

The Mud Says to the Potter

Did I ever touch Rama
bowing before my brass statue,

purchased in Jackson Heights,
or behold the Great as an exhale

that draws back breath: a mantra or
the tidal rhythm of biology?

The closest I've ever been to Rama
was when I bought him from the market.

But who will own my idol
in a century? Is it fair to say

that I look as God looks, either
as beholder or beheld? I was formed

from the clay of the crossroads,
dry with iron-red thirst. Now I wear

a potter's smock to wrestle the clay
of me. It's simple: any pulled wall falls

down even if I shape it after Vishnu.
A steady push towards the wheel's center,

the clay obeys; I can sculpt anything—
I mean to say I am yet unformed.

