

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