

# The Motherland

Poem written in March '24

The motherland I have never been to  
Lives in my imagination—  
In my dreams I see lush green fields and  
Stalks of wheat swaying in the wind and  
Tractors moving on neat dirt paths and  
Eternal sunlight illuminating bright yellow flowers.

The motherland I have never been to  
Defines me from a distance—  
Pulls me there on a quest of discovery and  
Beckons me under the false cloak of familiarity and  
Tells me that it is there where I belong and where I am welcome.

The motherland I have never been to  
Is owned by the others who shame me—  
Who tell me who I should be and  
What is expected of me and  
What my name and legacy ought to be.

The motherland I have never been to  
Lives on in the vivid, textured memories of my parents, my grandparents—  
Playing in the fields during hot dry summers and  
Sucking ripe *amb*\* plucked straight from the trees and  
Eating hot *samosas*\*\* amid the smoke of automobiles.

These memories are my birthright.  
The motherland is that memory that is mine  
By virtue of those who came before me,  
Something I will pass, diluted, to those who come after me.

\**amb*: mangoes

\*\**samosas*: traditional Punjabi snack