5-15-2015

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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.