

**Pola, in his later years**  
Khando Langri

counts dirty rupees  
sacred beads  
dried orange peels  
for the train ride  
to the monastery.  
trembling fingers  
teach pala the grammar  
of change: what separates  
the intentional from  
the unintentional,  
how action determines  
the inflection of verbs.  
the language of grief is  
one of shuffling feet  
full body prostration  
braced against the humid  
winds of karma  
lowered fists  
the size of prayer wheels  
calloused hands ask  
foreign earth

**Mola, in her early years**

holds chisel  
against rock, palms  
against forehead  
while heavy braids swing  
in tune with flint,  
earrings, spoon  
all lost in time (but not yet)  
in this poem she returns:  
to the children with  
twine wrapped waists  
the black wool tent  
too hot for Indian sun

to bear witness      to the flowers she plants  
sometimes - in dreams-

I see him;      in oil cans, that place where  
baring his tongue:      she makes beauty  
a sign of piety      amidst the dust.