

Classic Poetry Series

**Rajendra Keshavlal Shah**  
**- poems -**

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# Rajendra Keshavlal Shah(28 January 1913 – 2 January 2010)

Rajendra Keshavlal Shah popularly known as Rajendra Shah(Gujarati: રાજેન્દ્ર શાહ), was a lyrical poet who wrote in Gujarati. Born in Kapadvanaj, he authored more than 20 collections of poems and songs, mainly on the themes of the beauty of nature, and about the everyday lives of indigenous peoples and fisherfolk communities. In his poems using Sanskrit metrics, he was influenced by [Rabindranath Tagore](http://www.poemhunter.com/rabindranath-tagore/). He was one of the giants of post Gandhi-era called 'Anu-Gandhi Yug' in Gujarati literature.

Among his various professions, Shah was also a printer in Mumbai, where he launched the poetry magazine Kavilok. The press itself became an important Sunday meeting-place for Gujarati poets. Apart from writing poetry, Shah also translated into Gujarati Tagore's poetry collection Balaaka; Jayadeva's "Gita Govinda"; [Coleridge](http://www.poemhunter.com/samuel-taylor-coleridge/)'s "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; and [Dante](http://www.poemhunter.com/dante-alighieri/)'s "The Divine Comedy".

Shah won the Jnanpith — the Indian government's most prestigious literary prize — for the year 2001. The judges noted, "his intensity of emotion and innovation in form and expression which set him apart as a poet of great significance. The mystical tone of his poetry stems from the tradition of great medieval masters like Kabir, Narsinh Mehta and literary giants like them".

## **Awards**

Kumar Chandrak in 1947

Ranjitram Suvarna Chandrak in 1956

Sahitya Akademi Award in 1964

Mahakavi Nanatal prize in 1968

Narmad Chandrak in 1977

Aurobindo Suvarna Chandrak by Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1980

Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad award in 1985

Dhanaji Kanaji Suvarna Chandrak in 1986

Murdhanya Sahityakar Samman by Gujarat Sahitya Akademi in 1993

Narasinh Mehta award in 1994

Jnanpith in 2001

# Last Day

In the house which was full of din, in the dusty courtyard  
I kept the small baggage of the last age  
And then the misty sad sun's  
First ray shone in the sky; and that direction awoke in tremor.

The neighboring big ones living asked my welfare,  
The housewives looked at me and got talking,  
Out of curiosity children encircled me,  
The dog barked for a minute and then smelt my feet.

Locks were unlocked, the doors made a moan,  
Their bodies were close-bound in a motionless condition.  
Then the stale air from within, finding way,  
Ran out. As if a dead soul rose unfettered.

I went in the house and the darkness covered me for a moment.  
Then as if lit in a pencil of light I saw the old earthenware.

[Translated from the Gujarati by P. Machwe]

Rajendra Keshavlal Shah