ANDAL:
TIRUPPAVAI
NACHIYAR TIRUMOZHI

Translated by
P. S. SUNDARAM
THE POEMS OF ANDAL
(TIRUPPAVAI AND NACCIIYAR TIRUMOZHI)

Translated by
P. S. Sundaram

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Dedicated by
Ananthacharya Ideological Research Institute
to SRI BANSHIDHAR SOMANI
In grateful appreciation of
his continued assistance, cooperation and inspiration
This book is published with the financial assistance of the Thirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam under their scheme Aid to Authors to Publish Books
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We are happy to place this book The Poems of Andal in the hands of our readers. It is a translation in English of the Tamil poems of a great Srivaishnava Alvar, poet-saint. We are thus providing an opportunity to non-Tamils to acquaint themselves with the writings of a great soul noted as much for her poetry as her piety. The poems have been rendered beautifully into English by Professor P. S. Sundaram.

Professor Sundaram took a First Class Honours degree in English Language and Literature from Presidency College, Madras in 1930 and thereafter proceeded to Oxford where he took an M.A. degree in the same subject. He taught English for nearly forty years in the north, at Lahore, Cuttack, Bareilly and Jaipur, except for a stint of six years as Member Public Service Commission, Orissa. He is the author of a book on R.K. Narayan, and has translated the poems of Bharati into exquisite English (published by Vikas). His interest in ancient Tamil Literature arose after his retirement in 1974. It has resulted in many translations like those of the Kural and Naladhuvas, the Muttolayiram, the Kamba Ramayanam (Balakandam) and now Andal.

Andal is the only woman alwar of Sri Vaishnavism. Considered an incarnation of Sridevi, she was brought up by Vishnudatta in the best Srivaishnava tradition, and early fell in love with Krishna whom alone she wanted to marry. Her Tiluppavai, a poem of rare beauty, deals with the observance of the paval nonbu, while her Nacchiyai Tilmozhii, setting forth her dreams of a marriage with Krishna, as well as her passionate adoration of the mischievous flirt, provides much material for students of mysticism and the soul’s ascent to God.
We are indeed thankful to Professor Sundaram for making this work available to the non-Tamil scholars and religious people.

We are also thankful to the Tirumalai Tirupati Devasthanams for their liberal financial assistance for the translation under the scheme of "Aid to Authors" which has made this publication possible.

Our thanks are due also to Messrs Enenjey Printers for this elegant production.

Bombay, 28-1-1987

K. K. A. Venkatachari
Founder-Director
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In translating Andal’s poems I have been guided by the interpretations offered by Prativadi Bhayankaram Kasi Annangarschariar. My notes approach these poems as poetry, not as allegory or philosophy.

I am indebted to Dr. K.A.A. Venkatachari for sponsoring this translation, and to Mr. Badri of the Enerjey Press for the neatness of the production. I am also obliged to the Editor of The Heritage for permitting me to reproduce as much the greater part of the introduction to this volume a paper I had written for that journal on "Andal, Meerabai of the South" in its January 1987 number.

TRANSLITERATION

In my introduction and the English translation and notes I have stuck to the usual way in which names like "Andal" or words like "Tirumozhi" are printed. In the transliteration, however, I have followed the rules of the Madras University Tamil Lexicon, with the diacritical marks prescribed by it. The following equivalences will prove useful to the foreign reader:

\[ \text{a} = \text{a, a} \]
\[ \text{i} = \text{I, i} \]
\[ \text{u} = \text{U, u} \]
\[ \text{O} = \text{O} \]
\[ \text{K} = \text{K, k} \]
\[ \text{N} = \text{N, n} \]
\[ \text{C} = \text{C, c} \]
\[ \text{H} = \text{H, h} \]
\[ \text{T} = \text{T, t} \]
\[ \text{M} = \text{M, m} \]
\[ \text{Y} = \text{Y, y} \]
\[ \text{V} = \text{V, v} \]

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INTRODUCTION

Andal, the daughter of Periyalwar, is the only woman among the dozen Alvars, Vaishnavite saints of South India whose date is probably between the 8th and the 10th Century A.D. Friedheim Hardy, whose book *Utaha-Bhakti* is a model of research, places tentatively Andal and her father Periyalwar in the 9th Century.

Legend has it that Andal was found as a baby by Periyalwar under a shrub of basil, the plant sacred to Vishnu. The Brahmin priest nursed the child as his own daughter. Unknown to her father she was in the habit of deck ing herself with the garlands he had prepared for Vishnu's idol in the temple. When he caught her at this one day and, shocked by the desecration, took a fresh garland for the God, the latter would not have it as he missed the scent of Andal's body in it.

The girl was so devoted to Vishnu that when she grew up she would marry none but Ranganatha, Vishnu lying on his serpent in the Srirangam temple. The God appeared in a dream to the temple priests and ordered that Andal should be sent for from Srivilliputtur in what is now Ramnad District to marry him in the Trichinopoly District. When Andal stepped out of the palanquin and went into the temple sanctum, she disappeared in a blaze of glory, having joined her Lord. She is supposed to have been only fifteen at the time.

While the *Nalayira Divya Prabandham* is the sacred book of the Vaishnavites, Andal's *Tituppaavai* is a favourite with all those who know Tamil and look on Margazhi, the month corresponding to December-January as a particularly sacred month, to be observed with rising early in the morning and going round singing hymns eulogising both Siva and Vishnu. In the *Nacchiyaar Titumoli* Andal rises to the very heights of sacred eroticism, which will recall to a Western reader the Song of Solomon and the works of Juan of the Cross and Saint Teresa.

Andal's works are remarkable for the life they portray in the Tamil country all those hundreds of years ago. Children in all ages and all over the world put up castles of sand, but in Andal's time apparently such dolls' houses were put up invoking Manmatha, the God of Love. The marriage customs observed in Andal's time — the bridegroom coming in procession on the night before the wedding, the bride's foot being placed by the groom on the grinding stone, their going round the sacred fire, and the procession
through the streets of the town by the bride and groom on
the night of the wedding—— are all observed in South India
to this day. Andal's song of the dream-wedding is sung
even today at all Vaishnavite weddings. Presumably in
Andal's time marriages were contracted not between in-
fants or boys and girls less than ten years old, but young-
men and women who could immediately after the marriage
live as husband and wife—— as the ceremonial bath at the
end of the day mentioned by Andal is an item not of the
marriage proper of these days but what in the South is
now as the "nuptial" marriage—— the celebration of the
ride going into the groom's house to live with him as his
life which, in the days when I was a boy, could come a good
ten years after the first boy-and-girl marriage!

The Tituppavaal, put into the mouths of milkmaids,
is meant to rouse lazy lie-abeds to come out and bathe in
the cold morning, so that thus purified they could go into
the temple and rouse Krishna sleeping there. The thirty
stanzas of it are both lyrical and dramatic, chiding one
particular lie-abed, Krishna's favourite, for not getting
up, setting forth the exploits of the infant Krishna and how
he frustrated his uncle Kamsa's attempts to kill him, and
in the latter half of the poem appealing to Krishna to wake
up and accept the love of the gopis, the cowherded lasses who
will love only him. Apart from the ecstatic poetry of its
devotion, the stanzas give a picture of a rural community of
simple cowherds, their hamlet brimming with love and beauty
because Krishna chose to live in it, protected by and protect-
ing his foster parents Nandagopan and Yasoda, loving and
loved by their niece Nappinnai corresponding to Radha in the
Gita Govindam. The stress in these stanzas however is more
on devotion than on sexual love, jealousy and lovers' quarrels. The occasion after all is the religious observance
of a sacred month, but observed with singing and jollity,
not in sackcloth and ashes.

The Bhagavata Puranam, Book X Chapter 22, describes a
ceremonial observance similar to the one described in the
Tituppavaal, but though it is observed by the milkmaids
seeking Krishna for their husband, the deity they honour
for this purpose is Katyayani, a form of Parvati. It is now
accepted by scholars that the Bhagavata Puranam is much lat-
er than Andal. Andal's only God is Krishna, the greatest of
the incarnations of Vishnu. Vishnu himself is frequently men-
tioned in the poem, and among his incarnations reference
is made most frequently to Yamana-Trivikrama, Rama, Bal-
rama, and once almost certainly to Narasimha.
The refrain of the Tīrupparāi has presented considerable difficulties to translators. If pāvaḷ refers to a doll, a figure made of sand which according to the Bhagavata Purāṇam was that of Katyayani worshipped by the young girls seeking husbands, the refrain could be translated, "Accept it, Our Lady", the lady being the goddess. But the poem also prays for greater fertility in the land caused by timely rain connected with the cloud-hued Krishna. The refrain is useful as a link with the observance of the pāvaḷ nonbu to this day in Kerala, a nonbu being a religious penance exactly like the one celebrated in the Tīrupparāi. But from the point of view of appreciating Andal's devotion to Krishna, it may be ignored and is best left untranslated.

The fourteen poems making up the Nācchiyār Tirumoli cover a wide range from little girls building sand castles to a woman frustrated in love and calling her lover bitterly to account for having led her on and betrayed her:

If I should meet that Govardhan
Who cares not if she lives or is dead
Who only melts and is worn out
All for that mischievous bandit's love
I shall pluck my useless breasts
From their roots and fling them
On his chest, and so put out
The raging fire of my love.

But always mingled with this woman's love is Andal's realization that she is after all dealing with God himself, the consistent-inconsistent, merciful but inscrutable, amenable if at all to prayers, never demands. And so in the last poem, all passion spent, Krishna the mischievous rogue is thought of as the one with discus and conch, guarded from the sun's beams by his Garuda, giving his love to all creation, animals as well as boys, men and women, and not just to one girl.

The questions and answers of "The Woods of Arindavan" have a startling similarity to those in "The Ballad of Walsingham", where also one in love with the divine searches in vain for the beloved:

As ye came from the Holy Land
Of Walsingham,
Met you not with my true love
By the way as you came? ...
I have loved her all my youth,
But now am old, as you see:
Love ilks not the falling fruit,
Nor the withered tree ...  

Of womenkind such indeed is the love;
Or the word love abused,
Under which many childish desires
And conceits are excused.

But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never dead, never cold,
From itself never turning.

In all her frenzied love of God the devotee does not lose sight of the external world around her—the clouds, the birds, groves full of trees, flowers in their season. Only, all of them are related, or must be made to relate, to her and her passion. They must carry her message to the Lord, or their indifference makes her mad, or they seem to mock at her with their own nearer nearness to him, like the conch in his hand or the yellow garment he wears. The fourteen poems of the Nacchiyaat Tittumožhi deal with different themes, are in different metres, recall varying poetical conventions like the game of kudal or the kaikkilai, unrequited love, of the Muttollayiltam. But a witching love binds them together, giving them a unified and indeed unique sensibility.
திருப்பாவை
TIRUPPAVAI
மார்கலிட் திண்கால் மதி நிசாலா நானாயல்
நிக்காப் போதுற்று போதுமின்றி, நெய்துலையை;
சிறு மல்கும் அல்லது சீர்கால சோதார்
ஏற்கனாட் அரங்கங்கள் மல்கத்தாக உருவாக
நல்ல மையம் உருவாக விளக்கம்
நாயம் வேய்விருக்கிறது சீர்கால சோதார்
பிளாண்டின் மையம் மூலத்தாக உருவாக
பருவலாம் புதுக்கை சோதார் இறுக்கு;
பார்றா புதுப்பு புகைக்கு—என்ற சமயம்.

Mārkalit tinkal mati nizainta nannalāl
Nīkkāp potuṛī potuminch, nərləiɣir !
Cir melkum əipətik celvac cirumikāl !
Kyr vər koəntolilан nantakōpan kumarān
Ei ænta kənni uəcōtai ɨlançınḵam
Kär mənɪc cənkən̄ kətirmatiyam pōl mukattān
Narañən̄e namakkə paʃai tatwān;
Pətɔt pukałap paʃintu-əlɔt empəvāi.
Favouring Margazhi's Full Moon is here—
Maidens bejewelled, keen on bathing, come out!
Darling girls of the cowherd clan
Whose hamlet brims over with beauty and wealth;
That cruel sharp spear Nanda's son,
Young lion of Yasoda with her love—filled eyes
Cloud-hued, red-orbed, sun and moon for his face
Narayana himself has offered
His gracious drum all for us
To sing his praise and gain the world's.  

*Margazhi*: The Tamil month corresponding to December-January.

*Cruel spear sharp*: This is traditionally interpreted as qualifying Nanda, Krishna's foster-father, normally so tender-hearted as not even to tread firmly on the grass lest he should kill the insects on it, but guarding with a sharp spear the infant Krishna from bugs, wasps and asuras. This seems far-fetched to me. The epithet probably applies to Nanda's son Krishna who, the milkmaids complain, is so cruel to them, provoking their love but not returning it. Vide *Nacchiyar Titumoli* V(6) and XIII (6).

*Narayana*: Vishnu whose avatar is Krishna.

*Yasoda*: Krishna's foster-mother.

*His gracious drum*: To be taken perhaps literally, perhaps as signifying his favour.
Worldlings, listen to what we shall do,
How observe these sacred days.
We shall sing the feet of that Supreme One
Lying on the milky sea;
Bathe betimes; no ghee, no milk;
No shade for eyes; no flowers for hair;
Avoid all sins; spread no scandal;
Give alms, make offerings, all we can,
And joyfully seek our salvation.
Should we sing that Great One's name
Who shot up and measured the earth with one stride.
And go for our ceremonial bath,
Thrice a month harmless rain will be ours,
Swelling red paddy, the kayal aswim,
And bees asleep in the blue lilies!
Generous big heifers, their udders full,
Easy to manage will yield their milk—
A flood to fill our jugs to the brim;
And wealth unfleeting will fill the land.  (3)

Who shot up and measured with one stride the earth: This refers to Vishnu as Yamana the Dwarf, asking of Mahabali only three feet of earth and when this was granted, shooting up into Trivikrama the Colossus who measured all the earth with one stride, and the sky with another. His third step placed on Mahabali's head plunged him into the nether world.
All malai kanna! omu ni kai karavai;
Aliyul pukku, mukantukotu, attu ezi,
Uli mutalvan utuvampol may kaiuttu,
Paliyan tol utaip paspanapan kalyil
Alipol mini, valampuripol ninu atintu,
Talate cainkam utaitta caramalaipol
Vela ulakinil peyitay: nankalum
Markali niz aita makilntu-rol el empaavay

Great God of Rain, withhold not anything!
Plunge into the sea, fill up, rise with pomp;
Assume the dark hue of the Primal Being;
Blaze like the lightning discus in his hand;
Thunder like the conch above his strong shoulder;
Shoot your showers like the darts unceasing
From his bow Saranga, that we and the world
May live and bathe in joyous Margashi. (4)
Māyanai manun vaṭamaturai maintanait
Tūya petunī yamunāit tuvaivanai
Āyai kulattinil tōnum anī-vilakkait
Tāyaik kuṭal-vilakkam ceita tāmōtaranait
Tūyōmāy vantu nām tūmalai tūvit tolutu,
Vāyināl pāṭi, maṇattināl cintikka,
Pōya pilaiyum pukutawvān ninranum
Tīyinil tūcu ākum; ceppu-ēlōi empāvāy.

Eternal Mathura's wonder child,
Chief of Yamuna's holy tract,
Jewelled Lamp of the cowherd clan,
Damodara, a Revelation to his mother!
If we, all clean, adore him with flowers,
Sing full-throated, give him our minds,
Our sins both past and yet to come
Will all be burnt like cotton in the fire!
Let us then recite his names. (5)

Damodara, a Revelation to his mother: Krishna the mischievous imp who was tied to a mortar by his tormented mother and bore the mark of the cord on his stomach (Damodara). On a certain occasion, slapped on his cheek for eating mud, he opened his mouth and revealed in it all the three worlds.
The birds are twittering: Can't you hear
In the Bird King's temple the conches' tumult?
Get up, girl. Can't you hear the sound
Of the sages and yogis hailing "Hari"?
Him who sucked dry the ghoul-woman's venom,
Kicked off the sham-trap sent to entrap him,
The Omni-Potential asleep on the Serpent
In the milky ocean? Let us take that sound
Into our being and get refreshed!

The Bird King's temple: Garuda, the golden eagle, is Vishnu's vehicle and king of the birds. The Bird King's temple should be interpreted here as the temple of Vishnu the king of that bird, rather than as Garuda's temple.

The ghoul woman's venom: The reference is to Putana a wet nurse in a bewitching form sent to poison Krishna with her milk, whom Krishna sucked dead.

Sham-trap: An asura in the form of a cart sent to destroy Krishna whose plot Krishna saw through. Krishna kicked him to death.

The Omni-potential asleep on the serpent: Vishnu is often thought of as the God asleep on the serpent Adisesha in the ocean of milk. In this posture he contains within himself all creation.
கிகி கிகி இன்பு எங்கு அணிக்கைத் தலங்கு
தேசீ பெசு-ஆவம் கேதிலையே? பெய் பெப்பே!
கசும் பிடப்பும் கலக்கல்லப்புக் காப்பிட்டு
துசா நான் கல்ல் அய்யியர் மாறினால்
ஒசை போத்து தயிர்-ஆவம் கேதிலையே?
நாயகம் பெப்பவயு நாதயாண முற்றிட்டி
கேசவநைப் பதவம் நிக்கூ கிட்டிட்டிடே?
தேசம் உதயியாய்! சிதை-வொளை எம்பாவாய்.

Silly girl, can't you hear all over
The small birds twitter confabulating,
And the mingled music of the matrons' beads
Their ropes and hands going back and forth
As, their hair made up, they churn the curd?
Headman's daughter, you can hear
Our hymns in praise of Narayana,
The Killer of Kesi, and yet sleep on?
Bright-limbed damsel, open your door!

Kesi: An asura who took the form of a horse and whom
Krishna disposed of by thrusting his arm through it.
Dawn breaks in the east, and the buffaloes
Let loose a short while are grazing all over;
We detained many that would have gone
And have come here to call you out.
Get up, darling, much-loved girl!
Let us go and sing the praise
Of him who tore the demon horse
And confounded all the wrestlers;
Let us go and serve the God of gods
Who will pity us and give us his grace.  

The demon horse : Vide previous note.
Cousin, resting your eyes in sleep
On a pillow fragrant with incense smoke,
In a room bejewelled, lights around—
Unbolt and open the ornate door!
Auntie, won't you wake her up?
Is your daughter dumb or deaf?
Drowsy, or a-swoon spell-bound?
Let her recite the numerous names
Of that super-wizard, Madhava,
Of the Heaven of heaven, Vishnuland!

Madhava: One of the names of Krishna, meaning either the Lord of Lakshmi or the descendant of Madhu.
With fasting and prayer you would gain heaven
But will open neither your door nor mouth?
Has Kumbhakarna killed of old
By our Narayana basil-crowned——
The Blessed One who will give us his drum——
Yielded to you his sleep everlasting,
Vanquished, but in his sleep alive?
Lazy bones, our precious jewel,
Shake off your stupor and open the door!    (10)

Kumbhakarna: Brother of Ravana destroyed by Rama,
an incarnation of Narayana or Vishnu to whom the basil
is sacred. Kumbhakarna through a slip of his tongue won
from Brahma the boon of everlasting sleep.
Kattuk ketavaik kānākāḷ pala kāntantu
Cettār tiṭal alīya cemū ceyuc ceyyum
Kutram ontu illātha kōvalattam potkōtiyē!
Puttaraṭu-alkut punamayilē! pōtātāy,
Cettattut tōlimār ellārum vantu nin
Muzram pukuntu mukilvanṇan pēr pātac
Cittē pēcētē, celvap pentāṭṭi! ni
Etukku uzünkum potul?-ālot empāvāy.

O Golden Tendril of that clan
Of cowherds free from every fault,
Who milk their cows which have just calved
And rout their foes in open fight!
Your waist and middle a snake in its hole,
Gorgeous peacock, you won't come out
When your friends entering your yard
Are singing the praise of the raincloud-hued?
Spoilt darling, won't stir, won't speak?
Wherefore this sleep, what does it mean? (11)
Kanittu ilań kaṟu-etumai kaṟukku irtankki
Ninaittu mulai valiyē nintu pal cōra
Nanittu illam ċētu ākkum nat celvan tāṅkāy!
Panit talai vilā nin vācat kaṭai patti,
Cinattināl ten ilaṅkaik kōmānaic ċēta
Manattukku iniyānaip pāṭavum ni vāy tiravāy;
Init tān eluntirāy, itu enna pēr ujakkam!
Anaittu illattārum arintu-ēlōt empāvāy.

Sister of that wealthy milkman
Whose buffaloes yearning for their calves
Bellow and drip so much milk
That the place they stand on is a mire—
We stand here at your door
Our heads soaked in the morning dew,
Singing the praise of that sweet Prince
Who in his wrath slew Lanka's king:
But even so your mouth is shut?
The houses around are scandalised—
What a great sleep this! Get up at least now(12)
Tallik kiltimai pātip poy
Pillaikal ellāum pāvaik-kaalam pukkāt;
Velli eluntu viyālam utaṅkittu;
Tullum cilampina kān; pōtu-atik kannināy!
Kullak kulirak kuṭaintu nīṭātāte
Tallik kitattiyo? paṇy! nī nannāṭāl
Kaḷam tavintu kalantu-ēlot empaṇyā.

All the girls have reached our meeting ground
Singing the praise of him who tore
The beak of the demon bird, and of him
Who with a pinch plucked out a Titan!
Venus is up, Jupiter down.
You with eyes like a lotus or a gazelle's—
Look, the birds are chirping away—
Will forego the pleasure of a freezing plunge
And, darling girl, lie abed and sleep?
On this sacred day, don't lie, join us!  (13)

The beak of the demon bird: Bakasura a demon came in the form of a crane and was disposed of by Krishna.

With a pinch plucked out a Titan: Traditionally interpreted as Rama weeding out the ten heads of Ravana. But Rama shot with his arrows and even so, as each head fell, a new one sprouted. Rama had to aim at Ravana's heart before he could kill him. The reference will better describe the way Narasimha the Man-Lion disposed of Hiranyakasipu by using only his nails.
Look, in your backyard pools,
Red lotuses open, blue lilies close;
Ascetics in their saffron clothes,
Their teeth white, have gone to their temple
To blow the conch and open its door.
You who said that you would wake us,
Shameless braggart, get up, girl!
Let us sing the song of the Lotus-eyed,
Conch and discus in huge hands!
What! Our poppet, still asleep? 
"Don't pick on me, girls, I shall come out". How clever your talk! We know you of old! "Clever yourselves! Or, let me be!" Come on, be quick, what is holding you? "Has everyone come"? Yes, come out and count. Let us sing the wizard who can kill the strong And destroy his foe's enmity.
Nāyakanāy nīnta nantakōpannutṭaiya
Kōyil kāppānē! koṭit tōntum tōtana
Vāyil kāppānē! maṇikkatavam tāl tītavāy,
Āyar ciṟumiyaiṭōmkku atai paṭai
Māyan maṇiyavānnan nennali vāyināntān;
Tūyōmāy vantuṭm, tuyilelap paṭuvān;
Vāyāl munnamunnam māṭāte, ammā! nī
Nēya nilaik katavam nīkku-ēlōr empāvāy.

Guard at the gate of Nanda's palace,
With its flag and bunting for all to see,
Unbolt and open the ornate door!
Yesterday the gem-hued juggler promised
Us the dairymaid's his drum.
Clean in body and mind we have come
To wake him with our morning song.
Don't refuse us straightaway.
Open the door hinged to its post.  (16)
Rise, our Lord, Nandagopa
So generous with cloth, water and food;
Yasoda, rise, the lamp of your race,
The shimmering sprout of womanhood's stem;
King of the gods who pierced the sky
Measuring the world, don't sleep: arise!
Balarama with your red-gold anklet,
Don't you and your brother sleep on and on! (17)

Balarama: Krishna's elder brother.
Untu mata kaliyan oṭāta töl-vallyan
Nanta kōpālan matumakalē! nappinnāy!
Kantam kamālum kulāli! katāi tīzavāy!
Vantu enkum kōli alattana kān, mātavip
Pantāmēl palkāl kuyil-inānkal kūvina kān,
Pantāv virali! un māttuna pēr pātac
Centāmaraik kaiyāl cīr ār valai olippa
Vantu tīzavāy makintu-ēlōr empāvāy.

Daughter-in-law of Nandagopa—-
He with the might of an elephant in must,
Strong shoulders never turned back on the foe—-
Fragrant-haired Nappinnai, open the door!
Listen to the roosters calling all over,
Koels cooing from the Madhavi bower,
Again and again!
Your fingers so dexterous with the ball,
Red lotus hands with jingling bangles,
Let them joyously open the door
That we may hymn your cousin's praise! (18)

Nappinnai: Nandagopa's niece and specially beloved of Krishna.
Kuttu nilakku eriyak köttukkai kalittimel
Mettenta pâncâ - cayanattin mel esik
Kottu alat pûnkalal nappinnai koṅkaimel;
Vattuk kînta malar mâtpâ! vây tiravây;
Mait taṭankâṇnînay! nî un maṅâlanai
Ettanai pôtum tuyil ela oṭṭây kân,
Ettanai vêlum pituu âttakillâyâl;
Tattuvam ancu takavu-ēlōt ēmpâvây

Standard lamps burn all around;
On a downy bed, in an ivory cot,
Your chest decked with garlands you lie
On the breast of your loved Nappinnai,
Her curls adorned with clusters of flowers.
Open your lips!
And you with eyes so dark and wide,
Will you never break your husband's sleep
Lest you lose him for a second?
This is not right, not worthy of you!
Muppattu mūvat amarattkku mun cenku
Kappam tavittkkum kaliyē! tuyil elāy,
Ceppam uṭaiyāy! tītāl uṭaiyāy! cēvvātkku
Veppam kōṭukkum vimala! tuyil elāy;
Ceppu anna men mulaic cēvvāyē cītu matuhkul
Nappinnai nankāy! tiruvē! tuyil elāy;
Ukkamum tattoliyum tantu un manālanai
Ippōṭē emmai nīt āṭtu-ēlōr empāvāy.

You go before the thirtythree gods
And stop their tremors with your strength.
Arise, compassionate and skilful,
The stain-free fire to burn your foes!
And maiden Nappinnai with breasts
Tender and cup-like, red mouth, small waist,
Goddess of Beauty and Fortune, rise!
Give your husband a fan and a mirror
And let him bathe with us right now. (20)

A fan and a mirror: Evidently used in the observance of rites connected with the sacred days.
Ella kalahkal ettë ponkil mūtu alippa
Mānātē pāḷ cotiyum vallar petum pacukkal
Āṭtap pataittān makanē! atuvūtāy;
Uttam utāiyāy! petiyāy! ulakinil
Tōntamāy nīma cutatē! tuyil elāy;
Mānār unakku vali tolauntu un vācakkan
Āṭtātu vantu un aṭipaniyumā pōlē
Pōri yām vantōm pukaluntu-ēḻor empāvāy.

Son of the Lord of countless cattle,
Huge, unfailing in filling to the brim
And flowing over the jugs held under them!
Lord, you have wisdom and energy,
A pillar of fire manifest,
Rise now! Like your routed foes
Seeking your door to fall at your feet
We too have come to honour and praise you. (21)
Like the kings of this big, beautiful earth
Humbled, flocking to the foot of your bed,
We too have come seeking you.
Won't you show us a corner of your eye,
Open it like your tinkling anklet
Shaped in the form of a lotus unfolding?
If you but look with that lovely pair
A sun and a moon will have risen on us
To remove all our affliction.  
(22)
As a fierce lion in the rainy season
Lies asleep in a mountain cave
And waking up later, its eyes ablaze,
Mane bristling shakes itself,
 Raises its head and gets out with a roar,
So you, your hue like the poovai flower,
Come out, ascend the throne in your temple,
Well-wrought, majestic, and be pleased to ask
The reason that has brought us here. (23)
You measured our earth that day:
    Hail your feet!
Went and ruined Lanka in the South:
    Hail your vigour!
Kicked the cart to smithereens:
    Hail your fame!
Plunged the calf demon like a sling:
    Hail your anklet!
Lifted a hill up against the rain:
    Hail your strength!
Vanquished your foes:
    Hail the spear in your hand!
For ever and ever, your slaves praising you
We have come today for your grace—
    Won't you relent?
Flung a demon like a sling: An asura in the shape of a calf, Vatsa, sent to kill Krishna was flung by him against another in the shape of a woodapple and so both were destroyed.

Hall your anklet! Warriors distinguishing themselves used to wear an anklet of prowess.

Otulli makanāup pirantu, ōt itavīl
Otulli makanāup olittu valatat
Tarikkilān ākit tān tinku ninainta
Kattulaip pilaippittuk kancan vaipittil
Netupu enna ninai netumālē! unnai
Atuttittu vantōm; pārai tātuti yakil,
Titut takka celvamum cēvakamum yām pāli
Vatuttamum tiintu mākāluntu-ēlōt empāvāy.

Born to one mother and at dead of night
Lodged with another to be bred unknown,
You frustrated the chagrined tyrant's plots
A shooting fire in Kama's belly!
We have come here your beggars:
Should you grant us your drum
We shall laud your valour, and wealth
Befitting the Goddess of Wealth herself,
And our sorrows ended, shall rejoice.

Born to one mother.....Kama's belly: Krishna was born to Devaki in a prison but had to be spirited away at dead of night and be lodged with Yasoda so that he might not be killed by his uncle Kamsa.
Mālē! maniyanā! mātkali nit ātuvaṅ Mālaiyār caeyanaikal venṭuvana, kēṭtiyēl; Nālattai ellēm naṭaṅka mutalvana Jāl anna vannattu un pāncacanṇiyamē Pōluvaṅ caṅkaṅkal pōyppātu uṭaiyanaṇe; Cālap petum paraīyē, pallaṇtu icaippē; Kōla vilakkē, kotiyē, vitānāmē; Ālin ilaivyā! atul-ēlōr empāvāy.

Great Lover! Emerald-hued!  
If you ask us what we need
To observe as of old the Margazhi bath,  
It is conches like your Panchajanya  
Milk-white to set the world atremble;  
Great big drums whose sound will travel;  
Devotees to sing your Hallelujah,  
Tall lamps, a flag, a canopy—  
Give us but these, Lord who float  
Lying on a banyan leaf!  

Lord who float on a banyan leaf: When all the world is dissolved in a great flood Vishnu taking the form of a babe floats on a banyan leaf.
Govinda, who can win over those
Who will not come and join you—
The prize we seek for singing your praise
Will draw the praise of all the world!
Bracelets, shoulderbands, earrings, eardrops,
Anklets, and all such ornaments;
Dresses new, and after that milk-rice
Heaped up, covered with ghee which drips
Down our elbow as we eat—
And the delight of being together! (27)

Govinda: A name of Krishna meaning "Protector of cows".
Karavaikal pin cemü kānam cēntu unpōm,
Ariy onum illāta āyk kulattu untannaip
Pēnai peuntanaip punniyam yām utaiyōm;
Kuraiyu onum illāta kōvintā! untannōtu
Urzēl namakku inku ollicka oliyātu;
Ariyāta pillaikalōm anpināl untannaic
Citupēt alaittanavum cīiyavulāte
Itaiva! nī tārāy patai-ēlōr empāvāy.

We follow our cattle and eat in the woods
Ignorant folk of the cowherd clan
Blessed with the boon of you for our son!
Govinda without a single stain,
No one can break our kinship with you.
If through our innocent love
We have nicked your name, taken liberties,
Don't be angry with us, Lord,
Nor withhold your gracious drum.
Cittan ciyukâlē vantu unnaic cēvittu, un
Potēmatai açiyē pōrum potul kēlāy:
Pottam mēytu unnum kulattil pitantu ni
Kutēval enkalaik kollâmal pōkato;
Ittip paraikolvān antu kān kōvintā!
Eittaikkum ēl ēl pitavikkum untannoṭu
Uttōmē āvōm; unakkē nām āṭcevōm;
Mai mē nam kāmankal mātu-ālot empāvāy.

In morning's small hours we came to adore
Those golden lotuses, your feet: why?
Born are we in the cowherd caste
But you must take us in your own employ.
Not only for today do we seek your drum
But for ever and ever, seven times seven births!
Would be one with you, work only for you—
Change all our other wishes, Lord!
These thirty stanzas in chaste Tamil
In honour of Him who churned the sea,
Were composed by Kodai the daughter
Of that Prince of Brahmin priests
With his garland fresh and cool,
Of the lovely village, Villiputtur.
Maids bejewelled, their face the moon
Seeking Kesava got his grace
As narrated in these lines.
Whoever will chant them without fail
Will be looked after by the Lord
His four shoulders high as hills,
Eyes red, face comely and benign;
Will gain his grace wherever they go
And be happy evermore!

Kesava: A name of Krishna meaning either "Beautiful-haired" or "The slayer of Kesai".
நாசியர் திருமோழி

NACCHIYAR TIRUMOZHI
Tai oru tinkleum tarai vilakkit
Taṉ maṇṭalam iṭṭu māci munnaḻ!
Aiya nuṟ manaḷ koṇṭu teru anintu
Alakiṇukku alaṅҡaṭitu, aṉaṅkatevā!
Uyyavum āmkolō? ennū colli
Uṉnaiyum umpiyaṟiyum tolṭenā:
Veypaṭu or taḷal umil cakkaraḵ kai
Vēṅkaṭavarku ennai viṭikkittiyē.
All through the month of Tai, Ananga,
I swept the floor and covered it with drawings;
And now in Masi's first fortnight
Adorned the street with grains of sand.
This worship of you and your younger brother
Is in order that you may save my life.
Will you join my destiny
To Venkatam's Lord whose disc spits fire?  

*Thai*: Tamil month corresponding to January-February.

*Ananga*: Literally, "The bodiless", one of the names of Manmatha the God of Love, who provoked Siva the ascetic god by shooting one of his arrows at him and was burnt to ashes when that God, enraged, opened his third eye on him. The arrow nevertheless succeeded in its mission and Siva fell in love with Uma. On Uma's pleading, the God of Love got back his life but not his body. Eros, more mental than physical, can function without a body.

*Swept the floor ... drawings*: To this day people in South India sweep the floor in front of their houses and draw pretty designs on it called *kolam*.

*Masi*: The Tamil month next to Thai (February-March).

*Younger brother*: Sama the brother of Kama according to the *Bhagavata Puranam*.

*Venkatam's Lord*: The God at Tirupati, Vishnu with four arms, one of whose *avatara* is Krishna.
Vellai nun manalkoṇṭu tenru anuntu
Velvataippatun munnam tuṟai paṭiṇantu
Mullum illāc culli eri maṭuttu
Muyantu unnai nōtkintēn, kāmatēvā!
Kāl avil pūnkanai toṭuttukkoṇṭu
Kaṭalvaṇṇan enpatu ʿīr pēr eluti
Pūllīṇai vāi pilantān enpatu ʿīr
Ilakkintē puka unnai eikizziyē.

O Kama, I placate you with penance,
Strewing the street with fine white sand,
Bathing before the crack of dawn,
And feeding your fire with thornless twigs.
With flowers that are dripping honey——
The name of the sea-hued written down——
Will you aim at him and link me with him
Who tore the beak of the demon-bird?

Kama: The God of Love.
Feeding your fire: Gods were worshipped with homa, ghee being poured into fire.
Demon-bird: Bakasura, a demon in the form a crane, sent to swallow the infant Krishna who tore its mouth open and killed it.
With fragrant datura and drumstick flowers
Three times a day I worship your feet.
That my heart aflame I may not abuse you,
Call you a fraud and blacken your name,
With bunches of fresh-blown flowers your darts
And the name of Govinda written down,
Will you aim at that wonderful Venkatam's Lord
And link my destiny to that lamp? (3)

Govinda: One of the names of Krishna the Cowherd.
Cuvatil, putāna! nin pēt elutic
Cuvava nar kotikaḷum turan'kaṅkaḷum
Kavatip pinākkaḷum katuppu villum
Kāṭṭit tantēr, kaṇṭāy, kāmaṭāvā!
Avataip piṭāyam toṭanki enēnum
Ātaṛittu elunta en taṭa mulaikā!
Tvavatip pīranukke caṅkarpittut
Tolūtu valītēn, ollai vitikkiriyē

O kama, look, I have shown on that wall
Your ancestry and flags of fish,
Horses, women and white fly-whisks,
And a bow made of sugarcane.
From childhood I have dedicated
My surging breasts ever fond of him
To the Lord of Dwaraka alone—
Join my destiny quickly with his.

Dwaraka: Krishna's abode in the west coast of India.
Vāṇītai vālum au vāṇavarkku
Maṇaiyavai vālviyil vakutta avi
Kāṇītait titivatu őe nati pukuntu
Katappatum mōppatum ceyvatu oppa,
Ūṇītai ali caiku uttamarkku enu
Unnittu elunta en tata mulaikal
Māṇītavarkku enu pāccup paṭil
Vāḷakillēn kāntāy, manmatanē!

Know, Manmatha, I will not live
If, as an offering set apart
By pious Brahmins in a sacrifice
And meant for the gods who dwell in heaven
May by a forest jackal be seized
Which smells it, paws it and desecrates,
My broad breasts surging, set apart
For that great God with discus and conch,
Are noised about as meant for a man.  (5)

Manmatha: See note 2 under (1) above.
Uruvu utaiyai ilaiyarkal nallai
Ottu vallakalaik kontu vaikal
Tezuvital etikontu pankuni näl
Tituntavā nōkkintēn kāmatovā!
Katuuvitai mukil vannan kāyavannan
Katuviilai pōl vannan kamala vannat
Titu utai mukattinī tiruk kankalāl
Tituntavā nōkkku enakku avulu, kañtāu.

With handsome fellows, young and good,
Well-versed, Kama, in your code,
I do penance every day
And on Panguni's feast-day welcome you.
The raincloud-hued, the kaya-hued,
The kakkannam-hued with the lotus face
Make him see me with a special favour
With his gracious eye in his gracious face! (6)

Panguni: The month after Masi (March-April).
Kaya, Kakkannam: Dark-hued flowers.
Kāy uṭai nelloṭu katumpu amaittu,
Kaṭṭi arici aval amaittu,
Vāy uṭai maṇaiyavar maṇitarattāl
Manmatanē! unnai vanāṅkuṅkiṇēn;
Teyam mun aḷantavan titivikkitaman
Titukkaikalē ennait lintum vannam
Cāy uṭai vayiyum en tāṭa muḷaiyum
Tataṇiyil talaippukal taṭakkittiyē.

O Manmatha, I worship you
With tender rice and sugarcane
Cooked with candy and beaten rice
To sacred mantras chanted right.
Grant that I get fame on earth
As the one whose splendid belly and breasts
Were caressed with love by the great Lord
Who thrice victorious measured the world. (7)

Measur'd the World: Vishnu as Yamana the Dwarf begged
for three feet of ground from Mahabali the Asura Emperor,
and having obtained it stretched himself into a super-colossus,
measured off all earth with one foot, the sky with another,
and for the third foot due to him he put his foot on Mahabali’s head and sent him to the nether world.
Mācu uṭai uṭampotu, talai ulai,
Vayyputam veluttu, oupōtum uṇtu,
Tēcu uṭait tirai uṭaik kāmatēvā!
Nōtkinta nōnpinaik kutikkol kāntāy;
Tēcuwatu oṃu uṇtu iṅku, empetumān!
Penmaiwayt talai uṭaittu ākkum vanṇam
Kēcava nampiyaik kāl pṭippāl
Ennum ip pātu enakku atru, kāntāy.

O famed and expert God of Love,
Take note of the penance I undergo—
My body unwashed, my hair unbound,
My lips without colour, one meal a day.
One thing I have to say, my Lord,
That my womanhood may not be a waste
Grant me this, my life’s aim,
That I become Kesava's servant-maid. (8)

Kēcava: Another name of Vishnu-Krishna meaning “the beautiful-haired” or “the slayer of Kesī".
Toluthu muppōtum un aṭi vaṇaṅkit
Tūmalai tūyttoluthu ēttukinnēni;
Palutu inṭip pāṭkatal vaṇanukkē
Pāṇiceyṭu vālap petāviti, nān
Alutu alutu alamantu ammā vaḷāṅka,
Aṭṭavum atu unakkē uzaikkum, kāntāy;
Ulūvator eruttinai nukaṅkoṭu pāyntu
Uttam inct turantāl okkumē.

Three times a day I fall at your feet,
Praise you and ply you with clean flowers.
If you will not without fail
Make me serve that sea-hued Lord,
I will cry and cry and call for my mother,
And that will sting you to the quick
As if you had poked a labouring ox
With its yoke and driven it foodless away!
Katuppu vill malark kaṇaik kāma velai
Kalalinai paṇintu, anku őt kari alața
Matuppinai ocittup pul vāyipilanta
Manivannatruk ennai vakuttītu entu,
Potuppu anna māṭam poḻintu tōnum
Ițuvaityarkōṇ vittucittan kōtai
Vituppu țul īntamil mālai vallai
Vīṇavaik kōṇ ți nānṇuvate.

They will reach the feet of heaven's king
Who can joyously roll these rosary beads,
Verses in Tamil by Vishnuchittan's Kodai
Of Puduvai town with its glittering towers—
The tale of one who prayed to Kama
With his sugarcane bow and shafts of flowers,
Fell at his feet and prayed that he wed her
To that gem who tore a demon-bird
And breaking its tusks made an elephant scream

(10)

Vishnuchittan's Kodai: Kodai or Anqaï, daughter of Vishnu-
chittan the Brahmin priest of Villiputur (Puduvai). Both
father and daughter are among the twelve Alvars, poet-saints
singing the praises of Vishnu.

An elephant scream: This refers to one of Kansa’s elephants,
Kuvalayapida, which attacked Krishna and was killed by
him.
II. "DON'T RUIN OUR SANDHOUSES"

O thousand-named Narayana
Incarnate now as a man,
If you were indeed our cousin
All our troubles would have gone!
We have decorated this street
Welcoming Kama in Panguni—
O wicked mountain-heaver,
Don't you ruin our sandhouses!

Thousand-named Narayana: Vishnu who is often worshipped by the recitation of his thousand different names.

Mountain heavers: Reference to Krishna lifting up the mountain Govardhana to serve as an umbrella when Indra the rain-god, offended by him, came down in torrents to teach him a lesson. It was Indra who learnt a lesson.
We have broken our backs all day
Putting these sandhouses up.
Let us rest and look at them
And quench our ardour so.
Our father, you lay like a baby
On a banyan leaf that day—
That your mercy for us is infrequent
Is the wages of our sin!

Lay like a baby: At the time of the great flood, which destroyed all creation, Vishnu-Krishna lay like a baby on a banyan leaf floating on the flood.
Fierce lion, with your bed in the deep,
You rid the elephant of his woe;
With a glance from your eye's corner
Don't torture us who love you!
We have worked with our braceleted hands
To filter and winnow the sand—
With the sea's pure waves for your bed
Don't ruin our sandhouses.

Bed in the deep: Vishnu is thought of as normally sleeping on the serpent Adisesha on an ocean of milk.

Rid the elephant of his woe: The reference is to the help rendered by Vishnu to Gajendra the elephant when it was caught by a crocodile while drinking water in a pool. The elephant cried to Vishnu for help who, descending from his abode, smote off the crocodile's head with his discus.
தெய்யு மாம் முகில்போல் வணங்கி உண்டன்
தேசும் செய்கணியும் என்களை
மாயா இரு மயக்கக் கூறும் முகம்
மாயா மண்டிரம் தன் கொலோ?
னூயா பில்லைகள் என்பாத்து உண்மய்
நூவா நான்கா உடாக்கிலோம்
சையை தம்மாறீக் கன்னியாயே! என்கள்
சிட்டில் வாணு சித்தியெலே.

O hued like a thick raincloud
You've charmed us with your words and deeds!
Your face holds us in thrall
As if by magic and spell.
We have said nothing to hurt you
Lest you call us thoughtless brats—
O you with your eyes like the lotus,
Don't ruin our sandhouses.
O rogue, Madhava, Kesava,
Don't you have any eyes?
With small white sand we have made
These houses for all to admire—
Even if you destroy them
Though our hearts will break and melt,
Rest assured they won't be filled
With anger against you! (5)

Madhava: Another name of Krishna connecting him with madhu meaning "honey" or Madhu a Rakshasa whom he killed.
Kesava: Vide note under I (8)
We are immature children,
    Our breasts not fully formed;
Our learning does not extend
    To your tricks regarding these.
You who have spanned the sea.
    Destroyed the Rakshasa clan,
Created confusion in Lanka—
    O hero, don't tease us.

You have spanned the sea: The reference is to the story of the Ramayana which tells how Rama, one of the avatars of Vishnu, when his wife Sita was abducted by Ravana, the ten-headed king of Lanka, put a bridge across the sea to reach Lanka, and killed the Titan.
Pētam nanku ativāṣkaḻotu ivai
Tēcināl petitu in cuvai;
Yātum ontu aṭiyāta pillaiṅka-
Lomai nī nalintu en payan?
Ōta mā kātalvannā! un mana-
Vāṭṭimālotu cūlārum;
Cētu-pantam tiuttināy! enka!
Cirtil vantu citaiyēlē.

If you say these things to those
Who can sense their subtle meaning,
You will reap a lot of pleasure——
Why puzzle us innocent kids?
You, hued like the surging sea
Across which you put that bridge,
We pray, for your wives' sakes
Don't ruin our sandhouses.
What do you gain by spoiling
Our houses made in sport
With sand out of a round jug
And tiny pieces of stone?
Don't tease us pawing and kicking,
You armed with a blazing disc—
Don't you know, sea-hued, that to a bitter heart
Even candy doesn't taste sweet? (8)
Must you enter our courtyard unbidden,
   Show us your smiling face,
And break not only our houses
   But, Govinda, also our hearts?
You measured all earth with one foot,
   Stretched the other and measured the sky—
What will those around us say
   If they saw our body's state?

(9)

Cut body's state: Krishna's pranks have evidently not stopped
with just ruining the milkmaids' sandhouses!
No text in the image.
III. "GIVE US OUR CLOTHES"

Before the cock could wake us up
We came to plunge in this pool.
O you, with the serpent for your bed,
The blessed sun is up.
You have humbled us, made us your beggars—
We shalln't come here again—
My friend and I will raise our hands,
Give us back our clothes. (1)

Will raise our hands: Krishna teasing the naked girls who are covering their pudenda with their hands insists that they should pray to him with their raised hands. When the girls covering themselves with one hand raise the other, he insists that the prayer should be with two hands. The supplicant girl here says cleverly that she and her friend will raise one hand each and thus fulfill his condition!
O Juggler, our ambrosia,
With the honey-sweet basil crowned!
Alas, how came you here?
What brought you to this pool?
We will never consent to that—
Precocious child, you must wait:
You jumped and danced on the serpent—
Give us our clothes on that tree.

Jumped and danced on the serpent: Reference to the black cobra which was infesting a pool and causing much trouble. Krishna jumped on it from a tree and kicked and danced on it, and thereby forced it to leave the pool.
With your bow you destroyed Lanka—
What childishness is this!
If our mothers should see this thing
They will not let us in.
Perched on that flowering tree
You don't think of the scandal
We will give you all you want—
Give us our clothes and let us go
Before too many see us. (3)

*With your bow you destroyed Lanka: Vide note under 11 (6).*
urē erā java erē erē urē
und ḍaṁ ḍaṁ ḍaṁ ṣṭāṁ,
sahē ṣṭāṁ sahē ṣṭāṁ
ampē ṣṭāṁ urē urē;
āṭājē ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ!
Ghē ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ!
Ghē ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ;
Ghē ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ ṣṭāṁ urē urē.

Pētakka vilittu ekum nōkkip
Pēlai kuṭaintu āṭum cunaiyil
Ārakka nilā kanna nītkal
Alamaṅkīṇṭavā pāṭāy;
Ikkamēl onkum ilēṭāy!
Ilankal alittā pirēnē!
Kutakkvantacu āvatu asintōm;
Kununtītaṅk kūtsai pāṇīyāy.

0 you, the merciless one,
The Lord who destroyed Lanka,
Open your eyes wide and look
At this public pool!
We hold our tears back
But they tremble and flow down——
We know you are the king of monkeys:
Give us our clothes on that tree.

We know you are the king of monkeys: Referring sarcastically to the army of monkeys which helped Rama in his fight with Ravana.
O beautiful, black Lord,
How will this sport end
If our brothers chase you
With their javelins?
The carp and the swordfish
Are nibbling at our feet—
Don't go higher with our pretty saris,
Give us our clothes on that tree.
Taṭattu avil tāmarai poykait
Tāllkal em kālaik katuva,
Viṭat tēl etintāle pōla
Vētānai āṭavum paṭtōm;
Kuṭattai ēṭuttu ēṭavittuk
Kūṭtāṭa valla em kōvē!
Paṭi्रrai ellām tavirantu, enkal
Paṭṭaip panittazulāyē.

Our legs are stung by the stalks
Of the lotuses in the pool;
We are suffering all the torture
Of venomous scorpions' stings.
O King, so skilled in the art
Of tossing and dancing with pots,
Give up your stubborn mischief
And return to us our silks.
We are tired of standing in the water—
You conscious when all else is dead
Are guilty of a crime;
Our hamlet and houses are far.
All our love is for you—
Our mothers if they see us will rail—
Instead of just sitting there
Let go our silks from that tree. (7)

You conscious when all else is dead: Referring to Vishnu at the time of the dissolution of the universe.
Māmimār makkaḻē allōm;
Mayum inku ellārum pōntār;
Tūmalai karaṅkaḻ vaḷaṭat
Tollai itāt tuyilvaṅē!
Cēmamēl aṟu itu cāla
Cikkena nām itu connōm
Kōmaḷa āyat koḷuntē!
Kutuntitaik kūtai paniyāy.

Not all here you could marry
Others too have
You who can sleep through the ages
And rest your eyes,
What you have done is not proper.
Not to waste any more words,
O lovely sprig of the cowherd clan,
Give up our clothes from that tree. (8)

Not all here you could marry: Not all the girls who have come to bathe stand in the relationship of cross-cousins to Krishna whom he could marry and therefore could be given the freedom to tease.
You who can sleep through the ages: God is supposed to go into a yoga nīda while the world does not cease to function.
You escaped that dark night
From the net which Kamsa spread
Only to distress the hearts
Of us girls standing here?
Yasoda won’t discipline you,
Indulges and lets you loose—
You sucked the false demoness dry:
O shameless one, give us our clothes. (9)

You escaped that dark night: At the time that Devaki,
Kamsa’s sister, was married, it was predicted that a son
born to her would prove the death of his uncle. Kamsa there-
upon put Devaki in prison. When the child born in the prison
escaped miraculously, Kamsa made many attempts to kill
it but did not succeed.

Yasoda won’t discipline you: Yasoda the foster-mother
of Krishna was too fond of him to take him to task for his
pranks in and outside her house.

You sucked the false demoness dry: Putana, one of Kamsa’s
agents, a demoness, went to Krishna in the guise of a charm-
ing wet-nurse. She hoped to kill him with the poisoned milk
out of her breasts. But Krishna pretending not to know her
intention sucked the demoness dead.
கண்கியர்சு எங்கள் நாம்
அல்ல இறைய்சியத்தால்
குன்று குன்று எங்கள் ஏற்று செத்து
முடியவே குன்று உலக முழு
கண்கியர்சு குன்று உலக உலக
எங்கு எங்கு ஏற்று பிடிகு
அல்ல இறைய்சியத்தால்
மக்கியே புகவு பின்னர்.

Канникаютору енкаи нами
Катио питан вилайяттап
Пон идар матаракал күнта
Итувайракон паттан котай
Иннисаивбал конна малай
Итантум вальвар там пой
Манийя матаано ту
Ваикантам пукку итупате.

The sport which our dark Lord
Made with the young maidens
Kodai, daughter of the chief of Puduvai
Noted for its golden homes,
Has set forth in ten sweet verses
Which whoever is skilled to learn
Will enter Paradise and dwell
With Madhava for ever!
IV. "SHOW MY LUCK"

If I'll have the fortune to touch
And fondle the feet
Of the God whom many pure devotees
Worship with raised hands,
The Lord of Tirumal’s Grove
Who may lie where he list—
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck!

(1)

*Lord of Tirumal’s Grove:* Tirumaliruncolai, literally the grove inhabited by the sacred Lord, is a place in South India with a famous Vishnu temple. Andal makes frequent references to it, and one of the fourteen poems in this collection, no. IX, is devoted wholly to it.
Këttil vënkatam kannaputa nakar
Vëttam inti makilntu urai vëmanan
Öltatë vantu en kaip pañit tannotum
Këttu mëkil, nì këlitu kütale.

If the Dwarf who dwells content
In forest and city,
In hilly, wooded Venkatam
And in Kënnan Town
Will run to me and take my hand
With a fond embrace,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck!

Vënkatam: Venkatam is the hill Tirupati which houses the most famous of the Vishnu temples. It is now in Andhra Pradesh.
Kënnan: Kënnan is the Tamil form of Krishna, related to North Indian Kënhai.
If the one whom Brahma and the gods
Adore and praise,
The son of lovely Devaki
Of the bright brows,
Good Vasudeva's princely son
Will come to me,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck.

Brahma: The first of the Hindu triad of supreme gods, the Creator.
If he who leapt from the kadam in flower
On the black snake
Which frightened the cowherds and their wives,
And danced on it—
If that one so expert in dance
Will look me up,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck.

He who leapt ... on the black snake: Vide note under III
(2)
 Mata malikai cul muturaip pati
 Nati, nam teruvin natuvā vantittu,
 Ītai mā mata yānai utaittavan
 Kūtumākil, ni kūtitu kūtalē.

If the Lord of Mathura's terraced homes
Who kicked and killed
The fierce visored elephant
Will come here
Pursuing us, and look for us
In our own street,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck.

Visored elephant : Vide not under 1 (10).
If my mate destined who toddling broke
   The matuda trees,
And with his cunning killed Kamsa
   Outwitting him,
The king of flourishing Mathura
   Will come here,
O loop I draw, come out aright
   And show my luck.  

Broke the matuda trees: A couple of trees brought down by Krishna as a child, whereupon the two sons of Kubera the God of Wealth, who had been cursed to assume that form, were released from the curse and became their former selves.
Anu innattana cey cicupalanum
Nina nil mawutum etutum pullum
Ventu vel vical-kancanum vilamun
Kontavan varil, kutitu kulale.

If he will come who killed of old
Sisupala the sinner,
Brought down the matuda trees and slew
The bulls and the bird,
Made Kamsa fall with his victory spear
And all his pride,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck.

Sisupala the sinner: A cousin of Krishna who had sworn enmity to the latter and was killed by Krishna who gave him a long rope before despatching him.

The bulls and the bird: The bulls were sent by Kamsa to kill Krishna. As for the bird, vide note under 1 (2).
If he will come who will not dwell
Except in the hearts
Of those that love him eagerly,
Dwaraka's king,
The cowherd whose great pleasure lies
In grazing and sport,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck.
If he will come who in days of old
Disguised as a dwarf
Went to Mabali's sacrifice
And measured earth and sky
With one step first and then another
And so took all,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck. (9)

Mabali's sacrifice: Vide note under I (7).
If he will come who from of old
Is the Vedas' essence,
Pitied the elephant dripping must
And gave it life,
The lovely one embedded in the hearts
Of pretty milkmaids,
O loop I draw, come out aright
And show my luck.  

Elephant dripping must : Vide note under II (3).
Those shall be sinless who can chant
    These verses ten
Of curly-locks Kodai setting forth
    The milkmaids' ways,
Their long waits so advertised,
    Ardours, frustrations and sulks,
And the ecstasy of their union
    Once their yearnings were fulfilled!
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V. பூர்வம்

KUYIR PATTU

மாண்டை மாண்டை வருவது வர மாண்டை-
மாண்டை மாண்டை மாண்டை
போறும் கோடர்கோட்டு கீழே வரும்
என்று கூறுகூறு என்று கூறுகூறு?
மேலே மேலே மேலே மேலே மேலே!
மாண்டை மாண்டை மாண்டை மாண்டை
மாண்டை மாண்டை மாண்டை

Mannu petumpukal mātavan māmanī-
Vāṭṭan mani-muthi maintan
Tananai ukantatu kāranamāka en
Caṅku ilakkum valakku unṭē?
Punnai kurukkatti ēnal ēruntip
Pottum pill valum kuyile!
Pannī eppottum iruntu virinntu en
Pāvala-vaṭyān varak kūvāy.
V. "O Koel, Coo Min To Me"

O Koel, from the grove where abound
   Junnai, kunukutti, cherutti and kongu,
Is it fair that because I am in love
   With that famous gem Madhava—
A prince no doubt crowned and jewelled—
   I should lose my bangle of shell?
Stay for ever and coo so that
   My Coral Mouth may come to me! (1)

Junnai: A flowering tree, Alexandrian laurel. The three words which follow also describe trees peculiar to the landscape portrayed.

Bangle of shell: In ancient Tamil poetry, a bangle getting loose and coming off a girl's wrist symbolises her love-sickness making her thin. The absent lover or husband is often referred to as the one who has stolen her bangles.
வெள்ளை விள்ளாங்கு இத்தாக்கியில் கொஞ்டா

உள்ளம் புகுntு அம் nலுற்று nாளம்

The Spotless One, white conch in hand,

Will not reveal himself

But entering me will watch my woe

And lead me an endless dance.

O Koel, sing your song of joy

Fed on the honey of the jasmine you peck,

Stay and chirp your speechless speech

And coo my Venkatam to me!

Venkatam: Vide note under IV (2). The hill here stands for the god on its top.
Mātali tēr munpu kōlkolle māyan
Irāvanan mēl cara-māṇi
Tāy talai aṟṟarṟu vēḷattoṭutta
Talaivan vāta ekkum kāṇen;
Poṭu alai kāviṅ putumaṇam nāṟap
Poṭi vaṭṭin kāmatam kēṭṭu un
Kāṭaliyōtu utan vēḷ kuyillē! en
Karumāṇikkam vatak kūvāy.

O Koel, you who smell fresh flowers
And hear the streaked beetle's tune,
I don't see anywhere that chief
Who with his showered darts
Felled Ravana's heads again and again
From the chariot Matali drove.
Live on in our grove with your beloved—
Only coo my Black Diamond to me!

Felled Ravana's heads: Vide note under II (6). For the fight with Ravana, Indra king of the gods (as well as of rain, vide note under II (1)) lent his chariot driven by Matali to Rama.
Enpu utuki ina vēl netun kānka!
Imai ponūta pala nālum,
Tunpak kaṭal pukku vaikunthān enpatu ōr
Tōni peḻōtu ulaktēn
Anpu utaiyātaip pitivu utu nōyatu
Nīyum aziti kuyilē!
Pon purai mēnik karulak koṭi utaiy
Punṇiyanai vatak kūvāy.

Bones melted, spear-long eyes unsheathed
These many days
Plunged in a sea of sorrow I struggle
For lack of the Vaikunthām.
You too, Koel, know the pain
Of lovers parted——
Go and bring that Blessed One
With his golden Garuda flag.

**Vaikunthām**: Vaikunthām is the name of Vishnu's abode and of Paradise. Here it is thought of as the name of the ship which will carry the speaker across the world, a sea of sorrow, to heaven.

**Garuda**: The eagle which carries Vishnu and is portrayed on his flag.


Mennatāi annam parantu vilaiyātum
Villiputtūr āravān tan

Donnati kānpatu īr ācāiyināl en
Don kai kaniṇai tuṅcā;

In aṭiĉilōtu pāl-amutu uṭṭi
Etutta en kōlak kiḷiyai

Unnotu tōlamaik kolluvan, kuyilā!
Ulaku alantān varak kūvāy.

My two eyes like carp-fish at war
Wont't close because I yearn
To see his golden feet which stay
Stuck in Villiputtur!
Swans flying there are slow of gait.
If your coos the world-strider can bring
My parrot fed on sweet rice and milk
Shall be trained to be your friend.
Et ticaliyum amatai pañintu ēttum
   kutikēcan vali ceyya,
Muttu anna van muwuval ceyya vāyum
   Mulaiyum alaku alintēn nēn;
Kottu alat kāvil mañittaṭam kanpaṭai
   Kolūm ilai kuylē en
Tattvanai vatak kūkistiyākīl
   Talai allāl kaimmau ilānē.

I have lost the beauty of my pearly smile,
   Of my red mouth and breasts
Because of the Heart Thief's cruelty
   Whom the gods hail everywhere.
O young Koel, you who sleep
   In that grove of lovely flowers,
If you will coo to me my soul,
   I will give you my very head.
O lovely Koel, through my greed to embrace
The one on the milky sea,
My surging breasts in their ecstasy
Melt and distress my soul.
What do you gain by hiding yourself?
If you will coo and bring to me
The one with the discus, conch and mace
You will get a place in heaven.
Câthkam valaiya valikkum tatakkaic
Caturan poruttam utaiyan;
Nâṅkal em illituntu ottiya kaccaṅkam
Nānum avanum aritum;
Tēm kani mām poḷil centaliṟ kōtum
Citu kuyilē! tirumālai
Ānku vitaintu ollaik kūkkiṟiyākīl
Avanai nān ceyvāna kāṅē

O tiny Koel who peck the red sprays
In that copse of sweet mango-trees—
The Sarangam his strong hand can bend,
His skill, his resilience!
What secret passed between us two
Is known to us alone—
If you will quickly coo him here
You will see what I can do!

Sarangam: The name of Vishnu’s bow.
I was caught in the noose of the one they call
Sridhara, parrot-hued—
O Koel, who live in that beetle-loud grove
Hear and mark this well:
If you want to stay on and live in that grove
One of two things you must do—
Coo and get him with the discus and conch,
Or my golden bangle back!

Sridhara: Another of Vishnu's names meaning "The one who carries Sri, the goddess of Fortune" on his breast.
"Coo and get him ... or my ... bangle back": May not seem to present two alternatives, as with the coming of the lover the bangle will also come and can he worn again. But the idea here is that if the koel cannot get her lover to her, it must undo the love, which of course is impossible.
I cannot understand the justice  
Of my torture by south wind and moon  
Because I love him who straddled the world  
And he leaves me in the lurch!  
Don't you too, Koel, staying on here  
In this grove embitter me.  
If you don't coo Naranan here today  
I will drive you out of this place!  

Him who straddled the world: Vide note under I (7).  
Narayanai: The form of Narayana in old Tamil.
Vin uṣa nilṇu ati tāviya maintanai
Vaṣken maṭantai vizumpik
Kannuza en kaṭal-vammajik kūvu
Katunkuyilē! ema mānām
Pan uṣu nāmarataydē putuvalmannan
Pattātpīṭkā kōtal connā
Nam uṣu vācaka mālai vallāt namō
Nārāyanāya enpārē

This poem which the spear-eyed maiden made
In his love whose foot reached the sky
Saying, "Black Koel, coo him to me
That my eye may feast on that Sea-bued",
Is the work of Rādai of Villiputtur
Where dwell those versed in the Vedas:
Those who can enjoy and recite it
Will in effect be praying to Vīshnu. (11)

Whose foot reached the sky: Vide note under l (7).
VI. A DREAM WEDDING

My friend, I dreamt that Naranan
With a thousand elephants came
In a procession, and was received
By the city all bedecked
With festoons and flags along the streets
And golden jugs that were full. (1)
Nālai vatuvai-manam emu nāl ittu,
Palai kamuku pariṇu utalp panti kāl
Kōḷai mātavaṇ kōṟiṇiṇi anōn ār
Kāḷai pukutak kanāk kantān tōli! nān.

My friend, I dreamt that tomorrow
Being fixed as my wedding day,
He Madhava, Hari, Govinda
Entered like a bull
A canopy of coconut fronds
With clusters of areca-nut hung.

Nāti: Another of the names of Vishnu, meaning "One who takes away or removes (evil or sin)."

இந்திரம் குடில் சார்-திப்பு கொள்ளு
மாந்தவுள் வாழு வண், மூர்த்தி,
மாந்தவு கொரூ துறை வீதிக்கு, கரி-கரி
உறி வண்ண மூட்ட மார்கள், கறி! பாடி.

Intiran ullitta tevar-kulām ellēm
Vantiruntu ennai makat pēci, mantirittu,
Mantirak kōṭi ututtī, maṇa-mālai
Antari cūttak kanāk kantān, tōli! nān.

My friend, I dreamt that Indra the god
Came down with his clan
To bespeak the bride and fix the terms;
And Andari the bride's sister
Wrapped round me the bridal sari
And then garlanded me.

Andari: One of the names of Durga, sister of Vishnu-Krishna.
Nāl-ticait tittam koṇantu, nani nalki,
Pāippaṇac cittakal paliḻe etuttu āṭṭi;
Tūp puntai kanṭip punitanṭu antaṇaik
Kāppu-nāṅ kattak kanṭak kantāṅ, tōḷī! nāṅ.

My friend, I dreamt that numerous priests
Brought water for holy sprinkling
From the four corners of the earth
And raising Vedic chants,
Knotted the guardian string round my wrist
That I may wed Kannan the pure.

Kāṭī-ōlīt tīpam kalacam uṭan ēntic
Cātis īla mankiyac tām vantu atikollā.
Mātukaiyāt mānnan atiṇilai tōṭṭu, ekkum
Āṭicāp pukutak kanāk kantāṅ, tōḷī! nāṅ.

My friend, I dreamt that Nathura’s king
Sandalled, striding in
Shook the earth, and beautiful maidens
Advanced to welcome him
Carrying lamps as bright as the sun,
And shapely waterjugs.
Mattalam kotta, vati-canhkam ninu úta.
Muttu ñétit tāmam nirai tālata pantai kil.
Maittunān nampi matucūtañ vantu ennai
Kaiittalam parrak kanāk kanten tōli! nān.

My friend, I dreamt that my husband-to-be
Madhusudana took my hand,
Drums beating and conches blowing,
Under a canopy
Which seemed to go down with the weight
Of the pearl strings hanging from it. (6)

Madhusudana: A name of Krishna, who destroyed the rakshasa Madhu.

Vāy nallāt nalla mātai ṏti, mantivattāl
Pāciliñi nāñal paṭutlup pariti vaittu,
Kāy ciñça mā kalizu annān en kaippaṭṭi,
Tī valan ceyyak kanāk kanten tōli! nāñ.

My friend, I dreamt that the Veda-versed
Had built a fire and banked it
With a boundary of green grass.
And he, an elephant in must,
Took my hand in his and we both
Walked around that fire.
Immaikkum ē ē pizavikkum pātuvān,
Nammai utaiyavan, nātayānan nampi
Cennai utaiya titukkayāl tāl pātii
Ammi mitikkak kanāk kantēn tōli! nān.

My friend, I dreamt that Naranan
To whom I shall be bound
In this birth and for seven times seven
Caught hold of my foot
And put it with his lovely hand
On the grinding-stone.

Varicilai vāl mukattu ennaimāttān vantittu,
Erimukam pāttu, ennai munnē niṟutti,
Atimukan accutan kaimmēl en kai vaittup
Porimukantu attak kanāk kantēn tōli! nān.

My friend, I dreamt that my elder brothers
Bright-faced, with brows like bows,
Put me in front and stirred the fire,
And placing my hand in his—
The leonine— they fed that flame
Liberally with puffed rice.
Kunkumam appik kulir canam māṭittu,  
Maṅkala vīti valai ceytu, maṇa nir  
Arku avanōtum utan canu arku ānaimel  
Maṅcanam āttak kaṅaṅ kaṅṭei, tōli! nān

My friend, I dreamt I was smeared  
With sandal and saffron paste,  
And the two of us taken on an elephant  
Through decorated streets  
In a procession that was to end  
In a fragrant ritual bath.

Kōdai the daughter of Puduvai's chief  
Respected by the Brahmins  
Strung these twice five verses in Tamil  
Sanctified by her dream  
The wish-fulfilment of her wedding  
To the divine cowherd.  
Those who can recite them well  
Will be gladdened with good children.
VII. "TELL ME, WHITE CONCH"

Does it smell like camphor
Or the lotus flower?
Is the sacred mouth coral-red
Sweet to the taste?
I ask you in my yearning
For the taste and smell
Of the Tusk-breaker Madhava's mouth——
Tell me, white conch, sea-born!

Tusk breaker: Vide note under 1 (10).

White conch, sea-born: The questions have been addressed to Pahchajanyam the conch which Vishnu carries in his left upper arm. A demon, Panchajana had stolen a child and taken refuge in the sea. Krishna killed him and used the shell into which he had transformed himself as his horn to rouse his friends and frighten his enemies.

Kutuppiyam nārumō? kamalap pū nārumō:
Titup pavalac cevvaýtān tittittitukkumō?
Matuppu ocitta mātavanta
va<yccuvalum nārumum
Vituppuyuk kētkintēn col, āli-va<ucañke!

VII.  "TELL ME, WHITE CONCH"
Kalalil pingantu. kaumalatu panchacagan
Ufalil vajrantupavy, llyam kaittalat.
Titiril kuttyaari, tiya acyam.
Natalap paata mulankum tovattay, nar cahka!

You were born in the sea
And bred in Panchajans body.
But these things are forgotten:
God’s hand is now your home
And from there you frighten
The wicked Asuras.

Asuras: Titans, the enemies of the gods.

Oo venalbu. ooye oruwa oomha
Oo .wontal oore: oriyamOo Qoou, stay.
Oo. uguwam-udam oorOom oostOo
Ool.Ooru ooyamOou, Qoou Qoou oolOo!

Tata ucaluyn mitta caraakala cantiran
Itai uvall vantu alunale pole, nlyum
Uata maturayat-mannen vucuovan kaiyil
Kuttyaari littuntay, kolan parun cahk:

O beautiful big conch,
Like the full moon in autumn
On the Eastern Hill,
You too have gone up
To the hand of Vasudeva
Saler of north Mathura!

Vasudeva, the first a being long: A name of Krishna, son
of Vasudeva, with a short a.
O right-whorled conch, a moon
For ever in Damodara's hand
As if whispering
Secret spells in his ear
Even Indra's luck
Cannot equal yours. (4)

Damodara: A name of Krishna meaning "One who bore the mark of a cord round his stomach" with which Yasoda, his foster-mother had tied him to a mortar to prevent being pestered by him.

Unnōtu uṭane ou katalil vālōkai
Innāṭt inaiyār entu ennūvār illai kān;
Maṉ āki nīṭtā matucūṭan vāyamutam
Pannālum ūṅkindāy, pāṅcacakaniyamē!
Many shared
The same sea with you;
But no one cares
Who or what they are.
While you, Pancajanyam,
Eat all the while
The sweet ambrosia
Of Madhusudana’s mouth.

O right-whorled conch,
No need for you
To go in search
Of holy streams—
Perched on the hand
Of the twin trees’ slayer,
You can bathe in the water
From God’s own mouth!

The twin tree’s slayer: Vide note under IV (6)
Ceṅkamala nāḷ-malāmēl tēṅ nukatam annam pōl
Ceṅkān karumēnī vācutēvanutaiya
Akait talam ēzi ānā vacan ceyyum
canku-ataiya! un celvam cāla alakiyatē!

Like a swan sipping honey
From a fresh red lotus
Perched on Vasudeva's
Beautiful hand
You have made your home
Near his lotus eye—
O rare conch,
How great is your luck!

Unpatu collil ulaku alantān vāyamutam
Kanpatāi kollil kāṭalvānnan kaittalattē;
Jēṅ paṭaiyāt un māḷ petum pūcal cānukintāt;
Jēṅ pala ceykintha, pānca canṇiyamē.

For your food ambrosia
From his mouth the world-spanner's;
For your bed the hand
Of the sea-hued one——
All women have declared
A war against you.
What you do, Panchjanyam,
Is most improper.

The world spanner's: vide note under 1 (7).
O conch, immensely lucky,  
If you drink up by yourself  
The honey from Madhava's mouth—  
A common possession for which  
Sixteen thousand women wait—  
Why won't they quarrel with you? (9)

These twice five verses in Tamil  
Which describe the bond between  
Pancajanyam and the Lotus-navelled  
Were composed by Kodai  
Daughter of the famous Brahmin  
Of lovely Villiputtur.  
Those that can join in this praise  
Will join the Lord as his intimates. (10)

The lotus-navelled: A name of Vishnu out of whose navel, resembling a lotus, Brahma the Creator arose.
VIII. THE CLOUD MESSAGE

O clouds in the sky,
like a blue vesture spread
Is he too with you there
from Venkatam's clear-stream hills?
That the tears from my eyes
should drown these hills, my breasts!
Does it become his greatness
to kill a woman's essence thus?

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That the tears from my eyes
should drown these hills, my breasts!
Does it become his greatness
to kill a woman's essence thus?
Mā muttanitti coriyum mā mukilkāl! vēnkaṭattu
Cāmattī nizankonṭā tāṭālaṇ vēttai ennē?
Kāmattī upukuntu katuappattu, iṭaik kahkūl
Ēmattu or temalukku inku ilakkāy nān
itrippēnē?

O huge clouds, pouring pearls and wealth.
What says Venkatam's blue-hued Lord?
Burnt by love's fire in my inmost being
Must I lie a target for the south all night? (2)

A target for the south: The cool south wind makes
the absence of the beloved all the more of a torment, and
is associated with the hopeless yearning of a lover, Vide
V (10) in this connection.

Oli vannam valai cintai uzakkattōtu ivai ellām
Elimaiyāl ittu ennai italiyap pōyināvāl;
Kulit atuvi vēnkaṭattu en kōvintan kunam pāti
Alīyatta mēkahkāl! āvī kāṭtu itrippēnē?

Poor that I am, and forsaken now
By sheen, colour, bangles, thought and sleep,
O generous clouds, can I save myself
By singing the praise of cool Venkatam's king?

(3)

Bangles: Vide note under V (1).
Min ākattu elukinta mēkaṅkāl! īenkaṭattut
Tan ākat tirumāṅkai taṅkiya cīr māwaṅku
En ākattu īlaṅkakai vitumīt tām nāḷtōrum
Pon ākam pulkutakku en putivuṭaimai ceppumīnē.

O clouds who carry
lightning in your bodies,
Tell Venkatam’s Lord
whose body carries the Maid,
That day after day
I yearn that my own body
With its young breasts
should clasp his body bright.

Whose body carries the Maid: Vide note under V (9).

Vēn kontu kilanttu elunta mā mukilkāl!
venkaṭattut
Tēn konta malai citataṭ tirantu etip
polivikaḷ
Ūn konta val-ukizāl iraniyanai uṭal iṭantēn
Tēn konta caṟi-valaiкал taṟumēkīl cāṟumīnē.
O clouds in battalions risen up to the sky
And battering Venkatam's honey-drenched flowers,
If he who tore Hiranya with his sharp nails
Will restore my bangles— then you may tell. (5)

Who tore Hiranya: Hiranyakasipu was a Titan who had obtained a boon through his penances that no god, man or beast in forms till then created should be able to kill him, and no weapon have the capacity to injure him. When in his arrogance he became a menace, Vishnu took the form of a man-lion and killed him by using only his nails.

Calañ koñtu kilantu elunta tañ mukilkāl!
māvaliyai
Nilāñ koñtan venkāṭattē nīrantu ezip
polivirikāl!
Ulaṅku unta vilāṅkani pōl u l meliyap pukuntu
ennai
Nalañ koñta nātanakku en nātalainōy ceppuminē.

O cool clouds sucking up the sea and spread
So high over Venkatam, fall in torrents and tell
Him who deprived Mahabali of his lands
What a worm-eaten woodapple I am, sucked dry
by his love! (6)

Deprived Mahabali: Vide note under 1 (7).
O clouds from the conch-filled sea he churned,
Lay at the lotus feet of the lotus-eyed
My humble plea— let him enter me but one day
And wipe away my breasts' saffron,
and I will live. (7)

Sea he churned: When the gods and the Titans together churned the ocean to obtain nectar from it, the mountain Mandara used as a churning rod began to sink. Vishnu got under it in the form of a tortoise and held it in position. In that sense he may be said himself to have churned the ocean.
Kāti kālattu elukina kārmukilkāl! vēnkaṭattāl
Pōti kālattu eluntattāl potutavanār pēri colli,
Nīti kālattu elukkin am pala ilai pōl vilvēnai
Vāti kālattu ownāl tam vācakam tantaulāi.

O rainclouds rising in the rainy season
Like Rama in the battlefield!
I chant his name, my leaves are falling——
As the years roll, won't he send me a word? (8)

Rama in the battlefield: Vide note under 11 (6).

Māta yānai pōl elunta mā mukilkāl!
 vēnkaṭattaip
Patiyāka valukkāl! pampa añaiyān vāttai ennē!
Kati ennum tān āvān karuttātu őt pen-kōṭiyai
Vatai ceytān ennum col vāiyakattāi matiyātē?

O clouds which rise like elephants in must
And have found a house in Venkatam!
How undependable is the serpent-bedded!
A name for girl-slaughter wins no one's respect. (9)

The serpent-bedded: Vishnu has for his bed on the ocean
the thousand-hooded serpent Adisesha.
Nākattin anaiyānai nannutalāl nayantu urai cey
Mēkattai vēnkaṭakkōn vitu tūtil viṭṭappam
Tōkattil valuvāta putuvaiyarkōṇ kōtai tamil
Ākattu vaittu uraippār avai atiyāi ākuvaite.

This cloud message to Venkatam's king
Was made by bright-browed Kodai in Tamil——
The Puduvaiyuran's daughter
In love with the snake-bedded.
Get by heart and recite it,
And join God's household. (10)

Puduvaiyutan: Vishnuclltan belonging to Puduvai, Sri Villipputtur.
IX. THE LORD OF TIRUMAL'S GROVE

Scarlet and purple
The silkworms rise and spread
Throughout Tirumal’s Grove
Recalling him who churned
With Mandara long ago
Nectar luxurious—sweet—
Alas! how escape
The Straight-shoulder’s strategy? (1)

Churned ... nectar: Vide note under VIII (7).
கோக்கறி போகும் பலிவுன்னை என்மண்டி பீடுர். பொருள்செய்யும் படி புராண பெயர் பெயர் என்று என்றாங்கி;
பீட்டுக்கு பிரேஷ்ட் பார் நாய் கிளை மற்ற மாட்டி;
நூறு நான்? என்று! மூன்று போகும் நாட்டு.

Torkkaliyo pourn malitunçolai am púmpuranl
Tátkoći mullaikalum tavala nakai kättukína;
Kätkkoʃ paṭakkal nímu kalaríc cirikkat tatiyën;

In the lovely terraces in Tirumal's Grove
Where warring elephants play
The jasmines from the creepers
Flash his pearly smile!
And from some other creepers
Comes a cruel laugh——
O friend, to whom shall I complain
Against his garland's spite?

காத்மிய பக்கராட்டிரா! குரு பக்கரா! என்று
நூறு என்று கொண்டிருந்தால், நாட்டு என்று கொண்டிருந்தீத;
நூறு என்று போடா என்று கொண்டிருந்தீதே புங்கை
நூறு என்று புங்கை என்றுடன் கொண்டு என்றே?

Kätuvilai onmalarkā! kāyā malarkā! tirumāl
Ilṣu-oli kättukniit, enakku uy valakku onu
utalyit
Tiru vilایyit tuń töli tirumāliruncolai nampi
Vativalai le pukuntu vantippazum valakku utațe?
O lovely *kakkannam* and *kaya,*
You only remind me
Of the dark hue of the Lord,
Not teach me the way to be saved!
Was it right for the Lord of Tirumal's Grove
With whom Lakshmi loves to play
To enter my house forcibly
And take my bangles away?

*Kakkannam* and *kaya* : Flowers of dark hue.
*Take my bangles away* : Vide note under V (1)

Taimpolil vāl kuyilkā! mayilkā! on
katuviilakā!
Vampak kālaṅkanikā! vannap puvai
natumalatkā!
Aim petum pātakatkā! añi mālittucālai nīna
Empenu mūṅtalaṇa nīlam unkalukku en ceypate?

O koels and peacocks,
Bright *kakkannam* and fresh *kla,*
Colorful and fragrant *kayams,*
Living in this green grove—
You are a gang of five
Guilty of the five great sins—
What have you done to deserve
My gracious Lord's splendid hue?

*Kla* : A dark-coloured fruit.
*Kayams* : Vide note under (3) above.

**Gang of five, guilty of the five great sins :** The birds, flowers
and fruit suggest to her a gang of sinners together guilty
of the five great sins, viz. lying, theft, drunkenness, murder
and abusing one's teacher.
துங்கா மலர்ப பொில் சுற்றதெருவாளை, உண்டாத இந்து காதலை வேண்டும் மலர்பொில் செஞ்சிகாலொன் திருவதினால், உண்டாத இந்து காதலை வேண்டும் மலர்பொில்

You black beetles and flowers,
Beautiful, crowded pools,
Red lotuses in ponds,
And black bees on them!
All of you remind me
Of my red-eyed, black-hued Lord
In the grove named after him —
Show me a place of refuge!

நாட் நாடும் பொில் மற்றும் தெருவாளை, பிள்ளைக்காசு உண்டாத இந்து காதலை
நாட் நாடும் பொில் மற்றும் தெருவாளை, பிள்ளைக்காசு உண்டாத இந்து காதலை
நாட் நாடும் பொில் மற்றும் தெருவாளை, பிள்ளைக்காசு உண்டாத இந்து காதலை?

Nātu natum polil mālitunčolai nampikku nān
Nātu tāṭavil venney vāyennintu, parāvi vaitṭēn;
Nātu tāṭa niṭānta akkāra aṭćil cōnēn;
Eṣu tiruvutaiyān īṇu vantu ivai kollūn kolō?
I offered verbally
To Tirumal in his grove
Of fragrant flowers and pools
A hundred pots of butter
And a hundred of rice-pudding.
Will he, that great Lord,
His fortune ever ascendent
Come here today and take them?

Tirumal: Vishnu.

If the Lord of Tirumal's Grove
Fragrant with the south
Will come today and partake of these,
For each one I will give a lakh,
And on top of that give more—
If only he will come
Straight into my heart
And stay there eternally.
Is it true which is sung
Early in the morning
By a flock of black birds
Announcing his arrival?
The Lord of groves and hills
The Lord of Dwarka,
The Lord of the banyan leaf—
Is it his words they repeat?

Dwarka: Vide note under I (4).
Banyan leaf: Vide note under II (2).

Konku alatum polil malitunçolaiyit
konnaikalimēl
Tūnku pon mālaikalōtu utanay ninu
tūnkukintēn;
Tūnko[ll] tiyumukattu matuttu utiya canku oliyum
Cānka vil nān-oliyum talaippeyvatu enēnān
kolō?
I stand useless like the flowers
Hanging golden from the konnai
In Tirumal's kongu grove.
When if ever shall I hear
The conch blown by his beautiful mouth
And the twang of his Sarangam?

Konnai: Not all flowers are fit for worshipping God. The konnai flowers are useless from this point of view.

Kongu: A dark gourd.

Conch blown .. twang of ... Sarangam: Referring respectively to Krishna coming to the rescue of Rukmini about to be married to Sisupala, and Rama to that of Sita imprisoned in Lanka.

Cantoṭu kārakīlum cumantu taṭaṅkaḷ potutu
Vantīliyum cilampāḷu uṭai māliṅcōḷai nīnta
Cuntaranāic curunnu ār kuḷai kōtai tokuttu
utaitta
Centamīl pattum vallāī tirumāḷaṭi cēvāṭkaḷē.

Those will reach his divine feet
Who can recite these ten Tamil verses
Composed by Kodai of the curly locks
Decked with bee-haunted flowers.
They are in honour of that winsome Lord
In Tirumal's Grove, washed by the river
Coming down with sandal and ahil
And flooding many tanks in its rage.

Ahil: A fragrant wood whose smoke was used to scent the hair.
X. THE SHAMELESSNESS OF LOVE

O kandal flowers where is he—
His colour dark like the sea—
Who has trained you as his soldiers
To wage a war with me?
To whom now shall I clamour
To redress my woes
When my own heart has left me
Pursuing his basil?

Kandal flowers: A November flower plant, Gloriosa superba, which figures much in Tamil poetry in connection with disappointed love.

Basil: A plant sacred to Vishnu and used in worshipping him.
O tendu flowers flowering high,
Will you transport me
Countering the command
Of the primal Vedic God
To that supramundane group
High above all heights
Like the blaze in his right hand
But not burning me thereby?

Tendu flowers: The same flowers as in note under (1).
The primal Vedic God: Vishnu according to the speaker.
The blaze in his right hand: The discus which Vishnu carries.
Kōvai māṇattil ni un koluṅkani kontu emmai āvi toliaiyāl; vāyalakai tammai aṇcutum;
Tāviyēn tōntip pāmpu-aṇaiyākkum tam pāmpupōl
Nāvum irāntu ula ayttu nāniliyēnukē.

Bride Kōvai, don't kill me
With your winsome fruits:
I am afraid of you because
You so resemble his mouth;
Since I took birth for my sins
The serpent-bedded one
Like his own snake is double-tongued
To me who have lost all shame!

Kōvai: A climbing plant with red fruits.
Mullai pitâti! nî un muçuwalkal! kōntu emmâi
Allal vilâiviyal; ali nankây! un aṭaikkalâm;
Kollai atakkiyai mûkku arintîta kumâranâit
Collum poyyânâl, nānum pitânthamaï poy ante?

Lady Mullai, with your smiles
   Don't vex your refugee
Reminding me of my Lord
   With your round ancestry!
If even his word who slashed the nose
   Of the lawless demoness
Has proved a lie, why then my birth
   Itself must be a lie!

Mullai : The jasmine flower.

His ... who slashed the nose : The reference is to Rama
who had Surpanaka's nose cut off because that wicked sister
of Ravana threatened to eat Sita alive when he refused to
succumb to her advances. Rama among all the incarnations
of Vishnu is particularly noted as one who never spoke a
falsehood.
O koels singing your songs,
What is this song of yours?
If Venkatam's Lord will make me live
Then come and sing to me.
If he who has the Garuda
For his fluttering flag,
Will graciously come and join me
I Will call you and hear your song. (5)

Venkatam's Lord : Vide note under I (1).
Garuda ... flag : Vide note under V (4).
Kaṇa mā mayilkāl! kaṇṇapitan tirukkōlam pōntu
Aṇi mā natam payintu ātukinīkkku ati
vālkinā;
Paṇam ātu aravaṇai pāpala kālamum pallikol
Manavāla, nammai vaiṭtā paticu itu kānminē.

O lovely peacocks dancing in groups,
You resemble Kannan;
Your steps are pleasing and practised
But let me fall at your feet——
The bridegroom who for ever
Has made the snake his bed
With its dancing hood, has brought me
To this shameless state you see.  (6)

Kannan: Vide note under IV (2).
Made the snake his bed: Vide note under II (3).
Naṭam āṭit tōkaḷ uṭikkīnna mā mayilkāl! ummai
Naṭam-āṭtam kānap pāvīyen nān ōi mutal ilēn;
Kuṭam ātu kūttan kōvīntan kōmītai ceytu emma
Uṭai mātu koṇtān uṅkalukku ini onru pōtumē?

O lovely peacocks dancing
With your plumes outspread
Sinful I am in no condition
To enjoy your dance.
Pot-dancer tyrant Govinda
Has dispossessed me quite—
Is this not enough for you?
Do you want any more? (7)

Malaiyē! malaiyē! maṅ puram pūci ullāy nīnu
Maluku uṭtīnāi pōl uṭtu nal vēṅkaṭattu ul
nīnu
Alakappiraṅē tammai en nēcattu akappatē
taluva nīnu ennītu tataittukkōntu urraum
vallaiyē?
Rain, O rain, as a figure of wax
Covered with mud is melted
The fiery beauty of Venkatam's Lord
Has melted my soul away.
Why don't you come crowding
And pour him into me
So that I may embrace him
Caught for ever in my heart?

Kaṭalē! kaṭalē! unnaik kataintu kalakku-
unuttu
Utalul pukuntu nintu úral azuttavakkku
ennayum
Utalul pukuntu nintu úral azukkinta máyaṅku en
Naṭalaikal ellām nākaṇaikkē cennu utāittiyē?

Sea, O sea, tell him who entered you,
Churned and took your nectar away,
That he entered my body as well
To stir, churn and deprive me.
Can you carry all my sorrows
To that cunning wizard
Going to the serpent's self
Where as on a bed he lies?

Churned ... nectar away: Vide note under VIII (7).
Nalla en tōli! nākaṇālmicai nampātai
Celvai periyar; ciyu māniṭava nām ceyvaten?
Villi putuvai vittucittar tāṅkaḷ ēvuṟai
Valla paricu varvippatēḷ atu kāntumē.

My good friend, what can we do,
Poor human beings,
Against him the serpent-bedded
Rich and great?
If Villiputtur's Vishnucittan
Through his skills
Will get that Lord of his for us,
We can see him.
XI. THE HEART LOST TO SRIRANGAM'S LORD

Braceleted maids, isn't the shell
I love and wear on my hand
As dear to me as to him the shell
He loves and holds in his hand?
And yet Sri Rangan who has made
A fire-faced snake his bed
Does not choose to look, alas,
Upon my poor face! (1)

Shell I ... wear on my hand: Vide note under Ⅴ (1). The bangles worn by women were often of cowrie shell.

The shell he holds in his hand: This refers to Panchajanyaam, the conch in Vishnu's hand. Vide note under Ⅶ (1).

Snake his bed: Vide note under Ⅷ (9).
Iruthu ekkāñai ammanaimīnt! en atanakkattu
Innamutat
Kulal alakat, vāyalakat, kañ alakat, koppulīl
Eku kamalap pū alakat: emmanat ennūtālya
Kalal valaiyait tāmum kalal valaiyē ākkinaṁ

Fair mothers, my sweet ambrosia
Of Srirangam!
With his lovely hair, his lovely mouth
His lovely eyes
And the lovely lotus from his belly button—
My husband—
Has my loose bangle
Made me lose indeed!

*My loose bangle ... me lose indeed:* The Tamil puns on the words "loose bangles" and "bangles coming loose". I am attempting to reproduce this.

Poruṇu ene yēnē pumaiyēm ānuk-ē sumēn
Eshēl āriyē cūrurun ānukal vāmalum
Cūrurum lañu pēnurāt ānumant
En Cūrurum Bīt ūtañ ānēyp?

Pōṇku ōtam cūnta puvaniyum sin-ulakum
Aṅku ōtam cotame ālkinta empezuñān
Cēṅkōl uṭaiya tīvāvañkac cēḻanāt
Em kōḷ-valaiyāl īṭer tituvā ākatē?
My Lord of Srirangam,  
Rich and righteous,  
Who owns this sea-swept earth entire  
And the sky  
Has made his possessions  
Now complete  
With the bangle which I wore  
On my hand!

Maccu anī māta matil atāṅkat vāmananēt  
Paaccāip pacun tēva tām pantu nīt ētta  
Piccaik kutāiyāki, ennuṭaiya peyvalai mēl  
Iccai utaiyarēl, it tetuvē pōtātē?

If the great God dazzling green  
Of Srirangam's terraced mansions  
Feeling he lacks something  
In what he got long ago  
As Vamana the beggar  
Covets the bangle on my hand,  
Won't he be coming down  
This street on which we live?

Vamana the beggar? Vide note-under 1 (7).
Guruvāya āyicē ānāryām Gurp mādām ñt ññgu
arjor āngū āyicē Garei Gūbaru
Pallāk kūtal utuvāyp poī kalyil nīt ānu
Ellā ulakum alantu koṭṭa empetumān
Nallātkal vālum nalir atahka nākanāiyān
Illātōm kalpporulum eytwān othtu ulāne.

My Lord as an ugly dwarf
Stretched his hand like a beggar
And got all the worlds
Which he then straddled.
And now he lies cool on his serpent
In Srirangam where good men live
And would seem to rob
Us poor folk of what we have!

Kaip porulkal munnamē kaikkontār, kaviri nīt
Ceyp pūrāla ōtum tiuvatikāč cēlvanār:
Ep porukum ninu ārkkum eytātu nān marālyān
Copporulāy mīntār en meypporulum koṭtasā.
Our goods he took away long ago
The rich lord of Srirangam
Where the Cauvery flows over fertile fields.
The meaning and essence of the Vedas
In all things present, he escapes all
And having taken all my goods
He has now taken my body too!

The great Lord of Srirangam
With its mighty fortress walls
Does not remember all his acts
Of madness in the past
When for a female body's sake
Foodless and sleepless he
Spanned the sea and slashed its waist——
But is now so self-absorbed!

Spanned the sea ... waist: The reference is to Rama rescuing Sita. Vide note under II (6).
For the sake of the Earth-woman once on a time
Whose body was covered with moss,
A shameless pig he made himself
His own body's dirt never washed!
The bright Lord of Srirangam
So rich and godlike now—
The things that he told me once
No crowbar can break down!

A shameless pig: When the earth overwhelmed by floods
was lost in the sea, Vishnu incarnated himself as a great
boar and rescued the earth on the tip of his horn. Perhaps
what is usually referred to as Vatasa a boar should be transla-
ted rhinoceros.
When Sisupala's marriage was all fixed
And he never had a doubt
That he would take his bride by her hand,
To his astonishment
That great helper of woman in need
Intervened and caught her
Thereby disgracing Sisupala——
But is stuck in Srirangam now!

Disgracing Sisupala: Vide note under IX (9).

If those straight words
True and great
The Lord of Srirangam spoke
And Vishnuchittan heard——
"Those will I love
Who love me"
Themselves prove false——
Who on earth can help?

Those straight words: The reference is to the Bhagavad Gita,
what Krishna tells Arjuna.
All that you tell me in love with Madhava
— A feeling you can never understand—
Is as if a deaf one should earnestly engage
In a discourse with one who is dumb.
If you want that I should live, just take
and leave me
In the outskirts of Mathura city
Where the lad born to one and bred by another
First reaches the wrestlers' field. (1)

Lad born to one and bred by another: Krishna born to Devaki
but obliged to flee from Kamsa's wrath and take refuge
with Yasoda who became his foster mother.
Nāni ini āri karumam illai,
Nālayalārum aiṇintolintār;
Pāniyātu ennai matuntu ceṭu
Paṇṭu paṇṭu ākka uyutiṭākil,
Māni utuvāy ulaku aḷanta
Māyanaik kāṇi talaimaṭiyum;
Ānaiyāl ni ennai kākka vēntil,
ṇippāṭikkē ennai uyttiṭumin.

There is no more need for fear or for shame—
All our neighbourhood knows.
If without delay you would doctor me
Back to my former state,
Have vowed to save me, take me to that cowstead
Where at the sight of that wizard—
The dwarfish bachelor who bestrode the world—
My sickness might leave me. (2)

The dwarfish bachelor: Vide note under 1 (7).
That a woman should depart all by herself
Leaving her parents and friends
Is a scandal once risen that can't be suppressed,
And that juggler is ever before me.
Take me therefore in a pitch-black night
To Nandagopa's door
The father of that mischievous devil
Who causes such scandal and shame.

Nandagopa: Yasoda's husband, Krishna's foster-father.
 Ankait talattitai āli kaṇṭān
 Avan mukattu anti viliyēn entu
 Cenkaccuk kōntu kaṇ ātai āttuc
 Ĉiu māṇiṭavataik kānil nānum;
 Kōntkittalam ivai nōkkik kāṇit,
 Kövintaṅukku allāl vāyil pōkā;
 Inkuttai vālva oliyavē pōy,
 Yamunaik kataikku ennai uyttītiṃīn.

Have a look at these breasts of mine
 Meant for Govinda alone
 Which will not look at anyone's face
 But his with the discus in hand.
 In a red sash clothed, their eyes are blind
 To mere men from whom they shy off.
 I cannot live here anymore——
 Leave me on the Yamuna bank.

(4)
Akkum en nōy itu atiyalākātu;
   Ammanaimi! tulātip paṭatē,
Kākkatal vannān enpān ounavān
   Kaikanta yōkam tatavat tīrum;
Nīk'kātai nīnza katampai ērik
   Kāliyan ucciyl nattam pāyuntu
Tōikkalamāka niruttam ceyta
   Tōykaik kataikku ennai uyttitumīn

O Mother, don't grieve. This my disease
   No one can understand.
He whose hue is like the sea's
   Can cure it with a touch.
Take me beside that rivulet
   Which he made a field of battle
Jumping off a kadamba tree
   To dance on a cobra there.

Dance on a cobra there: Vide note under III (2).
The cool raincloud, katuvilla and kayam
And the lotus flower
Come before me and persuade me
To go to Krishikesa.
Take me to Bhaktavilochan, the place
So longingly looked at
By those tired, hungry, belly-pinched
When their lunch hour came!

Krishikesa: Krishna, lit. The Lord of the senses.
Belly pinched: The reference is to an occasion when Krishna and his friends after their rompings felt immensely hungry and were refused food by certain priests doing yagna to placate the gods. But the wives of these priests on hearing that it was Krishna who had sent the boys to beg for food immediately complied with their request, thereby demonstrating that the love of God is more important than plying him with prayers for selfish ends.
Vannam-tirivum mañam-kulairivum
Mañam ilāmaiyum vāvēliruvum
Unna lurēmaiyum ulmeliruvum
ōta nīt vannan enpān omēvān
Tannan tulāy ennun mālai koṇu
Cūttat taṇiyum; pilampan tanaipp
Pan aliyyap palatēvan venja
Pantivatattu ennai uuttitumin.

My changed complexion, depressed mind,
Pale lips and shamelessness,
No taste for food and sunken spirits
Will be cured when the sea-hued one
Crowns me with a chaplet of cool basil.
O take me to Panmadai
Where Lord Balarama broke the bones
Of the Asura Palamba.

Balarama: The brother of Krishna, himself one of Vishnu's incarnations.
கருனு பெருந்தலாய கைகள் சும்பத்
என் எத்து தீரும் தெரு விழும்
மூல செல்வ வாறும் உண்டாகே.

உணவோர்! எந்தத் தென்ற் வைதோர்?
என்று துளி செய் என்றே
வெள்ளா வான என்று பற்றே
சரத்தின் கைசெய் எப் போக்
சராவிட்டு கைசெய் என்று பற்றே.

Kattinam meykkilum meykkap pettan
Kaiu val caiyum akap pettan,
Pari utalitai yappum untan,
Paivikal! unkalkku eecuk koloo?
Kattana peci vacavu untate,
Kaliikal uyya malai tatuttuk
Korak kutaiyak aenti nint
Kovattanattu ennai uyttitum.

"He became a professional cowherd,
Joined the forester's caste,
Was put in the stocks" — O you sinners,
Such grist for your scandal mill!
Don't gossip and gain my abuse——
He saved too the cattle from rain
By lifting a hill as it were an umbrella.
Take me to Govardhan!

Was put in the stocks: Reference to the infant Krishna being tied to a mortar by Yasoda to prevent him from doing mischief.

Lifting a hill: Vide note under II (1)
Kūṭṭil iruntu kili eppōtum
Kōvintā! kōvintā! enu alaikkum;
Ūttuk koṭātu ceppanakil
Ulaku-alantān enu uyarak kūvum;
Nāṭṭil talaippali eyti unkal
Naṇmai ilantu talaiyitātē,
Cūṭṭu uyar mālāṅkal cūlintutōnum
Tuvāṟṟapātkku ennai uyttitumīn.

My parrot in its cage for ever
Cries "Govinda, O Govinda";
If I do not give him his food,
"O World-strider!" he shrieks!
Don't become the talk of the town
And by intruding lose your name,
But to Dwaraka with its towering mansions
Take me and leave me there
Mannu maturai toṭakkamāka
Van tuvātāpatitan alavum
Tannait tamar uyttup peyya vēntit
Tālkulalāl tuṇinta tunivai,
 Pon iyal māṭam polintu tōnutum
Putuvaiyarkōṅ viṭṭucittan kōtai
Inncaiyyāl conṇa ceṇcol māḷai
Ēttavallātkku itam vaikuntamē.

Paradise is the place for those
Who can tell the beads of this rosary
Strung by Vishnuchittan's Kodai
Of Puduvai with its glittering domes
Setting forth the daring suit
That her friends should transport her
To one or all of those sacred shrines
From Mathura to Dwaraka.
XIII. "BRING ME HIS THINGS"

To the sight of that black god called Kannan
   I am an addict;
Don't stand aside and mock at me
  Pouring acid on my wound;
Take from the room of that great Lord
  To whom a woman's woe is nothing
His yellow cloth, and with it cool
  The fever which burns me.  (1)

Yellow cloth: Vishnu is always represented as wearing
a yellow cloth.
I was caught in the net of that great Lord
Who slept on a banyan leaf;
Don't drill holes in me with a spear
By saying whatever you please;
From him who danced with a pot on his head
Driving his cows with a crook,
Bring the cool green basil and with it
Deck my soft hair on fire!

(2)

Banyan leaf : Vide note under II (2).
Kañcaik kāynta katwili
Kaṭaikkan ennum citaikkōlal
Neču uturua vēvantu
Nilaiyum talantu naivenai
Ancel ennann; avan owvan
Avan māwu aniita vanamālai
Vančiyē tatumākil
Māvira konanttu purattiē.

Shot through my heart by Kamsa's killer
With a plumed dart (his eye) from a dark
bow (his brow),
If he would console me burning and lost
With just one phrase, "Don't be afraid",
And send me beside, not holding it back,
The garland he wears on his chest,
Take it from him and bring it with you
To put it on my chest.

(3)

Kamsa's killer: Vide note under III (9).
உலக்கையை விட்டுச்செல்வே?
நட்புதூட் முதுப்பு என்னே
நாசறு நடுவே பெல்லதே
நானாலோ அவாறுது மாது
அந்த வெளை என்று
நெற்றை வரைவு கூற்றே
நோக்கி ராணிகு தெய்தே.

அது உலக்கட்டு விட்டுச்செல்வே
அயத்பக்தி காவாற்று உன்னும்
காட்டு உலக்கா உலக்குண்டு
தாலாணம் முழும் கிடற்றை
அதுவமுதம் அனியான் தான்
அமூதா வருதத உரியா
நிற்றன் காவாற்று புலாதாமே
பாருக்கி இலைப்பாய் நிக்கிதே.

Who in this world is there to console
Me unstrung and broken
By that black bull of the cattleyard
Who lorded it over all?
Bring the nectar which never sates
From his ambrosial mouth:
Don't let it go dry, O feed me with it,
And make me get well.
Aililum tolilum uruk kättān;
Ancēl ennān; avan oṭuvan
Taluvi mulucip pukuntu ennaic
Curtic culantū pōkānāl:
Talaiyin polilvāy nitāip pillē
Netumāl ūṭi vaukinē
Kulalin tolaivāy nit kontū
Kulira mukattut tāṭāvīṭē.

O he who will not show himself
Whether I weep or adore,
Will never say, "Fear not", clip or clasp,
Whirl me round and around,—
If in the grove, behind his herd,
You hear his flute divine,
Bring the moisture from its holes
And with it cool my face!
Naṭai ontu illā ulakattu
Nantakōpan makan ennum
Kotliya katiya tirumalal
Kuḷappukkuḷu koḻappattu
Pūtaiyum payarakillēn nān;
Pōkkān mititta atippattil
Poṭittān koṇantu pućirkal!
Pōkkā uyir en uḻampaiyē.

In this lawless world I lie,
Trampled by the hoof
Of one Nandagopa’s son, a Lord
Cruel, wicked, stern!
I cannot turn, I cannot stir—
If you can get the dust
From where he put his feet, O bring it
For my long time a-dying life!

Nandagopa’s son: Vide note under XII (3).
In this world which must obey
The Lord with the Garuda flag,
What a shame that a mother should breed
A useless neem fruit son!
Bind my pair of innocent breasts
To his shoulders palmtree-like
So that the guilt of his betrayal
By that bondage is atoned. (7)

Neem fruit: The fruit of the margosa, too bitter to be eaten.
Ullē utuki naivēnai
Ulalo ilalō ennēta
Kōllai kollik kutumpanaik
Krōvattananaik kaṇṭakkāl,
Kōllum payan ontu illēta
Kōṅkaitannaik kilāṅkōtum
Allip pariṭittu avan māwil
Etintu en alalait tīvēnē.

If I should meet that Govardhan
Who cares not if she lives or is dead
Who inly melts and is worn out
All for that mischievous bandit's love,
I shall pluck my useless breasts
From their roots and fling them
On his chest, and so put out
The raging fire of my love.

Pluck my breasts... raging fire: Kannaki, in the ancient Tamil epic the Silappadikaram, enraged by the king of Madurai's injustice, plucked one of her breasts off and flung it on the town, thereby setting fire to the entire town. The juxtaposition here of plucked breasts and fire recalls that incident.
Kommal mulaikal itai tīrak
Kōvintarkku ēt kuvēval
Immaip pitavi ceyyāte
Iṇip pōyc ceyyum tavamān en?
Cemmai utaiya titumāwil
Cēttēnēlum, ou ṇanu
Meymmai colli mukam nōkki
Vitaitān tavumēl mika naye.

If through secret service now
I can’t gain Govinda’s love
And quench the ardour of my breasts
What use of future penance?
It is well if he embrace me now
But speaking one day face to face
If he can only bid good-bye—
That too will be very good.

(9)
Kodai whose brow no bow can match
Puttur Vishnuchittan's daughter
Made these verses in her passion
For that jewelled lamp of the cowherd clan
Who wrought such mischief with his pranks.
Those who can recite them well
Shall never struggle in the sea of sorrows. (10)
"Did you see a black bull
Roaming free with Balarama
Gambolling in sheer joy
Somewhere here roundabouts?"

"We saw one who checked and grazed
His favourite cows with loving care,
Made them drink and played with them
In the woods of Brindavan". (1)

Balarama: Krishna's elder brother, vide note under XII (7).

Brindavan: A wood in the district of Mathura where Krishna spent his boyhood with young cowherds. The questioner is of course Andal who belongs to South India.
Aunika ennaip pirivu ceytu ōyarpāṭi kavaṇantu unṇum
Kununuku nāṭik kutṭaraik kōvaiṭṭaṇanaik kantīve?
Kanaṅkalōtu min mēkam kalantār pōla
vaṇamālai
Minunka ninṭu vilaiyāṭa viruntāvaṇattē kaṇṭōme-

"Did you see that young bull
Stinking of butter, Goyardhan
Who left me desolate and has his fill
Of joy in the cowherds' hamlet"?
"We saw one with a garland—
A dark cloud laced with lightning,
Making merry with a gang
In the woods of Brindavan". (2)

Goyardhan: Vide note under Il (1).
Mālāppu pīṭanta nampiyai mālē ceyyum
maṇālanai
Eḷāp poykal utaippānai iṅkē pōtak kaṇṭīrē?
Mālāl patanta veṭṭillāppān vinatai-cītuval
ciṭaku ennum
Mēlāppin kil varuvānai vituntāvanattē kaṇṭōmē.

"Did you see that youngster hereabouts
A very plague personified
Born to torment all women
With his unacceptable lies"?
"We saw one under Garuda's wing
Spread like a canopy overhead
To guard him from the sun's fierce rays
In the woods of Brindavan".

Garuda: Vide note under V (4).
КАது தங்க கமலக் காந் ஏன் நெற்றுக்கைது
பற்றி ஏனை
தெற்று கொஞ்சு விலாயிதும் இக்கன் கானாள் கணித்தெ?
நோய்ட்டா முற்றிக் குப்பன் புகாச் மால் சணநீக்
கண்டெ பொல
வருது நின்சு விலாயத்தா விருத்தவனட்டு கண்டோமா.

"Did you see the god who caught
With his lotus eye in a raincloud
Me, poor fish, to play and twirl
And drag me along wherever he goes"?
"We saw one like an elephant calf
His gleaming body covered with sweat
As if with pearls, and playing with others
In the woods of Brindavan".
Mālavan en maṇiyinai valaiyir pilaitta panti pōl
Etum onūm kolat tātā iča tannaik kantite?
Tītaka-ātai utai tāla perun kārmēka kantē pōl,
Vīti āra wavvānai vituntavanattē kantōme.

"Did you see that god who has gone,
Escaped like a pig from his poke,
Madhava my selfish jewel
Who won't give anyone anything"?
"We saw one in a yellow cloth
Like a great big raincloud calf
Who when he walks can fill a street
In the woods of Brindavan". (5)

Tatamam ariyākk kuṟumpanānait tan kaic cātinak atuvē pōl
Puruva vattam alakiya potulttam iliyaik kantite?
Uruvu kāritaey mukam ceylāy utayap patuppatattinmāl
Vitiyum kāritaey pōloānai vituntavanattē kantōme.
"Did you see that mischievous wretch
Who does not know propriety,
Brows lovely bent like his own bow,
His nature never consistent?"
"We saw one, body black, red eyes,
Beautiful like the sun's rays
Coming up the Eastern Hills,
In the woods of Brindavan".

Poettam uttaiya nampiyaiy putampol ullum
katiyanaik
Kuttaiyai pilaittu ninti ak katu ma mukilaik
kanitza?
Attit tara-kanankalal arap peuku vanam poul,
Vittam pettaiy oarvainai vituntavanattae
kantoma

"Did you see that thick dark cloud,
His nature wholly consistent,
His heart as black as his body
Whom none can trust, inscrutable?"
"We saw one coming along
Surrounded by a huge host
Like the stars which fill the sky
In the woods of Brindavan".
"Did you see that gracious Lord
With his discus in one hand
And a white conch in another
Clothed in a yellow garment"?
"We saw one bright and spirited
His strong shoulders overspread
With fragrant locks with wine-drunk bees
In the woods of Brindavan". 

Yellow garment : Vide note under XIII (1).
Nāttai patai enu ayan mutalāt tanta nalir mā malai unti Vittai panni vilaiyātum vimalantannaik kantē? Kāttai nātit tenukanum kalīrum pullum utan matiya Vattaiyāti vaavāna viluntavanattē kantōmē.

"Did you see that spotless one Who gave to Brahma and the rest His lotus navel for their house To make regions for his sport"? "We saw one who went to the woods Hunted there and also slew Dhenuka, the elephant and the bird In the woods of Brindavan". (9)

Lotus navel : Vide note under VII (10).
Dhenuka ... bird: Dhenuka, a demon who in the form of a donkey, attacked Balarama and was killed by him. As for the elephant and the bird, vide notes under I (10) and I (2).
பாவந்தல்-கலித்துக்கு அறுசெய்ய பரமாமண்டாண் நேரடை பரமா
கலித்துக்கு காணவும் பொய்யடை ஓராம். ஓராம்
பாவந்தல் கலித்துக்கு அறுசெய்ய பரமாண்டா.
நேரடை பரமா அன்னூறு என்று கூறி வந்து வருந்திய
ஒருவழியானோ கூறிய என்றோ நேரடை பரமாண்டா
நேரடை பரமா அன்னூறு என்று கூறிய என்றோ நேரடை பரமாண்டா

வழியாக்க.

Paavantal-kalittukku arulceyta paramantannaip
patin mel
Vizuntavanthu kantamai vittucittan Kotai col
Matuntam enu tam manattu vaittuk kontu
valvattal
Paavantal utaiya piran atikkil piriyatu ennum
iruppaie.

Those who would treasure as a balm
These words of VishnuChittan's Kodai
Describing what was seen on earth
In the woods of Brindavan
Of the great Lord of Heaven
Rescuer of the elephant
Will reach the sacred feet of that Lord
Never to be parted from them!

(10)

Rescuer of the elephant: Vide note under II (3).