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| K. Satchidanandan (b.1946) |
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| K. Satchidanandan is among the foremost modernist poets in Malayalam, as well as a prominent literary critic and translator. Born and educated in Kerala, Satchidanandan was a Professor of English at Christ College, Irinjalakkuda from 1970 to 1992 when he moved to New Delhi as the editor of *Indian Literature* published by the Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters). Subsequently, he worked as the Secretary of the Akademi from 1996 to 2006. Satchidanandan is the author of twenty-one volumes of poetry, sixteen volumes of poetry translations and nineteen volumes of essays in Malayalam. A recipient of numerous prestigious awards and honours at both national and international levels, including the Sahitya Akademi Award (2012) and the Knighthood of the Order of Merit from the Government of Italy (2006), his poetry has been translated into major world languages including English, French, German, Italian and Arabic. |
| K. Satchidanandan is among the foremost modernist poets in Malayalam as well as a prominent literary critic and translator. Born and educated in Kerala, Satchidanandan was a Professor of English at Christ College, Irinjalakkuda from 1970 to 1992 when he moved to New Delhi as the editor of *Indian Literature* published by the Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters). Subsequently, he worked as the Secretary of the Akademi from 1996 to 2006. Satchidanandan is the author of twenty-one volumes of poetry, sixteen volumes of poetry translations and nineteen volumes of essays in Malayalam. A recipient of numerous prestigious awards and honours at both national and international levels, including the Sahitya Akademi Award (2012) and the Knighthood of the Order of Merit from the Government of Italy (2006), his poetry has been translated into major world languages including English, French, German, Italian and Arabic.  Satchidanandan began his career as an experimental poet in the 1960s, along with a group of poets that included Ayyappa Paniker, N. N. Kakkad, Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan, Attoor Ravivarma and K. G. Sankara Pillai. Their avant-garde revolt against the prevailing sensibility was staged through a resonantly visual, self-consciously obscure, free-flowing line that conveyed the moral perplexity of a post-Nehruvian India through its unresolved angst and unfocussed rage. His early poems were characterized by an apocalyptic tone that became searchingly subversive in shorter poems such as “Five Suns” and “Fever,” but turned obsessively subjective in longer poems like “Meditations on Approaching Death.” A path-breaking translator of world poetry into Malayalam, Satchidanandan’s ability to assimilate diverse influences has accorded his poetic tone a unique cosmopolitan dimension.  In the late seventies, Satchidanandan turned increasingly to indigenous forms in the wake of a redefinition of the paradigms of modernist poetry in Malayalam. This coincided with the social and political turmoil in the country as evidenced by the National Emergency (1975-77) and the Naxalite revolt. He radicalized the poetic idiom through a dialogue with non-canonical folk traditions, as can be seen in *Indian Sketches* (1978)and *Socrates and the Cock* (1984)*.* These poems recover the moral altertness of Indian Bhakti poetry from Kabir to Tukaram and also map the subaltern domain of subliminal voices from the tribals of central India to the street painter of his hometown. His search for an alternative poetics that can invoke history through the seismographs of the self, results in the best poems of *Ivanekkooti* (This Man Too, 1987). During the eighties, he succeeded in weaving the political into the textual fabric of his poems as issues of ecology, gender, human rights and communalism impart a sense of urgency to his post-modernist idiom. The poems of *Kayattam* (The Ascent, 1990) and *Kavi Budhan* (Poet as Buddha, 1992) manifest this ethical turn.  A self-reflexive element has been a defining feature of his poetry. In conceiving of a higher destiny for poetry in a democratic society he highlights the need to speak with compassion and commitment. His quest for an inclusive vocabulary of the secular-spiritual that can offer resistance to the illusions of a globalised market of culture confirms this, particularly in the poems of *Apoornam* (Imperfect, 1998) and *Vikku* (Stammer, 2002).  Satchidanandan has edited several avant-garde journals in Malayalam, including *Prasakti*, *Samasya, Uttaram* and *Pachakuthira*. He is a highly significant literary critic in Malayalam, as well as the author of four books in English on Indian literature. Timeline 1971. Five Suns.  1978. Indian Sketches.  1983. Collected Poems  1992. Moves to Delhi  1996. Appointed as Secretary, Sahitya Akademi  2006. Collected Poems, 3 vols.  2012. Sahitya Akademi Award for poetry. |
| Further reading:  “Summer Rain: Three Decades of Poetry.” Delhi, 1995.  “How to Go to the Tao Temple.” Delhi, 1998.  “Imperfect and Other New Poems.” Calicut, 2000.  “Stammer and Other Poems.” Delhi, 2005.  “Misplaced Things.” Delhi, 2010.  “While I Write.” Delhi, 2011.  “Indian Literature: Positions and Propositions.” Delhi, 1999.  “Authors, Texts, Issues.” Delhi, 2002.  “Indian Literature: Paradigms and Praxis.” Delhi, 2008.  “Readings: Essays in Indian Literature.” Delhi, 2009. |