

Editor's Notes

*My child is rain
on the tamarind tree*

—Meena Alexander, “Blood Line”

I am pleased to introduce the poetry of Meena Alexander as featured poet in Folio. The works featured in this issue range from poems collected in *River and Bridge* (1996), to poems from Alexander's new collection, *Quickly Changing River* (TriQuarterly Books/Northwestern University Press, 2008). This selection of mother-child poems reflects Alexander's skill in presenting the reader with a poetic sensibility that includes South Asian influences and multiple linguistic and cultural voices—Malayam, English, the translation of Ovid's Latin, Sufi mysticism, references to Krishna, Gandhi, and Christ. Through these polyvocal texts, the central threads are inextricably linked to the narratives of motherhood, of mother-child relations. The mother's body is one that is steeped in blood, fiercely connected to the natural, spiritual, and mythical worlds. In her poem “Passion,” Alexander writes: “I am/the sting of love/the blood hot flute/the face/carved in the window/watching as the god set sail/across the waters/risen from the Cape,/Sri Krishna in a painted catamaran.”

Accompanied by images by the artist Zarina, Meena Alexander's poems provide a haunting, fascinating reading. The works have Alexander's consistent lyric voicings, undercut by an unflinching vision of the world as it is, raw, infused with images of earth, water, sun, places that taste of childhood and motherhood, entangled with history and memory.

—Rishma Dunlop



Zarina, "Ghar (Home)," cast paper, 24 x 32 x 1, 1988.