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## Posthumous Honour

**A.P.Govindankutty**

Sreejayam,

Post Paimkulam, Cheruthuruthy, Kerala

Escorted she walked, in measured steps  
As trained in the rehearsals,  
To the dais, stood at the appointed place,  
Her cheeks pale, eyes without shine,  
Emotions choking her throat,  
Hands outstretched, palms open,  
Received from the President  
The honour posthumous,  
The highest in peacetime,  
Conferred on the father of her little son,  
Just eighteen months,  
On the eve of whose birthday  
He fell on the border  
In fierce fight with armed infiltrators,  
Killed two and wounded all,  
Even after getting shot in his stomach,  
Saving three fellow-soldiers,  
Ere succumbing to his wound.

To her seat in the pavilion escorted  
She walked back in the same measured pace,  
Took her little son from his grandpa  
Hugged him, her eyes shut to suppress tears,  
Throat choking and limbs turning numb,  
Sat there waiting for the ceremony to end.

Homeward they returned  
When the dignitaries dispersed,  
To her loneliness and anguish,  
Wept for a while in her narrow room,  
Slipped into life's routine  
With the little one tugging her,  
Wiping her tears with tiny fingers,  
Hugging her and kissing her,  
Lisping incoherent words to console her.

Even as the young woman tries  
To sew together her tattered life  
With the machine given as relief,  
The world moves on with its wars,  
Cross border skirmishes,  
Soldiers killing and getting killed,

Spawning destructions indiscriminate,  
Driving people from where they were born, brought up and buried their dead,  
To seek refuge in unwelcome soil,  
Those sick and weak dying on the wayside,  
Idols of their gods they carry with them  
Of little help to save their body and soul.