

## Lamentation of a fisherboy

He stands alone  
On the surf-beaten shore  
In rags, gazing...  
His ninah has set out to sea  
In the early hour of the dawn.  
Laments he, no amma do I have!  
Even before I wake to see the break of day,  
He's gone...my ninah to the sea  
On his kattumaram  
Battling the waves,  
Braving the ruthless sea, he's gone...  
What will he return with this time,  
His net weighing down with the a harvest catch  
Or will it be yet another day we'll go hungry, his mind queries,  
He tosses a coin in the air,  
A strong wind blows and screams aloud with joy,  
Ah! its heads  
My ninah sure will return with his net full  
And we'll make merry again!  
His hopes soar high...  
As he sights a Kattumaram tossing on the rough waves,  
He claps his hands with joy,  
Ah! my ninah is coming!  
In a flash his destiny changed;  
Cruel fate has struck again,  
Where is my ninah? rants he in a fury  
Have the merciless waves swept him away?  
The other fishermen return  
Hide not the truth from me, he cries,  
A deep gloom fogs his mind  
As the fishermen drop down their heads in sorrow,  
His heart sinks in despair  
As he stands there on the surf-beaten shore gazing...  
Gazing...at the empty sea!

— Catherine Joseph

Ninah: Father  
Amma: Mother  
Kattumaram: Country craft