**The Synapse of Sentience**

“Let not the amritam pervading thy eyes,

Melt into the stifling sands in vain,

As I surpass the synapse of sentience,

Beyond the bodily boundaries into the boundless ocean.

Amma, let thy tears drench my palmar creases,

Infusing ichor into my senescing vein.”

“Regress, O son, O born of Brahman lineage, Regress;

To cross the sea is forbidden to thee,

Wouldst bring thee dishonour and disgrace,

Denying thee the honour of thy pedigree.”

“If I decline the imperial hest,

Our posterity be reduced to lines of mere insolvents,

Staggering to survive at the Raj’s interest,

On the brink of sabre and salt.

If I heed the beck and call,

And depart to partake in the sanguine maul,

Beneath the Ensign weaving tall,

Carolling my motherland’s pride with an open soul,

Than shambling beneath the deplorable downfall.”

“Regress, O son, O born of mighty Murugan’s grace, Regress;

I canst not see thee perish on a far-flung soil,

Strewn amidst the crumbling carcasses,

Is that an honour or a fatal foil?”

“If martyred over the surge,

My marauder, a mirror of me,

With the Param Brahma may I merge.

But if I return sentient to thee,

With battered bones, lacerated limbs;

Be naught but a lingering liability.

Yet I vow, my voyage wouldst revert to its shed.

With me relapsed over the march of time,

In the debilitated demeanour of an animate dead,

Chanting the euphony of a calcined chime.

Or my corpse sheathed in the flag of pride.

Let the colossal Cholamandalam be my witness,

As I surpass the synapse of sentience,

Weep not as I depart,

May Namagiri Amman be my luminary,

As I drift apart.

I mayst not live to be the future me,

My soul wouldst see my motherland free.”

A glance more immobile than glass,

Diverted, nailed below a head as heavy as lead,

As he surpassed the synapse of sentience,

Like countless others, tricked by the vague visions of being freed,

Liquored their lives in the spectre of pretence

A reverie revered of late,

That severely severed our fate.

-Aadityaamlan Panda