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Blood

A faint moon lingers
the sky not yet dabbed with the morning blush
I rise only so I can see
the pariyaat rain
the white skirt sits at her feet
when I bend to pick
she dresses my hair with some
I do not shake them away
but I always ask
holding her gift in
my palm bowl
'Can I take some inside?
You can see them.
And they you.
I'll keep them on the sill.'
She nods
and continues to dress my hair.
Yesterday when I ran to her

Late, I thought
And so picked a handful in haste
The chaste petals
were stained.
Not bruised by the fall.
Not yet bronzed by the sun.
But embossed with scarlet veins.
I looked up to ask.
She was bare.
Not one left to put in my hair.
I dropped my saffron-tipped jewels
and rushed indoors.
My feet on the wet floor
left prints
like a bride's
red with alta.
They looked at me with horror.
How dare
I reveal
what must stay inside!
Chide me like when I soiled
your floor with my muddy babyfeet.
Scold.
Hold.
Don't cry.
Don't ask if it hurts.
I won't lie.
Just hold me to your heart
For you still hide stuff in there.
I will not learn now.
But before I take leave
Let me feel the warmth of that which runs inside
as it must.