

Bombay, 1969

They carried mud-filled baskets on their heads.
I watched them from my third-floor hotel room,
protected from the humid air, the dread
of monsoon rains that daily added gloom.

I watched them from my third-floor hotel room
take off their saris, wash them in the pool
of monsoon rain, that daily added gloom
and filled the hole they dug with simple tools.

Took off their saris, washed them in the pool.
The rain washed through their hair till it ran clear,
and filled the hole they dug with simple tools,
for three dollars a day, or very near.

The rain washed through their hair till it ran clear
and then, so they could keep their families fed,
for three dollars a day, or very near,
they carried mud-filled baskets on their heads.