



Malayalam Writer Sethu's Short Story Collection Translated in English

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Ten short stories written by eminent Malayalam writer Sethu have been translated into English.

The tales in the collection *A Guest for Arundhathi and Other Stories* have been translated from Malayalam by K Kunhikrishnan.

The first story *Her Corner of Earth* is about a woman from Kerala whose two sons live in the US and Abu Dhabi. After years of refusal, she one day makes up her mind to visit her son Gopi and his family in the US. The story goes to describe her travel overseas just before her 82nd birthday and her journey back home.

In *Ammalu the Eligible Girl*, three men from Kunnukara visit a house in Thekkumkara to see a girl – Ramankutty, the prospective groom; the matchmaker called Third Man; and the local leader Nanumman, also known as Member. They go to assess if the girl could be the right bride.

The other stories in the collection are *The Babysitter*, *Family Tree*, *Shades of Blue*, *The Onam Market*, *Password*, *The Initiation* and *The City*.

Kunhikrishnan says while translating Sethu's short stories, he kept a global readership in mind.

"My effort was to recapture authentically their milieu in all its nuances and also to acquire the idiom of the new readership. Such crossovers are not easy.

"For the translator the first challenge is to transport the world of the short stories to another culture with their moisture and fragrance intact, and at the same time to present them in an ambience the English reader will be able to appreciate. To achieve this, I had to take liberties in certain contexts by making small deviations from the Malayalam text," he says.

Regarded as one of the tallest personalities of contemporary Indian writing, Sethu's fiction has been translated into many languages, and quite a few of his novels made into films. Born in Ernakulam in 1942, Sethu published his first short story in the leading Malayalam weekly, Mathrubhumi, when he was 25. His oeuvre comprises 18 novels and 20 collections of short stories.

Extensively translated, his most acclaimed novel *Pandavapuram* has been published in seven other languages. Four of his novels including *Pandavapuram* have been made into films. Winner of the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award, he has been conferred the Kerala Sahitya Award twice.

Says renowned filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan about the book, published by Palimpsest Publishing House, "The collection *A Guest for Arundhathi and Other Stories* is a sure testament to Sethu's poignant vision and narrative skill."

He calls the author as an outstanding Malayalam writer, who "carefully builds his characters and situations in the backdrop of mundane everyday life, taking the reader to the very core of our existence and offering him a glimpse of the despair, deceit, pretense, jealousy, rivalry and a sense of futility that cloud our world".

"Competently translated, the short stories open the magical vista of Sethu's creativity and poetic imagination to a wider audience," Gopalakrishnan says.