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## Games Gods Play

A. P. Govindankuty

The golden swan had assured him  
He was enshrined in her heart,  
Yet he was disconsolate  
When gods descending on him  
Commanded to plead with her  
Their suit of her hand.  
True to his breeding  
He obeyed the gods;  
Well did he play his role  
Persuading her of their merits.

In the royal court,  
When it was time for her  
To choose her consort,  
The treacherous gods  
Donned his looks  
And arrayed with him  
But fool her they couldn't,  
She chose him right,  
Placed around his neck,  
Eyes beaming with love,  
The wedding garland,  
Of flowers that never wither,  
Though at first she was put out  
At the games  
Gods sought to play  
With mortals on earth.

Decking defeat with grace,  
Showering their blessings  
And bestowing boons  
On the young couple,  
To their abodes  
Departed the gods.

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*Based on Nalacharitham. The gods are Indra, Agni, Varuna and Yama.*