



Poems  
**ARABESQUE**

**JUJU ABRAHAM**

## Juju Abraham

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with compliments  
Juju

# ARABESQUE

JUJU ABRAHAM

To

Appan,

Amma, Chettan

Raju

... Things are not what we see  
but what we perceive;  
that is why,  
I stood up;  
put my sword in its sheath  
and galloped away,  
away to find pristine reality  
- to imbibe what I want to believe  
whom I want to respect  
and  
how I want to live -  
I am still  
galloping, galloping, galloping...

juju

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## LITTLE WONDERS

Dr. K. Ayyappa Paniker

Juju Abraham's *Arabesque* is a collection of little literary wonders— short pieces expressing a wide variety of emotions, tensions and small rejoicings. The very first poem "Arabesque" begins with the word "pain," striking one of the keynotes of this anthology, and ends with the phrase "in joy to resolve." This may be taken to indicate the fact of pain and the possibility of joy. As one goes through the poems, one realizes that there is more of pain and agony and distrust in these poems than of hope and joy; yet, the poet tries to maintain a balance between the plus and minus experiences of life. One suspects that a clear note of feminism runs through some of these poems. "I, Gaia" may be read as an instance of this:

I am the "She"  
 you are searching for  
 call me White Goddess,  
 Lilith, Demeter, Astarte or  
 Gaia:

I gushed forth from nothing,  
 I gave you the earth.

.....

I create  
 from the void  
 I am woman  
 who gave you man.

Perhaps "Aspiration" is more self-assertive, spoken with the plural "we."



We are  
 dishes lovely,  
 cooking, cleaning, working,  
 doing the dirty dishes,  
 for three generations of men  
 who loll  
 in huge armchairs,  
 their legs propped up on stools,  
 reading newspapers, watching T.V.,  
 talking seemingly dense matters,  
 eyeing us  
 like flies fallen into their hot soups.  
 We, whom they wrap around  
 and cast aside as the urge demands,  
 are women  
 aspiring to be men.

The possibility of rebirth and recovery is hinted at in poems like "Burned Dreams": when dreams are burnt to ashes, there still is a new awakening:

from the bottom of my heart arose  
 aches and longings and hopes  
 the dreams had begun again  
 I melted  
 and started to live once again.

There is occasionally a touch of irony to explain away the un-resolved and un-resolvable issues in life. The prose piece "And they lived ever after (happily!)" is an instance in point. Wonderful sketches and etchings abound in many poems. "Memorabilia" captures the ecstasy of getting wet in the rain. Juju becomes a little philosophical in some very short pieces like "Angst." The

authenticity of the experience is maintained with a strict control over language and rhythm. Even in a poem like “The Attic,” one may expect far too many things found in the attic to be mentioned, the author is very selective with details, yet she does not mince her words:

all hearts have dark attics  
 where unsavoury thoughts are flung:  
 fears, passions, hatred, littered  
 thoughts  
 where deaths of loved ones wished,  
 where sexual fantasies loll  
 where emotions snarl, spit and bare their teeth.

These words display a power not found in loose and elaborate descriptions. Here the language is precise and minimal. “Champagne” is another poem marked by terseness and intense suggestiveness.

My bottled up passions  
 frothed and fizzled  
 when your fingers uncorked me  
 you then had your fill  
 and left me,  
 un-emptied, uncared,  
 passion losing its tang  
 a residue of bitter dregs  
 vapid, frigid.

Variety, depth, intensity, authenticity are among the virtues of Juju’s poetry. Any number of poems may be selected from this slim volume to illustrate the brilliance of her craft.

## ARABESQUE

Pain:  
     makes the soul sing  
 and in full throated ease  
     the melody begins.  
 And as each note  
     falls in place  
 the symphony gently  
     gathers pace.  
 Rippling down the hill  
     like a rill  
 it nimbly gurgles  
     the ache away.  
 O, music profound !  
     the elixir divine,  
 in you let me dissolve  
     in joy to resolve.

■

## CREATION

Hush, wayward thoughts  
                                 vying in vain,  
 clamouring to exist  
                                 without any constraint.  
 Hush, wanton thoughts  
                                 help me gently mould,  
 for in you an image  
                                 I precisely behold.  
 Let me chisel and carve  
                                 and exude in pain,  
 and hold your living form  
                                 in my arms once again.  
 Hush, fleeting thoughts  
                                 vying in vain,  
 gently let me mould you  
                                 and breathe a soul into you.

## TRANSMUTATION

With the speed of a leopard  
I swish past the jungle,  
and as my spots vanish  
I turn into a gazelle.  
My doe-like eyes  
drink in the sunset,  
with the nostalgia of a bird  
flying to roost.

Now I'm the wolf  
baying at the moon,  
green-eyeing the bats  
that whirl past the skies,  
into the inky blackness  
of the night.

And then  
the day bursts open  
and I spring awake,  
to don the garb of a man  
totally fake.

Now, as I melt into the ocean of being,  
I wander about aimlessly,  
half-man, half- beast;  
a creature incomplete.

■





*Arabesque* is her first collection of poems. Some of them have been published in *The Indian P.E.N.*; *Kavya Bharathi* and other literary magazines. In 1995 she was short listed for the All India Poetry Competition conducted by the British Council Division and The Poetry Society (India). She also has to her credit publications in various magazines comprising of poems, short stories and articles.

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“Variety, depth, intensity, authenticity are among the virtues of Juju's poetry. Any number of poems may be selected from this slim volume to illustrate the brilliance of her craft.”

**Dr. K. Ayyappa Paniker**  
from the Foreword

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