

## **Invitation**

Come down from Mt Olympus.  
I've lit and tended fires for you,  
with sandalwood,  
and camphor,  
its dense smoke, hope-  
transporting my longing.  
Fruit trees have laboured  
over these long months for our repast-  
gilded plates bursting with pomegranate  
fertile, red, turgid seeds,  
fragrant fleshy oranges,  
with their mottled skins.  
And grapes of varying hues,  
Still, you are not here.

I call you from Mt Kailash,  
I have jasmine, and  
cotton threads soaked in ittar.  
Even with the two together  
my heady, scented bliss dissipates,  
all too soon.  
And I say to myself,  
to remember you,  
I will keep my fingertips  
stained all day-  
so others will know  
how I anointed myself,  
for you, in vermillion.

Are you at Mt Meru?

I have flags

tied in the wind

Lost, they writhe,

not knowing where to go

or what to do.

My prayer drum rolls on its own now.

A learned behaviour,

a muscle memory all of its own,

as the clouds, crisp, and sharp roll by

on a sea of ultramarine.

As for me,

there is nowhere else to go.

You see,

I am good at waiting,

especially at the shrine of you.

## **Moon**

Let me distil

the Spirit from

your glow.

Intoxicating

in a weave of three,

like braided waves

it falls,

squandered wastefully

upon this cemented floor.

I would rather  
gather you in bottles,  
hoard you, knowing  
that you could not leave  
me then, even when  
the sun comes up.  
I would drink, sip by sip  
sparingly,  
but in defiance  
at the face of day.

### **Haiku**

Lips ready to touch  
a safe place, my morning cup  
betrayed by hot tea.

***Maya Bhalla** is a visual artist, living and working in Singapore. When she is not hands deep in clay or paint, she can be found at the local Kopitiam reading; and because the hours of the day are never enough, it is the writing that happens in the blackest times of the night.*



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