

## From My Girl and the City

*Everything that happens is words. But pure  
expression is nothing.* SAM SELVON

we have lit these words many times  
on trips out trips in  
the nameless cities on beds  
Brackley could not forget  
all these words we come to say  
in the silent tongues on ghislin  
evenings out in the chill autumn  
fingers clutching fingers in pubic pocket  
above tabletop love stories in Shabda  
the word holding soul bodies lost  
over years drowned in domesticity  
poetry couldn't pay the bills  
fiction couldn't cover the scent  
of mountain tops and hills  
spread with red saman poinciana red ixora  
rainflooded alleys ripe tamarind sugar  
cane stalks' sharp edges sugar  
cane juice fermented in the stills  
twangy rums on tongues tasting  
only words we left behind loves  
we left behind nothing still the ancient  
Indian ancient Hindu Zero's One  
more dip in the sea ashes from  
the flames dust to the ocean  
all these sentences cremated all these loves  
left behind all these words yours

today lines  
and it is nothing  
I am nothing  
you are nothing  
we are nothing  
if words once words  
are mantra  
om bhur  
om bhuwa  
om swah  
om swahaa<sup>1</sup>

SASENARINE PERSAUD

<sup>1</sup> All of these words are used at the end of certain mantras during *pujas*, especially after the Vedic Gayatri mantra which is popular in the Caribbean: *Bhur* is earth; *bhuwa* is midspace; *Swah* is deep space; and *Swahaa* is cosmos.