

Anna Louisa Miracle: On the Canal Bank

And the cut of her! And the strut of her!—JOYCE

and so—
the road whizzes by
one hundred and sixtyseven miles
due north
straight as conviction
undulating as a prone girl
taut skin dew-wet
shimmering

at fiftysix or so degrees north
one need give nor take
any latitude

but an hundred and eight
sharp longitudes sever us—
the flowermantled
midsummer's spring child
met by some lazy canal
among cattails and fernfronds
in some impossible near-far
August hour

with gentle reassuring words
she resolutely claimed
my hesitant verses
aching halftruths and impossible maybes

miraculous audience and
cool respondent,
those intemperate mutterings
and these
are for you—
to be or not to be.

SHYAMAL BAGCHEE