

MIRAJI

AN EVENING ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE WINE GLASS

“This isn’t a goblet.” I pick up a glass
slicer,
Pick it up and toss it into clear pond
water
to make some ripples.
Whose hand lifted the veil of day and
night?
So that the dancer, pirouetting on her
glittering leg
unveiled a glimpse of a signpost,
seduced, drew my glance to her.

Bring it here.
Let the swan-goblet swim on.
Bring it here.
I’ll drink every drag of thirsty thought.

Why should forgetfulness clutch my
skirt? Isn’t she the
whore whose shawl traps thousands
of heaving breaths
that foolishly ripple and dissolve?

My dried, half-dead wrist holds
spilling space,
in my every vein, blood drops shiver—
sweat on the dancer’s forehead.

Whose soft hennaed finger stroked the
blue lotus
so that every petal shivered? [...]

I fear my atrophied loneliness may now
dissolve.

Get up, come to me . . . come to me . .
. why're you so unsure?
What were you drinking to? Why did
you boast:
I have to drink the blood of my past
life.
Go away, bring the sleeping dancer,
who with her cold eyes,
with a single pat, puts my bounding
heart
to sleep in warm sighs.

I must live. I will crush this moment
with a snap of my fingers and make
it
a witness and confidant of endless
time.

Bring it here.
Let the swan-goblet swim to me,

Let the scene rise up again that once
stood in front of me
and suggested to me:
“Your every breath is death-bound.”
Your bright flowering face has made my
dust-heap blossom,
it shook me up, as a gust of wind
sweeps a dried petal along,
never stopping
flows along, flows along, sweeps along.

Have you ever seen the sparks in a
fireplace?
Laughingly stroking your cheek,
painted red
every finger [...]

oozes blood.

A thin sliver of a delicate succulent fruit
 touches
 my tongue, look—
 the simple whiteness of a plain robe
 crushes dry leaves.

Stay wrapped around me.
 Let me imagine that a sip of your arms
 will make my heart giddy,
 or shall I
 in profound emptiness
 black darkness
 rocking and rocking again,
 close my wet eyes?

This morning-robe betrays the secret:
 Don't think, silence is better.
 But a wave splattered with foam comes
 flooding
 across my thoughts.

Bring it here.
 Every twisting movement of the swan's
 warm throat makes
 the billows in the dancer's skirt
 swing,
 who until now
 sat hidden at my side.

But
 why do you regard me like a foolish
 child?
 I am not a foolish child,
 nor are you a foolish child—

I understand!
 Whenever the swan-goblet keeps time
 with the gurgling wine flask, [...]

the smooth surface of the wine
bubbles,
and each bubble is a foolish child—
each touches the dancer's skirt
calls out to the past night,
and dissolves.

I said
I've always said
I alone will clutch the dancer's skirt.

And each bubble will cry like a foolish
child,
each is a secret,
that I alone can unravel.
Casually forgetful,
each says again and again
bring it here.
But nobody listens.
Let the glass swan swim on.

Tired, the dancer returns to my
embrace,
and I too feel that I might go to sleep.

Take your white dress off,
don't stay wrapped up
my dried petal
Plucking you like this
I will turn you into a garden, so that

every flower cluster will suddenly
glitter.

Let the glass swan swim on.
Let the swan swim to me.
I am not blind. Yes
Let the swan go on swimming.

—*Translated by Geeta Patel*