

The Everlasting Cloud

Translated by k. Ayyappa Panikar

With the fire and steam of the pain
Of separation from the beloved,
With a sing, with a tear,
The spirit of time makes raincloud
And files it in play through the sky of fancy
As a child files a kite.

When the palai tree blossoms
Amidst the thick greenery
In the Ramagiri hermitage
of lofty souls,

When the gentle breeze blow
In an Ashadha morning,
And the jungle brook murmurs
In its slow course,

There sits a man on a rock
Jutting into the sky,
Utterly lost;
It was never dry.
To prevent his proud jump
Into the blue sky's sea,
The earth hangs heavy
Like a load on the stretching leg.

To his gaze stand below
The heavy rainclouds
Like a tusker
Digging up the valley.

Frisking and playing
Amidst them like cranes
Are the sprouts
Of a lover's dream.
It reflects the whole
of aryavarta in joy,
From the deserted Ramagiri
As far Alakapuri

In Alakapuri is seen
A silent house
Behind the arch
With the glow of a rainbow.

While the dooryard *mandara* flowers
Blossom all over or fade,
The desolate queen of beauty
Sits all alone within

The girl has forgotten
The song he has composed
In her effort to tune
The *vina* strings wet with tears,
The girl who quietly

Folds up its feathers to say
“Do you now remember
My beloved, O parakeet?”

Seeing that raincloud,
Time pauses to recall
The beetle-colored one who played
On the flute and rules this world.

“Like the vision of the Cosmos
Seen in his mouth,
O cloud, your interior
Makes me wonder-struck.

Before my tongue consuming all
Could stretch towards you
Through tears of joy,

Whether it be the wild jasmine
Fainting at Shakuntala’s departure,
Or the *ashoka* touched into full bloom
By the feet of an enthralled Malavika,

Or Kautsya’s throat
Throbbing at Raghu’s charity,
Or Rudra’s mind split up
By Gauri’s long blue eyes,

Or the gratitude of the fair maiden

Encircling Pururavas:

What is there that is not there
Reflected in you breast, O cloud?

Imaginary figure

Of anxious Man solidified,
My pride I bend before you,
Down to the ground.

When the Lord of Time, seated
On the pedestal of Eternal Joy
Pats with a glance the back of time
That is bowing in front of him,

When time touches his flower- feet
And shows obeisance,
He fondles with a smile his right hand
Marked by callosity:

“I have come through, by luck,
Precious stones
Pierced b diamond:
I was only a thread,”