

Stealing the Bridegroom's Shoes

It's a task that has fallen
in your hennaed hands, the theft
of the bridegroom's gold trimmed shoes

The poor man is already
quite nervous at the prospect
of losing his freedom, subsumed

By the rising tides of marigolds
the shoes are a last bastion
zealously guarded

By the bridegroom's brother
and three other friends besides
no one you can't outwit

The ceremony's over, garlands
of crisp green cash around his neck
newly minted brother-in law smiles

Reaching for his shoes, but no
you have possession! Out
comes the hapless wallet

Only when it is empty
when all the bribes are paid
can he venture to the marriage bed.

The gods of tradition well fed.

Sophia Naz