

In the Garden

Dearest, I've not killed Ravan¹
So we cannot go home.

Has Hanuman deserted me,
And Lanka smokes in my head?

A satellite who would be
a star before its energy's
Burned up in illusion
Records
Lumbering Canadian seagulls
Bombing the ground
Around rundown highrises
For refuse of poesy . . .

Forgive me, dearest,
For having found Ravan so late.
How he laughs at me
And how my fingers shake,
How unsteady my aim!
How many heads has he! And
Is it the one
That bears my face . . . ?

SASENARINE PERSAUD

¹ Ravan is the wicked king of Sri Lanka who abducted Sita, wife of Lord Rama, and kept her prisoner in his garden. Rama, with the help of Hanuman, locates her and after a battle in which Rama slays Ravan, they return to Rama's kingdom in north India. Ravan was difficult to kill as he had "ten heads"—and it was difficult to determine which was the real head. This is one of the main stories of the ancient Indian classic, the Ramayan.