Lakshmi Gill

A Puja in Turmeric

Down the Strait of Spices I sail
my right palm facing outwards
against the assault of a masala of memories.

How he would have loved it here
in this supermarket aisle of sacred geometry
where God numbers them—
sweet saffron to cure his depression,
holy basil for his stress, yellow turmeric
for his chicken curry—

black cardamom foams wash over me.
Hot. Sting my eyes.

That was April, dead of winter.
In three months, he would have flown here
from that backwater town, alien to the bone.

I sail down a horizontal line
filled with ginger, coriander, cinnamon, cumin,
red chilli powder—Oh, the tastes of my father!—
down a hallowed grove, my only yantra
this poem for regeneration.