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SELAMAT SORÉ

Salatiga, 1981

Cemara trees –
along the horse-tailed branches,
mutéd green in misty rain,
shining water holds
in myriad drops – released – to swell
again, to sway the slender stems
with barely perceptible rhythm
defying an absence of breeze,
 above the opened window
 thunder crumbles the clouds
 but no violence is apparent
 in any of this.

In the street,
beyond a luminous hedge
of yellow, green, and dark-red leaves,
what better advertisement? –
than a tinkle of the pedlar's spoon
upon his china plate, a silence
as he serves someone
and waits near the cemara trees,
 a dokar clips past –
 with dull wheels, with vapour
 rising from the horse's coat,
 with a subtly different rhythm.