

Classic Poetry Series

T. K. Doraiswamy
- poems -

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T. K. Doraiswamy(21 August 1921 – 17 May 2007)

T. K. Doraiswamy, also known by his pen name Nakulan, was an Indian poet, professor of English, novelist, translator and short fiction writer, who wrote both in Tamil and English, and is known for his surrealism and experimentation as well as free verse. He served as Professor of English, Mar Ivanios College, Thiruvananthapuram for four decades.

During his literary career which started in his forties, when he started writing in Ezhuthu, a literary magazine founded by C. S. Chellappa, he wrote a novel and six books of poems in English, and nine novels and five books of poems in Tamil. His English work was mostly published under his real name, while Tamil works often appeared under his pen name. He also wrote briefly under the pen name, S. Nayar(sp?). His symbolic novel Ninaivup Patai Nilakal (1972) is considered a milestone in Tamil literature and established him as an avant garde novelist . His other notable works in Tamil include, Nizhagal, Naykal, Naveenante Diary Kurippukal, Ezhuthu Kavithaikal, Iruneenda Kavithaikal, Antha Manchal Nira Poonaikutty, and in English, Words to the Wind, 'Non-Being' and 'A Tamil Writer's Journal'.

He received the Asan Memorial Award for Tamil Poetry in 1983.

 Early Life and Education

Born in 1921, in Kumbakonam, in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu, Prof. Doraiswamy moved to Thiruvananthapuram at age 14.

Later he completed his M.A. in Tamil from Annamalai University, followed by M.A. in English from University of Kerala. He had an . in Literature on Virginia Woolf's work.

Career

He started serious writing only in 1960s, and was encouraged in pursuing the art by his good friend Kaa Naa Subramoniam. Many of Nakulan's students acknowledge that he initiated them into the art of writing good poetry. He was widely read. He quietly influenced countless writers and artists who visited his house at Golf Links, Kaudiar, and had discussions with him, especially the young ones. Equally distinguished as a poet, translator, critic, anthologist, novelist and short fiction writer, his publications include a novel and six books of poems in English and nine novels and five books of poems in Tamil. His alter-ego

Naveenan in his Tamil novels stands out as a modernist anti-hero who was perhaps the first of his kind in Tamil literature. He was one of the first writers to attempt techniques like stream of consciousness in Tamil literature ably. His use of the diary form in his novels like "Naveenan's Diary Jottings" was based on his admiration for the spirituality, philosophy and theology of the twentieth century (modern) mystic [Simone Weil](http://www.poemhunter.com/simone-weil/) rather than influenced by writers like [Anaïs Nin](http://www.poemhunter.com/ana-s-nin/).

His only novel in English was called "Words for the Wind." (1973). His English poetry collections include "Words to the Listening Air," "Non - Being" and "A Tamil Writer's Journal I, II and III". He wrote a long poem in English called "Raja Vembala." His short stories were frequently published by [Pritish Nandy](http://www.poemhunter.com/pritish-nandy/) in the Illustrated Weekly of India. He has translated [James Joyce](http://www.poemhunter.com/james-joyce/), [T.S Eliot](http://www.poemhunter.com/thomas-stearns-eliot/) and [K. Ayyappa Paniker](http://www.poemhunter.com/ayyappa-paniker/), to name just a few. His best translation work may be the book "The Little Sparrow" in which he devotes himself entirely to the great [Subramanya Bharathi](http://www.poemhunter.com/subramanya-bharathi/)'s writing.

Although the influence of [James Joyce](http://www.poemhunter.com/james-joyce/) was pronounced in his writings, it was more the metaphysical and religious thrust similar to [T.S Eliot](http://www.poemhunter.com/thomas-stearns-eliot/)'s and the spareness of style of a [Samuel Beckett](http://www.poemhunter.com/samuel-beckett/) that really made his works stand out. He was definitely a late Modernist moving into the realm of Post-Modernism. He never compromised in his writing or his life on what was expected of an artist.

He retired as Professor of English, Mar Ivanios College, Thiruvananthapuram (University of Kerala) after serving for four decades, and started full-time freelance writing. His best known novels are Ninaivu Pathai, Naaikal (Dogs) and Vaakku Moolam (Confession).

He was awarded the Asan Memorial Award for Tamil Poetry in 1983, and several other literary awards.

Personal Life

He was a bachelor. He died on 17 May 2007, at Thiruvananthapuram, at the ripe old age of 86. He had looked after his parents till they died and so their domestic help Purthai took care of him till the very end.

A?Ku

T. K. Doraiswamy

Between The Writer And The Reader

Between the
writer and
the reader
words stand
as a
b
a
r
r
i
c
a
d
e

T. K. Doraiswamy

He Came To See Me

He came to see me
and left saying
see me.

T. K. Doraiswamy

Oru Kural

T. K. Doraiswamy

There Is No One

There is no one
for me
not even me.

T. K. Doraiswamy

We Come Here

We come
here to be
and leave
without being.

T. K. Doraiswamy

Whichever Book We Read

Whichever book
we read, we find
what is inside
us is in that book
Nothing else.

T. K. Doraiswamy