GLEANINGS FROM

SANGAM VERSES

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தமிழ்ப்பல்கலைக் கழகம் தஞ்சாவூர்
தமிழ் நாடு

Tamil University
THANJAVUR.

GLEANINGS FROM SANGAM VERSES

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English Version of Sangat - Thamizh by

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Translation

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Foreword

We are given to understand that 2000 years ago-through ages-there existed three Tamil Sangams (Council of Tamil poets) and they were called as: Tamil Sangam I (First) seated in Thenmathurai; Tamil Sangam II in Kapatapuram, and Tamil Sangam III in the present city of Madurai which were the capital cities of Pandya Kings, through various periods, successively. We came to know the names of those scholastic and munificent kings who all were involved in establishing, nurturing and patronising the three Tamil Sangams. Likewise, we also come to know the names of those great men of Learning, who were poets and scholars, who participated as members of the great academic bodies and did research works, apart from writing and presenting literary and creative works and grammars, which were dedicated to the purposeful use of Tamils. When deluges occurred, the first two cities, which were situated south of the present cape of Kanyakumari were swallowed by great seas and many of the precious works of those two earlier Tamil Sangam periods were also

lost for ever. All these facts are learnt by us from the unique work of Annotation in Tamil, called "Eraiyanar Kalaviyal Urai" (A commentary on the "Concept of Love" (களவியல்) by Eraiyanar).

In that commentary, we come across with the calculation of the periods through which the two earlier Tamil Sangams existed, a theory propounded probably by the commentator. On the face of it, it will appear that his statement about the millenniums through which the two Sangams existed might be an exaggeration. But, judging by the quality and merit of the collection of Literary works of Sangam Era, that are available, we can very well realise that, the people of Sangam Age in Tamil Land were leading a highly matured and civilised life of good traditions, and they all were competent creative poets who could easily pour in their feelings through standardised poetry. No one can dispute these facts.

We are much indebted to the yeomen service rendered by great men of letters who lived in the early years of this century like Thiru Si.Vai. Damodharam Pillai and Dr U.V. Swaminatha Iyer who had salvaged hundreds of Tamil works that belonged to the Sangam Era and later periods, from being plagued by termites and such other havoc, and virtually rescued them from being swept away along the current of passage of Time. The whole Tamil World pay its rich tributes to those eminent scholars and appreciate their immense services in salvaging the Tamil literary works of yore.

To-day, all those who know Tamil, are well aware of the vividness richness and excellence of Sangam Tamil Literature, thanks to the unstinted efforts of Tamil Scholars who wrote topical essays, that were featured in magazines, New commentaries and Books that were written and published on Sangam literature, along with the learning of Tamil as an academic subject in schools and colleges.

Besides these, there are translated works on Sangam literature brought out by learned Professors like P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar and V.R. Ramachandra Dhikshidar and other erudite scholars. These transcreations have spread to the nook and corner of the world and have carried the message of the vastness and eminence of the Tamil Language. Former Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi had a chance of going through the Translated versions of Puranannuru. The poem written by poet Kaniyan Poongundran that starts with யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர் captured her attention very much.

Having read and understood the unique theme of this particular poem, on one occasion of her sojourns abroad, in the then U.S.S.R., she quoted it as follows:

A famous Tamil poet has well said:

"All the world is our Home;

Everyman our kith and kin"

These are a few facts which highlight the fame of the Sangam Tamil. Dr. Kalaignar, a great political leader and statesman of the contemporary era, endowed with flair for writing and oratory skills is also equally unique in having won laurels in the field of Literature - who could be hailed as an uncrowned monarch in literary field-through his many worthy contributions to Tamil Language and Literature which are immeasurable and uncomparable in their loftiness. Thirukkural and Sangam Literature are unique Treasures of Tamils. Dr. Kalaignar has an outstanding reputation of having become the C.M. of the State for four times, and his achievement has become history. His political career, its excellence and his name and fame are

well known to one and all. He has to his credit many an achievement which are unparalleled in the history. With all these glorious performances and achievements, his mind has been constantly revolving around the richness of Sangam Literature and Thirukkural. To speak about his capabilities of contemporary creative art and literature, he has successfully produced many novels, short stories, plays (Dramas), prose (Dialogues) and poetry. He was at once skillful and highly individualistic in his style and presentation and has carved out a niche for himself in all these branches of Arts and literature. However, in his heart of hearts, Thirukkural and Sangam Literature have occupied the uppermost place, having anchored there steadfastly. That was why, Dr. Kalaignar was contemplating for making contributions to Tamil and Tamils that shall be long-standing as well as outstanding. The result was the birth of the modern innovative and annotative commentary to Thirukkural that has no match to it, called "**Kuraloviyam**". Another product of his deep thoughts further down in the stream, is the highly acclaimed architectural contribution to Tamils and his brain-child that is **Valluvar Kottam** and yet another product on the same stretch happened to be the great Literary master piece "**Sangath Thamizh**", will it not surpass millenniums and be irradiating itself to the world as a lighthouse on the Hill Top? We, caught up in paucity of words to depict its significant greatness, are so much humbled, that we cannot describe the features of this master creation 'Sangath Thamizh' completely and exhaustively!

I ponder over the following famous lines:

"Whatever literature may be
Communication it must be;

If there is no communication
there is no literature".

His superb skill in communicating the message in a different style, is his speciality.

We can go through his work and find the above truth in all the pages.

As a result of the efforts taken by the Tamil University, the mastery of the hand of Dr. Arangasamy who has endeavoured to render this mighty work into English, the translation really excells in its graceful style.

Indeed, the Translation is wonderfully fascinating us.

These are the lines that were written by Dr. Kalaignar with the caption. "Or Uvamai - Iru Katchi"

("ஓர் உவமை இரு காட்சி")
"ஓர் உவமை இரு காட்சி ளன ஒப்பிட்டுக் கூறுகின்ற கற்பனையின் அருமை
ஓங்கு புகழ் மாங்குடி மருதனாரின் தமிழாய்ந்த திறமைக்கோர் பெருமை:

"Rich Imagination with two spectacles in one simile
Bears witness to the greatness of Marutan, the poet"

Thus runs the rendering into English. However, the poetic touch with the lines by Kalaignar in the Original ending with 'அருமை' 'பெருமை' adds unparallel beauty to the theme which is overwhelming in comparison.

"மானம் காத்த மறவன்" ("Valiant soldier who (by dying) saved the self esteem") is a poem in 'Puranануru' written by Cheraman Kanaikal Irumporai, which is given in detail by Dr. Kalaignar.

What will be the appearance and stature of a hero of Sangam Age? It will be thus, so portrays Dr. Kalaignar:-

தவழ்ந்து வரும் தன் மகனவை
முத்தமிடுவதற்கும் குனிந்திடாமல்

தலைக்குமேலே தூக்கச் சொல்லிக் கொஞ்சுகின்ற
தன்மானத் தமிழ்ச்சிங்கம் அவன்;

தாமரை மொட்டிரண்டை ஏந்தி வரும்
தன் பட்டத்து ராணியையும்

நெளியாமல் நிமிர்ந்து நின்றே
நெஞ்சகத்தில் அணைத்துக் கொள்வான்

நிலம் நோக்கும் வழக்கமின்றி
நேர் பார்வை செலுத்தித்தான்

நிலவு முகத்தரசி
நெற்றியிலே இதழ் பதிப்பான்,

படுத்திருக்கும்போதும் பஞ்சணையில்
வினாக்குறி போல் வளைய மாட்டான் - வில்லில்

தொடுத்திருக்கும் கணையைப்போல்
கால்நீட்டித் துயில் கொள்வான்!

What a beautiful picturisation of a typical Character of Sangam Era:

In Tamil, Kalaignar has written all the first six lines in alliteration mostly starting with the letter "த" (or தா); the next six lines invariably starts with the letter 'ந' (with its variations). May be, perhaps, this beautiful combination of the voiced plosive letter 'த' (வன்மை) followed by the nasal sound 'ந' (மென்மை) is in view of the portrayal of the *stronger sex* (வன்மை) that is the 'hero' in the process of cuddling and embracing the heroine the weaker sex (மென்மை).

This has been beautifully rendered by the Translator as follows:-

"Dignified Tamil hero he was
who would not bow down to kiss

Even his baby that crawls to him
But fondle it by getting it lifted up.

Standing erect sans flexing
He would warmly embrace

His own princess consort of his kingdom
When she welcomed him with her lotus-buds twain.

He would impress his lips straight
On the crescent forehead of that genial darling

Only by looking straight but not bending to
Even when ensconing on the cushioned bed

He wouldn't curve like a question mark
But like an arrow, steady on the bow

He would stretch his legs and sleep straight"

Towards the end of his annotative comment Kalaignar writes like this:

சேரமான் கணைக்கால் இரும்பொறை
வீரவாளினை ஒலையாய்க் கொண்டு

தீட்டிய புறப்பாடலை
நீட்டுகின்றேன் உம்மிடையே

படித்துப் பாரீர் - உணர்ச்சியால்
துடித்துப் போவீர்!

The beauty of these couplets is in the spontaneous rhymes (appearing with the common second letter) and it excells in the presentation. Rhymes (எதுகை) and alliterations (மோனை) are the tools of mastery over poetry invented by Tamils and these techniques are found dynamic and vibrant in the prose-poetry of Dr. Kalaignar.

The rhymes are:

சேர
வீர
தீட்டிய
நீட்டு
படித்து
துடித்து

Dr. Kalaignar is the one and only master in this art, who could marvellously transform the rigid style of 2000 years old poetry into melodious and mellifluous lines by simplifying it, and at the same time, enriches the literary treasure of Tamils. Is he not the sole effulgent sun on this land!

These captivative lines of Kalaignar quoted above are recreated by the Translator as follows:

See how Ceraman Irumporai wrote a poem

Using his sword as the pen

Is given to you; peruse it please

You would surely be moved with feeling soon.

Translator has done justice in his rendition with his utmost ability. I do appreciate his effective and inspiring endeavour. The Tamil University has done a very impressive

job in bringing out this translated work in a pleasing and attractive manner and thus has added one more feather in its cap in the field of publications.

Thiru Arangasamy, presents himself in humble and polite word about his translation as thus:

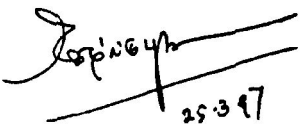
"I honestly confess that my rendition cannot in any way be deemed equal to the mastery of style, refined diction, and the lucid and flowery style of the original".

This Translation shall reach to the nook and corner of the world and shall be made accessible to scholars in all the languages over the world. Then alone, the quintessence of the Sangam Literature will be made known to the world; the culture, civilization and attainments of greatness in life by the ancient Tamils, will also be made known to the world. Besides these the fact that Dr. Kalaignar, our Respectful Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is the leader of the Tamils is already known, as the leader in the literary world and also in the field of creative literature, will be discerned by the world.

As a man of creative art and literature, he will be very much fond of being known and affectionately called as so. This creation and the transcreation will be everlasting, along with this universe. I hail this assurance while presenting this humble foreword by me.

Poet Kabilar of Sangam Era has dedicated his famous work (Kurinchi Pattu) along with 90 different kinds of flowers (which are peculiar to, and abundant in the Hills) of Tamil Land to Mother Tamil. Dr. Kalaignar, along with

those 90 kinds of flowers, dedicates this master piece of poetry of everlasting fragrance to Mother Tamil. My humble part of writing this foreword to this great work shall kindly be construed as a 'string that gets fragrance from the flowers in a garland" ("பூவோடு சேர்ந்த நார்"). I deem it a privilege, and feel elated for getting this opportunity of writing this foreword to a great work that will earn a long standing reputation from men of letters.



25.3.1997
Chennai

(M. THAMIZHKUDIMAGAN)

Dr. K. KARUNAKARAN
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PREFACE

The aims and objectives of the Tamil University consist in disseminating the message of ancient Tamil by publishing inestimable literary and grammatical works of Tamil and at times by effecting translation of some of these into English. For the past 15 years, the University has been bringing out the English renditions also. The ancient Sangam canon of Tamil Literature is deemed to be a classical masterpiece, highlighting the culture and renaissance of the Tamils who lived in the pre-christian era. Its uniqueness lies in the two-fold thematic classification of Aham and Puram respectively signifying matters of internal love and external heroism and societal affairs. Dr. Kalaignar, a deep-rooted votary of Tamil Language and Culture has fallen in love with these ancient literary pieces and poetised them in his inimitable style and rhetoric. It is solemnly hoped that this English translation Gleanings from Sangam verses is bound to carry the message of Tamil culture and its ancientry to the English-knowing scholars and public in countries far-off.

Dr. Kalaignar's way of portraying the love, heroism, charity, benevolence of kings, courtiers, poets and innate simplicity of the commoners is to be found illustrated in these poetical selections. The Tamil University feels proud in publishing this literary venture along with its three hundred and odd publications so far. Dr. Kalaignar is a

reputed creative writer, essayist, poet, orator and playwright. His Tamil writings continue to enrich scholars, poets and the public. A few years back the Tamil University celebrated this creative writer with the RajaRajan Award in honour of his literary services. It is a matter of pride now that the Tamil University undertakes to bring out an English translation of Dr. Kalaignar's Tamil poems from Sangam classics. This English version illuminates the social concepts and literary principles of ancient Tamils.

Dr. Palani Arangasamy, a bi-lingual scholar and formerly Head, Department of Translation, Tamil University has translated this quite successfully in English.

He deserves our hearty congratulations and compliments. His English biography of revolutionary Tamil poet Bharathidasan has already been brought out by the University.

The Tamil University conveys its deep gratitude and respects to Muthamizh Arignar Dr. Kalaignar for having accorded permission and an opportunity to bring out this literary contribution for the benefit of the scholarly public.

Thanjavur

K. Karunakaran

A note on Translation

Original to this anthology of free verse composed in melliflous Tamil by Dr. Kalaignar Mu. Karunanidhi, contains about 100 pieces of long expository and interpretative narratives. They are based on his random selection of Sangam poems, drawn from both the canons of Sangam literature-- The Eight Anthologies and Ten Idylls. These verse contributions of chosen Sangam excerpts were serialised in a Tamil literary monthly, *Kungumam,* for over eight long years. An English rendition of this literary work is only an after-thought, roughly 3 years after the publication of the Tamil version in 1987. Within this short span of three years, the Tamil anthology has undergone two editions, evidencing the fact in Indian standards that it was found to be a lucid and comprehensive Tamil adaptation for the lovers of ancient Sangam literature. The impregnable barriers to comprehend the Sangam works such as structural and lexical complexities, unfamiliar and strange allusions, and chaste diction with words archaic and obsolete, have been made easy and readable by Dr. Kalaignar in his inimitable modern Tamil poetic style.

Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales, written in East Midland dialect needed a Modern English translation which Neville Coghill did in the forties of the present century. If a simplified version for Chaucer is inevitable even within a period of six hundred years, what a gap there is to fill in between the poetic style of the Sangam era and that of the modern age in Tamil! It is exactly this gap, this

interpretative exposition of the Sangam poems, Sangattamil attempts to fill in.

Needlees to say, Sangam literature bears unmistakable literary evidence with regard to ancient cultural and social life of the Tamils, and remains a replica of the literary renaissance the Tamils experienced in the second millennium B.C. Dr. Kalaignar has been a popular spokesman for and authority on the ancient literatures, throughout the forty years and more of his public life. His easily readable literary expositions deserve to be transferred to the English-knowing, to establish a cultural link. Dissemination of knowledge knows no boundaries. As Tennyson says, 'Knowledge is like a sinking star beyond the utmost bound of human thought'. It is earnestly hoped that this sincere endeavour will serve this cause and do justice to the original work.

The translator craves the indulgence of bi-lingual readers for having effected into Dr. Kalaignar's poetical commentary, certain changes felt to have been acutely essential. As the commentary was serialised in a Tamil periodical, keeping in mind a literate public but not solely an elitist and literary group, passages, found to be redundant, verbose, hyperbolic and merely euphonious have been on close scrutiny trimmed to the extent possible, without any detriment to the thematic content and aesthetic fervour of the original. Scenes that are graphic, realistic, amorous and even erotic may have been a sheer necessity in whetting the appetite of readers when serialising the verses in a periodical. But in compiling them in a single volume, the effect of eroticism may seem a bit higher. In places where they appear to be so, certain amount of restraint has been effected into. So is the attention paid to the expressions that are double entendre. The ultimate aim therefore is to make this rendition relevant, convincing, purposeful and sustainable to an exclusively English-knowing audience.

Certain synecdochical, imagistic and metaphorical expressions that are too terse and concise in form as noted below and too exotic to non-Tamils, unless followed by lengthy and explantory footnotes, are rendered in plain and direct statements.

i tennampalai cirippazhagi (27)

ii. kattanimuthe enru karkkantuppoti tuvateer (210)

iii. Tamilaridai orrumai enpatu attippu, adippirai'(12)

iv. Mozhi Azhaki, Vizhi Azhaki, Muthunagaip-perazhaki Pozhilazhakai vellukinra puviyazhaki (231)

No two scholars agree as to the efficacy of any source-material translated into a target language. The commonly accepted view is that no translation could do cent percent justice in its thematic, structural, stylistic and aesthetic effects. What the translator attempts to do is to provide the semantic content of the original with the other easily adaptable sytlistic devices in consonance with the nuances of the target language. The concept of translation involves a study of what the author means rather than what he says. Even the best translator can make a sincere attempt to grasp the spirit of the original and to render it in the target language. I honestly confess that my rendition cannot in any way be deemed equal to the mastery of style, refined diction, and the lucid and flowery style of the original. These are the qualities for which Dr. Kalaignar is very well acclaimed as the best in the Tamil-knowing world. This rendering is therefore a humble attempt to capture the spirit of the original work of Dr. Kalaignar to the extent possible, with all my limitations. Suggestion for improvement of this venture is welcomed from scholars and literary public.

This English rendition would not have seen the light of the day but for this task assigned to me by the Tamil University as early as January'91. I took it upon with great relish and completed it in about six months. My thanks are due to Dr. (Miss) Jennifer of the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore for having gone through the typescript and offered valuable suggestions. The sincerity with which the steno-typist Mrs. Umamaheswari of the Tamil University did the job of typing and at times, repeatedly re-typing without demur deserves appreciation. I once again thank the Tamil University for having undertaken to get this English rendition printed in a nice-format and get-up.

Palany Arangasamy
Professor of Translation

Floral Tribute

I attempted verse, in a style lucid
Of the poets erudite, age-old Sangam
The desire I fulfilled to the extent possible
In hundred issues of *Kunkumam*, a literary monthly;
Delectable my feeling as a lover of art,
As that of the pleasure superb enjoyed
When heaping gold, dug out from mines
And collecting pearls from the deep ocean;
If continuously scooped, the treasure will be lesser
But the fluent imagination of the Sangam poets
Will flourish in plenty as much as a spring.
Scholars of yore have sung superbly
To make even aliens appreciate us to the core
Of romance, bravery and life - refined of Tamils
And a system of discipline with cultural import;
To those revered savants of the old,
Who are alive as life and letters immortal
Let me offer my homage and tribute.,
All the flowers the poet Kapilan was attracted to
In groves and forests

And listed in *Kurincipattu*, his magnum opus'
Let me pluck and shower on the Sangam works
That stole away my heart and mind.

Here follows a set of 34 lines from Kapilar's *Kurinci-pattu* which includes a lengthy list of 94 flowers as they were found in ancient Sangam Age of the Tamils. One is amazed to look at this long list of names of flowers which are not actually identifiable even to those who possess a perfect knowledge of the flora of the modern Tamil country. Strictly speaking, a systematic study of plants, herbs and flowers that are referred to is yet to be made, and even then, many of these flowers will be found unidentifiable. I am afraid that due to long passage of time, many flowers may even have become extinct. An attempt to apply the botanical reference to these flowers is an issue to be dealt with seperately. But presently let us be content with the fact that Dr.Kalaignar has aptly chosen a long list of flowers imagining them to be a rich and colourful floral tribute to the benign and scholarly ancients who have enabled us to enjoy their literary labours.

Whole world my place and all are my kinsmen

Having heard that Kathiresan Chettiar was born
In Mahibalanpatti to which place I had been
In pre-trifurcation of Ramnad,
Informed was I by a well-known scholar Manickam
That this village was Poonkunram
Cited in Purananuru, an age-old anthology.

It made me feel extremely happy and I went
On request and saw in person at a glance
A poem on a rocky cave,
Said to have been inscribed by Kaniyan Poonkunran.
Whether the old poet himself did it on his own
Or the deed of the successors I do not know; but
Whoever has chiselled it so, the universally known
Clarion call was composed by a Tamilian
Who has kept open his heart and mind
As if to illumine our vision and wisdom
Declaring that the entire world bordered by oceans
Is ours wherein all are our Kinsmen.

Thus did the poet a revolution, tearing open
The divisiveness and murky ignorance;
That poet who blessed us with the poem dynamic,
Interacted and mingled as a bee with flowers,
And gave the fruit of a poem Universal,
Was born in Poonkunram, is a fact
That makes me exhilarated with pleasure;

Poets in yonder.days stepped into the courts royal
Sang the poems rare in excellence, rich in quality
Shone with the glories in a manner superb
And secured trophies of gold in thousands,
Elephants caparisoned, armies numerous,
Tributes in plenty and awards unnumbered
Heaps and heaps, huge and plenty.
Even in those days a few time - servers
As a few of today who flatter the famed
And fly away on the decline of the patrons,
Like birds that leave the ponds dried to seek anew.....
But not so Kaniyan Poonkunran and concerned
much about them
Uncared for in crowning kings and praising patrons.
Some in a droning voice once persuaded him
To go to the royal courts with poems eulogistic
To obtain the prize but he negatived with a reply delicate
Rejected go their request and went his way;

"Well indeed you glorify the country!
Flatter the one who ruled the country!
Admire the heroes who confront wounds, dignified
To retrieve the country and to conquer anew.
As literature multitudinous speak of love and chivalry
Let me begin in my own way, all alone," he said
"That all places are ours and
All persons are our kinsmen;"

The same poet Poonkunran even when composing
A love poem in *Natrinai*, another anthology,
Counsels gently the world (all over)
That anything world-worthy be guarded by all means;
Posing thereby, "Should an entire medicinal tree
Be uprooted instead of taking its barks?"
The concept of one-world and one race
The Tamilian Poonkunran, born of a family ancient
Earlier than even the earth and the mud
Poetically evolved firmly with a stance
To those who keep their cheeks cupped in hand
And feel desperate that all is out of destiny.

Comments he gently furthereon,
'It is nothing but our actions that bring forth
All the evil and good in our life'
Not only that-
He continues to add in a manner calculated
"It is only the actions that we undertake
Hasten our misery in life and pass away soon.
That beings are born on earth
Perish and go off is not strange;
It is not becoming
Of those who are firm and steady
To consider life as composed of happiness only
And condemn it soon if misery intervenes.
Life on earth will steadily run
Shaking, shivering and gently too
As a buoy that floats on the river.
Follow the steps shown by the elders.
No bowing at all to the fabulous rich;
Nor to speak ill of those who are lesser."

Thus
Global unity, racial harmony
Precepts of life, high principles
Considering alike the happiness and misery
Serviling not the fabulous rich
Slighting not the lesser and poor
Such enticing ideas like a floral wreath
He weaves around, showing his
Lofty mind in the poem sung;
Let it spread like a deluge the world over.
But still, even the poet with a principle lofty profess,
The concept of one world and
The idea of one race with a resplendent kinship,
Added his nativity along with his name proper
As Kaniyan Poonkunran, the poet;
To think of this is a revelation that
Even that great poet is not devoid of
A passion and devotion to the soil he belongs.

A Hero Honour Bound

A hero will die if his honour is at stake
As a wild yak does even if a bristle falls, says
Thirukkural;

Evidence to this, as butter surfaces in churning milk,
Is the life of a Sangam knight.

Dignified Tamil hero he was
Who would not bow down to kiss

Even his baby that crawls to him
But fondle it by getting it lifted up.

Standing erect sans flexing
He would warmly embrace

His own princess consort of his kingdom
When she welcomed him with her lotus-buds twain.

He would impress his lips straight
On the crescent forehead of that genial darling

Only by looking straight but not bending to;
Even when ensconing on the cushioned bed

He wouldn't curve like a question mark
But like an arrow, steady on the bow

He would stretch his legs and sleep straight.
Has he a backbone unflexible?

Has he a crude mind where would not grow
An etiquette and courtesy expected of?

So was the wonder that struck many a person
Who would put a finger on the nose and
hail him wondrous!

This hero claims descendency from the Irumporai clan;
Legs he has as of iron-like mast, strong
Hence named he Kanaikkal Irumporai' of the Chera Clan
Who ruled a part of Tamil land
Harbour of Thondi, his capital which Grecians
called Dindis:

"After conquering a monarch named Moovan,
He battered his face and broke his teeth;
Fixed them then on the lock of the
Main gate of the massive fortress,
So proudly sang Poikaiyar in his *Kalavazhi Narppatu*
Which gladly speaks of this battle royal.

Very rare it is to see unity among Tamils,
Historically notorious for internecine war
And cleaving among themselves into two;
So divided they to show their mettle in sword-play.
Chola king Cenkanan by name
Cheeta alike in war front
Fluttered his banner of tiger in sky high fame
Having conquered wherever he went;

The Cera king Kanaikkal Irumporai having heard of this,
Aroused himself, followed by cavalry and chariot
Chosen heroes at his command closely at heels,
Like a lightning that tore open the dismal clouds!

"Will my bravery be lagging behind? he roared;
Will the victory of the Chola be able to withstand
Much against my Atlantean shoulders?"

Giant like elephants dashed with one another
Lynch pins gave way in the royal chariots
Broken in the melee into pieces thousand.
The impress of the horses' hooves
That entrenched in bloody mud
Resembled the shiny carp
That died and floated on a stagnant pond.

The injury received on the back
By a few of the infantry armed with shields
Drove them to shame
And then they fell down dead.

Full of swearing loud, stream of blood alas!
Eternal journey thus enveloped the field!
Who is to win, of the two who fight
Can't be said in a combat field as such!

Heads in thousands rolled on the earth
So was the rapier thrust on the Chola great
The splashing appeared as if each one
Strongly stricken with a bolt of thunder!

Florishing sword of the fierce Chera
Redden the soil as crimson sky!

Even though the two take it to their heart
That one who twitches his eye lid
At the aim of a spear is a coward,
Irumporai caught entangled at length
As a pachyderm in a pool of mud.

He exerted his strength entire
But stood defeated in front of the Chola!
In a *combat* field at Tirupporppuram

When the competent Chera failed
Alas! The Chola invincible
Put him behind bars at Kudavayil Kottam;

Cheran felt it in his heart and mind
That he did not get a martyrdom
At the attack of a sword unsheathed-
Languished he thus in gaol of his miserable fall.

To quench his parching throat one day,
Called he a sentry very near to him
And asked for a cup of water soon;

Tarried he and brought it late;
Perfunctoral attention furiated the king
Felt he acute as a disgrace to him and his ancientry;

Left he a poem for posterity
To see and feel, his mind and heart.

"Even if a baby is born dead or
A fleshy stump immature is out,
If a man invalid is ceased to be or
Dying of an acute sickness uncured,
To wipe of a possible folly of
Death without an honourable wound,
The esteemable Tamil race would eventually
Make a scratch on the body
And then perform burial rights.

But me of the line of such a race respectful
Injured and imprisoned like a cur
Shamefully languishing for a cup of water;

Even if rose water is offered
It is unbecoming of me to drink it and live
Therefore oh! My mother of Tamil,
To save the honour, bear with me
Let me fall down die on your gentle lap.

Thus--
The Chera king like a brave lion has left his name behind
With a poem septua for us to read;
As it is said the offspring left behind by the parents
Will reveal how far they were effective once;

See how Ceraman Irumporai wrote a poem
Using his sword as the pen
Is given to you! Peruse it please
You would surely be moved with feeling soon.

A Maid who stood by

Is not the sprout a tender leaf!
Is not a path a way for passers by!
Similarly, is it not customary to describe
The hero and the heroine as the lover and the lady-love?
Their bosom friend and a close maid are those
Who on the budding of the gentle but stealthy romance
Go as couriers in between and see to it, blossoming;
So the story goes in Tamil literature
To the delight of even the grey-haired.
The good old Tamil anthology *Ainkurunuru*
Contains amorous anecdotes numberless
And discloses them as found in the five regions;

Where the two lovers become one
Relating to the Marutam region and contiguous
Sang the poems, Orampokiyar!

Of the undying romance of female koels
Ancient poet Kapilar speaks lovely;

Peyanar, the famous poet brings in with pride
The gaiety and ecstasy, undergone
In the land of cow-herds, by soul-stirring lovers.

Ammuvanar, the poet arrays in beauty
What love prevails among the endearing couples
In the wavy land of coastal region.

Otalantaiyar the poet attempts to bring in
The pangs of separation endured by
The *birds of lovers* in sandy region.

Having perceived so keenly and sung in Tamil
Of the rational beings inhabiting the regions five,
Of irrational reptiles, fowls, finches and livestock
Forests, falls, beautiful groves
Rows of mountain ranges
Vast stretches of golden beaches with the lullaby of waves
The way of life of all the living creatures
All they saw and sang, and to the hearts content
Poems admirable in number,

Delectable fountains of the life romantic
And for a closer view, a specimen we plunge in.

In the Neital Region

On the sandy beach of the roaring ocean
An artistic damsel in golden colour
Inclined westward on the sandy dune
Looking at the blazing horizon of the setting sun.

To restore her with happiness
And cure her of her seasonal sickness
Stepped he from the bushes of green colour Punnai!

Jumped she agog and fell on his shoulders
Begging for a remedy she needed.
"Mutual the malady that we undergo
Sprouted in the morn, grown through all the day and
Blossomed in the evening, and therefore,
Let us cure ourselves of the disease"
Said he, by embracing her warmly,
They fell down, rolled, rose up, fell down and enjoyed!
On the cushion of the vast and wide yellow sand.

"Why the trickle of tears from your eyes?
It is because of the blowing sand?"
Under this pretext when he advanced to assist her,
Prevented she and pat came her comment:
"Want to blow out the sand off my eyes;
But did not pay heed to what I say long
Tears hence are streaming down from my eyes"

"We must give up the illicit meeting,
A life of *chaste* should be begun
Forthwith our marriage to the happiness of all
Should be performed by both of us"
Oh! My petals of flower brimming with honey
My darling doe, isn't your desire", asked he!
Bowed she gesturing 'yes'
With her cheeks becoming crimson in colour;
lines she drew criscrossing ecstatically
On the ground with the two of her feet!

With lustful desire patted he on her comely back
Plump and beautiful as that of the reverse of veena
"Need not be disconsolate, dear,
Let me affirm with orbiting moon as a witness!
Sooner will I get hold of your hand in marriage
Give up your sorrow; interim is a few days;
Let us be in pleasant happiness and conjoin together
Without peeping into the agony of the world mundane
The life homely is like walking on a rope
Straight with a jack-fruit on the head!
Is it good to boil and bubble as rice on the oven?
Or is it good to float like a boat on the gentle waters?
Therefore, My Dear, eye of the eye, art of my mind,
Let us linger awhile to become the partners right
Until then, attempt we to gauge the depth
And plunge into the ocean of love in full swing.

On her part;
Thrilled by the warm and gentle touch of her
endearing lover
Enduring the heat of his flesh and blood and sinews
She on his feet surrendered her frame entire
Saying "Dear, the handsomest lover! Let it be as you wish".
Gently caressing her profuse locks of curling hair
Said he "Oh my blessing! the fruit of the fruit,
the milky sweet!
Invites there the dark edifice yonder
Come along with me my heart!
To have our bliss rapturous.
For a while, a semblence of confusion, but
the moment next
She swiftly inclined herself on his shoulder shapely!

Before gaining entry into the edifice
Where even the ray of the stars cannot penetrate
Came suddenly a sound commanding them to stop
Alas! An untimely intervention for both of them;
As a hen that protect its chick
From being snatched away by the vulture
Her endearing maid arrived there;
Stood in front, directing him not to touch her!

Sans words silently spoke his eyes
'Why do you prevent the bee from squeezing the honey
The sin you commit is unbearable'

I do not find anything amiss in your love genuine;
Oh! The broad shouldered even to carry the hillocks
And to confront and overcome even the atrocious foe!
Let me offer you both my hearty felicitations.

But is there not a tradition for Tamils?
Should you not remind yourself of it?
Without a wedded life and a domestic bliss
The lovesong should not be sung either here or on the coast
And to have your jubilee covertly herewith
Parental acceptance would not be forthcoming
Are you not the chieftain of this hamlet
Please listen! What I say with a burning mind!

Here in the harbour at Tondi----

Shedding the sweat and staking their life,
The fishermen go on seas and catch fat fish
Did you not see a frail stork with no wings to fly
Waiting to snatch the fish robust?

Similarly---

If you lingered long to marry
This damsel of a graceful heroine,
Matured elders of this society
Come forward to arrange with her the marriage!
If you desire your wishes to remain unfulfilled,
You can postpone your wedding!

"Otherwise today itself ye
Fix a day for the marriage proper"
He heard shockingly this from the maid
Said he, No bar to wear my immaculate pearl:
Hail with a maid, hail you! for ever!
No question of waiiting for the time and tide;
I would'nt allow this soul of my breath to be sacrificed
To an old stork avaricious.
Let there be wedding and let it be tomorrow!

Commending the talent of the eloquent maid
Who spoke indictively against the erratic hero
And drove home to truth and power
A shorter poem Ammuvanar has offered to read.

The Agony of a Loving Mother

A woman graceful, walking as leisurely in undulation
As an ambling chariot adorned, on a floor of grass
That bears the egg of dew drops;
Talented she was, to breathe sweet Tamil,
Sister by kinship to Ponmudi, the poet and Kakkaippatini
Luminous poetess Avvai she was!
Sang gloriously in Tamil
Of great patrons such as Colan Perunarkkilli
Valuti of Kanapper, Venkovan of Chera land
Patron the great Velpari and Atiyaman the Chieftain.

Those were the days of Tamil land with patrons
Who, in showering gifts found their palms reddened;
It is the fortress of great heroes who walk straight
Into the battlefield in martial array with swords
unsheathed
Leaving behind their parrot-like beloved and
Unmindful of the breezy evening
If only a courier comes with a meassage of war.

Avvai the poetess blossomed later, poems innumerable
As much as a heap of flowers in a green orchid
Among Tamils who classified their lands into five,

She sang of love sans detriment to mother-land's chastity?
Also of bravery martial, of those who went to
the war front.
Stating that the hero who courted death in the front
Be as fragrant in glory as the logs of sandal---
She felt proud of mothers, who were infinitely pleased
Dew drops vanish if i trample the grass with my
tender feet;
The heads of the foes will fall down in the front
As much as the grains of paddy in a threshing floor.

Poetess Avvai walks ruminatingly of thoughts like these;
A woman of fragrant Tamil, embodiment of genius!
Before this graceful maternal figure who walks on crutches
Another woman comes with her fragile steps;

"Oh! Ye, who carry the hair as white as Thumbai flower!
Your pair of legs have become so weak
As cold and tender as the inner stalk of plaintain trees;
In such an old age as it is, why did you come?
Gone are the days when your eye brows were likened
To the bows of the warriors! But presently
With a back bent as bow;
Your eyes compared then to spears
But with eyes bedimmed, sought you the stick for walking!
Aware of the exhaustion of the pearls in Tamil land
you have dealt with your sparkling teeth as merchandise;
Wherefore are you and why restless?
What's the reason behind your misery?" so asked
the old lady Avvai.
And made fun of the woman who came in front.

Countered the motherly woman in her reply:
'Knowing well that the growing youthhood cannot
be barricaded
I couldn't understand why Avvai, you make fun of;"
She added further
"I do feel the reinvigoration of Tamil as a medicine
Injected into my mind, very much hurt within;
I did not forget O, the lady old, the bull-like warrior
Who took leave of me movingly on his adieu.
The young body was as gentle as the tender leaf of
a mango
That has sprung out of the mother earth!
Mettled he as unbending even on a gift of gold;
A cub of tiger will roll about on his lap
Such an endearing son, marched off to the combat field
to protect the welfare of the soil he belongs to"

Even before the old one eased,
Impatient Avvai interrupted:
Mothers speaking gloriously of the son gone to war
Remaining unmoved is the tradition of Tamils.
Dear Mother, surprised as I am to see you
Who seem to be new to the customs of Maravars"

"Listen to me until the end,
Nothing to be blamed on my part.
I do not deny the swollen eyes are due to weeping;
Not a lie that I cry miserably all through the day
The reason you will know as I do not conceal it"
"Be it known" said the great Avvai
The woman narrated accordingly.

"Great leader he was, the reputed king
With royal canopies and great chariots and
Credited as majestic to the learned and others;
The soldiers innumerable enlisted in his army
Never reluctant to march behind the king
As much as an array of fighting rams;
Thousands like that though there were,
The king alone had a love great for my own son;
At times of no war in the encampment
Gathered would be a great number of warriors
To relish a special brew *theral,*
On that occasion, the king would call my son nearer
And happily offering more of the brew.

Listen to me now of my agony!
In a combat field where the hungry jackals
Would float on the blood surface in a buoy of bones
A cluster of birds would roll about the heads severed
If only the head of my son proves to be as one of those
A pride would he be to the king and to the brew
he offered!
Received he warmly the love of the king
The tasty brew too in a bowl
But died he a death glorious?
Such a one I visualize and my tears trickled!
Is it not a rarity, thought I, My mother
Is it wrong, let me know please!"
Great old Avvai wondered so much
That such a lady as she is!
But I am not, lamented Avvai.

A Swine Endeared by the Maid

The damsel with a glittering smile covering
Her breast against the onslaught of Southern breeze,
Hurriedly asked her maid what the mother had said!

Mischievous maid, she with her sparkling eyes, said:
"Even the hillock I am skilled to make an umbrella of,
Even the stone is worn by the constant
crawling of ants
Similarly did I complete my job with your mother ,
said she;

"How far my mother did accept it?"
"Sit down awhile and tell me, oh, my maid,
the sweet message"
Begged the lady-love.

Replied the maid: "Myriads thanks must you utter;
No reward ever in the world for the service rendered
Faultless he, your lover immaculate
And when I compared him saying
That his actions are as swift as a swine
So sweet it was, as I said to her
'No bar for my daughter to marry the youngman'
So said your mother and patted me on the back
And gave me a potful of sweets
And thrust them into my mouth to relish".

"Unbelievable the utterence Oh!"
"Did you play with me, My maid dear!
Even after seeing my bangles loosen
Did you play with me, my maid dear!
Instead of converting my mother's dry mind
Into a cultivable wet land favourable
You have shattered my dreams with unseemly comparison
Of my beloved lover to a beastly swine
A lover who hugged me with a hope to, like *anrils*
And thus dismantled my happy dreams?

Is it becoming of you in any way?
Your mouth must be slit for having
Spoiled the matter in comparing the majestic hero,
Of the *Kurinci* soil capable of mauling the foes
On hearing the sound of the martial drum,
To a swine that uproot the vegetation in the wild-
Go away and away for ever!"

The confounded maid answered fearfully,
"Be not agitated; give up your nervousness;
No use in clamouring at the word swine;
Listen to the story fully and you will certainly
adore me at the end;
No folly in the swine that I referred to
I am like the one who ploughed, looked after
The crop and harvested it too and hence
Calling me a quarrelsome, is totally unbecoming;
I am the one who relishes the completeness of the growth
Of the crop of love having grown nurtured and
protected too!

Therefore-

Consider the merits of your maid
By seriously pondering about
The story of the swine that I narrated to your mother!
The maid began further on

"Don't consider this a story but what I saw with my eyes
On hunting among the hillocks and forests
When our hunters' rushing with their hounds preceding

A group of swine ran of, scattered
The mother swine with her cubs around
Struggled a lot and ran topsy-turvy
In a bid to escape with the fold entire!
Unable to brook the ordeals of the cubs and the she-swine

The male swine boldly confronted the hunters.
He growled, roared and jumped so menacingly
That the hunters were hesitant for a while;
On this advantage, the she-swine with her
drooping udders

Scattered among thick bushes nearby with all the cubs
The male species stood steadily
To fatally attack if any hunter came in front of it.
The furious waiting of the boar, mysterious,
Thrilled a hunter when he observed it.

Stunned as he was, the hunter felt within
Wondering and admiring,
The swine that shows as much boldness as the
kurinci Hero
Who has heaped a glorious fame as a lion roaring

even at the ebbing tide of the war;
Let such a swine live for ever in the wild!
Thus unwilling to spear it off
The hunter allowed it to go.
It is he who has compared the undaunted fury of
the swine
To that of the boldness of our hero and his firmness;

It is this that I repeated and queried
To whom this mounting strength would come-
Gladly your mother hugged me nicely
Happily said Genial you are
To choose a suitable mate for my daughter,
Hail with me she said and at the same time
Appeared there the one who enticed you;
The flowers in the wreath that he has on his shoulder
Are about to fall off and in that position
Comes he to relax and relish the honey of your sweet lips;
Young bride as you are, ward off his tiredness!
Let me know now if you are grateful or not?
Hope you will not avenge me for the story of the swine!
The way is this for him to come now;
Let there be no winking of your eye lids till dawn;
Keep yourself busy and both of you have a nice meeting!
Let me be off in the meanwhile,"
Ran away the maid even before she is thanked.

Love and Gratitude to the Crow

The maiden, sweet and ripe as jack-fruit
Was miserable with tears trickling
For the one who has gone to the war front
And yet to come back to be sportive with her shoulders.

Her maid made an attempt futile
To relieve her of misery and to console!
We all know that here in our country
A customary belief that guests would come

If a crow caws in the front yard;
Luckily a crow caws that day!
"Set aside your worry as the sound of the bird
Indicates that the young man would rush in
To taste your coral red lips.
So said the maiden and the lady's misery waned!
The lover who returned, hugged her warmly
Thus they enjoyed mutually the sugary taste!

"Hail to the maid! You were helping
To keep company with my lady-love
On all these days of my separation, hail to you!"
The maid of a long eye-brow spoke to him thus:

"It is the crow that has warmly consoled
The lady-love who was wearied with the pangs
of separation.
Hence Ye should mix the rice drawn from Tondi with
The sweet ghee of the fertile country of Nalli, the patron

And present it to the benign bird in vessel seven
Which even then would be nothing for the bird"
She spoke thus, at length--
The meaning behind this is that even if the ghee rice

Is given in bowls seven
It is in no way comparable to the help extended
By the crow, so says a poem in Kuruntokai.

Flowers seen by the Hero

If a goldsmith celebrates flowers wild
His comment would be of such a general nature-
Golden-hued are they, he would say.
He may even say that the array of Mullai buds
Is like a string of pearls! But red hibiscus
He would compare to ear-rings studded with emerald!
He may also add that motley coloured flowers
Increase the grandeur of beauty as a ruby.

If a peasant were to celebrate the buds of lily stalks
In a pond cool in front of him
Say he would this, a rarely seen beauty in all
As the tail end of the oxen;
If a painter were to see a park in front,
He would view the park as graceful as a wide canvas
With flowers variegated such as Tumpai, Makilam, and
Nilorpalam;

If a cluster of flowers go to the hands of a poet
Oh my God! He would take one by one and begin
Comparing each to the lovely limbs of a lass
Before resting awhile and go to sleep!
The colour of the flower Tazhai, compare he would
To the sleeky slimness of a lady and lotus the face.
He would speak of her breast to manorancita flower.

Fixed in a bouquet, surrounded on all sides
By Jasmine, Cenpakam, Camanti, etc.,
In comparison, he would show the flower Kantal

To the daintiness and softness of her fingers!
The tiny Makilam is her navel, he would say.
Comparing her he would be to the gentle Aniccham
When she fancies a feigned dislike in the chamber bed.
Her soft foot is as smooth as a cushion.
Her waist he would compare to the slender Atti!

If he were a weaver who work with
The loom of warp and woof, he would celebrate likewise
The soft petals of a flower is as soft as silk,
The grace of the ladies of buxom beauty
Is enhanced by the dazzling zari flowers on the borders
of a sari.
Thus the peasant, gold-smith, painter
The reputed poet, along with the weaver
All these adored in sweet Tamil,
The children of flowers born of nature!

Having overcome the enemies in the front
Here comes successfully a great warrior
With an avid desire to taste in full
The sweet honey that had been waiting at home;
Orders he to hasten the chariot
In a lightning speed that precedes thunder;
The marvellous hero thus rushes back home
With a congenial feeling about the habitat
In the village where lives his beloved
Who remains *alive* afresh in his heart of hearts.
His thoughts flow flutteringly
Of multifarious flowers that blossomed and seen
As if they lay scattered on the way.

"The Iluppai buds that are seen opposite
Fully blossomed on both sides of the track
Appear as if they are the sharp spears capped therein
From being blunted of their sharpness
When remain on the shoulders of the heroes;
Those flowers with crimson leaves appear as red as copper
Having been stirred of the buds by the humming bees,
Having bloomed by the wave of winds,
Scattered they on the floor as the hailstone fallen
As red as coral on the track;
The whole scenario reminds one of
A combat field where on a stream of blood
Pieces of fat seem to be floating on the surface"

Between the depiction of flowers by the peasant
The gold-smith, weaver and painter
Also by the young and budding poet who speaks of nature
And the view point of this hero about the fall of Iluppai
Did you not notice the special difference?
Even when this lover comes with an urge to see his
lady-love,
Flesh and blood that have flown about on the field
Alone appear in his poetic imagination
This is what Kalladanar the poet writes;

Though he covertly glorifies the name of the place,
What he implies is the true mind of the great hero.
Such wonderful revelation of the mind of the hero
Which the poet has brought in beautifully!
How he does it, I do not know
But similar treasure troves of rich imagination
Sangam literature bears in plenty!

Neither Paddy nor Water constitute Life

Once upon a time in the royal court of a great king
The assemblage of great poets commenced its
deliberations!

Fruitful discussions on many a topic arose and concluded
And there the fragrance of classical Tamil emerged.

This time however came a question very strange,
What is essential to a Being and what is to the Body?

The discussion began among the poets peerless
Clash of responses as sharp as spears;

Food and water provide the life line and nurture
human life
They even sustain the life of the dying, some body said.

They are the source of life even to the king who ruled!
A few others thus spoke of the grandeur of both
grain and water.

Mocikiranar the poet who slept once on the royal couch
Meant for the martial drum and was grandiosely honoured

By having been fanned by the king himself,
Stepped in the debate to offer his solution infallible.

"My dear great poets of real love!
Ye inspireth with poems of honeyed sweetness!

In fertile green fields where grow the golden hued paddy
Flows in water, the seeds sprout the crops get wetting:

The sweat of the tiller results in a heap of harvest
To boil ultimately as white rice for eating

And also to keep the oven alive, water is essential
Not am I to deny this well-known fact!

To nurture the body and to keep alive the soul,
Both water and food are no doubt essential!

Let me put a single idea for your serious thinking
Let me have the verdict totally unbiased!

When there is a king to administer the land
Which, if fallen on evil days and succumbs

To evil qualities and base behaviour,
When there is an absolute dearth of water and paddy

When the entire world suffers desparately
When the royal sceptre loses its virtues and orderliness
When there is evil and harm everywhere

Where lies the paddy and where remains the soul?
Everything becomes a universal burial ground!

Therefore,
The glory of the ruling reign is the happiness of
the society
That is the life and soul of all beings;

Even when there are various legions with spears
and arrows
Should not the king be active and alert to administer laws?

Is not the effective and sound administration essential
To shape the motherland as luminous as possible

And also to drive the alien force with effective heroism?
If lethargy and complacency creep in

Where is the paddy and where could water be?
If only a sensible rule remains .

As the source of life to the nation
Closely will follow fertility of the land and water;

Along with plenty and prosperity everywhere!"
Heard thus the effective discourse of the
ancient Mocikiranar

The remaining poets silently accepted
What he said as solemnly true to their humble knowledge;

Neither the grain is the life not the water is--
Such a statement, impressive

As letters that are engraved on stone,
Remain gleamingly in a poem of Purananuru.

A Maiden to speak the Glory of a Place

Near Pondy is located a village, Veerampattinam
The Place of birth of Veliyanar, the poet
Whose son Tittanar, also a poet of reputed Akam poems!
Vèliyanar as one who has begotten a son-poet
Depicted an exotic scene in an illumined poem
in Purananuru
The graceful dignity of a hunter's house-wife!

Having heard that a commander who
Went to the combat field with blessings of the king
Had garlanded himself with the flowers of victory,
Obtained the trophies and returned home,
A minstrel went to secure a personal favour from the
commander
Whose sense of bounty and virtue
Veliyanar speaks in lucid Tamil.

Glorified him as the hero outstanding who
Downed his enemies with two hands blessed
That became reddened due to constant showering
of things
Which he earned from countries alien and gifts obtained;
Hoping that these gifts he would shower forth to minstrels
Veliyanar the genius informed the minstrels in general
And also sang of the damsels, the blossoms of that place.
The depiction of the latter is noted down below.

Because the creepers Munnai and Muṉcuntai
So enmeshed, matted and vastly spread over
That there needn't be a built-in shelter to keep off the sun
There beneath rich foliage of the tree of hanging
jack fruits
In sleeps the hunter with hands loosened from the spear

His spouse with her eyes wide and sparkling as roving fish
Desirous of lying down along with him
Gently tiptoed out of the house
And looked at keenly the vine creeper in front.

Planned has she, to begin with, to sit near her husband
As softly as that of a falling flower and gladly
To visually devour his majestic frame
Then to apply belatedly her pair of lotuses
On his solid shoulders and if hurriedly
Shower a kiss on the bristling moustaches
Might he be waking up disturbed
Would it be healthy to disturb his deep sleep
And that too when he rests after his elephant hunting?
Let him sleep in full length and later on,
Can have the conjugal bliss until dawn
Thus thought the peacock-damsel
Who stood afar, caressing her profuse tresses black;

Her breasts covered with colourful fabric as they were
Heaved and lowered in heat and warmth
Bothered her very much and took her life off
Indicating her passion voluptuous
If boldly break off the passion and fall on him desperate
Folly will be hers for having stirred him from sleep.

Therefore, she

Went very near him and lay down silently,
Hoping to gently caress his soft cheeks
When relieved of the tiredness he wakes up and rolls on
And to offer him a grippy kiss
She with her heavy steps so gently on the dry leaves
Moved on towards the hunter who slept-
Neared him with her beautiful navel
Elegantly exposed above the delicate waist.

Then,

Under the cool shades of jack-fruits ripe
Behind the lush green creepers rich
Very near the hunter who was lying down,
A doe in the happy embrace of the stag
Enjoying the pangs of pleasure sans any objection;
In such a shadow enjoy the deer in their peak of pleasure
Forgetful of everything as if in solemn meditation
The house-wife saw this nature's romantic spectacle
Devoured it without closing her eyelids!

Immediately,

Certain lingering fear arose within her mind
Hesitant she was to move even one step ahead
Among the dry leaves of the jack tree and even
Among the withered flowers of various creepers
Even if the mildest sound of the impress of the foot
Awake the sleeping hunter young
Who sleeps soundly forgetting the whole world
Observing his stirring off from the earth

The mutual pleasing and delectable enjoyment
Of both the deers would be out
As the boiling pot of rice turned upside down
The deer would be stirred to run away regretfully-
Thus she thought for a while
May be when the hunter arose
In case he speared the deer to death hurriedly
The two lives that plunged into their love romance
Be blown out for ever amidst their love active!

Therefore, worried as she was,
And to prevent these two possible harms,
'Let me conceal myself aside," she said,
And stood there she, thus like an immovable statue;
She was as gentle as the humming breeze
That too sang softly the glory of this sweet damsel!

Will there be anybody to deny gifts to the minstrels
In a place where the chaste women who live
And pour forth the grace of love
Highly respecting the feelings of the animal kind?
The poet Veliyanar thus has revealed how rural culture
Is confirmed by this lady, justifying a proverb
That one grain of rice is enough as a sample for the
whole rice
Thus in this way the poet amply directed the minstrels
To go to the heroic chieftain for gifts and trophies.

A Beauty Married to A Local Chieftain

A prattling parrot, a domestic doll
A wafting breeze, a rising star, she was;

A hero from Marutam wedded that beauty and soon
They both in the night forgot the world;

Lascivious arts they learnt and learnt daily
On their cosy bed of silk cotton!

Learned at the cot was a morsel of clay
To be learnt was as big as the ocean

This he said to his silken wife
And gave her pleasure perennial to the core

From out of this bond of mutual love,
A babe was born as a tender fruit!

As the bed earned its rest, he suffered alone!
As an axe that chops off the wood

A burning passion cuts off his mind!
His prudent house-wife of right conduct

Grew her son as a cheetah young--
The swelling milk from the heavy breast

Fed him through the nipple black;
Kissing it gently anytime he wished

The husband has now felt its loss;
Presently finding the inflamming lust

With deep passion to quench this thirst
Fell he down, on the bed of a harlot;

Handling him full she offered her love
Their days were spent in orgy lustful

Unmindful of whether it is morn, eve, day or night.
His wife languished in a corner.

Melteth she as butter in a desert hot!
Knowing her condition acute

Got he into a chariot and rushed out hurriedly!
Prepared a minstrel known

And requested him to mitigate the fury of his consort!
The minstrel went and saw her at home

Spoke soothingly of all he could
but the house-wife full of fury undying

Revealed everything without mincing words;
All details she disclosed;

Thus neglected her unbecoming husband.
A Poet named Palkannanar

Has a poem in the Sangam canon
Which in a slightly changed form

From that of what was said by the pretty house-wife
Attempted I, with my imagination added

With no detriment to the material source!
The chieftain left the gloomy courtesan,

Anxious to see his luminous wife.
The mission through a minstrel may be of no avail

With this, he thought deeply;
At length he disguised himself as a minstrel

Stood before the wife faithfully
"Who you are? What do you want?" was

The tacit question that the lady put by a mere look!
'Lady of the lamp! Casket of beauty

Your husband has deputed me;
Your consort who went with the courtesan would come back soon

Be patient as the mother Earth
Extend a welcome with your bangled arms

Such a note in song, he recited,
With an accompanying stringed instrument
Be patient on his elopement with the courtesan;

He comes back a new man soon
If only you say that you forgave him,

Would he devour you as sweet honey!

Thus tuned he the music

The tricky drama enacted as if by a minstrel
Was by none other than her husband, she noted;

Making sure that he was not the musical-bard
What fear has she to argue against her counter-part male?

"Oh minstrel who play the yal now
Have a look at my condition deranged!

The melting ghee in the oven black
And also the soot that riseth therein

Applying the dye-black on the eyelids of my sweet babe
Resulted in the soiling and dirtiness of my cloth all over;

Even after suckling the children of the breasty milk
That flow in abundance in my breasts both

Spilt over the body and shoulder, and the
Resultlant stench may be loathsome to your friend,

Leaving me behind, hence,

What you have to do is to hasten him back
To the streets of those courtesans

Who are adept in being showy to entice him
Allowing their garments loose to fly about flauntingly

Also by dancing and singing in revelry;
Do these promptly for the gold he offers

Take it as a wage from the chieftain!"
When she warmed herself up with her speech furious

The husband guilty of many things trembled for a while
Fell on her shoulders, stating surely

'That my life will not withstand hereafter!.!
The disguise that he wore disappered soon!

Against one who left for the provisional pleasure
And returneth now in the disguise of the minstrel

With no alternative to wreak vengeance further on him
She too gladly and warmly hugged him;

Forgetfully ignoring the pointed stare of their child nearby
They became one and blew the tiny lamp nearby.

The Ravings of a harlot

In the branches of mango trees that have grown
On the fringes of bounded fields,

Succulent mango fruits, cloyless in taste
Grown in bunches as the breasts of plump woman

Fall into the nearby pond
where frolicks a cluster of fish;

So is the fertility and plenty of the country
It is but natural that the fish swallows

The mango fruit that falls of its own accord!

Similarly,

A local chieftain, Vanan,
Having been affected within by lust,

Came in movingly before me, begging for mercy!
If a mango falls into the mouth of the fish

Will the fish leave it off vainly?
Young man he is, and fell he on my lap

So is the story, my maid dear!
so what next?

Did I invite him claiming a kinship?
Did I welcome him with a lot of gifts?

Or furtively catch hold of him?
Did I entangle him with my glamour?

Or made him follow me, by my bewitching smile?
Ask these queries of the wife of him

Who abuses me a lot
Who has begged me pleadingly

To join in a chorus song?
The young man who came to me of his own accord

Said to me with a worried mind,
"The lady who shares my cot

Became a full-time sentry to the cradle of her child!
Suffered and starved out of hunger for long

Hence to enjoy you did I come boldly today!
Hug me and do away with my lustful fever

Expose yourself to me and enable me to enjoy", said he!
Concurred with him I and then he

Showered me with a bag of gold!
Though a courtesan, love you I dearly, said I

Genuine is my love; quench your thirst first;
As a child frantically upturned the rice

Forgetting to eat it calmly from the plate,
Jumped he on me with unusual haste and passion;

Trembled I, out of nervousness, though an adept in the art
But stood equal to him in the amorous contest!

Days went by with sweet happiness mutual
As jack-fruit, honeyed plaintain and sweet cereal!

Suddenly one day

Cloyed or satiated or knowing his wife's concern for him
He mounted his chariot and rushed back home.

Alas! Never returned to me at all!
Not only he gave me money enough but also was he

A bright light to dispel the gloominess of mine
Of being branded a common girl by the society!

Look at the time that is rolling by!
Tongues wag as the swirling sword

All the admirations people made
Are only when they share the cushioned bed!

He would promise to come the next day, the day after
And go on fixing several dates disappearing on a Saturday

But he would not come over again
No use my dear, blaming him with feelings of emotion

The fact remains that the hard-hearted lady, his wife
Who has been abusing and cursing me,

Drumming up the whole village, calling together all,
Said to have bound him with her trickling tears!

If one stands before a mirror and
Starts gesturing waywardly

The shadowy image on the mirror
Will also reflect the real person!

Similarly

She is the figure that moves about before the mirror!
He is like a toy reflecting all her moves!

What is the use waiting for him?
I am like jasmine blossomed in full

Will there not be one more bee
To suck the honey, day in and day out?

Dreaming all along that I should become a housewife
He destined me to be a common girl

So is the pangs of agony revealed by
A loving courtesan to her dear maid

All these ravings a poet Alankudi Vankanar
Narrated in a Sangam poem

The summing of which is given here.

Friendly Poet - Part I

The people of Pandya country
Who gained victories in combat fields

With fluttering banners with the emblem of a fish,
Had a grievance against Pandyan *Arivutai Nampi.*

A warrior with a moustache but of a sceptre bent;
His haitual way of increasing more revenue

Was by levying taxes in lieu of developing resources;
The need therefore was to straighten the royal sceptre!

Many have gone on this mission with a message
To see that the king accepts a reform

But they all returned having vainly waited!
Concerts of music, stages for dances

These alone reigned the royal court;
Within the doors on the bed flowery

Squabbling, sulking and feigned anger
The king fancying thus with the royal consort!

Four or five of the officials of the court
Sat along under the pretext of ruling the country

Spoiled the Nampi, on and off inducing him waywardly!
The courtiers, to whatever the king said, became yes-men

Nodding the head and made him gullible!
Courtiers around led him to mundane pleasure

Got him caught in the quagmire of carousal!
Those like birds that feed on the wet pond

Along with kith and kin, mere opportunists
Showed their talent in acts of ungratefulness

All multiplied their offences, anti-national!
A few virtuous feared that the fertile Pandya land

Would only become a desert because of selfish elements!
Felt a necessity therefore oneday they all

Requested a poet to see that the darkness
Is dispelled and light emerged.

A poet he was, Antai his proper name,
Born in Picir, a hamlet of Pandya Nadu.

This poet Picirantaiyar, a symbol of deep friendship
In the reputed annals of Tamil history.

Sans meeting the great king Kopperuncholan
He styled himself as his bosom friend!

Hoping boldly that he could remove the
Miserable and indigent conditions of his countrymen!

He went ahead to meet the great king Arivutai Nampi
who had heard about the arrival of that great poet;

Evil would it be to infuriate the poet, he thought
Also because of a polite and courteous quality

He suitably welcomed the great poet and bowed his head
As a sign of respect; "Gladdened even though,

Said the poet "For all your services to Tamil,
Is it fair to convert the royal sceptre into a tyrannical rod?

Those near you in the name of kinship and closeness
Spoil you and burn the people, as flames and torches!

They let the king carouse in jollity
Using the governance for their own ends.

Dear king, therefore your duty is to identify them;
Moreover, be prepared to prevent those evil forces

Thereby to safeguard the name of our country!
For offering the advice did I come; Would you accept?"

"Some there are keen on getting the prizes covetous
With their flattery undue concealing their evil

As the boatmen hoist sails windward,
But to set right your rule with an argument" said he

"Great poet, capable of melting the stones and boulders!
Those who were with me, all alone

Without reforming me of their knowledge and wisdom
Simply became yes-man and deprived me of their merits:

Talented savant you are! With wisdom enough
Come you to safeguard the Tamil country of Pandya.

What is the use of calling me merely an Arivutai Nampi,
Unless I earn, collect and divide it for the country?

Forgetting these without condemning the wrongs
I merely became a gullible unchecked!

Please speak to me what should I do?
Whatever you advise I will accept without demur"

"Look here, great king! Even if the land is
lesser than a thirty cents of land
Collection of produce, when the harvest of paddy is over

If given by handful and mouthful, even to the elephant
Would last for days together if carefully done.

If not,

Given a right to the elephant with a trunk long
to go of its own accord and graze in the land,

The grains of the field will not only be eaten
But the field entire get trampled upon by the pachyderm;

If this example is becoming for an elephant
Will it not be more so to one who rule the land?

With puppet- ministers and henchmen around,
When you order to take the fish out of water
Saying that it would be alive on the earth,
They wouldn't say 'nay' but 'yes' meekly.
If the sorry state of affairs prolong with no end
This famed nation will sink with a loss of glory!

If your aim is to tyrannically squeeze tax and revenue
The country will perish as a field is spoiled by
the elephant?

"Unlike those who were keen on getting rewards,
Leading me on for further revelry by glorifying

You have remedied me and wrought a change in my mind!
Reformed I am from this day, since the holy feet of yours

Stepped into my palace",
Thus the king spoke, and thus the poet won!

Friendly Poet - Part II

Because it was Tamil that was lingua franca
And the one who counselled is the great Picirantaiyar,

Not only the king made good his promise
That his reign would totally be infallible

But also kept his promise from being broken,
And saw to it that his reputation flourished.

The poet, a luminary among chaste Tamils,
Proved himself a beacon light for Arivutai Nampi,

Held in great affection, far beyond words,
Kopperuncholan, the great king of Chola region;

Poetic talent, patronising the learned
Unlimited bounty globally well-known

Safe-guarding the nation as the eyes are by the lids
Warmthness in mind far above that of the full moon-

These qualities that are inborn with Kopperuncholan
Nicely entangled the kind hearted poet with the noble king!

In his birth place called Picir, one day
The learned poet was found relaxing amidst a
cluster of trees,

Ruminating many things in mind!
When he sat reclined and gazed skyward

There was a he-swan flying with wings out-stretched!
To fulfil his desire of composing a poem,

About the royal Chola his bosom friend,
With the he-swan as centre of that poem,

Wrote he imaginatively in sweet poetic Tamil
Addressing the bird "he-swan! Oh he-swan!"

He disclosed his mind, much perturbed,
In not having chanced to see the great Kopperuncholan!

Worried he was, but controlling it somehow,
Started commenting admiringly of that great king.

Unless stringed, pearls will never become a necklace;
But even without the link of personally seeing, both

The poet and the king wore a wreath of friendship
Where a linking thread is their love for Tamil and their passion.

Theme of the song was the bounty of Chola and his love
"Dear he-swan, Oh, my he-swan!

From one end of Cape Comorin
With the beak picking up an Ayirai fish,

Flying aloft at a lofty height
Travelling north to the snow clad mounts;

Let your journey prosper!
En route to north, my endearing swan,

Capital of conquering Chola lies
'Koliyur alias Uraiyur township

The capital of Kopperuncholan, the great!
Rules he with a policy that agrarian wealth is unalloyed!

Supreme was his bounty with which
What his right hand offers his left doesn't know!

If you fly with your she-swan, you will see
The light of love in the vision of the king!

If anybody obstructs both of you on the way
Do not fly back soon with your lively mate!

Shout your claims towards the sentries of Uraiyur
As to fall within the ear-shot of Chola, the demi-god!

If you utter you are akin to and attached with
The habitants of Picir, the place of Antaiyar

The king himself would rush up to welcome you
And offer jewels and wealth to your she-bird

The reason being that he holds a love great to me!
Even the sweet honey will one day *cloy the taste*

But not our friendship of lasting value.

Friendly Poet - Part III

Having listened to the request of Antaiyar,
Whether the he-swan journeyed to the chola king, or not,

But with the content of having glorified a close friend,
The poet recited his composition to his affectionate wife!

"Images of a swan fancied by you is very nice as such"
Commented his wife when she was serving food

Not only to him but also to his grand children!
"Look here the two rows of Mullai flower" Said he.

Widening the bow-like curved eye-lid, she did
ask "Where?"
"Your gentle laugh with the raw white rice,

I said figuratively as florid Mullai"
"Beware of your grand children very near" said she.

"To the lovely children born of our son, said the poet,
Our language is ununderstandable besides

Your grown up son is afield with his wife
Taking their own time and let there be no fear"

"But he will be here at any time and no more dallying"
The poet thence filled his mouth with the rice prepared

Frantic in action clogged his throat and a choke he
suffered
Pat jumped the lady and gently struck her husband on
the head

Also when nicely massaged his chest, he embraced her
but she eluded
Thus the elderly lovers jingled with laughter.

The grand children too clapped their soft hands
With their prattling words as sweet as the sugarcane
bottom

To a scene of such spontaneous outflow of happiness
and gaiety
Came there news, thunderbolt alike blocking everything!

Against Kopperuncholan, the lord of Uraiyur,
His own dear sons started revolting

Hence the Chola lord himself a poet in sweet Tamil
Depressed in acute misery because of his children;

No other go against and hence, the gentle minded
Unsheathed his sword and went ahead to the combat field;

Such odd fighting among father and sons was so strange
Which the poet heard to his shock and agony,

Felt aggrieved at the loss of his happiness and contentment
And proceeded to the Chola country!

Native Tamils, self-respected and bold
If occasion demands, willingly sacrifice themselves!

Instead of being subdued by enemies,
With a fame spreading wide even across the seas

They sell the merchandise such as pearl, pepper,
and spices!
Literary savants and poets reputed

Glorify nature and beautify their edifice erected!
Glory of the race they would inscribe on history

Will also rule the nation with a love spiritual
These are the Tamils, on the apex of all

Arose in the Prehistoric age, earlier than stone and mud!
This is the glory altogether but the pity is

Entangled in the internecine warfare
With a lot of divisiveness that slowly kills;

It is this Tamil clan that falls entrapped!
So with this thinking, the poet Picirantaiyar

Sought to know the cause of the fight on his way!
Heard already of the assemblage of elders

In the centre of the village arranged by Kopperuncholan
Straight he went, agitated indescribably

To find out whether the belching fire has scorched off!
Many a poet Putanar, Nattanar besides Eyirriyar

Came in front with gladness and pride welcoming
Picirantaiyar with folded hands to join with them!

The poet anxiously enquired what has happened to
The fight between lion and the cubs

Very much agitated and agonised as I am;
Nothing harmful has happened luckily

The problem arose but here is the great man who has
Appeared like a lightning and prevented it timely!

Should the hen be furious if kicked off by the chicks!
By asking so in customary sweet Tamil

It is this poet Eyirriyanar who worked for the truce,
said that
This introduction was done by Pottiyar

Over which he jumped agog with joy.
They among the talented poets gathered

Exchanged ideas poetically precious
One in the group asked Pïcirantaiyar in person

Even though you have passed sixty in age
How is it that not even a ray of grey

In the beard and head remains thick black?"
"Look here for the reason I enumerate

My spouse is a lamp of the house
The son who increases the produce of the field

Is unbending in principles I lauded!
He fathered only two children limited

Both the babes are children prodigy!
Servants I have are of love and warmth

Doing service as I wish they to do!
My countrymen have the pride of having

A rule virtuous with a vow that not even a small
Folly as thin as of a cob web to fall on the royal sceptre!

Picir, a nice village where I was born
Remains full with great men and wise men!

With happiness altogether of all these to the villages
My hair is free of greyness, and my face, of wrinkles!

Oh! the learned, in my life devoid of concern
This is the happy result" said the poet genius!

Soon came a news shocking not apt for that occasion
But as if to break the heart and mind of the poet!

The lord Chola, who reigned like the rising sun
Desperate because of the enmity of his own children

Went northward to give up his life
So was the news, unhappy brought in, by a courier

In a palm leaf as sharp as a knife!
"Forthwith I shall go home to come again

We who lived as a symbol of friendship will never be
parted in that world of mortality!

Inform the Chola who has gone northward that
Even Picirantai would happily join with him"

So said the poet from whose eyes tears trickled
As if dew drops fall from the blades of grass

The great poet thus mourningly started off to PandyaNatu
To bid a farewell to his wife, son and grand children too.

Friendly Poet - IV

Those who compose an epilogue of their life
Breathe their last through northward facing

Fasting northwards, an event of the past was
Customary among Tamils, as per literary history!

A Chola king ruled for long, was ill at ease
Pondering over wars waged by his own sons!

Inclined he was to die by fasting northwards
Looked at it as the only resort to ward off his agony;

Having heard the decision of the king, a few poets
Accompanied him and sat alike spurning their life!

The king without deeming his life to be sweet,
Began to sink in strength gradually and hence

Some addressed the king Kopperuncholan
"The dear king!. The elderly Tamil poet Picirantaiyar

As you said was of deep intimacy towards you
Even though he did not see you in person at all,

What is the reason for his not coming still
Even at the fag end of your earthly days?

Sworn he had to die along with and very near to you;
Was there an iota of truth in his statement?"

Some spoke derisively like this
The king was furious on those who raised a doubt

On the nobility of his friend even on the dying occasion.
"When one reigns majestically with a sceptre in hand

"There is millennia of golden rays of light on his face
let his rule be as green as grass and grow like a
banyan tree"

Similar celebration and felicitation they would offer
As if it was cloyless sugar, honey and milk;

If a stormy course heavy over takes him
The flatterers would frontally stab him and vanish;

Deeming them evil, low-bred and murky minded men
Trample under foot their seasonal friendship!

Even the potter's ware would be of use if broken
But evil will be the net result of the

Feigned friendship of the fox-like elements, I assure!
If the cause of the mind is like a selfish mine

Some friendship will be like water that flows down
the ditch
But the intimacy of Antaiyar, immaculate gold in quality

In his place Picir, age old village of Pandyanadu
Even if does not surface in the days of prosperity

Certainly be present to give a helping hand in penury"
So was the long reply of the king to those elders!

And soon a day after, he became a tomb-stone!
Though came belatedly there the poet Picirantai

Who sat dying near his friend and saw him
The poet Kannakanar and wove a garland of tears

Also a wreath of poems and adorned the tomb-stones!
"Even if gold, pearl, coral and gem

Grow in different climes and lands
When woven together as a glitterring ornament

They reveal a nearness and likable blending;
The great king Chola of Uraiyur origin

And the great poet Picirantiyar in the soil of Pandiya
Was born as pearl and gold individually at a distance

As gems in a garland they began to remain side by side
Symbolising a luminary tomb-stone of undying friendship

The great will always stand beside the great
Those who werent will go dry and wear off in the annals

The poem remarkable inscribed by Kannakanar in
Purananuru
Not only to Chola king and Picirantai the poet

But to all those who hold a gentle and nice friendship
Is a blessing, cloyless and delectable sweet".

Glowing Anvil and a Droplet of Water

To Kalaiyarkoil where remain statues to
Marutu the Elder and the younger, the doughty warriors
Who had ruled the region of Sivakankai
Blossomed as flowers, red identical to the soil,
There has been a historical name Kanapper which
even today,
A land of heroes known for dignified warfare;
A chieftain Venkai Marpan built a rampart glorious
Challenging who could subdue it there!

Piercing an atom and getting into it may be possible
But into that rampart is next to impossible
So were confounded the warriors of proven bravery.
Ukkirapperuvaluti was the king of Pandiyanadu then;

A roaring lion he would be in the raging field.
Strong enough even to fight against the elephants!
Rare for the foes to escape his sword unsheathed!
He was a wondrous man of wisdom and arts
Famed himself by compiling poems of Akananuru.

It is said that the scholastic approval of Tirukkural
Was in a grand festival under the aegis of this
king himself.
Perunarkkilli, along with Ceran MariVenko
Saw the great poetess Avvai who
Celebrated their unity in her poetic eulogy

A king of fish-ensign, Ukkirapperuvaluthi
Also an endearing lover of a young maiden
Began dallying with that damsel of his choice
With inquisitive looks on the edges of her eye-lids
Queried she 'Oh my dear! Please clarify a doubt:"
"What is it my darling? Is it to clarify the way
You obtained as much softness as feathers of the swan?
I continue to suck honey from your lips
From where honey pours sans the swarming bees;
Do you want me to explain how did it happen?

Is your face modelled on the red lotus? Or you doubt
Whether red lotus had been modelled on your face?
Unable to bear the weight of the breasts above
The waist that wriggles as a worm on the fishing rod
Will be able to withstand the weight or else
Your luminous ivory thighs be able to support them?

In your mind,

In front of Valuti who asked the question,
Are these the doubts that you have?' she replied
And sat there with her head bent as a ripe corn
"Not inclined to raise the question to obtain the reward
By writing a poem on me; but tell me the meaning
of 'eyil'"

To which he said, "My dear pea hen! Don't you
know this?
Eyil is the fortification around the capital
To prevent the enemies from advancing against us"
"That I too know; but what is said to be
Is a fortress unbreakable by anybody -
Don't you know that a king arrogantly boasts
That even this king cannot touch it anyhow?"
When said "Even this king" she pointed out
The king Valuti and embraced him warmly;

"That news I too have heard of that fortress
Said to have been built at Kanapper
Our court poet Mulankilar has given a nice depiction
Of that edifice, which I will narrate to you now!
In the order of fortresses, it stands atop
Its long moat is deeper than the earth and its
Fortress is as lofty as to touch the ceiling of the sky
As much as the stars of which that are scattered there
The enclosures of bowmen to work speedily,
Adjacent the forest, a buffer zone,
As thick as to allow not even the rays of the sun
Besides a lot of ramparts and forts all around
Unshakeable even if thousands of elephants hit them
So was the famous fortress at Kanappereyil!

About that

Our court poet has spoken on many an occasion
To my happiness", so said the king.
"The foe at a distance is all known to the Pandiya king
You bring in your enemies as tigers in a cage;
Is it not a pity that still there is Venkai Marpan

Loudly proclaims with his sword unsheathed that nobody
Could come anywhere near him in adjacent Kanapper,
Well fortified!
Even after he indirectly makes fun of our bravery,
Is it not a shameful thing to remain quiet?

The doubt I have kept deeper within me for long
Revealed I today to the king who is capable of
Confronting even a rutting elephant ferocious
And to smash its head into pieces;
To him, is the fortress built by Venkai Marpan,
A mountain range as long as Vintiyas of the north?
The moat dug out by him however deep as the ocean
Is not a mere stream to jump across in a minute!"

Why then

Even after realising the challenging arrogance
Of Venkai Marpan, why you be inactive?
Let the king clear this doubt and then only
Can we have bantering, she squabbled!
The king clasped her warmly when she eluded
And spinning his legs with those of hers, said
"Tomorrow at dawn, I will proclaim a war and order
The warriors to march to Kanappereyil with their
Horses, elephants and chariots and you be not anxious!
And now take off your hands that obstruct me from you"
She too acceded when their squabble ran off in a
split of a second
But their sexual bliss continued until dawn!

The next day

Columns of soldiers marched as per the command royal
Also to fulfil the promise given to the consort of Pandiyan
Fully protected fortress of Kanapper was hit
And the siege was over after a heavy warfare!
Due to the strong and resourceful attack of Peruvaluti
The protected fortress of Venkai Marpan broke into pieces.

The Pandya king to convey the news of his victory
Came back to the queen who had bidden him farewell
After applying the sacred tilak on his forehead!
On the majestic chest of the acutely wounded Pandiyan
She applied her breasts to provide him warmth'.
The blood-oozing injuries all over the body
Obtained her kisses and kept them cured of all

Some days afterwards

Mulankilar came to the court of Pandyan
'Oh king' he addressed, 'your pride is such
That even the defiant kings praise you well
You have known nothing but victory
If only you go to the battle field!
Let me call you from today onwards
As Ukkirapperuvaluti, the conquerer of Kanappereyil
Let the epics recite your resounding glory!

The galaxy of poets praisé your fame and name!
Let this honourable name be with you until the sun
is alive!"
Humbly the king conveyed his gratitude and
forthwith asked,
Is Venkai Marpan, the defeated going again to
Organise a war-front to get back his kingdom?
The reply of Mulankilar added a nice simile to our
literature
Can you retrieve even a droplet of water if it falls
On the red hot iron of the furnace of a blacksmith?

Accordingly

Kanappereyil that was won over by Peruvaluti
Has become the droplet of water squeezed in by red
hot iron'
Likewise Venkai Marpan remains dejectedly,
After having spoken very highly of you"
The beauty of this simile brought in by the great poet
Would have confounded the Pandya king
As to what reward could be given to that poet?
Is there anything wrong in my opinion and if so
May I know it, my dear Tamil scholars?

Sweet Trembling

Having sweetly tasted the tender physique of the harlot
Forgetting the house wherein alone

A care-laden wife shedding tears innocently,
He has not even a split of a second

To think about her, but as a bird that is trapped,
Virtually devoured all lascivious bliss,

Drank to the core and quenched his lust!
As if one more Tiruvalluvan (to be born)

To write anew a chapter fresh of love and lust
Both have drunk the trove of newer pleasures

As if bodily one, rolled about, kissed together
And warmly hugged each other, spinning together!

Did the sweet honey satiate him?
Or was there a new awakening in his mind?

But to console his consort, rushed he back in his chariot!
As a thing that had been lost came back

Surprisingly into the hands of the loser,
The husband who had forgotten her all along

Has speedily returned as a bird emerged from its cage
My worry has gone, so said the virtuous Madam happily

And inclined to the shoulders of her maid
Lest she might fall down of her extreme happiness.

But the harlot who suffered to see her lover come again
From his wife's house, played a trick!

She laughed within herself recollecting a humorous story
That had taken place when the lover was in her company.

She called in, the maid of his wife, and said,
"Oh maid! Do you know this news interesting

While on my shoulders he, of a place of Ampal flowers
As pointed and sharp as the beak of a stork

Was enjoying his time in a happy mood,
Suddenly surged a fit of fury with which on me

He jumped and dragged me by tresses
Also to put off my bangles from the hands

Rushed in speedily with a face wild!
To him said I, "Don't be crazy! Be patient.

Unless you are calm, I will inform your whereabouts
To your wife instantly and sooner on this

What happened to him was something I could not say
I am alone amusing within me nostalgically!

Her sweet maid then queried as to what had
happened there!
"In the court royal of our king Malayaman

Who has proved his archery in a cow-retrieving war
And known for martial drums in his honour,

Minstrels used to come from alien countries
For being rewarded bounty from the king.

They used to beat the drums to make its sides vibrate!
So, was the vibration and trembling of my lover".

If the maid has conveyed this news to his house-wife
She would surely dislike him as a man unbecoming;

As if the milk boiled go back to the udders of a cow
The one who left her for his wife would come again to
the cot

So was the calculation of that artful harlot;
Whether her blessed dream came true or not

Even Paranar who wrote a poem in Narrinai
Has not said it and if so why we be worried about?

However,

On hearing, "Shall I inform your wife"

How pitifully he trembled as the two sides of a drum?"
Is really a comparison so apt and so nice.

Lullaby of a Mother

Pondering on the martial bravery of my dear consort
Who had left on an expedition to vanquish the foes,

Myself, just before going to bed for relaxing after
Having completed the domestic chores of the day,

Would call the beloved son of mine endearingly
as 'Kanna'
Inducing him to take a bowl of milky food:

He would with a boy opposite to our home
Frisk away on the street in moonlight, defying my call.

Furious would I be; with a stick in hand saying
Would you negate my command?' Here am I to
chastise you!

I would thus run behind, but would not beat him,
Still my innocent son would tremble with fear;

"With all your fears even for this rod," I would ask,
How would you answer for an arrow in the field?"

Pulling him nearer, nicely pinching his cheeks
In his ripe and ruddy lips of softness,

Would I slowly pour down the honeyed milk
Persuade him to drink it full for energy!

He, the prattling young boy unrefusing
Would drink it full out of lingering fear;

The tender son as a crescent moon grew up in full
And became a man, martial and immaculate now;

My consort who has gone to the battle-field
After having given me this boy for lullaby

Countered an arrow right on his valiant chest and
Stood there as a tomb-stone to fit in with Tamil culture!

I too have hardened my mind and also to safe-guard
The cultural dignity which we glorify

Grew up this boy with a swearing to make him a hero
outstanding
I bade him farewell handing him a sword unsheathed

Caressing his hair, kissing him on his forehead
Persuading him to hoist the banner of victory

See that our drums are sounded on the alien fortress
Apart from kicking out and driving them from
the field

For having once severed and torn apart the chest
Of my beloved husband who had his genial days with me!

But he,

Having heard a lot of sweet and surprising news
That the alien forces are felled down as trees,

Where my son has performed bravery as if in a sport
By sundering the giant-like elephant with swords in hand

And roll them off as if kicking the balls of hillocks,
I stepped in to see this heroic spectacle on the field;

No doubt the victory was ours but alas; My son alone
Was not found in the gory odoured war-front!

The heads cut off resemble the buds of lotuses!
The trunks of the vanquished heroes are the boats upturned
Severed limbs, hands and legs are idle oars of the Flood!
Stepped I amidst the heaps of corpses

'Deeply agonised I am; Oh! my son! Have you gone off
Like a refugee from the field and died cowardly?'
shouted I.

'Living as a martyr I am', came a sound eerily
That enabled me to turn up my bent head!

Rushed I towards the direction of the voice
'Oh my martial son! Where are you?' Queried I.

'Here I am', said he, saw him I very near!
Bending low, took him up and hugged him!

The shield that safe-guarded him lay on the ground
My noble son was down on the soil with an arrow
in his chest.

'Victory the outstanding' was his fainting voice
Showered my kisses on his forehead and said I

'Hail to you my pearl! Descended direct from the father
Who sacrificed his life for our nation in the front'

'An arrow has pierced through your chest! My son!
That pain must have been excruciating' wept I bitterly;

'True is it ma! Didn't feel it at all until you saw",
he said,
Thus he breathed his last on my lap and was gone;

Leaving me behind somehow to be merely alive!
Is he the son who has run off when I raised the rod

When refusing adamantly to take food
For playing with his mates in the street?

The one who waxed bold to give up his dear life
In redeeming the motherland by receiving an arrow

Such a son he was!
Hail to thee, my son!

Meaningful Separation

Shaped she is with enticing slender waist below
As if a couple of Veena placed topsy turvy!

Maiden she is with a bodice stately and firm
That has bound a pair of coconuts tender!

Tying a gentle calf in a long rope one day
Running about singing, frisking happily as usual

She was nearing a garden very near the hillock;
Came in front of her a lad of gentle smile!

To her who, in one hand held the rope similar to a creeper
Of ampal, queried he, a lad smiling mischievous,

"Is your greyish calf doing well? And you
Who holds it as your life are also well?"

She of slender waist sprang up furiously--
"Am I water in a fall to be drunk in handful?

Why do you create a bickering on my way?
Sensing my eyes that are fiery, be off!

Or else my words too will become!"
To the maiden who spoke and warned as such,

"Dear madam, why should I be going away?
As a female calf of a buffalo, with its hind legs

Kicked those who give chase, swirling with the bushy tail
You can hit me aside and run away from here'

Inclined to talk to me but afraid of people around!
Shall I close your mouth with my sweet lips?

Oh! Does your silence symbolise your willingness?"
How dare you to obstruct me! if it is known to my mother

She would furiously rush in as a mother-cow in the street
Hitting those who attempt to catch hold of the calf,

She too would drive you off" but he on that fury laughed.
"Let your mother or even the whole village be present!

Let your chieftain father with a sword come in front
I need n't be afraid; If only you put a word

That I am the charioteer to you, the lovely chariot!
But jerking her body, feigning anger, and staring at him

She, with all the agitations and oppositions
"Oh the man, you have become like a stately bull

That stands immobile even on the pouring rain!
Speaking chaotic and incoherent thus

You have shown your acceptance of love"
Said she feigningly as if with harsh words

Calling him condescendingly, 'You, the shameless!
And though answered hurriedly and emotionally

She at length asked him in a soft voice and gentle words:
"I go with a milk-pail on the morrow to the moors!

Would you come there to pasturage?" was her
question!
He understood her mind easily and they parted

From one another silently, but smilingly at each other.

A Martial Hero devoid of bewildering mind

A hero of martial sword who vanquished
Those that harmed a lot in the southern coast;

One who donned his shoulder with a wreath of *Vakai*
After having subdued the Vatuka chieftains of the north;

It was he who is named Ilancetcenni,
A king of the fertile Chola land whose reputation

Unpoti Pacunkutaiyar a Tamil poet of olden days
Has sung in a style, flowery and cascading.

The king has the glory of having been born
in Neitalankanal
With the honour of having conquered Ceṟuppali
and Pamulur

The scholars denote with no ambiguity that
The glorious title goes to speak of Ilancetcenni only!

Even when the Tamil poets compose the Puram songs
Perhaps the mythical stories were also in currency!

Hence an excellent simile, the poet Pacunkutaiyar
Formed in poesy even in those days.

When poets adorned the king with the garb of poems
At a time when he was in an assembly of state,

He, the paramount king presented them with gems
and jewels
And these in effect were silky tribute for their poems.

The pearl necklace, worn by the royal lineage alone
Emerald beads and heaps of ruby-studded bangles.

Along with similar jewels in plenty, to the poet
The king Ilancetcenni smilingly presented

With a pleasant mind gladdened to the brim
There after the leading poet has speedily journeyed

To proudly present them to his faultless relatives!
To them in handful the poet gave all the jewels at length!

His relatives not having seen those ornaments before
Put them strangely on; the necklaces on hands

The bracelets on their necks hurriedly and unevenly!
Unaware of rings meant for fingers

They put them as pendants on their ears!

Witnessing this

Unpoti Pacunkutaiyar laughed uproariously and
Formed a simile denoting the oddity of his kinfolk!

When Sita, the consort of Rama was abducted
By Ravana, the king of Sri Lanka, she in the air

Took off her jewels and threw them down
Which the monkeys took, and ignorant of properly
wearing,

Wore on their neck what was meant for waist,
Those for neck, on their thighs and legs and
wandered about;

Was there not a poetic fancy existing?
That one the poet has made a simile of

To denote the innocent oddity of his relatives
And depicted it to the pleasure of the elite.

That eloquent poet, tertile in imagination
Has spoken admiringly of Ilancetcenni

Elsewhere in a poem in a manner analogous
To the sweetness of honey and the breeze of Potikai

Here it is

You have become the eyelids of your adorers!
And ingenious to identify those who approach you

Blaming others and to cause them fall!
Deeming them to be evil mongers

You set them aside and drive them off!
On finding evil, whosoever has committeth it

You impartially inflict a deterrant punishment!
The drums of your fame fairly resound

Denoting your rule as impartial, judicious and fair!
If the faulty realises and behaves penitently

You always bless them with your benign love!
Only when the soft and plump physique

Of your queen who is courteous and warm to
Hug you on, you would bewilder

But not at all even when thousands of arrows thrown
at you
Such a hero of immaculate bravery are you!

Thus

In the sweeping spate of the poem of Pacunkutaiyar
The similes entice our understanding
The quality that symbolises a strong mind of
the Chola king
Who never fears at all even in acute enmity
Sweeps our deep imagination and understanding.

7

Why did the bees come?

As the seeds are embedded in a fruit ripe
The young daughter is protected at home by her mother!

Telling that old woman that she goes to a nearby tank,
Behaving as if so modest, she in the absence of her mother

Would hasten to the pond,
Deluding her into believing that she is true.

As the sword of a hero looks forward
To kiss the shield confronted in the field,

Her lover would wait for his darling!
She too would cling on to his sholulders as a garland!

Umpteen times, forewarned her maid stating
That rendezvous be limited lest this clandestine affair

Be harmful, giving room for ill-rumour even;
There would be a strong opposition, once it's heard!

But should the maiden not pay heed?
One day under the pretext of going to the hilly pond

Thus after deceiving the mother, she went out
Then he and she were one as patchy clouds commingle!

As the poet Vazhuthiyar recorded in his poem,
By pressing the beautiful breasts in a warm embrace

They two shared the caress in hundred thousand!
Next morn, the mother was in the kitchen

Went the daughter there to assist her in chores!
A cluster of bees whizzed around the maiden

Sensing a gentle odour that emerged off her shoulders
Due to an event of embrace near the falls, the day
previous.

This was not unperceived by the mother!
"Let me know the reason, my dear!

On whom did you unfairly fall?" She queried.
Because of bees that clustered around the maiden,

The mother has perceived the action of the daughter's
lover;
So the maiden has covered her bouquet like breasts

To conceal the traces of his nail and teeth!
'Don't play with your silence; tell me what has happened?

"One who begot and guarded you, is asking, mother said
angrily!
Suddenly stepped in the maiden's maid, presuming

That only with a lie could she be saved --
'Listen to me, mother; you slander her unfairly;

The sandal faggots you burn in the oven;
That smell has enveloped the whole of the kitchen

And hence the waves of bees swarm around!
It is not so as you doubt and your dear daughter

Has not looked at even a single male!
I would even swear but that is not necessary!
He who loves her wouldn't lay his hands even forgetfully
to tune
This Veena, without the consent of your nodding eyes.

The mother too believed it is the smoke of the
Burning sandal faggots that caused the bees to swarm!
Happily saying that her endearing daughter

Wouldn't commit any such clandestine offence,
The mother embraced and kissed her.

The event at home, the maid narrated to the hero
As directed by the maiden

"Unmindful of the movements of cheetahs
Amidst bamboo-forests of rocky terrain you come!

Exalted hero you are! Every day with your presence
Ably console the despondent maiden off her misery!

But aren't you aware of her travails from mother at home?
let you be not nervy at my question direct.

Daily you promise, you would fix a day for marriage;
Will it be sweet if you simply say 'honey'?

Choose a day and get you both wedded
With the consent of parents and relatives!

Or else you would simply be a hero of no truth!
But a man of mere bravado!"

'Let her know that my parents would visit her home
To fix a date and no botheration of a secret meet at all:

So said the hero and walked off briskly
And probably the marriage too in an opportune time
Would have been performed!

Plane without a Pilot!

Wise men nowadays create a lot of wondrous novelties,
Even in aerial space because of the impact of science--

The ancient days were not of utter ignorance
In days bygone too, a deep study of the constellation

To calculate the changing times and the depiction of
The revolution of satellites and also about

The twinkling stars in the firmament and their mutations,
Were carried on, apart from indicating eclipses,

In which the shadow of the earth would surround
The sun and moon and this too our forefathers

Spoke in detail, not surprisingly in the books of astronomy.
We were thus enlightened, but alas: We fell on evil
days later

While the foreigners' scientific growth went sky-high,
The waning moon we called God; the sun that rises

Daily to do its task, we called a spirit.
Except lying down and nabbing and ensconing

In meaningless fancy and imagination, we have not
reckoned
The astronomical talent of the ancient past but entrenched

In superstition making science of yore to go dry;
When I delved deep into a Sangam poem

To relish the delight of literary wisdom
Herein I find news to gladden the heart of everybody!

By explicating this, let me call you all
To share the pleasure that I myself obtained!

Let you all come to see the glory of the historical
Tamil land!
The poet Mutukannan Sattanar born of Uraiyur

Who sings the glory of the Chola king Nalankilli
Has said that customarily this world is of the nature

To be born to grow, to decay, and to die at length;
He also added the pride of a reigning monarch shall be

To liberally donate to those who come indigently
And shall offer help like a fountain to the poor
Along with words of consolation and love.

In addition to,

Innumerable are they who were born and dead
Traditionally in the world all over;

Though the lustrous petals are many in a lotus
Born of the dark and muddy tank,

It is easy to see glaring beauty therein
Where one cannot at all find any difference!
What appears to be fair, I would profess now;
Of these who were born in this world,

Very few alone deserve to be glorified by poets--
Many,the rest become pale as decaying lotus leaf!

The poet who has given thus a simile
Of the beauty of petal and the paleness of
decaying leaf

Will show the apex of glory that
The adorable kings obtain from poets in the world.

That means

To those who have secured a chance
To fly aloft in the deep sky

In a plane that is pilotless
Their life's elevation is as lofty as the sky itself.

In this poem of Purananuru that sparkles like a diamond
Because of a reference 'A plane without pilot'

Shall we grant that there must have been in function
Also a plane with a pilot even in those days?

Because they were concerned with technology in
those days
Perhaps a type of men *'Valavar'* may have flown
their vehicle!

Because of a worn out belief that crept in the middle,
This country suffered acutely devoid of common sense!

In the ethical statement of the poet Mutukannanar
That celebrated the Chola king

This item, of all has diverted my attention and so
I submitted it for your study and perusal

If it is wrong, set it right and I shall accept!

Honey and Scorpion

Lady's maid:

What the jingling of bangles until dawn mean?
How many did he offer? Kisses in hundreds?

Sleepless travails I endured were not a whit less!
What a screeching sound the couch has raised?
Cannot your people afford to buy a noiseless cot?

Swear on me and say my dear lady if I am deceitful.
Aren't you aware a lady is lying on the verandah?
And that too a spinster yet to be married?
Believing as if this world will be for that day only
You both have celebrated your festivities mutual!
Still will you be kind enough to listen, my dear!
And pay heed to as you are nostalgic with
nocturnal jubilee!

Shall we devour the whole mango tree because it's fruit
is sweet?
Uproot a creeper to wear because its flowers
are fragrant?
Excepting to drink water in handfuls to quench the thirst,
Will wise men fall into water and get drowned?

Instead of setting aside me stating, 'What else
Do you know about conjugal love, 'think over it deeply;
Anything that exceeds limits brings in, misery!

Your maid's advice is meant for the benefit of you both
The human frame is not moulded in iron!
Even though lust is enticing and pleasant
If you deeply indulge in it, indiscriminately
The human body would grow thin and be hunch-backed!

Expert my grandma in physiognomy whose advice
Did I hear from behind when she offered it to others!
What solid fact I did hear from her
I pass it on to you, my dear lady!
Is not your male counter-part remaining with you
For more than a period of six months?
What is the significance of yesternight only?
Did the cock crow so hurriedly as to bar your excesses?

Maiden:

My endearing hero has very well understood
That the crowing was not of a cock and said
'It is the mischief and mimicry of your maid;
And if caught within the grip of that hero
Complacent would it be as compact as a couplet!

And that too if it is the chapter of love
Is it so easy to set him aside and come away?
We have got a long time to reach a fruition, my dear"
So said he, and gently stroked me from head to feet!

Will not the string of Yal be vibrating with music
On fingering and so on his, I flew around in
exciting romance!
So far I forgot myself in unseen pleasure!
Only at the dawn did I understand the reason for
his pranks!

Closing his eyelids four and immersed in exotic pleasure,
What kisses he showered were all honeyed sugar-candy!
He circled himself like a creeper on my shoulders
The same I did whispering that he shouldn't leave
me at all!

Maid:

Enough! My dear! Don't intoxicate me!
Until the arrival of my lover who has
Gone on his errands of earning, let me be in wait!
Bother me not with excitement and
Poke me not fun by making me despondent!

Maiden:

As a wild pea-hen exuberant
I have disclosed everything to you unconcealed
Haven't understood that you didn't sleep the whole night
Because I soared with him in lofty pleasure!
We haven't behaved discriminatingly as a maid and lady!

Our friendship is as wide as the expanse of the sea!
You did ask why the revel the whole night last.
I too am at a loss for an answer for it;
When a feast comes of its own accord voluntarily
With no mind to set it aside sans relishing
I bade farewell to the sleep and the night
And yielded myself to the enjoyment superb!

Only after the sun-rise in the east, did I myself
Understand the story unusual of the night previous!
And became dazed in bewilderment.

Maid:

Dear lady, you are going on puzzling,
Why did you worry after the sun-rise?
Managed the whole night but now
What's the reason for your state of fear?

Maiden:

Look at him, yonder!
Expediting a band of warriors
Besides sharpening his spear!
'Donning it with bell and feathers
Shaking his Atlantean shoulders
As a roaring lion among the males
Comes he towards me with a shield in hand!

Look at the ebullient youth in battle-readiness
Undaunted as he is with no love for life!
Look at him with your eyes that had no sleep!
Tell me whether my eyes will have their sleep ever!
With a swearing to safeguard the motherland
Even at the risk of life, forsaking the near and dear
Thousands of warriors go ahead to the front
Crossing the land arid because of vast wild fire
That had happened in the days of yore.

He too hastens to bid adieu to me
Understand you now the significance
Behind his nocturnal activities with me!
You have chided me for having been
Overwhelmed in the deluge of delight!
Look at me and listen what's going to happen!

Nocturnal enjoyment is on the debit side
With the tears of joy rolled from my eyelids
And a dizziness felt by my eyes were to be of the past!

Step by step is going to come, a lot of misery!
What I calculated was not faulty!
Enacted he the drama, the whole night!
Ivory physique of mine, he hugged and fed me with kisses
Only to part with me and sunder my heart
By leaving for the front, cheerfully to face the foes!

I am to conduct the warriors, my dear
Strategy of enemies, I shall shatter to pieces
With a garland of Vakai shall I see you soon!
Thus will he come and seek me to bid adieu!
His statement, somehow is juicy and honey alike!
But it stings my heart as if that of a scorpion!

Undaunted Adolescent

A smart young lad he was with
An ankle-ring replaced just
A set of jingling tiny bells around his feet;
Avoiding a knitted plait of long tresses
That lad is in readiness with a shining sword in hand;
Putting off beautiful bracelets from his soft hands
He has with him a bow on his shoulder!
So innocent of age he was, a gold pendant he has
Worn on his neck

That lad, a descendant of Pandya dynasty
Assumed the captaincy to lead soliders
Stating that he is valiant enough to quell the foes.
Saw to it that martial drums are well sounded
Swore that he would go to the front and
Vanquish the enemies by nipping them in the bud.
Netunceliyan, he is named and known for his
Reputation of having a head unbowed.

About that lion's cub, roaring with unsheathed sword
The poet Itaikunrur kilar has sung
Gloriously in broad terms, hailed him as
A tender babe still odorous with breast milk!
Many a Tamil poet has sung
The glory of that brave Pandya lad:

Having listened to the poems of the savants
Kunrurkilar besides Koliyurkilar
Katupulaviyanar, Kallatanar and
Nakkiranar of Madurai and above all
The reputed royal poet Marutanar alias Mankutikilar
Who has sung Maturaikkanci, an idyll.
He, the immaculate gold of virtuous qualities
Was capable of composing artistic poesies
Now stepped into the battle royal.

When the columns of five Velirs strong
Converged into that of Chera and Chola monarchs
Of the ensigns of bow and tiger
To attack him fiercely on,
Thinking that prince Pandyan is too young,
The prince did not confound at all
Whether he could confront the seven-fold army.

"Submissively contain yourself or else
You may have to be done away with"
This threat from the foes, loudly he laughted at!
Not of a tradition to hide myself from the war, he said!

They mock at me that I am young
Let me convey now itself
How far their experience and resources are
Going to suffer at my hands in the front!
O Dear Courier! Rush back with my reply soon!

Inform your seven kings that this inexperience
Celiyan has taken up arms to fight!
Let Pandya forces of the south be ready to
Step into the field of Talaiyalankanam, he said.

Then

Interceded the Poet Mankuti Marutanar
Dear O, King Pandya, do not take to heart
That this poet is objecting you now!
Keeping in mind the strength of the enemy
'We would be defeated' will be the net result!
As I felt that due warning is my duty
I say that the avoidance of war is well!

The young Pandya of the fish-ensign
Heard his warning, went to the front
And said, you sing a dirge presuming
That a deer as I am, will go down
Into the mouth of the enemies of male tigers!
Please avoid your fears, O sire! After this life
What is left behind by the Tamils is their honour!
Leaving that floral honour to be trampled upon by foes
Thereby to make personal life a joyous one
Is merely a mean-minded glutton and a kite broken!

I am Netunceliyan who revere the Tamils;
Never bowing down my head for uncultured!
Seven, nay even if seventy crores of enemies
Confront me from all directions in martial array,
This lad will prove that he is not coward
And thus let me create history in the field!

In the dignified soil of Pandya king
Are there the mendicants live? No! Not at all!
The land of Pandyas is our unique mater!
She hasn't begotten her children as cowards!
Pride piles on pride on this holy soil
This lad Netunceliyan be adding more.
O! my virtuous countrymen! Believe me of my words!
So shouted he and composed a heroic song
That is capable of shaking our sinews of courage

In that poem

Arrayed chariots, horses with elephants
And soldiers in foot they had in large;
Hence those seven who derided and poked fun at
Condemning me as raw and young,
I broke their waist at Talaiyalankanam
Where the waves of soldiers who routed out
And I made them demoralized thereby
To stand erect like a tall cliff!

In case of my fall in the battle,
Unable to confront the seven conjoined
Let the world blame me to the core
That I'm the tyrant unmindful of citizens!

If only a defeat has entrapped me
Let acute famine afflict me
To the extent of being condemned by the world
That I am the worst sinner of having offered
Nothing to the needy and poor
who come to me with folded hands!

If the wreath of victory forsake me
Let me be destined to a miserable life
And of no use to wipe out the sufferings of relatives;
If the column of our heroes goes down
At a time when foes are upward
Let all the poets talented to sing melodiously
Under the chief Mankudi Marutanar
Decide forthwith not to glorify hereafter the Pandya king
And go afar from Pandyan Netunceliyan!

Thus the Pandyan swore fiercely
With reddened eyes proceeded
To the front in Talaiyalankanam,
Heading a column of active warriors!

Even thus as the Pandya swore
In Tamil, juicy and sweet,
He did assure us firmly
The safe guarding and observance of
The four-fold classical culture;
Such as the protection of poor as relatives,
Offering bounty as per kingly norms,
Embracing the countrymen with love
And the learned poets glorify the nation with patriotism!
When we happily recollect this,
Our mind is alike an orchid of Tamil.

The Crowing of a Cock

As white as a sesame flower's downpour
As if grey beards of saints fall on the ground
It's silver cascade courseth thro a mountain pond
Where a maiden has frisked in for a bath and
Emerged fully drenched and appeared
As if her whole physique is caged in a glass box.
A young man saw that and was stunned.

Are there two lotus flowers on her bust
Put topsy-turvy and their stalks
Cut off at the end and sat there fixedly?
There she stands with two plump fruits
With a pair of nipples seductively enticing!
Darting her arrows of eyes around
With her fine fabric as if woven from cobweb thread!

Who has applied the ivory hue of the Talai flower,
On her shapely thighs as of plaintain stem?
To Nature that created this lovely statue alive
Even if millions of sovereigns given as price,
With the nice wax of sandal in colour
Will it be equal to the beauty of soft eyelids that ope
and close?
Benumbed was the lad with a fever of lust --
But she ran away on being stared at, by a person hidden!

He has seen the speed of the meteors that fall;
Now he has seen, from behind a rock near the falls
A moon like beauty ran away suddenly!
Leaving his life and thoughts therein,
He alone bodily got on to his chariot back home!
Back again he, the next day near the falls!
In search of and to collect his mind he had left behind!

Is his life alone that he retrieved there!
That life-like lass's lovely appearance too!
That fair rose, because of her first day experience
Has brought in a thorn, a maid for her protection!
Our hero who has seen the maid a sentry-like
Though afraid, to begin with, began calculating
He could conquer the maiden with the help of this maid!

Went he ere the sunrise to the home of the maid!
When she callously asked him 'Why have you come?'
Answered he, 'Seeking your help to arrange her parents
Undeniably present to me, the beauty
Who is a flower yet to be plucked, did I come;
Sleepless I am, forsaking food!'

'Consent of the parents is only latter, 'She said!
But the lady slender and sleek doesn't like you!
Retracing your steps is advisable and she added
You can go in for a new venue to spread your
romantic net!
Why does she of curved forehead dislike me?
To enquire this personally with her, O, maid
Let me approach her now, as I am not a tiger
To devour that stag! Hail to thee," said he.

'It is uncultural to do mischief in a place alone
When a maiden engaged her self in bath- she opines!'
'Saw I as I casually observe a flower among the
dew drops'
Let her be merciful and I won't offend her at all, he said.

'What talk have you with him, 'so she shouted
That slender-waisted and sparkling beauty
Who gently walked with reddening steps
And went off from there with the pride of a princess'

"Doesn't the harsh words of a young maiden
Be as sweet as candy to those
Who find themselves gripped in romance?
She is twisting me of my life and hence
Have mercy to make her bless me," he pleaded.

'If my lady takes a decision once
She will, on no account reverse it, I swear;
Yet, let us see whether your prayer be of any use'
So said the maid and skipped off, to be with her.

The poor lad stood alone until dusk;
Then strolled he towards the home of the maid.
"You, the squirrel who come to crack the guava fruit
Listen as I speak truly that," she said,
To touch my maiden is next to impossible"

He did everything except prostrating before her"
'O Maid! Won't touch I even if
Mundane pleasures are offered to be in bulk!
Won't accept even if I am let to rule the whole world!
Life without her is unpleasant and bitter as strychnos!'

The maid quipped, 'Don't you have any other errand?
Unmindful of whether it's morn or eve, day or dark
You aim at me to do a liaison work and hence
Let me say with a finality that you better leave now!

He, to this remark

I swear that it is a false love,
If the lovers could divide the day
Into morn and noon besides the dusk
The falling sun and the darkness of
The sleepy night and faint light of the early dawn!
That's why unmindful of all these, I wander for her!

If there's no other way to secure her,
Let me ride on an improvised horse made of fronds
And the great sin and blame will be hers!
The spectators will pitifully comment that
It is a great harm that the lad-sinner causes
And go on abusing her publicly and
If she is not reluctant to be slandered
The only recourse for me is to die! he said.

With the one who has waxed bold to risk his life,
The maid decided not to have a clash and hence smiled!
Sought and got the maiden's consent soon for his love
The rest was a solemn marriage with parental consent!

They then learnt the lessons of conjugal bliss
In their academy of cushioned cot
Then among themselves mutually
Began to teach one another!

One morning in the meanwhile
The maid asked her observing that
She was jubilant to the brim previous night,
Whether the experience was fruit juice or honeyed jelly?

Attempting to hide the tooth-marks
On the cheeks and the neck and that of
Nails on the portions below,
With a shyness and reddening face
Without narrating the previous night story whole,
Said she, 'Listen to my agony!

Thinking there is time yet for dawn
We were in revelry mutual!
At a time when the cock was crowing 'kukkoo',
The dawn came like a sword to separate
My lover who was still sticking to my shoulders!'

Thus

Consoling the maiden who was in tears
Said the maid, 'love you hated as bitter then;
Vexed are you now at the dawn of day!
Don't blame the early morning
Which will be followed by night, sure!
'Shall we go to the falls for bath', asked the maiden.
'Why me? Perhaps he will be there to keep company
with you,
Replied the maid!

Brackish Tears and Fragrant Waters

Sprang his sword out of its sheath
Means the alien range is routed out!
With a glory such, ruled the Chola king at Uraiyur!

IF the Emperor of Ponni land, the fertile
Sees anybody with tears, welcome he would
And offer heaps of gold in abundance!
Because he breathed his last at Kulamurram,
He is termed in literature, Killivalavan of Kulamurram,

Eulogies many that highlight him in Purananuru;
When Alattur kilar, a poet received a gift
Conveyed his gratitude and said benevolently
To the sinners who cut off the udders of a cow,
Who trample and destroy the foetus of women,
And to those who afflict lovable parents
Pardon there is but not to those men
Who are of ingratitude in the world
And whose life will get decayed and annulled.

Once Killivalavàn besieged the fort of Karuvur!
To him went this poet Alattur kilar and counselled,
'Even after hearing the sound of felling the Royal Tree,
When he, the coward remains hidden with trembling fear
Will it be prestigious to win him over?
This advice made Valavan go back with out attacking
Luckily the Karuvur chieftain thus was rescued
As a tiny worm from a burning faggot.

Avur Mulankilar too has sung on Killivalavan!
'Oh! The bravest of lions! The king of kings!
If you are furious, there will be red-hot fire!
If you mercifully look at a place,
That will be luminescent as twinkling stars!
You alone could do the miracle of
Metamorphosing the summer sun into cold
And the cool moon into hot coal!
Even the God of Death waits before snatching a life

But Chola king! You do away with your foes
As instantly as you think in the battlefield!
Thus wonders Kovurkilar at his competent heroism
and adds
As a golden trove comes to a wood-cutter in a forest,
Valavan showers gifts to the seekers all!

Itaikkadanar, a poet eulogises the same Valavan
'You are the king who safeguards Native Tamils
As a Mother-Tiger protects her dear cubs;
You rule the Chola country of plenty and prosperity
Where visible everywhere when we see
Fish at the fag end of sluice and jaggery from sugar,
Red hibiscus the women pluk and bring,
Tortoises as found by tillers of the field
And paddy in plenty because of perennial Cauvery!

Vellaikkuti Nakanar has counselled and
Congratulated him in terms following:
Your umbrella, Oh! Great king is not for
Preventing a mere sunny climate! But it's a
A royal canopy to ensure a good reign to the people!
Even if drought remains without water
The peasantry toils with perseverence;

All the victories your warriors earn in the front
Aren't possible without the support of peasantry
And hence you protect the class of tillers
To keep the warrior class in happiness!

Nalliraiyanar hails the king with a smile effective!
Due to drought when the entire nation goes lean
As much as the slender waist of a danseuse,
Killivalavan, who reigns the country of Cauvery basin
Will pour forth on us his mercy of rain!

Similar wreath of tributes is submitted
By Tayankannanar of Erukkattur
Said by researchers to have lived near
Kulikkarai in the district of Thanjavur
Even if the world undergoes a cataclysmic havoc
Why should we be afraid when Valavan is there?

Thus

Avur Mulankilar, Alantturkilar
Atuturai Macattanar, Aiyur Mutavanar

Along with Nalliraiyanar, Nappacalaiyar
Erukkattur poet, Itaikkatanar
Vellaikkudi Nakanar, Kovurkizhar
And similar others are all alike tigers in poesy
These tigers praised the lion of king Killivalavan
Only to adore and admire him!

But as the famed lion went in search of a gentle deer
And said to have greeted it in poetical form,
Incident there is in Cirukudi village of Chola reign
Where Valavan had a friend intimate!

It is Pannan, the rich farmer who used to freely
Offer to the poor what all paddy he reaps!
Valavan heard this happily went there
Titled him as 'Doctor who cures hunger'
And added 'You offer gifts as the sky
Let you live your span of life with that of mine'
Thus a poem he wrote and handed it to him
And proceeded to Uraiyur his capital!

Whatever the force the aliens confront him with!
He has the annals of having annuled them;
A man of graceful, innocent and soft countenance
But alas! Gripped in by the hands of Death.
Heard this the galaxy of Tamil savants, shed tears
And painfully felt as if their ear drums are torn off!

I ask those who are adepts at making earthern pots
Customarily used to bury the deceased;
If they were to make a pot for our king Valavan
Shouldn't they hold the majestic mount Meru as clay
And the whole world with its western and eastern horizons
Be circled to form a potter's wheel?
Your pot would suit to bury his mortal remains!
But to contain his immortal fame, the whole world
is needed.

Thus plaintively when Aliyur Mutavanar writes
He has presumed the fame of Chola to be infinite.
Aduturai Macattanar shed tears narrating
The story of his having won a lasting glory in war.

'O! Yama, the ungrateful? How many warriors
Has he offered and you ate and get fattened?
But now you have killed him--
Who else you have to feed you hereafter?

A poetess Nappacalai of Marokkam
Couldn't believe the news of his death.
Hastened she to the palace at Kulamurram!
There lay the king of Cauvery as an elephant
That is no more but with no injury on the body!

Impatiently she asked whether
What she saw was really the truth?
Whether Death has got guts
To pluck off the life of the Uraiyur king?
Then how did it happen now?
Listen to me what has occured to my mind!

The Chola king of a famed chariot
Wearing a garland of gold and
Brandishing a sword as of lightning and
Annulling the alien front on the field
Can hardly be defeated by anybody!

That death that grabbed the life of Valavan
Has, in my opinion not devoured him;
Either with a fradulent enmity or by
Warring frontally with force and strength

Or by nabbing him bodily and defeated him,
But it would not have seized him as a prize;
Unless in the disguise of a poet
With folded hands and palmyrah leaves!
Unless by a devious method like this,
Nobody is strong enough
To take away his life!

Thus

Is it not a fact that what
Nappacalayar wrote was about love that grew unalloyed?
Without coming forward to safeguard
The pride of the nation, glorious
To which Valavan of rare greatness belonged
Should we allow our ancient fame
To fall like a tree blown by a tempest?
Let me know your feelings to what I say!

Foster - Mother is after a Damsel

Shall I, as a spinster, be useless
As the dazzle of a full-moon on a sandy desert?

Oh! My lover, capable of darting arrows at a terrible pace.
Raise your eyes and look at my condition!

My eyes are full of tears and it's said
That even a phantom takes pity on women:

What else are you going to answer me? Though bitter now
I was like tasty honey in the days of yore.

Thus with supplicating eyes fish like
She wept bitterly, falling at his legs.

Heaving her up with warmthness
Embracing that slender-waisted maiden
And gently stroking her soft abdomen

Said he, "Don't be silly! My deer; Wipe off your tears!
Not even a minute can I bear your separation!

Your parents are shouting thunderously
To prevent our nearness and that's why

My hesitation, my creeper-like lady-love!
Confounded as am I and don't know what to do!"

She heard his words, full of excessive passion
She grasped and butted him with her breast and said,

You squeeze honey from my lips ere it's given dear!
Why should then my parents be consulted?

Release me from being imprisoned as of sugarcane
in a mill
I shall fly along with you through the barren desert!

On his saying that the day next their romantic run,
She clinged onto his shoulders and felt jubilant

Knowing this, her parents became fiery and wild!
The Foster-mother began her mission of tracing
the maiden.

Forest and the mountainous segments
Combine to make a sandy region

Through which she, of the curved eyelid
And he, of the doughty physique

Might have gone through, presumably
And hence walked the woman, laden with anxiety.

On the way

Sacred men elderly
With pots suspended

From a pole balanced on the shoulder
Go on their endless journey.

Divine conscious mendicants as they are
The *foster-mother stood them against.*

'Merciful and ethical saints!
Haven't you seen my anril-like pet daughter;

Accompanied a calf-like young man comely
Cutting across the desert hot and sandy?

Superbly happy they were in a clandestine romance;
Now became bold to have worldly-wise life!

Elderly and virtuous as you are,
Would you be telling me if you have seen them!

To her who queried with a deep desire, they said,
"We have seen your girl bounded across!

It is but fair that the lotus-like maiden
Conjoined herself with an ebullient hero'!

Without bidding a nice farewell, it is surprising
You are after them far beyond the hills and mounts!

Listen to me now

Even though the sandal is born of mountains
It emits a scent to those who apply it on them!

If it belongs only to the mountain,
Where lies the value of its fragrance?

Even though the pearl is born of deep sea,
It sparkles on the person of the wearer!

If it is obliged only to the sea
What glory is there either for it or for the sea?

Even though the music is born of yal
Only when it is tuned, the pleasure swells!

If the music is the right of yal only
What's use of music to the instrument?

If the daughter is rightful to the parents only
Please be it known, learned woman!

Shall your daughter be as such
As a yal that doesn't vibrate with music

As a sandal that emits not a scent
As a pearl that is not worn?

Therefore

To enable the virtuous girl to live
With an ideal and like-minded lover,

Convey your hearty greetings
And then get back immediately.

Having listened to the virtuous passers-by,
The maternal instinct got quickly clarified;

Let the homely life chosen by the girl
Be as flourishing as orchid in a garden!

Thus the woman hailed them both, besides
Thanking the wandering mendicants and went back.

The Poet who Spat a Fiery Reply

Vel Ay Antiṛn, a chieftain with a
Moustache resembling a sheath of sword
Who ruled the Potikai region's Aykudi as capital
Was like a tiger in chasing away foes.

Enicceri Mutamociyar, Kuttuvan Kiraṇar
Otaikkillar, Pananar, Karikkannanar
Parankorranar and a host of poets
Sang in honour of Ay Antiran;
But the only poet who gaüged his mind,
Kept company and happily inscribed in Purananuru
As gently as fixing a peacock feather on to the hair
of a child
The generous gifts he offered with his hands daily,
Was Eniceeri Mutamociyar of Uraiyur alone.

Let us see how Mutamociyar gracefully depicts
A rare event when he speaks of fertile mountains.
When a baboon thummed up a drum
Taking it to be a jack fruit confoundedly
In a place of villagers' conclave near the hill,
The tree-borne swan-cocks in a group
Frightened and flew off flutteringly with a sound;
Smoke-like clouds hovering over such Potikai Hills
To which the smiling lasses go for a happy jaunt
And not the aliens go for invasion and towards which
They wouldn't think of besieging Ay Antiiran
For he, the hero who drove Konkar, his enemies

Up to the Eastern coast, quelling their deep-rooted enmity.

In the poems of Enicceriyar, the beauty of his land
Plus the travails of his foes could be discerned!
When Konkars, the vanquished enemies
Lay hidden in the mountains of the Western coast
The number of spears they left behind was said to
be lesser
Than the elephants gifted by Antiran to the impoverished;
Amazed at this, the Tamil savant Enicceriyar asks
the chieftain;
Does the pachyderm in your country begets ten in
one delivery
Such innumerable elephants in number you have, to give
Generously to the bards, minstrels and poets!
Such was the wondrous tribute Mutamociyar paid to
the Lord!

Though an expert in graphically portraying rural scene,
He, one day went on a walking trip to see the wilderness
And what he saw enroute was wholly unbelievable!
Small and big, herds of elephants unwearingly
Stood in hundreds just under the trees loftily grown;
Amazed at this, the poet forgot himself and wrote verses
Admiringly of the king in a flowing style!

Musical votaries would approach Antiran and
Obtain the elephants, hundreds in number!
Perhaps the forests too learnt the art of poesy
Sought the famed Antiran and obtained the elephants
as gift
And gathered them here under the trees?
Poetic delight and of the Tamil genius are of rock-candy!

More so the meaningful eulogy on Antiran, a fragrant
bouquet.
If Mutamociyar recites his fame that when the
Snow-clald Himalayas remain in the North and if
Orchard-rich hill of Aykuti doesn't lay in the South
This world would go topsy-turvy and haphazard,
Is it not due to the poet's bewilderment at the bounty
Of Antiran as much as the bee that drank honey?

But a few jealous elements considering as if
Pulling Antiran down to an abyss from his lofty height,
Opined what all he gives was an expectation of gain
And a selfish belief that earthly gifts will benefit in
re-birth
Thus a few unscruplous, waxed bold in a group
And attributed motive to his all-embracing benevolence!
Heard this the poet Mutamociyar who became angry
And condemned the evil-mongers as the worst;

Antiran is not a trader to barter the ethics said the poet
He has thus written a poem in unmistakable terms.
Do not spite Antiran as a scorpian does
When he doesn't harbour even the least
Lowered mind to expect a blessing in the next birth
By showering money as a saleable commodity!

Hail with Mutamociyar who spat a fiery reply
By telling that 'our king is not a deceiver
To present gold and jems, pearls and elephants
To the poets and the poor with a motive behind!

The Spouse who had seen a Partridge Fight!

Suddenly confronted with a shout halt
As if struck by a stone on the forehead,
Confounded by a verbal attack of the curved eyelid
He did ask why is she so detesting; while she
As a mullai-creeper yearns to spread on his broad chest.
He made her miserable by going to harlots
Where he has been practising on their soft bed
The art of dalliance and revelry he had already learnt!

If the lotus stalk, plucked off it's watery base
And placed on a burning rock on a summer day
Will it joyfully subsist or fade and wither away soon?
Having donned the domestic candle with a florid fire
And allowing it to melt and sink, day in and day out
He got entangled in the flowery smile of harlots
Who have been feasting him in cosy bed with no demur!

But she, of the home, keep the house spick and span
Before doing washing and cooking chores and
Sending the babbling tots to school in the morn
And used to laboriously wait for her husband
Until her legs pain and the eyes dazed.

But he

Would have, off and on tasted the harlot's lips
as though they were petals tender
That are ruby-red, having been kissed by many!
Unmindful of a public exposure in the village
He would drink her to the lees until the morn!

While the parrot at home sadly languish in the cage
Despairingly looking forward to the arrival of her spouse;
But he would lie sleep, entangled by the look
and infatuated in the sugary speech of harlots!

Even honey and milk would cloy him, he would say
But the crisp bodiced buds on the smooth bodies of harlots
Are like the juicy fruits of mango, he would add
Honey would be bitter to him, he would assert
And say that their cheeks are the juicy pulp;

When his wife shed tears with all her misery
He would gently stroke the slender waist of harlots!
Speaking admiringly of it as lightning!
The chaste woman at home would frequent the door
To see whether he comes back from his wandering.
But he would pray for an exchange of pan masala
From the mouth of the harlot to that of his;
Whatever the rapture is, if it exceeds the limit
It will be bitter and tasteless!

Once he found that the passion of the whore
Which he considered ambrosia and a blessing in life
Was there until he remained affluent,
Leaving those wood-peckers behind
Came back he to his koel at home!
Once she knows that her better-half has come,
Her sickened mind became a spear of ire,
'Did you come as a wayfarer estranged'
She mocked and hotly shouted at him, "Halt!"

Amicable wife as soft as cow but now
Appeared terrible to him as a charging tiger
And so he became nervous and bewildered;
Nicely to soften her, he spake sweetly
'Eye of the eye'. You fly with your fancy!
Hence you are belching fire and smoke!
Because I am a man, you needn't harbour doubts myriad!
All these days I had been to see the patridge-fighting-
So sweetly he spake and sought to soften her to the core!

But she

Amidst her laughter derisive, spat her fury
As if to scatter burning coal and spake
'I have heard that you have returned
After witnessing a patridge-fight.
Those birds, in disrobing themselves and
To wage a war of clasping embrace
I presume that the bard, your friend may have
Even attuned the Yal as breeze from a mount.

Oh! It's a pity that because of patridge fighting
I did see on your person a lot of ulcerous wounds!
New and newer partridges dashed against
And fought with you resulting on your solid shoulders
Bearing a lot of ulcerous wounds on your body too!
Even on yielding to be vanquished
Because you fought for a long time
Memorable marks there are on your face
Which I see on your being as the
Dark spots are found on the surface of the moon!

Thus

Having heard the words exploded,
Eliminating his words of untruth
Confessed he, 'My dear! You have known the entire truth
Forgive me of my folly committed unknowingly!
Bless and take me in, my dear!
Thus he wailed pitifully at her feet.

Herself

Without mitigating even an atom of her fury,
Who am I to pardon you? Those beautiful partridges
That you blessed and yielded to
Will wait for you, again to be blessed.
Go there again without letting them down!
Thus said she and went back soon!
Alas! It's a pity that he stands there like a statue!

The Unique Gift of Atikaman

The king whose whiskers are as pointed as a squirrel's tail
Is Pandyan Atiyaman Neduman Anci
Who pioneered the sugar-cane crop in Tamil land-
Because he was born of Tamil-loving Atiyars
He too became one of the Atiyamans;

Holding Takadur as capital, he reigned supreme.
To stabilise his fame on earth,
Bearing strength on his shoulders strong
Vanquishing foes at the twinkling of eyes
And desiring to confront enemies, in case of a fall
Though he named himself anci, meaning fearful
He led a dignified life as a fearless tiger.
Avvai, an empress among poets sang
In glory of him wholeheartedly and
Spoke in adulation of his ethical fervour.

'Be it known to enemies who conspire a war
We have a genuine friend of ours,
Atiyaman, who is strong and brave
As much as that of a single chariot-wheel
Framed in a month's time by a carpenter,
Capable of making eight chariots in a day.

The king, on a day wandered about in the morn
Speared the animals in plenty
And returned from his hunting
Saw a crevice en route surprisingly
Wherein grew a Nelli tree lofty in height

Bearing a single fruit alone
Among its branches and clustered foliage,
Having heard from a turbaned saint that
Its sweetness would truly prevent mortality
He plucked the fruit of its branch undelayed.

Presuming that their king would eat it
His warriors from Takadur walked erect
Following their leader from the forest
Netuman Anci, on arrival at his mansion,
Sent word for the great poetess Avvai.

I know why you have called me, O, king!
Is't not to depute me on a mission to Tondaiman?
Queried she and volunteered to go on it.
'Before undertaking that benign mission,
Have this Nelli fruit' the king offered it to her!
Avvai, being as cheerful as lily on a moonlit night
Tasted it and found it to be of sweetness.
In eating of this rare fruit, one will get
A life prolonged, so had said a saint in the wild!

What's the use of my longevity on earth?
If Avvai lives long, Tamil will live for ages!
Mine will be as long as Takadur remains
Let Avvai live long as does Tamil' said the king;
Without mindful of eating of the fruit himself,
The king of Takadur offered the fruit presuming
That if its uniqueness is informed, she wouldn't eat.
And hence he offered it endearingly to her
Without telling of its effect
And this poem is the fruit of gratitude to that
poetess great.

A Heart sweeter than Waters of the Blue Mountain

In an anthology of tens each in chapters ten
Patirruppattu, a grove of intellectual orchard
The thief called Time wrought havoc and hence
Poems numbering eighty in chapters eight remain.
What do the eighty say?
Life is not mere eating and sleeping!
Living up to the glory in waging war
And gaining victory or death heroic, is life real
Also munificence to those who are needy
And to those who are well versed in Tamil but poor.
With a parrot like woman playful and sportive
Living endearingly with a spirit united

Literatures resounding with martial heroism
Of the ethnic Tamils such as Cera, Chola and Pandyas
Besides recounting the pride of the country
Constitute the property of our peerless nation;
Of these the one, a refulgent pearl is Patirruppattu
A historical treasure of the heroic Cera dynasty;

Even if sensing it from a distance,
It exudes a gentle fragrance of Tamil as of screw-pine,
The ninth idyll, a bouquet, by Perunkunrurkilar,
A famous poet known for his majestic style
Exposes the grandeur of Tamil in its flavour.

In this idyll

To Kuttuvan Irumporai and queen consort Antuvancellai
Was born a son, the lamp of glory
They named him Ilanceral Irumporai.

But he

With his shoulders bearing strength
And heart bearing justice and truth
With a banner of Vanci, the big country,
He led successfully many an expedition militarily.
Vanquished the hilly region of Viccikkon and
Thence under the banner of his arrow,
He defeated the Chola and the Palayan Maran;

Furious as a gale he was as a charging tiger
And a roaring lion in battle front.
Played he with the heads of his foes
As if they are the balls of badminton;
Greatly surprised at his sinewy strength
Perunkunrurar met him in a camp of war.

Conveyed him the news that how his royal wife
An unalloyed gold is miserable at his separation;
"As a doe that suffers due to lack of shadow
In the presence of cheerful maidens florally decked,
The misery of your spouse resulted in her sallowness
Which spreds all over her physique but what
Sparkles like gold is her bushy eyelid and forehead
Which you must stroke and wipe off her misery".

Added the poet further: "To embrace the royal spouse
You leave the war-front now itself and to start
By yoking the horses to the chariot;
Because of your returning towards your
Ever smiling belle, expecting you there,
Here will be an endless pleasure
Among enemies in the front.

They will also say among themselves
That they will be free from the sound of the martial drum
Of the king Ilanceral Irumporai;
At least for a few days and hence
They would concur with your decision
Of going to Vanchi to see for yourself your spouse.
The time that you spend with your royal consort
Is the time for these alien kings to take rest,
And hence you allow them to sleep-thus he added.

Having listened to the counsel of the poet.
The king nodded to grant some rest
To his foes who run about, in the field of war.
He went back to assuage the burning lust
Of his royal spouse who waited for him in tears.
His warriors too on his order to return
Ran back joyfully and embraced warmly
Their own fair and young maidens!

'Hail to the Tamil poet' was the chorus recited
By all, as the roaring of the ocean wavelets.
So soon the night has gone off was the wonder
Of the Cera king who was one with his wife!

When the surprised king showered kisses in thousands
On the ivory breast of the admirable queen,
She thanked within herself the benevolence of the Poet.
For having induced the King to go home.

The king is with me only because of the poet's persuasion
And hence my gratitude to him, she said.
Pressing her face with that of her spouse,
Besides gently stroking his shoulders,
She whispered, 'My dear, let me have a boon!'

"I will fairly grant any thing you want, my dear!
Excepting the mandate of being with you
And not to go to the battle front
Where I drive off the foes by tearing them open"
Thought I, why you have come, said she
Today to save me of my misery;
But for the poet Perunkunrurkilar
The honeyed revelry I wouldn't have obtained;
Hence be liberal in gifting him she said.

'Source of my pleasure, let me give you one!
Said he and gently gave her a kiss
Went straight to the Chamber royal
And sent word for the Tamil savant!
Folded he his hands on his arrival
And gifted him with thirty and two thousand gold;
If this is what he smilingly gave by informing him,
Silently he gave a lot of houses and hamlets sans informing him.

Tamil poet, as a response

Thought I that Ceran has learnt only
The martial art of quenching the desire of revenge
By cutting across the combat-front in chariot,
Making the field entire stench with flesh and blood
And scattering it with mangled bodies;

Nay, equally desirous was he to embrace
The scholars and savants with gifts liberal
As much as he was to march against his enemies.
In a depth unfathomable even to a rowing rod,
The ear-rings of ladies who leaps and swim about
If get loosened and lost, could be visible
To those who see below from above;
Such transparent and sandal-laden waters
Are those that flow rushingly from the mountain blue;

The mind and heart of the Cera king
Are warmer and sweeter, I swear
Than the waters of the blue mount, said the poet,
After hearing this tribute of the poet
The king once again returned to the front
And on whose army's martial sound
The foes became unnerved and bewildered!

A brother demanding the head

The Cheerful bevy of floral beauties feel
The sweetness of honey sucked by bees
Blended with juice of the sugarcane and
Say with delectable pride that even the morsel
Being carried by the row of ants is
The bounty of our patron Kumanan
Who benevolently reigned the whole of Konku land.

The savants who sing the glory of Tamil
Frequented him with their admiration meaningful.
Their adulation would reverberate as the ocean-waves
Their recitation as the Tamil music, melodious.
That gathering is the confluence of love genuine
From where emerged a fragrance of poetic orchid.

A poet who perpetuates his verses in Tamil
Was Peruncittiranar, a scholar illumined;
Immaculately virtuous his housewife,
Also his mother along with his children
All were in poverty, unbearable to the poet
Who was sinking in indigence sicken in physique!
Withering would be his wife beloved!
Crawling like a worm his mother aged!
The hungry children would roll about the empty pots--
Confounded poet thought of and proceeded to Kumanan,
Who had given gifts in plenty till his palms get reddened.

Brushing aside the thought that
who could ever be a patron after Kari and Pari,
Said the poet, ye boasteth, Dear chief of Konku,
That yourself and the rain are synonymous!
Pay heed to my request! I need gold for my domesticity.
Once in the course of my travel did I hear
The bounty of Veliman and went there for donation;
A year had gone by since he died and Ilaveliman,
His brother not only declined but harshly responded me!
To contain the arrogance of Ilaveliman, O, King
Provide me with an elephant which I must tether
In his royal court yard and make him feel ashamed".
No sooner the poet said than Kumanan awarded him so.

This Konku chief had a brother Ilankumanan
As Velman, the heroic had one Ilaveliman as his younger.
Ilankumanan took a different stance once and began,
If wealth, force and mansions are gifted to poets
The country will go bankrupt and hence,! he added.
"Can't allow this to continue and let me have my share'!

"I have with me the Mutiramalai of orchard-fame
And you too with words that are bitter and sour!
What else you want- jewels, mansions, forces
All are yours - but let me have only love fraternal"
So said Kumanan with tears shedding profusely!

Still the feeling of enmity in his younger has not gone off!
He was of a mind not candid and amenable!
'Even before sun-rise on the morrow, said he sternly
Leave the nation and proceed to the forest!

Elder Kumanan did so and felt elated at love unbounded
Shown in the wild by doves, deers, sparrows, peacocks,
And koels more than what is shown by mankind.
But constant suffering is nothing but there is no
Tamil poet to provide with me sweet company!
Not only the royal sceptre, brother had grabbed
By treachery that was blazing!
Was he happy with that, when evil elements
Kindled the feeling of enmity that lie buried.

Ilankumanan mouthed the words harsh as follows:
"Bore with the elder so far, but he
Attempted waging a war against me
Do not obstruct me in offering a trophy.
Of myriad gold if his head is brought to me"

Head-cutting directive was tremulous and shocking;
Broader than wavy ocean was the bounty of elder
Kumanan
Who was also a fountain, a connoisseur of arts!
If his head is cut off, there won't be Mutiramalai!
Our blood will be frozen, so said the public
Spitting the trophy with fury and ire.

With an idea of applying floral wreath of Tamil
The poet came to the elder Kumanan;
It's Cattanar who felt aggrieved of his abode in forest.
Next morn he saw in the wilderness his patron
Who felt as if oasis is seen in a desert
As if inhaled a southern breeze in the evening
And enjoyed what the poet brought in his script.

"Rare poet thou are, didn't visit me earlier!
Reached me miserable! Let me do one thing!
Take my head now! Hasten to my brother!
Collect the cost of my head! Wipe off your distress
So said Kumanan elder! Sword he unsheathed!
Objected the savant! hastened out of the forest!
Where lives the young who is spoilt by evil?"
Queried the poet and showed the sword with which
He said he had cut off his head and demanded the prize!
"Elder was bold relying on you, the young
That believer, you betrayed and offered the prize-money
Let me get it now on the proof of this
sword-blood oozing"

The young saw the sword, stained of his elder's blood
Found himself bellowed of misery!
"Oh! my brother! Have you fallen to your own sword"!
The demise of his elder broken into pieces
His evil, deadly and poisonous mind
As if a mountain is pulverized of a detonator.
Wept bitterly as his innocence surged high.

"Learnt I that he would offer his life to Tamil",
Said the poet
"But if you hasten to the wild now itself
Fall at his feet, and see his life revived!
Now You touch the sword-tip to see the red-dye not blood!

Will the young stand there still?
Prostrated at his elder's feet and got hugged by him
Who had been already in a group of scholars
As bees that swarm around the hive!
It was he who had consented to part with his head
To the poet who sought a gift of gold:
But now his gift to his younger was an excuse and pardon!
What the penitent younger gave as a gift
To his elder was the royal canopy now.
But the elder has made over it for Tamil.

He, the Rain and She, the Earth

The mirror of moon hangs on the wall of the sky
For stars to look at and dress themselves;
Though we cannot see our face, my dear, there on the sky
I see in your sweet face that moon itself!
To look alike exactly, you have collyrium on your eyelids
And a dark spot painted on your graceful cheek.

On a plea to show me the crescent, a piece of
coconut kernel!
You will bury your bright face on my broad chest!
Exposing your forehead below the parting line of hair!
Oh! my dear! You should explain me a fact,
Isn't the one that darkens the moon called New Moon?
When I added still, 'Are you an exception?'
She buried her full-face on my lap.
Exposing her black tresses to be seen by me
And to make me deem it to be a New moon!
On pointing out as such with your fingers
I bowed down, kissed you and gently stroked your hair!

Oh! the slender-waisted, I said I don't believe
The mythical story of a snake devouring the moon!
But you retorted to question me as to
How could your action of 'Swallowing' my cheek
be called?
Didn't you swallow and release me in the nocturnal bed?

Enticed by your poetic style, I did kiss you soon
You did return the same but forgetting all these
I stayed elsewhere on errand but that shouldn't be

A reason for miserable sulking, my dear!
Even your feigned dislike exudes a charm.
As notation is essential for chanting music,
Playful quarrelling is for our pleasant intercourse.

Hence eclectic I am to see your sulking!
But if exceeds a limit, even manna will be toxic!
When evading me on my approaching you nearer,
I enjoy your pleasant beauty from a distance!
When removing your bodice to see the rotund buds within
Though your hands reluctantly cover the body
Your mouth utters 'leave me off' but
Your eyes alone gesture me for reconciling
Alas, the pleaure I enjoy then, is delectable.

Let us go towards the silvery waterfall!
Look afar the smooth flowery bed as if
To say that time is waning out vainly!
Suffice would be your sulking and hence
Smilingly open your mouth of pearl-like teeth
And have a swing of my shoulder and play!
Whether my pet's mind faded?
Wandered about for me? Shocked at my absence?
Whether suffered and trembled like aspen leaves
In not being certain of my returning?

Thus

A doe-like maiden suffering out of loneliness
Waiting for her seperated lover;
She feigned an anger even after his arrival
Hence to acquire her, he was full of description!

But she

Why is he merely talking and standing?
Should he not pull me down on the grassy plot
And shower kisses in hundreds, nay unaccountably
To redden my cheeks and even to swell the lips?
If he does so, will I reject it outrightly?
Will he not come forward to grasp me on warmly
Such was her despair and trepidation without
Controlling her fiery lust burning within.

'Pulling me on a couch the other day,
Swore that as *Anrils*, we will never part with--
What's the use of such promises and sermonizing?
One month will be over by the morning next.
You forgot your promise of returning the next day--
Perhaps leaving me in the lurch, nay to die!
Say it is but natural for men to forget--
I will prove that it's easier for women to die!

Thus

Before closing her ruddy lips from
Uttering the words attuned with melancholy
He rushed forth and hugged her warmly
Oh! my sweet, she said and did the same.
Cynthia on the bluish sky hid herself behind the Clouds
And even a doe receded behind a bush out of shyness!
Parrots and doves in pairs flew off the branches
Implying that these two have no sense of shame
To have their erotic game on the floral couch.
Sulking over, followed by lusty pleasure, asked she
Will there be a decay of separation ever in our life!

Then he said to her!
Oh! my life, look here and listen!
No force on earth can separate me from you!

Sans knowing who begot you and
Who gave birth to me and even kinship
Between my father and yours
We became friends mutual!
You took me as if from nowhere
As I took you in my heart from nowhere,
When raindrops fall on the ochre soil
That colour blended with the water
Cannot be taken off its hue
Similar is the indivisible blending of our hearts!
Set aside, hence the very thought of separation'
When the young man said so in simple terms
She became earth again and he, the rain!

Glory to the Kingdom

Uraiyur chieftain Nedunkilli
To provide a vent for the fury of his forces,
Ordered for the martial song and war
Against Cholan Nalankilli of Pumpukar;

Not satisfied with the vast stretch of land
He has come in advance arrogantly
To shed the blood of Tamils on both sides;
Why should he be avaricious of alien land?
If he himself comes in person and bows reverently
Requesting me the land itself as a gift
I would have given my life too!
Giving up this simple method in a humble way
What arrogance has he to confront me in a way
Assuming me to be puny and paltry?
Listen to what I say and convey firmly to Nedunkilli!
He be informed not to play fun against my sword!
So said Nalankilli of Pumpukar.

Thus

What Nalankilli spoke on the eve of war
Was ridiculed as comical by Nedunkilli
Who swore to attack with all his might
And presented himself in the battle array.

Cholan of Pumpukar, unmindful of war
Heaved his chest donned of garland
Said, 'This Nedunkilli will fall down soon
As a blind man stumbles across a sleeping tiger,
As tender shoots of bamboo get trampled
Under the heavy foot of majestic pachyderms
If in front of the broad-shouldered warriors of mine
If he does not fall and lay down on the earth,
Let the garland of mine be debased to embrace many a
Common, cunning women devoid of true love
Merely entertain many men physically, swore he.

The purport of Chola's swearing is this:
Men of high calibre will not desire the whores.
Cholan Nalankilli martially emerged out of his fort
Cholan Netunkilli fell down on the battlefield!
The reason why he is called as one who is killed
at Kariyaru
There's an opinion both the Killis are brothers;
Kovurkilar's interference at the field of battle
Proved futile and they didn't pay heed to his wise counsel

Therefore

Nalankilli became the king of Uraiyur
And ruled there also faultlessly of his sceptre;
Thence one day in the court royal,
When the elders began arguing that reigning is not easy
The king with his erudition and intelligence
Spoke vividly on the contemporary polity
To the admiration of everybody assembled.

After the reign of the monarchs of old,
When the successors obtain the right of rule,
The quality of it will be in proportion to their character.
The kingdom will be unbearable burden
To those who coerce the countrymen and
Begin ruling by levying taxes in plenty;

More so when they don't have the perseverence!
Those who safeguard the kingdoms well
And are dauntless, unyielding to alien threats
Will be admired by the annals of the nation;

That rule will be as light and weightless
As the feather of a swan or a full grown reed
That goes dry in an empty tank.

Thus

The savants wondered at the talent
Of having expounded two types of rule!
Hailed the king Nalankilli for a long life!
He was a poet too and hence he ruled
Not only the kingdom but even the mother tongue as well.

The Great Poet of Parampumalai

The poet Kapilar was born in reputed
Thiruvathavoor, a hamlet that lies within
Pandya nadu known for the ensign of fish.
He held an intimacy as firmly as the deer's horn
With Pari, the chieftan famous for his generous gifts,
The beauty for the hills is due to rains and
The beauty for Parampumalai is due to Pari;
Presume that the sweetness of jackfruit is also his gift
This patron doesn't pay undue respect to his wealth.
When Mullai creeper pined for a solid support
He has left his bejewelled chariot for it to spread on!

Studied we in myths of ancient days
Bellicose Narata would go to God Muruka and say
Valli, the bright round-faced belle befits you well;
Muruka jumped ahead to reach her
Wandered about like a gale on his peacock-chariot well.

Listen to this imagination:

Without seeing the lady despite an arduous wandering
Muruka of budding moustache neared Parampumalai
And queried an old lady where Valli has gone;
That old lady directed him to climb up the hill
To see the belle on the apex of the hill;
Fastly he climbed and eagerly asked Whither is valli;
Those who were there welcomed him to see in person--
What he saw there was valli root everywhere.

What a sportive mischief of all the old souls!
Even the grand old lady has disappointed me--
So thought Muruka, the God and ran back hurriedly.

Flow of honey from beehive all over the hillocks
Creeper of valli roots getting drenched in the flow;
Jack fruits at the bottom of the trees
As cubs clustered around Mother swine's udder;
In the hillocks of Pari capable, of produce with no tillage
The rock-ponds innumerable as the stars in the sky.
Though I narrate this in popular Tamil
Kapilar speaks the same in poetical Tamil

As patron Pari has fertile hillock and fearless mind
Also an aesthetic sense, he became devoted to Kapilar.
Has fathered a couple of girls of rare beauty;
Many have claimed the hands of the girls in vain
And attacked Parampumali but failed still.
As the bees that broke the bee-hive emerge
The Cera, Chola and Pandya kings besieged
Parampumalai.

Unperturbed Kapilar went in front of the three
Oh! Thou! of the heroic lineage! You are waging war!
The three hundred hamlets of Pari will resound
with drums!
You cannot conquer them by besieging;
Hold on to my words, all you three!
To those who pleaded him with song and dance
He gave everything he owned.
Be it known that Parampumalai, Pari and myself
Are the three that remain behind
If you commence war relying on your mettle
Defeat and fall will cling your shoulders!

Be aware the strength of Patron Pari whose domain
Will never surrender even in hundred days.
Still let me tell you how you can win over
Our hero born of ancient family of Evvi.
Keep your attack in abeyance, relax your besiege
All the three leave your soldiery behind
And appear as mendicants before Pari
To go back with Pari himself as a gift.

Declining the benevolent advice of the poet
The three swore that they wouldn't get back;
With the trap cunningly laid by some hard-cores
They snatched the life of Pari, the patron
Kapilar, the savant bore the anxiety and
Wandered about and lit the domestic lamp
For both the daughters of Pari who
Commanded a zenith of life reputed.

At length the poet handed over the two
To the Tamil poetess Avvai saying
That his job is over with that and
He cannot live a life alone without Pari
and hence to control the invincible misery
He gave up his life by fasting unto North;
Evil elements there are not knowing
The true meaning of friendship in the pragmatic world!
But the bosom friendship of Kapilar and Pari
Is like a memorial-pillar, sky-rocketing.

House of the Parents-in-law

With the Himalayan granite, chosen by the Chera King,
They suitably erected a statue for Kannagi,
As if built with the rest of that massive stone
This man has shoulders strong, legs and hands
A stately shape, structred well and strongly built.

Of the flowers showered at Kannagi's statue,
The petals of the best one could equal this lady's cheeks.
Both lovers are like honey delicious, insatiable!

Inscribed mutually in their thoughts to live together.
But the parents have connived, abetted by relatives

To wreck their decision, even at the budding stage.
'Our daughter enjoys a life palatial rich

He, handsome no doubt but hails of a family poor!
Instead of putting the lit-lampstead brass in the hall

Shall anybody place it on the pial of a roofless cottage
However sinewy and strong physique, he has of course?

Is he not the poorest of poor, thoroughly a zero
For buying even the slenderest golden chain

To tie around the neck of our daughter sweet?
In heroic mettle, unequal of course and for that

Shall we put a wax doll on the pedestal of fire?
Can't brook our dear young and comely girl in tears

In a hand-to-mouth family that struggles for gruel.
Dear maid, come hither to inform her in the grove

That this is the decision we and the relatives taken!
So ordered the parents rich and ran she hurriedly

Hoping to effect a change in her maiden's mind.
Awry-faced maid unloaded the news absolutely

To the maiden who remained unmindful of ill-rumour
In a grove of wafting breeze southern!

Swore the lady, says with fiery feelings inward;
After deeply ploughing with bulls strong

Yoking them to the age-old poles of sturdy palm,
In the fields moistured because of overnight rain

And by sowing a potful of pure and fresh seeds
However wealth my parents heap in gold instead of grain,

Once I have given myself up to one person,
Be it silver, gold, diamond or gems in mansion

Garden, groves with pellucid streams therein,
Nothing I am desirous of, in my place of birth

Won't touch anything with both my hands!
He has yielded his shoulders to me for clinging

Not because I would take to him a lot of wealth!
Even if plucking raw maize and drying in rocky upland

Clear off its chaff, giving it to the needy
And cook it in faggots wild with coarse green

And eating it without salt even millet on alternate days
In a plate borrowed and even if I were to remain

So lowly a status to wear tattered saree
With no cloth for a change of dress

Let it be known that my love for him is indestructible!
The place where he is, is a palace for me!

May be my birth place an affluent one,
But still, even gruel in my second home is a manna.

Life with him whom I deemed to be my husband
Is the life dignified and a life chaste!

Fly back like a wind and my parents be informed
Of my decision now, without wasting time!

Then

What job do I have now here?
Said the maid and ran back hurriedly there!

As there is no folly in the rejoinder of the daughter,
The parents too fixed a date with no demur.

Karikalan, the Monarch of Cauvery Land

Wavelets kiss cauvery-maiden at her mouth
With the tip of their tongue at Orchid Pumpukar
Where ruled the reputed Karikal Cholan;
Deprived of his father when he was unborn
Deprived him of his kingdom, his wicked relatives;

Chola Empress his ma, expectant as she is
To bring him up safely later on,
Left the palace, sought the help of a savant old
And led a life unknown, unseen by the wicked.

Pregnancy over and gave birth she
A male-child as fair as a crescent-moon;
Immaculately beautiful the baby was
Shining as a sword unsheathed and bright.

Kissed the baby insatiably she
And named Tirumavalavan, Calling him further on
"Lamp of the family and Incarnate of my husband",
Hugged him, hailed him long to rule the world all!

The fact of the queen's delivery of a son,
Unamiable relatives maternal, came to know of.
Conspired to put him to an end and hence
Circled around to snatch, as does wolf a hare.

Towards a hamlet near Uraiyur they ran
Sensing their source of enmity growing there
Planning to kill the baby with mother and an old man
Gutted with fire the cottage they stayed.

Dreaming of her baby vanquishing the rivals in age,
Though now sleeping calmly on the cot
She just closed her eyes for a while
When the fanatic fire smouldered.

With eyes blinking, shouting traumatically
She waved her hands sweepingly to the cradle
Where sleeping within, the son of the soil!
But alas! She breathed her last.

Braving a spear that came rushingly
Savant old who sheltered them there
Swore that he wouldn't let down his country;
Took the baby Valavan on his shoulders
And left the hut aided by his unsheathed sword!

Aimless of any direction, the old man hastened:
And disappointed of their incomplete success
The base-minded foes deputed their men
To go in search of babe and the old man all around!

Though a sacrifice the mother has done of her life
Determined to make the baby, a man complete
That conscientious old man despite his age advanced
Swore that he would fulfil what he planned

When carrying the baby Valavan in hand
Cutting across the line of foes with his sword
and crossing the blazing fire on the way
Got the baby's ankles a bit charred.

Even the back scar on the baby's legs
Seemed to be beautiful to the eyes of the old man
Who renamed the baby as Karikal Peruvalavan!

Heard the sustaining growth of a lineal descendency
Concealing the fury but with honeyed words
Came in front the claimants with saintly garb
With a deliberate lie and a dissembling look.

"Improper it is, oh, grandpa in your long custody
To keep the royal elephant concealed long as a fox!
Have no fear as we speak with divine blessing;

With piety to and belief with us and with no army along.
Send Karikal Valavan with us as his
Day of ruling is not far dissemblingly said his relatives.

The saintly garb confound even the stately heroes!
Unable hence to understand the felony involved
The grand old man bade Valavan farewell!

Fell on his feet and shedding tears of joy
Karikalan got the blessings of the old man
Solemnly followed the saffron-clad sinners
And walked erect with a sword in hand.

Stories of divine beings and preachings moralistic
Meticulous narrations on the way
Magnetised Karikalan who fell into their trap unbalanced.

"Tired we are and hence dear Valavan
Let us all relax a bit in a high ground near;
This made the lad lie down and sleep during which time
He was made to swoon and abducted soon.

Relieved of the herbal swooning,
The lad began confoundedly searching for saints.
In a cell you are, to be done away with!

'You, the son of the widow' shouted thus
The crowd of relatives and the saint undisguised.
Barred they the cell-doors with glee malicious!

"Go off, ye fools who do not know that the moon
Tears away the clouds murky", whispered the lad within!
How the imprisoned lad escaped as a flood
That breaks open the dam, says Urutirankannan
The poet in his idyll, Pattinappalai!

As a tiger that had freely roamed about in wild,
Got itself trapped in a cage
Karikalan who remained incarcerated
Did not contain himself like a foolish sheep.

As an elephant that has befallen in a pit
Fill up the cavity with soil by its tusk
Boldly emerge out of it in search of its mate
And hobnob with it, is depicted by the poet,

To compare nicely to the event of
Karikalan escaping the cells of the prison!
The lad who emerged out of it with ebullience
Aimed his sword towards the enemies cruel!

Pattinappalai speaks of stories in detail
That the owner of the banner with tiger's emblem
Both in Pumpukar and Uraiyur
Is none other that Karikal Cholan himself!

One who goes singly wild, bereft of lady-love
Would say the track is harsher than the spear of Karikalan.
But he who imagines when fondling his mate's shoulder
Would say it is warmer than the sceptre of Karikalan!

Fighting hero, Tiger's cub, who ruled the Tamil land,
Karikalan whose fame be hailed by all of us
Along with the honour and integrity endowed in him.

She is Music

To see her endearing lady comfortably
Enjoying her wedded life domestic,
A maiden on an evening
Hastened to her lady's home.

Noticing the doors slightly ajar,
She pushed them a bit more and saw a spectacle
That made her close the eyes, with hands both;
But when glanced through the finger's gap she bowed
her head!

On a mat laid in the hall
She, like a domestic dove was laying on the back
Unmindful of her apparel deranged;
Her mate buried his face on the breasts elevated
And playing pranks like a baby
Of course with her assent mutual;

She saw her endearing maiden stepping in
So friskly arose covering her wheatish brown physique
But yet, he had not given her up!
To quench his lust in a clasp warm
He took the fabric nice around her waist
And began undressing her freely,
What the least garment she had on her.

As if furious, she pushed aside his hands
With angry eyes commanding, 'leave me off;
She accorded a welcome to her maid asking when she
did come!
'Let you live long' said the maid happily
And answered' I have come at a time when

Your lover, for want of a pillow for support
Buried his face on your bare chest--
Meaningfully she spoke thus in a sarcastic vein--
And asked, 'May I have permission to sit here?'

Hurriedly

Setting right the dress straightening himself,
Said he unable to bear the heat of lust,
When I attempt bathing in a pool cold,
Should you come unknowingly of the time?
Queried, he, sportively.
The maid, no less in a mischievous repartee
Boldly faced him and answered.

'Quite often, we spoke about with one another
Sympathetically on seeing you cupping your cheeks
And sitting alone with concern and worry
In not being able to meet the sweet lady in person
Even though, seeing her once in a blue moon'

But now

'As one in order to pluck the Ambal flowers.
Gets into a beautiful pond of swarming ayirai fish,
Stands in the middle of it but cries of extreme thirst,
Why should you hurry, unmindful of time and day
Despite the fact that my lady is inseperable with you?'
said the maid.

Fix the opportune time before being off
As to when should I quench my thirst herein;
Either the lass put it in her memory or
Inscribing it on the muddy wall,
Aware of one truth, Dear Maiden
Capable of words reasoning and sweet!
Feeling of love is not to be invited' he said,
By replying to the maid.

'Seeing you throbbing with love today
I wonder how you did withstand the feeling
Of surging love and passion fiery
In not seeing her in the days of illicit meet'
Maid said so and without waiting for a reply
Ran hurriely off.

Closing the doors and putting the latch
Safely now to fulfil the task incomplete
He began, unmindful of his lady's squabbling;
What else will she do but tacitly
Accepting the dictates of the moment?
Not only she consented but yielded to be tuned!

Tiger's Cub in the Direction of War

The martial drum sounded as a clarion call
Given for warriors quickly to respond.
The heroes to safeguard the nation put their lives at stake
Rushed in response and gathered in groups.

Drumming sound, the naked lovers heard
When they twined their arms around one another;
Fearing he would arise and depart at the clarion call,
The lady hugged him tight in fond embrace;
Slightly pushing aside her face and breast
Arose he, the cub of a lion and took up the sword.

Bereft of her laughter and connubial bliss, asked she,
In a faltering voice, falling down at his feet,
Before depriving of the life of the foes,
Is it fair that you pluck me of my life?', she asked.

Embracing his love who start shedding tears
As the dew-laden petals fall on the meadow,
Said he 'However much we are one, in body and mind
If the martial drums call for risking our personal lives,
Is it fair to hobnob with a woman, my dear
Without safeguarding our honour and our nation?
Should I not keep on looking into the sky to see
Our dazzling victorious flag fluttering aloft at a height?
Surely we shall meet, if only I am alive after the war;
If not, shower your kisses on my corpse, hailing heroism!
In a minute, before her eyes bedimmed with glistening
tears
Sprang he, as a tiger's cub towards the direction of war!

As the banners fluttered about like wavelets
When the troops boomed with a thunderous sound,
And when the heads floated about in the stream of blood
Entered he, the hero into the fray of the field!

Advancing through the columns, heroic as he
After scraping off the heads of the foes,
Downed he, a massive elephant with his scimitar
Drew it back and saw it bent and twisted --
For a while confounded he, to continue the fight
After getting it free of its bends and twists;
To straighten the scimitar off its bends,
Dawned in his mind, an idea opportune;
To perform it soon, he neared a fallen pachyderm!

Two tusks of the massive dead elephant fallen
Were found by him straight upwards;
In between them he put the sword and set aright
As a green bamboo is straightened off its bends.

No more reinforcements to stake the lives
In the hands of warriors like him
Who are likely to resume the fight with unsheathed sword;
And hence the foes traumatically ran back for life;
"The foes who separated us are gone for ever; said she,
In the shoulders of one who returned from the field
To pour her forth with kisses sweet;
She clinged on and they glued themselves into one.

Not here, as my sister is nearby

Hers is a set of sparkling teeth
As white as the seeds of melon while laughing;
Her prattling words are as sweet as toddy;
A Tamil maiden of such rare beauty on the sandy coast
Played hide and seek besides
Burying and unearthing the dry fruits of punnai, a seed
of which
She left behind once, has grown into a tiny tree, now.

That shy maiden of unexcelled beauty
Nurtured the plant with chosen nutrients!
The mother has brought up this comely daughter;
But the daughter has grown up a punnai plant.
On a certain day, the mother has addressed her daughter;
Oh! Ye who daily take care of and attend to the plant,
And see that the shadowy punnai has also grown
along with you;
Hence let me deem it to be your sister-like.

The gladdened daughter felt exuberent in delight
Sprouted with cheers and hugged the plant
'You are like my sister as my mother has put it;'
When the pleasant maiden was standing thus
Very near the plant she had tendered well,
A pair of hands startled her by closing her eyes
from behind;
The lady of illumined eyes understood it in a second
That it is the chieftain of the Neital region,
Known for the clattering sound of the
right-sprialled conch-
Who has closed her eyes and embraced her;

"Have you come", she said and pat he replied,
'Did you feel disheartened that I haven't come;
Once twice and thus innumerable
Showered he, his warm kisses;
Aligning the couple of her ball-like breasts on him
She said, "Let there be nothing furtheron, my dear!
A sister of mine has been looking at both of us;"

'Where hides your sister? What a surprise is it!
When was she born', queried the young chieftain.
"Because I reared this tender punnai tree,
Asked my mother to deem it as my sister
That has grown along with me ever since;
Do not embrace me hence, neglecting what I say;
Do not tempt me on, by your sweet flattering;
To taste the succulent fruit of cheeks and
To do all that accompany in action,
As the very presence of this sister bars me in shyness,
To perform the delectable pranks of ours
In the glittering moon-lit night
Shall we go under a nearby green-wood?"
Said she, the musical chatterer, inclining on his shoulders.
'If that is your sweet command, my dear,
There is no obstacle at all', said he.
Gently pulled her slender waist to his side,
He ensured her round face on his broad chest.

Requiem by the daughters of Paari

He has a sword in hand and is liberal at heart;
Vel pari, he is named in the annals of Literature
Even though the triad of Tamil kings besieged his
Parampu hill
Undaunted he was in opposing those Cera, Chola and
Pandyas,
But never weak-kneed to cling on to his diadem.
Even though foes in plenty could overcome Pari,
None could outbeat his unique munificence;
Hence his wide reputation, even though ages gone-by;
Paari was once won-over, befelled and killed by the triad
So says the world, not knowing the name of those three!

But how is it, even though Pari is dead in war
His name is alive, unspoilt and inerasable?
Status of being a hero alone doesn't bring in glory.
Every step that he measures ethically unfaltering
With the sole aim of living with humane spirit
Alone shows the way for succeeding generations
Of descendants in a growing society.

Pari, the patron for hamlets around Parampu
Was similar to a kingpin of a chariot;
Having killed him after waging a war against,
The victorious triad conspired to carry off his
two daughters
But Kapilar, a poet-savant attempted, therefore
To safeguard the maidens at his own risk.

The world has hypocrites a few, disguising as benevolent
Enjoying the fruits of prosperity of friends
And running away when friends are in privation
Unmindful of the fact that it is utmost treachery.
In such a world as this, the poet Kapilar
Proved to be a friend of delectable sweetness;
Pari felt his nearness to be under a cool shade.
Such a one has left his daughters to fend themselves
As much as birds with broken wings, Kapilar heard.
He became wings for both of them and all three
flew away.

Earlier for a day or two, he entrusted the gems of
maidens two
To those who were sympathetic and of genuine love.
The two illumined gems were the caskets of beauty.
Unchiselled statues with the flavour of screw-pine.
The two daughters of Paari were like lightning that flashes.
Across the murky clouds of inclement weather.

In their place of refuge on the balcony upstairs
The daughters of Pari of beauty immaculate
Saw the flood of moonlight that resembled
The mouth of a boiling pot of milk.
Tears because of weeping, off and on
Had come and dried just below their lower brows.

But still, a fountain of Tamil overflowed within,
Emerged without as a requiem moving;
"Last month this day, as solid as a mass of butter
When the full moon was wandering forth
Our dear father Pari was with us cheerfully alive;
This month this day, no longer our father is;
The hill-country of ours is captured by the triad;
Deprived of our nation and our dear father too,
Stand alone we, distressed as we are . . ."

Having heard miserably the song melancholy
Poet Kapilar stroke the profuse locks of the lasses
Consoled them with words lovingly
'You will get princely consorts, soon!'

Neither the hill which was ours last month
Nor our father dear and what to do now--
Such a misery of the two images golden
Wabbling up pitifully as if on a blazing fire
They have brought to us a song of tragic note
But that too has news enough to provoke our melancholy.

The Moon on a Lotus pond

In the soil where runs the flooded river Vaigai
The gem among women, Perunkoppendu
With her heroic consort, chivalrous Puthapppandiyan
Who wears his combat-wounds as a garland,
Performed her household chores as a family lamp,
Besides being a woman of eloquence and intelligence.

Rising sun, the lord; full moon on the blue sky, was she!
Puthappandiyan of Ollaiyur, as a creeper of mullai
Crawled over everywhere and wedded to the land of Tamil;
The whole world glorified the bounty of Puthappandiyan
Who had around him a host of royal friends
Such as Titiyan of Pothiyamalai and Mavan of Mayyalur
Reputed Anthai, Sathan, Alizi, besides
Infuriating Iyakkan and tiger-like Thiran.

We, the Tamils have a customary practice among us
Such as mutual jealousy, struggle and the sequel of bloodshed!
Annals of Tamils speak vividly of Ceras, Cholas and
Pandyas as Monarchs of fame and intelligence;
But never it is said that they lived unitedly together;
Embittered we would be; but no use in recalling it!

Cera and Chola kings clanged their drum martial
Defying Puthappandiyan out of jealousy sheer!
"Oh! My Lord, my fear is because of the enemies two--
Tarry a while is my plea for their army is bigger"
Prevented thus Perunkkoppendu, the amiable-faced
With tears trickling out of her sooty eyes!

"What do you want me to do, my lady?
For the sake of you and the riches, the land and materials,
Shall I bow down my crest with bended knees?
If so, tell me why should I have my whiskers?
Without inscribing wide fame by dying with sword in hand
If I eke out my life as subservient and died
The world entire would spit at my cemetry!"

Inclining on the shoulders of him who is fiery like a lion,
Said she, 'Not that I want you to be subservient, my dear
'Surrendering' is a word which even useless man
Would be hesitant to write on the sand for sport!
Heroic you are; see that your foes run away from you--
Come back to get remedies on my lap for combat-wounds!

My closed lips and a couple of my hillocks below
Would be waiting with concern to provide fomentation!
To him who adored me as sweet honey and spirited doe
And kissed me all over my body with utmost love
Let me alone offer him the combat sword
To go to the front and slaughter the foes!
The arms Perunkkoppendu gave thus he received well
And hugged her close and drank her kisses to the lees.

To drive back the mass of enemy troops
That came in front with a martial drum,
He swore, ~See my sword unsheathed,
Let us see the victory in the combat-field
And if laurels of victory falls on the shoulders of foes,
I may have to part with my dear wife, the slender-waisted!
Let me have the disgrace of being dubbed a sinner
Of having lost all my friends and their comraderie.

Let me be cursed with a rebirth, if there is any;
In case of reincarnation, let me be a cheat of wild moor
From being called a ruler of the Southern region"

Thus

The column of exuberant Pandiyan soldiers took an
upper hand!
Even though the enemies ran away
Grievously-injured Puthappandiyan found himself
On the lap of his beloved Perunkkoppendu
Secured her kiss last and breathed his last.

'For the moon to wanderforth, no sky remains;
In a world minus my beloved, let me not be alive'
So said Perunkoppendu and followed suit
To the beweilderment of the whole of Pandya nadu;
Since there is no descendant to Pandya clan
They had made her a plea to rule the country.

But she

Addressing them twiice as 'My dear elders',
Ask me not to live with a heavy heart.
To ward off my undying misery
Decided I to-day itself with no bitterness
To kill myself by falling into a blazing fire.
Why should you prevent me from burning myself
After a life so congenial as that of anril has gone off?
When my broad-shouldered lord has breathed his last,
This fiery ditch and a lotus pond are alike to me"
No sooner did she say than she jumped into the fire!

A Song from the Woods!

Karaveeram is the name of a hamlet in Chola region;
Lived there an active young hero, a combatant warrior
Whose shoulders, many a fellow rubbed with wrongly
And got themselves pulverised as of coastal sand.
The tiger-ensigned soldiers of Chola region hailed him
happily;

Desirous he was in not only inscribing his name
With the tip of the sword, but also passionate
To weave a laurel of flowers from a garden of Tamil.
That warrior who was sharpening the spear
Grew the crop of words after sowing the seeds of letters.
The paddy-produce of beautiful Tamil, he saw in the field
And began one-day to harvest the same.

Images of Nature came in front one by one
And begged him to create a poem on each one of them.

Folding him with the feathers of active light,
The unique cynthia in the blue sky pestered him
To count the eggs of stars she has laid be poetised.

The rising sun has presented itself to argue
Why should he hesitate to paint it as a flower of the East.

The hillocks of silvery cascade of cold water
Wherein wanders the beautiful peacocks
Came in front of him in meandering path
Demanding him to devour their beauty.

A group of maidens of bewitching smile
While sportively throwing up one ball
When their two balls were jolting on the chest
Staged a dharna to have their doe-like glance drawn.

Colourful parrots came around him
Pleaded for poems to be sung on them.

A cluster of swans glided as boats
On the swirling waters of the stream
Requesting him to compose a set of ditties few.

Scenic beauty of thousand graces
Begged him to glorify them with no avail.
He stepped into the wild and spreaded his fancy
To secure a solid theme for his song.

Pachyderms stood after majestically
As stony hills of pitch black!
Broad-shouldered Karaveeran did not think
Even to spare his glances at them for a while.

Briskly-arose a he-lion, bestirred himself
Shaking his bushy mane and asked
Whether there is any objection to write
A graceful poem on his superb majesty.

As a sword that unsheathed
A tiger that emerged out of a cave
Countered him as if its wild fury
Is not more than enough to be a poetic theme.
That poet who did't take up the scroll
To scribble all the beauty that has fallen at his feet,
Saw at last a couple of monkeys
Making sure that his poems will live immortally
Brought out a blooming song in Tamil at length.

Beauty, beauty, perennial beauty
That prevailed not here, there but everywhere:
In such a scenery of angelic beauty
How a couple of monkeys of uncouth faces
Captured his imagination is a matter
That engages our attention and surprise!

Let us happily see with the help of his poems
What spectacle he himself witnessed;
So as to marvel the uniqueness of
The characters he chose to poetically glorify
With the feeling of passion, truth and love, genuine.

On the branch of a tree, loftily grown
A couple of monkeys, male and female
With a feeling of oneness and love
Have sat with happiness superfluous
An offspring that was born to them
Was also dozing on the lap of its mother!

The he-monkey leaped on to a branch next
After having given a nice kiss to his mate!
But because of a slight tilting in its jump
It fell down flat on the ground with a thud!
The she-monkey rushed downwards soon
With the baby-monkey crouched beneath.
But alas! the he-monkey that fell
Had already been dead with a broken skull.
Her feeling of misery was like a blazing fire.

With shedding tears, she cried aloud
And slapped her cheeks with hands
As if her lonely life was next to impossible
Having lived all along endearingly with him.
The baby monkey was yet to learn the way of life
In the forest wild but still, so what?
Let it be trained by my relatives and hence
She ran to her kith and kin with a plea
That they be of immense help to it
And gave the babe a loving kiss last.

Subsequently

The brute that disliked the widowed life
Of misery and agony without her mate
Who had wived her in a couch on the branches
And fathered a baby therein,
Decided to follow his footsteps;
Hurriedly climbed on to the apex of a hill
And fell down dead in a mangled form.

Among the human beings of fairness and beauty
There are occasions, devoid of trace of love!
But among the uncouth monkeys in the wilderness
Such a profusion of love stupefied the poet.

Withering Maiden in a Winter Breeze

When he endearingly accosted me in many a term
As pupil of the eye, succulent fruit, unwritten poem

And a silvery moon in the sky of my heart,
His living speech was a cornucopia and a grove near
the falls.

When he tickled me in sportive mischief
To see that my pain of breasts press him in clasp

And offered his sugary lips in sweet freshness
I found that the whole world was reeling upside down.

Should there be an obstacle, my dear, in the name
of dress
Preventing me from kissing you with 'chh'

From head to foot, all over the body?
Let the obstacle be given a send-off, he said.

How can I desist and give a negative rejoinder
To that combat warriors command?

As a result, the endearing couch became tattered!
Day light, as usual became inimical to both!

'My dear lamp, life of my life! Listen to me!
After successfully ploughing the cropping victory

With bow, spear and sword in the combat front
I would rush back to your stream of love, my fair image!

Much earlier than the onset of winter;
Thus fixed he, a day of return to my happiness

And swore this on a sword he uses.
After the tips of both the tongues curved dissoutely

You shouldn't break your words, my dear', she said;
To the spectacle of farewell to him to the front,

With tears glistening on both the eyelids,
The nail and teeth scratches crescent-shaped bear witness!

So what of the witnesses and the swearings?
To interact with one who is like tender coconut in summer

He hasn't come, despite the onset of cold winter;
But she has been rolling vainly on the couch.

As he fixed the day of parting,
Had she been sternly objected to

This physique would't have burnt with lust--
Shouldn't my eyes be aware of this predicament?

Thus what the golden-statue spoke with fiery words
And burning eyes as inscribed in Sangam poems

I shall say that mine eyes remain unashamed
Having numbered the days of his arrival
And consented to his parting but weeping vainly now
And bitterly as a riverine flow from Himalaya Mountain?

Arrive as per schedule and certainly
Join with you joyously in winter days, said he

But since he has not maintained it well
Heavy heart, have I, my lust is like blazing fire.

Wintry breeze gently removes the bark of the knotty
sugarcane
Which is as plump as an impregnated body
of a whipsnake;

The breeze causes a cool drizzling from a pack of clouds
That gently embraces the sky of woman with a silken
fabric;
Such a breeze cool makes me shiver to the core;
When I undress, if he is nearby, heat will overcome;

For himself being away at present
The naughty eyes have bidden farewell!

Why should you weep as perennial falls?
You stupid eyes! Be downcast with shame!

Fair woman of tongue, eyes and pearly smile
So global beauty as to excel the beauty of the grove;

Cupping your cheek wherein falls woeful tears
In your face swollen, due to weeping--

For a hard-hitting remark against the eyes
That they must be downcast with shame!'

The poet's mind must be rich with imagination!
And can be deemed equal to the soft southerly wind.

Hither is the Sword; Whither is His Tongue?

It's only a cottage, wherein arrayed
A set of lances, sharp and swords afresh
Ensemble of a sparkling armoury
To conquer the world and settle scores with foes.

It's true that a tiger's den is not beautiful;
So it's not strange that the hero's habitation is
The abode of dignity wherein never surfaces
Any sense of fear, nervousness and complex inferior!

In the frontyard of that house, an aged lady
Totally grey-haired, opened her toothless mouth
To gulp down a bowl of rice mixed with jaggery.
She then picked up a handful of rice to gulp.

There rushed in, a warrior-messenger.
Accosting the old lady with news anew.
"Not becoming of a male, heaving sighs like this
As a girl exhausted of her sportive games!
Let there be a gap between your one breath and another;
Then, you begin speaking", so said the lady old,
Known for her funny and sportive utterances.

"Not a time for fun, my dear granny!
Give up your ridiculous speech!
Perished is your son in the battlefiled' said he!

Though depressed, the lady soon stood erect!
'We used to 'cut' the pawns in a game of chess!
So in the field of battle is the wound on the chest or
back
Let me know it soon, 'she asked and he replied
"the back".
Quivered the lady with a shock tremendous;
Took the sword and hurried in the direction of war-drum;

'Have I suckled milk to a coward
Could such inactive element be called a warrior?
My husband, immortal once braved a lance;
Is he the son born to such a marvellous hero?
Where lies the honour? Lowered he, worse than a
broken wall

My consort's heroic fame was as high as the
Himalayas;
And his love of music vibrated on the strings of Veena
Emphasising the sense of honour and dignity;
Oh! Ye, do you belong to a dishonourable lineage?
You have stigmatised the hierarchy of the Tamils,
Despite my suckling and fondling you on may lap.

Where has gone the broad and fatty shoulders?
Were they not bestirring in a manner befitting
Oh! Ye, coward, incapable of countering the foe's arrow
What have you to say of my suckling?'
So wept bitterly, the octogenarian lady

And went up to the field and turned over
A number of corpses in the battlefield;
There has been a stream of blood amidst corpses!
She boldly walked across the heaps of bodies!

Found at last that he had braved a lance
That made her extremely happy, indeed!
So happy was she that an identical pleasure she had
Neither on the day of her wedding nor on her first delivery!

'My son has died a heroic death!
No worry at all for anything whatsoever!
I was about to cut off my breast that fed him!
But Oh! Where remains the fool who lied about my son?
Here is the sword! Where is his tongue?

A Dwarf and a Hunchbacked Maid

Poems romantic, connecting a handsome male with
A radiance as much as that of the rising sun
With a fair maiden with profuse locks of hair of
ankle-length,
The poets reputed would write customarily:

And also unleash flight of fancy to weave around
Stories romantic, with a rare spectacle of
A broad shouldered young man with a budding moustache
Applying his sugary lips to those of the maiden
Who is gentle-gaited as of a swan and slender-waisted.

The Tamil poets, ever since the days of Sangam Age
Narrate the indivisible bond of love bubbling
Between the dazzling spinster of golden hue
And the dashing lad of lion's gait in a style majestic.

Poet Ilanaganar, unlike all these depictions,
Bring before us a couple of beings
Whose fairness and beauty, if any is questionable,
And expose a comical love that arose among them.

Dwarf in Tamil means a man short in stature;
Hunchbacked is a person of bent-back;
Mansion in Tamil normally indicate the abode of kings.

Having done the jobs entrusted in the palace
Both the dwarfed man and the hunchbacked woman
Just then crossed the frontyard on their way back home.

Love in dwarf's mind blazed like fire!
That pint of a man felt it better to quench it--
And hence desired to move closer to the hunchbacked.

Do the doves alone flirt with one another?
Is love, the prerogative of parrots alone?
Is this not the world wherein the hooting owls too
conjoin together connubially and beget their offspring?

Feelings of love towards the dwarf in hunchbacked
And towards the hunchbacked in the mind of the dwarf
Arose mutually is not a wonder to the world.

Can there be a bar for the dwarf and the hunchbacked
To undergo conjugal felicity in this world,
Where the species such as monkeys and donkeys
enjoy bliss?

Because he is dwarfish in stature
Will his mind be a ditch and shallow?
Even if the lady is bent back in form
Is it a folly on her to be a love-lorn maid?

Ruminating all these, perhaps
Ilanaganar, the Sangam poet
Has written a poem on the love of the dwarf
For that woman, hunchbacked, as follows:

Dwarf: As the shade of a tree that stands on the bank
Falls on the water and begin wavering,
You, the ground-looking hunchbacked lady!
Tarry a while, without obstructing my word!

Hunchbacked: Oh! You, a funny fowl of a peculiar hen
That has a head similar to that of a human;
So dwarfish you are as to be of a handful;
Have you the fitness to approach me, the fair?

Dwarf: Thrilled I am at your flawless beauty
Which fluctuates as your hunchback goes up and down,
As a plough with a blade in front of it!
Why do you sometimes maintain a stony silence?
Let me know your intention or else you kill me off!

Hunchbacked: Am I resembling a plough?
Waited you so long to make fun of me?
You're as tall as a mounted chessboard
And should you analyse my fairness?
Shouldn't you know, being a male
The way of accosting a lady for an amorous company?
Arrogant as you are, being a male
Do you say that we needn't worry about time?

Dwarf: Oh! You who has the form of a skinned off stork!
If I hug you close, your hunchback will hit me!
If I clasp you from behind, the bent back will make me shy!
Let us do one thing, if you don't mind:
Let us stand side by side and embrace each other to the core.

Hunchbacked: Unknowingly of the fact that you're
half-a-man
What have you spoken to me!
Not knowing that many men approach me
Seeking permission to do likewise
As a creeper does of a tree,
What set-back did you find in me?
And that too to speak ill of me!
You are like a tortoise standing erect
With a notion that you have sprung up to
the sky
Ah! ah! ah! Feel like walking as the God
of Love?
What a beauty, you have! . . .

Dwarf: No more scorning . . . and
No more offending language . . .
I swear this, my dear!
Come back to the palace, within!
I have already chosen a corner
For our hobnobbing, my pea hen!

Hunchback: I too wouldn't speak low of you...
Let us eagerly hug with one another!
If we both embrace and enjoy to the core
In the palace of the king, the spectators if any
Would say that phantoms two are in pleasant
intercourse
Hence to a safe corner of a nearby grove,
let us go,
To clasp with one another as a couple of
written palm leaves
Are inscriped. rolled and put in a rolling
tin box.

What has happened to the dwarf after receiving this invitation?
He jumped ahead and carried her in his arms!
Drank they the conjugal felicity to the brim!
Dwarf and hunchback are only in physique!
But when they are one in spirit, unique in love
No short, but lofty height and no hunchback but a steep look.

The Garbage Fowler!

The cock shows its majesty by raising up its neck
As a sentry that stands guard;
By inciting fury of the fowls to fight
The rural folk would immensely enjoy;

Till date in villages, towns and cities exist the habit
Of witnessing cock-fight, not of a recent origin.
The cock-fight started earlier than the era of the

Third sangam, known for its anthologies
Kali, Akam and Puram.
Source for the fight is in Kuruntokai collection;
A piece of a sweet and delicious octave poesy- let us see.

Therein comes a damsel of bubbling beauty
Whose misery due to lascivious sickness is cognizable
'Amidst a lot of mullai bushes will be my lover
Of mountainous shoulders and of he-lion's gait'
Preventing me from joining and embracing him
Alas! my mother has incarcerated me at home!

The moment I saw him, be became the pupil of my eye
To call me as 'eye of an eye' and to hug me on;
Should'nt he come here to meet me of his own accord?
Will not my fiery stream of worry be a cold fall at
his touch?

What should I do when he, as a medicine is afar?
Which will I think and weep, when I am in
Dire straits of misery that harps me on:
The gentle breeze of mind has become a furious storm!

This distress has come to me, not from others;
Nobody would prevent this and lead me on to live!
This misery which renders me pining
Should go of its own accord with no other go.

Those who train cocks and make them ready
Will eagerly let them fight with one another soon!
The man who incited them, himself at length
Prevent them from aggravation and mitigate their ire.
As there are some men in between
To incite the cocks to fight and then to
Prevent them from crossing the limit,
Who's there to resolve my crisis in overwhelming distress?

Feud will be among the fowls in picking from garbage
They will furiously cackle and peck at one another,
Nobody else induced them to fight at the garbage;
Nor there anybody else to separate them from the feud.

Similarly,

Nobody has emboldened me to suffer out of lust;
And none else to quench my fury of lasciviousness.
As the fowls in garbage fight among themselves
And perish after a furious pecking mutual
The sickness of love that crept into my mind
Made me undergo a torture in stages;

Nobody else alas! to save me from my destruction
After setting aside the sickness of love!

The name of the poet is un traceable and unknown.
But he who drew analogy between the boiling mind
Of a belle and the fighting of fowls in garbage
The literary world has significantly nicknamed him
'garbage-fowl'.

Even though the names of many
Creative writers are thus unknown,
Let us be happy that their creations
Are still with us to gladden us full.

Queen in Her Bed and the King in Barracks

Literatures of ancient Tamil bear witness
That the Tamil race, since time immemorial
Has been leading their life with conceptual division
Such as Aham and Puram purporting respectively
Of matters of love and matters of heroism.

Though there are examples in plenty
What seems immeasurable as a laurel of pearls
Is the literary manna, *Netunalvatai.*
That poetical narrative explicits the heroism of
Pandyan Netunceliyan besides professing
The fiery distress of Koperuntevi his consort,
Due to her pangs of seperation at home.

That book also affirms in detail that
Ancient life in Tamil land with the
Dual concept of Akam and Puram
Was tacitly in contra-distinction
To the temporal and spiritual divisions
Enunciated subsequently in Tamil land

With their wrong strategy that a lone
Young Prince is vulnerable and likely to be conquered
The seven kings waged a war against him
in Talayalankanam;
But were inflicted with a defeat and utter humiliation.
Then that 'youngman' Nedunceliyan got wedded
To a lovely dove as his queen for life congenial.

In his younger days in battlefield
Even though combat injuries the king received
Now when confronted by seven-fold enmity there,
Turned into scars all over the body;
She took them to be dazzling bracelet on his chest
And offered to it her warm kisses innumerable.

But on his part, the time has not favoured him
to keep himself warmly without freeing from her grip
Even for a minute at night in the home
Once the marriage is over with his beloved.
Perpetual nuisance is the call clarion from the war field.

Even after the battle at Talayalankanam,
He led the forces and won laurels furtheron.
The Milalaik-kottam of Vel Evvi he advanced
And defeated his crew and the Mutuk-kottam
Of Mutu Velir, the reputed fencers in the days of yore.
Ravaged the forces of Ceraman Irumporai
And also put him behind bars one-day.

Thus

The wreaths of victory, he started heaping one by one
With the wavelets of soldiers clamouring for victory;
And thus like a bird that doesn't touch
Even a single fruit out of many a bunch
Pandima Devi sank in distress and separation
The day-time remains cruelly unmoved and so too
the nights
And she was, as a result shedding tears profusely.
When northwind brings in, a weather of icy cold
The maiden, if not clothing her body
Would protect herself in the physical warmth of her lover
And the lover too with her body on himself
Won over thus both, the shivering cold.

The present condition is that the Pandya king
Has already gone to the war-front in haste!
In the heat of a heroic fury boiling within,
The onslaught of winter was not harsh.

But alas! the condition of the Queen is pathetic;
Comments on its, the learned poet Nakkiran
By disclosing the misery of the domestic chicks
That suffer due to the severity of the season cold;
Gone are the days that they both, the hen and the cock
Roam about pecking food all over the street at their will;

Now caged within, not knowing day or night
Stand they on their legs one after the other
To ward off the pain due to constant standing.

Thus

In a pestering season of peevish cold,
With a spirited feeling of love immaculate
This pea hen of a woman roll about in bed!
Poet Nakkiran pictures this in Netunalvatai.

Lofty towers as if they are the steep hills,
Flags therein display motely hues of the rainbow!
Therein the solid columns of bluish tinge;
Have they plastered with pulverised silver?

Poet Nakkiran graphically portrays
The solidly built palace of Celiyan,
As if it was the fortress of unalloyed copper;
Poetically depicts the lying posture of the
Ruby-lipped queen of Pandya kingdom
In whose thoughts reverberate the king alone.

The graceful cot is laid with a couple of
Tusks taken out of massive-footed elephant
Died in harness in its fortieth year of life.
The four censers that hang around the couch
Are as finely shaped as solidly supple
As the milkly breast of an expectant woman.
Also the pendants made of pearls and gems
With a painting of mullai and jasmine on the walls.
The soft bed-spread of artistic beauty
With a rare motif of a lion-hunting design
And the couch with a nice cushion, divan and pillow
As if made of feathers of swan spread over.

But alas! He wasn't there to hug and roll down there!
And hence the distress of the queen is immeasurable.
Maidens on both side, gently stroke her soft feet
With a plea that she may close her eyes and sleep.
'Hey' be off! You have nothing else to do'
So said the queen angrily as if to drive them off.

On a landscape-painting opposite there
She saw the moon and Hyades settle close-by
Such a bliss of nearness, I have not got by
And thus I sink and become emaciated;
So said she and wiped off her rolling tears
But the worry within, has not gone off from her.

Thus

When the queen was waiting with a longing
As if a honeyed flower in a creeper waits for a bee,
What's the condition of Pandiyan Nedunceliyan
As depicted and spoken of, in Netunalvatai?

Love and romance never stood in the way
Of a feeling of responsibility of Pandiya king!
The mere memory of his queen consort
Has not deviated him from his lofty aims.
Northern wind has knocked his barracks too!
But on that pretext he hasn't run behind the maidens
Forgetting the sabre-rattling war-front.

Here

Why has the Pandiyan-king started at midnight?
Is it to meet the love-lorn consort in the couch?
No! No! Absolutely not!
In a season cold that shivereth hillocks
Because of an icy north-wind
Even if the blazing torch leans to south,
The king who is in the barracks north
Would not turn to south-even for the sake of his queen.

To perform his duties routine in the war-front
Surrounded by soldiers with swords unsheathed
By taking in arms, the shoulder-garment
When it slips down from his shoulder-left,
Putting his right-hand on the shoulder-band
Of a soldier friendly and strong,
The king was visiting an area nocturnally
Where the soldiers lying wounded and convalescing
And individually thanking with a concern for their health.

When the royal leader consolingly looked on each
of them
All the sufferings they underwent with their
Cut, maimed and injured legs, hands and body
Have gone off to the core, they felt.

The Queen consort was in distress for him,
But he comes around the barracks on foot to do his duty.
The conceptual division of Akam and Puram
with which the Tamil race has been living
Since time immemorial is borne by the contents
Of *Netunalvatai* -- Is not that alone enough?

Revengeful lady fulfils her Vow

Those were the days of young men,
Excited and determined to nip in the bud
the enmity entire with effective handling of a
swirling spear and sword furious!
Was also a golden era of poets and savants
Who organised their assemblage scholarly;
And warriors marched on to the fields
as furious tigers with the blessings of women household!

Even when the wind blows, it is the
Chivalry of Tamil that it brings forth;
Even when the sea-waves rise up, it is as if the
status of Tamils that it highlights!
Even when the burning sandal emits,
it is the fragrance of Tamil that it wafts through!

The graceful moon will peep out of bluish clouds
As a source for rich epics in Tamil!
Even Ashoka, the Emperor once said
That the Southerners in India are invincible;
Among those who were unconquerable
It was a group called the talented Kosars
who were heroic, dignified and virtuous;

Instead of vainly wandering about
From the country of Tulu to the Eastern Coast,
They are said to have settled, at length in
The regions such as Niyamam and Selloor
As recounted in Akananuru, a Sangam anthology.

Introduces this anthology, a couple of warriors
Anni and Mihili, known for their valour.
Coupling both these names into one
A Tamil girl has called hereself as such;
Talented she is to make her eyebrows
As an armament to topple the youngmen of agility;
But yet she was of coyness and modesty
Whose hands many have sought in vain.

A few Kosars have asked her father
To give his daughter in marriage but he negated it.
That fair and beautiful damsel Annimihili

Is of fire-belching chaste and undaunted
As Anni, the hero who sacrificed himself in the war front;
And as stern and firm as Mihili, the brave hero
Who has not only toppled Aai Eyinan, a compeer
But also made of his own, the territory of Nannan;
She was beautiful as a parrot and lovely as a moon graphic
Agile as the long-eyed fish in running water;
And above all, the one, potential enough for sexual union;
With these thoughts gleefully approached the Kosars.

"What do you think of my daughter, Ye, all,
the father said.
And added, 'I wouldn't give my sweet daughter in
marriage
To any uncouth element who comes by!
Haven't you known that she's inclined to a man of
Aluntur?
Titiyan, that chief she has vouchsafed as her own!
Ye all shouldn't come once again, seeking her hand!
Mindful of your job and behave better', he concluded.

Even among the Kosars good, there were a few
Who were hard-hearted, but yet thrived, the history
narrates!
It is they who conspired against the fair maiden!
Fertile lands that grow green gram in plenty,
The kosars owned as their ancestral property!
But the beloved family property of Mihili is the cow only.

As per their pre-plan, a few Kosars drove that cow
Into the green field for making it graze!
If it is a green pasture for a hungry cow,
Will it run away from, instead of gulping down the fodder?
The cow stomached the grass to the brim and bulged

As the belly of the cruel ruling class that
Collectively squeezes the labour of the working class!
If the eyes are plucked off from the old-man father
Who has declined to give his daughter in marriage.
There's nobody to help his daughter and then

It will be easier to ravage her beauty--
So was the diabolic plan of the low-bred elements
Who also began acting in a nefarious manner.
Putting the old man in a dock, during trial
They told him of the violation of the cow in its grazing;
Demanded him of narrating the truth.

The old man's face darkened
As much as thickly-clouded sky and he said
'I wouldn't ask, 'Who has seen the cow's grazing?'
I am of a family known for its truth only!
It is but true that my cow has grazed there!
Confessed has he, the fact and hence
Pluck the eyes off him, the Kosars ordered after trial.

Soon thus they dragged the old man-father of Mihili
And alas! Pulled his eyes off the socket.
'Oh! my father, have you lost your eyesight?
I won't allow the sinners from being revenged!
Thus said the daughter Mihili and wept bitterly.

"Having spoiled my eyes, decided they
To rob you of, my dear daughter!
But who is dare enough to go near her?
Before her father concludes his challenge
She said as if from a blazing fire.

'I wouldn't eat in any dish or have
Any change of dress until those
Who blinded my father are done away with;
No sleep and no eating until I take revenge!
Finish off the foes and sacrifice their lives
To my father who was made to lose his eyes.
The angry oath of Anni Mihili, the very next day
Reached the ears of Titiyan of Aluntur;

Having heard of the misery of the maiden
Worried he became and felt like seeing her!
Following the message that has reached him,
He saw Anni stand there as a smouldering fire.

Said he miserably, Oh! Ye, the well-pleasing
And well behaved, as you are, I do not know
How to remedy your ills of the heart!
'Forces of cavalry you have in your fortress!
Himalayan shoulders, you have, my dear!
If only it's true that you love me,
Wage a war against Kosars!

Those enemies unfair who blinded my father
Must be made to surrender and befallen!
You are the mongoose to cut off the snakes
And so I plead you, the strong shouldered Titiyan,
she said.
'See my sword that has come out of its sheath!
Let my swearing be known to you, my dear!
My hands will put off the lives of those
Who hurt your father, my dear in-law,
Then only they would touch you, physically'
So shouted that hero from Aluntur!

Soon followed the clamouring array of soldiers!
The unfair Kosars have been mangled to pieces
And they fell down dead as the wail-ruined and broken.
Thus she took revenge, as said earlier
And then only, embraced the shoulders of valiant Titiyan.
Their love blossomed thence forward
And provided a base for a poem in Akananuru.

Wiping out Indigence for the weal of the Nation

Toṇdaiman Ilantirayan, ruled the kingdom of Kanci;
Duty-conscious was he besides being a votary of Muse!

His ancientry is fabled back to the ocean:
Manimekalai, an epic says the hero who crowned himself

To rule the whole of Tondainadu with Kanci as capital,
Ilantirayan, born of a love-lorn couple

Cholan Killi and Naga maiden Pilivalai survived
A ship wreck and marooned on the coast with
Tondai creeper

The reason why the nominal prefix to him is Tondaiman;
Tirai in Tamil means waves and because of the fact

The proper name Ilantirayan, he came to be called;
All these details, the epic Manimekalai enumerates;

In his commentary on Iraiyanar Akapporul
Poet Nakkiran says that this king has in fact

Composed an extinct treatise, Ilantirayam
It is before this king only; the great poetess Avvai

Came and argued as an envoy of Atikaman Anci;
Mayilainadar, a commentator of Nannul opines

That 'Tirayanatur' a village is named after him.
Three poems in Narrinai bespeak

The scholarly mind and rich imagination of Ilantirayan
Befriended as they are, many a ruler

Enjoyed his hospitality in his palace rich;
Extending a courteous welcome with gifts

He would elucidate the ethical statecraft to all of them!
It is the advice that he gave in politics once

Is alive undying in the sweet annals of Sangam literature!

"Fixing on both sides of the axle
The wheels that serve as legs of a cart

And also the wooden bars parallel on it,
As a cart that moves ahead in the right track

Knowing very well the way it goes about
The royal sceptre will bring in honour and prosperity.

If not,

If the cartman drives it any manner he like
Its spokes will stick into quagmire!

If the rulers go about whimsically
And roam about falteringly, the nation will be a shambles.

Net result of the Indigent populace and Incapable rulers
Will be an ailment of the nation and ruin of industry.
The simile that Ilantirayan handled

In the days of yore proves to be convincing still!
To do things anew and to see the country in fertility
A sound mind is the pre-requisite
And that lesson and truth, this poem enumerates.

A Kannaki in Those Days

Much earlier to Saint Ilanko Adikal
Who composed an epic Cilappatikaram in chaste Tamil

The Story of Kannaki was celebrated and spread
As hearsay in olden days

As a few wreaths of gentle verses
Of sangam poets bear witness!

Pekan, a chieftain of strong shoulders and patron
Once offered a golden shawl to the shivering peacock

Had gotten happily in marriage, "Kannaki"
An image of chastity, storehouse of dignity;

Though lived congenially with her for some time,
He became as fickle-minded as a monkey that hops!

The place subsequently and even now called Palani
Was known as Potini in the days of yore;

There among the descendants of Aviyar clan
The one who carved a niche among the chieftains

And even claimed a place in the classical poems
Was this patron called Vaiyavikkopperumpekan

A hero who never bowed before his enemies!
As rain that down pours on the fertile soil

Also uselessly in an alkaline ground,
Pekan's bounty went on indiscriminately;

To make this glory universally known
Paranar, a sangam poet sang with happiness all.

Because Pekan proffered gifts profusely
Not only to the needy but also to the resourceful,

His indiscriminate charity is deemed not infallible
But not so he is in warring his enemies

As he is an adept in warfare only with his peers;
so is the comment scholarly of Paranar, the poet

Who elevated the chieftain's glory to alphine heights.

As a falcon has been won over by a parrot fair
Pekan, the hero was downed by a damsel of Nallur;

Enslaved him on her laps with all her honeyed words!

Made him lie down beside her, having bathed him in
rose water;
But alas! Kannaki was all in tears, an image of misery!

The pure lamp of the mansion remained uncared for!
A lack-lustre misery has settled in, thinking of Pekan!

All these the age-old poet Kapilar narrated in a
Sangam verse
Stating that chieftain should give up the embrace of
the whore!
And rush back to the house of Kannaki soon!

"She couldn't stop her tears miserable, O, Chieftain

Go back soon to wipe off her tears!" he said.
Cruel it is if you don't bless her' so said Paranar!

Implying that he should treat her endearingly
Aricilkilar, a poet who presented himself there

For a moment gave up the purpose of waiting for gifts
Persuaded the chieftain to yoke his horses to the chariot

To proceed straight to garland and to be happy with
Kannaki
And to make her fumigate her locks of hair with incense!

Next comes an equally known Tamil poet
Perunkunrur Kilar who addresses the chieftain,

"Supreme to Aviyars! If you come forward
To call your beloved Kannaki with cheerful face,

Setting aside her misery and restore her domestic bliss
That will be the fittest gift for me from you"

Pleaded thus he for the bemoaning Kannaki's genial life;
Realising his grave error, having been indicted,

By the same advice of many a scholar
Pekan set out on his journey in chariot!

Rushed back to see his beloved whose life
As a result blossomed again and
She became as gentle and sweet as the southerly breeze.

Southern Breeze and a Stormy Wind

Cold wind that squeezes the clouds to absorb
Dewy water to quench the thirst of hillocks

Is gently wafting across the excellent Takatur region,
Ruled by a chieftain Atikaman Netuman Anci;

A lover of sweet Tamil who one day in his court
Happily celebrated and admired the wise counsel.

Mobilised in for the welfare of the country
By learned elders, wise ministers and whiskered generals.

Avvai the poetess saw this assembly of state and
Glanced at the cheerful visage of the monarch, shed tears
of joy;

She smilingly composed a eulogy of poesy
As if it's a floral wreath of Mullai creeper

And in Puram anthology it is immoratalised,
The substance of which nice poem is for us to relish.

Whoever is around him in the court, Atikaman would
behave
With a sense of love, passion and sympathy

Besides showing an affection and tenderness
And above all with a sense of simplicity--

Are those not the qualities rare
Highly becoming of a leader of his stature?

Is it not the pride of the country too!
Avvai pondered over his suavity

And wove around it, a sweet garland of poesy,
"You are the fortress that protects country as eyelids

And you, the leader moving with us in all simplicity!
In thinking of you, I remember a tusker that I saw!

It's fair to compare her actions with that of yours
When a handful of young lads gather around the tusker

In a ford and begin washing its tusk
The pachyderm would appear like a toy for tiny tots

Devoid of instilling fear, so calm and peaceful.
Your simplicity is alike, when you move with us close;

As it arises with savage fury when it is rutted
You would be terribly stormy when confronted by foes

To do away with them with all the wrath and anger,
Even though you behave humbly to our delight.

When you look up fiercely straight at your adversaries,
You appear as boisterously walking as rutted elephant.

It is but fair that the dual qualities of the tusker
Which Avvai has seen in its actual life
Are identified well with those of Atikaman Anci.

Rattling toys render giddiness

Nattattanar a Sangam poet has narrated
Cirupanarruppatai, a unit from Ten Idylls in which

He drew an analogy between Nalliyakkotan, a chieftain
And Cera, Chola, Pandiya of generous bounty

Besides the seven patrons of the last Sangam era,
That chieftain's Oyma region of the bygone days

Is the present Tindivanam, says so, the well-informed;
Whereas the poet was born in Itaikkali area

Which is the modern Nallur near Madras, they add.
The glory of Nalliyakkotan's rule in Mavilankai

And also in regions such as Amur, Velur and
Eyirppattinam,
Enunciates the poet, in a way which is exemplary;

Also rich and prolific is his imagination with which
His Cirupanarruppatai excels in a cluster of similes

And so is his graphic portrayal of his native soil.
If we look at it, in a few lines of similes that follow

After a depiction of a convoy of salt-laden carts,
We could perceive the grandeur of our language and
literature
And also the glory of our ancients besides
A historical awareness that Tamils are the eldest of clans.

Traders in their country carts come in groups
Towards the coastal Korkai to buy salt for selling;

Ahead of the carts, drawn by sturdy bullocks
Come those monkeys groomed by them as if their
own children.

Creating a picture of the shells, cast on the shores
The poet narrates imaginatively as if from the apex of
a mount.

The shells have lids as sharp as sickles
Into whose bosoms the monkeys and tots thrust
the pearls!

Because pearls are of Korkai, the poet compares them
To the sparkling white teeth of the maidens!

There play the children of the fair salt-selling maidens
Of the slender waist and slim physique.

And of the five-fold plaits of black hair
That partially hide their soft shoulders and back;

The children play rattle with monkeys thrusting pears
into shells;
That gleeful imagination of a scene of the coast

Brought in by the poet thrills us
Our sense faints picturing them.

A Panoromic view of Nature

Ammovanar, in narrating a delectable love story
Has interestingly pictured a coastal scene in Narrinai,

How countless sufferings could be caused unless
One species doesn't know and discriminate the other.

The shoreline expanse is sandy with conch shells
Cast by tempestuous waves, fuming and bubbling;

A black jambo fruit was found rolling on the ground;
A cluster of beetles mistaking it to be one of their species

Began whizzing around it fondly when a crab
Rushed therein and gripped a beetle in between the
fore-limbs

Presuming it a ripe jambo fruit.
Noticing the predicament of a folly of indiscrimination

Which may lead even to death, the agitated beetles
Flew up embittered and swarm around sadly.

At a time when the crab set out happily feeling
That it has gripped a 'fruit', not knowing that it's a beetle

The shining beetle felt miserable there in, saying within
'Ignorant of discrimination moved I to the fruit and
got caught'.

In such a hapless condition, aid came in a crane's form!
Fearing that it might result in being eaten by the bird,

Which has appeared as if for saving the life of a beetle,
The crab gave up its grip of the insect

And let it go, ran away and sought refuge
In a clay-hole and thereby saved its own life!

Alas! if the crane hadn't appeared opportunely
That would have been the end of the beetle

Which bewilderingly took a jambo to be of its species!
The cluster of beetles on relief of one from the grip
of a crab

Whizzingly celebrated it as a mark of victory!
'One should discriminate one of its own!

Or else misery would pester heart-rendingly'
So said Ammovanar when movingly narrating

The parting misery of the lovers along with
The panoramic scene of natural beauty!

Such counselling of the poet I pondered over
Happily but somehow my eyes began trickling!

Why the Eerie Dancing Exorcist?

'The fairest daughter of mine remains crazy
Staring with eyes fixed and unmovingly;
Bring in the priest to assuage her passions fiery!'

So said the elderly mother who had begot the daughter
Cupping the chin and persuading the maid to act forthwith!
Semi-divine 'dance-spiritual' was a superstition
An order of the day and a belief among rural women-folk!

A tribe called 'velar' used to foretell after a ritual dance;
Elderly women say that they drive away the diabolic mind;
Despite the enlightened modern life at present
This blind notion has not gone off from our mother-land.

The house-maid informing the lady of her mother's request
'Shall I bring in that 'velar', pat came the reply
"Oh~ No! Don't bring him! If he comes,
He might even inform the mother of my affliction"-
So said the swan-gaited and barred the maid from
bringing him.

However, the elderly mother is not to give it up!
She took it to heart as to what's happened to the girl!
'Never she lies down on mat - nor drinks milk,
Nothing I understand of the misery the lady is in !

Even when I wake up in the dead of night
My pea-hen like daughter rolls about in bed sleeplessly!
She was the one, used to get up before dawn

Cheerful and agile as a frisking doe;,
Presently alas! Pitifully on the bed
As sapped as uprooted stem of a water-lily!
Twirls her body, bends and rolls about on the mat
The passion-affliction has gone up acutely!

Therefore,

Don't reject my command! Rush forth to Velan
Put it as my request and fetch him in a minute
To do the ritual dance before the deity
For warding off the passion-afflicted, so said the mother!

What shall the 'Velan' say?
Staring both the eyes upward
Raising a shout thunderous
Creating vain hullabaloo a lot
Making mountain of a mole-hill,
He would attribute everything to the mischief of a spirit!

The maid said all these to the lady-love, adding
'Love's passion, like a deluge-fire one-day
Would surely emerge as the root-soil
Comes out when the plough-tail slits the ground!
Hence ye need not hide your stealthy love
As the hens hide the chicks within the feathery-fold;

The priest who could perform the ritual dance
Need not come to ward off your affliction'!
Let us see our innocently wailing mother informed
The secret of your aiming at a heroic young man
Who is desirous of opening the wedlock properly!

Better to inform the mother before the bangles slip off
That the lad of the hillock caused the pallor-affliction
And a greenness among the collyrium fed eyes.
Noticing the maid's hesitating again and again
And the maiden's silent bowing with an infatuation
The mother-bird now only understood and left there,
Nodding the head indicative of a laissez-faire.

Mullai flowers at Ollaiyoor

An old village fragrant of Mullai arbour
Ollaiyur, presently Oliyamankalam in Pudukkottai district;

Kilar of Ollaiyur begot a valiant hero Peruncattan
Was competent in heaping victories for Pandyas

In all their skirmishes with the Cholas!
Besides a patron also with strong shoulders

As if to carry hillocks and arms to shower gifts,
Very well applauded and garlanded by the learned of
the nation!

Kutavayil Kirattanar and Totittalai Viluttantinar,
Are two poets, well known in Chola Nadu of the
tiger-banner

Very proud of Cattan's nation-wide fame and large-heart
To wipe off the misery and his heroism to scorch off
enmity,

Hold him in friendship therefore and felt happy.
Even if Peruncattan fights the Chola from Pandya's wing

Keerattanar would never fail to celebrate his virtues!
Perhaps that poet is noble and so exalted in mind

As to say that even a neighbour's jasmine has its own fragrance!
One day a rumour was afloat all through the nation

As fastly as that of a spear cleaving through a hillock
That Peruncattan, the hero befallen ill and to die soon;

Bulwark-like hero, fallen off due to sickness
Was a tremor that agitated Keerattanar as tempestuous sea.

He stepped into the country of Peruncattan, the patron
Enroute to Kudavayil, his destination.

The moment he stepped into the vicinity of Ollaiyur,
Appeared thereat a mass of fragrant mullai creepers;

'After the demise of Cattan who could
Win over the thunderous enemies,

What hurry for the creepers of mullai
To emerge with blossoms, so spoke the poet

Towards the vegetation of sweet-smelling Mullai
With a mind as confused as a storm ravaged garden.

'Young heroes wouldn't adorn themselves with you--
Bright-bangled maidens too wouldn't come to you--

Even the minstrel and his spouses who sing for gifts
Would not decorate their Yal by plucking you with!

When the entire village weeping bitterly
At the misery of having lost the heroic Cattan,

Unmindful of all these at Ollaiyur
Why did you blossom, mercilessly Oh! Mullai!

Because a poem thus with an elegiac note
Poet Kirattanar sang with melancholy;

The expired Cattan, the ablest hero
Lived long in the memory of the people!

Till day, this is known to everybody else,
Let us hail thus the perpetuation of their intimacy.

Should he be forgotten if there is Re-birth?

Ammuvanar, a gentle poet of the Sangam age
Sweetly presented the memories, romantic;

Of a young maiden who believed in reincarnation;
A damsel donned herself of chastity as an ornament

Referred to in one of the poems in Narrinai Nanooru;
Did a rigorous penance for her lover's arrival

And bathed herself in tears because of fiery lust!
"The promised day of his arrival lapsed;

And the sensual pleasure, he promised too has gone off!
Kissed me saying that my shoulders are like bamboos

Where has he gone unmindful of their despondency?"
Both the eyes waiting for him with sleepless lids

Staring bemused at the track in the direction
of woods!
Wouldn't he come to comfort this lotus-bud,

With a warm clasp, knowing the news of waiting?
"Bereft of awareness and intellect, I am, but

Augment my sickness sensual at the approach of dusk!
Futile it is to survive without him, even for a minute;

Can a mere ceiling without walls be called a house?
After bidding farewell to the fingers

What way is there for a veena to shower music?
No worry at all, even if one out of two lungs

Meant for breathing in and out, is lost?
It is but natural that life's nature is to die

If the heart is severed and cut into two!
We were like the heart and he was the sun!

He has set in the horizon west, alas!
Why hasn't he risen again to bless me,

To set up a canopy of light and to dispel the dark?
I cannot forget him and hence

Made up my mind to put an end to my life!
But there's fear lingering in me before I die;

It's said that there's a re-birth!
What's the use if I get resurrect and born again!

I have endowed myself to him and hence
Will the rebirth be of this feminine sex

Make me not forget him?
Thinking on these lines, sinking am I.

With no strength, I become weak for the fear of death!
This privation of a rural belle

Ammuvanar has portrayed poignantly
In a poem in Narrinai for us to read.

Measure of Rice one and Clothpieces two

Oh! The great rich who live in mansions
And sleep in cosy beds with a lullaby of nice-breeze!
You amass riches, bathing in labourer's sweat
Day in and day out with a craze for money!
You inflate and bloat your bosoms
As a carrion - eating, jungle-vulture!

You are after money wandering insatiably
Having thrown aside the poor to a life of doom!
Those who have the sole aim of holding a wealthy life,
Tell me your answer to a question that I pose!
Do you eat on the leaf the baked ruby and emerald curry?
Do you stuff your bosoms with pounded

And boiled rice made of pearls, corals and stones
Along with roasted diamonds and steamed gems?
Such a provoking question to those rich men
Who heap in plenty, intellectural Anna asked
From the rostrums from where we too ask it again!

We all thunderforth in these days
That here must be a fragrance of communism!
This roaring is not new; already trumpeted by
Poet Nakkirar in one of the poems of Purananuru.

To a king who is active to stabilise his rule
And to bring under his royal canopy
What all country that remains around the southern seas,
And also to an illiterate and brutally energetic man

Who roam about day and night sleeplessly
All through the forest for hunting animals
As easily as making a fruit fall, by a stone's throw,
What is essential to the bodies and to safeguard honour
Is a couple of clothings, upper and lower!

To prevent them from being in hunger
And to happily eat either boiled rice or gruel;
Is it not enough for each of them
In the sea-borne world, a small measure of grains?

Thus
What is eaten is a small measure;
Worn is a couple of garments
Even after realising this
Is it fair for some to suffer in poverty
A few others to pride in fabulous rich?

When the needs of the body and mind
Are the same to all that are born in the world,
Why should some men, thoughtlessly
Go on hoarding riches in abundance?

Go about dying on that score in ditch-like life?
Breaking the monopoly that gloats over selfishness
And to find a proper way to drive out poverty
A commune policy of apportioning and feeding all
Should be set apart and this be a pleasant task
of our life!
Such a policy formulated by Nakkirar in the world
Is still presented as the best by savants all.

Paripatal, a Garden of many flowers

No effort is needed to trace out
The age of enlightening Paripatal
Is of the Third Sangam as per researchers.

The myths and Itikasams of Sanskrit
Gradually crept, as needle into a fruit
Inter laced the lines of Paripatal
And exhibit themselves as of ancient literature
As if to reflect the arts, traditions
And the rich cultural heritage of Tamils.

However, let me reveal one thing!
The ancient poets have done a miracle of balancing
The Tamil words fairly in their poesies
As a wreath of pearls dug out of sea
And as dazzling necklace studded with nine gems.

Ambal that opes its soft and tender petals--
Kantal's incensed cluster that blossomed as if handful
--Are a few of the portrayals of hillocks's rich verdure
Bespoken in many a poem in Paripatal anthology.

About the river Vaikai, a poem conveys
Both of its banks are boomed in fragrance
Of flowers such as jasmine, champaka, ape-flower
Aquatic lily, and lotus, white basil, along with cinnamon
Trumpet-flower, gamboge and aromatic variety.
When writing about wild river

That swell and overflew the banks,
The poem would draw an analogy to the river running-
To a maiden who doesn't know dance
And to a gayful lady who doesn't know sulking.

Therefore

From the golden mine of classical Paripatal
Would fall down the clayey dust of myths
Also the sweet drops of melodious music in driplets.

Hearing the loud noise caused by Vaigai in its rush
Banging both of its banks with ferocious current
Men who woke up all of a sudden wiping their eyes
Forgetting for a while that they are in terra firma
Began yoking the horses of chariot on the carts
And unwittingly the oxen on the chariot again.

This is how

Paripatal portrays in melodious language
About the perplexed and affrighted charioteers
Who perform their functions topsy-turvy.
If wearied of soldiers' grandiose march in columns,
Shall we glance at the gentle gait of ladies' who go
for bathing?

And drink to the lees their lovely beauty
Through the latticed window of Paripatal?

Swan-like gait
Slender waist
Sugary language
And graceful physique!
In the silken body
Of symmetrical structure,
Two buds of plaintain
Blooming out of breast
To entangle and pierce
The hearts and minds of the young.

Damsel's moon-like face is the blossomed lotus
Her breasts are lovely buds of unblossomed lotus
Not only her hands but her feet also red lotus!

Come along to feel
The excelling imagination
Of the poet's inventive writing
As if, you see a story.

A bevy of young girls
With the tinkling of their anklets
Gathered around the bathing ghat
To revel in watery sports!
One's garb was as white as the moonlight
Another's was as blue as the sky
One other's a green fabric loosening
One more maiden with a saree of coral red,
Merrily sang and plunged into the pool
Ran about, leaped in, emerged and enjoyed.

Just then.

A mahout who usually bathe the young elephant
Entered in to the waters of Vaikai.
That male-elephant viewed then a female one!
Gladdened male saw the female with gaping mouth
Stood on the way, staringly looking at it!
Despite the mahout's spurring on with an iron spike
He refused to move ahead.
Looking at the enchanted male
The female-elephant swayed its ears.
After eyeing one another
Deeming why should there be oral dalliance
Male elephant walked slowly
Followed closely by the female!

In full to her view, a large painting of a tiger
Had been on the brink of the pool.
She-elephant was out of moods and extremely lascivious;
And as the painting was excellent and life-like
With a fear of an immediate gory attack of the real tiger
The female elephant ran amuck frantically.
The bathing maids, on this became frightened
Leaped out of the water in utter nakedness
Began running about helter-skelter;

But realising how they're, into the pool jumped again.
Ignorant of what could have harmed the lady-elephant
The male raised an alarm, heaved up its trunk
As a commander lifted his sword to go in war
And trumpeted there uncontrollably.
The mahout attempted heavily goading it to control;

But it was of no use and hence as an alternative
He brought the she-elephant very near the male
And pacified it as a measure of fulfilling its love--
A job equal to that of a skilful sailor
Who has plugged a gap in the portion of a ship.
The mahout thus controlled the fury of the elephants
And also the trembling of ladies in the pool;
Thus speaks in a poem Karumpillai-p-putanar in Paripatal
Another poet Marutuvan Nallaccutan
Is said to have musically notated the poem to palaippann.

Mocukiranar on the Cot meant for a War-drum

The grizzly beard, a cascade of silver falls
As if the string of Thumpai flowers singly strung!

The physical frame with its firm structure solid
Because of the diurnal habit of consuming millet rice!

Comely eyes, pointed and sharp
As sharp as to excel the point of an arrow!

Here cometh, the great poet of fame
As if sweet Tamil itself assumed an image!

Mocukiranar is his name and even the breeze
That wafts through him, would smell literature.

It's said that on this king of poets
Cera, Chola and Pandiya kings had a veneration deep!

On the heads that carry the diadem
Tamil has moved in, is borne by literature.

One of the three who fortifies Tamil
Is the Ceran, Irumporai who won over Takadur.

It is he who publicly gifted to Aricilkilar
The territory altogether administered by him,

For having composed ten poems of the eighth unit
And on his declinature, him made he, a counsellor.

The Ceran's hands that had a sceptre royal
Sometimes held a stylus too

And created a number of pieces fine literary.

Elderly Mocukiran, to meet the chief Ceraman
With as much love as a bee after honeydew in flowers

Walked fast a distance and reached the chief's mansion;
Waited at the palace to meet the chieftain

Who was said to be napping within!
Himself felt like relaxing for a while;

Saw hither and thither, therefore
Whether a fit place would be there!

Eyed a charpoy meant for the royal drum
Full of white flowers strewn over there!

Unknowingly of the fact that the cot is meant
For a royal drum to be used on battle-eve bloody

The poet, elderly laid himself down leisurely.
Those were the days when the kings angrily behead

If anyone commits a severe offence of lying on the cot
Which is set apart for displaying the royal drum victorious.

Because that war-drum was taken out, that day
By warriors for a ceremonious bath,

Totally unaware of his, the great poet
Found himself closing his eyes and dozing!

Extremely wearied of the strenuous walking
With the body perspiring profusely

He was soon in grip of a sound sleep;
Unconsciously began snoring too.

The king who was relaxing with his consort
Bereft of napping after a while, arose from bed.

When came to the frontyard for a walk
Felt surprised to see the sleeping Mocukiran

On the charpoy of the war-drum there.
A certain attendant humbly bowed before

Asked the king, 'Shall I bring the sword, O King!'
If anybody lies down on the charpoy

Meant for placing the war-drum
Should be beheaded soon, was an order royal

Already in enforcement and hence
The warrior who knelt down in front

Politely waited for a mere gesture from the king!
'King's pair of eyes would be emitting fire

Fury and ire, his words would belch--
Much against this wishful thinking of the warrior,

Commanded the king, 'Bring me the fan'
The yak-tail fan, brought in by the attendant

Held in hand, the ruling king of the nation
Swayed it gently and served the poet thus;

This, the king didn't stop until
The poet gets up from the cot, relaxed.

When woke up quiet a long time after,
Jumped he down from the charpoy suddenly!

Overawed with feelings, asked the poet
'What's this, O, King!' and to which

The king replied, 'Pleasure is mine, a humble being.
'Though I'm aware of the edict royal

I lalid down myself but still,
Though this could cost me my life

'In lieu of an order to behead me
What a fortune is't that the king

Himself fanning me with', wondered the poet.
'If serving the cause of Tamil

One could live as long as Tamil;
With such an egoism did I serve

To yourself, the embodiment of Tamil
Who has cometh to my mansion'

So said the Ceran and on this, the poet
In turn, offered a poem in Tamil

Which proves to be fruit juice with honey.

Does the mind wander aimlessly?

Leaped he too, into the fray with fiery eyes
To add dignity to and safeguard the honour of his country.

To chase the harsh-mouthed felonious elements and
To crack the heads of Kanaka and Vicaya by
loading boulders on them.

For sculpting the image of Kannaki at Vanci,
And to inscribe the glorious victory of Great Cenkuttuvan

On the towering crest of the Mount Himalayas,
Gone he has northward with a severe pledge

As ferocious as a lion and me, his lady-love
Feel exhilarated in every limb of my physique;

He closely drew my conch-like neck towards him
Impressed his warm kisses on my cheeks

As soft as a pulpy kernel of a palmyra fruit
Said he, 'Let not your eyes trickle tears!

The moment I win over Kanaka and Vicaya
I shall rush back with Cera king and fall on your lap!

Foment me with your soft lips and cure me of my
Combat-wounds with which my chest would be donned'.

With these words when he was departing
As one of the warriors of the Cera troops

My mind tacitly asserted to him that
'It won't be parting from him even for a second'

And obstinately followed him like a shadow!
The spouse who vibrated me as a veena from head
to foot

And drew away my bodice to indulge in revelry
Has not yet come and hence

No pestering to the bed and no sleep to my eyes!
Gave up numbering the good old chronometer!

Though I, my mind will, in fetters to me bring him
Who will draw me towards him and drown me in gaiety!

Did my mind stay behind to accompany him only
Instead of returning alone to me:

Or finding him to be of no love, become worried
And slowly returning back to me weak and emaciated?

Perhaps, approached soon, staring at for a while
Unable to identify me due to my pallor and thinness

And thinking 'This is a different woman' and returned
And wandered about in search of me, I don't know!'

The breeze wafted the soft incence kindled therein
By a cluster of bees from flowers and gladdened here;

Deep concerned is she, her husband, a dignified hero
Parted leaving her with loosening bangles, hasn't
come yet,

Despondent is she that even her mind accompanied him
And offered no consolation to her who is miserable;

Such a melancholy of separation disclosed by a maiden
In the pages of Narrinai, I, along with the story
of invasion.

Of Ceran Cenkuttuvan, jointly did present!
What I tasted with relish, I share with you in simple style.

A drunken male-monkey

A male-monkey, one day, very near the hill-pond
Was found sleeping after having drunk unwittingly;
Poet Kapilar noticed this, while coming that way.

Is it a male monkey? drunk? That too licit or not?
A drink without permit from the Government?
Let him be taken, now itself to the gaol-
Such sweeping laws had not been enacted;
Nor are the rules whimsically pliable in the days gone by!

However Kapilar had a desire curious
From where it could have obtained the drink!
Felt like rousing the monkey itself from sleep
To get an answer, but he could not.

The reason being, that the mischievous monkey
Has been lying down in a deep intoxicated slumber,
Unmindful of the very existence of the world
In a cosy bed of soft natural flowers, golden-hued
Fallen down gradually for days innumerable!

On a hillock lofty, very near the rippling falls,
The monkeys, male and female on sandal branches
Used to hobnob as a prelude to a delectable mating--
Such a scene Kapilar had seen but now
At a time, dusk why the monkeys both
Have forgotten the arboreal play? wondered he.

Thought within himself that the male alone
After a wearied wandering all over the jungle with
its female,
Must have taken a sought- after medicine
Sedatively lying on with eyes closed
Sleeping thus, on a huge heap of flowers soft.

If she-monkey knows the male's drinking
She would scold and prevent him from coming close-by.
But as the male was fearful of its wife, who was
Sulking, often reiterating ethical behaviour,
The male-monkey, unknowingly drank and lying
down there!

Though the poet could imagine the drunkenness
He was puzzled as to what sort of fruits, barks
And other ingredients could have been the cause;
Who brewed it for the monkey to reach a dizzy heights?
Which drink is capable of disrupting the sense,
By overcoming it as a smoothly journeying breeze,
Creating a feeling of the earthy globe reeling round
And a cloudy sky seems swinging around?

Legs paining, stood there the poet, with an intent gaze
Let his loud thinking run about swiftly;
Feeling thirst, as a result, he sipped a little
Of the water falls and moistened his tongue
Then only alas! he found a solution to the puzzle!

Though drank the droplets few, from the hill-top-pond
That juicy drink geared his nerves to the core
And pulled him down to giddy gates of paradisal pleasure!
Relieved himself of the kick however, after a great struggle
Composed he, a poem to be added in 'Akam' anthology

The poem, that highlights the fertility of a hillock
Owned by a royal chieftain of that mountainous region
Though embedded in a style antiquated
I simplify it to make it as palatable as cane-sugar;

"Oh! the Lord of hilly region of exuberant growth
Of lush vegetation that gives what all that kills
The appetite of all types of fauna!
Along with ripe bananas that fall and roll
From bunches of plaintain trees
Grown green, lustily with broad leaves
On the brink of the rocky hill-pond,
The tasty juice from a jack-fruit pulp
So delicious as to keep a cloyless thirst
Mingled, soaked and bloated in water
And due to an exposure to surface heat
Changed, frothed, fermented and bubbled
And brewed naturally
A type of pleasure-giving toddy which drank the
he-monkey
Thinking it to be plain water
And felt a reeling of eyes, giddiness and kick;

Unable to climb up, as it is wont to
On a pepper-creeper-wound sandal tree
The he-monkey fell down on a rising ground
Of gentle and fragrant flowers fallen.

What a nice spectacle of a monkey, sleeping cosily
With a pleasure unaimed and unexpected.

Let us offer Millions of Greetings

When the exalted Ilantirayan Tontaiman
Ruled his region with artistic Kanci as capital,

Katiyalur Urutirankannanar, in an excelling Tamil
Wrote Perumpanarruppatai and dedicated it to him.

It's this same poet, secured sixteen lakhs of gold pieces
From Karikal Valavan for having sung Pattinappalai
on him.

Both these Tamil Idylls, forming part of Pattuppattu
Convey the life-style and culture of ancient Tamils;

Guideth the mind to happily solicit a gift
By identifying the patron from whom it could be got.

Arruppatai, the scholars say is a poem of commendation
Submitted in honour of those competent and benevolent

As much as a watery spring, highlighting the fertility
Of the area wherein they reign and live famously

The Perumpanarruppatai of Urutirankannanar
Remains a treasure-trove of news about Tontaiman

The connoiseur of Arts who ruled the famous Kanci,
Besides highlighting the ethnically famed ancient Tamils

Who were, men and women free from poverty;
It also displays the domestic chores of a herdswoman

Who awakes before sunrise, works at home unwearingly
And modestly welcomes guests;

With the income that flows in, due to hard labour,
She is not desirous of changing it into dumb gold

And no avaricious craving for jewels to don with
But increased the cattle heads such as cows and buffaloes

And effected sale of milk, curd, butter and ghee;
Such was the customary life in ancient Tamil land,

so has said purportly the poet Urutirannannanar
As if guidelines for community development schemes.

Herein, they are:

Bards! Oh, bards! Pay heed to what I say!
Herein the hamlet, much earlier than early birds

A maid would arise ere the sun-rays fall on her
She is of lips as red as ruby; enchanter to look at!

Spinster virtuous, to ensure the pride of the soil
With a face, culture-suffusing, a heart of graceful courtesy!

With a churn-staff as concave as a mushroom
Churning with a rope, causing a roar as of a tiger

She would make butter-milk out of thick curd
Ghee out of butter and carry them on a pitcher,

Hawking butter-milk, with a gait that makes known
Her bamboo like shoulders and small ear-jewles;

With the money thus earned, procuring paddy
For rice, other articles from the shanty

And courteously hosting kith and kin at home.

She, with the proceeds of butter and ghee,
In lieu of jewels and gold, go in for

Buffaloes, cows and calves, to develop her small trade.
Oh! the bards! If ye all walk towards her homestead

The fresh millet-rich she supplies undeniably
Would resemble still-born chicks of a crabs womb

You would relish it along with milk she pours out!
The staff with which she stirs the thick curd

Says the poet, is as concave-shaped as a mushroom!
The sound in churning the curd with a rope

Is likened to a tiger's roaring in woods;
Millet mixed with milk and given for bards

Resemble the still-born chicks in a crab's womb;
Doesn't such apt comparisons in Tamil

Deserve more than millions of greetings?

King's Eulogy on a Hero

Takatur Atiyaman planned and succeeded
In his efforts to subdue, under his reign,
Malayaman Tirumutikkari of Tirukkoyilur.
Who ruled on the banks of the river, south Pennai.
Chieftain Tirumutikkari escaped from foes
Went and sought refuge under the Cera of Karuvur.

Cera king came forward aligning himself with
Tirumutikkari in the war-front, whereas in their turn
The four-fold army of Pandya and Colas
Rushed in support of Atiyaman, though of no use.
Even if the capital, Takatur is done away with,
Let me die an honourable death, so said Atiyaman
and died.

The victorious Cera of Karuvur in the annals of Tamils
Is Called Perunceral Irumporai, who seized Takatur
Apart from subduing foes with his sinewy shoulders,
Enhanced the repute of Sangam Age with his poesies.

Other than the time pre-occupied by active warfare,
Poems innumerable composed he of his own.
Thirty of his choisest verses sparkle like gems
And radiate illumination from the scrolls of Kalittokai;
As he has composed a set of verses in Kalivenpa metre,
On desert region exclusively, he is called
Perunkatunko, who sang on arid regions.

Aricilkilar ranked him as a reputed chief
And celebrated him in the Eight unit of the ten poems;
Sweet and tasty poems written by him are found
In Narrinai, Kuruntokai and Akananurù anthologies.

The glorious Cera-king ruled not only
The land of Tamil but also assets literary;
Even though there is a long list of scholarly poets
Aricilkilar, Mocukiranar, Ilaveyini and Ponmutiyar
Who has celebrated him, himself was also a poet exalted.

A marvellous hero too, devoid of pride,
Never arrogating his fame solely to himself;
One who has let the banner of victory fly
From the main entry of the Fort of Karur,
After crossing the impassable fortifying walls,
Destroying the forces of elephants and
Performing martial exploits to make known
To enemies that they are sure of being defeated!

On one occasion

Bereft of his warriors in a field of battle, but yet
Retrieved his own flag after breaking open obstacles,
Hoisted it aloft on the walls of enemy's fortress
And returned to Karur on an elephant royal.
Opening his eyes widely, an old man on the way
Paid his homages to the monarch who vanquished
his foes,
Walked very close to drummers and queried,
Is my son also among those exist, barring the dead?

Perunkatunko who sang on arid regions,
Known as Perunceral Irumporai, the spear-borne
Who has carved a niche for himself in literature,
Dismounted from the elephant and got hold of
oldman's hands!
Said he, 'Oh! the sweet and gentle elder man!
As bent as the crescent moon of the sky!
What do you want?' To which the old man asked,
"My son with as much fury as tempestuous sea
Had gone on war; may I know where he is?"

"Disinclined to lead an imperfect temporal life
Crept has he for immortal life into the poems I sung"
So said the Cera king with both eyes trickling
And stood there trembling to see the grey-haired man!
"Well, Well, my lord! Aim of begetting him is fulfilled;
If I listen that poem, wherein you exalted him
To perpetuate his fame so long as the world exists
I, who still alive will praise you', said the elderly man.

"As if the arms that grew him are given bracelets in gold"

The king saith as follows:
"My strong-willed hero
To vanquish the forces oncoming
Unhesitantly at the cost of his life
Braved the spears, lances and swords
And the body swarmed with arrows
Fell down with the body torn asunder.
But still the foes neared him, back and forth
Killed the one who was sweet in temper.

The enemies who broke his sheild
Maimed his physique also
And threw the pieces of flesh all around;
You have asked me'Where is he?'
Because of his heroic deeds,
He has given up this worldy life
Gone ahead to live, be it known
In the tongues of the scholars, learned".

Having heard the substance of a poem from Purananuru
To the effect that his son flies aloft in fame
The old man smilingly thanked the king,
Began walking briskly and majestically with a tiger's gait.

Render help and offer wealth

Hero he is, who could severe head from torso
Of those enemies, not desirous of terms in good
- as rice and chaff are separated
When the pestle pounded the paddy seeds in mortar.

That Pandyan Netunceliyan, conqueror of Aryan forces
Fiery and revengeful and a king of kings
Capable of cutting the intestines of enemies
To make them hang it in his honour,
Unfailing in his aim and hitting with his spears sharp.

Kept chaste Tamil cherishing in mind,
This king of Celiyan clan became a proven scholar also.
A story there's of Kannaki defaming him as "a king who
is careless"
For delivering a judgement hastily without perusal.
It's this Pandyan, who is celebrated in Cilappatikaram,
An epic poem of Ilanko, the saint-poet;

It's he who sacrificed his life, saved the honour of justice
Once realised that justice is mortified in his judgement;
When this king ruled the Pandya region
Flourished in abundance, the naturâl fertility.
To perpetuate and maintain the prosperity, thus gained
Ruled he, the country with plans and performances.

Pearls from southern coast, beauty of the falls and hills
Palace-like mansions, graceful gardens and groves
Dancing sheaves of corn that have grown full
In fields all along the rivers that criss-cross the country--

All these well, pleased him not, to his heart's content
Finding that the best of all, is the fountain of knowledge
That goes non-stop in the whole world
Said he, 'all the plenty in a nation of illiterates is futile;

Great teachers impart education that
Makes the mind a gem, free of filmy moss;
Hence he, around the neck of Mother Tamil
Garlanded a poem which convey in opening lines
That one should safeguard the learned
By rendering help and offering aid monetarily.

The royal consort Kopperuntevi one-day
Clasped his shoulders and queried him a few!
'King dear, what is meant by 'rendering-help'
'If any harm is caused to the teacher
One should go and assist him, replied the king.
'What do you mean by monetary aid', again she queried;
'Payment to him more, on occasions all' -- was the reply.
Apart from extending help and enhancing pay,
One should devotedly learn from him devoid of anger.
Even though aware, she probed him further on.

Continued the king: 'Devotion to learn mean, even if
One remains backward or steeped in distress
Learning should be done, avoiding ire;'
To these explanations, felt the queen, a happiness
But smilingly hugged him and asked further;

'One more doubt lingering in me, my dear!
Of the children born to a mother, be learned or not
Aren't both of them alike as much as her pair of eyes?
Though two are born from one womb
Mother is delectable in mind only with the son
Who is wise and proves himself a flower afresh
In the stream of education known for ethics and ability.

Explaining this, the king slightly inclined to the queen
And began writing still on the palm-leaf.
"Not only the mother but even the king
Metes out the same to the educated;
Instead of calling the eldest son of the family
Simply to respect age and seniority
Keeping in mind that he is dunce to the core,
The royal court would send for the young
But matured in knowledge and statecraft;
In our country where live, men of four-fold groups
Those on the highest of hierarchy aren't superior
Nor are the lowest in it inferior!

Though the divisiveness unluckily crept in long back,
Even if the lowest is resourceful and knowledgeable,
The topper would be deemed to be the lowest
This, the king wrote and read it out to the queen;

But she applied her lips with those of him
And asked, where are the fingers that wrote the poem?
Drew those fingers and applied them to her eyes!
That Puram song glorifies the education, age-old
Caused the poet-king to have dalliance with his queen.

Glorified Hero of Talaiy-alankanam

Netunceliyan, an adolescent hero commenced
Adroitly his onward march to confront
And allied forces of seven-fold chieftains,
Ceran, Cholan, Elini, Titiyan
Irunco Venman along with another two

Porunan, the chieftain and Erumaiyuran;
Reminding us of Veni, vidi, vici
Stepped into the field, surveyed the scene
Fought vigorously and heaved aloft his insignia;
Thus became he, the king of kings-
So happily says Nakkirar in one of the Akam poems.

On the boldness and strength of this young Pandyan
Poet Kallatanar eulogises in one of the Puram poems
That on his attack, fell both Cera and Cola kings
As both sun and the moon are downed on earth.

"Fighting one with another is common
In which, one alone succeeds is also the same;
But to defy and defeat a group of seven,
One alone fought and the seven were downed
Is a matter of novelty ever known in the world"
So glorifies Itakkunrurukilar the signal victory
Of this young Pandyan in a poem in Purananuru.

Kutapulaviyanar, a poet with unbearable concern
Makes a mention of Talaiyalankanam, as 'heavy-headed'
To indicate the internecine fighting of Tamil
chieftains there.
Broad shouldered Pandyan was the victor at length;
Hence the wish of the poet to embrace him fondly!
Soon he hugged the pearl-rolling chest
Of that marvellous Pandyan of singular fame.

Look at the graphic portrayal, by the poet
Of the combat field of Talaiyalankanam!
When arrows flew to face the onslaught,
Fell down soon the alien elephants!
Combat warriors cut their trunks with mouths;
The slashed pieces strewn around the ground
Gave the picture of ploughs on the wet field!
Many a commander there fell down dead
Also too, along with them, their sons heroic
Saw the women-elders with their withering faces;

Though stood around and bitterly wept
Felt a pride whether there is any more prideful victory
Than begetting these sons, bold and heroic.
Mankuti Marutan, the court-poet
Of Pandyan Netunceliyan
Felt a happiness and a surprise
At the adroitness and victory outstanding
Of this adolescent Pandyan royal;

But felt a bit satiated soon
That this Pandyan is crazy of combat victory.
To mitigate and assuage his war-craziness
Composed he, and idyll, Maduraikkanci
Wherein comes the depiction as follows:
An array of elephants, cutting across the field
Resemble the frigates that cleave the seas,
The hearth is made of heads of the royal kings
Torn asunder by spear-holding warriors;
The blood as of water would boil
Wherein would be cooked the flesh of the war-victims
With the ladle of shoulders, the oblation thus prepared
The Pandyan would submit on the sacrificial pit--
so is the eulogy of the poet who praises his foe also!

Those who are termed enemies to you
Even though defeated by you
With the battle- scars, they live long
In the world of wide heroism.
Thus pays he a tribute to those who are defeated.

Added he that Pandya king should give up
Wars hereafter and lead a life with warrior's tribute
Let him be a patron to support the indigent!
Let him live along with all peace and happiness
And to the admiration of the world herein.

Those with moral uprightness will live long
Others would be deemed not, to be living at all!
The hero of Talaiyalankanam, thus lived
With the tributes of the scholar-saints of Tamil!
Blessed with an idyll immortal, Maturaikkanci.

By Mankuti Marutanar, the great king lived long!
Nakkirar, the poet sang Netunalvatai
In honour of the same Pandya king
Who has left an immortal glory behind him.

Ye Son, hie thee to the Battle field

Those were the days of mutual warfare
Among the Cera, Chola, and Pandiya monarchs
On the combat grounds in deltaic region of Cauvery
As to whose banner should fly aloft on the victory tower.
A spinster in a certain village shocked to the core
Felt moved, as if a wax on a red hot flame;
Having heard her father has died in battle
Waged for saving the beloved mother-land.

Her spouse with fiery eyes just then returned
To whom the news she said with tears shedding.
"Felt a jolt at your pater's demise", queried he!
She negated his surmise, stating,
"The loss of even a single warrior would afford aliens
As a dent is made in a fabric plain
To gain entry towards our land unchecked.
Mere thinking of this made me shed tears, she added.

Soon, in turn, emerged he,.as a tiger from a den
Arose fiercely as the bubbling fire of a volcano
With a scythe for chopping down the foes,
Swore to revenge with a face cheerful!
'Strategic enmity will be torn into pieces
Never would I return until the nation is redeemed"

His wife smilingly quibbled, 'March ahead, dear'
Return I or not but you turn around for a parting kiss
She obeyed, soon he advanced to shower arrows on
his foes.
Sound of the drums signified active war!
Look at the way, the fair maiden's spouse
Penetrate the columns and put his foes to death!
Friendly warriors felt a surprise and praised him too!
The pearl-like damsel, felt a delight immense
On hearing the signal victory, he is piling on and on.

Castles he redeemed! Victory drum vigorously sounded!
Hooves of the horses broken! Force of the
elephants mauled!
Spears are broken into pieces and all these are heard,
Jumped she joyously and sang a song of Victory!

Warriors back home vouchsafe her spouse's victory!
Messengers of royal court made her merry!
Sang paeans, the neighbouring maidens!
Tears of joy the wife shed at his singular fame!
Suddenly stepped in, a man, as ill-luck would have it!
'Dear Lady! Be courageous to listen the news latest!

Alas, the one who oped the wedlock in a bridal chamber
Assuring you of a lasting unity in life mundane
Braved a spear and fell down dead!
Her 'life' has gone, but she's alive to mourn it.
Wailed she, wept bitterly and cursing
Death that snatched away the family-bunch.
What remains in life! The fruit is not--
Saying so, she lamented aloud!

No more days to exchange sugary words;
No more songs in dalliance with warm looks;
Will my eyes ever close their lids, she wept!
Looked towards the place where his body lay
And prayed fervently shedding tears.

In the ears of the woman who fell down desperate
Martial drumming of alien forces heard!
'Once my family is spoiled; let it be to the core'
With these vengeful words, arose she briskly
Adding 'My life, either for my dear land or for my house;
She, capable of measuring time in a brass-plate
Kept in mind her only son, dearly brought in
By herself in a cradle, presently in schooling
Under the branches of a banyan tree;

Went she straight and leaped in he, tiny tot,
Still a lovely boy in a prattling stage!
Asked he, 'Did the grandpa and daddy return?'
'Returned and gone off to a land of repose,
Sweet, my dear, you also accompany, she said.
'What did they bring for me', asked he with innocence,
'Honour, honour! immaculate honour!
To relish the same you too come along, she said.
The pride of clan presented himself
She, the lamp of the family continues, saying
'Incursion of enemies has caused our family
Havoc rendering it as a barren tree;
Doesn't matter, they all leapt into a fray died there!
But gained a repute of saving honour
And amassed a glory of lasting fame as the earth!

Dear, my son, attack the onslaught of the foes
So long as you have strength in your arms.
Sing martially! Here is your country
Rush out to save its honour'
Said she, hugged forth the tender boy
Groomed his hair, dressed him nicely
Handed him a blood-stained sword
And bade him farewell to the battle-field
Is it not a scene adorable and to be
Celebrated by one and all in the world over?

Poet of the New Song

Proletarians clamour and roar like oceanic waves,
That those who claim property, comforts and joys
Are those like selfish rats, against whom
To establish the maxim that abundance is for
common weal,
The labour-class; flag in hand, with fiery eyes
As if to scorch off idiocy, beat a martial sound
At the sight of which volcanic men, I am delightful;
With a gentle smile I turn back for a while to see them!

Ah!

I am very much moved and surprised!
With sparkling eyes, turn I the pages of Purananuru
And read to see that a poet of olden days
With a mind as throbbing as ours
And a feeling desperate whether there's life at all for us,
Inclined to shatter the hegemony of monopolists;
Also to rewrite the annals anew
Of acute poverty of indigent men
Who sink in, fall in, below the life-line
He has given a poem in that anthology.

Pakkutukkai Nankaniyar is his name-
So named as he improvised a cloth-bag
Into his fabric for wearing as the appendage
Pakkutukkai attributed by all means as such!
The term may also mean that the poet
Is so unconcerned about the apparel
That he won't wear even that bag-cloth properly
And hence so named by his contemporaries,

What's remarkable is that even in days olden
He poetized his ideas with fervent concern, querying
When would blossom an equality in human tribe
With simple dress, life, and appearance humble!
Heard he a bridal song in one house; but ill at ease
Felt he on hearing a wailing drum in another!
Though life and death are natural to human beings,
He felt two reasons different for the two events he saw!

In one place heard he wedding drums resounding
With festoons and porches of mango, jack fruit and
plaintain
All around the chamber on the arrival of bridal car
And with pots of drinks, rich food for guests in mansions
Whereas in another, the skeleton-like poor on the street
Waiting with empty stomachs for leaves of the feasts
All out in backyard for picking the crumbs on;
Pakkutukkai nankaniyar, with tears trickling from his eyes
Went to a place afar, having heard of a pathetic story;

A fair damsel, statue-like and slim as a creeper
Ended her life with no other alternative
As her early love, unfulfilled and wedding stopped
Due to her poverty, hinted at by parents of the groom
An immaculate lass thus fell down on the lap of demise.
A plaintive drum, close by the home of the fair girl
The poet heard and it is his mourning
That has assumed the shape of a poem in Purananuru.

Delightful lovers, florally decked on one side
Dying maidens with tears as of cascade on the other--
Is it not a horror in the earthy world and still more
Uncultured a trend if one set of people alone
To enjoy a happy life and another to endure misery?

Hence the statement of the poet is that, now itself
Let the benevolent arise and activate measures
To effect a change in the trend and to see
That everything is made common, equitable to all
What is said by Nankaniyar, we must concur with
And translate into action, uprooting the monopoly
and erect an egalitarian world to the betterment of all.

Ecstasy at the Onset of Rains

A wearied frog, desperate with no shade to rest
Heavily breathed and unaware of a danger lurking in,

Sought its rest under the faint shade of a cobra's hood
That was already tottering due to excessive heat--

Acute drought and scorching heat combined
That was the cruel summer, vividly portrayed by Kalidasa.

To the female-deer, suffered for want of a cool shade
Its stag offered its own, himself standing on the heat;

Such was the cruel summer as sung by Perunkatunko
in Kalittokai
Due to the pangs of separation of the beloved jubilant

Tears that she shed are no more as her eyes are dried;
So also the ponds with embankments as high as hillocks

But dried with no rains that might when clouds gather;
Flock of birds that had frequented there for prey

Would wanderforth, mindful of their existence
in all directions and fly in search of watery tanks!

Ploughs would sleep with neither sowing nor ploughing
As the soil becomes arid in fields accustomed to water!

Famine, famine was in everybody's lips
And its severity pricking the minds of all!

If sky became overcast, all of a sudden
And downpour was torrential as if the sky was torn,

What amount of pleasure would be to the maidens
Who go about with a pitcher to fill in, with water

Thinking that there will be fish frisking in;
To the people who were embittered due to drought

And to tillers sad due to the dryness of fields!
Such a pleasure is going to be yours, said the maid.

'How is it' the lady-love asked, patting the maid's cheeks
'The news would be as sweet as honey', she replied

'Listen! the lover to marry you soon
Is fastly coming in, see! a chariot, yonder', added she.

Might it not go as a Lie?

He, who gained many a victory, the chief of Velir clan
Customarily awarding gifts to his endearing poets;

Evvi, he is named, everywhere he is famed
At a time when engulfing darkness pitch

Was giving up its rigor, yielding to dawn
Came forth news as an arrow released

Tó the ears of an extempore poet Vellerukkilaiyar.
What news? What news it was?

It was the death in the battle-field of Evvi
The chieftain who ruled over Nitur

Such a tragic news, so terrible a news,
Might it not go as a lie, so is the despair of the poet;

Whose fond hope is that news should also be a lie
As much as the one explained below.

There had been a marvellous hero, Akutai,
Accustomed to gift elephants to the poets.

A rumour was strongly afloat everywhere
That none could win him over in the world

As he had a gold-capped disc, a war-device
Against which, whoever comes would be defeated;

Even a lion-like, on hearing his name, would be a mouse.
Those were the days when the foes would tremble

And feel reluctant to antagonise him;
But once it's known Akutai, the lion-like

Fought bravely and died in the field
What all they spoke about a golden disc

Has become fictitious and apocryphal.
Should not the news of the death of my beloved Evvi,

Be as much ficitious and apocryphal as that;
That's what feels the excelling poet

With the misery of a cow that has lost its calf.

Historic Passage that bears Evidence

Two thousand years ago
Villagers clustered together, cast their ballots
And chose their councils guiding five in number.

Even in monarchy in its heyday in the past
Democracy also successfully functioned
In small and big villages under 'kutavolai' system;
So says in an Akam poem, Marutan Ilanakanar.

In the Akam unit of poems innumerable
The pangs of separation, wailing of the belle
Exposure of love-intrigues, enduring of a pale colour,
Riding as a lover dejected on a stem of palmyra,
Wayward husband, after returning from a harlot
Deputing a minstrel to his wife to mediate,
Disclosing his pangs of love to his associate,
Young maidens sobbing bitterly when narrating
To loving maids, their sweet dreams broken abruptly,
Wallowing in misery sans food and water,
A fair hen laboriously waiting for its cock
And desperate in not seeing at a point nocturnally,
All these and other items of amorous side found.

Also blended, along with, the matters of puram
Such as a spectacle of war, warrior's husbandry
The decline of enemies, dignified and heroic
Annals of Tamils, ancient and their culture.
When the lover, before bidding adieu on a day
Expecting an acceptance from his domestic parrot,
She said "If you say, I leave thee not on any account
Assure me or else, say so to those who survive this woe"
With eyes weeping, lids and cheeks swollen;
Deeming them to be a restraint, there remains
Reluctantly a young man of a rich family,
Without going on an expedition of earning.

But the young man imagining within, the scene
Of the track that he was to pass by,
The poet himself expatiates in a poem exuberantly,
The region he was to cover without his lady
On an earning expedition is arid and sandy!
Because of the failure of thunder showers for long
Parched and hot is the soil burning for ever
From where, people in batches migrated elsewhere
for livelihood
In such a land of battle, bubbling with heroism
Inimical forces of two countries warring
Resulting in mangled forms of dead soldiers.
Birds of prey, brushing aside their under-wear
Pecking the bowels and picking up their intestines
Is so cruel and horrible a sight to look at!

Picking of intestines is aptly compared by the poet
To the picking up of the ballots by village councillors;
With this exotic simile, the poet elaborates the rare
And the ancient custom of Tamils to the world all over.
Villagers all would gather around in a hall
Their choice of names they would scribe on leaves
Detailing to which group they should be attached to,
And drop the leaves on, into the sealed pots
Which the arbiters would keep safely there.
An officer of the royal authority for records
Would come, unseal the pots and take the leaves
One by one to decide, at length and inform

The assemblage, the elected list and entitling
That group to look after the welfare of the village.

It is this dignified tradition, the poet Marutanar
Perpetuates for the succeeding generations to know
In the annals of Sangam literature.

Eagle and vulture pick out the intestines
Of youths who died in battle
Appears to him, the poet says
As if the palm-leaf-ballots are picked
Out of the pot meant for selecting
The welfare-minded village council.

Akam poem is the one but alas!
How, how much news it contains!
One news is the husband's abandoning of expedition
On a mere thinking of his lady-love's parting tears!
Her tears would be as sharply piercing my heart
As the pointed spear of the toddy-loving 'pittan'
The commander of the ever-winning Cera king,
So says an enterprising young, implying thereby
In news different that heroism is the symbol of Tamils.

One more news is that the parts of hilly
And forest regions would commingle in droughts
Yielding themselves to be termed arid desert!
Another news is that a warrior's dignity is
To confront the onslaught of the enemies at the risk
Of death in the field to be pecked at, by birds!

Surprising, of all news is the traditional one
That bespeaks the pride of ancient Tamils,
That even in monarchical days, the villages, big and small
Were the cradles of democratic spirit.
Limitless is the joy that one gets in all these news.

A Prize without Betrothal money

Your face would frown if, I say 'price for breasts!'
It means a 'betrothal money' in the Tamil Lexicon.

To choose a flowery girl from Mullai region as
daughter-in-law
What's given by Tamil elders is called ' betrothal money'

If in the parlance of the ancients, it's a 'price for breasts!
Contemporary Tamil may deem it to an obscene word!

Once, a certain girl is chosen as bride for a person,
A purse with money is bound to be given to the
bride's family.

But one father of a girl as pictured in Mullaikkali
Cheerfully informs with eclat that he would give

His creeper-like daughter in marriage without money!
When we read the passage as said sweetly by
Nalluruthiran,

We too enjoy as if tasting the sugary slices of jack fruit.
Adolescent youth is he to control the bull with horns

Which is capable of causing a gory death, tearing
the bowels;
That father, begotton his daughter as a pearl

Says how that youth should engage himself in the task!
'If he leaps up to embrace the bull by the horns

As a lover hugs the breasts of his hobnobbing damsel
No restraint to give my daughter in marriage to him!

Needless to pay even a single pie towards betrothal
when he becomes competent to beget my daughter
as prize.

Heroism is the one caused with a feeling of
Hugging the couple of breasts of his lady-love

When one activates himself undaunted and uncowed.
A poem in Mullaikkali bears sample evidence to this!

Hence shame it is if shoulders of a youth bends in fear!

Hail to kinship

Proper names of innumerable poets remain unknown
But they all remain alive as poesies in literature!

One of these, Ore-er-ulavar nicely pictures
With an apt simile in the pages of Kuruntokai

The heart-throbbings of a love-lorn young man!
At a time when copius rains flooded lands, wet and dry.

Unable to plant the seedlings after a good ploughing
As a farmer with a single plough felt aggrieved

And kneading his hands helplessly,
That love-lorn young man felt bewildered

Without seeing his beloved partner!
Because the poet drew the simile of a plough

Or 'Ore-er', he is called Ore-er-ulavar;
Next of kin has the poet in plenty

Such as parents, brothers, sisters and relatives!
Felt a heavy heart for a long time

And naturally once he felt it acute!
In the life of joys and sorrows alternately come

What have we seen and why this life at all?
In a brackish ground, levelled and as plain

As a peeled off skin, put upside down,
Look at there a deer, ran off and vanished,

From being killed by the spear of the hunter.
Inclined I am, as such to live alone, singly

Without being crushed between plenty and poverty;
Heaviness in heart will go to be enveloped in peace,

If only relieved myself of kith and kin.
Before arriving at a crucial decision as this,

The poet movingly thought over it with tears trickling!
Unfair it is that I alone prove to be escapade

Leaving the family and relatives, dependents behind!
Not possible to cut off them as we do cut the yarn

Those relatives who come around me and hence
A way of life amenable is to lead a life with one and all.

Is there an Eye-witness?

Mullai blossoms with ever increasing fragrance
But my dear wedded is yet to come!

On my lap he was in the sand behind the bushes;
'Don't leave even a flicker of a second, said I in his grip

showering his love limitless in a happy embrace
together we fondly bound, as eye and its lids;

Drank deep the bliss conjugal, indescribable
Revelry and orgy in all happiness thousands;

But alas! scorching me in seperation
Oh! my maid! Is it becoming of him!

It is a lie we too were one, unmindful of the world?
Is his promise and a vow 'Dear I married you' a lie?

"Maid, you ask me a witness for the promise, he made;
He. who hugged me therein, is a witness by himself;

When I pressed my cheeks on his sinewy shoulders,
A heron with legs as thin as the stalks of millet

Stood there, staring at the waters of the running stream
Whether the ara fish would come there to be pecked!

Unless perhaps the bird has seen both of us,
No eyewitness for the clandestine connection'

So said the lady-love, full of tears in her eyes
And holding maid's hands, asked her to fetch him soon!

Scenes from a Single Simile

Pandyan Netunceliyan of Talaiyalankanam
Never-bending to foes but ever to sacrifice for Tamil!

Unless secure the victorious wreath in battle for fame
Let neither the cluster of poets led by Mankuti Marutan

Eulogise me nor the nation, so swore the king
To whom the poet Marutan dedicated a volume

Maturaik-kanci, which speaks of the pride of Tamils;
A typical work evidencing the annals of history.

That his banner of fish was paramount everywhere;
Making enemies retreat from battle

Felt he to be a way of gathering glory;
Always raising the sword, annihilating the rivals

Securing himself the wreaths of glory for ever;
None to excel or even to be a peer, however

In such a way he raised himself to heights;
Maruthan sang Kanci to effect a change

That the king does ethical acts innumerable,
Avoiding his time being spent, ever in battles.

There in the long poem, come across we
A single simile with illustrations double!

An elephant in rut, frenzied to the core
Uprooted the peg, threw off the mahout

Ran amuck ruinously as if a solid boulder
Spoils everything in its rolling down the rocky slope!

Similar is the comparison, the poet brings out below
To the ruinous actions of the furious pachyderm.

In the placid sea of plenty of shells and conches,
Along with a very big fish called 'Panai'

As a tempest, all of a sudden, attacked a ship
Cuts its rope, tore the sails, uprooted the mast

Dislocated the anchor and caused a colossal havoc-
Rutted elephant would also jump about thus

Far beyond the control of its mahout!
As an elephant reels about as rut increases

When the chanks and shells are blown back and forth
The tempest also would be found enraged.

Rich imagination with two spectacles in one smile
Bears witness to the greatness of Marutan, the Poet.

Nocci wreath that flew aloft?

Unknowingly of kith and kin, and parents
A belle of bow-like brows in her company of the hero

among the flowery bushes near the lotus-pond
Would learn the orgy of sex with all her pleasure;

Later on, when he didn't return from the battle-fray
To see again his beloved lass, that dreaming lady-love

Was found miserable in tears, pining for her lover.
Very much moved to see her mentally depressive,

Her parents held her to be in the grip of spirits
Offered prayers to God Muruka after a ritual dance;

Deeming her to be innocent, unknowingly of her mind
Her parents held the ritual dance which is portrayed

By a poet significantly called Veri Padiya Kamakkaniyar!
Eulogisingly of a soldier who died in battle

That Kamakkanniyar has given a poem in Purananuru
The warrior, alike a tiger-cub jumped into the battle

Was found dead with a spear pierced into his chest.
He had worn, on his crest a wreath of nocci plant

On his waist, a band with an armour and bracelet.
To devour the scattered corpses in the field of war

Many a wide-mouthed vultures that circling above
Pecked at the blood-stained nocci wreath also

Thinking that it is intestinal flesh;
On seeing this in the beak of the bird at a height

The poet famously mentions in his poem
Stating that even the nocci plant is elevated

Because of its being worn by a singular hero
Who has fallen dead having fought mindlessly of his
mortal life

The poet makes us feel exhilarated to the core
At the mere reading of it in Purananuru.

Butter melts on a scorching Rock

Vanankamudi, a hero who never bows down
But competent to terrify the world with sword
Said from A to Z to his friend, a 'Puritan'
Who had, in a friendly way mocked him earlier.
"Palpitated I am besides being warped and bent
Because of a belle perfect, whose row of teeth
Is as orderly as the flowers in a Mullai wreath!
Without realising the malady that irks me
You are parodying me in all smiles stating
'Oh! my affectionate and rare friend!
I become thin and emaciated due to her!"

Amidst a cluster of flowers with bees jostling
On the apex of hillocks where play wild beasts--
On the beaches lay crabs in co-habitation,
It's but natural for lovers to drink mutually
Honey-dew from one another's lips, co-habit,
Sulking and joying in a closed meeting
Entwining the position of four legs and four hands
Get seperated and then joined to renew pleasure!
Such being so, why should you get bothered
As an ant in acute distress, very near the anvil!
So said consol g the friend, Puritan
Whose hands Vanankamuti held forth narrating.

"Listen my friend, I wouldn't say that
She and myself are like honey and manna
As these two would satiate beyond a limit!
An apt comparison for a cloylessness
Won't be available in any language, I swear!
Saw a lad jumping upon a branch of mango tree
And plucked the fruit therein, but alas!
Why the tree itself took back the fruit, distressed I am!

Stag-like girl, from the pond took a carp
Ran back home and looked I staringly!
Why did the two carps, I held in my lips for a while
Leave me to my shock and leap into the lotus-pond?
Though understood that Vanankamuti's mind
Is miserably broken beyond anybody's mending
The Puritan, however continued his counsellings!

"Not a trickster she is, to vanish!
Don't forget, there is no trickery at all!
She is a lamp of the human race and one
Who is to be your homely light, torch bearer of ladies!
Despite her news to you that she will be away
For a few days elsewhere with her relatives,
Why do you cry that your love disappeared
As a coin that is lost at the bottom of the sea?
You're marvellous to push aside, with hands
The arrows and spears that are darted at you!
Should you be standing as bootless as a rotten tree?
Unfair it is! Avoid your worry and let your heart
Be not as tossed up as a dinghy in mid-sea;

The consoling words of his close friend
Has not moistened and put off the fiery love
Of Vanankamuti who is separated from his lady-love!
Felt he melted as a wax in his blazing love!
Vellivitiyar, a poetess explains in Kuruntokai
His bubbling mind of romantic fervour!
Is there a simile more excelling than
The simile brought in by the strong-shouldered
To the friend who attempted consoling him
That though away, she would return tomorrow?

My beloved and counselling friend!
If your persuasion could prevent my body
From being melted and weakened
Out of my blazing love, would I accept
Unhesistatingly and say that it's good!
In a rock that radiates scorching heat
An armless and dumb, in his inability
To safeguard butter melting therein
Neither to cry for others to come and preserve it
Nor to rush into protect himself
He remained as a mute witness!
My misery is no less due to her separation!
But you elongate your piece of advice!

In the lusty mind, burning within
Of brave Vanankamuti, a chief among heroes
No more counselling as if piercing with spear
That's what Puritan thought and left him off.

Sheaves of Millet and Trunk of an Elephant

A damsel with as soft a body as silken fabric
Climbed up a wooden platform raised

To watch over the millet field;
Aware of this flew there he, a broad-shouldered!

She, perceptibly sweet, as pure as tumpai flower
Stood, there, stupefying him with her buds two.

Her beauty of driving the birds off with catapult
Staringly looked at he and stunned at it.

The sharp-eyed lass, without looking at him
Mindful of safeguarding the millet stalks.

Arrived there, he, hoping a lot to talk about
The pearl-like lass, didn't look at him.

Stood there he, to taste her sugary lips
Like a devotee but to no avail!

The maid of the lass who drove the birds
Gently came very near him and said

'Ye, hero desirous and cultivating an intimacy
You can meet her after sunset'

Unable to embrace, at a time when thought of it
The sturdy hero bowed his head as a millet stalk!

Kapilar, the poet brings in a comparison
To the millet stalk that is bent.

An elephant sought to bend a ripe bamboo
With seeds on its top, but the beast could not succeed;

Hence lowered its trunk down and
Placed it on the pearl-like and milky-white tusk;

Fully riped millet-stalk appeared like this to the poet..
He, the love-lorn as if to remind that scene

Desired to hug and happily offered kisses on her
But worried on its impossibility in fact;

Hence he bowed his head as a millet-sheaf
And the sheaf is as curved as an elephant's trunk;

This is how Kapilar works out a comparison;
Unique to Tamil literature of ageless endurance!