

## The Po-Co Kid

*maatahet logan bol na sake hai*  
*darsana nahin maral, murjhaake*

Let's get one thing queer—I'm no Sabu-like sidekick,  
I'm the main drag. Ram Ram in a sari; salaam

on the street. I don't speak Hindu, Paki, or Indian,  
can't control minds, have no psychic powers.

I clip my yellow nails at dusk; on Saturday nights  
I shave my head. Forgive me Shiva,

forgive me Saturn. I'm Coolie on Liberty Ave, desi  
in Jackson Heights—where lights spell *Seasons Greetings*

to cover Christmas, Diwali, and Eid—  
where white folks in ethnic aisles ask, *Will your parents*

*arrange your bride?* while Ma and I scope out fags,  
gyaff, and laugh while aunties thread our eyebrows.

*“The subaltern cannot speak.  
Representation has not withered away.”*

## Aji Recording: How Will I Go

dulhin rowe rowe piya ke ghar jana  
kaheki rowe piya ke ghar jana

piya ke ghar jana, piya ke ghar jana  
kaheki rowe piya ke ghar jana

sasur mare mare baans danda leke  
sasur mare mare nanad gari aawe

saiya mare mare baans danda leke  
saiya mare gale mein bahi dalke

kaise ham jaibo sasural  
chunari mein lagal daag

kaise ham chipao  
chunari mein lagal daag



Dulahin cry fe go a 'e husban' house  
'e cry an' cry

Faddah-in-law an' muddah-in-law does beat me  
Sistah-in-law does send insult

## ANTIMAN

me husban does gimme lash wid one piece bamboo  
me husban does beat me afta 'e grabble me t'roat

mow me go go a me faddah-in-law,  
me orhni get one stain—

mow me go hide 'am,  
me orhni get one stain—

✽

The bride cries, she must go to her lover's—  
she cries because she must go.

My in-laws will beat me,  
my sister-in-law will curse me out.

My love will hold my neck  
and beat me with a bamboo rod.

How will I go to my in-laws  
with a stained veil—

how will I hide it,  
the stain in my veil—

## Kalapani

means water's black  
means sea crossers, means  
to forget secrets and rituals, means  
conversion, means cloud cover,  
means night means  
sunset, means loss, means  
water in the breath,  
means to mislay  
your name, means orphaning,  
means taking the name  
Coolie, means breaking  
under bundles of cane stalk,  
means Guyana, means  
migration, means America, means  
voyage, means to remain  
living, means planting  
seeds in your ancestors' sweat,  
means salt and sea-  
change, means a story's new  
lea, means a yield  
of fruit, means  
to generate, means  
to rise as the sun