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On Doctoring

By Asha Jina

Back when my sister was dead,
we wrapped her in a new *sari* daily.
Golden silk upon tree-bark skin.
She slept on the rosewood bed—
you remember—the one that,
when the air grows so heavy it vibrates,
smells faintly of rotting apples.

We watched as white-coats swept into her room
and staggered out.
Meanwhile, we chewed on sugarcane,
sucking the sugar jelly
and spitting out the sinewy bits.

When they left, we crowded her room.
Your uncle sang,
or when he was feeling up to it,
clowned around like her favorite actor Nagesh.
I apprised her of the town gossip.

On the last day of her death,
iridescent sunrays flooded her room.
Our father's eyes, once languid,
are suddenly phoenixes.
He grips the bedframe, scrapes it across the floor,
so that my sister faces the sun.
She opens her eyes.

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