



Three Poems *

Kamalakara Kadave

Translated from Kannada by Maithreyi Karnoor

A Very Dear Pumpkin

The bazaar swelters under
The afternoon sun; potatoes, aubergines
Weighing stones under umbrellas
And loose change under gunny-sack mats

Tubers sell for three and half rupees
A sheep caned when its
Mouth strays to coriander greens
Isn't spared a mouthful of curses

Durgabai Shinde,
The street sweeper not made filthy
Rich by the municipality's wages
Strives long in Popatlal Pansaare's shop
To cut each kilo of onion,
Spinach, bitter gourd and carrot
By fifty paise;
All her vegetables are paid for
By the thirty rupees of that lout



Paanwala Gajodhar Mishra's

Unmet desires

That drove her there in preparation

Of the upcoming occasion

'How much is the pumpkin?' if you ask,

Popatlaal loses his cool and yells

Shankar Pillai, the orderly of

Brigadier Nanawati household

On a mission to obtain

Fresh peas for his table

Attempts to bring down the heat

'Why cook your brains over such trivialities, *bhai*?

You need a cool head to run the business'

He says and squashes a *beedi*

Under the heel of a black boot

'This time summer is killing, *nahi kya?*'

Miss Katariya of gita beauty parlour

Remarks to her girl friend

While picking hot green chilies

In Khomane Bai's shop

The hag

Khomane Bai, unable to cut it

Cackles, 'there must be an AC

In your home, of course?'

The sparing teeth arranged like

Jail bars in her mouth



Wink at the raging afternoon sun.

The Boatman's Farewell

On magnolia evenings and banks
Covered in languid cowries
He sails on his *boatly* legs,
The melody escaping his lips doesn't
Give away his state – physical, fiscal.
He doesn't curse the wind
As time dances before his eyes
Stretched from the done to the yet;
How long ago, how far away
The water that flows peaceably
Past had started?

Like this: the light spilling over
The waves around his eyes become
Now a laugh, now a worry line
At the corner of his mouth.
A feeling that doesn't outdo him
He knows, swirls alongside
Like a favoured friend in mid-river.
Although in his boat he carries the moon
He never ignores the perfumes of the
Trees and the creepers on the banks;



Many that shaded him half his life
Are nearing the end of theirs.
As his net-swinging hands cook gruel,
Feed the children and the rheumatoid wife
His paths close one by one everyday.

For today, this moment's being
What apart from dreams, memories,
Shade, pride, desires, regrets
Need weigh on his cooling blood?
The sand dunes, crooked canopies
Of coconut trees, paddy fields and egrets
Of here
Also awe him while imparting
A parting – feeling of forgetfulness...

Oh look, here comes the last wave
Of sleep; an engulfing unawareness.

The Horse and the Murderer

Basking in the glory of hair
As white as white can be
During a break in ferrying grooms
Is the horse.
Like an indolent *paan*-chewing peon



Stands

A murderer between murders.

Easy music passes between them
As a yet unpainted moth;
Pulled in the chaos of the band, the trigger
Would be a quick and bloody death and
The bother of mingling and out of traffic

Trumpeting breathlessly is the news
Through tender blades of grass
Glowing post a misty breakfast
Tickling breeze and sun
Chipped through winnowing branches,
That the jail break is tomorrow!

Chewing the cud in the memory
Of an old oat
They glower at each other
Speech has been floored even while shore
Is a distant thought
Now, the point of the matter is:
Who among them will,
In the ensuing chaos, know the other,
Who will shrink from that one step
Forward.



*The three poems by Kamalakara Kadave, are published by Akshara Prakashana, Heggodu (Sagara) Karnataka, 2010.

The Poet

Kamalakar Kadave was born in Sirsi, Karnataka and had his education in Sirsi, Mysore and Pune. He is presently an Associate Professor at the Postgraduate Department of English of Ahmednagar College, Ahmednagar in Maharashtra, India. He is a bilingual writer and a translator between Kannada and English. His publications include two collections of poems in Kannada, the first "*Churuparu Reshime*" appeared in 2006 and won the "PUTINA Award for Best Book" and the second "*Mugiyada Madhyahna*" appeared in 2010. His third collection of poems "*Jagada Jate Matukate*" will be out in November 2016. He has translated to English the poetry of several contemporary Kannada poets. Translations of his poems have appeared in *Indian Literature* and *Muse India*.

The Translator

Maithreyi Karnoor is a writer, translator and theatre critic. Her original English poems have appeared in *Indian Literature*, the bi-monthly journal published by the Sahitya Akademi, and she is working towards publishing her first collection of poems. Her English translations of Kannada contemporary Dalit literature are published as part of an anthology by Harper Collins, and her translations of academic essays on theatre, have appeared in *Aniketana* by Kannada Sahitya Akademi. Her theatre reviews appear regularly in the Bangalore edition of *The Hindu*.

Maithreyi lives in Bangalore where she works as a subeditor for an online film magazine. She was born in Hubli, Karnataka, and has an MA in Literary and Cultural Studies from EFL University, Hyderabad.