

Alpana Sharma

Afghanistan

After all's done
But not said
No, not said
Nearly enough,
The orphans still howl
For their mothers
In the closed
Unloved
Spaces of the war zone

Between grown-up battle lines
That were drawn
Long before those shrieks
Hit our ears,
We paused
In our exertions
At the mall of
Endless shopping
And asked,
Of this ignorance
What forgiveness?
But knew the answer already—

It is from now
As it always was
Too late,
Too late to unclench
The petrifying clutch
Of infant fingers
Drone-struck in awe
Of the machine that overtook them.