

South of the Nilgiris

My son who is young
just six this year
knows the red soil of our land

Turning it in his palm
he said
“My sister is this earth
I am water
we will mix together.”
I heard this in a dream

He pointed at my belly
watermelon swollen
streaked as if mud
had dribbled over
lighter flesh

“I am glad
I was not born a girl.
I will never hold that weight
in my belly.”

He spun on his heels,
on his lean shoulders
I saw wings of bone
pale as the stones of Kozhencheri

“Mother!” he laughed
“You know I am not a girl!”

Under my ribs
she turned
his unborn sister,
green as a wave
on the southern coast
ready to overwhelm me,
overwhelm even the distant hills.