reflections

The other day
a song
played on the radio…
the melody
and lyrics
took me to a far away land
to a time
gone by.

What happened
to those companions
of my childhood years
with whom I shared scraped knees
and elbows.
Secrets whispered
in adolescent ears,
pubescent giggles
and fears
at reflections in mirrors.
Reading forbidden books,
eying passing boys
with wide-eyed looks
and running away
when they looked back.

We shared the first
spilling of our blood,
the pain
in our budding breasts;
We were women now,
so we were told,
that this monthly ritual
of blood-letting would flow
till we grew tired and old.

The boys, too, fretted by the mirror
with longing for
baby-fine whiskers,
their ears
fine-tuned
to their voices
to cease their
high-pitched whining.
Yet
It was a time for us—
budding men
and women
to hang on to
childhood—
to come together to play,
laugh, cry,
and smile,
without care
or guile.

Then
one day we all stood
like bees stuck to a pot
of dripping honey;
pig tails, knobby knees
clueless grins,
and eyes squinting against
the blazing Bombay sun,
for all time
to look back
and laugh
at the black and white
grainy
photograph.