

# Cold Turkey

**Sweta Srivastava Vikram**

Cold Turkey

Every night they went  
into the rainforest –  
eyes covered  
with goulashes of defiance  
and a splinter in the brain –  
mortality feared their spirit.

Five friends, fifteen years  
of whipping whiff of tobacco –  
a ritual followed like shedding  
of leaves every autumn.

Then one September,  
winter sneaked upon one  
of the friends, and he  
became a barren tree.  
Mermaids of reality asked  
for offerings, his lips and lungs  
hidden behind splashes of tar –  
fungus on what used to be  
a slice of white bread.

Across the river of grief,  
underneath the sky of tears,  
something could be seen –  
the remaining four friends buried  
their love for fumes, wordlessly.  
Even the nightingale inhaled  
that night of pure ecstasy.

## About the Author

A graduate of Columbia University, Sweta Srivastava Vikram is a multi-genre writer and marketing professional living in New York City. She is the author of an upcoming chapbook of poetry from Modern History Press, *Kaleidoscope: An Asian Journey of Colors*. Sweta is also an avid blogger: visit [www.swetavikram.com](http://www.swetavikram.com)