

The background is a deep purple with a mottled, textured appearance. A white, torn-edge paper shape is positioned on the right side, containing the author's name. The title is written in a black, elegant script font.

Monsoon

Whispers

Venkataramanan

Soundararajan



A collection of my childhood poems and short stories

dedicated to **Madelaine (Laine) Shil-Lei Mammen**

August 17th 2007 – Forever in hearts



Table of Contents

S.No.	Title	Penned Year	Pages
1.	The Rainbow of Imagination	1995	4
2.	A really special Friend	1996	5
3.	You, the Angel	1996	6
4.	As long as we do that together	1997	7
5.	Our Queen of Heart	1997	8
6.	True Joy	1998	9
7.	Window to the World	1999	10
8.	Reflections	1999	11
9.	A Golden Recipe	2000	12
10.	Till death do us together	2000	13-15
11.	I thought I knew	2000	16-18
12.	The Monsoon Whisperer – A short story	2001	19-23

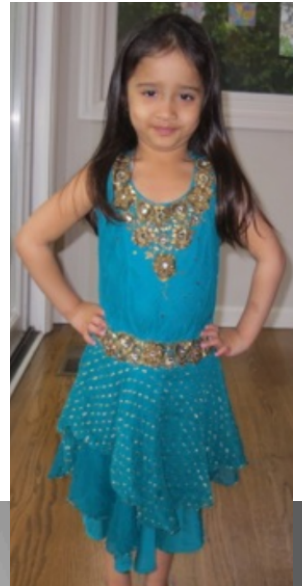




I. The Rainbow of Imagination

The shy sun rises in her orbicular orange garment,
 clothing the earthen bare brown firmament...
 playful pink butterflies fly my way,
 blissful blue peaks in the borders stay...
 grave grey clouds threaten to shower,
 whizzing white lightning flashes his power...
 reclusive red rose buds glisten moist,
 the yawning yellow moon doses in her hoist...
 grand green forests emit a wondrous scent,
 and the blessed black night is in full descent...

I wonder as I return from this mesmerizing faint,
 the rainbow of imagination, can words ever paint?



II. A really special Friend

Yes, you are young and sly,
 with your fingers, her small ones you pry...
 Eyes brim with tears, as she begins to cry,
 and you act as though you don't know why...
 Mom comes, and her best she does try,



You wonder how she is such a perfect spy,
and to appease her, your lies start to fly...

Well, that was quite a while back,
you are now big enough to fill out a sack...
She is big too, but her life you love to hack,
since you are forced to share with her, your shack...
Sometimes you feel like giving her a light smack,
especially when 'Ms. Good Girl' gets pats on her back...
Once or twice you do manage a mild sneak attack,
but get it good from Dad, alas he always has her back...

Well, that is a while back now,
finally she is strong, you don't know how...
You forbid from even calling her a cow,
carefully instead choosing words like dove...
Surprisingly she is polite, maybe she even does love,
and to most of your demands she does bow...
She tries so hard to mimic you, to put up a show,
and Grandpa does his best, the seeds of love to sow...

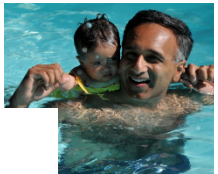
Along the 'River of Life', you travel a bend,
Her laughter, her tears, her stories are all you depend,
Her hug you cherish, her mistakes you comprehend,
She is your pride, and for her your very life you amend...
When the river does slow, only her reflections you tend,
to see, to hear, to feel, in every memory you spend...
She is your Angel, the Heaven's had so benevolently lent,
for when God created your Sister, he created a really special friend...



III. You, the Angel

Do you chase the wind all over the field?
Do you chat with the crickets that dwell in the reed?
Do you race the swallows with vigor and speed?
Do you share your warmth with a friend in need?
Do you jump with joy when your loved ones succeed?
Do you daily do at least one noble deed?
Do you thank God for his generous yield?
It is the Angel in you that is the cause indeed...





IV. As Long as we do that Together

Let us feel the breeze, as he plays with our hair...
Let us catch the snowflakes, as they fall through the air...
Let us taste the honey, as she collects in a hive...
Let us touch the cool water, as he comes to us when we dive...
Let us drink the dew, as she settles on a lotus leaf...
Let us swim the ocean, as he treasures the reef...
Let us touch the rose, as she blossoms and blooms...
Let us imagine the wizard, as he brooms and zooms...
Let us watch the rain, as she falls in a shower...
Let us hear the thunder, as he growls his power...
Let us remember the timeless times with each other...
Let us do anything, as long as we do that together...



6/24/2





V. Our Queen of Heart

Our gift of grace, our warm embrace,
Our glitter of rays, for life's crazy maze...
Our loving pond, our palm frond,
Our magic wand, on us you dawned...
Our work of art, our lemon tart,
We are of you, a part,
and you, our queen of heart..



VI. True Joy

My Lord, I can't describe in mere words,
how I crave to fly free with the joyful birds...

To walk the nights in a moonlit way...
to run by the flower beds and on them lay...
to hum music throughout the day...
to dance with butterflies over farmland hay...
to paint the rainbows and on them play...

to wink with the stars from a bed of clay...
to bite the sweet mangoes ripened in May...
to sit on the rocks and stare at the bay...
to dive really deep and swim away...

But my Lord, whenever I visit your abode to pray,
I pause, I reflect, and I can hear thy say,
that true joy is living to the lees each day...



VII. Window to the World

My Eye, Thou art,
window to the World...
But blind are Thee,
to the Other...



VIII. Reflections

She heard the baby wail,
the parents hush to no avail...
Along came the girl, the search,
the love, the dorms, the Church...

She saw the Old couple, truly alive,
they laugh, they cry, they strive...
A startled cry and tears of pain,
man vanished, lady lay in the rain...

"I Will" she said, thrill and shudder,
lady's face lit up, she thought... mirror...
Few sobs, men stood in still poses,
lady lay, drenched in a bed of roses...

Her birth, youth, life, pain,
reflections she would attain..
Her marriage, man, death, ages,
us too, at God's hands, are mere pages...



IX. A Golden Recipe

Let me tell you a recipe that is worth a pot of gold,
for generations and generations it has been told...

With dedicated hard work you fill a tenth of the pot,
put in a dozen slices of all the imagination you have got...

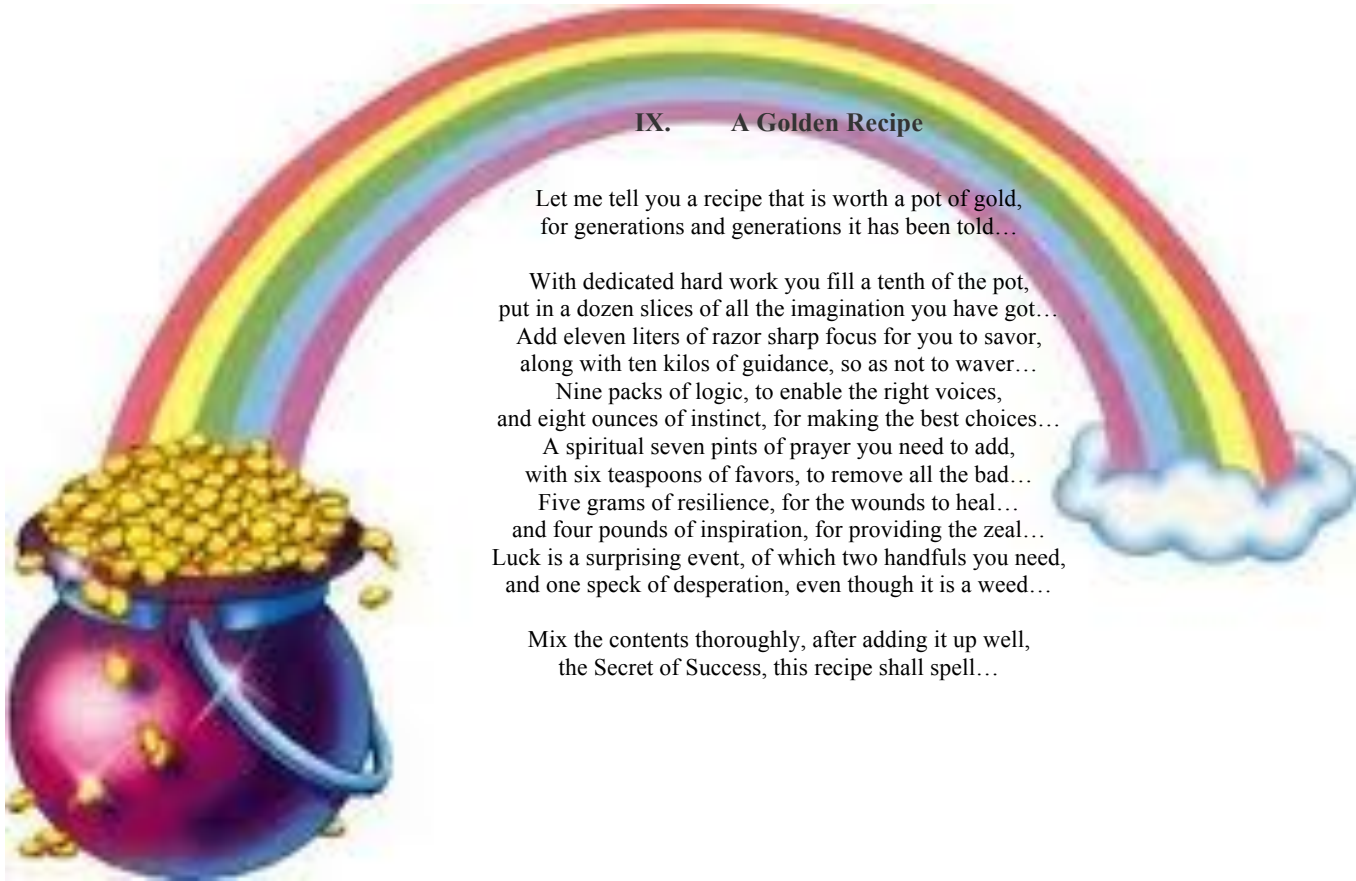
Add eleven liters of razor sharp focus for you to savor,
along with ten kilos of guidance, so as not to waver...

Nine packs of logic, to enable the right voices,
and eight ounces of instinct, for making the best choices...

A spiritual seven pints of prayer you need to add,
with six teaspoons of favors, to remove all the bad...

Five grams of resilience, for the wounds to heal...
and four pounds of inspiration, for providing the zeal...
Luck is a surprising event, of which two handfuls you need,
and one speck of desperation, even though it is a weed...

Mix the contents thoroughly, after adding it up well,
the Secret of Success, this recipe shall spell...





X. Till Death do us Together

The desert winds blew swift and chill,
as the palm trees danced and time froze still...
Like a lonely lost locket, the moon hung over the hill,
as he watched this cosmic dance of destiny and will...

*Ever wondered why some shine, while others fade away...?
Why they emit warmth and love along life's way...?
Why they ignite minds, help other's through each day...?
Why they last forever, no pause to their stay...?*

As he drifted on the duet of Night's darkness, then star's light,

The sky seemed ripped apart, the heavens poured their plight,
in crystal tears of dazzling drops to the thirsty ground in sight...

*Ever wondered why at times, a ton of tears weighs but a feather...?
Why at times, dimes of misery seem treasure that gather...?
Why at times, blues dissolve sans reason, like a pail of lather...?
Why at times rainbows appear, no matter the weather...?*



As he sat up and brushed his wavy coral locks behind,
and glanced at the stars, now misty, like fog bid them blind...
The drops pitter-patter, while a distant dark shadow he can find,
could be hope? desire? perhaps apparitions of the mind...

*Ever wondered why life is unable to return someone lost...?
Why the abyss of parting darkens roads ahead, brightens roads past...?
Why love lost is never forgotten despite destiny's deserts so vast...?
Why faith always endures, even past when the last breath last...?*

At once he stood up, anxious, face concealing his fear,
and his eyes their tears; he said "I am ready... come hither..."
He could not see but could feel, as the shadow drifted near,
and in a flash, darkness lifted, shy sun arose, bright and clear...

*Ever wondered why some stories have no loss...?
Why some choices are made for us by fate's coin toss...?
Why with a fall, it takes to rise stronger, a cause...?
Why emotions are eternal waves without pause...?"*



Memory waves flooded the strangely warm shelter,
He lost his will, crying into the celestial shoulder...
"While I can't undo the grief I shared, my dear,
eternal unity awaits you and your little one from here..."

*Ever wondered why its better to forget, best to forgive...?
Why no matter what destiny throws, true courage is to live...?
Why love can heal, can soothe, even past the grave, to give...?
Why even Death, to this powerful force, is submissive...?*

As father and his princess walked into the meadows wet,
the smiling sun settled, cozily in his hill's bed to set...
As the stars shone bright with their bejeweled asset,
the desert winds and palm trees danced away their duet...





XI. I thought I knew

I thought I knew life, until decades into it, I was blessed with you...
I thought I knew love, until the day I held in my arms, you...
I thought I knew divinity, until I glanced at the sleeping you...
I thought I knew beauty, until the full moon seemed pale next to you...
I thought I knew trust, until I held in my hands, that of you...
I thought I knew pride, until I felt myself beam at the thought of you...
I thought I knew warmth, until I got the first embrace from you...

I thought I knew happiness, until I felt myself grin continually with you...
I thought I knew passion, until I saw every second lived intensely by you...
I thought I knew energy, until all else seemed still besides you...
I thought I knew surprise, until I stumbled upon loving notes from you...
I thought I knew comfort, until I cozied idly on the ground next to you...
I thought I knew wisdom, until every moment was a new lesson from you...
I thought I knew colorful, until all rainbows seemed to emanate from you...
I thought I knew care, until I saw others being cared for by you...
I thought I knew innocence, until we forgot all else, just to be me and you...
I thought I knew compatibility, until I could no more tell apart me from you...



I thought I knew concern, until I was moved by destiny's trysts with you...
I thought I knew courage, until I saw those trysts be battled by you...
I thought I knew hope, until all I could hope for was holding on to you...
I thought I knew fear, until the only thoughts that haunted me were losing you...
I thought I knew helplessness, until I could not help you...
I thought I knew pain, until life ripped apart me from you...
I thought I knew parting, until it was time to say the last goodbye to you...

I thought I knew loss, until I looked and looked but could not find you...
I thought I knew desperation, until I felt I could not feel you...
I thought I knew vacuum, until I could feel nothing sans you...
I thought I knew oblivion, until days rolled into nights thinking of you...
I thought I knew time, until mere seconds lasted forever without you...
I thought I knew clarity, until I thought and thought of nothing but you...



I thought I knew forgiveness, until the wind whispered in my ears, words from you...
I thought I knew satisfaction, until I found out I am a mere reflection of you...
I thought I knew contentment, until I felt bliss for the new life destined for you...
I thought I knew dreams, until reality became a dream, thanks to you...
I thought I knew comfort, until the past dissolved, thinking of my future with you...

I thought I knew the past, until I look back and see by my footsteps, those of you...
I thought I knew the future, until I stood at its welcoming doorsteps, waiting for you...
I thought I knew me, until I got to know myself from you...
and then I thought I knew you, until I saw myself engrained in you...

The Monsoon Whisperer – A Short Story

The skies were overcast with dark gray puffs of cotton-like cumulo nimbus and the downpour was like nothing Vani had seen in her fifteen years of existence. She loved everything about the Monsoon season. In many ways, Vani felt that the Monsoons mirrored her existence - unpredictable and ever-changing.

The rhythmic pitter patter on the earthen pots beside the Verandah and fresh *scent* of rain mixing with the sand on the lawn wafted their way through the air towards where Vani sat perched by the window sill. Vani could always foretell the monsoons before they arrived given the uniquely invigorating scent that bode of approaching downpours. Vani soaked in the *sights*, *sounds*, and *stimuli* of the monsoon season - they filled her senses with gay abandon as she romanticized the notion of escaping from the clutches of her reality.

Vani put her hand out through the wet window sills and brushed her palm against the brilliant green lichen that were native to her village. The lichen felt cool to her touch. She rejoiced as the showery pearls of rain drops danced off her palm and the chill spring wind caressed her long coral locks. Somewhere at a distance, a train blared its horns and was followed by the disgruntled moans of a Buffalo - jolting Vani back to reality. Vani reckoned that her neighbor Vishnu must have once again left Vimala - his beloved Buffalo - to graze on the tufts of grass besides the elevated train tracks. Vimala seldom liked being curtailed to Vishnu's back-yard and often wandered to graze on the lush grass by the tracks that ran beside their neighborhood.

Every time Vani heard another train pass by, a chill ran through her spine and she involuntarily shivered. Vani recalled the few rare words Vedavit had spoken last

will be visiting us from Vellore tomorrow to discuss their terms for your marriage”. Vani tried to take her mind off the uncomfortable thought and hoped against hope that she lose herself in the stormy spectacle playing out before her.

As if it were possible, the storm had intensified even further over the last hour. The Peepul tree and the Banyan tree that stood on either side of the verandah swayed and danced incessantly to the powerful winds that tore mercilessly through their branches. The howling winds carried gusts of green leaves and brown twigs in ostensibly choreographed swirling vortexes. There were flashes of brilliant lightning that were followed faithfully by ripples of thunders that resonated through the air. “Arjuna, Arjuna, Arjuna....” Vani repeated softly, as she had been taught years ago by Vasundara - to “pray that the powerful forces of Nature don’t hurt living beings”. Thoughts of Vasundara made Vani’s eyes misty - the old lady had raised Vani for 12 years before she passed away.

Vani had no recollections of her parents, her infancy, or her early childhood. Growing up, Vani had often wondered who her parents were and how they may have been like. Adding to the mystery of her origin, Vani had been told various tales by the villagers she grew up around, many of which revolved around how Vani’s parents had suddenly died. Over the years, these stories had drained her of any hope that her parents might still be alive somewhere. As she grew up, Vani realized the rumors and stories surrounding her parent’s purported death were just that - rumors and stories.

herself to ask Vasundara about her origins, lest she consider that a lack of maternal love on her part - a quality Vasundara exuded. While some of the stories surrounding Vani's parents disappearance were easily interpretable as untrue, some seemed like they just might have an element of truth. For instance, some villagers rumored that Vani's mother Vinaya was enamoured by the large forest behind her home, and that she had gotten unwittingly sucked into a hidden quicksand on that hill during an evening stroll. This version had it that Vani's father Varun had rushed to try and save his beloved, but perished trying to rescue the woman he loved.

For many years, Vani thought this story to be true and avoided going anywhere near the hill. In another version of the story, Vani was told that the boat her parents were on collapsed due to a flash flood in the river *Kaveri*, resulting in their death during an ill-fated visit to the holy island of *Shivanasamudra*. Vani had hence feigned stomach ache and refused to join her class on a field trip to the island that her school had arranged. While each of these stories disturbed Vani in specific dimensions during her formative years, her hunch that all she had heard were merely stories and rumors turned out to be true. On her deathbed, Vasundara told Vani the most astonishing version of her past - a version Vani had no reason to disbelieve - a version that had since come to define how Vani perceived her origins as well as all the people around her.

to the present. The sky seemed ripped apart as sheets of water thrashed to the ground and spattered in streams that dispersed instantly in a wide-spectrum of directions. The streams formed small but swift currents that rapidly channelized their way out of the flooded Verandah and into the already over-flowing street in front of her house. Vani gazed at the trails of water that swept their way onto the flooded street. Above the din from the storm, she heard another train pull into the railroad station. Shortly thereafter, three black umbrellas appeared as tiny specks on the corner of the road in front of her house. Vani had a sinking feeling about the looming black specks that grew gradually larger. She watched in dismay as the unwelcome umbrellas made their way slowly but steadily towards her home. She told herself “Its probably not *them* - its likely to be guests coming to visit Vishnu - perhaps to try and barter Vinaya for copper coins like they had unsuccessfully attempted to do last month”.

“Vani..... VANI..... where are you girl?”, she heard Vismaya shout from the kitchen below. “Come down right NOW and get ready to be presented to the guests - *they* are already here”. It appeared that Vani’s wishful thinking was in vain after all. “I am coming down, *Chitti*”, Vani shouted loudly, so that Vismaya could hear her above the din outside. Even the raging storm had not deterred her suitor from traveling hundreds of kilometers with his family. Vani momentarily felt let down by the monsoon storms, but quickly pardoned the seasonal spirits after another shell-shocking thunder ripped through the air.

Vedavit in the yard below. “To hell with these rains”, she heard Vedavit swear loudly. Through her window, Vani could see Vedavit as he wade his way through the waist-high pools of water that was logged in the verandah, and made his way steadily towards the run-down wooden gate. As he ushered in his guests, Vani saw Vismaya dutifully following suit behind her husband as she struggled against the wind and rain to steady a wooden-plate filled with the traditional guest-welcoming ingredients -- a broken coconut, kumkum, turmeric, and jasmine flowers.

Vani quietly closed the windows and walked past the Almirah that had once been Vasundara’s prized possession, towards the flight of stairs that promised to carry her down to her dark destiny. Reluctantly, she held up the bright-maroon *paavadai* that Vismaya had selected for this occasion, and slowly dragged herself down the unsettling flight of stairs.



A collection of my childhood poems and short stories

dedicated to **Madelaine (Laine) Shil-Lei Mammen**

August 17th 2007 – Forever in hearts



The background is a deep purple with a mottled, textured appearance. A white, torn-edge paper shape is positioned on the right side, partially overlapping the purple background. The text is written in a black, elegant script font.

Monsoon

Whispers

Venkataramanan

Soundararajan