

Henna*Krishna Thinakkal*

virgin eyes watch as steady hands
drip black water thick as vows.
the rose garden begins in her palm,
growing over the trails in her skin,
and creeping over hills of bone,
tangled and turning north towards her heart.
sacred songs beat in rhythm with her blood,
bringing back the scent of incense
and coconut oil in her hair,
sweet and musky and clinging
as she got lost in the folds
of her mother's sari on the way to prayer.
her lips form the words
and whispers of God's names
marry the breeze
coolly drying the petals and thorns on her arm.