

## **Pangs of the Gopis**

© Chinmoy Mukherjee 2025-2045. No part of this document may be used without explicit written permission from the author.

This is a work of fiction. All characters, events, and places are entirely fictional, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Pangs of the Gopis

Introduction

Gopi 1

Gopi 2

Gopi 3

Gopi 4

Gopi 5

Gopi 6

Gopi 7

Gopi 8

Gopi 9

Gopi 10

Gopi 11

Gopi 12

Gopi 13

Gopi 14

Gopi 15

Gopi 16

Gopi 17

Gopi 18

Gopi 19

Gopi 20

Gopi 21

Gopi 22

Gopi 23

Gopi 24

Gopi 25

Conclusion

# Introduction

In the hallowed geography of the heart, there exists no landscape more sacred or more sorrowful than the groves of Vraja immediately following Krishna's departure for Mathura. The poems collected here, "*Pangs of the Gopis*," are not merely literary expressions of heartbreak; they are the crystallized tears of the soul, capturing the pinnacle of devotional theology known as *vipralambha-bhava*—love in separation. When Akrura's chariot carried Krishna away, he did not simply remove a person from a village; he ripped the sun from the sky of Vraja, plunging the cowherd maidens into a twilight of eternal longing.

These verses invite the reader into a world where sensory perception has been painfully heightened by absence. In Vraja, without Govinda, every sense object becomes a weapon. The cool, fragrant breeze from the Yamuna, once a source of delight during the *rasa* dance, now burns like the breath of a forest fire. The call of the cuckoo and the hum of the bumblebee, once the orchestra of their union, now sound like the jeers of fate. The visual tapestry of Vṛndavana—the emerald tamala trees, the sapphire river, the golden dust raised by cows—remains vividly colorful, yet for the Gopis, these colors are washed in the grey pallor of grief. They see his form in the dark rainclouds, they smell his aguru scent in the wet earth, and they feel the ghost of his touch in the brushing leaves.

The twenty-five voices articulated here represent a spectrum of emotional responses to this divine abandonment: anger, jealousy, humility, madness, and resigned adoration. Some Gopis blame the Creator for giving them eyelids that blink and interrupt their vision; others blame the horses that pulled the chariot. Yet, beneath the accusations of cruelty and the envy of the city women of Mathura, there lies an unyielding, iron-strong devotion. They do not seek liberation (*moksha*) or heavenly opulence; they seek only the dust of his feet. As you step into these poems, prepare to walk on that dust, illuminated by the flickering lamps of memory and scented with the crushing weight of a love that survives even when the Beloved is gone.

## Gopi 1

*Oh Krishna, shimmering dark as the heavy monsoon cloud,  
You left us while lightning flashed against the sudden grey,  
Like a wandering bee forsakes the wilted forest blooms,  
To sip cold nectar from Mathura's fair and golden maids.  
My heart, that once danced in rasa's silver moonlit circle,  
Now weeps alone, craving your aguru-scented hand,  
Hearing only the wind where once your bamboo flute would play.  
The forest green has turned to ash in your long absence;  
I smell the fading jasmine and faint with deep despair—  
Return, Govinda, and quench this scarlet fire of longing!*

## Gopi 2

*Beloved of Yadus, your lips' enchanting, reddish draught  
We tasted once, sweet as the nectar of the celestial moon,  
Then you vanished to city lights and lamps of burnished gold,  
Embracing rivals whose heavy breasts crush your wild-flower  
garland.*

*I see your playful glances in every shifting shadow,  
Your generous smile haunting Vraja's blue, rippling rivers.  
The scent of musk still lingers where you used to stand,  
And the call of the peacock mimics your distant laughter.  
How can I forget, when your name is my very breath?  
Come back, before the colors of my world fade to white.*

### Gopi 3

*Like a hunter's arrow piercing the monkey king in the wild,  
Your absence strikes my soul, cruel and swift as thunder.  
In Mathura, you revel with women of fortune and jewels,  
While I, a simple Gopi, cling to memories of your flute's low hum.  
Your lotus feet marked our paths with crimson signs—  
Come, tread them again, crushing the soft grass of Vraja,  
And heal this wound with your deceptive, glittering charm.  
The yellow silk of your garments is all I wish to see,  
As the scent of crushed tulasi leaves rises from the earth.  
Return, O dark one, and paint our grey lives with joy.*