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When you ask me what we'll do...

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Keywords

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[When you ask me what we'll do...]

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When you ask me what we'll do if your visa isn't picked,
I don't say anything. You already know the answer.
A mountain born girl, lonesome quiet as dew seeped
through fissures of wild granite will only
evaporate in India. Shrink, diffuse to mist. Disperse
to shadow street dogs searching for scraps.

In Portland, coyotes ride trains, so maybe I, too,
could cross an ocean and ride from Tiruvallur to Chennai.
Curl my body into a seat beside someone's grandmother.
Tell her the similarities between Oregon and Ooty.
How the color and shape of her bindi reminds me
of a half-ripe thimbleberry, picked to make jam.

En Peyar Coyote of these coastal cascades,
eater of river rats. Salamanders and chanterelles.
Drunk on fermented crab apples in October.
I shake my body in the rain. In the shade of vine maples.
Your Tamil is the oldest living language in the world,
and my native mosses and ferns, the bristling
horsetails that graze skin are some of the oldest life.

Take your sacred thread. Try and circle a coyote's throat.
A savage thing goes where it wishes, not where it's led.
Your family asks you: *how could you bring home some wild stray?*
My puja, offered between teeth gentle and jagged:
*Praise be to Sarama, queen of the wolves
and coyotes wandering far from home.*