

RUPAM BAONI



your evensong un-
scabs lesions sat inside of
Me that I never

knew still lived here, just
here, just above my rib cage
and the beating heart



look how my heart sits
bunched up in threes, fours and fives
still, how blood gushes

in and out my
chambers in perpetuity
or so it seems; but

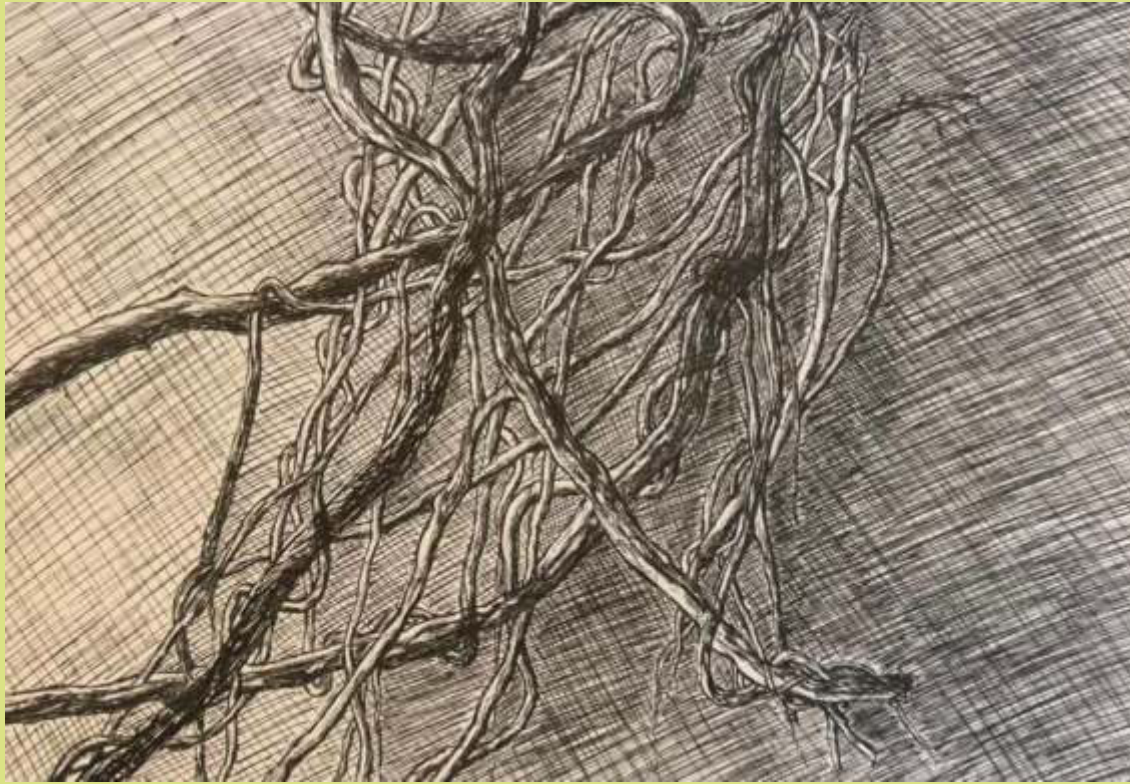
I know better now
and how the rivers of my
body navigate

my wildernesses
still, they build their weirs where
wounds sleep untended;

they call my name out
loud or catch my breath by the
throat; and I know now

how I ache for me
still, how I patter miles on
after me to watch

me duck and vanish
into corners just seconds
before I get there



winter is the best
time to know things for what they
are; look how dad's gnarled

fingers, his limbs stripped
off their many springs, summers
and autumns tell tales

of a lifetime of light and
shade, the shadows he calls love



here's the archway off
the centre of my heart where
you entered like the

sun, bounding chamber-
to-chamber, bathing nooks
braising my insides, my gold-

dust turned to charcoal
now; I've pulled down all doors there
were, so no keys turn

for the ushering
anymore, all bolts done with
and no, no locks no

more, no padlocks my love, so
you may leave light as breath

(**Rupam Baoni** is a writer and artist based in London, whose work ranges from poetry, fiction, essays to watercolour, oils, acrylics and sculpture. Her collection of poems *chronicles of entering my body* (Hypatia Publications 2021) was shortlisted for the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2023. It features the poems *bone journey* and *bone island* that have been shortlisted in the Queen Mary Wasafiri New Writing Prize and the Bridport Prize respectively. She has been shortlisted twice for the Bridport Prize and longlisted in the Commonwealth Short Story Prize, the London Short Story Prize, the National Poetry Competition, PBS & Mslexia Women's Poetry Contest and Frontier Poetry Prize, among others. Her short story *Anatomy of Separation* was longlisted in the 4th Estate Writing Prize as well as in the Commonwealth Short Story Prize.)