

Mum, saying goodbye to you is one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. You were not only my mother, but you were also my strength, my comfort, and my constant support.

You filled our home with love, warmth, and laughter through your beautiful and yummy cooking, and your joy in bringing people together. No one ever left our house hungry, and no one ever left without feeling welcome.

You were an amazing cook and a natural entertainer, but above all, you were an extraordinary grandmother. You cared for my children with so much love, patience, and devotion. In your presence they were safe, steady, and deeply loved, and that is a gift I will carry forever. The memories you created with them will live on in their hearts and mine, always.

Thank you, Mum, for everything you gave us your time, your care, your sacrifices, and your unconditional love. Our lives are richer because of you. You will always be with us, in our meals, our gatherings, our stories and in the love we pass on to our children.

Rest peacefully, Mum, with Papa. You are forever loved and forever missed.

- Thevi Chelliah

Ammama life was more than everything, it was a life that was rich with love, strength, sacrifice, and wisdom.

Ammama was the heart of our family. She was someone who held us together through good times and hard times, often without saying very much, but always doing so much.

My Ammama lived a life defined by care for others. She gave endlessly, her time, her energy, her love, often putting everyone else first. It showed up in the way she worried about us, fed us, prayed for us, and made sure we were okay, even when she herself was tired or unwell.

She had a quiet strength about her. She endured hardships that many of us will never fully understand, yet she carried herself with dignity and resilience. She taught us, simply by example, what it means to persevere and to keep going even when life is not easy.

What I will remember most is her presence. Just knowing she was there gave a sense of comfort and stability. She didn't need to be loud to be powerful. Her love was constant, and that constancy is something we will feel deeply now that she is gone.

There is sadness in knowing that she is gone, and that's natural. But there is also gratitude. Gratitude that we had her in our lives. Gratitude for the memories, the lessons, and the values she passed on to us. Gratitude for the legacy she leaves behind, not in things, but in people.

Her love lives on in her children, her grandchildren, and everyone whose life she touched. And as long as we carry her values with us, kindness, patience, resilience, and love for family, a part of her will always remain.

Ammama, thank you for everything you gave us. You were deeply loved, and you will be deeply missed. May you rest in peace, knowing your life mattered and your love endures.

- Deshan Cheliah

## My Ammamamah

There are people who love you loudly, and people who love you daily. Ammamamah loved in the daily way. In the kind of love that shows up as food on the stove, hands in your hair, prayers in the background and a presence that makes a house feel like a home.

Ammamamah had a way of loving that didn't stop when you got older, or when life got busy, or when you technically didn't "need" looking after anymore. Even when we were grown, she carried that same watchful care. I'll never forget her calling me at 2am Darwin time, waking me up because she was scared. She told me Amma hadn't come home yet. And what hit me was this, Amma was already in her 50s and still, in Ammamamah's eyes, she was her child. I could hear the worry in her voice and that moment captures Ammamamah's caring ways perfectly.

I still remember being in primary school, crying to her about a girl who had perfect French braids. I wanted them so badly. Ammamamah didn't know how to do French braids, but that did not stop her. She did a modified version and I walked into school feeling cooler than I deserved. That was Ammamamah. She might not have had the exact method, but she always found a way.

Ammamah taught me Thevarums, not just the words, but the feeling of devotion, discipline, and being anchored to something bigger than yourself. She fed me while I was finishing Year 12, the way only a grandmother can. She massaged my legs while I trained for my arangetram, soothing the ache, but also quietly giving me the motivation to push on. She didn't just support my milestones; she carried them with me.

Food was one of the ways Ammamamah loved most clearly. Whenever we landed in Singapore to visit her, she made sure our favourite foods were waiting for us. No matter the hour, the kitchen would come alive again, sometimes even late at night, making fresh thosais just for Appa.

And for my Amma, despite technically being adopted out of the family, Ammamamah never treated her any differently. She never treated any of us differently.

Even though Ammamamah couldn't travel much herself, when I could travel, I tried to bring her with me. I sent her postcards all through my first Europe trip. I video-called her from multiple beaches across the globe, wineries, churches, wonders of the world, holding the phone up so she could share in the beauty with me. Whenever I was in Singapore, I made sure to take her out or bring food home for us to share. We always ate more than we were meant to, and the best part was her cheeky smile as we did.

Ammamma's life made a difference. Not in a loud, performative way, through how she simply showed up. So today, Ammamamah, I am not saying goodbye to you.

Instead, I would like to thank you.

Thank you for raising me with gentleness and strength.

Thank you for teaching me devotion.

Thank you for loving me in the everyday ways that become the foundation of my life.

And even though I feel the ache of losing you, Amamma, I also feel the gift of having had you.

I will carry you in my voice when I sing thevarums.

In my heart when I travel to places that you never got to go to.

And in the way I love others.

Rest peacefully, Ammamma.

We will miss you more than words can hold. And we will honour you by living full and always striving to be the best versions of ourselves.

- Venaska Cheliah

Mamee, from the moment I joined this family, you treated me like a son.

You helped us when we were building our home by advising on customs and the appropriate timing for key steps. You were always very practical.

You made peanut biscuits for Thevi to bring back for me and when I visited, you made my favourite, puttu. You also opened your home to Amma and my siblings and made sure they were comfortable. When I was working away, you looked after my wife and children. You supported Thevi and taught my children their culture.

Thank you for everything you have done for us.

- Thiagus Cheliah





