...

"The women of charm are with smiles and slanted looks, and now they are on par with the twilights that are ornamented with a beautiful ornament called moon, and they are now decorating themselves confusedly and they are inciting the incorporeal Love-god in the hearts of itinerants...

"Extremely seared by the rays of sun, and even by the already seared dust on the pathway, with its slithery motion and downcast hood, repeatedly suspiring when being scalded thus awfully, that serpent is sinking down under the pave of peacock's plumage, distrait of the fact that a peacock is an enemy of serpents, thus distrait is the relative danger from a born enemy or from the searing summer...

"Thwarted are the valorousness and venturesomeness of that king of animals, the lion, for the thirst is abnormal, thereby gaping his mouth much lengthily, and suspiring repeatedly with a lengthened and dangling tongue, and repeatedly whisking his frontal hair of the mane, that lion is not pawing the elephants, though they are at his nearby, and though they both of them are born rivals, thus the scalding summer cooled off their mutual contempt...

"Verily dried up are their throats, but somehow some cool water remaining in their trunks is brought to those dry throats with the prehensility of their trunks, but too scanty is that water for those mega-vores, further muchly scorched by sun's scorching rays and overpowered by heightened thirst, even those water-seeking tuskers are unafraid of those nearby lions, as negligible is the physical danger than the natural danger...

"The scorching sunrays that are akin to the tongues of blazed up Ritual-fire, by them the bodies as well as the souls of peacocks are wilted, thus they wedge their faces in the pack of their plumage for certain coolness, and though they mark the serpents that are milling about under the very same plumage through the plumes and feathers, they peck not those serpents to death, as their priority is to cool off their faces and heads...

"The slime in the ponds is dried up but in some areas Bhadramusta grass is available, and while the herd of wild boars is digging up that grass with their long and broad snouts for a piggish slumber, the sunrays have highly sweltered their backs, but that herd dug the dry swamp more and more, as though to enter the interior of earth, to get a mucky, miry, muddy slumber...

"With the unbearable prickly heat of sunrays highly seared is a frog, and jumping up from a pond with mud and muddy water, it jumped to sit under the shade of a parasol, called the hood of a snake... neither thirstier frog is aware that it is the shade of a

snake's hood, nor the thirstiest snake is aware that it is shading a thirsty frog...

"When each other elephant is highly huddling, belaboured is that lake by their elephantine limbs, and completely uprooted are the tall slender stems of lilies and lotuses of that lake, without any remnants of standing lotuses or lilies, thus trampled and agglutinated with mud, they are heaped up under the feet of elephants, and ill-fated are the fishes when trodden by elephants underfoot, and the Saarasa waterfowls are fleeing with fear of this rumpus...

"Akin to sunshine upcast is irradiance of the jewel on its hood, and wigwagging is its twinned tongue licking the air, and it is seared by its own venom, by fiery soil, and by the searing sun as well, and thus tottering thirstily, that hooded serpent is not draining the dregs of frogs, to the dregs...

"Frothily gaping and reeling are the two-pieced snouts, and jerkily extruding are the lightly reddened tongues, and staggering thirstily looking for water with upraised snouts, those herds of she-buffalos are extruding from the caves of mountain with such snouts and gaits, wherein they took shade from the scorching sun so far, but thirst drove them out of those cool caves...

"Extremely withered as though by wildfire and utterly shrivelled are the tender stalks of crops, and windswept by harsh winds they are uprooted and completely wilted and reduced to straw, and all over scorched are they in an overall manner as the water is evaporated, and if seen from highlands till the end of forest, this summer is foisting upon the onlookers a kind of disconcert, as the straw in the wind about the monsoon is unnoticeable...

"Perching on the trees with wilted leaves, flocks of birds are hyperventilating, the overtired troops of monkeys are going nigh of viny caves on the mountain, the water-craving herds of buffalos are rambling hither and thither, the straight flying Sharabha birds are nose-diving into wells and easily lifting up the water...

"The wildfire, that is simulative of a just blossomed bright and fierily ochreish safflower, is exceedingly speedy and further whipped up by the speed of the wind it is eagerly embracing the treetops, that are on the banks of lakes and rivers, with tongues of fire, onto which trees the apices of climber plants are eager to embrace, thus that wildfire has burnt down every quarter of land, in a trice...

"That wildfire, now intensified by the gusts, is blazing the valleys of mountains, and thus skittering across it entered the stands of bamboos, only to shatter them in a second with clattering rattles, then escalated by gusts it is overspreading the straw fields, then from their within, on smacking the perimeter of straw-field, it is broiling the herds of deer, tumultuously ...

"That wildfire taking a rebirth in the copses of silk-cotton trees is extremely blazing, and from within the cavities of the trees it is erupting with the glint of golden yellow, and thus uprooting the wizened leaves on wizened branches along with their trees, and then hurled by gusts it is whirling everywhere in that woodland unto its edging...

"When fire scorched their bodies, their dichotomic thinking of mutual hostilities had to be discarded, and those elephants, buffalos and lions come together as friends, and when blighted by the fire, they are quickly exiting their habitual confines to enter the

areas of rivers that have broad sandbanks...

"Oh, dear melodious singer, what if the summer is scorching... fragrant lotuses are overlaid on coolant waters, agreeably refreshing is the fragrance of Trumpet flowers, comfortable is the fresh water in bathing pools, pleasurable are those moonbeams, and with these pearly pendants and these jasmine garlands, let our simmering summer nights enjoyably slip by, while we abide on the tops of buildings right under the moonscape, savouring potations and amidst music and song...

Kalidasa

Seasonal Cycle - Chapter 02 - Rainy Season

"Oh, dear, now the kingly monsoon is onset with its clouds containing raindrops, as its ruttish elephants in its convoy, and with skyey flashes of lighting as its pennants and buntings, and with the thunders of thunderbolts as its percussive drumbeats, thus this rainy season has come to pass, radiately shining forth like a king, for the delight of voluptuous people...

"By far, the vault of heaven is overly impregnated with massive clouds, that are similar to the gleam of blackish petals of black-costuses... somewhere they are similar to the glitter of the heaps of well-kneaded blackish mascara... and elsewhere they glisten like the blackened nipples of bosoms of pregnant women, ready to rain the elixir of life on the lips of her offspring, when that offspring is actualised...

"The stock of Caataka birds that is disquieted with thirst, and though praying prayerfully for raindrops, those water-filled danglers in the sky, namely the clouds, that have many showers to shower, and though their rumblings are heart-stealing and ear-filling indicating rainfall, but those clouds are drifting away, slowly... heedless of the prayers of poor Caataka birds...

"The clouds in their warrior-march are wielding crashes of thunderbolts as their drum kits, and the flashes of lightning as the fluttering flashes of the bowstring of rainbow, and even they are unloosening very sharp arrows from that rainbow, called the sharply torrents, only to rend the lovelorn hearts of itinerants, that too ruthlessly... in their war on behalf of their ladyloves...

"The earth with grass sprouts seems spread with lapis gems that are shred to smithereens, for the grass has yet not attained that much greenery, and muchly sprouted and overspread are the greenish leaves of Kandali plants that suddenly sprout in rainy seasons, and amidst which greensward red insects are muchly mosaicked, thus the earth is beaming forth like a best lady decorated in many coloured jewels, other than whitish diamonds and other crystalline ones...

"This cloudy and showery environ is evermore heart-pleasing to peacocks, hence they are screaming with hilarity and fidgety, and the whole stock of peacocks is brilliant when its fanlike expansive plumage is outstretched, and on impulsively petting and pecking peahens, now they have commenced their peacock-dance

"Highly intensified is the rapidity of the waters of these maidens called rivers, which similes with the promptitude of maidens with misdemeanour, where these waters are new and thus miry, while those dames are newly maturated and thus they are in the mire of maturity, while these waters are hurtling hastily towards their lover, called the ocean, with a seasonally created excitement, those damsels are flirtatiously jaunting with their flirty lovers, and in doing so both of them are reckless about their own kith and kin, since the rapid watercourse of rivers is felling its riverine trees, ubiquitously... and the flirty jaunting of those dames is felling the reputation of her family, far and wide... ah, a season is the culprit to cause a seasonal itch...

"With the advent of rains upshot are the tender sprouts of grass, and the greensward when grazed by deer and other grazers, it is divers in its hue, somewhere with blackish patches, elsewhere with stacks of grass, and somewhere else with verdant pastures, and with their upcast tender leaflets the trees are ornately decorating the Vindhya mountains, thus the environ is heart-stealing, picturesquely...

"Oh, dear, sheeny are the faces of the deer with their swiftly zipping eyes, which are akin to black-lotuses and to your eyes as well, and they the deer and you, zip your eyes more and more, when there is a thunder or a rumble, then you run into my embrace, as they run to overcrowd the white sand-beds amidst lushly thickets of forests, and this georgic beauty of forests and the graceful beauty of yours, all this is promptly rendering the heart highly ecstatic...

"Though the cloud-cover rendered the nights as pitch-dark, and though thundering is thunderous, and though the pathways on ground are indiscernible for it is pitch-black, even in such nights the lover-seeking women are making haste on those paths, that are indiscernibly shown by the flashes of torch-lights, called the flashes of lightning, for they are impassioned to meet their lovers, to all intents and purposes...

A couple sleeping on a bed, but each at the each end of that bed, and when her man is in sound sleep, she is without any rapid eye-movement, for she is thinking that rapidly about the peccadilloes of her man with some 'other' woman/women, and when she wanted to conclude her man to be a beguiler, as said guuDha vi priya kR^it SaThaH 'one who performs libidinous deeds stealthily, is a beguiler...' then a thunderous cloud thundered thunderingly, and in a trice she embraced her man in an airtight manner, notwithstanding his slyness, for he is her man... thus the seasons unite the divided...

"While their lotus-like eyes are shedding teardrops that are moistening their delicate and tender leaf-like lower lips, that are crimson in colour like Bimba fruit, a lip-like small gourd fruit that becomes crimson red when ripened, and they are rejecting their garlands, ornaments or cosmetics, for those ladyloves of itinerants are staying back at home, hopeless of the return of their men in this season, as said proSite malinaa kR^ishaa 'by sojourners enmired and emaciated are their wives...' thus the seasons divide the united...

"Though the rainwater is new and crystalline but when collected by river it turned to whitish yellow colour of the soil, for begrimed is the river water with dirt, grass, and insects, and when it is skittering off in a serpiginous course facing a declivitous path towards ocean, the stock of frogs that have come out of that river seeking rain, they have observed that river with some trepidation, for those frogs are sceptical whether a python is snaking or a pythonic river is slinking...

"Rains denuded the flowers of their petals, therefor on abandoning the petal-less lotuses the honeybees, solicitous of nectar and desirous to swarm the newborn peacock-coloured costuses, buzzing mellifluously they are muddle-headedly swarming on the circular fanlike plumages of peacocks, that are twitch-dancing in the rain...

"When dark clouds full with new waters are thundering repeatedly, the ruttish wild elephants are repeatedly responding them with their own trumpeting, on the premiss that the thunders are the trumping of the 'other-she-elephants' in rut, and while the cheeks of those elephants are shining like the shiny black-lotuses, and rife with ruttish tallowy fluids, hordes of honeybees are harrying them, for that tallowy stench...

"The silver clouds that vie with the whiteness of white lotuses are kissing the black boulders of mountains on mountaintops, while the mountainsides are bestrewn with mountain-rapids, and widespread with debut dancing of peacocks, and all this is inducing a carnivalesque visual revelry...

"The zephyr is smoothly ruffling the treetops of Kadamba, Sarja, Arjuna and Ketaki trees in woodlands, and the fragrance of those flowers is wafting windswept, further allied with the coolant clouds that are with cool droplets of rainwater, the breeze in this rainy season is muchly fragranced and coolant as well, then why can't this breeze breath affair of the heat in any heart...

"While the braids are dangling down onto the convexities of the their fundaments, their heads coroneted with flowers of fine fragrance and while the pearly pendants are dangling from upon the convexities of their breasts, and while their gleeful faces are aromatic with strong drinks, thus these voluptuous women are niftily arousing arousal in their lovers...

"Well decorated are the water-bearing blackish clouds with the wiry flashes of lightning and with rainbows, and they are flashily dangling down with the weight of water, likewise the jewelly ear-hangings and waist-strings of the womenfolk are dangling down that flashily, thus even those vivacious women are instantly stealing the hearts of sojourners, for these exotic women are reminiscent of the ladyloves of those sojourners...

"Now the women are wearing the concatenated tassels of newborn flowers of Kadamba, Kesara, and Ketaki trees, and at the place of hairslide they are wearing the bunches of flowers of Kakubha trees as their ear-hangings, on concatenating them as they like...

"These days the women are not applying sandal-paste that is mixed with yellow camphor etc., for it will be too coolant, and hence their limbs are quietly bedaubed with the powder of aloe vera and sandal-paste as bodily scents, and with flowers bedecked as ear-hangings at hairslides, their plaited hairdo is rendered fragrant with these flowers and shampoos, such as they are, they are in the service of their in-laws in their chambers, but on hearing the rumbles of clouds, they are hastening themselves to their own bedchambers, where their men are in long wait, though the nightfall has not fallen that deep...

"The far-flung clouds are blackish like the black-lotus petals, enchased with rainbows, and they are now stooping, as with Manmadha, the Love-god, who stoops to take an aim with his love-bow, and then lightly whiffed by the whiffle of wind these clouds are milling about slowly and slowly, and the young wives of wayfarers, who are disconcerted mainly by the reason of separation from their men, and additionally by these whifflling, milling, stooping archers, called clouds, wielding rainbows as their love-bows, as they seem coming slowly and slowly only to steal the hearts of the lonely young wives of wayfarers...

"When new waters are besprinkled abated is the ardour of the forest, up to its endmost parts, that was once caused by the simmering summer, and with the newborn flowers of Kadamba trees that forest appears as though gladdened, and when the wind is whiffling the boughs, whiffled boughs are dancing as though to the tune of rumbling clouds, and in that dance the whitish needle-like blades of Mogra flowers are appearing to be that forest's whitish toothy grins, and all-over the forest it bears those grins and giggles...

"In this rainy season when congeries of clouds have showered enough, plethoric is the flowery blossom, hence the womenfolk embed their hairdos with the tassels of Maalati

flowers together with Vakula flowers, and with other new blossomy flowers, and the tassels of new buds of Kadamba flowers are pinned and pensile like their ear-hangings, and this has all the hallmarks of lovers, that decorate the hairdos of their ladyloves, themselves with their own hands...

"The women are wearing sets of chains of pearls on the top of their busty bosoms, and on their beamy pelvic girdles and on their torsos a very thin and white finery, and those torsos wear a delicately crimpy triple-waistline, while their belly wears a very fine hairline that suggests their maturity, which bristles up with the sprinkles of new water...

"By their association with droplets of new waters, the trees have collected plenteous water from new rains, thus they are aplenty with flowers, and thus their treetops are sagging under the weight of those flowers, thereby they are unfluctuating, but when nudged by the breeze fluctuated are these sagging flowery treetops, and then this breeze is absolutely stealing the hearts of itinerants, which is blent with the pleasing fragrance of those flowers, as well as with the pollen grains of Mogra flowers, for this very fragrance is remindful of their dear ones, back home...

"When weighed down with waters the clouds thought thus, 'he, this Mt. Vindhya is our highest mainstay, as we are verily drooping with the weight of water...' and then the clouds have descended on Mt. Vindhya and rained on him, thereby the exceedingly severe torridity of Mt. Vindhya, caused by the tongues of fire of the summer, is mollified by those torrents of rainwater, and thus the Mt. Vindhya is as though gladdened, at the good gesture of the clouds of this season...

"Heart-pleasing will be this rainy season with its many a hallmark, and this will be heart-stealing for voluptuous women, and this is the altar ego of trees, twigs and tendrils, and the élan vital of the living beings, and non-paroxysmal in fetching vaata, pitta, kapha aadi vikaara 'air, bile, phlegm etc., disorders, hence may this rainy season endow all your expedients and expectations, frequently...

Kalidasa

Seasonal Cycle - Chapter 03 - Pre Autumn

"On the departure of rainy season bechanced is autumn with a heart-pleasingly bloomed lotus as her face, betokening the heart-pleasing face of a new bride, and the autumnal fields of white grass with whitish flowers as her apparel, which betoken the whitish bridal apparel of a new bride, and the amorously clucking clucks of swans that have just returned from Lake Maanasa as rains have gone, are the jingling anklets of autumn, which betoken the delightful jingles of anklets of new bride, and now the rice is ready to ripe and thus the tenuous stalks of rice, which have their necks a little bent down, betoken the obeisant face of a new docile bride...

"Blanched is the earth with whitish grass and the nights with silvery and coolant moonbeams of the moon, and the rivers with white swans, lakes with white-lotuses, and that forest up to its fringes with whitish jasmine flowers and with somewhat whitish seven-leaved banana plants that are swagging under the weight of their flowers...

"Presently the rivers are journeying slowly with a strutting of prideful lovely girls, for the raising and falling fishes of rivers seem to be the delightful sets of strings at the waistlines of rivers, like the sets of girdle-strings on the waists of girls, and the ranges of white waterfowls on riverbanks seem to be the whitish pearly pendants of rivers, like the pearly pendants around the bosoms of prideful girls, more so the broad sand-dunes at edges of those rivers appear to be the roundish fundaments of those rivers like that of those girls...

"With clouds that have doled out their waters, the vault of heaven is silvern somewhere, it is like the whitish conch shell elsewhere, and somewhere else it is palish like the stalks of lotuses, and the clouds on achieving their levity and moved by the speed of wind, they are splintered into hundreds of pieces and journeying away, and thus the sky appears to be a king fanned with royal-fans, called the swerving, splintering, and silvery clouds...

"The sky is looking like well-kneaded knoll of black mascara, and the earth is delightfully inscribed with the vermilion colour of safflowers that are flowered up to the visible horizon, and the swaths and even the ravines of earth are surrounded with charming lotuses... and on visualising such an environ, which heart of which adolescent person doesn't get up to a lot of ecstasy...

"When the slothful wind is slothfully stirring up the upper branches of red-golden coloured trees, that are most lovely with peaking tender leaflets, and with muchly outcropped flowers, from which nectar is muchly trickling, that which is overly drunk by the honeybees, and when such a sylvan scenery is seen, whose heart won't be riven...

"A girl burgeons as a damsel day by day, so the autumnal night is lengthening its night-time day by day, and as a damsel wears shiny jewellery on her nubility, this damsel, called the autumnal night, is wearing clusters of twinkling stars as her jewellery, as the veil of a damsel will be unveiled frequently presenting her face, these veils called clouds on the skyscape are now being unveiled to present the moonlike face of this autumnal damsel, and a damsel starts to wear raiment with unblemished whiteness at her pubescence, so also, this autumnal damsel's wraparound is the immaculate moonshine...

"Inaccessible were those rivers in rainy season even for the waterfowls, barring the people, for they were ferocious and feculent, but this autumn made them placid and

pure, and hence the rows of ripples of their water are pecked with the beaks of partridges for their feed, and all over on their banks and riversides, flocks and flocks of cranes and drakes are bustling, and muchly cackling are the swans, and the rivers themselves are reddened with the red-pollen grains of red-lotuses, thus those spectacular rivers, riverbanks, and riversides are rejoicingly accessible even for the people...

"These days the moon is an eye-festival and heart-stealing with his profuse moonbeams, and he is the real gladdener for he is the sprinkler of fresh and coolant dewdrops through those moonbeams, but nowadays he alone is becoming an inflamer, for he is burning the bodies of the women, who are already felled by the arrow of Love-god, which arrow is daubed with the venom, which venom is nothing but their own lusting after their itinerant husbands, that are now separated from them...

"The wind being the prime mover in nature is now wiggling the well-ripened rows of rice stalks that are curvy under the weight of their cobs, and the same wind is waggling the best trees that are saggy under the weight of their flowers, and he alone is wobbling the fully bloomed clumps of lotuses in the lakes, moreover, thus he is vehemently wriggling the hearts of young men, with his lilting breezing and lively freshness...

"The limpid waters of lakes are refurbished with bevies of couples of voluptuous swans, amongst the just bloomed white and blue lotuses that elaborate lakes, and the rows of ripples of lake-water are undulated by the oncoming slowish morning breeze, as well as by the ruffles made by swans, thus the all-time ripply lakes are ecstasizing hearts, in a trice...

"Presently evanished are the rainbows in the bellies of clouds, and indiscernible are the skyey flags, called flashes of lightning, and un-winnowed is the aerospace with the windage of wings of cranes, and peacocks are unseeing the sky with their upraised faces, agog for rains...

"The Love-god is drawing nigh of melodiously singing swans, leaving off the peacocks that have ceased to dance anymore, as there is no rain, while the grandeur of the flowers of trees like Kadamba, Kutaja, Arjuna, Sarja, Niipa already drew nigh of the seven-leaved banana plants, that flower and flourish at this time...

"The fragrance of flowers of white-flower trees is heart-stealing, and nowadays birds are not scorched by the sun, thus they are there in fine fettle, and they are calling each other reciprocally, thus those birds and their callings are heart-stealing, and the eyes of she-deer that are abiding all over there are like black-lotuses, thus with all them the woodlands and their fringes beyond ken, are ecstasizing the hearts of men...

"The dawn time breeze on recurrently winnowing the red-lotuses, white-lotuses, and the lotuses that bloom at sunrise, is in contact with those lotuses and thus acquiring more coolness, more so, on sifting the dewdrops that are clinging at the edges of leaves, that auroral breeze is very much exhilarating...

"The precincts of earth are surrounded with exuberant stretches of rice-crops, and they are glistering with stocks of cattle available there, that are robust and multiplying, and that is even reverberated with the callings of swans and drakes, thereby those interior places within the apparent horizon are thus causing an euphoric state to the spectators

in this pre-autumnal season...

"The womenfolk's very lissom gait is won by the svelte steps of swans, and moonshine of their faces is won by the efflorescent whiteness of white-lotuses, and their lustful, wily, and sidelong glances are won by the swings and sways of blue-lotuses, and even their eyebrows' subtle flutters are won by rocks and rolls of thin ripples... thus this season is outmoding the most famous beauty of the nature, namely the womenfolk...

"The Shyaamaa climbers are decorated with their tender leaves and flowers, and by the weight these they are flexed and look like the curvaceous arms of women, that are decorated with many an ornament, flowery bracelets and leaf-thin bangles and the like, but stolen is that shine of those arms of women by these climbers of this season... and this broadly smiling season, with red Ashoka flowers as its lips and with delightful and sparkly whitish new jasmine buds as its teeth, is stealing the splendour of toothy grins of womenfolk, with their jasmine budlike teeth and roseate lips...

"These days women are furling up their longish, thickish, and blackish hair termini into buns and overstuffing them with new jasmines, and even if their ears are already inserted with best golden budlike ear-hangings, they are now inserting divers black-lotuses into their hairdo, at the back of their ears...

These days the ladies are with highly gladdened hearts for the climate is equable, thus they are decorating their globelike busts with emulsions of sandal-paste and with pendants of pearls and gold, and their girth-lines are decorated with sets of golden girdles festooned with golden tassels, and even their lotus-like feet are decorated with best anklets that have jingling bells...

"These days the vault of heaven similes with the vast of earth in their forms of exalted splendour... on the earth the lakes are bejewelled with emeraldine waters, similar is the sky with somewhat emeraldine hue... such water is overspread with white-lotuses, similar is the cloudless sky overlaid with stars... these waters are overprotective to kingly swans, similarly the vault of cloudless heaven is holding out the moon, the king of the nights...

"In this pre-autumn its ingredients are heart-pleasing, for the breezes breeze cool for touch by their association with white-lotuses, and the divisions and subdivisions of quarters can be descried, for dissipated are the clouds, and the waters can be enjoyed, for they are devoid of slush, and walkable is the earth, for its slime is dried up, and in nights the welkin is with the moon, with his immaculate moonbeams and medley of stars...

"These days when the sun arouses the lotuses with his sunrays at daybreak, they are shining forth like best damsels with flourishing visages, but when the spherule of moon has gone into faintness at dawn, even those lotuses are becoming smileless and subduing, as with the smiles of youthful women, whose lovers have journeyed away, and who grin and bear it...

"Nowadays the itinerants on noticing the splendour of eyes of their ladyloves with blackish mascara, in black-lotuses, and the chinks of their golden girdle-strings in the clucks of lustily swans, and the endearing gleam of their lower lips in the reddish flowers, they are bewailing disconcertedly, unsure of their homecoming in this season...

"The pleasing exquisiteness that has arrived with this pre-autumnal Sharat season is beating a retreat to somewhere else, on leaving the grandeur of its autumnal moon on the faces of women, and the clucky speeches of swans in their gemmy anklets, and the safflower like flower's reddish hue on their beautiful lips...

"Unfolded lotuses as its face, unfurled blue-lotuses as its eyes, and clothed in the raiment called the outstretched new white grass-flowers, thus this Sharat, pre-autumn is heart-appeasing with the brilliance of its lotuses, and let this very season bring utmost delight to all of your hearts, like your fervent and lustful ladyloves with their visages like autumnal lotuses, eyes with mascara like autumnal blue-black lotuses, with their whitish wraparounds, like the silken white grass flowers of autumn, and let them be romantic, like this romantic Sharat season...

Kalidasa

Seasonal Cycle - Chapter 04 - Pre Winter

"Delightful are trees and fields with the outgrowth of new tender-leaves and crops, Lodhra trees are with their blossomy flowers, crops of rice are completely ripened, but now lotuses are on their surcease by far, for the dewdrops are falling... hence, this is the time of pre-winter that drew nigh...

"The busts of flirtatious women that are graced by bosomy bosoms are bedaubed and reddened with the redness of heart-stealing saffrony skincare, called Kashmir kumkum, on which embellished are the white pendants that are in shine with the whiteness of whitish dewdrops, white jasmines, and whitely moon...

"Undecorated are the hiplines of kittenish women with gem-studded golden strings of girdle, nor their lotus like feet that have the brightness of lotuses with jingling anklets, whose jingling is correlative to the clucks of swans, for the cold touch of coldish metal gives cold quivers...

"Unbearable is the touch of metallic circlets on wrists and bicep-lets on upper-arms of the couple of arms of vivacious women, or the touch of new silk cloths on the discoid of their waistline, or fine fabric on their robust breasts...

"The womenfolk are rubbing fragrant wood-turmeric powder on their bodies, and their lotus-like faces are tattooed with erasable tattoos of foliage, and their head-hair is fumigated with the fumes of aloe vera resin, and they are doing all this for merrymaking in an enjoyable lovemaking...

"Thoughgood fortune is bechanced in the happiness of lovemaking, the women of age are with sallowish and whitened faces owing to the strain of lovemaking, and though they want to laugh heartily, they desist from it, noticing very painful lower lips that are bitten with the edges of teeth of their lovers in lovemaking, lest the lip is lengthened, the pain is sharpened...

"On reaching the valleys of bosomy busts of women of age, the winter breeze is attaining their coolant splendidness, but when those bosoms are pressingly hugged by their lovers it is incarcerated there with an unable pain, and that pain is expressed by the Hemanta season, as though it is bewailing for a release of that breeze at least at dawn time, with tear-like dewdrops clinging on to the spires of grass-blades...

"Overspread with abundant rice crops and ornamented with herds of she-deer, and delightfully reverberated by the ruddy geese, with their calls and counter-calls, the complacent corridors of confines are captivating hearts...

"Now the lakes are adorned with fully blossomed black-lotuses, and elaborated with swan-like waterfowls in their excitement, and sheeted with considerably coldish waters that are depurated, thus these lakes are stealing the hearts of men, for men look up to them as the visages of women that are with black-lotus-like hairdo, with swanlike eyes, and whose bodies are cold, wanting a warm hug...

"Oh, dear, the Priyangu plants that give fragrant seeds are ripened by the snow caused coldness, and they are frequently wobbled by the snowy winds, and they now appear like the fragrant and frisky women gone into paleness and wobbliness by their dissociation from their lovers...

"These days the mouths of people are fragranced with the fragrance of liquors made

from the essential oils of flowers, and their bodies are fragrant with the same fragrancy by their puffs of suspires, and while lying on beds jointly with their bodies in tight embrace, they are slipping into sleep, entwined with the essence of passion...

"The young and beautiful ladies that are new to their adulthood have bruises and marks of teeth notches on their lips, and even their bosoms are incised with nails of their lovers, thus these marks and incisions clearly indicate that they have enjoyed lovemaking consummately...

"Some woman of age staying in the warmth of tender sun to warm up herself, is holding a mirror and applying cosmetics on her lotus-like face, and while doing so, she is pouting her lips and examining them that are dented with teeth bites of her lover, whose quintessence is guzzled down by her lover in last night...

"One more woman whose body is fatigued by the strain of excessive lovemaking, and who is quiet sleepless last night, and whose eyes are palish like white lotuses, and whose bun is slithered and plaits of head-hair are loosened and hair tousling on her shoulders, bust, and on her bosoms, is tripping into sleep, warmed up by the rays of tender sun...

"Bedraggled are the loose ends of cloudlike blackish head-hair onto the lofty busty bosoms of some other slender-bodied women of age, by which busty weight crouching are their bodies, as slim pearly pendants would crouch onto their bosoms, and they are taking away the circlets of flowers from their hairdos, as those flowers are already utilised and devoid of their heart-pleasing fragrance of yester night, and now they are grooming their hair, afresh...

"On examining her body that is completely enjoyed by her lover, another woman is highly gladdened, and she remade her pleasant lips resplendently with lip-colouring, and on examining her bust with nail scratches, she embarrassedly wore her bodice, and while doing so the pain of friction of bodice with nail-scratches made her eyes to twitch, on which eyes dangling are her dark, delicate, and twitchy hair-curls...

"By the exertion in their long-lasting games of lovemaking other women of age are wearied, and their slim bodies are thrilling at their flanks from bosoms to thighs, thereby those prettily pretty women are applying bodily oils and pastes to take an oil bath, that relieves these tingling sensations...

"Pleasant with many an attribute, stealer of the hearts of women, and at which time the confines of villages are overspread with many an abundant rice-crop on earth, and overlaid is the sky with the garlanded flights of ruddy gees, that which is always with a heart-stealing environ, such as it is, let this season Hemanta, pre-winter, endow comfort to all of you passionate people...

Kalidasa

Seasonal Cycle - Chapter 05 - Winter

"Oh, dear with best thighs, heart-stealing is this environ with abundantly grown stacks of rice and their cobs, or with sugarcane, and it is reverberated with the screeches of ruddy gees that abide hither and thither... now heightened will be passion, thereby this season will be gladdening for lusty womenfolk, hence listen of this season, called Shishira, the Winter...

"At this time, people enjoy abiding in the medial places of their residences, whose ventilators are blockaded for the passage of chilly air, and at fireplaces, in sunrays, with heavy clothing, and along with mature women of age, for they too will be passionately steamy...

"Presently, not the sandal-paste, which will be coolant like moonbeams of moon, nor the building tops, that were once rendered pleasant with the immaculate moonshine, nor the breezes, that are chilled by dense sleet... any of them is delightful for the people...

"The nights are unenjoyable for the people, for they are chilled with the huddles of snow, and further chilled by moonbeams of the moon, besides, these nights are ornamented very whitish clusters of cluttered and lacklustre stars...

"On taking betel leaves and their enclosing material like lime and areca-nut parings, and other fragrant material for chewing, and even handling body creams and tassels of flowers, for it is cool to wear them on, and with their lotus-like faces that are fragranced with delightful recreational drinks, the women are enthusiastically entering their bedchambers, that are desirably fragranced with the fumigation of aloe vera resin...

"On entering bedchambers seen are the irritant husbands irritating for the arrival of their wives, but once these husbands were at fault and they were daunted repeatedly earlier, hence they are now wavery, for their hearts are ciphered by their hesitation, and on looking at such husbands, who are now longing for lovemaking, the lustful women are overlooking their faults, lest time and opportunity fritters away... thus this season unites couples, though they are at loggerheads...

"The women that are new to adulthood are relentlessly gratified for a long time in longish nights, by young men who are muchly impassioned and lusting for their women, thus these young women after the end of night are moving about sluggishly in the morning, with their aching busts that are strained during last night's escapade...

"The womenfolk's breasts are tightly bound by breast-bands thus they are squeezy, and on them the upper fringe of their colourful silk wraparound is wrapped, and such busts are ornamented, and in their hairdo interposed are flowers, thus those women are delightful and it appears that they themselves are embellishing the wintry season as its ornaments...

"Nowadays the chests of lustful men are ocherish for they are rubbed against bosoms of their flirtatious women, whose busts are adorned with vermilion coloured skincare, and which young women are befitting for a comfortable close self-indulgence, for they are new to adulthood, and have warmish bosoms, and the men are sleeping while overly pressing the bosoms of their ladyloves against their own, thus the men are brazening out the chilling coldness of winter, and thus the women of age have an edge on the frostiness of this season...

"In nights the gladdened women of age, desirous of lovemaking are consuming best, heart-stealing, excitant, and stimulant hard drinks along with their lovers, in which drinks lotus petal are placed for fragrance, and which lotus petals are undulated by the richly scented lusty suspirations of those women...

"In the morning, one woman on getting rid of her penchant of passion, examined her own body, and observed that her nipples are subdued by her lover's embrace, and thus concluding that her body is completely enjoyed by her lover, she is going out of the bedchamber to another chamber, laughingly ...

"At dawn, another charmingly delightful and attractive woman, whose rumps are heavy and whose waistline is slender, on joggling the ends of her slithered hair plaits from which discarded are the circlets of flowers, that adorned her bun last night but now withered, and on furling up that hair which is fragrant, for it was fumigated with the resin of aloe vera during last night, is leaving the bed...

"With their discoid faces that look like golden lotuses, cleansed just with water, and with their wide and medially whitish eyes, whose edges touch the edges of ears, and with their just cleansed hair dangling and clasping their shoulders, those women of age are snugly in the heart of their houses in these days, and they appear to be many a personified prosperity, Goddess Lakshmi-s, amidst Her golden lotuses...

"Other women of age, uneasy with the weight of their beamy behinds, a little bent down at waist by the weight of their breasts, which weight of breasts and behinds is making them to walk slowly and slowly, but they are quickly disrobing themselves of their night-time and love-time getups, and enrobing themselves with the getups befitting for daytime...

"On observing the areas of their bosoms that are puckered at their tops with edges of nails of their lovers during last night, and while touching the teeth-cracked tender-leaf like lower lips with their tongues, those women of age are rejoicing, for all this is according to their sought-after delectation, thus they are applying makeup on their faces, at the dawn time of the sun, that rejoicingly...

"In this season, abundant are the new sugar-candies and their modified sweetmeats, new rice is relishable, juice of new sugar-cane is delightful, intensified will be the disport of lovemaking, for the self-conceit of Love-god occasions anew, but this season alone will be the cause for scorching the hearts of those that are devoid of their loved ones, and thus let this winter season be always there for your propitiousness...

Kalidasa

Seasonal Cycle - Chapter 06 - Spring

"Oh, dear, with the just unfolded tender leaflets of Mango trees as his incisive arrows, and with shining strings of honeybees as his bowstring, the assailant named Vasanta came very nigh, to afflict the hearts of those that are fully engaged in affairs of lovemaking...

"Oh, dear, in Vasanta, Spring, trees are with flowers and waters are with lotuses, hence the breezes are agreeably fragrant with the fragrance of those flowers, thereby the eventides are comfortable and even the daytimes are pleasant with those fragrant breezes, thereby the women are with concupiscence, thus everything is highly pleasing...

"This Spring season endows prosperity to waters of swimming pools, and to moonshine, for their water or shine is pleasurable, and even to mango trees, as their flowers are just flowered, more so, to the bejewelled girdle strings of women, for their wearing is neither cumbersome nor irksome in this season, thus it endows prosperity to womenfolk of age, as they enjoy in wearing them, thus they too, become enjoyable, these days...

"These days the flirtatious women are adorning their roundish behinds with silk cloths that are dyed with Kusumbha flower's reddish dye, and their bosomy busts with thin silks that are dyed with ocherish and reddish colours, for thinness and silkiness are agreeable in this thinnish ambience...

"The womenfolk of age are now decorating their temples with just unfolded new whitish flowers of Karnikara, and with new and reddish Ashoka flowers and with whitish jasmines flowers in their blackish hair-locks that are swaying, thus unfolded is the beauty of these women, with the flourishing resplendence of these newly unfolded flowers...

"The bosoms of women with burly rumps, whose hearts are now flurried by the Love-god, are now sharing pearly pendants that are wetted with white sandal-paste that is bedaubed on their busts, and their biceps with circlets of bicep-lets, and their hiplines with the strings of cinctures, that are till recently unbearably coldish to touch... thus, the touch of season is romantic...

"The golden lotuses like faces of flirtatious women are tattooed with erasable foliage tattoos with black Kasturi lines, and in those designs sweat-drops are now percolating, with them those faces are delightfully beautified as gem-studded jewellery, interspersed with pearls...

"Now the limbs of womenfolk are flustered by the Love-god, thus they are panting for their need-fulfilment, hence they are now loosening the fastenings of their undergarments, since spring fever makes them sultrily fervent, thus they are enamoured of their lovers, who are tarrying at their nearby...

"The Love-god is making the limbs of sybaritic women as thinnish, palish and lethargic, and tending to yawn time and again, and with these syndromes the bodies of women are becoming restless in the spring fever, with an air of enchantment...

"Now the Love-god is diversely apparent in women, who are jaded out by hard drinks, for their eyes are fluttery, their cheeks are whitely, their bosoms are stony, their waists are slimly, and their behinds are sturdy... thus these features are the evidences for

their seasonal infatuation with Him...

"Advent to spring Love-god makes the limbs of womenfolk sluggishly dizzy with sleepiness, He makes their speech a little teeter-tottering with sensualities, and He also makes their looks aslant with the knitting and unknitting of their eyebrows, seeking vehement sensual pleasures...

"The frolicsome and lustful women that are with faineance are bedaubing their whitish bosoms with sandal-paste, in which well kneaded are the fragrant seeds of Priyangu, yellowish turmeric, saffron and musk, to relieve themselves of spring fever...

"These days the people, whose limbs are wearied down with their desire induced ebullience, are wearing thinnish cloths, that are fumigated with fragrant aloe vera resin and dyed in the colour of reddish lac resin, quickly discarding their coarse clothing, for this season is neither coarse nor crude...

"The passionate male koel, black singing bird, on savouring the invigorative essence of just grown flowers of Mango trees, is gladdened and passionately kissing his love, so also this honeybee, abiding in lotuses, and savouring their nectar, this too is passionately mating with his love to her complaisance, sequestered in the petals of lotuses...

"Delightful are the branches of mango trees that are laden with bunches of coppery tender leaves, and with just flowered flowers, and with their heads a little bent down, for they simile with the bashful women, whose heads are with flowery hairdos and coppery half-veils, and a little bent down and swaying in lustiness, like mango treetops that are gently swaying, swayed by the gentle breezes of this season, and on identifying themselves with those mango trees, the womenfolk is rendered muchly overenthusiastic for love, in this spring time...

"All-over adorned are those Ashoka trees with bunches of reddish folioles, and reddish flowers that resemble the hue of red corals, and when the new entrants to adulthood are observing those unfolded red flowers, those Ashoka trees are making them agonised, for unfulfilled is their new longing for a newish love...

"The charming flowers of mango trees are with delightful thickish buds, and they are overly swilled by tipsy honeybees, and slow breezes are flurrying and tilting their delicate leaflets, thus when lovelorn youngsters observe them, their hearts are quickly ecstasized by those mango trees...

"Oh, dear, the mien of this season is akin to the facial resplendence of ladyloves, with the utmost beauty of the clusters of flowers of Kuravaka plants that are uprisen in this season, and if this is observed by any good-hearted person, won't his heart be agonised, indeed, struck by the arrow of Love-god?

"The ruddy flowers in springtime are sprung by the winds simile with the reddy flames that are just now set to flame, and everywhere the earth is overspread with such brakes of Kimshuka trees, and presently when their treetops are bent under the weight of those red flowers, whole of this earth similes with a new bride, shining forth in her new bridal redly costume, and her head a little bent under the half-veil of that costume...

"Aren't the youthful hearts of youthful lovers that are hidden in the hearts of their pretty faced ladyloves unsplit by these Kimshuka flowers, that are in shine with the reddish bills of parrots... aren't they already and definitely burnt by the flame-like redly Karnikaara flowers... then why for this Kokila, the black singing bird, is again gnawing away those hearts, with its gnawingly melodious singing...

"Passion is surging out in male Kokila-s, singing birds, as they obtained jollity in this springtime on chewing mango flowers, thus they are singing inexplicably, and the honeybees, when they are drunk with the flowery nectar of those flowers, they are also droning hums murmuringly as their drinking song, and with these hums and drones the hearts of new brides are flustered in a trice, even if they are in the service of their in-laws, where certain docility and prudishness are in demand...

"On the departure of mist-fall in springtime, the propitious breeze is breezing pleasantly to undulate the flowered branches of Mango trees, and to transmit the singings of Kokila-s in all directions, thereby to steal the hearts of humans, who can neither be blatant nor silent, of their longings...

"These days the pleasure gardens are brightened up with whitely jasmines, thus they simile with the toothy grins of sprightly brides, and hence they are heart-stealing, and these gardens are now stealing the hearts of saints or sages that have neutralised their materialistic indulgences long back, as such, these gardens must have stolen the hearts of youths, which are already tainted with seasonal sensualities...

"This Madhu month, Chaitra, nectarean month at the end of springtime, is forcefully stealing away the hearts of people, for the womenfolk, whose bodies are slenderised by the pride of Love-god, is eyeful with their golden strings of girdle that are pensile onto their hiplines, and their bosoms are clung by pendulous pearly pendants, besides, earful are the singings of Kokila-s and the humming of honeybees...

"These interiors of visible horizon are comprised of mountains that are adorned with divers and delightful flowery trees, and the areas of those mountainsides are hurly-burly with the singings of Kokila-s, and the masses of their rock faces are hemmed in and enwrapped with fragrant mountainy moss, that comes out now when those rocks were fissured during last summer, to see such an environ, all the people are rejoiced...

"On seeing a flowered mango tree, the frame of mind of any itinerant is overly woebegone, for he is dissociated with his ladylove, thus he shuts his eyes unable to behold that ladylike mango tree with her hairdo overlaid with flowers, and obstructs his nose, for the fragrance of this ladylike mango tree is akin to his ladylove, thus he goes into a state of woefulness, and even he bewails and shrieks loudly... thus pitiless is this season, Vasanta, Spring for singletons...

"Delightful is this flowery month with the racketing of lusty honeybees and Kokila-s around, and with flowered mango trees that fruit sweet mangos, and with Karniakra flowers, and each of these is becoming as though an acute of arrow of Love-god, that ecstasies and even cleaves the hearts of self-respectful women, who cannot explicitly explain their pangs for love, nor can suffer them, implicitly...

"Whose best arrow is the delightful cluster of mango flowers, whose bow is the Kimshuka flower, whose bowstring is the beeline, whose silvery parasol is the

immaculate silvern moon, whose ruttish elephant for ride is the rutted breeze from Mt. Malaya, that waft the scent of sandalwood, which will be rutting, and whose panegyrists are the singing birds, namely Kokila-s, and such as he is, he that vanquisher of worlds, that formless Love-god, pairing up with his friend, namely Vasanta, the Spring season, that Love-god lavishes serendipities on you all, generously...

Kalidasa

Shakuntala Act 1

King Dushyant in a chariot, pursuing an antelope, with a bow and quiver, attended by his Charioteer.
Suta (Charioteer). [Looking at the antelope, and then at the king]
When I cast my eye on that black antelope, and on thee, O king, with thy braced bow, I see before me, as it were, the God Mahésa chasing a hart (male deer), with his bow, named Pináca, braced in his left hand.

King Dushyant: The fleet animal has given us a long chase. Oh! there he runs, with his neck bent gracefully, looking back, from time to time, at the car (chariot) which follows him. Now, through fear of a descending shaft, he contracts his forehand, and extends his flexible haunches; and now, through fatigue, he pauses to nibble the grass in his path with his mouth half opened. See how he springs and bounds with long steps, lightly skimming the ground, and rising high in the air! And now so rapid is his flight, that he is scarce discernible!

Suta: The ground was uneven, and the horses were checked in their course. He has taken advantage of our delay. It is level now, and we may easily overtake him.

King Dushyant: Loosen the reins.

Suta: As the king commands. – [He drives the car first at full speed, and then gently.] – He could not escape. The horses were not even touched by the clouds of dust which they raised; they tossed their manes, erected their ears, and rather glided than galloped over the smooth plain.

King Dushyant: They soon outran the swift antelope. –Objects which, from their distance, appeared minute, presently became larger: what was really divided, seemed united, as we passed; and what was in truth bent, seemed straight. So swift was the motion of the wheels, that nothing, for many moments, was either distant or near. [He fixes an arrow in his bowstring.]

[Behind the scenes.] He must not be slain. This antelope, O king, has an asylum in our forest: he must not be slain.

Suta: [Listening and Looking.] Just as the animal presents a fair mark for our arrow, two hermits are advancing to interrupt your aim

King Dushyant: Then stop the car.

Suta: The king is obeyed. [He draws in the reins.]

Enter a Hermit and his Pupil.

Hermit: [Raising his hands.] Slay not, O mighty sovereign, slay not a poor fawn, who has found a place of refuge. No, surely, no; he must not be hurt. An arrow in the delicate body of a deer would be like fire in bale of cotton. Compared with thy keen shafts, how weak must be the tender hide of a young antelope! Replace quickly, oh! replace the arrow which thou hast aimed. The weapons of you kings and warriors are destined for the relief of the oppressed, not for the destruction of the guiltless.

King Dushyant: [Saluting them.] It is replaced.

[He places the arrow in his quiver.]

Hermit: [With joy] Worthy is that act of thee, most illustrious; of monarchs; worthy, indeed, of a prince descended from Puru. Mayst thou have a son adorned with virtues, a sovereign of the world!

Pupil: [Elevating both his hands.] Oh! by all means, may thy son be adorned with every virtue, a sovereign of the world!

King Dushyant: [Bowing to them.] My head bears with reverence the order of a Bráhmin

Hermit: Great king, we came hither to collect wood for a solemn sacrifice; and this forest, and the banks of the Malini, affords an asylum to the wild animals protected by Shakuntala, (Shakuntala) whom our holy preceptor Kanva has received as a sacred deposit. If you have no other avocation, enter yon grove, and let the rights of hospitality be duly performed. Having seen with your own eyes the virtuous behaviour of those whose only wealth is their piety, but whose worldly cares are now at an end, you will then exclaim, 'How many good subjects are defended by this arm, which the bowstring has made callous!'

King Dushyant: Is the master of your family at home?

Hermit: Our preceptor is gone to Sómatirt'ha, in hopes of deprecating some calamity, with which destiny threatens the irreproachable Shakuntala, and he has charged her, in his absence, to receive all guests with due honour.

King Dushyant: Holy man, I will attend her; and she, having observed my devotion, will report it favourably to the venerable sage.

Both: Be it so; and we depart on our own business. [The Hermit and his Pupil go out.]

King Dushyant: Drive on Suta. By visiting the abode of holiness, we shall purify our souls.

Suta: As the king (may his life be long!) commands. [He drives on.]

King Dushyant:[Looking on all sides.] That we are near the dwelling–place of pious hermits, would clearly have appeared, even if it had not been told.

Suta: By what marks?

King Dushyant: Do you not observe them? See under yon trees the hallowed grains which have been scattered on the ground, while the tender female parrots were feeding their unfledged young in their pendent nest. Mark in other places the shining pieces of polished stone which have bruised the oil fruit of the sacred Ingudì. Look at the young fawns, which, having acquired confidence in man, and accustomed themselves to the sound of his voice, frisk at pleasure, without varying their course. Even the surface of the river is reddened with lines of consecrated bark, which float down its stream.

Look again; the roots of yon trees are bathed in the waters of holy pools, which quiver

as the breeze plays upon them; and the glowing lustre of yon fresh leaves is obscured, for a time, by smoke that rises from oblations of clarified butter. See too, where the young roes (deers) graze, without apprehension from our approach, on the lawn before yonder garden, where the tops of the sacrificial grass, cut for some religious rite, are sprinkled around.

Suta: I now observe holy habitation.

Dushm. [Turning aside.] This awful (awe inspiring)sanctuary, my friend, must not be violated. Here, therefore, stop the car; that I may descend.

Char. I hold in the reins. The king may descend at his pleasure.

King Dushyant:[Having descended, and looking at his own dress.] Groves devoted to religion must be entered in humbler habiliments (garments). Take these regal ornaments;–[the Charioteer receives them] –and, whilst I am observing those who inhabit this retreat, let the horses be watered and dressed.

Suta: Be it as you direct! [He goes out.]

King Dushyant: [Walking around and looking.] Now then I enter the sanctuary. –[He enters the grove.] –Oh! this place must be holy, my right arm throbs. –[Pausing and considering.] –What new acquisition does this omen promise in a sequestered grove? But the gates of predestined events are in all places open.

[Behind the Scenes.] Come hither, my beloved companions; Oh! come hither.

King Dushyant: [Listening.] Hah! I hear female voices to the right of yon arbour (tree). I am resolved to know who are conversing. –[He walks round and looks.] –There are some damsels, I see, belonging to the hermit's family who carry water–pots of different sizes proportioned to their strength, and are going to water the delicate plants. Oh! how charmingly they look! If the beauty of maids who dwell in woodland retreats cannot easily be found in the recesses of a palace, the garden flowers must make room for the blossoms of the forest, which excel them in colour and fragrance. [He stands gazing at them.]

Enter Shakuntala, Anusuya, and Priyamvada.

Anusuya: O my Shakuntala, it is in thy society that the trees of our father Canna seem to me delightful; it well becomes thee, who art soft as the fresh–blown Mallicá, to fill with water the canals which have been dug round these tender shrubs.

Shakuntala: It is not only in obedience to our father that I thus employ myself, though that were a sufficient motive, but I really feel the affection of a sister for these young plants. [Watering them.]

Priyamvada: My beloved friend, the shrubs which you have watered flower in the summer, which is now begun: let us give water to those which have passed their flowering time; for our virtue will be the greater when it is wholly disinterested.

Shakuntala: Excellent advice! [Watering other plants.]

King Dushyant: [Aside in transport.] How! is that Kanva's daughter, Shakuntala? –[With surprise.] –The venerable sage must have an unfeeling heart, since he has allotted a mean employment to so lovely a girl, and has dressed her in a coarse mantle of woven bark. He, who could with that so beautiful a creature, who at first sight ravishes my soul, should endure the hardships of his austere devotion, would attempt, I suppose, to cleave the hard wood Samì with a leaf of the blue lotos (lotus). Let me retire behind this tree, that I may gaze on her charms without diminishing her confidence. [He retires.]

Shakuntala: My friend Priyamvada has tied this mantle of bark so closely over my bosom that it gives me pain: Anusúuya, I request you to untie it.

[Anusuya unties the mantle.]

Priyamvada: [Laughing.] Well, my sweet friend, enjoy, while you may, that youthful prime, which gives your bosom so beautiful a swell.

King Dushyant: [Aside.] Admirably spoken, Priyamvada! No; her charms cannot be hidden, even though a robe of intertwisted fibres be thrown over her shoulders, and conceal a part of her bosom, like a veil of yellow leaves enfolding a radiant flower. The water lily, though dark moss may settle on its head, is nevertheless beautiful; and the moon with dewy beams is rendered yet brighter by its black spots. The bark itself acquires elegance from the features of a girl with antelope's eyes, and rather augments than diminishes my ardour. Many are the rough stalks which support the water lily; but many and exquisite are the blossoms which hang on them.

Shakuntala: [Looking before her.] Yon Amra tree, my friends, points with the finger of its leaves, which the gale gently agitates, and seems inclined to whisper some secret. I will go near it. [They all approach the tree.]

Priyamvada: O my Shakuntala, let us remain some time in this shade.
Shakuntala: Why here particularly?

Priyamvada: Because the Amra tree seems wedded to you, who are graceful as the blooming creeper which twines round it.

Shakuntala: Properly are you named Priyamvada, or speaking lovingly (kindly).

King Dushyant: [Aside.] She speaks truly. Yes; her lip glows like the tender leaflet; her arms resemble two flexible stalks; and youthful beauty shines, like a blossom, in all her lineaments.

Anusuya: See, my Shakuntala, how yon fresh Malicá, which you have surnamed Vanàdósini, or Delight of the Grove, has chosen the sweet Amra for her bridegroom.

Shakuntala: [Approaching, and looking at it with pleasure.] How charming is the season, when the nuptials even of plants are thus publicly celebrated! [She stands admiring it.]

Priyamvada: [Smiling.] Do you know, my Anusuya, why Shakuntala gazes on the plants with such rapture?

Anusuya: No, indeed: I was trying to guess. Pray, tell me.

Priyamvada: 'As the Grove's Delight is united to a suitable tree, thus I too hope for a bridegroom to my mind.' –That is her private thought at this moment.

Shakuntala Such are the sights of your own imagination. [Inverting the water–pot.]

Anusuya: Here is a plant, Shakuntala, which you have forgotten, though it has grown up, like yourself, under the fostering care of our father Kanva.

Shakuntala: Then I shall forget myself. –O wonderful! –[approaching the plant.] –O Priyamvada! [looking at it with joy] I have delightful tidings for you.

Priyamvada: What tidings, my beloved, for me?

Shakuntala: This Madhavi–creeper, though it be not the usual time for flowering, is covered with gay blossoms from its root to its top.

Both. [Approaching it hastily.] Is it really so, sweet friend?

Shakuntala: Is it so? Look yourselves.

Priyamvada: [With eagerness] From this omen, Shakuntala, I announce you an excellent husband, who will very soon take you by the hand. [Both girls look at Shakuntala.]

Shakuntala [Displeased.] A strange fancy of yours!

Priyamvada: Indeed, my beloved, I speak not jestingly. I heard something from our father Kanva. Your nurture of these plants has prospered; and thence it is, that I foretell your approaching nuptials.

Anusuya: It is thence, my Priyamvada, that she has watered them with so much alacrity.

Shakuntala: The Madhavi plant is my sister; can I do otherwise than cherish her?

[Pouring water on it.]

King Dushyant: [Aside.] I fear she is of the same religious order with her foster–father. Or has a mistaken apprehension risen in my mind? My warm heart is so attached to her, that she cannot but be a fit match for a man of the military class. The doubts which awhile perplex the good, are soon removed by the prevalence of their strong inclinations. I am enamoured of her, and she cannot, therefore, be the daughter of a Brahmin, whom I could not marry.

Shakuntala: [Moving her head.] Alas! a bee has left the blossom of this Mallicá, and is fluttering round my face. [She expresses uneasiness.]

King Dushyant: [Aside, with affection.] How often have I seen our court damsels affectedly turn their heads aside from some roving insect, merely to display their

graces! But this rural charmer knits her brows, and gracefully moves her eyes through fear only, without art or affectation. Oh! happy– bee, who touchest the corner of that eye beautifully trembling; who, approaching the tip of that ear, murmurs as softly as if thou wert whispering a secret of love; and who sippest nectar, while she waves her graceful hand, from that lip, which contains all the treasures of delight! Whilst I am solicitous to know in what family she was born, thou art enjoying bliss, which to me would be supreme felicity.

Shakuntala: Disengage me, I entreat, from this importunate insect, which quite baffles my efforts.

Priyamvada: What power have we to deliver you? The king Dushmanta is the sole defender of our consecrated groves.

King Dushyant: [Aside.] This is a good occasion for me to discover myself –[advancing a little.] –I must not, I will not, fear. Yet –[checking himself and retiring] –my royal character will thus abruptly be known to them. No; I will appear as a simple stranger, and claim the duties of hospitality.

Shakuntala: This impudent bee will not rest. I will remove to another space. –[Stepping aside and looking round] –Away! away! He follows me wherever I go. Deliver me, oh! deliver me from this distress.

King Dushyant: [Advancing hastily.] Ah! While the race of Puru govern the world, and restrain even the most profligate, by good laws well administered, has any man the audacity to molest the lovely daughters of pious hermits? [They look at him with emotion.]

Anusuya: Sir, no man is here audacious; but this damsel, our beloved friend, was teased by a fluttering bee. [Both girls look at Shakuntala.]

King Dushyant: [Approaching her.] Damsel, may thy devotion prosper! [Shakuntala looks on the ground, bashful and silent.]

Anusuya: Our guest must be received with due honours.

Priyamvada: Stranger, you are welcome. Go, my Shakuntala; bring from the cottage a basket of fruit and flowers. This river will, in the mean time, supply water for his feet. [Looking at the water-pots.]

King Dushyant: Holy maid, the gentleness of thy speech does me sufficient honour.

Anusuya: Sit down awhile on this bank of earth, spread with the leaves of Septaperna: the shade is refreshing, and our lord must want repose after his journey.

King Dushyant: You too must all be fatigued by your hospitable attentions; rest yourselves, therefore, with me.

Priyamvada: [Aside to Shakuntala] Come, let us all be seated: our guest is contented with our reception of him. [They all seat themselves.]

Shakuntala: [Aside.] At the sight of this youth I feel an emotion scarce consistent with

a grove devoted to piety.

King Dushyant: [Gazing at them alternately.] How well your friendship agrees, holy damsels, with the charming equality of your ages, and of your beauties!

Priyamvada: [Aside to Anusuya.] Who can this be, my Anusuya? The union of delicacy with robustness in his form, and of sweetness with dignity in his discourse, indicate a character fit for ample dominion.

Anusuya: [Aside to Priyamvada.] I too have been admiring him. I must ask him a few questions. –[Aloud.] Your sweet speech, Sir, gives me confidence. What imperial family is embellished by our noble guest? What is his native country? Surely it must be afflicted by his absence from it. What, I pray, could induce you to humiliate that exalted form of yours by visiting a forest peopled only by simple anchorites?

Shakuntala: [Aside.] Perplex not thyself, O my heart! let the faithful Anusuúya direct with her counsel the thoughts which rise in thee.

King Dushyant: [Aside.] How shall I reveal, or how shall I disguise myself? –[Musing.] –Be it so. [Aloud to Anusuúya.] Excellent lady, I am a student of the Véda, dwelling in the city of our king, descended from Puru; and, being occupied in the discharge of religious and moral duties, am come hither to behold the sanctuary of virtue.

Anusuya: Holy men, employed like you, are our lords and masters. [Shakuntala looks modest, yet with affection; while her companions gaze alternately at her and at the king.]

Anusuya: [Aside to Shakuntala] Oh! if our venerable father were present–

Shakuntala: What if he were?

Anusuya: He would entertain our guest with a variety of refreshments.

Shakuntala: [Pretending displeasure.]Go too; you had some other idea in your head; I will not listen to you. [She sits apart.]

King Dushyant: [Aside to Anusúuya and Priyamvada] In my turn, holy damsels, allow me to ask one question concerning your lovely friend.

Both. The request, Sir, does us honour.

King Dushyant: The sage Kanva, I know, is ever intent upon the great Being; and must have declined all earthly connections. How then can this damsel be, as it is said, his daughter?

Anusuya: Let our lord hear. There is, in the family of Cusa, a pious prince of extensive power, eminent in devotion and in arms.

King Dushyant: You speak, no doubt, of Kausika, the sage and monarch.

Anusuya: Know, Sir, that he is in truth her father; while Canna bears that reverend name, because he brought her up, since she was left an infant.

King Dushyant: Left? The word excites my curiosity; and raises in me a desire of knowing her whole story.

Anusuya: You shall hear it, Sir, in few words. –When that sage king had begun to gather the fruits of his austere devotion, the gods of Swarga (heaven) became apprehensive of his increasing power, and sent the nymph Ménacà (Menaka) to frustrate, by her allurements, the full effect of his austerities.

King Dushyant: Is a mortal's austerity (piety) so tremendous to the inferior deities? What was the event?

Anusuya: In the bloom of the vernal season, Causica, beholding the beauty of the celestial nymph, and wasted (overpowered) by the gale of desire. –[She stops and looks modest.]

King Dushyant: I now see the whole. Shakuntala then is the daughter of a king, by a nymph of the lower heaven.

Anusuya: Even so.

King Dushyant: [Aside.] The desire of my heart is gratified. –[Aloud.] How, indeed, could her transcendent beauty be the portion of mortal birth? Yon light, that sparkles with tremulous beams, proceeds not from a terrestrial cavern. [Sacontalá fits modestly, with her eyes on the ground.]

King Dushyant: [Again aside.] Happy man that I am! Now has my fancy an ample range. Yet, having heard the pleasantry of her companions on the subject of her nuptials, I am divided with anxious doubt, whether she be not wholly destined for a religious life.

Priyamvada: [Smiling, and looking first at Shakuntala, then at the king.] Our lord seems desirous of asking other questions.

[Shakuntala rebukes Priyamvada with her hand.]

King Dushyant: You know my very heart. I am, indeed, eager to learn the whole of this charmer's life; and must put one question more.

Priyamvada: Why should you muse on it so long? –[Aside.] One would think this religious man was forbidden by his vows to court a pretty woman.

King Dushyant: This I ask. Is the strict rule of a hermit so far to be observed by Kanva, that he cannot dispose of his daughter in marriage, but must check the natural impulse of juvenile love? Can she (oh preposterous fate!) be destined to reside for life among her favourite antelopes, the black lustre of whose eyes is far surpassed by hers?

Priyamvada. Hitherto, Sir, our friend has lived happily in this consecrated forest, the abode of her spiritual father; but it is now his intention to unite her with a bridegroom equal to herself.

King Dushyant: [Aside, with ecstasy.] Exult, oh my heart, exult. All doubt is removed;

and what before thou could have dreaded as a flame, may now be approached as a gem inestimable.

Shakuntala. [Seemingly angry.] Anusúuya I will stay here no longer.

Anusuya. Why so, I pray?

Shakuntala. I will go to the holy matron Gautami, and let her know how impertinently our Priyamvada has been prattling. [She rises.]

Anusuya. It will not be decent, my love, for an inhabitant of this hallowed wood to retire before a guest has received complete honour. [Shakuntala, giving no answer to go.]

King Dushyant: [Aside.] Is she then departing? –[He rises, as if going to stop her, but check himself.] –The actions of a passionate lover are as precipitate as his mind is agitated. Thus I, whose passion impelled me to follow the hermit's daughter, am restrained by a sense of duty.

Priyamvada. [Going upto Shakuntala} My angry friend, you must not retire.

Shakuntala: [Stepping back and frowning.] What should detain me?

Priyamvada. You owe me the labour, according to our agreement, of watering two more shrubs. Pay me first, to acquit your conscience, and then depart, if you please. [Holding her.]

King Dushyant: The damsel is fatigued, I imagine, by pouring so much water on the cherished plants. Her arms, graced with palms like fresh blossoms, hang carelessly down; her bosom heaves with strong breathing; and now her dishevelled locks, from which the string has dropped, are held by one of her lovely hands. Suffer me, therefore, thus to discharge the debt. –[Giving his ring to Priyamvada Both damsels, reading the name Dushyant, inscribed on the ring, look surprised at each other.] –It is a toy unworthy of your fixed attention; but I value it as a gift from the king.

Priyamvada. Then you ought not, Sir, to part with it. Her debt is from this moment discharged on your word only. [She returns the ring.]

Anusuya. You are now released, Shakuntala, by this benevolent lord –or favoured, perhaps, by a monarch himself. To what place will you now retire?

Shakuntala: [Aside.] Must I not wonder at all this if I preserve my senses?

Priyamvada: Are not you going, Shakuntala?

Shakuntala: Am I your subject? I shall go when it pleases me.

King Dushyant: [Aside, looking at Shakuntala] Either she is affected towards me, as I am towards her, or I am distracted with joy. She mingles not her discourse with mine; yet, when I speak, she listens attentively. She commands not her actions in my presence; and her eyes are engaged on me alone.

[Behind the scenes.] Oh pious hermits, preserve the animals of this hallowed forest! The king Dushyanta is hunting in it. The dust raised by the hoofs of his horses, which pound tile pebbles ruddy as early dawn, falls like a swarm of blighting insects on the consecrated boughs which sustain your mantles of woven bark, moist with the water of the stream in which you have bathed.

King Dushyant: [Aside.] Alas! my officers, who are searching for me, have indiscreetly disturbed this holy retreat.

[Again behind the scenes.] Beware, ye hermits, of yon elephant, who comes overturning all that oppose him; now he fixes his trunk with violence on a lofty branch that obstructs his way; and now he is entangled in the twining stalks of the Vratati. How are our sacred rites interrupted! How are the protected herds dispersed! The wild elephant, alarmed at the new appearance of a car, lays our forest waste.

King Dushyant: [Aside.] How unwillingly am I offending the devout forests! Yes; I must go to them instantly.

Priyamvada: Noble stranger, we are confounded with dread of the enraged elephant. With your permission, therefore, we retire to the hermit's cottage.

Anusuya. O Shakuntala, the venerable matron will be much distressed on your account. Come quickly, that we may be all safe together.

Shakuntala: [Walking slowly.] I am stopped, alas! by a sudden pain in my side.

King Dushyant: Be not alarmed, amiable damsels. It shall be my care that no disturbance happen in your sacred groves.

Priyamvada: Excellent stranger, we were wholly unacquainted with your station, and you will forgive us, we hope, for the offence of intermitting awhile the honours due to you: but we humbly request that you will give us once more the pleasure of seeing you, though you have not now been received with perfect hospitality.

King Dushyant: You depreciate your own merits. The sight of you, sweet damsels, has sufficiently honoured me.

Shakuntala: My foot, O Anusúya is hurt by this painted blade of Kusha grass; and now my loose vest of bark is caught by a branch of the Curuvaca. Help me to disentangle myself, and support me. [She goes out, looking from time to time at Dushmanta, and supported by the damsels.]

King Dushyant: [Sighing.] They are all departed; and I too, alas! must depart. For how short a moment have I been blessed with a sight of the incomparable Shakuntala I will send my attendants to the city, and take my station at no great distance from this forest. I cannot, in truth, divert my mind from the sweet occupation of gazing on her. How, indeed, should I otherwise occupy it? My body moves onward; but my restless heart runs back to her; like a light flag borne on a staff against the wind, and fluttering in an opposite direction.[He goes out.]

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto Fifth) - Uma's Reward

Now woe to Umá, for young Love is slain,
Her Lord hath left her, and her hope is vain.
Woe, woe to Umá! how the Mountain-Maid
Cursed her bright beauty for its feeble aid!
'Tis Beauty's guerdon which she loves the best,
To bless her lover, and in turn be blest.
Penance must aid her now—or how can she
Win the cold heart of that stern deity?
Penance, long penance: for that power alone
Can make such love, so high a Lord, her own.
But, ah! how troubled was her mother's brow
At the sad tidings of the mourner's vow!
She threw her arms around her own dear maid,
Kissed, fondly kissed her, sighed, and wept, and prayed:
'Are there no Gods, my child, to love thee here?
Frail is thy body, yet thy vow severe.
The lily, by the wild bee scarcely stirred,
Bends, breaks, and dies beneath the weary bird.'
Fast fell her tears, her prayer was strong, but still
That prayer was weaker than her daughter's will.
Who can recall the torrent's headlong force,
Or the bold spirit in its destined course?
She sent a maiden to her sire, and prayed
He for her sake would grant some bosky shade,
That she might dwell in solitude, and there
Give all her soul to penance and to prayer.
In gracious love the great Himálaya smiled,
And did the bidding of his darling child.
Then to that hill which peacocks love she came,
Known to all ages by the lady's name.
Still to her purpose resolutely true,
Her string of noble pearls aside she threw,
Which, slipping here and there, had rubbed away
The sandal dust that on her bosom lay,
And clad her in a hermit coat of bark,
Rough to her gentle limbs, and gloomy dark,
Pressing too tightly, till her swelling breast
Broke into freedom through the unwonted vest.
Her matted hair was full as lovely now
As when 'twas braided o'er her polished brow.
Thus the sweet beauties of the lotus shine
When bees festoon it in a graceful line;
And, though the tangled weeds that crown the rill
Cling o'er it closely, it is lovely still.
With zone of grass the votaress was bound,
Which reddened the fair form it girdled round:
Never before the lady's waist had felt
The ceaseless torment of so rough a belt.
Alas! her weary vow has caused to fade
The lovely colours that adorned the maid.
Pale is her hand, and her long finger-tips
Steal no more splendour from her paler lips,

Or, from the ball which in her play would rest,
Made bright and fragrant, on her perfumed breast.
Rough with the sacred grass those hands must be,
And worn with resting on her rosary.
Cold earth her couch, her canopy the skies,
Pillowed upon her arm the lady lies:
She who before was wont to rest her head
In the soft luxury of a sumptuous bed,
Vext by no troubles as she slumbered there,
But sweet flowers slipping from her loosened hair.
The maid put off, but only for awhile,
Her passioned glances and her witching smile.
She lent the fawn her moving, melting gaze,
And the fond creeper all her winning ways.
The trees that blossomed on that lonely mount
She watered daily from the neighbouring fount:
If she had been their nursing mother, she
Could not have tended them more carefully.
Not e'en her boy—her own bright boy—shall stay
Her love for them: her first dear children they.
Her gentleness had made the fawns so tame,
To her kind hand for fresh sweet grain they came,
And let the maid before her friends compare
Her own with eyes that shone as softly there.
Then came the hermits of the holy wood
To see the votaress in her solitude;
Grey elders came; though young the maid might seem,
Her perfect virtue must command esteem.
They found her resting in that lonely spot,
The fire was kindled, and no rite forgot.
In hermit's mantle was she clad; her look
Fixt in deep thought upon the Holy Book.
So pure that grove: all war was made to cease,
And savage monsters lived in love and peace.
Pure was that grove: each newly built abode
Had leafy shrines where fires of worship glowed.
But far too mild her penance, Umá thought,
To win from heaven the lordly meed she sought.
She would not spare her form, so fair and frail,
If sterner penance could perchance prevail.
Oft had sweet pastime wearied her, and yet
Fain would she match in toil the anchoret.
Sure the soft lotus at her birth had lent
Dear Umá's form its gentle element;
But gold, commingled with her being, gave
That will so strong, so beautifully brave.
Full in the centre of four blazing piles
Sate the fair lady of the winning smiles,
While on her head the mighty God of Day
Shot all the fury of his summer ray;
Yet her fixt gaze she turned upon the skies,
And quenched his splendour with her brighter eyes.

To that sweet face, though scorched by rays from heaven,
Still was the beauty of the lotus given,
Yet, worn by watching, round those orbs of light
A blackness gathered like the shades of night.
She cooled her dry lips in the bubbling stream,
And lived on Amrit from the pale moon-beam,
Sometimes in hunger culling from the tree
The rich ripe fruit that hung so temptingly.
Scorched by the fury of the noon-tide rays,
And fires that round her burned with ceaseless blaze,
Summer passed o'er her: rains of Autumn came
And throughly drenched the lady's tender frame.
So steams the earth, when mighty torrents pour
On thirsty fields all dry and parched before.
The first clear rain-drops falling on her brow,
Gem it one moment with their light, and now
Kissing her sweet lip find a welcome rest
In the deep valley of the lady's breast;
Then wander broken by the fall within
The mazy channels of her dimpled skin.
There as she lay upon her rocky bed,
No sumptuous roof above her gentle head,
Dark Night, her only witness, turned her eyes,
Red lightnings flashing from the angry skies,
And gazed upon her voluntary pain,
In wind, in sleet, in thunder, and in rain.
Still lay the maiden on the cold damp ground,
Though blasts of winter hurled their snows around,
Still pitying in her heart the mournful fate
Of those poor birds, so fond, so desolate,—
Doomed, hapless pair, to list each other's moan
Through the long hours of night, sad and alone.
Chilled by the rain, the tender lotus sank:
She filled its place upon the streamlet's bank.
Sweet was her breath as when that lovely flower
Sheds its best odour in still evening's hour.
Red as its leaves her lips of coral hue:
Red as those quivering leaves they quivered too.
Of all stern penance it is called the chief
To nourish life upon the fallen leaf.
But even this the ascetic maiden spurned,
And for all time a glorious title earned.
Aparná—Lady of the unbroken fast—
Have sages called her, saints who knew the past.
Fair as the lotus fibres, soft as they,
In these stern vows she passed her night and day.
No mighty anchoret had e'er essayed
The ceaseless penance of this gentle maid.
There came a hermit: reverend was he
As Bráhmanhood's embodied sanctity.
With coat of skin, with staff and matted hair,
His face was radiant, and he spake her fair.

Up rose the maid the holy man to greet,
And humbly bowed before the hermit's feet.
Though meditation fill the pious breast,
It finds a welcome for a glorious guest:
The sage received the honour duly paid,
And fixed his earnest gaze upon the maid.
While through her frame unwonted vigour ran,
Thus, in his silver speech, the blameless saint began:
'How can thy tender frame, sweet lady, bear
In thy firm spirit's task its fearful share?
Canst thou the grass and fuel duly bring,
And still unwearied seek the freshening spring?
Say, do the creeper's slender shoots expand,
Seeking each day fresh water from thy hand,
Till like thy lip each ruddy tendril glows,
That lip which, faded, still outreds the rose?
With loving glance the timid fawns draw nigh:
Say dost thou still with joy their wants supply?
For thee, O lotus-eyed, their glances shine,
Mocking the brightness of each look of thine.
O Mountain-Lady, it is truly said
That heavenly charms to sin have never led,
For even penitents may learn of thee
How pure, how gentle Beauty's self may be.
Bright Gangá falling with her heavenly waves,
Himálaya's head with sacred water laves,
Bearing the flowers the seven great Sages fling
To crown the forehead of the Mountain-King.
Yet do thy deeds, O bright-haired maiden, shed
A richer glory round his awful head.
Purest of motives, Duty leads thy heart:
Pleasure and gain therein may claim no part.
O noble maid, the wise have truly said
That friendship soon in gentle heart is bred.
Seven steps together bind the lasting tie:
Then bend on me, dear Saint, a gracious eye.
Fain, lovely Umá, would a Bráhman learn
What noble guerdon would thy penance earn.
Say, art thou toiling for a second birth,
Where dwells the great Creator? O'er the earth
Resistless sway? Or fair as Beauty's Queen,
Peerless, immortal, shall thy form be seen?
The lonely soul bowed down by grief and pain,
By penance' aid some gracious boon may gain.
But what, O faultless one, can move thy heart
To dwell in solitude and prayer apart?
Why should the cloud of grief obscure thy brow,
'Mid all thy kindred, who so loved as thou?
Foes hast thou none: for what rash hand would dare
From serpent's head the magic gem to tear?
Why dost thou seek the hermit's garb to try,
Thy silken raiment and thy gems thrown by?

As though the sun his glorious state should leave,
Rayless to harbour 'mid the shades of eve.
Wouldst thou win heaven by thy holy spells?
Already with the Gods thy father dwells.
A husband, lady? O forbear the thought,
A priceless jewel seeks not, but is sought.
Maiden, thy deep sighs tell me it is so;
Yet, doubtful still, my spirit seeks to know
Couldst thou e'er love in vain? What heart so cold
That hath not eagerly its worship told?
Ah! could the cruel loved one, thou fair maid,
Look with cold glances on that bright hair's braid?
Thy locks are hanging loosely o'er thy brow,
Thine ear is shaded by no lotus now.
See, where the sun hath scorched that tender neck
Which precious jewels once were proud to deck.
Still gleams the line where they were wont to cling,
As faintly shows the moon's o'ershadowed ring.
Now sure thy loved one, vain in beauty's pride,
Dreamed of himself when wandering at thy side,
Or he would count him blest to be the mark
Of that dear eye, so soft, so lustrous dark.
But, gentle Umá, let thy labour cease;
Turn to thy home, fair Saint, and rest in peace.
By many a year of penance duly done
Rich store of merit has my labour won.
Take then the half, thy secret purpose name;
Nor in stern hardships wear thy tender frame.'
The holy Bráhman ceased: but Umá's breast
In silence heaved, by love and fear opprest.
In mute appeal she turned her languid eye,
Darkened with weeping, not with softening dye,
To bid her maiden's friendly tongue declare
The cherished secret of her deep despair:
'Hear, holy Father, if thou still wouldst know,
Why her frail form endures this pain and woe,
As the soft lotus makes a screen to stay
The noontide fury of the God of Day.
Proudly disdaining all the blest above,
With heart and soul she seeks for Śiva's love.
For him alone, the Trident-wielding God,
The thorny paths of penance hath she trod.
But since that mighty one hath Káma slain,
Vain every hope, and every effort vain.
E'en as life fled, a keen but flowery dart
Young Love, the Archer, aimed at Śiva's heart.
The God in anger hurled the shaft away,
But deep in Umá's tender soul it lay;
Alas, poor maid! she knows no comfort now,
Her soul's on fire, her wild locks hide her brow.
She quits her father's halls, and frenzied roves
The icy mountain and the lonely groves.

Oft as the maidens of the minstrel throng
To hymn great Śiva's praises raised the song,
The lovelorn lady's sobs and deep-drawn sighs
Drew tears of pity from their gentle eyes.
Wakeful and fevered in the dreary night
Scarce closed her eyes, and then in wild affright
Rang through the halls her very bitter cry,
'God of the azure neck, why dost thou fly?'
While their soft bands her loving arms would cast
Hound the dear vision fading all too fast.
Her skilful hand, with true love-guided art,
Had traced the image graven on her heart.
'Art thou all present? Dost thou fail to see
Poor Umá's anguish and her love for thee?'
Thus oft in frenzied grief her voice was heard,
Chiding the portrait with reproachful word.
Long thus in vain for Śiva's love she strove,
Then turned in sorrow to this holy grove.
Since the sad maid hath sought these forest glades
To hide her grief amid the dreary shades,
The fruit hath ripened on the spreading bough;
But ah! no fruit hath crowned her holy vow.
Her faithful friends alone must ever mourn
To see that beauteous form by penance worn,
But oh! that Śiva would some favour deign,
As Indra pitieth the parching plain!'
The maiden ceased: his secret joy dissembling,
The Bráhman turned to Umá pale and trembling:
'And is it thus, or doth the maiden jest?
Is this the darling secret of thy breast?'
Scarce could the maid her choking voice command,
Or clasp her rosary with quivering hand:
'O holy Sage, learned in the Vedas' lore,
'Tis even thus. Great Śiva I adore.
Thus would my steadfast heart his love obtain,
For this I gladly bear the toil and pain.
Surely the strong desire, the earnest will,
May win some favour from his mercy still.'
'Lady,' cried he, 'that mighty Lord I know;
Ever his presence bringeth care and woe.
And wouldst thou still a second time prepare
The sorrows of his fearful life to share?
Deluded maid, how shall thy tender hand,
Decked with the nuptial bracelet's jewelled band,
Be clasped in his, when fearful serpents twine
In scaly horror round that arm divine?
How shall thy robe, with gay flamingoes gleaming,
Suit with his coat of hide with blood-drops streaming?
Of old thy pathway led where flowerets sweet
Made pleasant carpets for thy gentle feet.
And e'en thy foes would turn in grief away
To see these vermeil-tinted limbs essay,

Where scattered tresses strew the mournful place,
Their gloomy path amid the tombs to trace.
On Śiva's heart the funeral ashes rest,
Say, gentle lady, shall they stain thy breast,
Where the rich tribute of the Sandal trees
Sheds a pure odour on the amorous breeze?
A royal bride returning in thy state,
The king of elephants should bear thy weight.
How wilt thou brook the mockery and the scorn
When thou on Śiva's bull art meanly borne?
Sad that the crescent moon his crest should be:
And shall that mournful fate be shared by thee?
His crest, the glory of the evening skies,
His bride, the moonlight of our wondering eyes!
Deformed is he, his ancestry unknown;
By vilest garb his poverty is shown.
O fawn-eyed lady, how should Śiva gain
That heart for which the glorious strive in vain
No charms hath he to win a maiden's eye:
Cease from thy penance, hush the fruitless sigh!
Unmeet is he thy faithful heart to share,
Child of the Mountain, maid of beauty rare!
Not 'mid the gloomy tombs do sages raise
The holy altar of their prayer and praise.'
Impatient Umá listened: the quick blood
Rushed to her temples in an angry flood.
Her quivering lip, her darkly-flashing eye
Told that the tempest of her wrath was nigh.
Proudly she spoke: 'How couldst thou tell aright
Of one like Śiva, perfect, infinite?
'Tis ever thus, the mighty and the just
Are scorned by souls that grovel in the dust.
Their lofty goodness and their motives wise
Shine all in vain before such blinded eyes.
Say who is greater, he who strives for power,
Or he who succours in misfortune's hour?
Refuge of worlds, O how should Śiva deign
To look on men enslaved to paltry gain?
The spring of wealth himself, he careth naught
For the vile treasures that mankind have sought.
His dwelling-place amid the tombs may be,
Yet Monarch of the three great worlds is he.
What though no love his outward form may claim,
The stout heart trembles at his awful name.
Who can declare the wonders of his might?
The Trident-wielding God, who knows aright?
Whether around him deadly serpents twine,
Or if his jewelled wreaths more brightly shine;
Whether in rough and wrinkled hide arrayed,
Or silken robe, in glittering folds displayed;
If on his brow the crescent moon he bear,
Or if a shrunken skull be withering there;

The funeral ashes touched by him acquire
The glowing lustre of eternal fire;
Falling in golden showers, the heavenly maids
Delight to pour them on their shining braids.
What though no treasures fill his storehouse full,
What though he ride upon his horned bull,
Not e'en may Indra in his pride withhold
The lowly homage that is his of old,
But turns his raging elephant to meet
His mighty Lord, and bows before his feet,
Right proud to colour them rich rosy red
With the bright flowers that deck his prostrate head.
Thy slanderous tongue proclaims thy evil mind,
Yet in thy speech one word of truth we find.
Unknown thou call'st him: how should mortal man
Count when the days of Brahmá's Lord began?
But cease these idle words: though all be true,
His failings many and his virtues few,
Still clings my heart to him, its chosen lord,
Nor fails nor falters at thy treacherous word.
Dear maiden, bid yon eager boy depart:
Why should the slanderous tale defile his heart?
Most guilty who the faithless speech begins,
But he who stays to listen also sins.'
She turned away: with wrath her bosom swelling,
Its vest of bark in angry pride repelling:
But sudden, lo, before her wondering eyes
In altered form she sees the sage arise;
'Tis Śiva's self before the astonished maid,
In all his gentlest majesty displayed.
She saw, she trembled, like a river's course,
Checked for a moment in its onward force,
By some huge rock amid the torrent hurled
Where erst the foaming waters madly curled.
One foot uplifted, shall she turn away?
Unmoved the other, shall the maiden stay?
The silver moon on Śiva's forehead shone,
While softly spake the God in gracious tone:
'O gentle maiden, wise and true of soul,
Lo, now I bend beneath thy sweet control.
Won by thy penaṇce, and thy holy vows,
Thy willing slave Śiva before thee bows.'
He spake, and rushing through her languid frame,
At his dear words returning vigour came.
She knew but this, that all her cares were o'er,
Her sorrows ended, she should weep no more!

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto First) - Uma's Nativity

Far in the north Himálaya, lifting high
His towery summits till they cleave the sky,
Spans the wide land from east to western sea,
Lord of the hills, instinct with deity.
For him, when Prithu ruled in days of old
The rich earth, teeming with her gems and gold,
The vassal hills and Meru drained her breast,
To deck Himálaya, for they loved him best;
And earth, the mother, gave her store to fill
With herbs and sparkling ores the royal hill.
Proud mountain-king! his diadem of snow
Dims not the beauty of his gems below.
For who can gaze upon the moon, and dare
To mark one spot less brightly glorious there?[Pg 2]
Who, 'mid a thousand virtues, dares to blame
One shade of weakness in a hero's fame?
Oft, when the gleamings of his mountain brass
Flash through the clouds and tint them as they pass,
Those glories mock the hues of closing day,
And heaven's bright wantons hail their hour of play;
Try, ere the time, the magic of their glance,
And deck their beauty for the twilight dance.
Dear to the sylphs are the cool shadows thrown
By dark clouds wandering round the mountain's zone,
Till frightened by the storm and rain they seek
Eternal sunshine on each loftier peak.
Far spread the wilds where eager hunters roam,
Tracking the lion to his dreary home.
For though the melting snow has washed away
The crimson blood-drops of the wounded prey,
Still the fair pearls that graced his forehead tell
Where the strong elephant, o'ermastered, fell,
And clinging to the lion's claws, betray,
Falling at every step, the mighty conqueror's way.
There birch-trees wave, that lend their friendly aid
To tell the passion of the love-lorn maid,
So quick to learn in metal tints to mark
Her hopes and fears upon the tender bark.
List! breathing from each cave, Himálaya leads
The glorious hymn with all his whispering reeds,[Pg 3]
Till heavenly minstrels raise their voice in song,
And swell his music as it floats along.
There the fierce elephant wounds the scented bough
To ease the torment of his burning brow;
And bleeding pines their odorous gum distil
To breathe rare fragrance o'er the sacred hill.
There magic herbs pour forth their streaming light
From mossy caverns through the darksome night,
And lend a torch to guide the trembling maid
Where waits her lover in the leafy shade.
Yet hath he caves within whose inmost cells
In tranquil rest the murky darkness dwells,

And, like the night-bird, spreads the brooding wing
Safe in the shelter of the mountain-king,
Unscorned, uninjured; for the good and great
Spurn not the suppliant for his lowly state.
Why lingers yet the heavenly minstrel's bride
On the wild path that skirts Himálaya's side?
Cold to her tender feet—oh, cold—the snow,
Why should her steps—her homeward steps—be slow?
'Tis that her slender ankles scarce can bear
The weight of beauty that impedes her there;
Each rounded limb, and all her peerless charms,
That broad full bosom, those voluptuous arms.[Pg 4]
E'en the wild kine that roam his forests bring
The royal symbols to the mountain-king.
With tails outspread, their bushy streaming hair
Flashes like moonlight through the parted air.
What monarch's fan more glorious might there be,
More meet to grace a king as proud as he?
There, when the nymphs, within the cave's recess,
In modest fear their gentle limbs undress,
Thick clouds descending yield a friendly screen,
And blushing beauty bares her breast unseen.
With pearly dewdrops Gangá loads the gale
That waves the dark pines towering o'er the vale,
And breathes in welcome freshness o'er the face
Of wearied hunters when they quit the chase.
So far aloft, amid Himálayan steeps,
Crouched on the tranquil pool the lotus sleeps,
That the bright Seven who star the northern sky
Cull the fair blossoms from their seats on high;
And when the sun pours forth his morning glow
In streams of glory from his path below,
They gain new beauty as his kisses break
His darlings' slumber on the mountain lake.
Well might that ancient hill by merit claim
The power and glory of a monarch's name;[Pg 5]
Nurse of pure herbs that grace each holy rite,
Earth's meetest bearer of unyielding might.
The Lord of Life for this ordained him king,
And bade him share the sacred offering.
Gladly obedient to the law divine,
He chose a consort to prolong his line.
No child of earth, born of the Sage's will,
The fair nymph Mená pleased the sovran hill.
To her he sued, nor was his prayer denied,
The Saints' beloved was the mountain's bride.
Crowned with all bliss and beauty were the pair,
He passing glorious, she was heavenly fair.
Swiftly the seasons, winged with love, flew on,
And made her mother of a noble son,
The great Maináka, who in triumph led
His Serpent beauties to the bridal bed;

And once when Indra's might those pinions rent
That bare the swift hills through the firmament,
(So fierce his rage, no mountain could withstand
The wild bolt flashing from his red right hand,)
He fled to Ocean, powerful to save,
And hid his glory 'neath the friendly wave.
A gentle daughter came at length to bless
The royal mother with her loveliness;
Born once again, for in an earlier life
High fame was hers, as Siva's faithful wife.[Pg 6]
But her proud sire had dared the God to scorn;
Then was her tender soul with anguish torn,
And jealous for the lord she loved so well,
Her angered spirit left its mortal cell.
Now deigned the maid, a lovely boon, to spring
From that pure lady and the mountain-king.
When Industry and Virtue meet and kiss,
Holy their union, and the fruit is bliss.
Blest was that hour, and all the world was gay,
When Mená's daughter saw the light of day.
A rosy glow suffused the brightening sky;
An odorous breeze came sweeping softly by.
Breathed round the hill a sweet unearthly strain,
And the glad heavens poured down their flowery rain.
That fair young maiden diademmed with light
Made her dear mother's fame more sparkling bright.
As the blue offspring of the Turquois Hills
The parent mount with richer glory fills,
When the cloud's voice has caused the gem to spring,
Responsive to its gentle thundering.
Then was it sweet, as days flew by, to trace
The dawning charm of every infant grace,
Even as the crescent moons their glory pour
More full, more lovely than the eve before.
As yet the maiden was unknown to fame;
Child of the Mountain was her only name.[Pg 7]
But when her mother, filled with anxious care
At her stern penance, cried Forbear! Forbear!
To a new title was the warning turned,
And Umá was the name the maiden earned.
Loveliest was she of all his lovely race,
And dearest to her father. On her face
Looking with love he ne'er could satisfy
The thirsty glances of a parent's eye.
When spring-tide bids a thousand flowerets bloom
Loading the breezes with their rich perfume,
Though here and there the wandering bee may rest,
He loves his own—his darling mango—best.
The Gods' bright river bathes with gold the skies,
And pure sweet eloquence adorns the wise.
The flambeau's glory is the shining fire;
She was the pride, the glory of her sire,

Shedding new lustre on his old descent,
His loveliest child, his richest ornament.
The sparkling Gangá laved her heavenly home,
And o'er her islets would the maiden roam
Amid the dear companions of her play
With ball and doll to while the hours away.
As swans in autumn in assembling bands
Fly back to Gangá's well-remembered sands:
As herbs beneath the darksome shades of night
Collect again their scattered rays of light:[Pg 8]
So dawned upon the maiden's waking mind
The far-off memory of her life resigned,
And all her former learning in its train,
Feelings, and thoughts, and knowledge came again.
Now beauty's prime, that craves no artful aid,
Ripened the loveliness of that young maid:
That needs no wine to fire the captive heart,—
The bow of Love without his flowery dart.
There was a glory beaming from her face,
With love's own light, and every youthful grace:
Ne'er had the painter's skilful hand portrayed
A lovelier picture than that gentle maid;
Ne'er sun-kissed lily more divinely fair
Unclosed her beauty to the morning air.
Bright as a lotus, springing where she trod,
Her glowing feet shed radiance o'er the sod.
That arching neck, the step, the glance aside,
The proud swans taught her as they stemmed the tide,
Whilst of the maiden they would fondly learn
Her anklets' pleasant music in return.
When the Almighty Maker first began
The marvellous beauty of that child to plan,
In full fair symmetry each rounded limb
Grew neatly fashioned and approved by Him:
The rest was faultless, for the Artist's care
Formed each young charm most excellently fair,[Pg 9]
As if his moulding hand would fain express
The visible type of perfect loveliness.
What thing of beauty may the poet dare
With the smooth wonder of those limbs compare?
The young tree springing by the brooklet's side?
The rounded trunk, the forest-monarch's pride?
Too rough that trunk, too cold that young tree's stem;
A softer, warmer thing must vie with them.
Her hidden beauties though no tongue may tell,
Yet Śiva's love will aid the fancy well:
No other maid could deem her boasted charms
Worthy the clasp of such a husband's arms.
Between the partings of fair Umá's vest
Came hasty glimpses of a lovely breast:
So closely there the sweet twin hillocks rose,
Scarce could the lotus in the vale repose.

And if her loosened zone e'er slipped below,
All was so bright beneath the mantle's flow,
So dazzling bright, as if the maid had braced
A band of gems to sparkle round her waist;
And the dear dimples of her downy skin
Seemed fitting couch for Love to revel in.
Her arms were softer than the flowery dart,
Young Káma's arrow, that subdues the heart;
For vain his strife with Śiva, till at last
He chose those chains to bind his conqueror fast.[Pg 10]
E'en the new moon poured down a paler beam
When her long fingers flashed their rosy gleam,
And brighter than Aśoka's blossom threw
A glory round, like summer's evening hue.
The strings of pearl across her bosom thrown
Increased its beauty, and enhanced their own,—
Her breast, her jewels seeming to agree,
The adorner now, and now the adorned to be.
When Beauty gazes on the fair full moon,
No lotus charms her, for it blooms at noon:
If on that flower she feed her raptured eye,
No moon is shining from the mid-day sky;
She looked on Umá's face, more heavenly fair,
And found their glories both united there.
The loveliest flower that ever opened yet
Laid in the fairest branch: a fair pearl set
In richest coral, with her smile might vie
Flashing through lips bright with their rosy dye.
And when she spoke, upon the maiden's tongue,
Distilling nectar, such rare accents hung,
The sweetest note that e'er the Koïl poured
Seemed harsh and tuneless as a jarring chord.
The melting glance of that soft liquid eye,
Tremulous like lilies when the breezes sigh,
Which learnt it first—so winning and so mild—
The gentle fawn, or Mená's gentler child?[Pg 11]
And oh, the arching of her brow! so fine
Was the rare beauty of its pencilled line,
Love gazed upon her forehead in despair
And spurned the bow he once esteemed so fair:
Her long bright tresses too might shame the pride
Of envious yaks who roamed the mountain-side.
Surely the Maker's care had been to bring
From Nature's store each sweetest, loveliest thing,
As if the world's Creator would behold
All beauty centred in a single mould.
When holy Nárad—Saint who roams at will—
First saw the daughter of the royal hill,
He hailed the bride whom Śiva's love should own
Half of himself, and partner of his throne.
Himálaya listened, and the father's pride
Would yield the maiden for no other's bride:

To Fire alone of all bright things we raise
The holy hymn, the sacrifice of praise.
But still the monarch durst not, could not bring
His child, unsought, to Heaven's supremest King;
But as a good man fears his earnest prayer
Should rise unheeded, and with thoughtful care
Seeks for some friend his eager suit to aid,
Thus great Himálaya in his awe delayed.[Pg 12]
Since the sad moment when his gentle bride
In the full glory of her beauty died,
The mournful Siva in the holy grove
Had dwelt in solitude, and known not love.
High on that hill where musky breezes throw
Their balmy odours o'er eternal snow;
Where heavenly minstrels pour their notes divine,
And rippling Gangá laves the mountain pine,
Clad in a coat of skin all rudely wrought
He lived for prayer and solitary thought.
The faithful band that served the hermit's will
Lay in the hollows of the rocky hill,
Where from the clefts the dark bitumen flowed.
Tinted with mineral dyes their bodies glowed;
Clad in rude mantles of the birch-tree's rind,
With bright red garlands was their hair entwined.
The holy bull before his master's feet
Shook the hard-frozen earth with echoing feet,
And as he heard the lion's roaring swell
In distant thunder from the rocky dell,
In angry pride he raised his voice of fear
And from the mountain drove the startled deer.
Bright fire—a shape the God would sometimes wear
Who takes eight various forms—was glowing there.
Then the great deity who gives the prize
Of penance, prayer, and holy exercise,[Pg 13]
As though to earn the meed he grants to man,
Himself the penance and the pain began.
Now to that holy lord, to whom is given
Honour and glory by the Gods in heaven,
The worship of a gift Himálaya paid,
And towards his dwelling sent the lovely maid;
Her task, attended by her youthful train,
To woo his widowed heart to love again.
The hermit welcomed with a courteous brow
That gentle enemy of hermit vow.
The still pure breast where Contemplation dwells
Defies the charmer and the charmer's spells.
Calm and unmoved he viewed the wondrous maid,
And bade her all his pious duties aid.
She culled fresh blossoms at the God's command,
Sweeping the altar with a careful hand;
The holy grass for sacred rites she sought,
And day by day the fairest water brought.

And if the unwonted labour caused a sigh,
The fair-haired lady turned her languid eye
Where the pale moon on Śiva's forehead gleamed,
And swift through all her frame returning vigour streamed.

[Translated from the Sanskrit into English Verse by. Ranrn T. H. GRIFFITH, M.A..]

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto Fourth) - Rati's Lament

Sad, solitary, helpless, faint, forlorn,
Woke Káma's darling from her swoon to mourn.
Too soon her gentle soul returned to know
The pangs of widowhood—that word of woe.
Scarce could she raise her, trembling, from the ground,
Scarce dared to bend her anxious gaze around,
Unconscious yet those greedy eyes should never
Feed on his beauty more—gone, gone for ever.
'Speak to me, Káma! why so silent? give
One word in answer—doth my Káma live?'
There on the turf his dumb cold ashes lay,
Whose soul that fiery flash had scorched away.
She clasped the dank earth in her wild despair,
Her bosom stained, and rent her long bright hair,
Till hill and valley caught the mourner's cry,
And pitying breezes echoed sigh for sigh.
'Oh thou wast beautiful: fond lovers sware
Their own bright darlings were like Káma, fair.
Sure woman's heart is stony: can it be
That I still live while this is all of thee?
Where art thou, Káma? Could my dearest leave
His own fond Rati here alone to grieve?
So must the sad forsaken lotus die
When her bright river leaves his channel dry.
Káma, dear Káma, call again to mind
How thou wast ever gentle, I was kind.
Let not my prayer, thy Rati's prayer, be vain;
Come as of old, and bless these eyes again!
Wilt thou not hear me? Think of those sweet hours
When I would bind thee with my zone of flowers,
Those soft gay fetters o'er thee fondly wreathing,
Thine only punishment when gently breathing
In tones of love thy heedless sigh betrayed
The name, dear traitor! of some rival maid.
Then would I pluck a floweret from my tress
And beat thee till I forced thee to confess,
While in my play the falling leaves would cover
The eyes—the bright eyes—of my captive lover.
And then those words that made me, oh, so blest—
'Dear love, thy home is in my faithful breast!'
Alas, sweet words, too blissful to be true,
Or how couldst thou have died, nor Rati perish too?
Yes, I will fly to thee, of thee bereft,
And leave this world which thou, my life, hast left.
Cold, gloomy, now this wretched world must be,
For all its pleasures came from only thee.
When night has veiled the city in its shade,
Thou, only thou, canst soothe the wandering maid,
And guide her trembling at the thunder's roar
Safe through the darkness to her lover's door.
In vain the wine-cup, as it circles by,
Lisps in her tongue and sparkles in her eye.

Long locks are streaming, and the cheek glows red:
But all is mockery, Love—dear Love—is dead.
The Moon, sweet spirit, shall lament for thee,
Late, dim, and joyless shall his rising be.
Days shall fly on, and he forget to take
His full bright glory, mourning for thy sake.
Say, Káma, say, whose arrow now shall be
The soft green shoot of thy dear mango tree,
The favourite spray which Köils love so well,
And praise in sweetest strain its wondrous spell?
This line of bees which strings thy useless bow
Hums mournful echo to my cries of woe.
Come in thy lovely shape and teach again
The Köil's mate, that knows the tender strain,
Her gentle task to waft to longing ears
The lover's hope, the distant lover's fears.
Come, bring once more that ecstasy of bliss,
The fond dear look, the smile, and ah! that kiss!
Fainting with woe, my soul refuses rest
When memory pictures how I have been blest.
See, thou didst weave a garland, love, to deck
With all spring's fairest buds thy Rati's neck.
Sweet are those flowers as they were culled to-day,
And is my Káma's form more frail than they?
His pleasant task my lover had begun,
But stern Gods took him ere the work was done;
Return, my Káma, at thy Rati's cry,
And stain this foot which waits the rosy dye.
Now will I hie me to the fatal pile,
And ere heaven's maids have hailed thee with a smile,
Or on my love their winning glances thrown,
I will be there, and claim thee for mine own.
Yet though I come, my lasting shame will be
That I have lived one moment after thee.
Ah, how shall I thy funeral rites prepare,
Gone soul and body to the viewless air?
'With thy dear Spring I've seen thee talk and smile,
Shaping an arrow for thy bow the while.
Where is he now, thy darling friend, the giver
Of many a bright sweet arrow for thy quiver?
Is he too sent upon death's dreary path,
Scorched by the cruel God's inexorable wrath?'
Stricken in spirit by her cries of woe,
Like venomed arrows from a mighty bow,
A moment fled, and gentle Spring was there,
To ask her grief, to soothe her wild despair.
She beat her breast more wildly than before,
With greater floods her weeping eyes ran o'er.
When friends are nigh the spirit finds relief
In the full gushing torrent of its grief.
'Turn, gentle friend, thy weeping eyes, and see
That dear companion who was all to me.

His crumbling dust with which the breezes play,
Bearing it idly in their course away,
White as the silver feathers of a dove,
Is all that's left me of my murdered love.
Now come, my Káma. Spring, who was so dear,
Longs to behold thee. Oh, appear, appear!
Fickle to women Love perchance may bend
His ear to listen to a faithful friend.
Remember, he walked ever at thy side
O'er bloomy meadows in the warm spring-tide,
That Gods above, and men, and fiends below
Should own the empire of thy mighty bow,
That ruthless bow, which pierces to the heart,
Strung with a lotus-thread, a flower its dart.
As dies a torch when winds sweep roughly by,
So is my light for ever fled, and I,
The lamp his cheering rays no more illume,
Am wrapt in darkness, misery and gloom.
Fate took my love, and spared the widow's breath,
Yet fate is guilty of a double death.
When the wild monster tramples on the ground
The tree some creeper garlands closely round,
Reft of the guardian which it thought so true,
Forlorn and withered, it must perish too.
Then come, dear friend, the true one's pile prepare,
And send me quickly to my husband there.
Call it not vain: the mourning lotus dies
When the bright Moon, her lover, quits the skies.
When sinks the red cloud in the purple west,
Still clings his bride, the lightning, to his breast.
All nature keeps the eternal high decree:
Shall woman fail? I come, my love, to thee!
Now on the pile my faint limbs will I throw,
Clasping his ashes, lovely even so,—
As if beneath my weary frame were spread
Soft leaves and blossoms for a flowery bed.
And oh, dear comrade (for in happier hours
Oft have I heaped a pleasant bed of flowers
For thee and him beneath the spreading tree),
Now quickly raise the pile for Love and me.
And in thy mercy gentle breezes send
To fan the flame that wafts away thy friend,
And shorten the sad moments that divide
Impatient Káma from his Rati's side;
Set water near us in a single urn,
We'll sip in heaven from the same in turn;
And let thine offering to his spirit be
Sprays fresh and lovely from the mango tree,
Culled when the round young buds begin to swell,
For Káma loved those fragrant blossoms well.'
As Rati thus complained in faithful love,
A heavenly voice breathed round her from above,

Falling in pity like the gentle rain
That brings the dying herbs to life again:
'Bride of the flower-armed God, thy lord shall be
Not ever distant, ever deaf to thee.
Give me thine ear, sad lady, I will tell
Why perished Káma, whom thou lovedst well.
The Lord of Life in every troubled sense
Too warmly felt his fair child's influence.
He quenched the fire, but mighty vengeance came
On Káṃa, fanner of the unholy flame.
When Siva by her penance won has led
Himálaya's daughter to her bridal bed,
His bliss to Káma shall the God repay,
And give again the form he snatched away.
Thus did the gracious God, at Justice' prayer,
The term of Love's sad punishment declare.
The Gods, like clouds, are fierce and gentle too,
Now hurl the bolt, now dropp sweet heavenly dew.
Live, widowed lady, for thy lover's arms
Shall clasp again—oh, fondly clasp—thy charms.
In summer-heat the streamlet dies away
Beneath the fury of the God of Day:
Then, in due season, comes the pleasant rain,
And all is fresh, and fair, and full again.'
Thus breathed the spirit from the viewless air,
And stilled the raging of her wild despair;
While Spring consoled with every soothing art,
Cheered by that voice from heaven, the mourner's heart,
Who watched away the hours, so sad and slow,
That brought the limit of her weary woe,
As the pale moon, quenched by the conquering light
Of garish day, longs for its own dear night.

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto Second) - The Address To BRahma

While impious Tárak in resistless might
Was troubling heaven and earth with wild affright,
To Brahmá's high abode, by Indra led,
The mournful deities for refuge fled.
As when the Day-God's loving beams awake
The lotus slumbering on the silver lake,
So Brahmá deigned his glorious face to show,
And poured sweet comfort on their looks of woe.
Then nearer came the suppliant Gods to pay
Honour to him whose face turns every way.
They bowed them low before the Lord of Speech,
And sought with truthful words his heart to reach:
'Glory to Thee! before the world was made,
One single form thy Majesty displayed.
Next Thou, to body forth the mystic Three,
Didst fill three Persons: Glory, Lord, to Thee!
Unborn and unbegotten! from thy hand
The fruitful seed rained down; at thy command
From that small germ o'er quickening waters thrown
All things that move not, all that move have grown.
Before thy triple form in awe they bow:
Maker, preserver, and destroyer, Thou!
Thou, when a longing urged thee to create,
Thy single form in twain didst separate.
The Sire, the Mother that made all things be
By their first union were but parts of Thee.
From them the life that fills this earthly frame,
And fruitful Nature, self-renewing, came.
Thou countest not thy time by mortals' light;
With Thee there is but one vast day and night.
When Brahmá slumbers fainting Nature dies,
When Brahmá wakens all again arise.
Creator of the world, and uncreate!
Endless! all things from Thee their end await.
Before the world wast Thou! each Lord shall fall
Before Thee, mightiest, highest, Lord of all.
Thy self-taught soul thine own deep spirit knows;
Made by thyself thy mighty form arose;
Into the same, when all things have their end,
Shall thy great self, absorbed in Thee, descend.
Lord, who may hope thy essence to declare?
Firm, yet as subtile as the yielding air:
Fixt, all-pervading; ponderous, yet light,
Patent to all, yet hidden from the sight.
Thine are the sacred hymns which mortals raise,
Commencing ever with the word of praise,
With three-toned chant the sacrifice to grace,
And win at last in heaven a blissful place.
They hail Thee Nature labouring to free
The Immortal Soul from low humanity;
Hail Thee the stranger Spirit, unimpressed,
Gazing on Nature from thy lofty rest.

Father of fathers, God of gods art thou,
Creator, highest, hearer of the vow!
Thou art the sacrifice, and Thou the priest,
Thou, he that eateth; Thou, the holy feast.
Thou art the knowledge which by Thee is taught,
The mighty thinker, and the highest thought!'
Pleased with their truthful praise, his favouring eye
He turned upon the dwellers in the sky,
While from four mouths his words in gentle flow
Come welling softly to assuage their woe:
'Welcome! glad welcome, Princes! ye who hold
Your lofty sovereignties ordained of old.
But why so mournful? what has dimmed your light?
Why shine your faces less divinely bright?
Like stars that pour forth weaker, paler gleams,
When the fair moon with brighter radiance beams.
O say, in vain doth mighty Indra bear
The thunderbolt of heaven, unused to spare?
Vritra, the furious fiend, 'twas strong to slay:
Why dull and blunted is that might to-day?
See, Varun's noose hangs idly on his arm,
Like some fell serpent quelled by magic charm.
Weak is Kuvera's hand, his arm no more
Wields the dread mace it once so proudly bore;
But like a tree whose boughs are lopped away,
It tells of piercing woe, and dire dismay.
In days of yore how Yama's sceptre shone!
Fled are its glories, all its terrors gone;
Despised and useless as a quenched brand,
All idly now it marks the yielding sand.
Fallen are the Lords of Light, ere now the gaze
Shrank from the coming of their fearful blaze;
So changed are they, the undazzled eye may see
Like pictured forms, each rayless deity.
Some baffling power has curbed the breezes' swell:
Vainly they chafe against the secret spell.
We know some barrier checks their wonted course,
When refluent waters seek again their source.
The Rudras too—fierce demigods who bear
The curved moon hanging from their twisted hair—
Tell by their looks of fear, and shame, and woe,
Of threats now silenced, of a mightier foe.
Glory and power, ye Gods, were yours of right:
Have ye now yielded to some stronger might,
Even as on earth a general law may be
Made powerless by a special text's decree?
Then say, my sons, why seek ye Brahmá's throne?
'Tis mine to frame the worlds, and yours to guard your own.'
Then Indra turned his thousand glorious eyes,
Glancing like lilies when the soft wind sighs,
And in the Gods' behalf, their mighty chief
Urged the Most Eloquent to tell their grief.

Then rose the heavenly Teacher, by whose side
Dim seemed the glories of the Thousand-eyed,
And with his hands outspread, to Brahmá spake,
Couched on his own dear flower, the daughter of the lake:
'O mighty Being! surely thou dost know
The unceasing fury of our ruthless foe;
For thou canst see the secret thoughts that lie
Deep in the heart, yet open to thine eye.
The vengeful Tárak, in resistless might,
Like some dire Comet, gleaming wild affright,
O'er all the worlds an evil influence sheds,
And, in thy favour strong, destruction spreads.
All bow before him: on his palace wall
The sun's first ray and parting splendour fall;
Ne'er could he waken with a lovelier glance
His own dear lotus from her nightly trance.
For him, proud fiend, the moon no waning knows,
But with unminished full-orbed lustre glows.
Too faint for him the crescent glory set
Amid the blaze of Śiva's coronet.
How fair his garden, where the obedient breeze
Dares steal no blossom from the slumbering trees!
The wild wind checks his blustering pinions there,
And gently whispering fans the balmy air;
While through the inverted year the seasons pour,
To win the demon's grace, their flowery store.
For him, the River-god beneath the stream,
Marks the young pearl increase its silver gleam,
Until, its beauty and its growth complete,
He bears the offering to his master's feet.
The Serpents, led by Vásuki, their king,
Across his nightly path their lustre fling;
Bright as a torch their flashing jewels blaze,
Nor wind, nor rain, can dim their dazzling rays.
E'en Indra, sovereign of the blissful skies,
To gain his love by flattering homage tries,
And sends him oft those flowers of wondrous hue
That on the heavenly tree in beauty grew.
Yet all these offerings brought from day to day,
This flattery, fail his ruthless hand to stay.
Earth, hell, and heaven, beneath his rage must groan,
Till force can hurl him from his evil throne.
Alas! where glowed the bright celestial bowers,
And gentle fair ones nursed the opening flowers,
Where heavenly trees a heavenly odour shed,
O'er a sad desert ruin reigns instead.
He roots up Meru's sacred peaks, where stray
The fiery coursers of the God of Day,
To form bright slopes, and glittering mounds of ease,
In the broad gardens of his palaces.
There, on his couch, the mighty lord is fanned
To sweetest slumber by a heavenly band;

Poor captive nymphs, who stand in anguish by,
dropp the big tear, and heave the ceaseless sigh.
And now have Indra's elephants defiled
The sparkling stream where heavenly Gangá smiled,
And her gold lotuses the fiend has taken
To deck his pools, and left her all forsaken.
The Gods of heaven no more delight to roam
O'er all the world, far from their glorious home.
They dread the demon's impious might, nor dare
Speed their bright chariots through the fields of air.
And when our worshippers in duty bring
The appointed victims for the offering,
He tears them from the flame with magic art,
While we all powerless watch with drooping heart.
He too has stolen from his master's side
The steed of heavenly race, great Indra's pride.
No more our hosts, so glorious once, withstand
The fierce dominion of the demon's hand,
As herbs of healing virtue fail to tame
The sickness raging through the infected frame.
Idly the discus hangs on Vish□u's neck,
And our last hope is vain, that it would check
The haughty Tárak's might, and flash afar
Ruin and death—the thunderbolt of war.
E'en Indra's elephant has felt the might
Of his fierce monsters in the deadly fight,
Which spurn the dust in fury, and defy
The threatening clouds that sail along the sky.
Therefore, O Lord, we seek a chief, that he
May lead the hosts of heaven to victory,
Even as holy men who long to sever
The immortal spirit from its shell for ever,
Seek lovely Virtue's aid to free the soul
From earthly ties and action's base control.
Thus shall he save us: proudly will we go
Under his escort 'gainst the furious foe;
And Indra, conqueror in turn, shall bring
Fortune, dear captive, home with joy and triumphing.'
Sweet as the rains—the fresh'ning rains—that pour
On the parched earth when thunders cease to roar,
Were Brahmá's words: 'Gods, I have heard your grief;
Wait ye in patience: time will bring relief.
'Tis not for me, my children, to create
A chief to save you from your mournful fate.
Not by my hand the fiend must be destroyed,
For my kind favour has he once enjoyed;
And well ye know that e'en a poisonous tree
By him who planted it unharmed should be.
He sought it eagerly, and long ago
I gave my favour to your demon-foe,
And stayed his awful penance, that had hurled
Flames, death, and ruin o'er the subject world.

When that great warrior battles for his life,
O, who may conquer in the deadly strife,
Save one of Siva's seed? He is the light,
Reigning supreme beyond the depths of night.
Nor I, nor Vish□u, his full power may share,
Lo, where he dwells in solitude and prayer!
Go, seek the Hermit in the grove alone,
And to the God be Umá's beauty shown.
Perchance, the Mountain-child, with magnet's force,
May turn the iron from its steadfast course,
Bride of the mighty God; for only she
Can bear to Him as water bears to me.
Then from their love a mighty Child shall rise,
And lead to war the armies of the skies.
Freed by his hand, no more the heavenly maids
Shall twine their glittering hair in mournful braids.'
He spake, and vanished from their wondering sight;
And they sped homeward to their world of light.
But Indra, still on Brahmá's words intent,
To Káma's dwelling-place his footsteps bent.
Swiftly he came: the yearning of his will
Made Indra's lightning course more speedy still.
The Love-God, armed with flowers divinely sweet,
In lowly homage bowed before his feet.
Around his neck, where bright love-tokens clung,
Arched like a maiden's brow, his bow was hung,
And blooming Spring, his constant follower, bore
The mango twig, his weapon famed of yore.

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto Seventh) - Uma''s Bridal

In light and glory dawned the expected day
Blest with a kindly star's auspicious ray,
When gaily gathered at Himálaya's call
His kinsmen to the solemn festival.
Through the broad city every dame's awake
To grace the bridal for her monarch's sake;
So great their love for him, this single care
Makes one vast household of the thousands there.
Heaven is not brighter than the royal street
Where flowers lie scattered 'neath the nobles' feet,
And banners waving to the breeze unfold
Their silken broidery over gates of gold.
And she, their child, upon her bridal day
Bears her dear parents' every thought away.
So, when from distant shores a friend returns,
With deeper love each inmost spirit burns.
So, when grim Death restores his prey again
Joy brighter shines from memory of pain.
Each noble matron of Himálaya's race
Folds his dear Umá in a long embrace,
Pours blessings on her head, and prays her take
Some priceless jewel for her friendship's sake.
With sweetest influence a star of power
Had joined the spotted moon: at that blest hour
To deck fair Umá many a noble dame
And many a gentle maid assiduous came.
And well she graced their toil, more brightly fair
With feathery grass and wild flowers in her hair.
A silken robe flowed free below her waist;
Her sumptuous head a glittering arrow graced.
So shines the young unclouded moon at last,
Greeting the sun, its darksome season past.
Sweet-scented Lodhra dust and Sandal dyed
The delicate beauties of the fair young bride,
Veiled with a soft light robe. Her tiring-girls
Then led her to a chamber decked with pearls
And paved with sapphires, where the lulling sound
Of choicest music breathed divinely round.
There o'er the lady's limbs they poured by turns
Streams of pure water from their golden urns.
Fresh from the cooling bath the lovely maid
In fairest white her tender form arrayed.
So opens the Kása all her shining flowers
Lured from their buds by softly falling showers.
Then to a court with canopies o'erhead
A crowd of noble dames the maiden led—
A court for solemn rites, where gems and gold
Adorn the pillars that the roof uphold.
There on a couch they set her with her face
Turned toward the east. So lovely then the grace
Of that dear maid, so ravishing her smile,
E'en her attendants turned to gaze awhile;

For though the brightest gems around her lay,
Her brighter beauty stole their eyes away.
Through her long tresses one a chaplet wound,
And one with fragrant grass her temples crowned,
While o'er her head sweet clouds of incense rolled
To try and perfume every shining fold.
Bright dyes of saffron and the scented wood
Adorned her beauty, till the maiden stood
Fairer than Gangá when the Love-birds play
O'er sandy islets in her silvery bay.
To what rare beauty shall her maids compare
Her clear brow shaded by her glossy hair?
Less dazzling pure the lovely lotus shines
Flecked by the thronging bees in dusky lines.
Less bright the moon, when a dark band of cloud
Enhances beauties which it cannot shroud.
Behind her ear a head of barley drew
The eye to gaze upon its golden hue.
But then her cheek, with glowing saffron dyed,
To richer beauty called the glance aside.
Though from those lips, where Beauty's guerdon lay,
The vermeil tints were newly washed away,
Yet o'er them, as she smiled, a ray was thrown
Of quivering brightness that was all their own.
'Lay this dear foot upon thy lover's head
Crowned with the moon,' the laughing maiden said,
Who dyed her lady's feet—no word spake she,
But beat her with her wreath in playful glee.
Then tiring-women took the jetty dye
To guard, not deck, the beauty of her eye,
Whose languid half-shut glances might compare
With lotus leaves just opening to the air;
And as fresh gems adorned her neck and arms,
So quickly changing grew the maiden's charms,
Like some fair plant where bud succeeding bud
Unfolds new beauty; or a silver flood
Where gay birds follow quickly; or like night,
When crowding stars come forth in all their light.
Oft as the mirror would her glance beguile
She longed to meet her Lord's approving smile.
Her tasteful skill the timid maid essays
To win one smile of love, one word of praise.
The happy mother took the golden dye
And raised to hers young Umá's beaming eye.
Then swelled her bosom with maternal pride
As thus she decked her darling for a bride.
Oh, she had longed to trace on that fair brow
The nuptial line, yet scarce could mark it now.
On Umá's rounded arm the woollen band
Was fixt securely by the nurse's hand.
Blind with the tears that filled her swimming eye,
In vain the mother strove that band to tie.

Spotless as curling foam-flakes stood she there,
As yielding soft, as graceful and as fair:
Or like the glory of an autumn night
Robed by the full moon in a veil of light.
Then at her mother's hest, the maid adored
The spirit of each high ancestral lord,
Nor failed she next the noble dames to greet,
And give due honour to their reverend feet.
They raised the maiden as she bowed her head:
'Thine be the fulness of his love!' they said.
Half of his being, blessing high as this
Can add no rapture to her perfect bliss.
Well-pleased Himálaya viewed the pomp and pride
Meet for his daughter, meet for Śiva's bride;
Then sought the hall with all his friends to wait
The bridegroom's coming with a monarch's state.
Meanwhile by heavenly matrons' care displayed
Upon Kuvera's lofty mount were laid
The ornaments of Śiva, which of yore
At his first nuptials the bridegroom wore.
He laid his hand upon the dress, but how
Shall robes so sad, so holy, grace him now?
His own dire vesture took a shape as fair
As gentle bridegroom's heart could wish to wear.
The withering skull that glazed the eye with dread,
Shone a bright coronal to grace his head.
That elephant's hide the God had worn of old
Was now a silken robe inwrought with gold.
Ere this his body was with dust besprent:
With unguent now it shed delightful scent;
And that mid-eye which glittering like a star
Shot the wild terror of its glance afar—
So softly now its golden radiance beamed—
A mark of glory on his forehead seemed.
His twining serpents, destined still to be
The pride and honour of the deity,
Changed but their bodies: in each sparkling crest
The blazing gems still shone their loveliest.
What need of jewels on the brow of Him
Who wears the crescent moon? No spot may dim
Its youthful beauty, e'en in light of day
Shedding the glory of its quenchless ray.
Well-pleased the God in all his pride arrayed
Saw his bright image mirrored in the blade
Of the huge sword they brought; then calmly leant
On Nandi's arm, and toward his bull he went,
Whose broad back covered with a tiger's hide
Was steep to climb as Mount Kailása's side.
Yet the dread monster humbly shrank for fear,
And bowed in reverence as his Lord drew near.
The matrons followed him, a saintly throng,
Their ear-rings waving as they dashed along:

Sweet faces, with such glories round them shed
As made the air one lovely lotus bed.
On flew those bright ones: Káli came behind,
The skulls that decked her rattling in the wind:
Like the dark rack that scuds across the sky,
With herald lightning and the crane's shrill cry.
Hark! from the glorious bands that lead the way,
Harp, drum, and pipe, and shrilling trumpet's bray,
Burst through the sky upon the startled ear
And tell the Gods the hour of worship's near.
They came; the Sun presents a silken shade
Which heaven's own artist for the God had made,
Gilding his brows, as though bright Gangá rolled
Adown his holy head her waves of gold.
She in her Goddess-shape divinely fair,
And Yamuná, sweet river-Nymph, were there,
Fanning their Lord, that fancy still might deem
Swans waved their pinions round each Lady of the Stream.
E'en Brahmá came, Creator, Lord of Might,
And Vish□u glowing from the realms of light.
'Ride on,' they cried, 'thine, thine for ever be
The strength, the glory, and the victory.'
To swell his triumph that high blessing came
Like holy oil upon the rising flame.
In those Three Persons the one God was shown,
Each first in place, each last,—not one alone;
Of Siva, Vish□u, Brahmá, each may be
First, second, third, among the Blessed Three.
By Indra led, each world-upholding Lord
With folded hands the mighty God adored.
In humble robes arrayed, the pomp and pride
Of glorious deity they laid aside.
They signed to Nandi, and the favourite's hand
Guided his eye upon the suppliant band.
He spake to Vish□u, and on Indra smiled,
To Brahmá bowed—the lotus' mystic child.
On all the hosts of heaven his friendly eye
Beamed duly welcome as they crowded nigh.
The Seven Great Saints their blessings o'er him shed,
And thus in answer, with a smile, he said:
'Hail, mighty Sages! hail, ye Sons of Light!
My chosen priests to celebrate this rite.'
Now in sweet tones the heavenly minstrels tell
His praise, beneath whose might Tripura fell.
He moves to go: from his moon-crest a ray
Sheds quenchless light on his triumphant way.
On through the air his swift bull bore him well,
Decked with the gold of many a tinkling bell;
Tossing from time to time his head on high,
Enwreathed with clouds as he flew racing by,
As though in furious charge he had uptorn
A bank of clay upon his mighty horn.

Swiftly they came where in its beauty lay
The city subject to Himálaya's sway.
No foeman's foot had ever trod those halls,
No foreign bands encamped around the walls.
Then Śiva's glances fixed their eager hold
On that fair city as with threads of gold.
The God whose neck still gleams with cloudy blue
Burst on the wondering people's upturned view,
And on the earth descended, from the path
His shafts once dinted in avenging wrath.
Forth from the gates a noble army poured
To do meet honour to the mighty Lord.
With all his friends on elephants of state
The King of Mountains passed the city gate,
So gaily decked, the princes all were seen
Like moving hills inwrapt in bowery green.
As the full rushing of two streams that pour
Beneath one bridge with loud tumultuous roar,
So through the city's open gate streamed in
Mountains and Gods with tumult and with din.
So glorious was the sight, wonder and shame,
When Śiva bowed him, o'er the Monarch came;
He knew not he had bent his lofty crest
In reverent greeting to his heavenly guest
Himálaya, joying in the festive day,
Before the immortal bridegroom led the way
Where heaps of gay flowers burying half the feet
Lay breathing odours through the crowded street.
Careless of all beside, each lady's eye
Must gaze on Śiva as the troop sweeps by.
One dark-eyed beauty will not stay to bind
Her long black tresses, floating unconfined
Save by her little hand; her flowery crown
Hanging neglected and unfastened down.
One from her maiden tore her foot away
On which the dye, all wet and streaming, lay,
And o'er the chamber rushing in her haste,
Where'er she stepped, a crimson footprint traced.
Another at the window takes her stand;
One eye is dyed,—the pencil in her hand.
Here runs an eager maid, and running, holds
Loose and ungirt her flowing mantle's folds,
Whilst, as she strives to close the parting vest,
Its brightness gives new beauty to her breast.
Oh! what a sight! the crowded windows there
With eager faces excellently fair,
Like sweetest lilies, for their dark eyes fling
Quick glances quivering like the wild bee's wing.
Onward in peerless glory Śiva passed;
Gay banners o'er his way their shadows cast,
Each palace dome, each pinnacle and height
Catching new lustre from his crest of light.

On swept the pageant: on the God alone
The eager glances of the dames were thrown;
On his bright form they fed the rapturous gaze,
And only turned to marvel and to praise:
'Oh, well and wisely, such a lord to gain
The Mountain-Maid endured the toil and pain.
To be his slave were joy; but Oh, how blest
The wife—the loved one—lying on his breast!
Surely in vain, had not the Lord of Life
Matched this fond bridegroom and this loving wife,
Had been his wish to give the worlds a mould
Of perfect beauty! Falsely have they told
How the young flower-armed God was burnt by fire
At the red flash of Śiva's vengeful ire.
No: jealous Love a fairer form confessed,
And cast away his own, no more the loveliest.
How glorious is the Mountain King, how proud
Earth's stately pillar, girt about with cloud!
Now will he lift his lofty head more high,
Knit close to Śiva by this holy tie.'
Such words of praise from many a bright-eyed dame
On Śiva's ear with soothing witchery came.
Through the broad streets 'mid loud acclaim he rode,
And reached the palace where the King abode.
There he descended from his monster's side,
As the sun leaves a cloud at eventide.
Leaning on Vish□u's arm he passed the door
Where mighty Brahmá entered in before.
Next Indra came, and all the host of heaven,
The noble Saints and those great Sages seven.
Then led they Śiva to a royal seat;
Fair gifts they brought, for such a bridegroom meet:
With all due rites, the honey and the milk,
Rich gems were offered and two robes of silk.
At length by skilful chamberlains arrayed
They led the lover to the royal maid.
Thus the fond Moon disturbs the tranquil rest
Of Ocean glittering with his foamy crest,
And leads him on, his proud waves swelling o'er,
To leap with kisses on the clasping shore.
He gazed on Umá. From his lotus eyes
Flashed out the rapture of his proud surprise.
Then calm the current of his spirit lay
Like the world basking in an autumn day.
They met; and true love's momentary shame
O'er the blest bridegroom and his darling came.
Eye looked to eye, but, quivering as they met,
Scarce dared to trust the rapturous gazing yet.
In the God's hand the priest has duly laid
The radiant fingers of the Mountain-Maid,
Bright, as if Love with his dear sprays of red
Had sought that refuge in his hour of dread.

From hand to hand the soft infection stole,
Till each confessed it in the inmost soul.
Fire filled his veins, with joy she trembled; such
The magic influence of that thrilling touch.
How grows their beauty, when two lovers stand
Eye fixt on eye, hand fondly linkt in hand!
Then how, unblamed, may mortal minstrel dare
To paint in words the beauty of that pair!
Around the fire in solemn rite they trod,
The lovely lady and the glorious God;
Like day and starry midnight when they meet
In the broad plains at lofty Meru's feet.
Thrice at the bidding of the priest they came
With swimming eyes around the holy flame.
Then at his word the bride in order due
Into the blazing fire the parched grain threw,
And toward her face the scented smoke she drew,
Which softly wreathing o'er her fair cheek hung,
And round her ears in flower-like beauty clung.
As o'er the incense the sweet lady stooped,
The ear of barley from her tresses drooped,
And rested on her cheek, beneath the eye
Still brightly beaming with the jetty dye.
'This flame be witness of your wedded life:
Be just, thou husband, and be true, thou wife!'
Such was the priestly blessing on the bride.
Eager she listened, as the earth when dried
By parching summer suns drinks deeply in
The first soft droppings when the rains begin.
'Look, gentle Umá,' cried her Lord, 'afar
Seest thou the brightness of yon polar star?
Like that unchanging ray thy faith must shine.'
Sobbing, she whispered, 'Yes, for ever thine.'
The rite is o'er. Her joyful parents now
At Brahmá's feet in duteous reverence bow.
Then to fair Umá spake the gracious Power
Who sits enthroned upon the lotus flower:
'O beautiful lady, happy shalt thou be,
And hero children shall be born of thee;'
Then looked in silence: vain the hope to bless
The bridegroom, Śiva, with more happiness.
Then from the altar, as prescribed of old,
They turned, and rested upon seats of gold;
And, as the holy books for men ordain,
Were sprinkled duly with the moistened grain.
High o'er their heads sweet Beauty's Queen displayed
Upon a stem of reed a cool green shade,
While the young lotus-leaves of which 'twas made
Seemed, as they glistened to the wondering view,
All richly pearled with drops of beady dew.
In twofold language on each glorious head
The Queen of Speech her richest blessings shed;

In strong, pure, godlike utterance for his ear,
To her in liquid tones, soft, beautifully clear.
Now for awhile they gaze where maids divine
In graceful play the expressive dance entwine;
Whose eloquent motions, with an actor's art,
Show to the life the passions of the heart.
The rite was ended; then the heavenly band
Prayed Śiva, raising high the suppliant hand:
'Now, for the dear sake of thy lovely bride,
Have pity on the gentle God,' they cried,
'Whose tender body thy fierce wrath has slain:
Give all his honour, all his might again.'
Well pleased, he smiled, and gracious answer gave:
Śiva himself now yields him Káma's slave.
When duly given, the great will ne'er despise
The gentle pleading of the good and wise.
Now have they left the wedded pair alone;
And Śiva takes her hand within his own
To lead his darling to the bridal bower,
Decked with bright gold and all her sumptuous dower.
She blushes sweetly as her maidens there
Look with arch smiles and glances on the pair;
And for one moment, while the damsels stay,
From him she loves turns her dear face away.

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto Sixth) - Uma's Espousals

Now gentle Umá bade a damsel bear
To Śiva, Soul of All, her maiden prayer:
'Wait the high sanction of Himálaya's will,
And ask his daughter from the royal hill.'
Then ere the God, her own dear Lord, replied,
In blushing loveliness she sought his side.
Thus the young mango hails the approaching spring
By its own tuneful bird's sweet welcoming.
In Umá's ear he softly whispered, yea,
Then scarce could tear him from her arms away.
Swift with a thought he summoned from above
The Seven bright Saints to bear his tale of love.
They came, and She, the Heavenly Dame, was there,
Lighting with glories all the radiant air;
Just freshly bathed in sacred Gangá's tide,
Gemmed with the dancing flowers that deck her side,
And richly scented with the nectarous rill
That heavenly elephants from their brows distil.
Fair strings of pearl their radiant fingers hold,
Clothed are their limbs in hermit-coats of gold;
Their rosaries, large gems of countless price,
Shone like the fruit that glows in Paradise,
As though the glorious trees that blossom there
Had sought the forest for a life of prayer.
With all his thousand beams the God of Day,
Urging his coursers down the sloping way,
His banner furled at the approach of night,
Looks up in reverence on those lords of light.
Ancient creators: thus the wise, who know,
Gave them a name in ages long ago:
With Brahmá joining in creation's plan,
And perfecting the work His will began;
Still firm in penance, though the hermit-vow
Bears a ripe harvest for the sages now.
Brightest in glory 'mid that glorious band
See the fair Queen, the Heavenly Lady, stand.
Fixing her loving eyes upon her spouse,
She seemed sent forth to crown the sage's vows
With sweet immortal joy, the dearest prize
Strong prayer could merit from the envious skies.
With equal honour on the Queen and all
Did the kind glance of Śiva's welcome fall.
No partial favour by the good is shown:
They count not station, but the deed alone.
So fair she shone upon his raptured view,
He longed for wedlock's heavenly pleasures too.
What hath such power to lead the soul above
By virtue's pleasant path as wedded love!
Scarce had the holy motive lent its aid
To knit great Śiva to the Mountain-Maid,
When Káma's spirit that had swooned in fear
Breathed once again and deemed forgiveness near.

The ancient Sages reverently adored
The world's great Father and its Sovran Lord,
And while a soft ecstatic thrilling ran
O'er their celestial frames, they thus began:
'Glorious the fruit our holy studies bear,
Our constant penance, sacrifice and prayer.
For that high place within thy thoughts we gain
Which fancy strives to reach, but longs in vain.
How blest is he, the glory of the wise,
Deep in whose thoughtful breast thy Godhead lies!
But who may tell his joy who rests enshrined,
O Brahmá's great Creator, in thy mind!
We dwell on high above the cold moon's ray;
Beneath our mansion glows the God of Day,
But now thy favour lends us brighter beams,
Blest with thy love our star unchanging gleams.
How should we tell what soul-entrancing bliss
Enthrals our spirit at an hour like this?
Great Lord of All, thou Soul of Life indwelling,
We crave one word thy wondrous nature telling.
Though to our eyes thy outward form be shown,
How can we know thee as thou shouldst be known?
In this thy present shape, we pray thee, say
Dost thou create? dost thou preserve or slay?
But speak thy wish; called from our starry rest
We wait, O Siva, for our Lord's behest'
Then answered thus the Lord of glory, while
Flashed from his dazzling teeth so white a smile,
The moon that crowned him poured a larger stream
Of living splendour from that pearly gleam:
'Ye know, great Sages of a race divine,
No selfish want e'er prompts a deed of mine.
Do not the forms—eight varied forms—I wear,
The truth of this to all the world declare?
Now, as that thirsty bird that drinks the rain
Prays the kind clouds of heaven to soothe its pain,
So the Gods pray me, trembling 'neath their foe,
To send a child of mine and end their woe.
I seek the Mountain-Maiden as my bride:
Our hero son shall tame the demon's pride.
Thus the priest bids the holy fire arise,
Struck from the wood to aid the sacrifice.
Go, ask Himálaya for the lovely maid:
Blest are those bridals which the holy aid.
So shall more glorious honours gild my name,
And win the father yet a prouder fame.
Nor, O ye heavenly Sages, need I teach
What for the maiden's hand shall be your speech,
For still the wise in worthiest honour hold
The rules and precepts ye ordained of old.
This Lady too shall aid your mission there:
Best for such task a skilful matron's care.

And now, my heralds, to your task away,
Where proud Himálaya holds his royal sway;
Then meet me where this mighty torrent raves
Down the steep channel with its headlong waves.'
Thus while that holiest One his love confessed,
The hermits listened: from each saintly breast
Fled the false shame that yet had lingered there,
And love and wedlock showed divinely fair.
On through the heaven, o'er tracts of swordlike blue,
Towards the gay city, swift as thought, they flew,
Bright with high domes and palaces most fair,
As if proud Alaká were planted there,
Or Paradise poured forth, in showers that bless,
The rich o'erflowings of its loveliness.
Round lofty towers adorned with gems and gold
Her guardian stream the holy Gangá rolled.
On every side, the rampart's glowing crown,
Bright wreaths of fragrant flowers hung waving down,—
Flowers that might tempt the maids of heavenly birth
To linger fondly o'er that pride of earth.
Its noble elephants, unmoved by fear,
The distant roaring of the lions hear.
In beauty peerless, and unmatched in speed,
Its thousand coursers of celestial breed.
Through the broad streets bright sylphs and minstrels rove:
Its dames are Goddesses of stream and grove.
Hark! the drum echoes louder and more loud
From glittering halls whose spires are wrapt in cloud.
It were the thunder, but that voice of fear
Falls not in measured time upon the ear.
'Tis balmy cool, for many a heavenly tree,
With quivering leaves and branches waving free,
Sheds a delightful freshness through the air,—
Fans which no toil of man has stationed there.
The crystal chambers where they feast at night
Flash back the beamings of the starry light.
So brightly pure that silver gleam is shed,
Playing so fondly round each beauteous head,
That all seem gifted from those lights above
With richest tokens of superior love.
How blest its maidens! cloudless is their day,
And radiant herbs illume their nightly way.
No term of days, but endless youth they know;
No Death save him who bears the Flowery Bow:
Their direst swoon, their only frenzy this—
The trance of love, the ecstasy of bliss!
Ne'er can their lovers for one hour withstand
The frown, the quivering lip, the scornful hand;
But seek forgiveness of the angry fair,
And woo her smile with many an earnest prayer.
Around, wide gardens spread their pleasant bowers,
Where the bright Champac opes her fragrant flowers:

Dear shades, beloved by the sylphs that roam
In dewy evening from their mountain home.
Ah! why should mortals fondly strive to gain
Heaven and its joys by ceaseless toil and pain?
E'en the Saints envied as their steps drew near,
And owned a brighter heaven was opened here.
They lighted down; braided was each long tress,
Bright as the pictured flame, as motionless.
Himálaya's palace-warders in amaze
On the Seven Sages turned their eager gaze,—
A noble company of celestial race
Where each in order of his years had place,—
Glorious, as when the sun, his head inclining,
Sees his own image 'mid the waters shining.
To greet them with a gift Himálaya sped,
Earth to her centre shaking at his tread.
By his dark lips with mountain metals dyed,
His arms like pines that clothe his lofty side:
By his proud stature, by his stony breast,
Lord of the Snowy Hills he stood confest.
On to his Council-hall he led the way,
Nor failed due honour to the Saints to pay.
On couch of reed the Monarch bade them rest,
And thus with uplift hands those Heavenly Lords addressed:
'Like soft rain falling from a cloudless sky,
Or fruit, when bloom has failed to glad the eye,
So are ye welcome, Sages; thus I feel
Ecstatic thrilling o'er my spirit steal,
Changed, like dull senseless iron to burning gold,
Or some rapt creature, when the heavens unfold
To eyes yet dim with tears of earthly care,
The rest, the pleasures, and the glory there.
Long pilgrim bands from this auspicious day
To my pure hill shall bend their constant way.
Famed shall it be o'er all the lands around,
For where the good have been is holy ground.
Now am I doubly pure, for Gangá's tide
Falls on my head from heaven and laves my side.
Henceforth I boast a second stream as sweet,
The water, Sages, that has touched your feet.
Twice by your favour is Himálaya blest,—
This towery mountain that your feet have prest,
And this my moving form is happier still
To wait your bidding, to perform your will.
These mighty limbs that fill the heaven's expanse
Sink down, o'erpowered, in a blissful trance.
So bright your presence, at the glorious sight
My brooding shades of darkness turn to light.
The gloom that haunts my mountain caverns flies,
And cloudy passion in the spirit dies.
O say, if here your arrowy course ye sped
To throw fresh glory round my towering head.

Surely your wish, ye Mighty Ones, can crave
No aid, no service from your willing slave.
Yet deem me worthy of some high behest:
The lord commandeth, and the slave is blest.
Declare your pleasure, then, bright heavenly band:
We crave no guerdon but your sole command.
Yours are we all, Himálaya and his bride,
And this dear maiden child our hope and pride.'
Not once he spake: his cavern mouths around
In hollow echoings gave again the sound.
Of all who speak beyond compare the best,
Angiras answered at the Saints' request:
'This power hast thou, great King, and mightier far,
Thy mind is lofty as thy summits are.
Sages say truly, Vish□u is thy name:
His spirit breatheth in thy mountain frame.
Within the caverns of thy boundless breast
All things that move and all that move not rest.
How on his head so soft, so delicate,
Could the great Snake uphold the huge earth's weight,
Did not thy roots, far-reaching down to hell,
Bear up the burden and assist him well?
Thy streams of praise, thy pure rills' ceaseless flow
Make glad the nations wheresoe'er they go,
Till, shedding purity on every side,
They sink at length in boundless Ocean's tide.
Blest is fair Gangá, for her heavenly stream
Flows from the feet of him that sits supreme;
And blest once more, O mighty Hill, is she
That her bright waters spring anew from thee.
Vast grew his body when the avenging God
In three huge strides o'er all creation trod.
Above, below, his form increased, but thou
Wast ever glorious and as vast as now.
By thee is famed Sumeru forced to hide
His flashing rays and pinnacles of pride,
For thou hast won thy station in the skies
'Mid the great Gods who claim the sacrifice.
Firm and unmoved remains thy lofty hill,
Yet thou canst bow before the holy still.
Now—for the glorious work will fall on thee,—
Hear thou the cause of this our embassy.
We also, Mountain Monarch, since we bear
To thee the message, in the labour share.
The Highest, Mightiest, Noblest One, adored
By the proud title of our Sovran Lord:
The crescent moon upon his brow bears he,
And wields the wondrous powers of Deity.
He in this earth and varied forms displayed,
Bound each to other by exchange of aid,
Guides the great world and all the things that are,
As flying coursers whirl the glittering car.

Him good men seek with holy thought and prayer,
Who fills their breast and makes his dwelling there.
When saints, we read, his lofty sphere attain,
They ne'er may fall to this base earth again:
His messengers, great King, we crave the hand
Of thy fair daughter at the God's command.
At such blest union, as of Truth and Voice,
A father's heart should grieve not, but rejoice.
Her Lord is Father of the world, and she
Of all that liveth shall the mother be.
Gods that adore him with the Neck of Blue
In homage bent shall hail the Lady too,
And give a glory to her feet with gems
That sparkle in their priceless diadems.
Hear what a roll shall blazon forth thy line,—
Maid, Father, Suitor, Messengers divine!
Give him the chosen lady, and aspire
To call thy son the Universe's Sire,
Who laudeth none, but all mankind shall raise
To Him through endless time the songs of praise.'
Thus while he spake the lady bent her head
To hide her cheek, now blushing rosy red,
And numbered o'er with seeming care the while
Her lotus' petals in sweet maiden guile.
With pride and joy Himálaya's heart beat high,
Yet ere he spake he looked to Mená's eye:
Full well he knew a mother's gentle care
Learns her child's heart and love's deep secret there,
And this the hour, he felt, when fathers seek
Her eye for answer or her changing cheek.
His eager look Himálaya scarce had bent
When Mená's eye beamed back her glad assent.
O gentle wives! your fondest wish is still
To have with him you love one heart, one will.
He threw his arms around the blushing maid
In queenly garment and in gems arrayed,
Awhile was silent, then in rapture cried,
'Come, O my daughter! Come, thou destined bride
Of Śiva, Lord of All: this glorious band
Of Saints have sought thee at the God's command;
And I thy sire this happy day obtain
The best reward a father's wish would gain.'
Then to the Saints he cried: 'Pure Hermits, see
The spouse of Śiva greets your company.'
They looked in rapture on the maid, and poured
Their fullest blessing on her heavenly lord.
So low she bowed, the gems that decked her hair
And sparkled in her ear fell loosened there;
Then with sweet modesty and joy opprest
She hid her blushes on the Lady's breast,
Who cheered the mother weeping for her child,
Her own dear Umá, till again she smiled:

Such bliss and glory should be hers above,
Yea, mighty Śiva's undivided love.
They named the fourth for Umá's nuptial day;
Then sped the Sąges on their homeward way;
And thanked by Śiva with a gracious eye
Sought their bright rest amid the stars on high.
Through all those weary days the lover sighed
To wind his fond arms round his gentle bride.
Oh, if the Lord of Heaven could find no rest,
Think, think how Love, strong Love, can tear a mortal's breast!

Kalidasa

The Birth of The War-God (Canto Third) - The Death of Love

Is eager gaze the sovereign of the skies
looked full on Káma with his thousand eyes:
E'en such a gaze as trembling suppliants bend,
When danger threatens, on a mighty friend.
Close by his side, where Indra bade him rest,
The Love-God sate, and thus his lord addressed:
'All-knowing Indra, deign, my Prince, to tell
Thy heart's desire in earth, or heaven, or hell:
Double the favour, mighty sovereign, thou
Hast thought on Káma, O, command him now:
Who angers thee by toiling for the prize,
By penance, prayer, or holy sacrifice?
What mortal being dost thou count thy foe?
Speak, I will tame him with my darts and bow.
Has some one feared the endless change of birth,
And sought the path that leads the soul from earth?
Slave to a glancing eye thy foe shall bow,
And own the witchery of a woman's brow;
E'en though the object of thine envious rage
Were taught high wisdom by the immortal sage,
With billowy passions will I whelm his soul,
Like rushing waves that spurn the bank's control.
Or has the ripe full beauty of a spouse,
Too fondly faithful to her bridal vows,
Ravished thy spirit from thee? Thine, all thine
Around thy neck her loving arms shall twine.
Has thy love, jealous of another's charms,
Spurned thee in wrath when flying to her arms?
I'll rack her yielding bosom with such pain,
Soon shall she be all love and warmth again,
And wildly fly in fevered haste to rest
Her aching heart close, close to thy dear breast.
Lay, Indra, lay thy threatening bolt aside:
My gentle darts shall tame the haughtiest pride,
And all that war with heaven and thee shall know
The magic influence of thy Káma's bow;
For woman's curling lip shall bow them down,
Fainting in terror at her threatening frown.
Flowers are my arms, mine only warrior Spring,
Yet in thy favour am I strong, great King.
What can their strength who draw the bow avail
Against my matchless power when I assail?
Strong is the Trident-bearing God, yet he,
The mighty Śiva, e'en, must yield to me.'
Then Indra answered with a dawning smile,
Resting his foot upon a stool the while:
'Dear God of Love, thou truly hast displayed
The power unrivalled of thy promised aid.
My hope is all in thee: my weapons are
The thunderbolt and thou, more mighty far.
But vain, all vain the bolt of heaven to fright
Those holy Saints whom penance arms aright.

Thy power exceeds all bound: thou, only thou,
All-conquering Deity, canst help me now!
Full well I know thy nature, and assign
This toil to thee, which needs a strength like thine:
As on that snake alone will Krish□a rest,
That bears the earth upon his haughty crest.
Our task is well-nigh done: thy boasted dart
Has power to conquer even Śiva's heart.
Hear what the Gods, oppressed with woe, would fain
From mighty Śiva through thine aid obtain.
He may beget—and none in heaven but he—A
chief to lead our hosts to victory.
But all his mind with holiest lore is fraught,
Bent on the Godhead is his every thought.
Thy darts, O Love, alone can reach him now,
And lure his spirit from the hermit vow.
Go, seek Himálaya's Mountain-child, and aid
With all thy loveliest charms the lovely maid,
So may she please his fancy: only she
May wed with Śiva: such the fixt decree.
E'en now my bands of heavenly maids have spied
Fair Umá dwelling by the Hermit's side.
There by her father's bidding rests she still,
Sweet minister, upon the cold bleak hill.
Go, Káma, go! perform this great emprise,
And free from fear the Rulers of the Skies;
We need thy favour, as the new-sown grain
Calls for the influence of the gentle rain.
Go, Káma, go! thy flowery darts shall be
Crowned with success o'er this great deity.
Yea, and thy task is e'en already done,
For praise and glory are that instant won
When a bold heart dares manfully essay
The deed which others shrink from in dismay.
Gods are thy suppliants, Káma, and on thee
Depends the triple world's security.
No cruel deed will stain thy flowery bow:
With all thy gentlest, mightiest valour, go!
And now, Disturber of the spirit, see
Spring, thy beloved, will thy comrade be,
And gladly aid thee Śiva's heart to tame:
None bids the whispering Wind, and yet he fans the flame.'
He spake, and Káma bowed his bright head down,
And took his bidding like a flowery crown.
Above his wavy curls great Indra bent,
And fondly touched his soldier ere he went,
With that hard hand—but, O, how gentle now—
That fell so heavy on his elephant's brow.
Then for that snow-crowned hill he turned away,
Where all alone the heavenly Hermit lay.
His fearful Rati and his comrade Spring
Followed the guidance of Love's mighty king.

There will he battle in unwonted strife,
Return a conqueror or be reft of life.
How fair was Spring! To fill the heart with love,
And lure the Hermit from his thoughts above,
In that pure grove he grew so heavenly bright
That Káma's envy wakened at the sight.
Now the bright Day-God turned his burning ray
To where Kuvera holds his royal sway,
While the sad South in whispering breezes sighed
And mourned his absence like a tearful bride.
Then from its stem the red Aśoka threw
Full buds and flowerets of celestial hue,
Nor waited for the maiden's touch, the sweet
beloved pressure of her tinkling feet.
There grew Love's arrow, his dear mango spray,
Winged with young leaves to speed its airy way,
And at the call of Spring the wild bees came,
Grouping the syllables of Káma's name.
How sighed the spirit o'er that loveliest flower
That boasts no fragrance to enrich its dower!
For Nature, wisest mother, oft prefers
To part more fairly those good gifts of hers.
There from the tree Palása blossoms spread,
Curved like the crescent moon, their rosiest red,
With opening buds that looked as if young Spring
Had pressed his nails there in his dallying:
Sweet wanton Spring, to whose enchanting face
His flowery Tilaka gave fairer grace:
Who loves to tint his lip, the mango spray,
With the fresh colours of the early day,
And powder its fine red with many a bee
That sips the oozing nectar rapturously.
The cool gale speeding o'er the shady lawns
Shook down the sounding leaves, while startled fawns
Ran wildly at the viewless foe, all blind
With pollen wafted by the fragrant wind.
Sweet was the Köil's voice, his neck still red
With mango buds on which he late had fed:
Twas as the voice of Love to bid the dame
Spurn her cold pride, nor quench the gentle flame.
What though the heat has stained the tints that dyed
With marvellous bloom the heavenly minstrel's bride?
Neither her smile nor sunny glances fail:
Bright is her lip, although her check be pale
E'en the pure hermits owned the secret power
Of warm Spring coming in unwonted hour,
While Love's delightful witchery gently stole
With strong sweet influence o'er the saintly soul.
On came the Archer-God, and at his side
The timid Rati, his own darling bride,
While breathing nature showed how deep it felt,
At passion's glowing touch, the senses melt.

For there in eager love the wild bee dipp'd
In the dark flower-cup where his partner sipp'd.
Here in the shade the hart his horn declined,
And, while joy closed her eyes, caressed the hind.
There from her trunk the elephant had poured
A lily-scented stream to cool her lord,
While the fond love-bird by the silver flood
Gave to his mate the tasted lotus bud.
Full in his song the minstrel stayed to sip
The heavenlier nectar of his darling's lip.
Pure pearls of heat had late distained the dye,
But flowery wine was sparkling in her eye.
How the young creeper's beauty charmed the view,
Fair as the fairest maid, as playful too!
Here some bright blossoms, lovelier than the rest,
In full round beauty matched her swelling breast.
Here in a thin bright line, some delicate spray,
Red as her lip, ravished the soul away.
And then how loving, and how close they clung
To the tall trees that fondly o'er them hung!
Bright, heavenly wantons poured the witching strain,
Quiring for Śiva's ear, but all in vain.
No charmer's spell may check the firm control
Won by the holy o'er the impassioned soul.
The Hermit's servant hasted to the door:
In his left hand a branch of gold he bore.
He touched his lip for silence: 'Peace! be still!
Nor mar the quiet of this holy hill.'
He spake: no dweller of the forest stirred,
No wild bee murmured, hushed was every bird.
Still and unmoved, as in a picture stood
All life that breathed within the waving wood.
As some great monarch when he goes to war
Shuns the fierce aspect of a baleful star,
So Káma hid him from the Hermit's eye,
And sought a path that led unnoticed by,
Where tangled flowers and clustering trailers spread
Their grateful canopy o'er Śiva's head.
Bent on his hardy enterprise, with awe
The Three-eyed Lord—great Penitent—he saw.
There sate the God beneath a pine-tree's shade,
Where on a mound a tiger's skin was laid.
Absorbed in holiest thought, erect and still,
The Hermit rested on the gentle hill.
His shoulders drooping down, each foot was bent
Beneath the body of the Penitent.
With open palms the hands were firmly pressed,
As though a lotus lay upon his breast.
A double rosary in each ear, behind
With wreathing serpents were his locks entwined.
His coat of hide shone blacker to the view
Against his neck of brightly beaming blue.

How wild the look, how terrible the frown
Of his dark eyebrows bending sternly down!
How fiercely glared his eyes' unmoving blaze
Fixed in devotion's meditating gaze:
Calm as a full cloud resting on a hill,
A waveless lake when every breeze is still,
Like a torch burning in a sheltered spot,
So still was he, unmoving, breathing not.
So full the stream of marvellous glory poured
from the bright forehead of that mighty Lord,
Pale seemed the crescent moon upon his head,
And slenderer than a slender lotus thread.
At all the body's nine-fold gates of sense
He had barred in the pure Intelligence,
To ponder on the Soul which sages call
Eternal Spirit, highest, over all.
How sad was Káma at the awful sight,
How failed his courage in a swoon of fright!
As near and nearer to the God he came
Whom wildest thought could never hope to tame,
Unconsciously his hands, in fear and woe,
Dropped the sweet arrows and his flowery bow.
But Umá came with all her maiden throng,
And Káma's fainting heart again was strong;
Bright flowers of spring, in every lovely hue,
Around the lady's form rare beauty threw.
Some clasped her neck like strings of purest pearls,
Some shot their glory through her wavy curls.
Bending her graceful head as half-oppressed
With swelling charms even too richly blest,
Fancy might deem that beautiful young maiden
Some slender tree with its sweet flowers o'erladen.
From time to time her gentle hand replaced
The flowery girdle slipping from her waist:
It seemed that Love could find no place more fair,
So hung his newest, dearest bowstring there.
A greedy bee kept hovering round to sip
The fragrant nectar of her blooming lip.
She closed her eyes in terror of the thief,
And beat him from her with a lotus leaf.
The angry curl of Rati's lip confessed
The shade of envy that stole o'er her breast.
Through Káma's soul fresh hope and courage flew,
As that sweet vision blessed his eager view.
So bright, so fair, so winning soft was she,
Who could not conquer in such company?
Now Umá came, fair maid, his destined bride,
With timid steps approaching Siva's side.
In contemplation will he brood no more,
He sees the Godhead, and his task is o'er.
He breathes, he moves, the earth begins to rock,
The Snake, her bearer, trembling at the shock.

Due homage then his own dear servant paid,
And told him of the coming of the maid.
He learnt his Master's pleasure by the nod,
And led Himálaya's daughter to the God.
Before his feet her young companions spread
Fresh leaves and blossoms as they bowed the head,
While Umá stooped so low, that from her hair
Dropped the bright flower that starred the midnight there.
To him whose ensign bears the bull she bent,
Till each spray fell, her ear's rich ornament.
'Sweet maid,' cried Siva, 'surely thou shalt be
Blessed with a husband who loves none but thee!'
Her fear was banished, and her hope was high:
A God had spoken, and Gods cannot lie.
Rash as some giddy moth that wooes the flame,
Love seized the moment, and prepared to aim.
Close by the daughter of the Mountain-King,
He looked on Siva, and he eyed his string.
While with her radiant hand fair Umá gave
A rosary, of the lotuses that lave
Their beauties in the heavenly Gangá's wave,
And the great Three-Eyed God was fain to take
The offering for the well-loved suppliant's sake,
On his bright bow Love placed the unerring dart,
The soft beguiler of the stricken heart.
Like the Moon's influence on the sea at rest,
Came passion stealing o'er the Hermit's breast,
While on the maiden's lip that mocked the dye
Of ripe red fruit, he bent his melting eye.
And oh! how showed the lady's love for him,
The heaving bosom, and each quivering limb!
Like young Kadambas, when the leaf-buds swell,
At the warm touch of Spring they love so well.
But still, with downcast eyes, she sought the ground,
And durst not turn their burning glances round.
Then with strong effort, Siva lulled to rest,
The storm of passion in his troubled breast,
And seeks, with angry eyes that round him roll,
Whence came the tempest o'er his tranquil soul.
He looked, and saw the bold young archer stand,
His bow bent ready in his skilful hand,
Drawn towards the eye; his shoulder well depressed,
And the left foot thrown forward as a rest.
Then was the Hermit-God to madness lashed,
Then from his eye red flames of fury flashed.
So changed the beauty of that glorious brow,
Scarce could the gaze support its terror now.
Hark! heavenly voices sighing through the air:
'Be calm, great Siva, O be calm and spare!'
Alas! that angry eye's resistless flashes
Have scorched the gentle King of Love to ashes!
But Rati saw not, for she swooned away;

Senseless and breathless on the earth she lay;
Sleep while thou mayst, unconscious lady, sleep!
Soon wilt thou rise to sigh and wake to weep.
E'eṇ as the red bolt rives the leafy bough,
So Śiva smote the hinderer of his vow;
Then fled with all his train to some lone place
Far from the witchery of a female face.
Sad was Himaláya's daughter: grief and shame
O'er the young spirit of the maiden came:
Grief—for she loved, and all her love was vain;
Shame—she was spurned before her youthful train.
She turned away, with fear and woe oppressed,
To hide her sorrow on her father's breast;
Then, in the fond arms of her piṭying sire,
Closed her sad eyes for fear of Śiva's ire.
Still in his grasp the weary maiden lay,
While he sped swiftly on his homeward way.
Thus have I seen the elephant stoop to drink,
And lift a lily from the fountain's brink.
Thus, when he rears his mighty head on high,
Across his tusks I've seen that lily lie.

Kalidasa

The Cloud Messenger - Part 01

A certain yaksha who had been negligent in the execution of his own duties, on account of a curse from his master which was to be endured for a year and which was onerous as it separated him from his beloved, made his residence among the hermitages of Ramagiri, whose waters were blessed by the bathing of the daughter of Janaka1 and whose shade trees grew in profusion.

That lover, separated from his beloved, whose gold armlet had slipped from his bare forearm, having dwelt on that mountain for some months, on the first day of the month of Asadha, saw a cloud embracing the summit, which resembled a mature elephant playfully butting a bank.

Managing with difficulty to stand up in front of that cloud which was the cause of the renewal of his enthusiasm, that attendant of the king of kings, pondered while holding back his tears. Even the mind of a happy person is excited at the sight of a cloud. How much more so, when the one who longs to cling to his neck is far away?

As the month of Nabhas was close at hand, having as his goal the sustaining of the life of his beloved and wishing to cause the tidings of his own welfare to be carried by the cloud, the delighted being spoke kind words of welcome to the cloud to which offerings of fresh kutaja flowers had been made.

Owing to his impatience, not considering the imcompatibility between a cloud consisting of vapour, light, water and wind and the contents of his message best delivered by a person of normal faculties, the yaksha made this request to the cloud, for among sentient and non-sentient things, those afflicted by desire are naturally miserable:

Without doubt, your path unimpeded, you will see your brother’s wife, intent on counting the days, faithful and living on. The bond of hope generally sustains the quickly sinking hearts of women who are alone, and which wilt like flowers.

Just as the favourable wind drives you slowly onward, this cataka cuckoo, your kinsman, calls sweetly on the left. Knowing the season for fertilisation, cranes, like threaded garlands in the sky, lovely to the eye, will serve you.

Your steady passage observed by charming female siddhas who in trepidation wonder ‘Has the summit been carried off the mountain by the wind?’, you who are heading north, fly up into the sky from this place where the nicula trees flourish, avoiding on the way the blows of the trunks of the elephants of the four quarters of the sky.

This rainbow, resembling the intermingled sparkling of jewels, appears before Mt Valmikagra, on account of which your dark body takes on a particular loveliness, as did the body of Vishnu dressed as a cowherd with the peacock’s feather of glistening lustre.

While being imbibed by the eyes of the country women who are ignorant of the play of the eyebrows, who are tender in their affection, and who are thinking ‘The result of the harvest depends on you’, having ascended to a region whose fields are fragrant from recent ploughing, you should proceed a

little to the west. Your pace is swift. Go north once more.

Mt Amrakuta will carefully bear you upon its head—you whose showers extinguished its forest fires and who are overcome by fatigue of the road. Even a lowly being, remembering an earlier kind deed, does not turn its back on a friend who has come for refuge; how much less, then, one so lofty?

When you, remembling a glossy braid of hair, have ascended its summit, the mountain whose slopes are covered with forest mangoes, glowing with ripe fruit, takes on the appearance of a breast of the earth, dark at the centre, the rest pale, worthy to be beheld by a divine couple.

Having rested for a moment at a bower enjoyed by the forest-dwelling women, then travelling more swiftly when your waters have been discharged, the next stage thence is crossed. You will see the river Reva spread at the foot of Mt Vandhya, made rough with rocks and resembling the pattern formed by the broken wrinkles on the body of an elephant.

Your showers shed, having partaken of her waters that are scented with the fragrant exudation of forest elephants and whose flow is impeded by thickets of rose-apples, you should proceed. Filled with water, the wind will be unable to lift you, O cloud, for all this is empty is light, while fullness results in heaviness.

Seeing the yellow-brown nipa with their stamens half erect, eating the kankali flowers whose first buds have appeared on every bank, and smelling the highly fragrant scent of the forest earth, the deer will indicate the way to the cloud.

Watching the cataka cuckoos that are skilled in catching raindrops, and watching the herons flying in skeins as they count them, the siddhas will hold you in high regard at the moment of your thundering, having received the trembling, agitated embraced of their beloved female companions!

I perceive in an instant, friend, your delays on mountain after mountain scented with kakubha flowers—you who should desire to proceed for the sake of my beloved. Welcomed by peacocks with teary eyes who have turned their cries into words of welcome, you should somehow resolve to proceed at once.

Reaching their capital by the name of Vidisha, renowned in all quarters, and having won at once complete satisfaction of your desires, you will drink the sweet, rippling water from the Vetravati River which roars pleasantly at the edge of her banks, rippling as if her face bore a frown.

There, for the sake of rest, your should occupy the mountain known as Nicaih which seems to thrill at your touch with its full-blown kadamba flowers, and whose grottoes make known the unbridled youthful deeds of the townsmen by emitting the scent of intercourse with bought women.

After resting, move on while watering with fresh raindrops the clusters of jasmine buds that grow in gardens on the banks of the forest rivers—you who have made a momentary acquaintance with the flower-picking girls by lending

shade to their faces, the lotuses at whose ears are withered and broken as they wipe away the perspiration from their cheeks.

Even though the route would be circuitous for one who, like you, is northward-bound, do not turn your back on the love on the palace roofs in Ujjayini. If you do not enjoy the eyes with flickering eyelids of the women startled by bolts of lightning there, then you have been deceived!

On the way, after you have ascended to the Nirvandhya River, whose girdles are flocks of birds calling on account of the turbulence of her waves, whose gliding motion is rendered delightful with stumbling steps, and whose exposed navel is her eddies, fill yourself with water, for amorous distraction is a woman's first expression of love for their beloved.

When you have passed that, you should duly adopt the means by which the Sindhu River may cast off her emaciation—she whose waters have become like a single braid of hair, whose complexion is made pale by the old leaves falling from the trees on her banks, and who shows you goodwill because she has been separated from you, O fortunate one.

Having reached Avanti where the village elders are well-versed in the legend of Udayana, make your way to the aforementioned city of Vishala, filled with splendour, like a beautiful piece of heaven carried there by means of the remaining merit of gods who had fallen to earth when the fruits of the good actions had nearly expired;

Where, at daybreak, the breeze from the Shipra River, carrying abroad the sweet, clear, impassioned cries of the geese, fragrant from contact with the scent of full-blown lotuses and pleasing to the body, carries off the lassitude of the women after their love-play, like a lover making entreaties for further enjoyment.

And having see by the tens of millions the strings of pearls with shining gems as their central stones, conches, pearl-shells, emeralds as green as fresh grass with radiating brilliance and pieces of coral displayed in the market there, the oceans appear to contain nothing but water;

And where the knowledgeable populace regale visiting relatives thus: 'Here the king of the Vatsa brought the precious daughter of Pradyota. Here was the golden grove of tala-trees of that same monarch. Here, they say, roamed Nalagiri (the elephant), having pulled out his tie-post in fury.'

Your bulk increased by the incense that is used for perfuming the hair that issues from the lattices, and honoured with gifts of dance by the domestic peacocks out of their love for their friend, lay aside the weariness of the travel while admiring the splendour of its palaces which are scented with flowers and marked by the hennaed feet of the lovely women.

Observed respectfully by divine retinues who are reminded of the colour of their master's throat, you should proceed to the holy abode of the lord of the three worlds, husband of Chandi, whose gardens are caressed by the winds from the Gandhavati River, scented with the pollen of the blue lotuses and

perfumed by the bath-oils used by young women who delight in water-play.

Even if you arrive at Mahakala at some other time, O cloud, you should wait until the sun passes from the range of the eye. Playing the honourable role of drum at the evening offering to Shiva, you will receive the full reward for your deep thunder.

There, their girdles jingling to their footsteps, and their hands tired from the pretty waving of fly-whisks whose handles are brilliant with the sparkle of jewels, having received from you raindrops at the onset of the rainy season that soothe the scratches made by fingernails, the courtesans cast you lingering sidelong glances that resemble rows of honey-bees.

Then, settled above the forests whose trees are like uplifted arms, being round in shape, producing an evening light, red as a fresh China-rose, at the start of Shiva's dance, remove his desire for a fresh elephant skin—you whose devotion is beheld by Parvati, her agitation stilled and her gaze transfixed.

Reveal the ground with a bolt of lightning that shines like a streak of gold on a touchstone to the young women in that vicinity going by night to the homes of their lovers along the royal highroad which has been robbed of light by a darkness that could be pricked with a needle. Withhold your showers of rain and rumbling thunder: they would be frightened!

Passing that night above the roof-top of a certain house where pigeons sleep, you, whose consort the lightning is tired by prolonged sport, should complete the rest of your journey when the sun reappears. Indeed, those who have promised to accomplish a task for a friend do not tarry.

At that time, the tears of the wronged wives are to be soothed away by their husbands. Therefore abandon at once the path of the sun. He too has returned to remove the tears of dew from the lotus-faces of the lilies. If you obstruct his rays, he may become greatly incensed.

Kalidasa

The Cloud Messenger - Part 02

Your naturally beautiful reflection will gain entry into the clear waters of the Gambhira River, as into a clear mind. Therefore it is not fitting that you, out of obstinancy, should render futile her glances which are the darting leaps of little fish, as white as night-lotus flowers.

Removing her blue garment which is her water, exposing her hips which are her banks, it is clutched by cane-branches as if grasped by her hands. Departure will inevitably be difficult for you who tarries, O friend. Who, having experienced enjoyment, is able to forsake another whose loins are laid bare?

A cool breeze, grown pleasant through contact with the scent of the earth refreshed by your showers, which is inhaled by elephants with a pleasing sound at their nostrils, and which is the ripener of wild figs in the forest, gently fans you who desire to proceed to Devagiri.

There, you, taking the form of a cloud of flowers, should bathe Skanda, who always resides there, with a shower of flowers, wet with the water of the heavenly Ganges. For he is the energy surpassing the sun, that was born into the mouth of the fire by the bearer of the crescent moon6 for the purpose of protecting the forces of of the sons of Indra.

Then, with claps of thunder, magnified by their own echoes, you should cause to dance the peacock of the son of Agni, the corners of whose eyes are bathed by the light of the crescent moon at the head of Shiva and whose discarded tail-feather, ringed by rays of light, Parvati placed behind her ear, next to the petal of the blue lotus, out of her love for her son.

Having worshipped that god born in a reedbed, after you have travelled further, your route abandoned by siddha-couples carrying lutes because they fear rain-drops, you should descend while paying homage to the glory of Randideva, born from the slaughter of the daughter of Surabhi, and who arose on earth in the form or a river.

When you, the robber of the complexion of bearer of the bow Sharnga, stoop to drink the water of that river, which is broad but appears narrow from a distance, those who range the skies, when they look down, will certainly see that the stream resembles a single string of pearls on the earth, enlarged at its centre with a sapphire.

Having crossed the river, go on, making yourself into a form worthy of the curiosity of the eyes of the women of Dashapura, adept in the amorous play of their tendril-like eyebrows, whose dark and variageted brilliance flashes up at the fluttering of their eyelashes, and whose splendour has been stolen from the bees attendant on tossing kunda flowers.

Then, entering the district of Brahmavarta, accompanied by your shadow, you should proceed to the plain of the Kurus, evocative of the battle of the warriors, where the one whose bow is Gandiva brought down showers of hundreds of sharp arrows, just as you bring down showers of rain on the faces of the lotuses.

Having partaken of the waters of the Sarasvati which were enjoyed by the bearer of the plough who was averse to war on account of his love for his kinsfolk, after he had forsaken the wine of agreeable flavour which was marked by the reflection of Revati's eyes, you, friend, will be purified within: only your colour will be black.

From there you should go to the daughter of Jahnu above the Kanakhula mountains, where she emerges from the Himalaya, who provided a flight of steps to heaven for the sons of Sagara, and who laughing with her foam at the frown on the face of Gauri, made a grab at the hair of Shambhu and clasped his crescent moon with her wave-hands.

If you, like an elephant of the gods, your front partly inclining down from the sky to drink her waters which are pure as crystal, in an instrant, because of your reflection on her gliding current, she would become very lovely, as if united with the Yamuna in second location.

Having reached the mountain which is the source of that very river, whose crags are made fragrant with the scent of the musk of the deer that recline there, white with snow, reposing on the summit which dispells the fatigue of travel, you will take on the splendour like that of the white soil cast up by the bull of the three-eyed one.

If, when the wind is blowing, a forest fire were to afflict the mountain, ignited by the friction of branches of the sarala trees, burning with its flames the tailhairs of the yaks, it would befit you to extinguish it completely with thousands of torrents of water, for the resources of the great have as their fruit the alleviation of those who suffer misfortune.

The sharabha there, intent on springing in anger at you who departs from their path, would lunge at you, only to break their own limbs. You should cover them with a tumultuous storm of hail and rain. Who, intent upon a fruitless endeavour, would not be the object of contempt?

There, with your body bowed in devotion, you should circumambulate the foot-print of the one wears the half-moon diadem, which is continually heaped with offerings from ascetics, and at the sight of which, at their departure from the bodies, cleansed of their misdeeds, the faithful are able to achieve the immuteable state of membership of Shiva's following.

The bamboo canes filled with the wind sound sweetly. Victory over the three cities is celebrated in song by the Kinnari demi-gods. If your rumbling like a muraja drum resounds in the caves, the theme of a concert for Shiva will be complete.

Having passed various features on the flanks of the Himalayas, proceed thence north to Krauncarandhra, gateway for wild geese, which was the route to glory for Bhrgupati—you whose beautiful form is flat and long, like the dark blue foot of Vishnu uplifted for the suppression of Bali.

And having gone further, become the guest of Mt Kailasa, the seams of whose peaks were rent by the arms of the ten-faced one and which is a mirror for

the consorts of the Thirty Gods, and which, extending with lofty peaks like white lotuses, stands in the sky like the loud laughter of the three-eyed one accumulated day by day.

I foresee that when you, resembling glossy powdered kohl, reach the foot of that mountain as white as a freshly cut piece of ivory, the imminent beauty will be fit to be gazed upon with an unerring eye, like the dark blue garment placed on the shoulder of the plough-carrier.

And if Gauri should take a walk on the foot of that pleasure-hill, lent a hand by Shiva who has set aside his serpent-bracelet, your shape transformed into a flight of steps, your torrents of water withheld within yourself, become a stairway rising in front of her for the ascent of the jewel-slopes.

There the young women of the gods will use you as a shower—you whose waters are brought forth by the striking together of the diamonds in their bracelets. If, friend, you were unable to release yourself from them, being encountered in the hot season, startle them who are intent on playing with you, with claps of thunder, harsh to the ear.

Partaking of the waters of Manasa which bring forth golden lotuses, bringing at pleasure momentary delight like a cloth upon the face of Airavata, shaking with your winds the sprouts of wish-fulfilling trees like garments, enjoy the king of mountains with various playful actions, O cloud.

Once you, who wander at will, have seen Alaka seated in the lap of the mountain like a lover, with the Ganges like a garment that has slipped, you will not fail to recognise her again with her lofty palaces and bearing hosts of clouds with showers of rain at the time of year when you are present, resembling a woman whose tresses are interwoven with strings of pearls.

Kalidasa

The Cloud Messenger - Part 03

Where the palaces are worthy of comparison to you in these various aspects: you possess lightning, they have lovely women; you have a rainbow, they are furnished with pictures; they have music provided by resounding drums, you produce deep, gentle rumbling; you have water within, they have floors made of gemstones; you are lofty, their rooftops touch the sky;

Where there are decorative lotuses in the hands of the young wives; fresh jasmine woven into their hair; where the beauty of their faces is made whiter by the pollen of lodhra flowers; in the thick locks on their crowns are fresh kurubaka flowers; on their ears charming shirisa flowers; and on the parting of their hair, nipa flowers that bloom on your arrival;

Where the trees, humming with intoxicated bees, are always in flower; the lily pools, having rows of wild geese as waistbands, always produce lotuses; where the tails of the tame peacocks, their necks upstretched to cry out, are always resplendent; and where the evenings are perpetually moonlit and pleasant, and darkness has been banished;

Where the tears of the lords of wealth are of utmost joy, having no other cause, there being no suffering other than that caused by the flower-arrowed god which is to be assuaged by union with the desired one; where there is separation other than that arising from lovers' quarrels; and where there is indeed no age other than youth;

Where yakshas, having assembled on the upper terraces of the palace, made of crystal, accompanied by their excellent womenfolk, enjoy ratiphalam wine produced by a wish-fulfilling tree, while drums whose sound resembles your deep thunder are beaten softly;

Where the girls fanned by breezes cooled by the waters of the Mandakini river, the heat dispelled by the shade of the mandara trees that grow on its banks, are urges by the gods to play with jewels hidden by burying them with clenched fists in the golden sands and which are to be searched for;

Where the handfuls of powder flung by those red-lipped women bewildered by shame when their lovers passionately pull away their linen garments, the ties of which have been loosened and undone by restless hands, although they reach the long-rayed jewel-lamps, they fail to extinguish them;

Where ragged clouds, like yourself, brought to the upper stories of the palaces by the leader of the wind, having committed the misdeed of shedding raindrops on a painting, cleverly imitating puffs of smoke, flee immediately by way of the lattices as if filled with dread;

Where at night the moonstones, hanging from a web of threads and shedding full drops of water under the influence of moonbeams bright since the removal of your obstruction, dispel the physical langour after sexual enjoyment on the part of the women who are freed from the embraces of their lovers' arms;
Where lovers, with inexhaustible treasure their residences, together with the kinnaras who sing with sweet voices of the glory of the lord of wealth, accompanied by celestial courtesans, engage in conversation and enjoy everyday the outer grove known as Vaibhraja;

Where at sunrise the route taken by women the previous night is indicated by mandara flowers with torn petals that were shaken from their hair by the movement of their walking, by the golden lotuses that slipped from behind their ears, and by necklaces of strings of pearls the threads of which broke upon their breasts;

Where a single wish-fulfilling tree produces every adornment for women: coloured garments, wine which is suitable for introducing an amorous playfulness to the eyes, flowers together with buds which are distinctive among ornaments, and red lac dye suitable for application to their lotus-like feet;

Where horses, as dark as leaves, rival the steeds of the sun; where elephants, as tall as mountains, pour forth showers, like you, from the pores of their temples; and where the foremost warriors stood in battle against the ten-faced one, the splendour of their ornmanets surpassed by the scars of the wounds from Candrahasa;

Where the god of love does not generally carry his bow strung with bees, knowing that the god who is the friend of the lord of wealth dwells there in person: his task is accomplished by the amorous play of talented women whose glances are cast by means of curved eyebrows and which are not in vain among the objects of their desire.

There, to the north of the residence of the lord of wealth, our home is to be recognised from afar by an arched portal as lovely as a rainbow, near which a young mandara tree, caused to bow down by bunches of flowers that may be touched by the hand, is cherished by my beloved like an adopted son.

And within is a pool the steps of which are studded with emerald stone, filled with flowering golden lotuses whose stalks are of smooth chrysoberyl. On its waters the geese that have take up residence there do not think of Lake Manas close at hand, and are free from sorrow, having seen you.

On its bank there is a pleasure hill whose summit is studded with fine sapphires, beautiful to behold with a hedge of golden plantain trees. Having seen you, O friend, with flashing lightning, near at hand, I recall that mountain with a despondent mind, thinking, 'It is enjoyed by my spouse'.

Here is a red ashoka with trembling buds and a charming kesara near a hedge of kurubaka and a bower of madhavi. One desires (as I do) the touch of your friend's left foot. The other longs for a mouthful of wine from her, having as its pretext a craving.

And between these is a golden perch with a crystal base, studded at its foot with gems that shine like half-grown bamboo, on which rests your friend the blue-necked one, who, at the day's end, is caused to dance by my beloved with claps of her hands, made pleasant by the jingling of her bracelets.

Having seen the figures of Shanka and Padma painted near the door, by these signs preserved in yout heart, O noble one, you may distinguish the

residence, now reduced in beauty because of my absence. Indeed, at the setting of the sun, even the lotus does not display its own splendour.

Having shrunk at once to the size of a small elephant for the sake of a swift descent, resting on the pleasure mountain with lovely peaks that I have mentioned, please cast your gaze in the form of a flickering bolt of faint lightning upon the interior of the house, like the glow of a swarm of fire-flies.

Kalidasa

The Cloud Messenger - Part 04

The slender young woman who is there would be the premier creation by the Creator in the sphere of women, with fine teeth, lips like a ripe bimba fruit, a slim waist, eyes like a startled gazelle's, a deep navel, a gait slow on account of the weight of her hips, and who is somewhat bowed down by her breasts.

You should know that she whose words are few, my second life, is like a solitary female cakravaka duck when I, her mate, am far away. While these weary days are passing, I think the girl whose longing is deep has taken on an altered appearance, like a lotus blighted by frost.

Surely the face of my beloved, her eyes swollen from violent weeping, the colour of her lower lip changed by the heat of her sighs, resting upon her hand, partially hidden by the hanging locks of her hair, bears the miserable appearance of the moon with its brightness obscured when pursued by you.

She will come at once into your sight, either engaged in pouring oblations, or drawing from memory my portrait, but grown thin on account of separation, or asking the sweet-voiced sarika bird in its cage, 'I hope you remember the master, O elegant one, for you are his favourite';

Or having placed a lute on a dirty cloth on her lap, friend, wanting to sing a song whose words are contrived to contain my name, and somehow plucking the strings wet with tears, again and again she forgets the melody, even though she composed it herself;

Or engaged in counting the remaining months set from the day of our separation until the end by placing flowers on the ground at the threshold, or enjoying acts of union that are preserved in her mind. These generally are the diversions of women when separated from their husbands.

During the day, when she has distractions, separation will not torment her so much. I fear that your friend will have greater suffering at night without distraction. You who carry my message, positioned above the palace roof-top, see the good woman at midnight, lying on the ground, sleepless, and cheer her thoroughly.

Grown thin with anxiety, lying on one side on a bed of separation, resembling the body of the moon on the eastern horizon when only one sixteenth part remains, shedding hot tears, passing that night, lengthened by separation, which spent in desired enjoyments in company with me would have passed in an instant.

Covering with eyelashes heavy with tears on account of her sorrow, her eyes which were raised to face the rays of the moon, which were cool with nectar and which entered by way of the lattice, fall again on account of her previous love, like a bed of land-lotuses on an overcast day, neither open nor closed.

She whose sighs that trouble her bud-like lower lip will surely be scattering the locks of her hair hanging at her cheek, dishevelled after a simple bath, thinking how enjoyment with me might arise even if only in a dream, yearning for sleep, the opportunity for which is prevented by the affliction of tears;

She who is repeatedly pushing from the curve of her cheek with her hand whose nails are unkempt, the single braid, plaited by me, stripped of its garland, on the first day of our separation, which will be loosened by me when I am free from sorrow at the expiry of the curse, and which is rough to the touch, stiff, and hard.

That frail woman, supporting her tender body which he has laid repeatedly in great suffering on a couch, will certainly cause even you to shed tears in the form of fresh rain. Generally all tender-hearted beaing have a compassionate disposition.

I know that the mind of your friend is filled with accumulated love for me. On account of that I imagine her condition thus at our first separation. Even the thought of my good fortune does not make me feel like talking. All that I have said, brother, will be before your eyes before long.

I think of the eyes of that deer-eyed one, the sideways movements of which are concealed by her hair, which are devoid of the glistening of collyrium, which have forgotten the play of their eyebrows on account of abstinence from sweet liqour, and whose upper eyelids tremble when you are near: these eyes take on the semblance of the beauty of a blue lotus that is trembling with the movement of a fish.

And her lovely thigh will tremble, being without the impressions of my fingernails, caused to abandon it long-accustomed string of pearls by the course of fate, used to the caresses of my hand at the end of our enjoyment, and as pale as the stem of a beautiful plantain palm.

At that time, O cloud, if she is enjoying the sleep she has found, remaining behind her, your thunder restrained, wait during the night-watch. Let not the knot of her creeper-like arms in close embrace with me her beloved, somehow found in a dream, fall from my neck at once.

Having woken her with a breeze cooled by your own water droplets, she will be refreshed like the fresh clusters of buds of the malati. Your lightning held within, being firm, begin to address her with words of thunder; she, the proud on whose eyes are fixed on the window occupied by you:

'O you who are not a widow, know me to be a cloud who is a dear friend of your husband. With messages stored in my heart I have arrived at your side, and with slow and friendly rumblings I urge along the road a multitude of weary travellers who are eager to loosen the braids of their womenfolk.'

When this has been said, like Sita looking up at Hanuman, having beheld you with her heart swollen with longing and having honoured you, she will listen attentively to you further, O friend. For women, news of their beloved that brought by a friend is little short of union.

O long-lived one, following my instructions and to bring credit to yourself, address her thus: 'Your partner who resides at the ashram on Ramagiri, who is still alive though separated from you, inquires after your news, madam. This is the very thing that is first asked by beings who may easily fall into

misfortune.

He whose path is blocked by an invidious command and is at a distance, by means of these intentions, unites his body with yours, the emaciated with the emaciated, the afflicted with the deeply afflicted, that which is wet with tears with that which is tearful, that whose longing is ceaseless with that which is longed for, that whose sighs are hot with that whose sighs are even more numerous.

He who has become eager to say what is to be said in words in your ear, in the presence of your female friends, with a desire to touch your face, he who is beyond the range of your ears, unseen by your eyes, addresses these words composed on account of his desire, through the agency of my mouth:

"I perceive your body in the priyangu vines, your glances in the eyes of the startled deer, the beauty of your face in the moon, your hair in the peacock's feathers and the play of your eyebrows in the delicate ripples on the river, but alas, your whole likeness is not to be found in a single thing, O passionate one.

Having painted your likeness, with mineral colours on a rock, appearing angry because of love, as soon as I wish to paint myself fallen at your feet, my vision is clouded again and again with copious tears. Cruel fate does not permit our union, even in this picture.

Watching me with my arms stretched up into the air for an ardent embrace when you have somhow been found by me in a vision or in a dream, the local deities repeatedly shed teardrops as big as pearls on the buds of the trees. Those winds from the snowy mountains which having broken open the sepals of the buds of the devadaru trees become fragrant with their milky sap and which blow southwards—they are embraced by me, O virtuous one, with the thought that your body might previously have been touched by them.

How can the night with its long watches by compressed into a moment? How may a day become cooler in every season? Thus my mind, whose desires are difficult to satisfy, is rendered without refuge by the deep and burning pangs of separation from you, O one of trembling eyes.

Indeed, ever brooding, I maintain myself by means of myself alone. Therefore, O beautiful one, you also should not fear. Whose happiness is endless or whose suffering is complete? The condition of life rises and falls like the felly of a wheel.

The the holder of the bow called Sharnga rises from his serpent bed, the curse will end for me. Having closed your eyes, endure the remaining four months. After that, we two will indulge our own various desires, increased by separation, on nights lit by the full autumn moon."

And he said further, "In the past you embraced my neck as we lay on our bed, you called out something in your sleep and woke up. When I asked over and over, you said to me with an inward smile, 'I saw you in my dream enjoying another girl, you cheat!'

Having ascertained from the telling of this account that I am well, do not be suspicious of me on account of any rumour, O dark-eyed one. They say that love somehow perishes during separation, but because there is no fulfilment, the love for that which is desired with increasing desire, becomes a even more ardent.”’

Having comforted her thus, your friens whose sorrow is great in her first separation, return at once from the mountain whose peaks were cast up by the bull of three-eyed one. Then you should prop up my life which flags like kunda flowers in the morning with her words about her welfare, and an account of her.

I hope, friend, that you are firmly resolved upon this friendly service for me. I certainly do not regard your silences as indicating refusal. When requested you also apportion rain to the cataka cuckoos in silence, for the response of the virtuous to those who make a request is the performance of that which is desired.

Having undertaken this favour for me who bears this request that is unworthy of you, with thoughts of compassion for me, either out of friendship or because you think that I am alone, proceed to your desired destination, O cloud, your splendour enhanced by rainy season, and may you never be separated like this even for a moment from your spouse, the lightning.

Kalidasa

Waking

Even the man who is happy
glimpses something
or a hair of sound touches him

and his heart overflows with a longing
he does not recognize

then it must be that he is remembering
in a place out of reach
shapes he has loved

in a life before this
the print of them still there in him waiting

Kalidasa