

Muse in the Museum

Water seen from the back
as full as the front,
The façade with no pretense,
no form finds force timeless
how we prefer
could be one drop, or entirety.

The falls over the concrete
blocks celebrate man's conquering—
Copper coins and silver refraction
the pool offers to man's wishes,
where without will
nothing comes true,
without truth nothing lasts.

How the lines man shapes,
shapes forming possibilities
how light becomes color—
Lines indulging inflections,
how color is made of light.

There is so much life
in this ordinary life,
her streets and quiet defeats
his bravados and unknown alleys
it's hands crossing the forks of alliance.

Rufino Tamayo's "The Lovers"
speak with hands—
Face to face on canvas
beings assimilate in space,
ceiling a face of sky brooding
their gaze, a sea in its noblest expanse.

A willow writes on glass.
It's cursive afternoon signature
staircasing the high-rise,
Light shifts light
in myriad body languages
no human will fully decipher.

—Varsha Shah
February 28, 2003

Mother at Other End

Distance caught between cables,
I capture her in a box,
Our Shakti circulating matters and motions
easterly and westward like a toggle switch.

Without moving we meet
connecting on airwaves
shifting countries in spurts—
the marvel only glasswire could deliver.

Our intonations are tongues
in color, a fine art
of weaving conversation's face
inside the dark tunnel of sturdy filaments.

Longer we ramble more nostalgic turns
this riff of women lore
in a jamming of the said, the unsaid
What's told in not telling.

As we spring across maps
of blood, soil, cries and memories,
In the cable we sojourn—
From this shelter what force could take us apart?

I catch her gripping the mouthpiece,
Our gazes astounded in the chamber—
How voices assimilate two lands
oceans apart, into ears' caves—
How we belong inside our longings.

—Varsha Shah
March 18, 2003