enough to already speak English. No one said then, "You must be reborn white-skinned—and clean-shaven to show it—to survive." Just a few months ago, they called us exotic new Canadians, new blood to build a new country.

Today I took one of my wedding saris to the neighbourhood dry cleaner and a woman with no eyebrows held it like a dishrag as she asked me, "Is it a bed sheet?"

"No," I said.
"Curtains?"
"No."

I took the silk back to our basement apartment, tied my hair in a tight bun, washed the heavy folds in the metal bathtub, and hung it, gold threads glinting, on a drip-dry hanger.

When I had finished, I spread a bed sheet on the floor of the bathroom, filled my arms with the turbans you'd worn last week, and knelt there surrounded by the empty soft hollows of scarlet, navy, earth brown, copper, saffron, mauve, and bright parrot green. As I waited for the bathtub to fill with warm soapy water I unravelled each turban, each precise spiral you had wound around your head, and soon the room was full of soft streams of muslin that had protected your long black hair.

I placed each turban in turn on the bubbly surface and watched them grow dark and heavy, sinking slowly, softly into the warmth. When there were no more left beside me, I leaned close and reached in, working each one in a rhythm bone-deep, as my mother and hers must have done before me, that their men might face the world proud. I drained the tub and new colours swelled—deep red, dark black mud, rust, orange, soft purple, and jade green.

I filled the enamel sink with clean water and starch and lifted them as someday I will lift children. When the milky bowl had fed them, my hands massaged them free of alien red-blue water. I placed them carefully in a basin and took them out into our grey two rooms to dry.

I placed a chair by the window and climbed on it to tie the four corners of each turban length to the heavy curtain rod. Each one in turn, I drew out three yards till it was folded completely in two. I grasped it firmly at its sides and swung my hands inward. The turban furrowed before me. I arced my hands outward and it became a canopy. Again inward, again outward, hands close, hands apart, as though I was back in Delhi on a flat roof under a hot sun or perhaps near a green field of wheat stretching far to the banks of the Beas.

As the water left the turbans, I began to see the room through muslin screens. The pallid walls, the radiator you try every day to turn up hotter for me, the small windows, unnaturally high. When the turbans were lighter, I