



## Immigrant 1978: Siniti

My Sister arises from her bed of barley straw, the seed  
of black mustard spiking her eyelids.  
She will bake little cakes for the Jasmine Festival,  
the sky bursting jasmine in a thousand petals of  
snow.

Flame tree and sugar cane,  
the first harvest of winter rice  
is the rhythm of her sari interwoven with the seasons.

I, in Canada, between these woolen blankets  
fold my hands  
prayerwise  
to temple the small heat of my breath.

I turn off the alarm clock that regulates my days.

My heart cracks open with the cold.  
I am closed in by mountains of snow  
I am buried alive in the snow.  
Tomorrow I will lay away my sari for a parka.

My Love, my Beloved  
sleeps like Vishnu in his tortoise reincarnation,  
his head tucked under his shell.

We are Rama and Sita exiled on the mountain.

I go now to my tasks in the restaurant  
where the three eyes of Siva watch behind red curtains,  
Maharajah smiling from the menu.

In a monsoon of glass raindrops  
I walk through the curtain of beads,  
my glass tears shattering the silence.

Maara Haas

Previously published in *The Link*, western Canada's South-Asian  
newspaper.