

Pooja Nansi



What Now Old Woman

What now you old woman, flesh like
dough, what now? Who do I ask about
the constant kneading? The divisions of
water and ghee for *rotlis* so thin you can look
through them like windows to childhood?
Who do I ask when I need to know which
shlok will make my wished for things
apparate? Who will tell me how many times
I should let the words vibrate
small hummingbirds on my lips as I caress
rudraksha beads, tuck them under my pillow?
You see it's been hard times and I need a
talisman of your making. So what now old woman?
Can you hurry up your limping gait? Can you
untuck the handkerchief from your sari,
unfold it to reveal turmeric for my wounds?
Say you are watching me. Tell me I am doing it all
wrong – I have been too liberal with the salt
again and this is not what Arjun would have asked
Krishna as if you taught me nothing
with those stories. Come look at me in
disappointment, say I am a sorry excuse for a

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Gujarati girl. Speak to me from wherever
you are because the nights keep falling and
nobody knows how I could be any
grand daughter of yours.

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