

Rebirth of a Dichotomy by Anjali Nambiar

In the deep valley folds of Mexico
Popo kneels over Ixta
His mountainous warrior figure
Keeled over in gut-wrenching pain
Spewing the ashy remains of the funeral pyre
He entered with his beloved
As she immortally lies dead

Behind the mountains of Ayodhya
Rama's 14 years of exile is disturbed
Fighting with divine honor
Against the dishonorable rakshasas
To find Sita
Yet turn her away for Ayodhya
—the forgotten epilogue of the *Ramayana*

The *rakshasi* sirens tempt in their honey voices
Thick and sticky, crooning and cooing
Talons slowly prying out the men's hearts
As Ulysses bleeds at the mast
Bound by the amorous anguish
With which he desires their song

The wax rolled between Daedalus' deft fingers
Disintegrated into sweet honey
To seal Icarus' coral grave

As his son plunges from the thermosphere of ambition
Watching his own bewildered expression
In the reflection of the sea—enlarging
His wings—floating behind him

Majnun possessed by his mad obsession with Layla
Scribbled in poetic verse in the ripples of desert dunes
Swept over by sandstorms and rewritten in vain
Unable to discern love in Layla's filial obligations
Of unfilial love

Holofernes: a disembodiment
Gilded body stained red while watching his own horror

In the reflection of Judith's dagger
Straining against bone and grit
And triumphing with his head in her hand
As he immortally lies dead

Immortal death
Ignoble divinity
Disfigured beauty
Crippling ambition
Disrupted inertia
Permanence dissolved

From the ashes of an archetype
Rises a new dichotomy