

Classic Poetry Series

# **Rajagopal Parthasarathy**

## **- poems -**

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# Rajagopal Parthasarathy(1934 -)

R. Parthasarathy (full name: Rajagopal Parthasarathy), is an Indian poet, translator, critic, and editor.

## <b> Early Life and Education</b>

Rajagopal Parthasarathy was born in 1934 at Tirupparaiturai near Tiruchchirappalli. He was educated at Don Bosco High School and Siddharth College, Mumbai and at Leeds University, UK, where he was British Council Scholar in 1963–64.

## <b> Career </b>

He was Lecturer in English Literature in Mumbai for ten years before joining Oxford University Press in 1971 as Regional Editor in Chennai. He moved to New Delhi in 1978. He is Associate Professor of English and Asian Studies at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, USA .

His works include Poetry from Leeds in 1968, Rough Passage brought out by Oxford University Press in 1977, a long poem ( Preface "a book where all poems form part of a single poem, as it were" – R. Parthasarathy ) and edited Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets published by Oxford University Press in 1976 which went into Sixteenth Impression only in translates from Tamil to English. His translation into modern English verse of the 5th-century Tamil epic, The Tale of the Anklet: An Epic of South India brought out by Columbia UP in 1993. It has received significant awards including the Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize in 1995 and The Association for Asian Studies, Inc. – A.K. Ramanujan Book Prize for Translation in 1996. He was awarded the Ulka Poetry Prize of Poetry India in 1966. He was a member of the University of Iowa Writing Program during 1978–79. He was member of the Advisory Board for English of the Sahitya Akademi – the National Academy of Letters, New Delhi, India .

# Homecoming

I am no longer myself as I watch  
the evening blur the traffic  
to a pair of obese headlights.

I return home, tried,  
my face pressed against the window  
of expectation . I climb the steps

to my flat, only to trip over the mat  
Outside the door. The key  
goes to sleep in my palm.

I fear I have bungled again.  
That last refinement of speech  
terrifies me. The balloon.

Of poetry has grown red in the face  
with repeated blowing. For scriptures  
I, therefore, recommend

the humble newspaper: I find  
My prayers occasionally answered there.  
I shall, perhaps, go on.

Like this, unmindful of day  
melting into the night.  
My heart I have turned inside out.

Hereafter, I should be content,  
I think, to go through life  
with the small change of uncertainties.

[From 'Homecoming']

Rajagopal Parthasarathy

# Three Strains

Arab  
mongol  
tartar  
three strains  
go to make  
this jade  
dragging the jutka  
grazing the tarmac  
of Madras streets.

Three sangams  
and twice three  
go to make this  
Tamil language  
I handle  
and speak  
and manhandle  
and teach  
derived  
from of old.

The strains are weak,  
wearing out;  
arab or mongol  
or tartar elements  
are rarely  
to be recognized  
in this  
tottering  
but willing  
jade.

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