

# Agra Road

*by* Bill Yarrow

“Do you seek in the heart-shaped palace  
the cold telos of love?” the guide asked us.  
Everyone nodded yes. I stared out the bus  
window into the face of a ripe monkey  
whose owner demanded forty rupees for  
any photographs I took. Is there nothing  
willing to forgive the terror of its cost?

Beyond a jade gate, a lotus pillar nods to  
a braided fort. To enter in this colloquy,  
you must take off your shoes, and when you do,  
it is 1653, the year of the diamond moon.  
Mughals rule the candied land, alligators bask  
on the soft edge of the Yamuna, but in the iron  
sky, the ivory birds are still the birds.

