

A TEMPLE POOL MIGHT IGNITE  
LOTUS - BLOOD FROM YOUR HEART

George Kalamaras

Not the wind in your hair but dying  
carp. Each curl a curving inward  
toward some damp sound. You ride the rickshaw  
like finally getting even. You dream  
you murdered the young man with too many  
*turn-left-here's* and *stop-now-there's*, and felt  
your life had closed. All night those spokes  
had followed you to tea stalls, lassi stands,  
even to the mirror you refused  
to kiss. Why do you wake  
each morning craving jack fruit, the bed-  
sheets still raised several inches stiffly  
above your waist? The wheel turns and turns.  
Blood rushes to the open wound.  
Empty spoke spaces shadow your thoughts?  
Salt-blotched rubber thongs on a stranger's feet  
are an unwound turban on a bed of nails?  
*It's a question of controlling your  
passion*, the yogi told you over and over  
with his eyes, chanting some strand of sound  
all the way from the *Bhagavad-Gita*  
down into fruit pits dried as beads  
in his hands. If the stirring in your groin  
was rotating lotus light, a temple pool  
might finally ignite from pure, gold  
gill-fire. If you could swallow the fin-flash  
of Kali's sword, pike Shiva's trident  
as hooks in your heart, the bleeding might stop.