

Classic Poetry Series

V. K. Gokak
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

V. K. Gokak(9 August 1909 - 28 April 1992)

Vinayaka Krishna Gokak (Kannada: ?????? ????? ??????) was a major writer in Kannada language and a scholar of English and Kannada literatures. He was fifth among eight recipients of Jnanpith Award (1990) for Kannada language for his epic Bharatha Sindhu Rashmi. Bharatha Sindhu Rashmi that deals with the vedic age is perhaps the longest epic written in any language in the 20th Century. In 1961, Gokak was awarded the Padmashree from the Government of India for Dyava Prithvi.

 Academic Life

Vinayak Gokak was a student of literature at Karnatak College Dharwar. Gokak with a first at Oxford in a colonial India, was a charismatic Indian professor of English. After returning from Oxford, he in the year 1938 became the principal of Willingdon college, Sangli. Through the years, Gokak had the privilege of heading colleges, universities and elite institutes in India. He served as the first Vice Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at Puttaparthi, Anantapur District between 1981 - 1985. His novel Samarasave Jeevana is considered one of the representative works of Navodaya literature in Kannada.

Honours and awards

1. Presidentship of the 40th Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in 1958.
2. Honorary doctorates from the Karnatak University.
3. Honorary doctorates from the Pacific University of the USA.
4. Central Sahitya Akademi award for his 'Dyava Prithivi' in 1961.
5. Jnanpith award-for his Bharatha sindhu rashmi, in 1990.

English Words

Speech that came like leech-craft
And killed us almost, bleeding us white!
You bleached our souls soiled with impurities.
You bathed our hearts amid tempestuous seas
Of a purer, drearier, delight.
O tongues of fire! You came devouring
Forests of nightshade, creepers that enmesh,
Trees that never remembered to grow,
And shrubs that were but thornmills in our flesh.
You were the dawn, and sunlight filled the spaces
Where owls were hovering.
O winged seeds! You crossed the furrowed seas
To nestle in the warm and silent earth.
Like a golden swarm of fireflies you came
Pining for a new agony, a new birth.
You blossomed into a nascent loveliness.
You ripened into nectar in fruit-jars
That hung like clustered stars.
O winging words! Like homing bees you borrow
Grown murmurous, the honey of delight,
Pollened within our hearts the coming morrow,
Sweetened within our souls for aeons bright:
You kindle in the far corners of the earth
The music of an ever-deepening chant:
The burthen of a waneless, winterless spring,
The gospel of an endless blossoming.
Fathomless words, with Indo-Aryan blood
Tingling in your veins.
The spoils of ages, global merchandise
Mingling in your strains!
You pose the cosmic riddles:
In the beginning was the Word
And the Word was God.
The Word is in the middle
And the Word is Man.
In the end will be the Word
And the Word will be God in Man.

