

The perfumers ply across
The cracked
Rugged promenades
In silence
Like rows of ants.
Like molten honey
The overhead sun
Drips down their
Bare backs —
Insulated by the sheath of sweat.
Wilted, blackened rose petals
Stick to the gaping fissures
Of their thickened soles,
Unlike the centuries–old
Uneven cobbles
Cemented in place
Underneath.
Cruising across the
Sea of cacophony,
They continue
Along the trail
Known to them
Behind the blindfold
Like the back of their hands.
The hymns
Oozing
From their unmoving tongues
(Long back they had pledged so)
Line them one after the other.
The bergamots, the wild irises and witch hazels
In the myriad bottles in rucksacks thrown on their backs
That they had picked from the dumping grounds,
Swirl in their fragrant oils
The brine cries and unchecked grins of the streets.
The perfumers, the previous night, had
Tears stream down their chins
To the anecdotes of the bottles.

In the unceremonious event of reincarnation
They had matched steps with them
Along the burning, white salt fields,
The mustard blooms set ablaze,
The tangerines, too thick-skinned to feel the swollen fingers of the pickers,
And the abandoned fields
Now reclaimed by wild flowers,
Nurtured by the unmarked graveyard
Of the million plucked strings muffled with dried blood;
Tuned to play rebellion.
The perfumers are cautious not to stain their past lives with peels of tears.
Instead, they lay bare the scars at the altar of soft pressed oils.
Like them, the lingering fragrances have little to do with language and territory.
They heal.
They cure of memories.
And the perfumers, the foot soldiers,
On their way to the sea
To plummet the melancholies to their epilogues,
Chant the alleviating soliloquies
They have come to worship.
The onlookers barely capable of looking out of their bubbles,
Cannot fathom the thinning of the walls.
The soft splashes in the sea
Only add rhythm to their sobs and delights.
And the perfumers march on
With the empty sacks on their backs.