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Durga*
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DURGA*

"103E or 104E Fahrenheit might be a much more favorable temperature for truths to germinate and sprout in, than the more ordinary blood-heat of 97 or 98 degrees."

—William James,
Varieties of Religious Experience

Come into the temple. Stay out of the temple. The most sacred place in the temple is just outside the temple. No, in the threshold.

Stand in the threshold and let me anoint you: this is the font of flames, that one, of water. Rather, that one is flames, and this one, water: flesh, flames, water, all are the same. Extinguish yourself.

Get out, then return, get out.

Come in, come into the temple; now get out and wait for a sign, wait for my eyes to signal you, then return.

That wasn't the signal. Stand in the threshold and let me anoint you:

this is the fire, and this, the water. Water, fire, flesh: one substance. Stop howling; put yourself out, and then return.

Come in; get out. Return with a candle, put out your candle and go in darkness; go by the light of my eyes, which call you, which don't.

Flames, water, flesh, words. Extinguish yourself: I must have devotees of a tempered faith. Flesh, water, flames, words.

These are my eyes, this is your sign. Let me anoint you:

words, fire, flesh, water, each becoming the other:

this is the font of flames, that one, of flames.

—*after a painting by Bikash Bhattacharjee*

*"difficult to penetrate": one name for the wife of Shiva