

## **My Last Candle**

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-- Dedicated to everyone in Sixties Club. Web-published September 2025 --

“But I have arrived at the end of my resources: there is nothing left in the larder,  
and this candle that you see burning is the last that remains ...”

-- From Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*

Flicker, flicker candle bright,  
How I wonder what you light!  
From the room the darkness goes,  
But not the gloom of shadows...  
-- From Nirmaldasan's *Moonlight Miscellany*

**Poet laureate**  
(December 2019)

To both the king and queen  
I swear I have been loyal,  
But ask me not to chaunt  
The chant royal.

**In Praise Of Man**  
(2018)

If you ask me to sing in praise of man,  
I'll surely do the best that I can.  
But you must pay me in dollars and pounds  
To squarely keep my conscience out of bounds!

**Pangram**  
(Sentence comprising every letter of the English alphabet. Composed in 2018)

Adam dozes but Eve wakes, quietly picks a jinxed fruit and eats enough.

**The Bold Truth**  
(2018)

Aswathamma's life is violently ended!

**Monorhymer**  
(December 2019)

My life is like a pantomime  
With many a turn on a dime  
You see me walking in my prime  
Sipping a glass of sweet fresh lime  
And humming the pleasantest chime  
I'm certain you have enough time  
To watch me slipping into slime  
With a face now blackened with grime  
Or committing some grievous crime  
But sorry I've run out of rhyme

**Threesome Homophones**  
(December 2019)

A and B and C,  
Am I born to see  
The calm or stormy sea?

In the fane  
Do not feign  
To be fain ...

The mantis prays,  
The mantis preys ...  
Ah praise the mantis!

He's willing to share some peas  
But takes the pie in one piece.  
May his soul rest in peace!

**Humbaba Dead**  
(2018)

The stars will not glow again –  
Humbaba, the guardian of the woods,  
Is dead, killed by two friends  
Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

The winds will not blow again –  
Humbaba, the guardian of the woods,  
Is killed, slain by two friends  
Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

The rivers will not flow again –  
Humbaba, the guardian of the woods,  
Is slain, axed by two friends  
Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

The forests will not grow again –  
Humbaba, the guardian of the woods,  
Is axed, murdered by two friends  
Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

**Palinode**  
(2018)

I fondly hope you have not read  
My verse titled *Humbaba Dead*.  
But if you have read that ode,  
Please also read this palinode:

The sun sinks into the main,  
The stars glow again!

The earth shakes its main,  
The winds blow again!

The clouds burst into rain,  
The rivers flow again!

Birds' droppings seeds contain,  
The forests grow again!

**A Glosa on T. Ashwin Kumar's 'Waking Up With A Polar Bear'**  
(2013)

“When I woke up from a hot summer night,  
So hot that I had slept in my underwear,  
The heat had melted all the world's ice,  
And I woke up with a polar bear.”

I had swooned into a slumber deep  
Like a comet in a flash of light;  
And found myself melting a dream  
When I woke up from a hot summer night.

Even the helpless gods are crying treason!  
O where is the biting cold of winter?  
Of what use these blankets this season?  
So hot that I had slept in my underwear.

Throw the sun into another galaxy,  
And let the waning moon wax and rise  
And cool the earth before the heat,  
The heat had melted all the world's ice.

When I curled up into a ball of fire,  
Went in flames, I thought, my underwear.  
The glaziers in global warming disappear  
And I woke up with a polar bear.

**The Spell Of Shakespeare**  
(Inspired by Willard Espy's rhyme book, August 2020)

Do you fear  
To spell Shakespear?

He himself wasn't sure  
Of spelling Shakespure.

He would be square  
If you write Shakespuare

He wasn't a squire  
To be spelt Shakespire

Like the tables of Napier  
Are the plays of Shakespier

Maybe Byron wrote giaour  
After reading Shakespiaour

A piece of US caviar  
Is Shakespiar

And the British caviare  
Is also Shakespiare

Thousands said he is without a peer  
O that Shakespeer

Tolstoy felt he wasn't sincere  
Ah this Shakespere

You may easily tire  
If you read Shakespire

But the dearest of the deare  
Lo and behold -- Shakespeare!

### **The Weevil Equivoque**

(First read down each column, then read across the two columns. Composed in 2018)

Not a mango weevil	flies fruitlessly
has a stronger will	to become free
to brave the chill	of the dark sea
with utmost skill...	unto eternity!

### **Weevil Anagrams**

(2018)

Weevil – We live!  
Mango weevil – Evil man, we go!

### **Chronogram** (2018)

How many weevils?  
weeVILs  
LIV or LVI?  
54 or 56 weevils!

### **Lipogram Lines**

(Every line will have all the vowel letters excepting one vowel; *a e i o u* in that order. Composed in 2018.)

For the sun the world pines,  
But shadows fall as a mist  
Over north, south and west;  
In the east the sun shines  
And brightens my lipogram lines.

### **A Wish For My Son** (03/04/2020)

Let's think not of tomorrow  
For tomorrow is another day;  
But today, this morrow,  
Ah 'tis your birthday!

Into a wishing-well I tossed a coin,  
Whether your dreams be many or few;  
And ancestral voices in chorus join  
As I sing a happy birthday to you!

### **A Wish For My Mother** (05/05/2020)

The jasmine-scented breeze  
Is blowing in the trees  
Singing a happy birthday to you!

Your friends and pets and all  
Are rushing into the hall  
Singing a happy birthday to you!

Though the stars are out of sight  
They'll spell your name tonight  
Singing a happy birthday to you!

In a hanky I've tied a coin  
And Young Davids in chorus join  
Singing a happy birthday to you!

**A Wish For Kanna And Sapna**  
(18/05/2020)

When hand-in-hand they walk  
May there be flowers sweet  
Under Kanna and Sapna's feet!

When close they sit and talk  
May the breeze like a tether  
Bind Kanna and Sapna together!

On this wedding anniversary  
May all the gods and goddesses  
King Kanna and Queen Sapna bless!

**Literary Fragments**  
(Complete them if you will)

1. A BRIDAL HYMN  
The bride is beautiful like the twinkling stars,  
The groom is handsome like the waxing moo,  
The guests bless the couple like the raining skies,  
They sing a bridal hymn ...
2. DOMESTIC OIKOS  
Hail the domestic oikos,  
Nothing better than the family,  
Sweetest society ...

### 3. ASCETIC COSMOS

Hail the ascetic cosmos,  
Nothing better than solitude,  
Aham Brahmasmi ...

#### **Temple Bell**

(Imitation of Jane Taylor's Twinkling Star. Composed in 2016.)

Tinkle, tinkle, temple bell,  
How I wonder what you tell,  
Within the heart with music fills,  
Like an echo in the hills.

As we walk the temple round,  
Thrice within the sacred ground,  
Then we hear your blessings ring,  
Tinkle, tinkle, in chorus sing.

When to home we turn to go,  
Along the path with footing slow,  
Let your ringing cast a spell,  
Tinkle, tinkle, temple bell.

#### **Poetic Prose: Fall Of Nahusha**

King Nahusha of Hindustan is now the King of the gods. Since he was good on earth, they thought he would be good in heaven too. But that was not to be. He desired with lust every nymph he saw and soon his greedy eyes fell on Indrani, the queen of the gods.

She said she would yield if he came on a palanquin borne by the sapta rishis, the seven sages. They obliged and as the palanquin went along a little slow, Nahusha lost his cool and planted a kick on Agastya's shoulder saying, "Sarpa, sarpa!" meaning "Faster, faster!" The sage simply agreed with him to say, "Sarpa, sarpa!" meaning "Serpent, serpent!"

Nahusha metamorphosed into a serpent, serpent – a python huge and fell faster, faster from presumptuous heaven back into the humble earth!



**A Tribute To Prof. IAJ Jeyadoss Of Loyola College**  
(21/03/2019)

Vernal Equinox,  
World Poetry Day –  
Prof. IAJ Jeyadoss!

Patriotic Indian,  
Secular Soul --  
Prof. IAJ Jeyadoss!

Tamil Spirit,  
Noble Kinsman –  
Prof. IAJ Jeyadoss!

Loyolite Sincere,  
English Star –  
Prof. IAJ Jeyadoss!

Sometime Dean,  
Always Teacher –  
Prof. IAJ Jeyadoss!

**Loris Malaguzzi's 'One Hundred'**  
(Rendered into syllabic verse, January 2020)

No way. The hundred is there.  
The child's made of one hundred.  
It has hundred languages,  
Hundred hands and hundred thoughts,  
A hundred ways of thinking,  
Of playing and of speaking.  
A hundred, always hundred,  
Hundred ways of listening,  
Of marvelling, of loving,  
A hundred joys for singing  
As well for understanding.  
Hundred worlds to discover,  
A hundred worlds to invent  
And a hundred worlds to dream.

It has hundred languages  
(And a hundred hundred more)  
But teachers steal ninety-nine.  
Yes, the school and its culture  
Separate head from body.  
And then the school tells the child  
To just think without the hands,  
To simply do without head,  
To listen and not to speak,  
To understand without joy,  
To love and to marvel too  
Only Easter and Christmas.  
They tell them to discover,  
Find the world already there.  
Of the hundred languages,  
They steal ninety-nine; and they  
Tell the child: that work and play.  
Reality and fantasy,  
Science and imagination,  
Sky and earth, reason and dream,  
Are things that do not belong  
Together. And thus they say  
That the hundred is not there.  
But the child will always say,  
“No way. The hundred is there.”

### **The Six Monkeys**

(Expanded version of 'The Three Monkeys')

But hear no evil  
Though devil's voice be loud and clear;  
But hear no evil  
Though slander and gossip your ears may thrill.  
May tidings glad bring you cheer;  
For feeble Truth just cock an ear,  
And hear no evil.

But speak no evil  
Though devil's words be tongue-in cheek;  
But speak no evil

Though tongue may wag for lack of will.  
May lips and tongue always seek  
Simple words of Truth, wise and meek,  
And speak no evil.

But see no evil  
Though devil's deeds spectacular be;  
But see no evil,  
Just shut your eyes and remain still.  
From uncouth sights may eyes be free;  
Watch Truth's sapling become a tree,  
And see no evil.

But think no evil  
Though devil's thoughts be seductive.  
But think no evil,  
Your empty self with musings fill.  
In that consciousness collective,  
May your heart and soul wisdom give  
And think no evil.

But do no evil  
Though devil's horns be mighty sharp.  
But do no evil,  
Let humbleness flow like a rill.  
May your dauntless feet scale a scarp  
And nimble fingers tune a harp  
And do no evil.

But be no evil  
Though devil's being be strange.  
But be no evil,  
Even if it's destiny's will.  
Sure it is within human range  
To strive for that angelic change  
And be no evil.

### **Three Extra Monkeys**

(Expanding upon Prof. Robinson's suggestion. Composed in 2024)

But consume no evil,  
Though it isn't devil's opinion!  
But consume no evil.  
Just sip Holy Communion  
If you seek heaven's dominion  
And consume no evil.

But touch no evil,  
Though devil's mask be without a flaw!  
But touch no evil.  
Just kiss the black stone in mecca  
And walk around the kaaba  
And touch no evil.

But read no evil,  
Though devil's words be as good as mine.  
But read no evil.  
Memorise verses of Adi Granth in shrine  
And feel a thrill ascend your spine  
And read no evil.

### **The Corona Quarantine**

(Didactic verse composed in chant royal, August 2020)

The corona quarantine is a pain,  
Across the world millions sicken and cry.  
On their lips is the corona refrain;  
Some people recover, some people die.

Spines tingle with fear when we hear a sneeze  
And masked faces are afraid of the breeze.  
Not God nor Nature did this virus send  
But scientists who claim to be mankind's friend.  
They should learn like us to hold a candle  
And much time in precious devotion spend;  
The last but bright candle is burning still.

O never walk into the lab again,  
There is much beyond in the world to spy.  
Never, never dissect the mice and grain;  
Let whales sail the sea and birds wing the sky.  
Though Frankenstein's monsters may be at ease,  
In nature must humankind find its peace.  
Who can us from this corona defend?  
Enough, enough of playing 'let's pretend'.  
The mind is sick and the body is ill,  
Hardly any time on thoughts to expend;  
The last but bright candle is burning still.

Mathematics intoxicates the brain;  
Its equations are beautiful and spry!  
Counting was an art when mankind was sane,  
But as a science its equations are dry.  
As an art it's a lovely flight of geese,  
But as a science it's a stale piece of cheese.  
Upon art and craft must our lives depend,  
And now we must technology suspend,  
And corona will have no pow'r to kill.  
Does handicraft our dignity offend?  
The last but bright candle is burning still.

Take a walk past trees in the grassy plain  
With feet unshod, and you'll know how and why  
So brown rich the earth is after the rain;  
And may your eyes enjoy the rainbow pie,  
And may your ears too enjoy, if you please,  
Sweet music of the wind among the trees.  
Human culture and divine nature blend,  
Far from the cities, as the rivers bend.

Whether the walk be up or down the hill,  
Our ways must towards divinity wend;  
The last but bright candle is burning still.

The broken oikos must become a fane  
And nature will heal herself by and by.  
Her children are we and so must remain  
To pluck a wholesome reed and flute a sigh,  
Burn incense and pray'rs say on bended knees;  
Corona disappears, our troubles cease.  
Dip in the oceans and the hills ascend,  
Touch the sky, the moon, the stars and descend.  
With imagination and poetic skill  
Our thoughts must towards divinity tend;  
The last but bright candle is burning still.

Envoy

With hearts laden with pulsing memories,  
Our quarantined ship will sail the sev'n seas.  
And as this chant royal swings to an end,  
Let's take a pledge – our darkened souls to mend.  
Though the sun has sunk and the night grows chill,  
Yet we may chance to count our dividend;  
The last but bright candle is burning still.

### **Flights Of Siddhanta**

(Nirmaldasan's translations of selected quatrains from Tirumoolar's Tirumandiram.  
Dedicated to Dr. Nirmal Selvamony on his birthday, 29 April 2021)

270

Love and Sivam are twain, the ignorant say;  
Love becoming Sivam know not they.  
When Love becoming Sivam they see,  
In Love-Sivam's being they be!

2716

“Siva Siva” say not evil doers;  
Saying “Siva Siva” evil disappears;  
Saying “Siva Siva” makes each a god,

And “Siva Siva” makes Siva the God!

1532

For those who say He's inside and outside --  
Inside and outside my God does reside;  
For those who say He isn't in and isn't out,  
He neither is within nor is without.

1680

They follow not Master who heals the blind,  
They follow Master who heals not the blind.  
Blind and blind blindly dance in a blind dance;  
Blind and blind into tumbling pit advance.

1445

In town, country and ev'ry sacred shrine,  
Wander and seek and sing His name divine.  
Sing and singing bow and having bowed,  
The heart's congress becomes His abode.

2757

Dancing with gods and dancing in cosmos,  
Dancing with trinity and spirit fellows,  
Dancing in song and with Sakthi in trance,  
And dancing in shrine is the Lord of dance!

1604

What becomes mantra and medicine great,  
What becomes tantra and bounteous estate,  
What becomes beauty and pristine discourse  
Are my Lord, my God's sacred feet of course!

2615

Scissor your desires, scissor your desires,  
Even unto God scissor your desires!  
The more you desire, the more come sorrows;  
The less you desire, joy sure overflows!

2067

Saying Seer isn't here much mischief they do,

But places without Seer come not to view;  
Like all-seeing Seer they permeate space;  
Seeing the Seer, of mischief there's no trace!

2883

Within the Seer five milch cows there be  
Without kineherd wandering recklessly.  
If the kineherd comes and recklessness goes,  
Then milk of the Seer's kine overflows!

2351

Many vessels are shaped by the same sod,  
And every womb is filled by the same God.  
The eye, excepting itself, can see much;  
The being of the great One is also such.

252

Everyone to God may offer a leaf;  
Everyone to cow a mouthful sheaf;  
Everyone a handful may spare as they eat;  
Everyone to others may say words sweet.

1857

What's offered to God of the towered fane --  
To devoted human temples is vain;  
What's offered to human temples is fine  
Also unto God of the towered shrine.

148

He wished to dine, a sweet dish was his;  
And with slender dame he came to bliss.  
He felt in his chest a sinister ache  
And lay to rest but could never awake.

724

If Mr. Body dies, then Mr. Breath flies --  
True Wisdom's form cannot firmly realise.  
I found the means for the body's health;  
I nurtured my body, I nurtured my breath.



2148

Body and body bodily embrace  
And know not how life within body stays.  
They're dark how life in body friendly dwells,  
Confused as stray dog in monastic cells.

2944

With eyes in the face, fools outward bebold;  
Only to inward eyes true joys unfold!  
How may a mother say if she be asked  
To tell her son how she with husband basked?

2290

Wood of jumbo is concealed by jumbo,  
Concealed within the wood lies the jumbo.  
God of the worlds is concealed by the worlds,  
And concealed within God lie all the worlds.

2228

I myself am mine enemy and friend,  
I myself am this life's and next life's end;  
I myself enjoy fruit of every deed,  
I myself am leader and myself lead!

2355

Understanding Self, the Self knows its way  
But the Self in ignorance goes astray.  
Understanding the mind that knows the Self,  
The Self then will stay to worship itself.

2014

There's only one tribe and only one God;  
Think good and the way of Death is un-trod  
As well rebirth's way; and so meditate  
And attain the Being's eternal state.

FINIS