

A Hand is the First Thing One Gives to Another

by **Sutapa Chaudhuri** (February 2016)

Lies inform

the leftover caresses.

Arteries clog

with unwanted truths—

the veins of life

grow thin and brittle;

slow but sure,

like the dark phone lines

that crisscross

the overhead skies

in set geometric patterns,

blood too coagulates

beneath the suppurating skin.

Heavy and burdensome,

loneliness solidifies,

pressing like a slab of stone

on wheezing chests, vital air

absent in asphyxiated lungs.

Sleepless, the night wakes—

searching for traces of life

in phantom selves and

fragmented relations

trying to find meaning

in the age-old axiom.

Sutapa Chaudhuri has two poetry collections – *Broken Rhapsodies* and *Touching Nadir*. *My Lord, My Well-Beloved* is a collection of her translations of Rabindranath Tagore's songs.

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