

## **Drona's Wages**

by Amlanjyoti Goswami

Eklavya, that Bhil kid  
Stopped the dog's bark with a shower  
Of perfect arrows

But didn't kill the dog.  
This I had never seen, never taught.  
I asked him: 'who is your teacher?'

'You', he said, pointing to  
My clay likeness, mud baked,  
Sitting like a real guru on the forest floor.

The yellow leaves scattered green lessons  
I took ages to learn.  
The deepest secrets of bow and arrow.

I had never seen this kid before.  
The royal princes I taught were mouth agape.  
My job and honour at stake.

Give me, I said, finally,  
What you owe me then  
Your thumb, for a guru's wages.

Nothing less will do.  
He mused a bit, smiled, knew this was a trick.  
Then laid his one good thumb, at my swollen feet.

