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## Women Without a Voice

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# Women Without a Voice

by Daniel Daly

A dim shop. Half of Tachileik sliding  
off shelves and tables, dust everywhere,  
a good sign. We lift it, study it, as if  
it were a text, arcane, compelling.  
Doll-lady strokes it with rings  
popping around her index fingers.  
*Listen. So pretty its sound. Buddha Music...*  
*That is music you never hear. Listen.*  
*Listen. You will never hear this*  
*any other place. Want it?*

Outside, the Burma rain is misting to glitter  
on the street. A passing bike rider waves,  
cries out, Cheap...Polo...Camels.  
Saris sweep past, thin as wind.  
A spray of birds trim a weary tree.

We hear them then, women we glided by  
in the middle of a compound, silent,  
announced by the trishaw drivers.  
*American, hey you buy things American.*  
*Show you good prices. Marlboro, flashlight.*  
*Show you pretty ladies scrub at the well.*

We hear them then, stillborn voices,  
as if coins glittered in a dim pool.  
Or sheaves of wheat touched by wind  
turned to rumor in the softness of light  
returning, surging over in-roads  
and distant valleys. Where the evening  
air breathes its own being. Where  
we drift easily into our journeys.

A land in the middle of a country.

