***Mon*/To Manjuri**

Sarah Aziz

*“I hate Indians…The famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits.”*

*—Winston Churchill*

Listening is a soft thing.

You grow out your fingernails—

that is where your home

-town festers, smothered

by fuchsia glitter glue. Manjuri,

Mon-joo-reeh,

*Mon, Mon, Mon,*

The heart.

Is listening, which is to say

it is a soft

thing, which is to say,

your broken breaths over

the phoneline quelled the

ghost in the powder blue

gown, before *fajr*, before

the mother emptying her last

song into a child, not hers, not

anymore, but of the

famine— before

1943,

before a goddess’ name

-sake pillaged this sister’s

vow, before I began to

pray for the swell of

Baba’s belly, before

the White man

cut us open like mustard kebab,

before the soft was pressed

-flower-brittle-yellow,

and, after,

after

only

you.