



Under the mango sun

Vasanthi Vasudev

The ancient mango tree
-over a hundred years young-

Was in full bloom

And in full life.

Long slender bunches of leaves

Lanceolate and waxy green

Hung like festoons

Over our heads

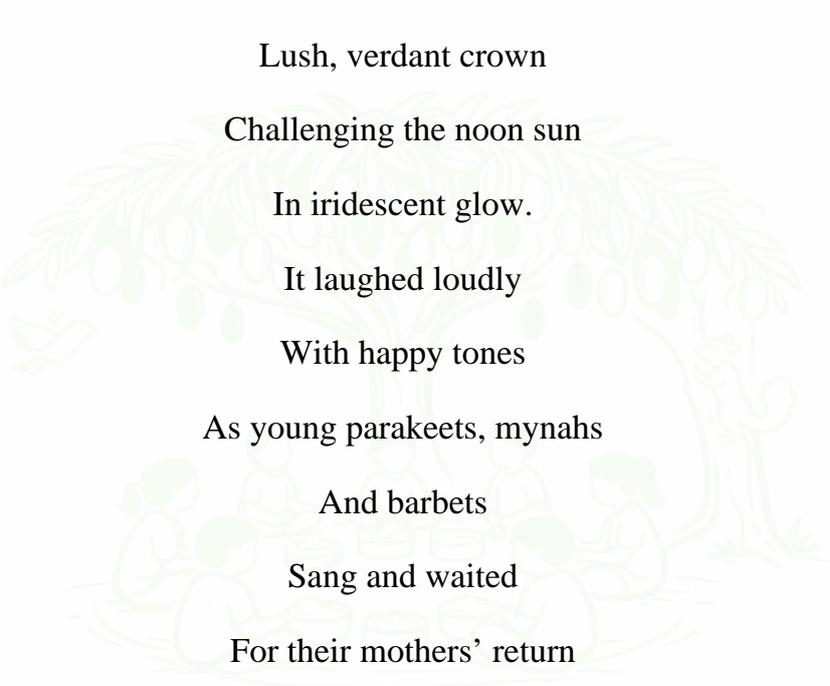
Hiding slender green mangoes

Still waiting to grow

Fat and ripe.

Some tiny ones

Copper coloured



Some, light green
With bunches of flowers
Peeked skywards
From under the
Lush, verdant crown
Challenging the noon sun
In iridescent glow.
It laughed loudly
With happy tones
As young parakeets, mynahs
And barbets
Sang and waited
For their mothers' return
Squirrels in score, scurried
up and jumped, dizzy busy.
We sat cross-legged
In a wide circle
Matching the
Circular canopy
In perimeter
Our stainless steel
lunch boxes
Wide open,
vying gaping mouths

Gleamed in
Florescent sheen.

Pasty curd rice

Rich and snowy

With a pickled

Baby mango

Stuck in the centre,

Shone like full moons

A twenty to a tree!

“I want a bite

Of that mango

It looks better

Than mine...”

“Take the whole piece

It’s OK

“I will have curd rice, plain”

“No no !”

“Oh yes! I like it that way!”

The tiny mango flew

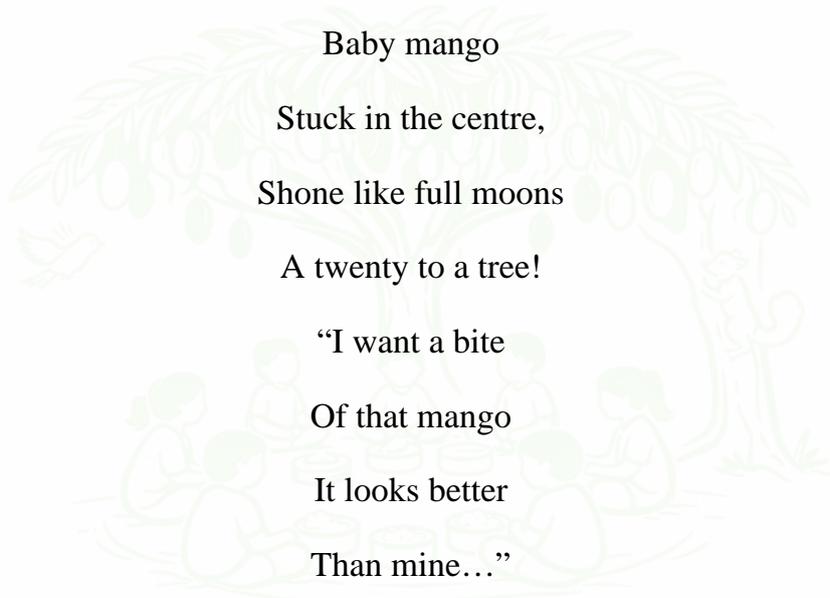
Out of a the box

And landed

On the curd rice

bed of the other!

Two broad grins



Sealed the friendship
“Did you see
That tall boy
Standing at the gate
Yesterday, when school left?
He is Malini’s brother”.

Someone cried in an excited voice
And all eyes turned in
reverence towards Malini

As she sat
smug and stately
Under the opposite
tree all by herself...like a
princess !

Someone let out a sigh
And blushed pink
Giggles were muffled
In a quick hush and
A long awkward silence!

Lunch time
Under the mango tree
Dipping into curd rice
And cutting into
Tender mango pickle

Was a very busy time,
otherwise...

So many stories to tell

So much of fresh news
to gather and keep

Ice cream to be shared

Along with spicy secrets..

Home work to be done

Mistakes to be condoned

Promises to be made

Scores to be settled..

Lunch break was too short

For them all

We had to wait endlessly,

for the next....

Fifty years later

I still wait for those

Lunch breaks

I still want to

Sit under

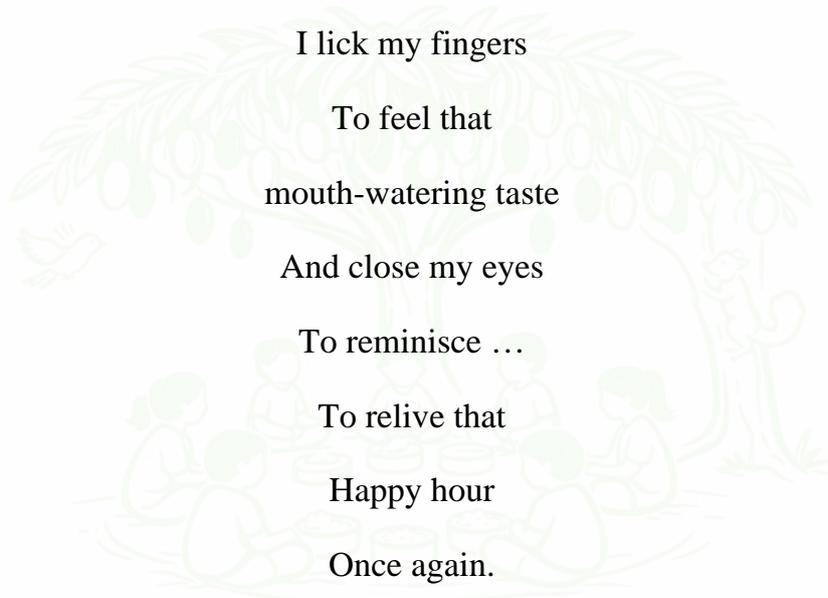
The mango tree

Somehow, cajole

My creaking knees

To bend and touch the ground

I still wait for those stores
Those tummy fulls
Of giggles and laughs
I still yearn for that
Curd rice and mango pickle...



I lick my fingers
To feel that
mouth-watering taste
And close my eyes
To reminisce ...
To relive that
Happy hour
Once again.

My eyes
Tear in joy
As that very same
Mango tree
Rises green and grand
And fills my vision
It lights my breath
And lifts my being
To a brilliant moment
Of déjà vu
Ever so euphoric

Ever so evergreen

And ever so

Permanent

Like the everyday sun

Was that tree ...

Our good old

Mango tree!

