

## After the Interview

Brimming with confidence  
she sailed the hall  
boasting of her performance  
inside the closed room.

Panicky rivals filled  
with jealousy flanked her  
to know what they asked  
and how she answered.

Tapping her powdered nose  
with the rim of her gaudy specs  
she forced an enticing smile  
that raised eyebrows too.

“Silly, silly were their questions  
belittling my scholarship and experience.  
What do those kids know?  
Singers of Ba-ba black sheep.

“I played the pied-piper and  
led those mice to the sea,  
just to put them in their place.  
Come, let us have a cup of tea.

“I have letters from the chief of state  
commending the gifts of gods in me.  
if they deny me this post, believe me,  
they are sure to lose theirs.

“This tea on your tongue  
is only a prelude to a grand fete.  
They have read my palms, you know.  
Would you like to have one more cup?”

## Seminar

Cups and saucers  
vie with each other  
to kiss the lips of participants.

Shawls and garlands,  
clicking cameras and blinding flashlights  
stir up their pride.

Encomiums — a mutual affair —  
drench them to the bones.  
Every fellow is a Lord on the dais.

Listen to my trumpet.  
Toot...toot...toot.

Trees have roots.  
Crows have wings.  
2+2 make four.

Listen to my big drum.  
Bang...bang...bang.

Hands clasp...hands shake hands.  
hands pat shoulders. Lips praise.  
Hearts fume...Teeth grit.

Ba...ba...Black sheep!  
Have you any wool?  
No Sir, No Sir!  
no bag is full.

**P. Raja**