

A J Thomas's Poems

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Poetry

Like jnana yoga,
tuning into the Self, 24×7,
through wakeful moments,
diurnal encounters,
and sleep,
poetry is in being alive
in the all-consuming luminescence.
It thrums in and around you.

Beauty born outside of forms,
an unuttered whole world,
gaining ground, sprouting in consciousness,
slipping into utterance,
a body of sound, an enchanted field,
a poem.

Wolves

Wolves appeared in sheep's guise,
mixing with them,
launching a slow ambush.
They revealed themselves by and by,
and the sheep began to imitate them.
So, the wolves, emboldened, appeared now
as wolves in wolves' clothing!
Well-meaning sceptics
who refused to call out
the wolves in sheep's clothing
were rendered speechless.
Because now,
the wolves had complete control.

Superheroes

Superhero-style world leaders
filling the template of the all-powerful
Superman, Spiderman, Batman, Shaktiman—
dealing with perceived enemies with damning effect,
a spectacle for the masses...

Superheroes—in short dramas,

audiobooks flooding the digital space,
always winning,
in every episode and in the final showdown.
They even turn memes on their heads,
lost to all mirth, satire and humour.
They mistake their own grimaces for smiles.
The narrative always writhes, heaves and weaves,
like a gargantuan serpent at their fingertips.

And the world holds its breath, waiting
for the next moment to be the last.

Dr. A J Thomas is an Indian English poet, fiction writer, editor, and translator with more than 20 books. His latest books are: *The Greatest Malayalam Stories Ever Told* (selected, translated, and edited), *100 Indian Stories* (edited), and *Once* (Orikkal, novel by N. Mohanan, translated). He was Editor of *Indian Literature* for nearly 20 years. He taught English at Benghazi University, Libya, from 2008 to 2014. He was a Senior Consultant at IGNOU. He received the Katha Award, the AKMG Prize (which enabled him to tour the USA, UK, and Europe in 1997), and the Vodafone Crossword Award (2007). For *The Greatest Malayalam Stories Ever Told*, he won the V. Abdulla Memorial Translation Award (2025), the First UNESCO Heritage Literature City Award of Kozhikode Corporation for Translation from Malayalam to Other Languages (August 2025), and the Pen and Paper Award, New Delhi (2026); the book was shortlisted for the Vodafone Crossword Award 2024 in the bestseller category. He also won the Kalashreshta Award 2026 (for *Once*). He is a holder of a Senior Fellowship from the Department of Culture, Govt. of India, and was an Honorary Fellow of the Department of Culture, Government of South Korea. He has been an invited guest speaker at writers' conferences and readings in South Korea (thrice), Australia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Nepal.