



One angelic kiss

Brenda Brooks

Though mostly you ignore me never bringing gifts that amount to more than a small tin of artichoke hearts and I would never be ridiculous enough to love you (though I am still ridiculous enough to love) there are nights filled with I don't care and so what anyway we're all going to die maybe sooner and hopefully more adventurously than we think and the sun's got to fizzle sometime and there's a world-class loopy tyrant ordering a new set of epaulettes even as we speak or

preferably,

even as we make a pragmatic date to get together for one last long angelic kiss which may be one of the few pure gestures left to aspire to aside from the kind of gesture made by the real lover to the truly loved when she raises a thin blue porcelain bowl so fine you can see every storm happening on the moon through it to the other's lips and tips thirty-six drops of rain individually collected just after dusk onto her tongue saying nothing because that kind of angelic kiss speaks for itself.

Local honey

Must be gathered slowly, at first, the tongue's tip, the fingertips,

are everything in this sweet, precocious business we set our bodies to.

The gatherer must love and live for honey (the faintest scent of slow nectar) from her fluted centre, and learn to say so, make it rise

with a touch implied and gestures sweetly unfulfilled

until they are fulfilled,

in the gatherer's own wild measurement of dripping time,

at the hurting moment honey becomes too heavy for itself.

But it must be slowly, at first;

the tip of such things being all -

the intense intent before the fact,

the near touch, the almost word, the ingenious, honey eye

that turns the gatherer into the gathered deeply in.

YOUTH STRETCH

photos: ka yin Fong



by Vinita Srivastava

There is a story that is told about the dhobi's (washer's) dog: The dhobi leaves his community with his dog every morning to go to the river to wash clothes all day. Playing with the river dogs, the washer's dog becomes almost but never quite at home by the river. Every night, the washer's dog runs, looking forward to going home. Only to realize he is not home there anymore either. His ways have changed. He is part river now.

Pratibha Parmar cautions us against the use of the term "exile;" she warns that the use of the word must be specific, for even though we may be "treated as exiles" or feel exiled in some sort of "psychic or cultural way," we are "not exiles, but settlers."