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Goat Days: The art of writing and the task of translating

Joseph Koyippally

Goat Days (Penguin 2012, Seagull 2016), the English translation of the Malayalam novel *Aadujeevitham* (2008), has made it necessary for English-reading Indians to recognize its author Benyamin as one of the important young writers at work today. The success of *Goat Days* is the result of its uniquely moving and powerful story beautifully told in a universal and almost mythical mode. Such stories could speak to anyone, anywhere, and would work in any language for any readership be - it popular or literary. *Goat Days* got wide critical appreciation, international literary recognition, academic interest, and importantly succeeded in the market. This is an effort to document the process of the translation of *Goat Days* and to analyse it from a translator's perspective.

I came across *Aadujeevitham* by chance and that too at Kulanada, Benyamin's village, after my return from Saudi Arabia and joining the Central University of Kerala (CUK) in 2009. We didn't know each other as both of us had been expatriates in India and abroad for long—he, since the 90s and I, a little longer. Like all other readers of *Aadujeevitham*, I too was struck by its powerful story. I was happier, though, to have found a material fit to be included in the syllabus of a postgraduate elective course on Diaspora Studies, which I was designing for CUK, where I had joined a couple of months earlier. I translated it into English in two months' time in between my regular work, and kept supplying it incrementally to my students as I progressed. In order to showcase Gulf diaspora in my postgraduate elective course