THE POETRY OF SACRED EARTH

Lakshmi Stuthi
Soloist: Ranee Ramaswamy
An invocation in praise of the Goddess Lakshmi

Ishvara
Soloist: Aparna Ramaswamy

At no point in the cosmos does nature end and the Divine begin. It is nature itself that, through a subtle process of dissolution, turns into God, and it is God who, through a subtle process of manifestation, turns into nature. 

_Vishnusahasranāmam_— the thousand names of Mahavishnu—describes him as master of all the worlds, the supreme light, the essence of the universe; all matter animate and inanimate reside within him, and he in turn, resides within all matter.

– _Vishnusahasranāmam_, from the _Mahabharata_

The sun that lights the wide world folds its many rays and joins the mountains as if it swallowed the day. Darkness spreads with the complexion of warring Thirumāl bearing a discus. The beautiful moon rises up spreading light. Lotus blossoms with thick stems close like the eyes of those asleep. Trees slumber in bowing posture like those embarrassed on hearing praises. Buds have opened abundantly on bushes, resembling smiles. Bees hum like music from tiny bamboo flutes.

– _Nallanthuvanār, Kaliththokai_ 119, Sangam era (300 BCE – 300 CE)

Holding the silver sangu on the left
Vishnu doesn’t show me his form
Entered my heart, makes me suffer
Every day I live to see his dance
Oh kuyil, you who enjoys and sings in the shenbaga flower
Quietly softly please koo so my Venkatavan comes to me.

– Andal, _Nachiar Tirumozhi_ (Sacred Sayings of the Goddess), 9th c

Mullai
Soloist: Ranee Ramaswamy

The skies have not failed, the forest is beautiful and huge dark clouds have showered their benefits. Pattupoochis with red backs crawl between sapphire colored kāyā flowers, fine mullai flowers have fallen and spread, appearing like the work of an artist, in the red forest land.

– _Seethalai Sathanar, Akananuru_ 134, Sangam era (300 BCE – 300 CE)

On his hills
the _manai_ creeper that usually sprawls on large round stones
sometimes takes to a sleeping elephant.
At parting,
his arms twine with mine.
He gave me guarantees
that he would live in my heart forever.
Friend, why do you think
that is any reason for grieving?

– Paranar, _Kurunthokai_ 36, Sangam era (300 BCE – 300 CE)
THE POETRY OF SACRED EARTH
(ctd.)

Neythal
Soloist: Aparna Ramaswamy
I am here:
my loveliness
eaten away by pallor
is lost in the woods by the sea.
My lover is comfortable in his hometown.
All the guarded secrets of our love
are all over the village square.
– Venputhi, Kurunthokai 97, Sangam era (300 BCE – 300 CE)

Marutham
Soloist: Tamara Nadel
There was a time when
my friend gave you
bitter neem fruit and
you called it
sweet lump of sugar.
But now she gives you
sweet water
from the ice-cool springs
of Pari’s hill
and you call it hot and brackish.
Is this the way
your love has gone?
– Milai Kanthan, Kurunthokai 196, Sangam era (300 BCE – 300 CE)

Kurinji
What could my mother be
to yours? What kin is my father
to yours anyway? And how
did you and I meet ever?
But in love our hearts are as red
Earth and pouring rain:
mingled
beyond parting.
– Cempulappeyanirar, Kurunthokai 40, Sangam era (300 BCE – 300 CE)

Prithvi Suktam
Soloists: Ranee Ramaswamy and Aparna Ramaswamy
May this Earth, whose
surface undulates with
many gradients, and
sustains an abundant
variety of herbs and plants
of different potencies and
qualities, support all human
beings, in all their diversity
of endowment, in mutually
supportive harmony and
prosperity.
– Prithvi Suktam (Hymn to the Earth), from the Adharva Veda