

Pond of the Washerwomen

This is the shallow tarn,
the only water body

within the vastness of trash.

Washwomen from Morano, Jharsugoda and ten other villages
come,

carrying loads of laundry. They sit in the sunshine
and drop saris, *cholis*,
pajamas onto the water's surface.

Traders' shirts, a dairy woman's shawl
float, drift away like swans—

Forgetting how old they are, the washwomen jump into the water
and splash at each other

like little girls. Someone swims to gather
the clothes back. Then, they wash them
with bar soap, tie them to the clothesline.

Kurta—kamez—shalwars

become crane wings in the gusts.

Sankar Roy

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