

K.V. Raghupathi

(A former academic, poet, short story writer, novelist, critic, columnist, and book reviewer from Chiguruwada Village, Tirupati)

There Lives a Poet like a Hermit

Solitude is not a curse.
It needs no patronisation,
stands alone with no time, name, and colour of the skin
holding nothing in hands
but embraces whoever seeks for it.

There lives a poet in a village
anonymously, on its periphery
far from the bustling city
with lush fields dotted with rising coconut trees on the west
but now are being slowly devoured by land sharks.

Not everybody knows the inside and outside
of the poet's life
but they know he is a hermit
bare, devoid of
vile religion, debased philosophy, dreadful ideology,
odious sect, repulsive belief, and nauseating faith.

He has no pets
but the birds are his pals
visiting regularly for pools in the plastic plates
for a dip and drop to quench the thirst
and for some crumbs he occasionally sprinkles.

He is seen every evening at the stroke of five
walking alone with a roller like a monk lost in thoughts
across the fields, pausing now and then
to watch the pranky birds and the sailing clouds,
trees of multiple shapes and forms
clothed in leaves and flowers.

He is not spiritual; he claims nothing
but sounds ethereal when he speaks:
words flow, fly, and fall like rain drops
on leaves making mellifluous.
His means are small, his desires none,
his possessions meagre;
he reads occasionally but writes more;
he reflects and meditates every moment,
lives as though he were not in the world;
he has no rules to live; formulates none
but cooks when butterflies tickle the inner walls,
sweeps and mops the floor when he smells dirt,
sleeps when his eyes are droopy like the evening shrinking petals,
watches plenty and reads everything in nature
and responds on demand.

He never did anything extraordinary
that invited contempt and envy
or could be cherished.

The present youth is indifferent, though
those who are his contemporaries never remembered

nor visited him nor chatted
but he continues to live in his world
like a starling in a bush, unseen.

The inner light has not dimmed, still steadfast
not worn out
to live long, strong and healthy;
like a coconut tree in the fields
he is unaffected by the idiosyncrasies of the world;
he is aloof but accessible.

A few villagers notice him when he pops out
in the mid-afternoon to guard his bones from the racing vehicles.

He never lives at somebody's mercy
a self-reliant, he does his chores
unashamedly, unfazed by remarks.
Nothing ever makes him gloomy,
formidable like bunker walls,
he has never treasured,
his wisdom is living and his living is wisdom,
has little regard for memory and knowledge.

There is no sense in boxing him in a framework,
at times he slips out;
many think he is under the spell of some absurd power
but he is vicious to anything that comes from outside
he trusts his inner conscience and convictions.
Can anyone make him another cranky?
Who could have predicted this audacity from him?

Is it from his living?
He never goes back into the shadows of his past
and nibbles it.
If you truly look for him
you can locate him, reclusive
sitting quietly, occasionally on the veranda
sometimes inside the cottage
named as Upanishad Nilayam – the home of wisdom
watching trees and birds endlessly
enjoying every bit of life
sucking juice to its marrow.
He is a poet in solitude!