

Haldhi Dhoodh (Turmeric Milk)

Eman Khan

9:45 AM

Amma pours the milk with a flourish
bangles clinking against each other.

Pungent, earthy aftertaste lingers
on my tongue.

I sink to the floor

Hold out swollen fingers for inspection
a warning before pain's thunderous boom reverberates throughout
my body.

For the rest of the day

My body calcifies

A hulking statue
impossible to defeat

Pain medication swims

In the river of turmeric milk.

Kurtha's heavy beads and sandpaper interior

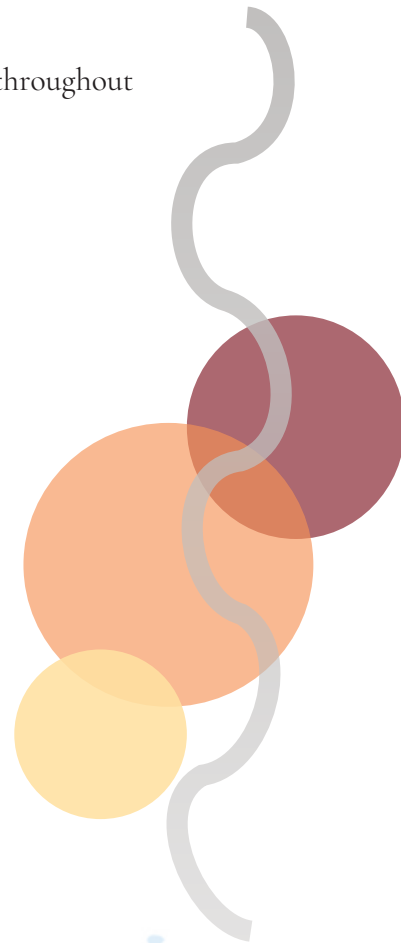
Scratches my face as I pull it off

Fabric latches to hair

But my limbs are cement blocks

And all my energy expires

I deflate.



1:29 PM

A peppery aroma
Lifts me from unconsciousness
Pots and pans clang downstairs
Pakistani classical music echoes around the house
The singer's *ragas* and percussions
fuel Amma's personal concert with dishes
The *ragas* seduce my eyelids shut

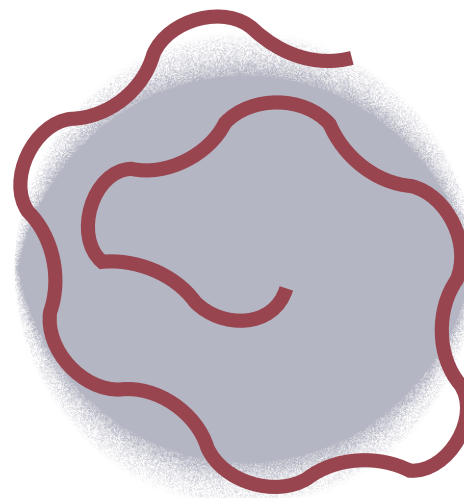


4:05 PM

I jolt awake
Torpid and lost in a thick haze
clawing through the milky web that shrouds my mind
Downstairs,
loud cheers and hoots erupt from Amma and Abba
Cricket broadcaster's commentary
faint and overpowered by Amma and Abba
chanting and clapping.

6:10 PM

A spice-laden fragrance overpowers the room
Saran-wrapped plate and mug wait
expectantly on the bedside table
My tremors rock the plate
stiff fingers struggle to grasp the samosa
Teeth sink into the crumbling crust
Potato filling falls in a hurried escape.
I limp to the bathroom
One thorny step in front of another
with the mug
Dump its contents into the sink
Stare at the swirl of the golden galaxy
Disappearing into the drain.



Haldhi dhoodh is not a cure

