

Poets

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Green Parasol

Sweet blossom of hair and flesh
fourteen years ago you tore me up so swift.

They set you blue, bawling to my left breast.
Later I fit you hungry still

between elbow and wrist,
dreamt us rib to rib

in the chiselled ivory box
your great grandmother

bore north over red hills
as part of her wedding dowry.

In the studio on 61st I watch your sharp torque
of groin and thigh, a dancer's labor

toes strung to the polished floor
knees flounced in precise pirouette.

Later you hunch in your room
scrawling hot alphabets

in the margins of
Their Eyes Were Watching God.

Home work done
you're Instant Messaging your friends

chat of the latest rap
or boyband, or bandana.

You're quiet now.
Here take this gift

strip off the worn silk
tear the cloudy tissue paper.

Its all I have
this moist quilt work

of rooms and balconies
continents torn

tampered with
bloodthirsty.

My love, my little phoenix
your mother the old nest is quite undone.

Soar over the Bronx river,
set fire to old straw,

light up the broken avenues of desire.
Then be a girl like any other.

In soft mist, in flowering sunlight
at the rim of stone gates

raise a green parasol
under a green tree.

–For Svati Mariam in the year 2000–