

**the villagers say *our plants*,**

forgetting the reason  
for this dirge of rain, trance full  
of girlhood songs. the jaher era  
blooms. still, the villagers say  
*ripe for magic*, keep the women  
indoors while blood lets  
& lets. blood in the soil, so they call it  
*filth*. blood on our legs, so they call us  
*gone*. they know a lost cause  
as it melts, know there's no  
diluting here. here where the rice beer  
starts & stays warm. they say  
*too much skin*, & who can blame them.  
even as the rain falls, we create  
our own heat.

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forgetting the reason  
for this raining  
dirge, trance full  
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*ripe for magic*, keep us  
indoors while blood  
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## lucky inhabitant

failing to conjure even distant relatives i know not  
which women precede me believe all this pain is at least  
our own on my lap the books theorize

[witchcraft is no longer a personal matter]  
state plainly [the women had nails  
driven into their foreheads] & full up now with steel

& scythes & a list of weapons wielded  
against us am nauseous & taking it personally though  
at least am not asked to detail my assault on television

holding my chin up for photographers dubbed *icon*  
& simultaneously driven out of the nation yes  
you might say this makes me one of the lucky

inhabitants yes here there are no jackfruit  
trees but in a chamber the semi-circle of [men had red eyes—  
the kind of eyes that saw no reason and were filled

with cruelty] while somewhere online i am blamed  
for not remembering yes some victims are men  
& i won't fight back know what fate awaits

women who protest too much no matter dialect  
or country the question is the same *ki jani* they ask  
in the motherland & *who knows* here we throw up

our hands & it isn't in prayer  
there's blood in the soil so they call it *filth* blood  
on our legs so they call us *gone* they're not wrong

& they will not be fools won't take it back  
it's night & the jackfruit trees close in there's chanting  
in the distance who runs this world

## daayan summons a bottle

the men develop a system to get what they want. any way  
to the bottom of a bottle is one they'll pioneer : moonlit paths  
through the pale green growth, they trade tea leaves,  
tobacco, ghee. they trade what we women  
toiled. naturally, we sneak sips, dilute the remainder  
with river water like we're inquisitive children, slinking  
through our own homes, careful not to step too heavy.  
i'm the only one who takes full flasks like this. that's not why  
they want my clothes or what's underneath. they don't know  
their own skin glows amber—we all sweat it out  
the same. our teeth slump against gums & all our bones  
whittle down. maybe they feel a bright yellow in their lungs,  
the unsung chakra, & think it's my fault that their feet  
slur the dirt, how they want to pull us  
into their arms, kiss us flat on the forehead, tell each other  
they're capable of so much love. in the moments before  
blackout, all their limbs ablaze with heat, the whole world  
seems like rice beer—possible & warm & fused. perhaps they awake  
in the fields the next morning, dew melting into their too-  
ready pores, & don't remember how they fell asleep : safe  
in each other's arms, we women still lucid, still  
drinking, preparing the rice for tomorrow.

## daayan after a village feast

any way to the bottom of a bottle is one the men  
will pioneer. moonlit paths through the pale green  
growth. they trade tea leaves, tobacco, ghee. they trade

what we women toiled. naturally, we sneak sips, dilute  
the remainder like kids—slinking on packed mud, careful  
not to step too heavy. i'm the only one who takes

full flasks like this. that's not why they want  
my pasture. they don't know their own skin  
glows amber—we all sweat it out the same.

our teeth slump against gums & all our bones  
whittle down. maybe they feel bright yellow  
in their lungs, the unsung chakra, & think it's my fault

their feet slur the dirt. they pull me in with spindly arms,  
kiss me flat on the forehead, let the brandy breathe  
their half-lie : how capable they are of love.

moments before the blackout, all their limbs  
ablaze, the whole world seems possible & warm  
& fused. what intoxicating survival—they sleep

unarmed, sloughed against fences while i sneak bottles  
from their loose fists, tuck them into our baskets,  
& we steal into the woods—