

**THE QUEST- Sarojini Naidu**

My foolish love went seeking thee at dawn,  
Crying — O wind where is Kanhaya gone?

I questioned at noonrise the forest glade,  
Rests my sweet lover in thy friendly shade?

At dusk I pleaded with the dovegray tides,  
O tell me where my Flute-player abides?

Dumb were the waters, dumb the woods, the wind,  
They knew not where my playfellow to find.

I bowed my weeping face upon my palm,  
Moaning — O where art thou, my Ghanashyam?

Then, like a boat that rocks from keel to rafter,  
My heart was shaken by thy hidden laughter.

Then didst thou mock me with thy tender malice,  
Like nectar bubbling from my own heart's chalice.

Thou saidst, — O faithless one, self-slain with doubt,  
Why seekest thou my loveliness without,

And askest wind or wave or flowering dell  
The secret that within thyself doth dwell?

I am of thee, as thou of me, a part.  
Look for me in the mirror of thy heart.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Sarojini Naidu**, née **Sarojini Chattopadhyay**, (born February 13, 1879, Hyderabad, India died March 2, 1949, Lucknow), political activist, feminist, poet, and the first Indian woman to be president of the Indian National Congress and to be appointed an Indian state governor. She was sometimes called “the Nightingale of India

Sarojini was the eldest daughter of Aghorenath Chattopadhyay, a Bengali Brahman who was principal of the Nizam’s College, Hyderabad. She entered the University of Madras at the age of 12 and studied (1895–98) at King’s College, London, and later at Girton College, Cambridge.

After some experience in the suffragist campaign in England, she was drawn to India’s Congress movement and to Mahatma Gandhi’s Noncooperation Movement. In 1924 she traveled in eastern Africa and South Africa in the interest of Indians there and the following year became the first Indian woman president of the National Congress having been preceded eight years earlier by the English feminist Annie Besant. She toured North America, lecturing on the Congress movement, in 1928 -29. Back in India her anti-British activity brought her a number of prison sentences (1930, 1932, and 1942- 43). She accompanied Gandhi to London for the inconclusive second session of the Round Table Conference for Indian–British cooperation (1931). Upon the outbreak of World War II she supported the Congress Party’s policies, first of aloofness, then of avowed hindrance to the Allied cause. In 1947 she became governor of the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), a post she retained until her death.

Sarojini Naidu also led an active literary life and attracted notable Indian intellectuals to her famous salon in Bombay (now Mumbai). Her first volume of poetry, *The Golden Threshold* (1905), was followed by *The Bird of Time* (1912), and in 1914 she was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Her collected poems, all of which she wrote in English, have been published under the titles *The Sceptred Flute* (1928) and *The Feather of the Dawn* (1961).

## **SUMMARY**

The Quest is about the incomparable love of Radha and Krishna. In the poem Radha is searching for her beloved Krishna. Lord Krishna is the symbol of imperishable love who can provide the shelter of love to everyone. Radha has given the highest rank among the lovers of Krishna. It is not easy to define whether the passion she feels towards Krishna is love or devotion. According to the beliefs, the zenith of devotion is love. Radha searches her beloved Krishna. She asks the wind about him. But she cannot find him. Krishna has the habit of resting in the forest at the noon time. She searches for him in the forest too, but fails to find him out. At the late evening she enquires the grey coloured tide about the dwelling place of her dear flute player. The waters, the wind and the woods do not give any answer to her questions. None of them know anything about him. She carries her crying face in her arms. She keeps weeping- where her Ghanashyam has gone. Her search shows the passion in the heart of Radha towards Krishna. In the love for him, she becomes a silly girl who always makes complaints to her lover. Her heart is suddenly awakened like a boat which shook from top to bottom by his hidden laughter. He mocks her with the usual tricks of Krishna and honey bubbled in the chalice of her heart. She always thinks like every other girl and tries to find out some reasons to quarrel with him. Even then she realizes that all the silly thoughts raised in her heart are only because of the love hidden in her. Then he asks her why she is searching for him in the wind, wave and the flowering valley. He says that he belongs to her. She can look into the mirror of her heart to see him. The Quest is about the love and devotion of Radha towards Lord Krishna. The image of Radha and Krishna is one of the most celebrated one in Indian mythology. We can see the concept of 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha' in the poem. Here Krishna stands for the concept of Purusha and Radha for Prakriti and this union is considered as the basics of life upon the earth. She uses the image of divine love to portray her concept of love. Hence the love in the poem becomes eternal. She narrates the poem according to the traditional concept of love in India. The poem is the transfer of personal love to the universal love. She brings oneness of the hearts of the idol and the devotee. She believes in the love before which everyone is compelled to surrender. In The Quest, the nightingale of India sings about love which is imperishable. She sings about the love of Radha and Krishna, the iconic couple of Indian Myths. She seeks him all over but fails to find him out. As in every love, she finds that her lover is always playing with her, but fails to accept the fact. She shares her complaints to herself. But at the same time she enjoys his teasing. In the end she realizes the fact that he resides in her mind and it is her fault that she could not identify the platonic love hidden in the mind of Krishna towards every woman who adores him. The

love described in this poem is platonic in nature which refers to the union of the minds rather than the union of the bodies.

## **THEME**

The Quest is about the love and devotion of Radha towards Lord Krishna. The image of Radha and Krishna is one of the most celebrated one in Indian mythology. We can see the concept of 'Prakriti' and 'Purusha' in the poem. She uses the image of divine love to portray her concept of love. Hence the love in the poem becomes eternal. She narrates the poem according to the traditional concept of India. She turns out in to an idea that the highest level of devotion is love. That love is portrayed well in the poem when she says god rests in the heart of the people who worships him. The poem is a journey from the personal love to the universal. She brings oneness of the hearts of the idol and the devotee.