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TOPIC

MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE

*BY*

KAMALA DAS (1934 – 2009)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Kamala Das (1934-2009) was a prominent, Indian Woman writer who wrote in English and Malayalam.
- She wrote about a range of topics, chiefly of love with its own betrayal and consequent anguish.
- She explored deeply and sensitively the nuances of man – woman relationship.
- Some of her poems deal with nostalgia for childhood.
- Her works include ‘Summer in Calcutta’, ‘The Old Play House’ and other poem’s ‘My Story’ and ‘Yaa Allah’.
- She embraced Islam in 1999 at the age of 65 and assumed the name, Kamala Suraiyya.
- She was also politically active she launched a national political party “Lok seva” party. She unsuccessfully contested the Indian Lok Sabha election in 1984. She won many awards including the Sahitya Akademi Award.

## ABOUT THE POEM

Kamala Das recalls her ancestral home and her dead grandmother in this poem. The Poem is a confession, comparing her present mental state being unconditionally loved by her Grandmother.

## MY GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE

KAMALA DAS (1934 - 2009)

There is a house now far away where once  
I received love.....That woman died,  
The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved  
Among books, I was then too young  
To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon  
How often I think of going  
There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or  
Just listen to the frozen air,  
Or in wild despair, pick an armful of  
Darkness to bring it here to lie  
Behind my bedroom door like a brooding  
Dog...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?

## PARAPHRASE OF THE POEM

- There is a house where I lived Once. It was my grandmother's house.
- I received lots of love in that house. My Grandmother died.
- The house became silent. Snakes moved among books. I was too young to read.
- My blood became cold like the moon. Now I often think of going back there...
- I want to look intently through the windows. I just want to listen to the sounds of the cold wind blowing outside. Or in a desperate moment I want to pluck some memories of the house and bring them back to my present home.
- The Memories will live with me in my bed-room and lie like a brooding dog. No one can believe that I lived in such a house of love.
- I have lost my way now. I go about begging at strangers' doors to receive love, at least in small quantities.

**THANK YOU**