

Classic Poetry Series

V. Madhusoodhanan Nair
- poems -

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V. Madhusoodhanan Nair(1949 -)

V. Madhusoodhanan Nair is a well known Malayalam poet, scholar, and teacher, well accepted nationally and by Keralites everywhere in the world, who popularized poetry and endeared it even to the illiterates and children.

While the most popular poem from him is the Naranath Bhranthan, he has many more touching and strong poems to his credit. A professor by profession, he has held many eminent positions by virtue of his knowledge and position in society.

Prof. V. Madhusoodhanan Nair was born on 25th February 1949 at Aruviyodu a hilly hamlet by the river Neyyar, down south in Neyyattinkara in the district of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Madhusoodhanan Nair imbibed quite early the tradition of many a ritualistic song from udhan Pillai, his father, who was a reciter of Thottam Pattu. Soon after securing his M.A he has had a brief stint at journalism before joining St. Xavier's College, Thiruvananthapuram.

He took to writing poetry while at school and began publishing his pieces only in 80's. His first collection "Naranathu Bhranthan" was published in 1992. He is the recipient of Kerala Sahithya Akademy Award, Kunju Pillai Award and K. Balakrishnan Award.

He is well versed in Malayalam, English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Tamil. He has written and rendered lyrics for three Malayalam films and wrote lyrics for Tharangini and Manorama Music.

He is now fully devoting his time to his literary works having retired from the College as the Professor and Head of the Department of Malayalam.

He is married and having three children. He is now residing in Thiruvananthapuram

Education & Research

He completed his M.A. scoring high marks from University College. He passed the translation training course from the State Institute of Languages and did two refresher courses from Academic Staff College, Thiruvananthapuram.

As a part of research he completed a thesis in the subject ' The influence of Vedic Metaphors and mythical images in the poetry of Vallathol'

Membership in Cultural Bodies

- Member, Advisory Board, central Sahitya Academy, New Delhi
- Member, Kerala Sahitya Academy General Council (2 terms)
- Member, State Curriculum Committee, Government of Kerala
- Managing committee member, Asan Memorial, Thonnakal
- Member (for 3 years), Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation Planning
- Member, Executive Committee, C.V. National Foundation
- Life Member Drishyavedi, Thiruvananthapuram

Awards

- Sahitya Academy award for poetry in the year 1992
- Asan Award for Poetry – 2003
- Kunju Pillai Award for poetry in the year 1986
- rishnan Award for poetry in the year 1990
- R.G. Mangalom Award –2003
- Souparnikatheeram Prathibhapuraskaram – 2003

Bharatheeyam

1. Lo, my son,
This is India's map.
These drained lines flowing out
Like frantic cries of impotence
Are rivers sans progeny
Behold, my son, The shaven headed saffron mounds,
The routes of civilization
That has forgotten its footsteps,
The amorous urban 'Yakshis'
Wreathed in smiles to entrap you,
The skytracks where hawks screech and scream about,
The chimneys which puff out ashen cash,

The golden mansions of faith
Agape for devout offerings,
Diverse hues and shades, diverse lands,
And withered jungles of life in between.
This is India's map, my son.

2. You repeat the textbook quote:
'India is my country, and every Indian my brother'
Is Bharat but a sweet
Relished once a year on August 15 ?
Is Vharat a pedantic term
Taught by one's father
To resonate a rhetoric speech ?
Is it to be sought in the hasty lines
One draws on the annual answer paper ?
Don't you see below the lines
The hunger of a hapless infant ?
The nakedness of a wayward girl ?
The eyes of a beaten bullock
Quenching to thirst at a mud-ferrow ?
The frantic flutterings of life ?
The religious cults whetting then rapier
In a frenzy of fiery ?
The rat-race or classes and
Ethres falling to mammon ?

3. Son

Where is your brother who feeds you
With the honeydew of his sweat ?
Why is it that he flees from
The very womb that begot him ?
Who among these is your brother ?
Seek him in the sweating (farms)
Look for him amid the city din,
And in the potent castles of greed.
Ask the temple pigeons
Rankling in the smoke fire of superstition
Or the tender Crescent swallowed by
The python of greed.
Ask the gory hymn, 'Hey Ram', that gushed out
From an old heart
When hit by a gun-shot,
Or the hot currents that engulf
The north and the south is a whirl

4. Son,

This is the real map of India:
Bharat is the pulsing heart
That beats behind the lines.
You should clutch the creeper,
Reach down the roots,
To the transparency of truth,
And stay there for a short while.

Don't you see the ember of time
In the abandoned torch of some wayfarer ?
As you blow it, breathing into it,
Doesn't an old time spring up in fits and starts ?

Wash your face with the crystal tears
Trickling from the core of the earth.
Go down the steps, and behold
The crimson halls of yore
Where nymphs dance in unison

Your forefather had inscribed many a myth
In the broken earthen had reached beyond the 'Brahma Vrit'
With the arrow of the word.

This 'Dharmadhwar' is the witness to
The subtime self-realisation
That 'I am the omnipresent'.
This bunyan bears witness to the wisdom
That the cosmos is enshrined in a tiny seed.
These holy streams stand witness to
The quenching of the lust of life
This fire is the witness to
The supreme sacrifice made to the famished bird.
The magnificent 'moonrise of enlightenment'
Is witness to one's acceptance of sorrows and sufferings
And meting out 'Sukha' and 'hita'.

5. Son,

This is the bosom of India
Swelling with the elixir of love for all humanity,
From her snowy crown to the watery heel.
Rise like a tonal flame from this breast
Take a pulse beat along,
And a feathery lance.
Dot down the heartlines of the earth,
Ride past the tides of transience
Return the three worlds, and Return to the haven of mother's lap,
And be thee a dawn.

V. Madhusoodhanan Nair