

# Postcard 2

GOWHAR YAQOOB

I  
A plain cloth curtain  
against which  
an old lady bespectacled  
sits cross-legged  
wearing an eerie smile  
Her face embroidered  
with thin pink wrinkles  
a portrait of grandma.

II  
She posed  
like a young dancing girl  
for a coloured photograph  
on a pretty sunlit afternoon  
colours melt in her eyes  
behind her glasses  
grandmother has turned eighty  
with beautiful calm on  
her wrinkled face  
and bony neck.

III  
When grandpa would go  
to bring grandma back home;  
both returned back on a cycle  
taking longer way  
back home  
grandma always recollects it  
with girlish giggles  
in her voice  
and miraculous joy  
in her eyes.

IV  
A girl with red headgear  
walks  
alone  
on the bridge

holding  
a basket full of cherries  
that match her scarf.

V  
A maiden  
sings to herself  
at a window  
that opens into  
the deserted street  
She combs her long black hair  
as the sun sets  
behind those roof-tops.

VI  
The soil here is red  
moist breeze sublime  
and the landscape non-linear.  
In the backdrop  
the blue sky beholds  
trinkets of clouds,  
laced with the coconut trees  
to sculpt in  
verdian time.

VII  
A path dented in asphalt  
with trees on both sides  
leaving midway stretch  
that looks bare in daytime  
or sensuous on full moon nights.  
The stone building is huge and  
grotesque  
behind exquisite window sills  
and rooms on both sides  
of the corridor  
walks one into a labyrinth  
of human breath

semi-curiously obscuring  
outside:  
what if  
all those who arrive  
are left with no exit.

VIII

The first thing that impinged on me  
was the smell  
smell of a city -  
do all cities smell the same  
all those who walk in  
from lane to lane  
from square to square,  
time cued along the roads  
mute in scorching heat  
and solitude,  
where  
life is cramped in silhouettes.