

## Sonali's Detour

Suzi Mezei

Hunks of damp loam stick to potatoes  
and muck the hessian sack that unites them in the darkness  
of the old woman's cellar

that's really just a burrow in the dank earth  
under the geometry of her lonely house.

I ask Nimal if Acci *needs anything* such is my western guilt.

I learned my grandmother through stories;  
the red politics of her youth, her hard-headed rebellion  
a monochrome blur in the family album.

I let the decades make her ancient before we even met,

toured the plantations, bought gifts of hand plucked orange pekoe  
en route to her village, delaying as if time provides infinite chances,  
only to be folded into her history, her arms unrelenting in their embrace.

I am awash in the heat of the her kitchen, regret like vinegar in my blood,  
my fingertips trace the familiar comfort of creased rupees  
from an exchange at Bandaranaike airport.

I ask Nimal again *is there anything Acci needs?*

He shakes his head *just let her cook for you*  
and Acci's forehead shines, bent over Maa-wee rice,  
picking out the stones.

**Suzi Mezei** is a Sri Lankan born Australian writer. She is widely published and works in several genres although poetry is her favourite. She loves dogs, film festivals and photos of Morocco. She hopes this year will be better than the last!