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The Ordeal of Draupadi / Polarization

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The Ordeal of Draupadi/ Polarization

by Manvi Jalan

Bathed in milk and honey, woven in jasmine,
they told me, I was too man to be woman,
yet I was destined to unhinge the fate of my
men, of war. I am and forever remain the
Queen of the Palace of Illusions.

~

Lost to the vines of fate that entrap me.
Sold like a slave to my husbands
brothers, spit at my face you
Kunt, and then call me a whore.
They are men of many wives,
and I of many husbands unchosen.

~

That day, when the petals of time
unfolded our destinies within them,
and the tree in the courtyard shed
bright red petals, Yudhishtir had
with a roll of his dice, sold me to
the enemy.

~

That day, when they dragged me
by my hair and every man in the
room watched me with burning
desire, you Kunt let them expose
my naked body to satisfy your
ego and I learnt that men choose
themselves over their women.

~

But I am unnamed in my war,
and it took a century for them
to learn my name and hear
my voice. I who saved the men
from killing themselves. I the
Queen of the Palace of Illusions,
I, Panchaali.