

WIND



BY SUBRAMANIA BHARATI
TRANSLATED FROM THE TAMIL BY A.K. RAMANUJAN

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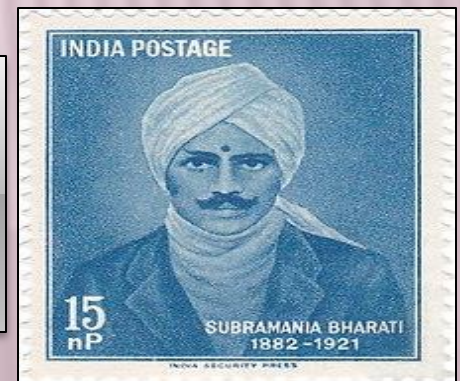
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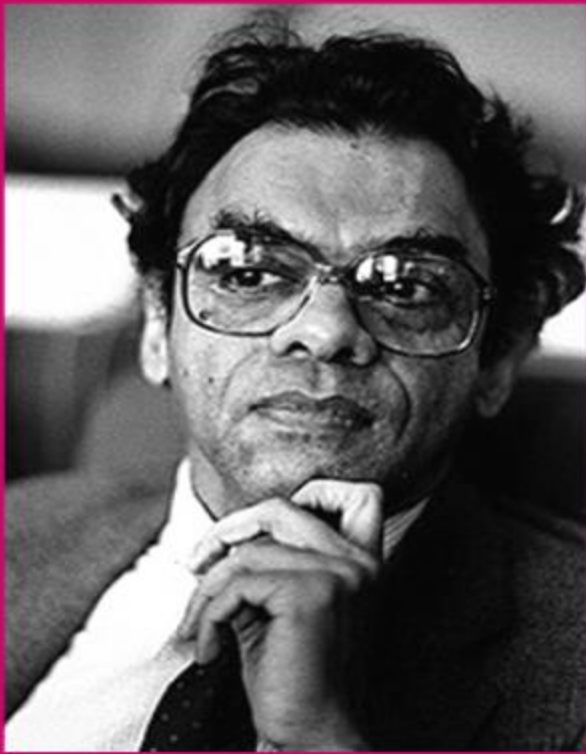
The poem, Wind, was originally written in Tamil by Subramania Bharati and later translated into English by A.K. Ramanujan.



Chinnaswami Subramania Bharathi also known as Bharathiyar (11 December 1882 – 11 September 1921), was a Tamil writer, poet, journalist, Indian Independence activist, a social reformer and a polyglot. Popularly known as "Mahakavi Bharathi", he was a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry and is considered one of the greatest Tamil literary figures of all time. His numerous works included fiery songs kindling patriotism during the Indian Independence movement.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI
COMMEMORATIVE STAMP
ISSUED ON
11 SEPTEMBER 1960





*Attipate Krishnaswami Ramanujan (16 March 1929 – 13 July 1993) popularly known as A. K. Ramanujan, was an Indian poet, scholar, professor, philologist, folklorist, translator and playwright. His academic research ranged across five languages: English, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. He is well known for his translation of classical and modern poetry. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award posthumously in 1999 for his collection of poems, *The Collected Poems*.*

[Click here](https://youtu.be/MGAAIUSRlCo) **<https://youtu.be/MGAAIUSRlCo>**
for a story from A.K. Ramanujan's *A Flowering Tree and other oral tales from India*

INTRODUCTION TO THE POEM

❖ Wind, one of the five elements of nature, has been personified in the poem that describes the power of wind on nature and human life. It focuses on the violent aspect of wind that causes destruction. The fierce wind is also seen by the poet as a symbol of adversities in life. He says that while the weak people break down having failed to cope with difficult times, the stronger ones endure and emerge victorious. The poem gives an important message that we should be mentally tough and physically strong in order to survive the hardships of life.

❖ The poem, *Wind*, is an example of modern poetry written in *free verse*.

THEME

The poem, *Wind*, depicts the enormous power of wind in the world and how it has the potential of being both a destroyer and a creator. The weak and fragile cannot withstand its fury, while the strong can use it to their advantage. The same is true of the adversities of life- those who are weak easily break down and those who are strong take them in their stride and come out stronger. Therefore our attitude to life and its trials and tribulations determines our response to them.

The poem inspires us to face the challenges and hardships with courage, grit and determination.





Wind



*The wind blows strongly and causes a lot of destruction.
How can we make friends with it?*

Wind, come softly.
Don't break the shutters of the windows.
Don't scatter the papers.
Don't throw down the books on the shelf.
There, look what you did — you threw them all down.
You tore the pages of the books.
You brought rain again.
You're very clever at poking fun at weaklings.
Frail crumbling houses, crumbling doors, crumbling rafters,
crumbling wood, crumbling bodies, crumbling lives,
crumbling hearts —
the wind god winnows and crushes them all.
He won't do what you tell him.
So, come, let's build strong homes,
Let's joint the doors firmly.
Practise to firm the body.
Make the heart steadfast.
Do this, and the wind will be friends with us.
The wind blows out weak fires.
He makes strong fires roar and flourish.
His friendship is good.
We praise him every day.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI

[translated from the Tamil by
A.K. Ramanujan]

EXPLANATION

Lines 1 to 7:

Wind, come softly.

Don't break the shutters of the windows.

Don't scatter the papers.

Don't throw down the books on the shelf.

There, look what you did — you threw them all down.

You tore the pages of the books.

You brought rain again.

The poem opens with a plea to the wind to blow gently without causing any damage. Being aware of the power of the wind, the poet urges him (the wind is personified in the poem) not to break the shutters of the windows, scatter the papers and throw down the books on the shelf. However the wind pays no heed to the poet and applies his force creating a mess in the room. Quite disappointed, the poet accuses the wind of throwing all the books down and tearing the pages and also for bringing showers of rain along with him while approaching the poet's house.

EXPLANATION

Lines 8 to 12:

**You're very clever at poking fun at weaklings.
Frail crumbling houses, crumbling doors, crumbling rafters,
crumbling wood, crumbling bodies, crumbling lives,
crumbling hearts —
the wind god winnows and crushes them all.**

The poet says that the wind makes a mockery of the weaklings. He is mischievous and plays with those who are too weak, meek and mild to combat his power. The wind causes damage to both property and life. It tears down frail houses, crumbling doors and rafters, and any structure which cannot endure the strong gusts of wind. It also takes a toll on human body and mind. The wind crushes everything that is weak. Just as the harvesters winnow the chaff from the grain, the wind god separates the weak people from the strong ones and destroys them.

Here wind symbolises the adversities and challenges one faces in life. The poet uses the word 'crumbling' repeatedly in these lines to suggest that a weak and fragile person breaks down in the face of hardship.

EXPLANATION

Lines 13 to 18:

**He won't do what you tell him.
So, come, let's build strong homes,
Let's joint the doors firmly.
Practice to firm the body.
Make the heart steadfast.
Do this, and the wind will be friends with us.**

The poet tells his readers that the wind does not listen to anybody and therefore, we cannot escape the ill effects of the wind by only pleading with him. He feels it is wise to make friends with the wind, that is, the adversities in our lives. We must be prepared well in advance to face and tackle all problems. We must build strong homes with firm doors to stop the wind from easily entering and invading our spaces. We should also make ourselves strong, both physically and mentally. We must train our bodies and our hearts to resist the ill effects of the wind. Only then shall we no longer consider the wind an enemy. Instead the wind will invite us to become his friend, and we shall be able to fearlessly accept his invitation.

EXPLANATION

Lines 19 to 22:

**The wind blows out weak fires.
He makes strong fires roar and flourish.
His friendship is good.
We praise him every day.**

The poet explains that the wind can only extinguish the weak fires while it intensifies the strong ones. Similarly adversities deter the faint hearted but make them stronger who have unfaltering will. Thus befriending the wind or the hardships of life makes it easier for us to face them. We learn to accept challenges and overcome them with courage, grit and determination.

Having compared the wind to God for his immense power and strength, the poet wants us to praise him everyday. This will pacify him and prevent him from causing any damage. The wind is our good friend too and should be praised for making us strong and enabling us to cope with difficulties.

POETIC DEVICES

≈ Personification

The wind has been personified in the poem. The poet addresses the wind as “you” thus attributing human characteristics to an abstract element of nature.

≈ Anaphora

*This refers to the repetition of a word or a phrase at the beginning of two consecutive clauses/sentences.
Lines 2,3 and 4 begin with “Don’t”.
Lines 6,7 and 8 begin with “You”.*

≈ Repetition

The word “crumbling” is repeated in the poem to lay emphasis on the fact that the wind crushes everything that is weak.

POETIC DEVICES

≈ Alliteration

This refers to the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.

Few examples from the poem-

- *w*ind *g*od *w*innows (repetition of *w* sound)
- *w*on't do *w*hat (repetition of *w* sound)
- *f*ires *r*oar and *f*lourish (repetition of *f* sound)

≈ Metaphor

A metaphor is an implied comparison in contrast to the explicit comparison of the simile. The poet uses metaphor in "the wind god winnows and crushes them all" where he compares the wind god with a farmer or harvester who winnows the chaff from the grain. Similarly the wind god separates the weak people from the strong ones and destroys them.



POETIC DEVICES

≈ Imagery

The poem is replete with word pictures like the destructive activities of the wind, the wind bringing rain along with it and the wind god winnowing and crushing the weaklings, all of which appeal to the senses.



≈ Symbolism

The wind is a symbol for the adversities in our life.

MESSAGE

One must develop physical strength and mental toughness in order to survive the hardships of life. A feeble person will break down unable to cope with the stress and strain just like any weak structure that crumbles down in severe windstorms.

VALUE ADDITION

The poem inspires us to be fearless and face challenges and hardships with courage, grit and determination.



REAL LIFE CONNECT

❖ *There is no dearth of people who have touched the pinnacle of success overcoming immense challenges in life.*



Masudur Rahman Baidya, the first physically challenged Asian swimmer to cross the English Channel in 1997.



Evelyn Glennie, world's premier solo percussionist, who feels music but cannot hear it due to hearing impairment.



Mariyappan Thangavelu represented India at the 2016 Summer Paralympics games and won the gold medal in the finals.

❖ *Today when the entire world is shaken up due to the Coronavirus outbreak, we should not lose heart and give up. Let's remember every cloud has a silver lining. This too shall pass as no storm can last forever.*

*“Oh, deep in my heart I do believe
We shall overcome, some day”*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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THANK YOU