

The Voice

Someone is calling me, a voice faraway
but strangely familiar, a manoeuvre of Scorpio
turning slowly onto its side from season
to season. The hills are on fire,
the cries of crickets swell with each warm hour;
desperate for friendship a movie queen somewhere
knocks breathlessly on an unknown door. It is summer;
a storm cries from the lonely places of the sea.
The tears that leave me outside
are only my own. Perhaps someone
has been calling me a long time, a voice
like that of a long-sunken ship
wanting to come up again on water. A voice
that belies the dead whiteness of the sky.
And I look at the hand I wave often
from the window, unable to understand
how the waves of need ride pleading over the land —
as more stars move into place
and the tuberose spreads its warmth by the window,
and I try to make myself more than what I am,
thirsting under the stone
like grass caught in a tangle round itself.

— *Jayanta Mahapatra*