

Love

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Sangam Tamil Literatures praise and celebrate Love. Following Sangam Literatures are exclusively devoted for Love:

aka naanooru (அகநானூறு) – Four hundred songs on Love by 144 plus 3 unknown poets.

ain kurunooru (ஐங்குறுநூறு) – Five hundred songs on Love by five poets.

nat triNai (நற்றிணை) – Four hundred songs on Love by 192 poets.

kurun thokai (குறுந்தொகை)– Four hundred (and one) songs on Love by 205 poets.

kalith thokai (கலித்தொகை)–One hundred and fifty songs by five poets

யாயும் ஞாயும் யாரா கியரோ
எந்தையும் நுந்தையும் எம்முறைக் கேளிர்
யானும் நீயும் எவ்வழி யறிதும்
செம்புலப் பெயல்நீர் போல
அன்புடை நெஞ்சம் தாங்கலந் தனவே

*What could my mother be
yours? What kin is my father
to yours anyway? And how
Did you and I meet ever?
But in love
our hearts have mingled
as red earth and pouring rain*

- poem from Kurunthokai; Translation A.K. Ramanujan

For the lyric is "*Yayum yayum yarakiyaro*" by an ancient Tamil poet of the Sangam age, our favourite love song from the Kurunthokai anthology. The metaphor of earth and rain for the lovers retains its urgency across the centuries. The passion is as electrifying as it was when the poet *Chempula peyal neerar* lyricised it some 2,000 years ago.

The poem is printed in Tamil letters along with A.K. Ramanujan's English translation. This poem was selected for display on the underground trains in London, UK by Judith Chernaik, one of the selectors of the Poems on the Underground, London.