

Notes for my Husband

By Shadab Zeest Hashmi

I showed Yousuf to the amethyst
Morning when he was born

Kettledrums play four at a time
Each tuned to play its own note
Each he would swallow whole
With my vertical voice in Urdu

And watch with his cardamom eyes
The slow flare of Van Gogh's Sun Flowers
The silk ascent to Victoria's Peak
The concave shine of mango *achar*

He is slender like pine nuts
And keen on butter

Yaseen prefers honey
And tells me the sun on the front door
Smells like library soap
I feel the light lathering the knob
As I open it

The house is filled
With jazz and bag-pipes
Iqbal's poems
On marble construction paper

We weep in both languages
And anything round is a planet