

SATI MOOKHERJEE

BANDISH: *STHAYI*

in teental

What's *fixed* beneath, beyond these stair^{-stepways of stone} or of vapor?

... these fences? these walls like mirrors^{partitioning} known | alien.

To walk the floodplain, pulled by each^{sentence branching} across paper,

to divine—dowse—bowing to sub-^{and to Supra—}terranean.

POET'S NOTE

This poem is excerpted from “Khayal,” a work in a nonce form based on a North Indian classical musical structure of the same name. “Teental” (*teen*: three, and *taal*: clap or beat) is the most common time signature in Hindustani classical music. It is a meter of sixteen beats, segmented into three claps and a gap, indicated by a wave gesture of the hand in the air: clap-2-3-4 / clap-6-7-8 / wave-10-11-12 / clap-14-15-16. Here syllables are substituted for beats. Sthayi means “fixed.”