

RECOGNITION

*Marriage at twelve and five swift children
Had dulled the light in her eyes.*

*Half her teeth were gone
And her body hung slack:
Sleep for her was oblivion for a few hours
For pain, hunger and pain.*

*Her face disturbed me,
Not because of Her deprivation
To which I had developed a careful resistance
But because she reminded me of someone.*

*I tried picturing her
Wish a little more flesh,
A little less dirt.
But my memory refused to oblige.*

*Two days later, while combing my hair,
With a sinking heart, I saw her
Staring at me from the mirror.*

—Kalyani Chaudhuri