

Lakshmi Gill

A Puja in Turmeric

Down the Strait of Spices I sail  
my right palm facing outwards  
against the assault of a masala of memories.

How he would have loved it here  
in this supermarket aisle of sacred geometry  
where God numbers them—  
sweet saffron to cure his depression,  
holy basil for his stress, yellow turmeric  
for his chicken curry—

black cardamom foams wash over me.  
Hot. Sting my eyes.

That was April, dead of winter.  
In three months, he would have flown here  
from that backwater town, alien to the bone.

I sail down a horizontal line  
filled with ginger, coriander, cinnamon, cumin,  
red chilli powder—Oh, the tastes of my father!—  
down a hallowed grove, my only yantra  
this poem for regeneration.