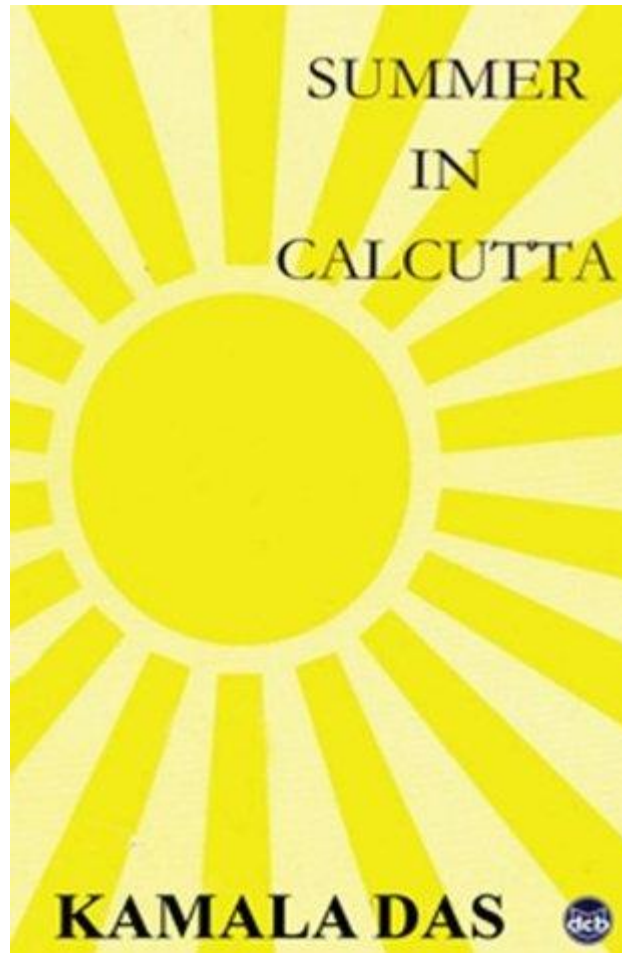


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**A Critical Appreciation of the Poem *My Grandmother's House* by
Kamala Das**

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Kamala Das, the most prominent feminist voice in the postcolonial era, has created a permanent place for herself in Indian Writing in English. The poem *My Grand Mother's House*

is a lyric that reveals her nostalgic yearning for her family home in Malabar where she had spent some of the happiest days of her life with her grandmother. The poem first appeared in Kamala Das's first anthology of verses titled *Summer Time in Calcutta*.

Kamala Das then lived in a city, far away from her grandmother's place. Here she suffered from an acute sense of alienation after having left grandmother's place after her marriage. She remembered the days she spent in her grandmother's house and the love and affection showed by her. The memory makes her sad and she says ...

“There is a house now far away where once

I received love..... that woman died.”

She was reminded of her grandmother's house where she spent her memorable childhood. It was the only place where she could receive love from her grandmother. She became emotional and suffered intense agony. After the death of her grandmother, the poet says that even the House was filled with grief, and she accepted the seclusion with resignation. Only dead silence haunted the House, feeling of desolation wandering throughout. Kamala Das was too young to read the books at that time. The books in the house seemed to her as horrible as snakes and her blood turned cold like the moon.

“The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved

Among books, I was then too young

To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon”

Since then the poetess was thinking of going to her grandmother's house again. She had a strong desire to be in there and wanted to look through the windows of the house. She called the windows blind because there was no one in the house to look through the windows. She wanted to sit there alone and listened to the blowing of the cold winter wind. Her heart was itself like a dark window where the fresh air did not blow.

“How often I think of going

There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or

Just listen to the frozen air.”

Kamala Das told her darling that it would be difficult for him to believe that she had lived in such a wonderful house. She loved it so much that she was proud of it. Now the love shown by her grandmother was not there for her. So she had been requesting even the strangers to show at least some of their love on her. But her wish remained unfulfilled. The failure of love and the birth of poetry were related to each other in Kamala Das. Her intimacy with her husband was purely physical. Under such circumstances love degraded into lust and savage condition. So she had been begging strangers to show true love to her like her grandmother who shared her love and affection for Kamala Das.

“You cannot believe, darling,

Can you, that I lived in such a house and

Was proud, and loved... I who have lost

My way and beg now at strangers' doors to

Receive love, at least in small change?”

Kamala Das sums up the poem saying that it is, to some extent, difficult for anyone to believe that she once lived in such a house filled with love and affection and was so loved by all and she lived her life with full pride. It is also to hard believe for every one that her world once filled with happiness is a sharp contrast to her present situation where she is completely devoid of love and pride. She says that in her desperate quest for love, she has lost her way. Since she didn't receive any feelings of love from the people whom she called her own, she now has to knock “at strangers' doors” and beg them for love, if not in substantial amounts, then at least in small measure.

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