

## DEFILEMENT

Mariyam Zafar

Frantic review of Customs Declaration  
once more to make sure everything's right.  
The pale face flushed with the power and pride  
that seeps from certain uniforms, certain skin.  
The officer began to undress my luggage.  
He caressed my name, sliding his fingers down  
my books, my education, my family,  
unlacing the threads of my Anarkali  
tickling past the tinkle of my bangles,  
their glittering grains of gold now gaudy  
against the stark white airport light- too bright  
for the muted racket of my anxiety  
exploding with victory as his hands seized  
the smuggled stash of undeclared dignity.