

## Ammachi (Grandma)

She sits gaping at soap operas  
Banal and regressive dramas, where the lead-in-distress  
Diffident, stoic, braves through marital woes.

Ammachi chops onions.

A tender wife of sixteen, mother by eighteen  
Cooked, cleaned, Slogged  
Cooked, cleaned, Sobbed.  
Her marriage rescued her from poverty  
At the price of bruises for every blunder.

Running after three kids,  
Feeding and clothing,  
Negotiating with her husband  
On behalf of these siblings.

Those heaving mango boughs bowed  
To her resilience and generosity, while she  
Winnowed grains under their shade.  
Her chores were in perpetual motion.

Oscillating  
From wife to nurse, as Grandpa became weaker.  
If old age is second childhood  
She was his second mother.  
Mourned him, too, like a child's mother.

My mother and I, stand on the shoulders of a giant  
Who taught her daughters more than she could learn.

Maudlin dramas might have her hooked  
But lazy parodies will never compare  
To the nuanced fortitude that Ammachi showed  
In the face of life that was never fair.