

Castaway

Kolkata, you toss me like a broken bottle
 in the gullet of a ravenous sea.
 No colour, every colour, you gleam
 green to gold to black
 within one instant: mother, murderer, child.

Before I met you I was whole
 and stoppered, full of words,
 words that formed sentences...
 until you seized me, smashed me
 in your jaw of contradictions, slurped
 sense out of me like marrow,
 made me hollow, jagged, lacking –

At the same time, you offered
 new songs, new colours, new fruits
 to feed the hungers
 I'd never realised that I was aching with,
 aching all my life

for

You

like the violent, loving ocean,
 you sully me as you kiss clean
 my jagged edges
 making me glisten, smooth. Now I swim

and swim through the swirling
 words tangled like weeds. Now I can be
 somehow whole in my brokenness, can love
 this city that is so many cities
 and no city,
 find myself
 happily lost, adrift
 and wordless at last.

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