

THEY PILED
FLOWERS ON THE
BODY

JIMMY PIANKA

They piled flowers on the body
and lit incense in the mouth.
I sat on the bank and watched the river,
grey like cataracts & sickly with garbage,
little kids scrubbing rags and kicking up ash.

The son washed his hands and I folded mine.
Brahmins lit candles and prayed.
I've never seen kindling so eager to burn –
and when the wind changed,
smelled anything like that.



Elena Chien is in her final year of the Combined Degree Program between Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. She studies French and Photography and is a member of EXPOSURE.

PHOTO CAPTION

BIRODS FLY THROUGH A GATEWAY TO THE DARGAH OF MIRAN SAHIB. A DARGAH IS A SACRED SHRINE BUILT AROUND THE TOMB OF A SUFI SAINT. IN AJMER, INDIA, THESE SHRINES ARE SPACES OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM WHERE PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS COME TO WORSHIP.