## SHIKHA MALAVIYA

## To Touch the Sky

1873

The sun's shadow swept over my face as I built biceps drawing water from the well rope burns on my hands and wrists and when I complained there was no time to play Aai's anger drew welts on my back her orders a daily refrain gather sticks for the chulha scrub the pakshala so when I found the *jhopala* empty I grabbed its chains as if a horse's reins pumping my legs furiously to see how high I could go braids flying, skirt rippling, sun winking toes trying to touch the sky my only witness a green pigeon whose wings I conspired to steal

Shikha Malaviya is a South Asian American poet, writer, and publisher. She is co-founder of The (Great) Indian Poetry Collective, a mentorship model press publishing powerful voices from India & the Indian diaspora. Her poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and featured in PLUME, Prairie Schooner, and other fine publications. Shikha has been a featured TEDx speaker and was selected as Poet Laureate of San Ramon, California, 2016. Shikha is a six-time AWP poetry mentor in their Writer-to-Writer program. Currently, she is a Mosaic America Fellow, committed to cultural diversity in the San Francisco Bay area and beyond. Her book of poems is Geography of Tongues.

chulha (Hindi)—earthen stove pakshala (Marathi)—"kitchen" aai (Marathi)-"mother" jhopala (Marathi)—traditional wooden swing

## **GREGORY HOM**

Balance, 2021 Collage, 10 x 10 in.

