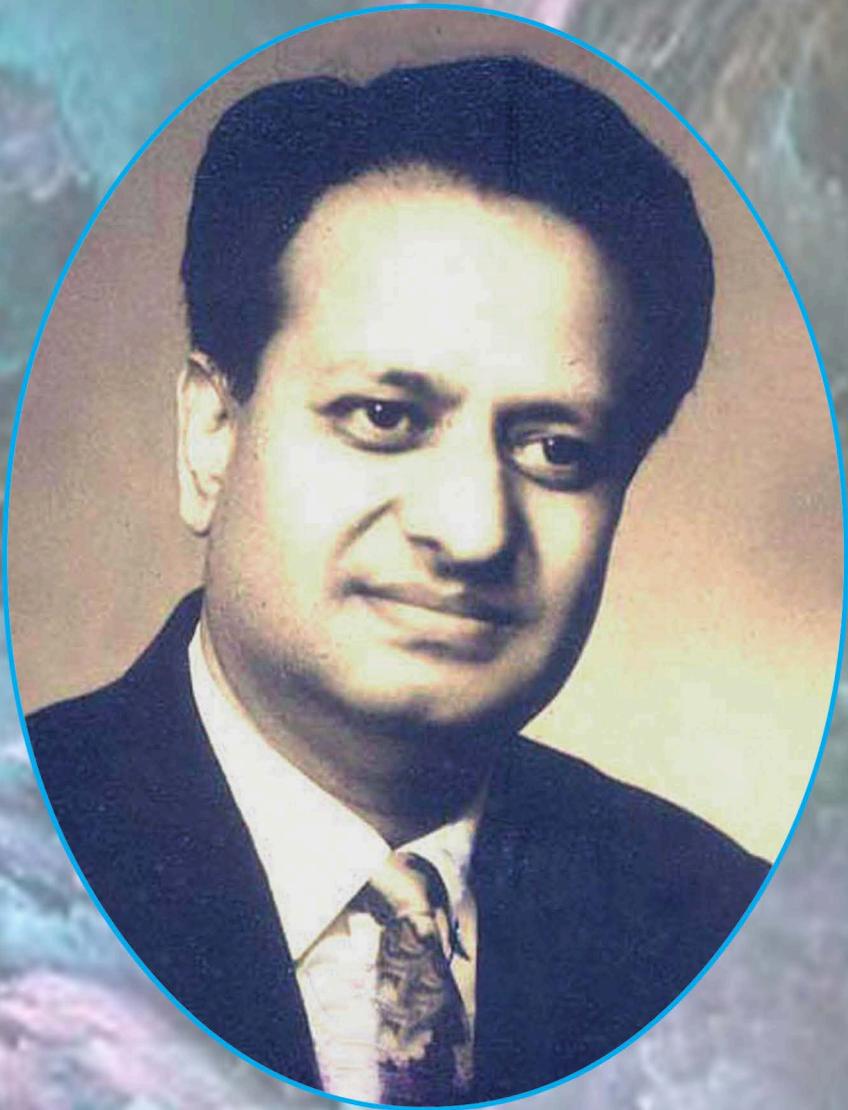


# **MY COUNTRY - MY PEOPLE**

**AND SELECTED POETRY**





Seshendra's Mother Late Ammayamma (Sitting) With (From Left) Her Youngest Daughter Devasena, Daughter-in-law (Seshendra's Wife) Janaki, Son Seshendra, Husband late Subrahmanyam, Youngest Son Rajsekharan and Elder Daughter Anusuya in 1949 at Seshendra's House at Thotapalli Gudur Village, Nellore District, Pin:524311 (A.P.) India

*My Country – My People  
And Selected Poetry*

*Translated into English by the Poet*

*(My country My People: Modern Indian Epic,  
The Burning Sun, Gorilla, Turned Into Water and Fled away,  
Ocean is my Name)*

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*Saatyaki S/o Seshendra Sharma*

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*(Translated by K. Damodar Rao Associate Professor of  
English Kakatiya University, Warangal.)*

**Gunturu Seshendra Sarma:**  
**an extraordinary poet-scholar**  
*One of the ironies in literature is that*  
*he came to be known more as a critic than a poet*

HYDERABAD: An era of scholastic excellence and poetic grandeur has come to an end in the passing away of Gunturu Seshendra Sarma, one of the foremost poets and critics in Telugu literature. His mastery over western literature and Indian 'Alankara Sastra' gave his works a stunning imagery, unparalleled in modern Indian works. One of the ironies in literature is that he came to be known more as a critic than a poet. The Central Sahitya Akademi award was conferred on him for his work 'Kaala Rekha' and not for his poetic excellence. The genius in him made him explore 'Kundalini Yoga' in his treatise on Ramayana in 'Shodasi' convincingly. His intellectual quest further made him probe 'Naishadha Kaavya' in the backdrop of 'Lalita Sahasra Naamavali', 'Soundarya Lahari' and 'Kama Kala Vilasam' in 'Swarna Hamsa', Seshendra saw the entire universe as a storehouse of images and signs to which imagination was to make value-addition. Like Stephene Mallarme who was considered a prophet of symbolism in French literature, Seshendra Sarma too believed that art alone would survive in the universe along with poetry. He believed that the main vocation of human beings was to be artists and poets. His 'Kavisena Manifesto' gave a new direction to modern criticism making it a landmark work in poetics. Telugus would rue the intellectual impoverishment they suffered in maintaining a 'distance' from him. Seshendra could have given us more, but we did not deserve it! The denial of the Jnanpeeth Award to him proves it

- **The Hindu**

India's National Newspaper

Friday, Jun 01, 2007

# CANTO 1

A hand rises out of the dawn, the hand of the toiler of time, it is raised dipped in the Blood and sweat of human fields; it scatters sindow to long shadows and distances.

I open my eyes and from my little window greet the birds and clouds, flying about in the air. I fling a sigh at them that all my dreams are only their wings. I share the loving gift of Sun, my day, with them.

I am born out of the grain, I live for the grain and dead I go back into the grain. I make Poems with molecules of sounds and like glasses Made out of particles of sand, lilt them into tunes.

With yarn which dreams of colours, weave saris to drape women of my country and Release them like butterflies in the meadows of Human life.

I make ships, launch them in the oceans, to carry and go flying my people's flags:

I lay roads into dreams, I build mansions Into the clouds, with my life I raise massive walls On the frontiers of my country, high into the chest Of our enemies;

I give shapes, forms and voices to rocks and release them from silences. I plough all the Fields of human life; what beauty has I not Created with this hand! What thing on earth did Not surrender to this hand? But this hand has remained ever empty!

I had no place in bygone history and the Present history has no scruples. Why I build dams, Why I till lands, I do not know!

I live in zero, but I walk along. Man is the walking tree, whose roots have changed into legs. Had I remained a tree, I could have

## CANTO 4

Poetry is coming like a red red horse,  
Like a an arrow from my blood, like the life of a martyr! It is  
not letting me breathe!

From across the vast glass-pane are coming turning into  
words, all those trees, all those roads that run through the trees  
all those people that the roads carry, all those loads of skies that  
people bear, and all those horizons that hang from the skies;  
helplessly-

Every moment of mine, comes and goes, chistling itself into  
a sculptured piece,

One time as my nation, another time as my song. Yet another  
time as my poem, and then as my blazing sun.

With new faces, wearing new halos of light my poems come,  
jumping and dancing on the new line of my eyes.

On my roads are written letters of welcome; on my footsteps  
are rained colours by roadside trees.

Some children are playing marble, out there. Those very  
marble which they play today will ascend the guns of tomorrow  
and destroy these gigantic edifices of oppression.

They shall raise new buildings and new sunrises will be born  
in the hills.

Can ranges of mountains stop the dawn?

Sun will any how jump forward, cutting across with a  
thousand swords; he will planted flags of light on the hills-

The shining roads, which today are bearing on their backs  
rolling motor cars, will flee away through these crowds of trees..

I may go and I may not return; but there is no escape from  
my memories; they shall sing forever becoming birds in the air,

## CANTO 6

You called me; but I would have any how come in search of you even without your call, in quest of your voices-

Looking with my ears, with my eyes, with my skin, with my nostrils.

Not one, but with all my senses, searching in all directions of my country-

I came, not that I only know and you don't know; but that we all shall walk in the same direction hand in hand.

Not that we should all speak the same word but that our word shall not be a mere word but a flame of light which will illumine the paths of the people.

And that we shall realize it is within us it is for this I am in search of you-

My friends my words and thoughts are countries never tread by the feet of any man, my consciousness is a gypsy who knows no boundaries familiar to the antiquated history of mankind.

My footsteps are mighty wild lions that sprawl in the dense forest unaware of fear-

I fight with flowers, I fight with gardens of flowers, I fight with clouds, fight with fierce storms.

Fight I breathe to live, my limbs know no submissive postures.

I am the solder of righteous indignation. Truth is the volcano that explodes in my bosom. Truth is the fierce cataract that roars in my voice.

I burn my selfish body and flow like a river molten gold in the highways of my nation. Come with me..

## CANTO 7

You living corpses! Look! Falcons are hovering over your cities.  
Do not think that silent trees do not speak is an idea of your  
ignorance but they are monks living on their inner energy.

In the civilization of mix of huts and mansions you commit  
suicides and flatter them as self-realization.

Your speeches are charred chastity of languages

Trees rising out of the burning bosom of earth give soulful  
cool shades to man spontaneously

In woods ruled by winds man can penance without out lose  
of human dignity.

. On the highway of your cities we find bullock carts dragging  
like unbearable ancient burden. Motorcars flashes of lightening  
like vanity on wheels; do not even glance at the rows of trees on  
the roadside.

Old and new slight one another in contempt and ridicule in  
your path.

Values of nature have been cast away by your view.

That eagle flying wing to wing with the plane in the high skies  
is not a mere bird It is an ancient bird gazing from the ramparts of  
the azure at the rise and fall of civilizations. Those civilizations  
Which Man unfurls as symbols and flags of his victory in pages of  
his history.

Looking at man's trumpeting Vainglory Mountains are in snide  
splits Oceans are smiling in doubt; sky is roaring in laughter,

Ancient forests, wombs of wisdom are in pain making  
inaudible commentaries

## THE BURNING SUN

I am the drop of sweat, I am the sun  
Rising from the hills of human sinews,  
Hearts are my friends  
I live in the city of sufferings  
Although in my fist, I hold an ocean of history  
I sculptured man silently –  
Wings that carried birds  
Did not bring them back;  
I am drinking thick darkness  
In the haunts of those forests  
Which cry out in agony for the birds  
That did not return;  
Clutching at the garment woven of memories  
I twine myself to the feet of my country.  
Heads that were hanging to the trees  
Smile as flowers today in the branches  
Hearts that received the bullets  
Ring in temples of our land like bells;  
Blood of theirs nights squeezed and offered  
By how many to bring forth this day;  
They are hanging like icicles  
On the ridges of our roofs;  
Look, it is an iron fist I have;  
I shall excavate the flame of light  
From the rocks of time –  
I will set fire to the sleep of resisting centuries –  
To the rivers that run in passion after the sea

## EUCALYPTUS FOREST

Skies outside are calling come let us go –  
Let us run in the Eucalyptus forests  
Which have grown tall as the steeples of churches  
Where red Camellias are dreaming in silences  
Come let us join those drunken clouds  
That are jumping intoxicated  
On the hearts of the hills:  
Let us erase all the wounds of earth  
Turning drops of sweat into pearls of grain  
Let us rain love  
Why these friends between us?  
They are like your pearl necklace  
Which come between our lips  
These so called friends are a lie ,  
Like all things today from which  
Time has stolen away  
The gold of truth  
We met once beneath these trees  
That ruminates by night the memories  
Of the sun  
Gathered by day;  
Here beneath these stars  
That join the tired human race  
In the eternal march on earth  
Beneath this mimosa  
With Dahlias, Camellias, Lilies, Daisies  
And varied flowers gathered from these

## PILGRIMAGE FOR PEACE

My soul craves for travel  
a long pilgrimage for peace  
far far beyond the borders;  
into the lap of hills,  
into the womb of forests,  
he plunges himself  
into the train of winds,  
hops over caravans of clouds.  
to quench his thirst  
for silence glimmering  
over the yonder horizon.

and to escape  
from the grotesque colonies  
of naked trees  
that haunt his dreams  
forever.

he dreams  
for a journey  
into a dream  
where the whole world  
of living beings fly on wings  
scattering sweet syllables in the air;

where even a leaf before it falls  
to the ground  
plays around sailing  
in a boat of song.

## DROPS OF STARS

In the shade spread by the tree  
A  
Tiny bush is standing,  
Such gentle little thing;  
A bird perched on the branch,  
A flower dropped on the bush  
The bush looked up,  
I was afraid  
It might walk away  
With its slate and books  
Now the small bush with  
Is the picture before me  
Pulsating with flaming colours,  
He is sipping the starry drops  
Of my thoughts,  
A butterfly sauntering over it  
Disturbs the peace of my eyes;  
In this a living scene  
There is no place even for a bird,  
Filaments and pollen  
Only board the vehicles  
Of flowers,  
Even perfumes  
Must hold the rods of winds  
And travel  
In this picture  
Every object  
Lives

# GORILLA

## **Modern Indian Classic**

*This collection of poems was published in 1976 , when India was passing through the cruel times of Emergency imposed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi , the then Prime Minister. To the vested interests of the contemporary society Seshendra's concept of Gorilla is a shock therapy like Pablo Picasso's Guernica.*



*After My Country My People , this work of Seshendra Sharma is such a creative explosion of Indian Genius that in it all linguistic limitations break down and collapse and the entire country and culture of India rises to its full height, Gorilla is a new culture of poetry , is a new poetic vision; it is a new science of beauty . Seshendra rightly says 'My poetry does not fly any flags but my hands are the swords of my country''*

Dr. Dhananjaya Varma ,Critic  
*(From preface to Gorilla Hindi Translation )*

**End of Preview.**

**Rest of the book can be read @**

**<http://kinige.com/book/My+Country+My+People>**

**\* \* \***