


# If They Should Come for Us

By Fatimah Asghar

these are my people & I find  
them on the street & shadow  
through any wild all wild  
my people my people  
a dance of strangers in my blood  
the old woman's sari dissolving to wind  
bindi a new moon on her forehead  
I claim her my kin & sew  
the star of her to my breast  
the toddler dangling from stroller  
hair a fountain of dandelion seed  
at the bakery I claim them too  
the sikh uncle at the airport  
who apologizes for the pat  
down the muslim man who abandons  
his car at the traffic light drops  
to his knees at the call of the azan  
& the muslim man who sips  
good whiskey at the start of maghrib  
the lone khala at the park  
pairing her kurta with crocs  
my people my people I can't be lost  
when I see you my compass  
is brown & gold & blood  
my compass a muslim teenager  
snapback & high-tops gracing  
the subway platform  
mashallah I claim them all  
my country is made  
in my people's image  
if they come for you they  
come for me too in the dead  
of winter a flock of  
aunties step out on the sand  
their dupattas turn to ocean  
a colony of uncles grind their palms  
& a thousand jasmines bell the air  
my people I follow you like constellations  
we hear the glass smashing the street  
& the nights opening their dark  
our names this country's wood



for the fire my people my people  
the long years we've survived the long  
years yet to come I see you map  
my sky the light your lantern long  
ahead & I follow I follow