

**Oh, Ancient Ascetic**  
**P M Narayanan\***

Oh, ancient ascetic  
Is it peace or indifference  
In your ariel-rooted grey beard?

Is it grief or sympathy  
In your meditative aged eyes?

Is it creation or destruction  
In your deep-rooted lotus feet?

Is it the heavenly Ganga or the fearsome Veerabhadra  
In your entangled matter hair?

In my dreams, noons, dusks and nights,  
I keep seeing you,  
Ever detached,  
Ever conscious.

Like Eternal Time,  
You, your silent witness?

Like Infinite knowledge  
You, immersed in your own ecstasy?

Or,  
You, meditating for your own self annihilation.

**(Translated from Malayalam by Muraly. R)**

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