

CREATIVE SPACE

Once they went out to play

SHIKHA MALAVIYA

Once they went out to play
but now we've stolen their spring
and other things...
chewed their sweetness of walnuts
donned their scratchy wool *phirans*
with embroidered collars that sing,
wrapped our chill with their pashmina shawls
that fit through a ring,
sipped their warmth from *kawa*
with a saffron tinge,
bitten their blood-red apples
whose cheeks are freshly pinched;
but we don't carry their shrapnel
under our skin
nor the rings under their eyes
from all those gone missing.
Those we let them hold
as we keep on humming
*Rind posh maal gindane draa-yi lo lo**

***Note:** *Rind posh maal gindane draa-yi lo lo* is a line from a poem by 19th century Kashmiri poet Rasul Mir, which roughly translates as: "Young beautiful girls have gone out to play". These words are generally associated with the coming of spring, and Kashmiris know it through a folk song, which was also later integrated into a Hindi film song that became very popular.

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