



The Flower and the Snake

Vasanthi Vasudev

The unsteady toddler
Sees the flaming flower.
His eyes glow wide
In spontaneous wonder.
He leaps forward
In impatient gait;
Hands outstretched ...
To feel with tender touch
The gentle petals, perhaps...

The naive child then,
Sees the creeping slimy snake.
His eyes light again
In curious joy;
He rushes ahead
In playful mood,
To lightly stroke, or pull
The fanged hood, perhaps....

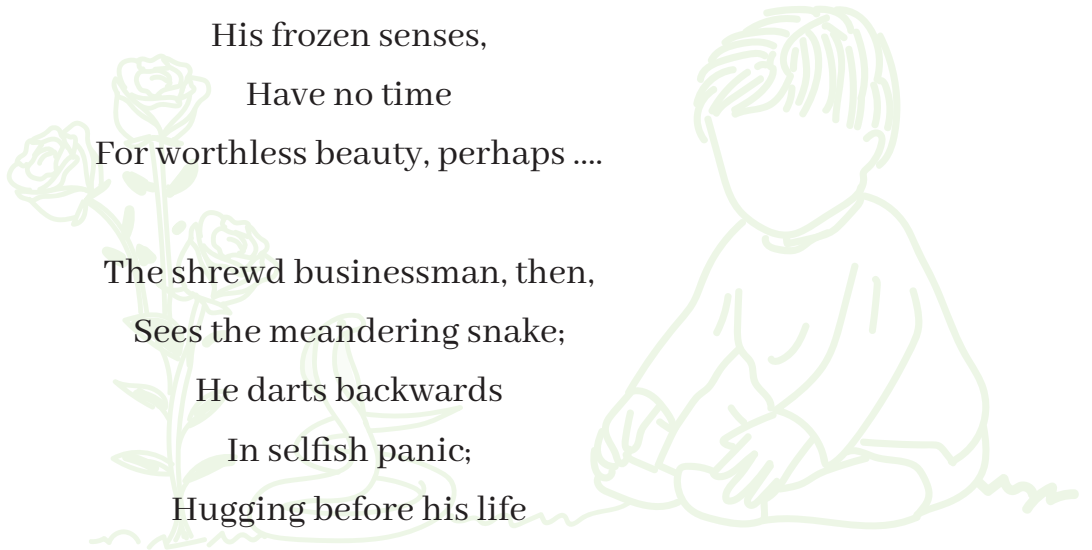


The busy man
Breezes past boughs in bloom;
His open vacant eyes
Are blinded in future plans.

His hurrying steps
Crush the fallen petals;
His frozen senses,
Have no time
For worthless beauty, perhaps

The shrewd businessman, then,
Sees the meandering snake;
He darts backwards
In selfish panic;
Hugging before his life
His bursting purse;
To guard his booming wealth
From the stealing snake, perhaps...

The sage in meditation,
Sees first the flower
And then the snake.
He sees them as such
But perceives them, not as such.
He sees the God in the flower,
And the Creator in the snake.
He remains still in equanimity
Having crossed the bridge between
The real and the unreal.



But, who will see
The flower as a flower,
And, the snake as a snake?
The curious child?
The material man?
And
Or unearthly sage?

Who will understand
The flower's short-lived joys?

Who will anticipate
The snake's long-lived fears?

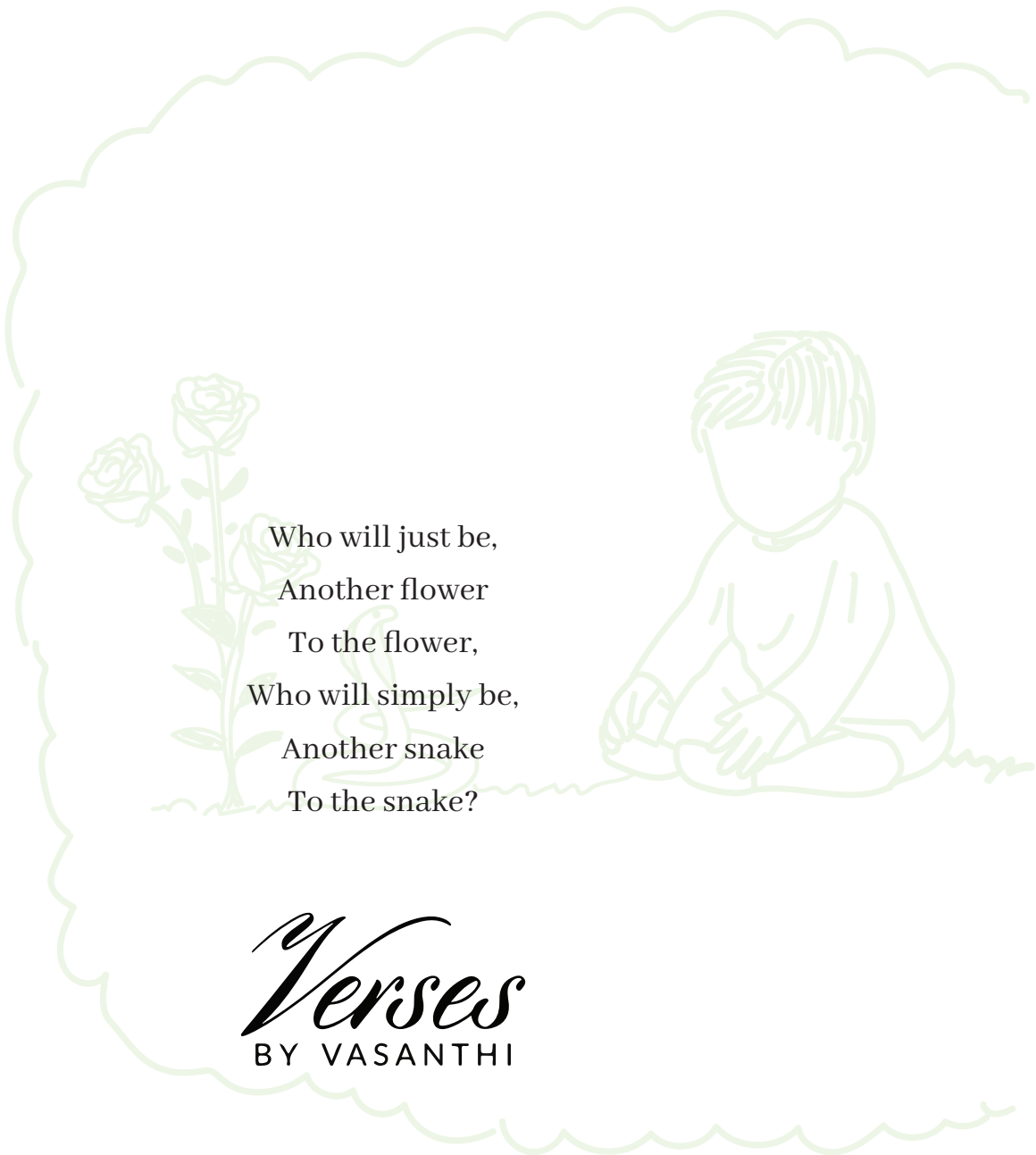
Who will pen
The flower's yearning
To be immortal?

Who will write about
The snake's longing
To be loved?

Who will strive
To preserve the nectar
In the flower?

Who will labour
To rob the venom
From the snake?

Who will feel
For the faded flower?
Who will cry
For the hounded snake?



Who will just be,
Another flower
To the flower,
Who will simply be,
Another snake
To the snake?

Verses
BY VASANTHI

