

## LONGING...

As my destination draws closer, ever within me,  
 Is a yearning, a deep longing;  
 A wish to have my clock re-wound,  
 And my fondest days re-lived,  
 Bask in my cherished memories.  
 And my longing gives way to melancholy,  
 As I know those days won't again live.

My flight through time begins in Koyilandy,  
 To the care-free days of childhood,  
 With my parents, sibs and our home sweet.  
 Fond memories of games we played, these bring,  
 Also of good food and easy life;  
 Memories of those days in equal measure bring,  
 A pang of aching within me deep,  
 And a helpless feeling I couldn't return,  
 To those wonderful days ever again.

My mind drifts next to my school days,  
 The deepest friendships, and my dearest school,  
 The exquisite food and mulberry fruits,  
 Spiced and toasted peanuts, hand cricket,  
 The marbles, the spinning tops and kites,  
 Oh! Those days, those care-free days!

My special affinity with grandma,  
 My "Ammamma", the care she gave me,  
 Unquestioning, unadulterated care and affection,  
 The cups of tea, the special fruits and tidbits,  
 They bring me a twinge deep within, and longing,  
 From knowledge I couldn't go back and relive,  
 All the affection she showered on me,  
 Or to return in kind, in some small measure.

Deep friendships I've had all through school days,  
 And even more friends in college days;  
 Friends I could count on in my time of need,  
 Friendships any more hard to find.

The friends I've had from early childhood,  
 And some in the mist of time I've lost,  
 All their memories I treasure in my chest,  
 Companions they are forever mine,  
 Just remembering, just traveling in time.

My journeys home often end,  
 In a flush of feelings, indescribable,  
 As I fly over the symphony of colors,  
 And the chorus of coconut palms,  
 Paddy fields, mango and jack fruit trees,  
 The greenery that's astounding and uplifting;  
 Only Kerala has all these and I feel the pang,  
 As I leave, flying over the carpet lush,  
 I feel a deep longing for this mine land, blessed.

Oft I revisit my courting days, my first encounter,  
 And that special feeling only those in love experience,  
 And the many years I shared with my partner,  
 The simple pleasures of eating out, traveling together,  
 Together a family we made and brought up,  
 Oh! The pleasures and pain we shared,  
 Those memories keep returning,  
 Ever reminding me of their transience.

The long-lost Hindi songs, so melodious,  
 Back into my life they've returned;  
 Thanks to music videos, I've started to relive,  
 And memories flood back from my young days.  
 And sometimes the tears of joy they bring,  
 Upon hearing long-forgotten melodies,  
 But mostly a longing to return to those good days.

My memories of my favorite teacher,  
Ranging from fear to respect then to affection,  
And life-long contact we've had,  
That only his death hath broken.

Fr. Reynolds holds in my heart a special place,  
As a teacher, priest, friend and guide.  
And I have this deep longing inside,  
To return to days when he was warden,  
In our hostel, a terror and disciplinarian.

Oft I reflect on the purpose of my life,  
Was I meant to be an artist, a physician, a writer,  
An inventor or a scientist; will anyone remember me,  
My humble gifts in these varied fields?

When the fateful day comes and I take stock,  
Have I used all that I've been bestowed?  
Are there things I could've done, excelled more?  
Do we just live or do we live to leave a score,  
For family if not for posterity?

And as I take stock, I know I've done things,  
That surely make me proud and I feel content,  
And some others leave me wanting;  
Yet there is this deep ache, this longing.  
This agony that I'll leave all these one day,  
Both the deeds I cherish and the bad deeds,  
That day may arrive sooner and may be warning-less!