

## ***sea fragments: :the prelude***

### **book: :childhood**

Shallow voices: in your voice I birth  
a spidersilk thread of morning, an open  
wound, an infant's fingers, the music of  
burdened rainclouds over the Alps. I birth  
a heart of mineral,  
a voice singing an unnamed raga—

I know you dream of summer, your bare limbs  
growing among the tall grasses,  
dreaming of languorous strawberries by  
the riverbank. Your ankles go light  
as you stand in an empty riverbed,

ghosts of waters rushing by them.  
When you lean down to take a sip,  
sand blindfolds you: the murmuring  
sediments of riverbeds pull you down;  
*you are one of me,*  
    *one of me,*  
    *one of me.*

### **book: :summer vacation**

At your feet you see: a fleet of  
dragonflies, a wet wind, all aflame  
with the hot fires of a trapped summer.  
Mancala games with cowry shells:  
let out the trapped sea from within the shells,

save those of us burning inside.  
You are still young, *play*.  
Another summer of pallanguzhi  
even wild birds have left, migrating  
to some cooler monoliths,  
staying adrift, flowering

in some distant rock, their  
elemental rhythm transiting rain—  
search for rain,  
    search for new  
                    sanctuary,  
count your shells before you sleep

### **book: :retrospect**

We saw it coming and we did nothing. Or:  
*we did what we could*, in the blazing  
heat of noon, scrambling for the changing  
sun, hardening, solidifying, like fossils,  
like crystal...

The days departed start again to life,  
you put your heart of mineral

along the seabed, covering it with  
algae, promising a new life to come.  
Year after year we unearth bleached corals

their empty polyps inanimate with  
fish spirits, murmuring the times of  
ice and snow. The currents collect  
sound and age, leaving it,  
leaving me,  
washed up on a distant shore, watching  
you and your curved bones

**book: :imagination and taste**  
**[not restored]**

Utter loss of hope itself: a hummingbird  
sings of Man's haughty race into  
my ear, for the dearth of flowers.  
A quiet sound — as you whisper:  
*the hummingbird is losing its voice*

and so we return it to the sea,  
our feet burned by the pebbly shore,  
the hot winds carrying scents of  
tuberose, exile, decaying salmon,  
fuel. You are all grown now

breathless with age, your presence  
an abyss. You have still not  
lived long enough, but you lived longer  
than the hummingbird. This is the only life  
you bring life to, wash your hands in

the sea, the earth's sacred words  
flaming over your back. I met you first  
at the temple, your feet wet with  
milk, turmeric, crushed petals. We  
do not forget, our gods do not  
forget.

We have dared to tread this holy ground  
speaking no dream — no longer  
do gods speak to us, their sea-blue skins  
marking our hands. We call on darkness  
& are submerged in the sea,

its midnight dream closing over us  
as our bodies float with jasmine garlands  
over and forgotten  
vapours of tongues  
dust of sediment