

Shringara

The image in the mirror is no longer frozen
in an unimaginable longing. There was no place
for anything other than romancing
in the courtyard of the temples of our daydreaming;
transforming the shroud for a wedding veil.

The silver petals of the fragrant jasmine
in my windowsill glow like fireflies in moonlight.

A participant in life's carnival, I prepare for illusion.
Elizabeth Arden's flawless finish foundation frosts
on skin breathing Shahnaz Hussain's sandalwood face cream.
Givenchy's mascara thickens and lengthens eyelashes,
rosewood powder blushes on cheeks. My mask is complete
with desire red, double colour, ever lasting Estée Lauder lipstick.
I spray myself generously with Nirvana and Samsara.

I travel towards what end I cannot say—
along the way, those I meet and those I do not;
all that happens and all that I wait to happen
keep defining me in some inexplicable way.
Daily the mirror mocks my wrinkles and streaks of grey.

If I am the result of an unrepeatable set of circumstances,
what use is there in seeking escape from self enunciation?
In the end we are all dead. The days become my shringara.

SHANTA ACHARYA