

After the Interview

Brimming with confidence
she sailed the hall
boasting of her performance
inside the closed room.

Panicky rivals filled
with jealousy flanked her
to know what they asked
and how she answered.

Tapping her powdered nose
with the rim of her gaudy specs
she forced an enticing smile
that raised eyebrows too.

“Silly, silly were their questions
belittling my scholarship and experience.
What do those kids know?
Singers of Ba-ba black sheep.

“I played the pied-piper and
led those mice to the sea,
just to put them in their place.
Come, let us have a cup of tea.

“I have letters from the chief of state
commending the gifts of gods in me.
if they deny me this post, believe me,
they are sure to lose theirs.

“This tea on your tongue
is only a prelude to a grand fete.
They have read my palms, you know.
Would you like to have one more cup?”

Seminar

Cups and saucers
vie with each other
to kiss the lips of participants.

Shawls and garlands,
clicking cameras and blinding flashlights
stir up their pride.

Encomiums — a mutual affair —
drench them to the bones.
Every fellow is a Lord on the dais.

Listen to my trumpet.
Toot...toot...toot.

Trees have roots.
Crows have wings.
2+2 make four.

Listen to my big drum.
Bang...bang...bang.

Hands clasp...hands shake hands.
hands pat shoulders. Lips praise.
Hearts fume...Teeth grit.

Ba...ba...Black sheep!
Have you any wool?
No Sir, No Sir!
no bag is full.

P. Raja