

Kuldip Gill

Almost a Glosa—for Jim

*The darkness lifts, imagine, in your lifetime.
There you are—cased in clear bark you drift
Through weaving rushes, fields flooded with cotton.
You are free. The river films with lilies,
—Louise Glück, “The Undertaking”*

Did you imagine how far we’d travel? Us.
The day we met, sitting across the table
from each other at Moishe’s? You across
from her, and me from him. They talked.
We smiled, then you called. At that time
I doubted anyone could be so kind. Imagine.
We are wont to pull in against the tides.
But, above that we’ve managed to
undertake us. Our lives. See—shapes shift.
There you are—cased in clear bark you drift

along. A hot sun blazed through windows of a blue buick.
Miles of green scent rising from lines of rutted furrows
seeped up from the ground into the car.
From somewhere—the synapses or amygdala,
came the call of memory. I knew it—the smell acrid,
nostalgic. My mother’s hands full of white cotton.
She walked in, vanished, reappeared, through unripe
recall. Plato’s tabula abrasa. Now in the valley
near San Jose, or was it Fresno? Back in Faridkot?
Through weaving rushes, fields flooded with cotton.

You are free. The river films with lilies, the far bank
shallow. The chortling stream flows over white
rocks, grey flecked granite. Hard and unforgiving
though they seem. A place to dangle our feet and sit
in wonder. It seems that we have come far, near
to be in this place. The peace. *I have survived my life.*
Drive on, it will be hours yet before we stop to rest.
The road winds down river banks, edges of arroyos.
There, see? The moon’s long rays on water frills.
You are free. The river films with lilies.