saavitri: 1949 - 1991:: Had she lived longer, she would have written more, and certainly more brilliant poetry. saavitri was born into a highly feudalistic family, married off into a more feudalistic and cruel family! During her short but very productive lifetime, she fought and fought against male chauvinism. She wrote about two dozen poems, a few essays and came to be known as 'radio saavitri' for her talks on the AIR. She died of tuberculosis, and after her death, a few of her friends brought out a volume('saavitri') of her writings, under the editorship of aranyakrishna, in 1992.

Some critics recognize(rightly so!) that her poem 'baMdipOTlu,' written in 1984 became an early and positive catalyst for the current upsurge of feminist poetry. baMdipOtlu was translated into english by C. Rama Rao and Arlene Zide as 'Dacoits' and was published in "In their Own Voice," the Penguin Anthology of Contemporary Indian Women Poets (1993), edited by Arlene K. Zide. I will give both the original and the translation below.

Prof.Chekoori Rama Rao publicized this poem, read it at several university meets, reviewed it, and wrote an appreciation of it! He even included it as a must-read for B. A. Telugu candidates!!

బందిపోట్లు

పాఠం ఒప్పచెప్పక పోతే పెళ్ళి చేస్తానని
 పంతులు-గారన్నప్పుడే భయమేసింది

ఆఫీసులో నా మొగుడున్నాడు!
అవసర-మొచ్చినా సెలవివ్వడని
 అన్నయ్య అన్నప్పుడే అనుమానమేసింది

వాడికేం మగ-మహారాజని
 ఆడా మొగా వాగినప్పుడే అర్థమై పోయింది

పెళ్ళంటే పెద్ద శిక్ష అని
 మొగుడంటే స్వేచ్చా భక్షకుడని

మేం పాలిచ్చి పెంచిన జనంలో సగమే
 మమ్మల్ని విభజించి పాలిస్తోందని!

– March 23, 1984 ఆంధ్ర జ్యోతి వార పత్రిక

Dacoits

When the teacher said:
I'll get you married off
if you don't recite the lesson
I was afraid.

When my brother said:
My 'husband' is my boss
who never grants me leave
even when I need it most
I grew suspicious.

When the neighbours said:
But, he's a man, a'maharaja'
so what could he be missing?
I understood.

That marriage is a huge punishment,
that a husband gobbles up your freedom,
and that half the population
that we nourished at the breast
divides
and rules.

– Translated by C. Rama Rao Arlene Zide.
Acknowledgements to Sri Venkateswara Rao Veluri for this posting on telusa