Chelliah is a proud young lad who overcomes a troubled childhood amidst rural deprivation through self belief. Bullied at school and at home, surviving his mother’s anxiety and lack of confidence in him, he finds a role model in auto mechanic Ramu. His work takes him to the big city, where he finds friendship and betrayal, love and loss, challenges and triumph. Sa Kandasami’s tender story climaxes in Chelliah’s election as an office bearer in a workers’ union.

About the author Santhappa Devar Kandasamy, popularly known as Sa Kandasamy, is a noted author, documentary film maker, director and producer. He won the Sahitya Akademi award, India’s highest literary honour, in 1998, for his novel Visaranai Commission.
Bound by a sense of filial duty, Parasu, the eldest son of Jagannathan, gives up his dreams of higher studies and settles down to a safe and secure government job. His younger brother Viswam knows little of his inner struggle. Viswam also dreams big and pities Parasu for his lack of ambition while envying him his lovely wife, but when reality hits him, Viswam is forced into a deeper understanding of the way we want life to be and the way it really is.

Surrendered Dreams is a coming-of-age story, sensitively and sympathetically written.

About the author Indumathi made a substantial impact on readers of Tamil fiction with her serialised novel Tharaiyil Irangum Vimanangal back in the 1970s. Known for her bold, occasionally, controversial themes, she began her writing career at the age of 16. Her articles and stories were published in Tamil magazines like Jnana Ratham, Ananda Vikatan and Kumudam.
'It’s about time,' announced Shalu’s mother one fine day. Little did the Sundaesan family realise when they jumped on the matrimonial bandwagon that they were in for the ride of their lives. Sundaesan becomes the quintessential ‘girl’s father’, nosing out prospective bridegrooms with the flair of a bloodhound. Parvati learns that for all her culinary prowess, the way to the ‘boy’s party’s’ heart is not through the stomach. Shalu, the bride-to-be, discovers that to be true to who you are is the hardest thing when ‘Reject’ is repeatedly stamped on you.

Will Shalu’s prince come along?

The TamBrahm Bride is a light-hearted journey through the dizzying world of south Indian arranged marriages predominantly populated by astrologers, matchmakers and NRI grooms. Rivetingly told, the story may be set in the Indian context, but has a universal appeal that echoes the sentiments of a global audience.

About the author Kausalya Saptharishi is a US-based freelance journalist whose byline has appeared in varied American and Indian publications including The Washington Times, Hinduism Today and India Abroad. This is her debut novel.
Set amid days long gone, the story centres around the Arasur family. Grown wealthy from the tobacco trade, the family earn the envy of the king. But are the two sons of the Arasur family worthy heirs of their father’s mantle? Swaminathan, an erstwhile Vedic scholar loses his mind and has a sexual relationship with a woman who lived three hundred years before him, and Sankaran who looks after the family business battles his erotic urges. It is only in tragic circumstances that Fate reveals who will carry on the line…

Abounding in unforgettable characters such as Subbamma who echoes the disasters to come, Swaminathan’s ghostly lover—a woman whose spirit wanders restlessly across time—Kitta Ayyan, who converts to Christianity, Vaithy who drowns his ego in onion sambar, his wife Gomati, the multi-talented Kottakudi dasi—The Ghosts of Arasur reminds us that reality is often stranger than fiction.

About the author: Era.Murukan (Murugan Ramasami) is a noted novelist, short story writer, poet, columnist and translator from Malayalam besides being a writer on information technology in Tamil. He is the recipient of various awards including the prestigious 'Katha' and 'Ilakkiya Chintanai' for literature.
Blood Ties is a harrowing tale of domestic violence and terror. Set in a small town in rural Tamil Nadu, it deals with a joint family of three brothers sternly presided over by their widowed mother. The story is narrated largely through the bewildered eyes of six-year-old Thambi. Intertwined with graphic accounts of blood-letting are scenes of the everyday life of the children, their little games and pranks—and the angelic ministrations of Thambi’s elder sister. Through this largely autobiographical story, related in a non-judgemental, compassionate, sometimes humorous style, poet and illustrator Yuma Vasuki—real name D Marimuthu—paints vivid word pictures and beguiles you into a surreal world of tragedy and redemption.
Indira Parthasarathy is at his sardonic best while dissecting the hypocrisies of Indian society. In this novel he lays bare the double standards of fiercely competitive men in the business world and their women forced to live in their shadows. Humour and compassion soften the blow and the reader is left with empathy for each of the characters—the ambitious company executive Arun, his talented wife imprisoned in his social circle, the ‘liberated’ Radhika with her own share of adversity, and the physically challenged artist-intellectual Damodaran. The scene of the action is New Delhi, but it could be anywhere.
Giridhar and Durga live a picture-perfect life until Giridhar is sent to the U.K. on work. Durga endures the separation but becomes increasingly worried as letters from Giridhar dry up. Unwilling to admit to her family and children that there is no news from her husband, Durga battles her fears alone. However, a final revelation sets her on a journey she had never thought she would undertake. A journey for truth.
Lizzy’s family is caught in a bind. Once the first family of the village, they now have nothing but their ‘respectability’ to fall back on. As members of other castes begin to overtake them in wealth and position, the menfolk of Lizzy’s family feel threatened. Change comes, but at the cost of many innocent lives.

Lizzy’s Legacy was published in Tamil in 1964 as Putham Veedu. It was the author’s first novel.
Twice Born
Vijay Raghavan
Page : 200
Rs. 200

Vijay Raghavan has been a professional journalist for three and a half decades and has worked in newspapers across the four metropolises of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai.

Twice Born is the tale of a man who embarks upon the conquest of unhappiness; and then on the conquest of happiness. On the way, he has to clear up the mess in his head created by a psychologically castrating marriage, a beloved son who becomes a Naxalite revolutionary and tortured by the police. He is helped on his voyage of rediscovering himself by a deus ex machina in the form of Dr Hekyll and Mr Jyde, two splinters of his splintered self.

'...an amazing novel that really digs into the psychological horrors of the mind with intricate detail. I thoroughly enjoyed this book.'
Indira Parthasarathy is a well known Indian playwright, short story writer and novelist writing in Tamil. He has received several honours for his writing, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi awards and the prestigious Saraswati Samman.

Mukundan can't wait to leave Tamil Nadu for New Delhi. He is in search of a job and a new life. He gets both, though not in the way he expects. Chance places him as a cook in the house of Mishra, a political king-maker, who recognises the young man's leadership potential. Mukundan is groomed for political success by Mishra and the seductive Sarla whose raw ambition both awes and repulses him. And when a political denouement is imminent, Mukundan realises that there is room at the top only for one of them.

Set in New Delhi at the height of Indira Gandhi's reign, Into this Heaven of Freedom (Swatantra Bhoomi) captures the intrigue, suspense, manoeuvring and one-upmanship that characterise politics.
The eeriness of Jayakanthan's two novellas in this volume is overwhelming and disturbing. The protagonists are helpless victims of psychological maladies. Their suppressed libido and Oedipus complex are areas Tamil writers generally dared not enter—at any rate in the 1960s, when they were written.

The brilliant introvert Rajaraman is the quintessential good boy. The play of circumstances kindles oedipal fancies in him. The incandescent consummation with Sarada Mami is a catharsis. A rishi is born looking at the world with a disdain at once benignly distant and compellingly personal.

Well-educated and well-employed Janaki lives under the protective cover of her paranoid, possessive, puritanical mother. Her healthy friendship with a collegemate of yesteryear promises liberation. Her short-lived taste of freedom is stamped out and she is sucked back into her mother's bizarre, overwhelming orbit.

The success of Jayakanthan lies in evoking in the reader a profound empathy with the tragically deviant characters of the two stories.
Neela Padmanabhan is a prolific writer in both Tamil and Malayalam, with eleven novels, six short story collections, a volume of poems and a collection of essays to his credit.

Through the life of Anantan Nair—the humble hero of this novel—we experience the tragedy of the ancient regime of princely India and traditional Kerala society, caught in a whirl of vulgar modernisation. As the rigid hierarchical social order of the Nairs, with the easy virtues of their matriarchal tribalism and the slow pace of an ambitionless life crumbles, Anantan Nair finds himself questioning his life's worth as a husband, father and man.

In this beautiful novel, Neela Padmanabhan has captured the soul of Trivandrum and laid it bare for us to see.

Translated from Tamil by M Dakshinamurthy

Cover Photograph Courtesy - Wikimedia Commons
Ashokamitran’s Today—translated from his Tamil novel Indru—is an avant garde departure from traditional forms of writing. The novel strings together a number of genres such as narrative fiction, poetry, lectures and a newspaper interview to produce a rare amalgam of fiction and recent history. The condition of freedom fighters in free India, social evils like dowry, corruption and crass commercialism, institutions like marriage and politics are highlighted as problems that occupy centre stage today. The period chosen for such delineation is immediately before and after the imposition of a national emergency by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Anger, persecution, lack of compassion and tolerance find their counterpoint in a father figure—perhaps a veiled reference to the Father of the Nation whose dreams lie shattered in the present. Today is also for all time. Its concerns are universal, its people are of flesh and blood. It raises serious questions about the validity of the value systems governing our lives in an increasingly complex world. It is without doubt a trailblazer in post-modern Tamil literature. Translated from Tamil by Shanti Sivaraman
PS Sri’s The Temple Elephant is a novel meant for all those with a young heart, a vivid imagination and a thirst for divine love. Narrated from the viewpoint of an elephant, it may be called a bestiary with a socio-political and spiritual message. The novel opens with an eloquent description of an ancient South Indian temple in which the aged elephant, Kesavan, is serving God. As he ambles along the streets of a temple town with the silver image of Krishna on his back, Kesavan recalls his past. His turbulent youth and manhood in the jungle, his capture in a keddah operation, his sufferings at the hands of his tormentors, his revenge, and finally his willing submission to the Maharishi, his guru, who not only saves him from slavery and death, but also shows him a path of love and self-surrender that eventually brings him to serve in an ancient temple. Set against the backdrop of the British Raj, the novel takes its readers on an odyssey from the beautiful jungles of South India through the opulence of palace life to the serene simplicity of an ashram.
This is the work of a young writer still evolving into the major literary force he was expected to become—before a drowning accident in 1987 snatched him away when he was barely 45. The novel explores the psyche of several individuals playing superficial roles in their daily encounters with life in a largely metropolitan setting. Most of them are prisoners of their images or rather the images they wish to project to the world. Insecurity and their sense of alienation prevent them from realising their potential as students, lovers, parents, company executives. Aadhavan juxtaposes characters from very different backgrounds and lets the reader listen to the inner voices of these diverse personalities while they interact with one another and when they are apart. The voices are sometimes strident, at other times gentle, but they keep up a constant dialogue with the reader. Despite all the introspection and self-examination of its characters, Paper Flowers is not a grim tale but one laced with humour and self-deprecation. An outstanding representative of the emerging Tamil fiction of the 1970s.
Jayakanthan (b.1934) is known for his original thinking and thought-provoking ideas. A prolific writer, he has two autobiographies, two biographies, several novels and novellas, anthologies of short stories and essays to his credit. He is a Jnanpith Award-winner and a recipient of the Chennai Samskrita Academy award. His broad canvas often has characters drawn from the lower echelons of life, brought to life by his unique treatment.

Once an Actress is about an intense interplay of emotions in a relationship punctuated by intolerance, separation and eventual reunion. An essentially cerebral columnist, Ranga is a sensitive person struggling to overcome his feudal upbringing. For an actress brought up on mainstream theatre, Kalyani is a connoisseur of arts of uncommon maturity. Ranga adores Kalyani but seeks constant evidence of her love for him. Kalyani finds her life’s meaning in her involvement with Ranga. Love for her is sincerity, honesty and compassion, not its overt demonstration. This unsettles Ranga. A helpless victim of his chauvinistic pettiness with its thin veneer of intellectual gloss, Ranga seeks and obtains separation from Kalyani. The eventual reunion with a now disabled Kalyani is a moving denouement.
Indira Parthasarathy is the nom de plume of Professor R Parthasarathy, a well-known Indian playwright, short story writer and novelist writing in Tamil. He has received several honours for his writing, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi awards and the prestigious Saraswati Samman. He has so far published fifteen novels, six anthologies of short stories, ten plays and a collection of essays.

Among the most significant of Indira Parthasarathy’s novels, **Wings in the Void** explores the wheeling and dealing, ambition and greed that rule the lives of countless upwardly mobile Indians caught up in the intrigues of the political and diplomatic circles of Delhi in the 1960s. Into this complex world arrives Kasturi, a young intellectual in the making from a small town in Tamil Nadu, in search of wealth, success and personal freedom. The novel is an account of his mental and emotional evolution. What Kasturi achieves—and loses in the process—mirrors the experiences of many young modern urban Indians in their struggle for a better life.
Vaasanthi, former editor of India Today’s Tamil edition, has authored 30 novels, six short story collections, two volumes of journalistic articles and four travelogues. As a novelist and journalist, she has been a champion of human rights, gender issues, and communal harmony.

This work, Aakasa Veedugal, has been translated into Hindi and Czech.

A Home in the Sky is the story of the yearnings of an innocent child Raju, brutalised by a repressed, self-righteous father Sabhesan, who wallows in the misery of his self-imposed, rigid orthodoxy. Raju’s angelic mother Lalita and adoring elder cousin Meenu—a fiery city-bred girl on the verge of adulthood—are the child’s only hope, but they cannot save him from the cruelties of his life.

On a visit to the village, Meenu decides to stay on to study in a nearby college, drawn to the aunt she loves and admires and the cousin she feels she must protect. The handsome young lecturer Hariharan is a distraction she fails to combat, while his disabled sister poses a fresh challenge. The nascent romance between her and Hariharan soon runs into trouble.

Tragedy breaks the hitherto unrepentant Sabhesan and for the first time Meenu begins to understand Lalita’s patience with her autocratic husband. And love blossoms once again in her own life.
Sivasankari has written with great awareness on social issues and social problems. Globally recognised and honoured for her writings, she is the recipient of several awards. Her works have been translated into many Indian languages, English, Japanese and Ukrainian.

Knit India Through Literature is her mega-project involving intense sourcing, research and translation of literature from 18 Indian languages, with a mission to introduce Indians to other Indians through culture and literature.

Bridges is a saga of three generations of Tamil brahmin women. The novel gives the reader rare glimpses into customs and traditions typical of each period it covers—with an unjaundiced eye, great attention to detail, compassion and humour.

The women in Bridges—the central figures in the novel—are quite often strong characters. Each succeeding generation of women is stronger and more emancipated than the previous one.

The story spans nearly a century and although its women have different life experiences, they face them with courage and dignity. The men too provide an interesting mix of characters, each a product of his time and milieu. In the process of telling this compelling family history, Sivasankari succeeds in capturing the many nuances of the lifestyles of the times.
Ashokamitran has been an internationally recognised Tamil writer of fiction for decades, known for the wry detachment and spare prose of his writing. His novels have been translated into English, Tamil, Telugu and other languages. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of short stories entitled ‘Appavin Snehitargal’ (‘Father’s Friends’) in 1996.

Star-Crossed is a novel about the world of Tamil cinema minus the glamour. It takes a keen look at the lives of film-makers, technicians, producers and actors. Turning the spotlight on the fringes of the entertainment world, Ashokamitran exposes the daily trials and a tribulation of a cast of characters none too familiar to those who equate the world of celluloid with the proverbial dream factory.

The original Tamil title, Karainda Nizhalgal, conveys the tragedy and uncertainty inherent in the lives of these providers of mass entertainment, whose fortunes rise and fall or sink altogether with the making of a film. Simply told, the tale reveals the nitty-gritty of the ordinary lives in the shadows that collaborate to create magic for the silver screen. Told in simple, unsentimental language, the story is nonetheless profoundly moving.
Jayakanthan, born in 1934, is among the most eminent and influential writers in Tamil. He has won acclaim as a combative and thought-provoking author, with over 10 novels, 30 novellas and 100 short stories as well as numerous essays to his credit. He has received many awards, among them the prestigious Jnanpith Award in 2002 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1972. He is also a Fellow of the Sahitya Akademi.

Jayakanthan's novel, Love and Loss, is a sensitive 'slice of life' story that explores the lives of Thangam, a construction worker and her son Chitti, born out of wedlock. The squalid slums of erstwhile Madras, now Chennai, form the grimy background to the tender drama of a woman trying to find an anchor to her life in a roadside astrologer she befriends, and the furious resentment and protest this engenders in her son.

Originally titled Unnai Pol Oruvan in Tamil, it portrays a milieu that was not often the stuff of fiction in the 1960s. It was made into an award-winning film.
**Indira Parthasarathy** is the nom de plume of Professor R Parthasarathy, a well known Indian playwright, short story writer and novelist writing in Tamil. He has received several honours for his writing, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi awards and the prestigious Saraswati Samman. He has so far published fifteen novels, six anthologies of short stories, ten plays and a collection of essays.

Indira Parthasarathy calls Krishna a metaphor that ‘fulfils all the dark and lurking desires in our deep Unconscious and represents the collective vision of the community as a whole.’ In his view, Krishna cannot be judged by the ‘moral yardstick’ set for others either.

Using the pansophical Narada as the narrator widens the scope of the novel and helps contemporize its concerns. Beginning with Jara the hunter shooting an arrow at Krishna’s feet in the aftermath of the Kurukshetra war, the author has Narada telling the story of Krishna as revealed to Jara by Krishna. Indira Parthasarathy’s Krishna is not only an amalgam of the Harivamsam, Sri Bhagavatam, Vishnu Purana and the Mahabharata but the vehicle that carries their cultural and aesthetic themes into a literary discussion of the idea of Krishna.
Aadhavan was the nom de plume of the late K S Sundaram (1942-87). In a brief span of time, he wrote two significant novels, a play and more than fifty short stories. A Sahitya Akademi Award winner, Aadhavan brought a refreshing new style to Tamil fiction. His books, mostly short stories, set in the urban milieu of his time, gave expression to the middle class of an entire generation.

Aadhavan's novel traces the emotional evolution of an adolescent growing into young adulthood. Infatuation, calf love, flirtations, love outside-marriage the yearnings and disappointments that lead to the growth and maturity of a young college student are the theme of the story. As Ramaseshan is himself the narrator, the reader is privy to his innermost doubts and inferences, not to mention the shifting focus of his attentions. Written with humour and insight, the novel also touches on the gaps between generations trying to understand each other and the slow dawning of clues to complete this exercise successfully.