

Kamala surraya essay sample

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Kamala Surayya / Suraiyya formerly known as Kamala Das , (also known as Kamala Madhavikutty, pen name was Madhavikutty) was a major Indian English poet and littérateur and at the same time a leading Malayalam author from Kerala, India. Her popularity in Kerala is based chiefly on her short stories and autobiography, while her oeuvre in English, written under the name Her open and honest treatment of female sexuality, free from any sense of guilt, infused her writing with power, but also marked her as an iconoclast in her generation. On 31 May 2009, aged 75, she died at a hospital in Pune, but has earned considerable respect in recent years.

Early Life Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess. Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess. Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess. Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess. Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess.

Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess Kamala Das was born in Punnayurkulam, Thrissur District in Kerala, on March 31, 1934, to V. M. Nair, a former managing editor of the widely-circulated Malayalam daily Mathrubhumi, and Nalappatt Balamani Amma, a renowned Malayali poetess

She spent her childhood between Calcutta, where her father was employed as a senior officer in the Walford Transport Company that sold Bentley and Rolls Royce automobiles, and the Nalappatt ancestral home in Punnayurkulam. She spent her childhood between Calcutta, where her father was employed as a senior officer in the Walford Transport Company that sold Bentley and Rolls Royce automobiles, and the Nalappatt ancestral home in Punnayurkulam. Like her mother, Kamala Das also excelled in writing.

Her love of poetry began at an early age through the influence of her great uncle, Nalappatt Narayana Menon, a prominent writer. At the age of 15, she got married to bank officer Madhava Das, who encouraged her writing interests, and she started writing and publishing both in English and in Malayalam. Calcutta in the 1960s was a tumultuous time for the arts, and Kamala Das was one of the many voices that came up and started appearing

in cult anthologies along with a generation of Indian English poets. Literary Career

She was noted for her many Malayalam short stories as well as many poems written in English. Das was also a syndicated columnist. She once claimed that “ poetry does not sell in this country [India]”, but her forthright columns, which sounded off on everything from women’s issues and child care to politics, were popular. Das’ first book of poetry, *Summer In Calcutta* was a breath of fresh air in Indian English poetry. She wrote chiefly of love, its betrayal, and the consequent anguish. Ms. Das abandoned the certainties offered by an archaic, and somewhat sterile, aestheticism for an independence of mind and body at a time when Indian poets were still governed by “ 19th-century diction, sentiment and romanticised love.” Her second book of poetry, *The descendants* was even more explicit, urging women to: “ Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts, The warm shock of menstrual blood, and all your

Endless female hungers ...” – *The Looking Glass*

This directness of her voice led to comparisons with Marguerite Duras and Sylvia Plath. At the age of 42, she published a daring autobiography, *My Story*; it was originally written in Malayalam and later she translated it into English. Later she admitted that much of the autobiography had fictional elements. Kamala Das wrote on a diverse range of topics, often disparate – from the story of a poor old servant, about the sexual disposition of upper middle class women living near a metropolitan city or in the middle of the

ghetto. Some of her better-known stories include Pakshiyude Manam, Neypayasam, Thanuppu, and Chandana Marangal. She wrote a few novels, out of which Neermathalam Pootha Kalam, which was received favourably by the reading public as well as the critics, stands out.

She travelled extensively to read poetry to Germany's University of Duisburg-Essen, University of Bonn and University of Duisburg universities, Adelaide Writer's Festival, Frankfurt Book Fair, University of Kingston, Jamaica, Singapore, and South Bank Festival (London), Concordia University (Montreal, Canada), etc. Her works are available in French, Spanish, Russian, German and Japanese. She has also held positions as Vice chairperson in Kerala Sahitya Academy, chairperson in Kerala forestry Board, President of the Kerala Children's Film Society, editor of Poet magazine[6] and Poetry editor of Illustrated Weekly of India. Although occasionally seen as an attention-grabber in her early years, she is now seen as one of the most formative influences on Indian English poetry. In 2009, The Times called her "the mother of modern English Indian poetry". Conversion to Islam

She was born in a conservative Hindu Nair (Nallappattu) family having royal ancestry, After being asked by her lover Sadiq Ali, an Islamic scholar and a Muslim League MP, she embraced Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and assumed the name Kamala Surayya. After converting, she wrote:

" Life has changed for me since Nov. 14 when a young man named Sadiq Ali walked in to meet me. He is 38 and has a beautiful smile. Afterwards he began to woo me on the phone from Abu Dhabi and Dubai, reciting Urdu couplets and telling me of what he would do to me after our marriage. I took

my nurse Mini and went to his place in my car. I stayed with him for three days. There was a sunlit river, some trees, and a lot of laughter. He asked me to become a Muslim which I did on my return home.” Her conversion was rather controversial, among social and literary circles, with *The Hindu* calling it part of her “histrionics”. She said she liked being behind the protective veil of the purdah. Later, she felt it was not worth it to change one’s religion and said “I fell in love with a Muslim after my husband’s death. He was kind and generous in the beginning. But I now feel one shouldn’t change one’s religion. It is not worth it.”.

Politics

Though never politically active before, she launched a national political party, Lok Seva Party, aiming asylum to orphaned mothers and promotion of secularism. In 1984 she unsuccessfully contested in the Indian Parliament elections.

Personal Life

Kamala Das had three sons – M D Nalapat, Chinnen Das and Jayasurya Das. Madhav Das Nalapat, the eldest, is married to Princess Lakshmi Bayi (daughter of M. R. Ry. Sri Chembrol Raja Raja Varma Avargal) from the Travancore Royal House. He holds the UNESCO Peace Chair and Professor of geopolitics at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education. He was formerly a resident editor of the *Times of India*. She had a sexual relationship with Sadiq Ali, an Islamic scholar who was much younger in age. She herself describes her visit to Sadiq Ali’s home as follows: “I was almost asleep when Sadiq Ali

climbed in beside me, holding me, breathing softly, whispering endearments, kissing my face, breasts ... and when he entered me, it was the first time I had ever experienced what it was like to feel a man from the inside.”

Womanhood in her Poetry

Das’ uncanny honesty extends to her exploration of womanhood and love. In her poem “ An Introduction” from Summer in Calcutta, the narrator says, “ I am every/ Woman who seeks love” (de Souza 10). Though Amar Dwivedi criticizes Das for this “ self imposed and not natural” universality, this feeling of oneness permeates her poetry (303). In Das’ eyes, womanhood involves certain collective experiences. Indian women, however, do not discuss these experiences in deference to social mores. Das consistently refuses to accept their silence. Feelings of longing and loss are not confined to a private misery.

They are invited into the public sphere and acknowledged. Das seems to insist they are normal and have been felt by women across time. In “ The Maggots” from the collection, The Descendants, Das corroborates just how old the sufferings of women are. She frames the pain of lost love with ancient Hindu myths (de Souza 13). On their last night together, Krishna asks Radha if she is disturbed by his kisses. Radha says, “ No, not at all, but thought, What is/ It to the corpse if the maggots nip?” (de Souza 6-7). Radha’s pain is searing, and her silence is given voice by Das. Furthermore, by making a powerful goddess prey to such thoughts, it serves as a validation for ordinary women to have similar feelings. Eroticism in her Poetry

Coupled with her exploration of women's needs is an attention to eroticism. The longing to lose one's self in passionate love is discussed in "The Looking Glass" from *The Descendants*. The narrator of the poem urges women to give their man "what makes you women" (de Souza 15). The things which society suggests are dirty or taboo are the very things which the women are supposed to give. The "musk of sweat between breasts/ The warm shock of menstrual blood" should not be hidden from one's beloved. In the narrator's eyes, love should be defined by this type of unconditional honesty.

A woman should "Stand nude before the glass with him," and allow her lover to see her exactly as she is. Likewise, the woman should appreciate even the "fond details" of her lover, such as "the jerky way he/ Urinates". Even if the woman may have to live "Without him" someday, the narrator does not seem to favor bridling one's passions to protect one's self. A restrained love seems to be no love at all; only a total immersion in love can do justice to this experience. Much like the creators of ancient Tantric art, Das makes no attempt to hide the sensuality of the human form; her work seems to celebrate its joyous potential while acknowledging its concurrent dangers.

Feminism

Das once said, "I always wanted love, and if you don't get it within your home, you stray a little" (Warrior interview). Though some might label Das as "a feminist" for her candor in dealing with women's needs and desires, Das "has never tried to identify herself with any particular version of feminist activism" (Raveendran 52). Das' views can be characterized as "a gut

response,” a reaction that, like her poetry, is unfettered by other’s notions of right and wrong. Nonetheless, poet Eunice de Souza claims that Das has “mapped out the terrain for post-colonial women in social and linguistic terms”. Das has ventured into areas unclaimed by society and provided a point of reference for her colleagues. She has transcended the role of a poet and simply embraced the role of a very honest woman.

Death

On 31 May 2009, aged 75, she died at a hospital in Pune. Her body was flown to her home state of Kerala. She was buried at the Palayam Juma Masjid at Thiruvananthapuram with full state honour.