You ask, after many years,
\textit{any regrets?}
I say \textit{None! I’d live}
\textit{life ex-act-ly again;}

Yet there are nights when
something breathes in the room,
shadowing the mirror
it jerks me awake –

in hotel rooms that envelop so
precisely; the family sedan’s
pale leathery embrace,
is tumescent

all spaces
where it would deface
the excel spreadsheet
of my life.

I am in an ancient cartouche.

Chiselled into the hieroglyphic
spelt \textit{I love you},
I am the woman kneeling
below the oval eye.

\footnote{Dipika Mukherjee was born in India, then educated in Switzerland, Indonesia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and the USA. She has edited two anthologies of short stories: \textit{Silverfish New Writing 6} (Silverfish, 2006) and \textit{The Merlion and the Hibiscus} (Penguin, 2002). Her poetry and prose have been published in literary journals in the US, Canada, the UK, India, Singapore, and Hong Kong, as well as broadcast over Singapore Public Radio.}
The Craft

*I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free*

Michelangelo

On an island, only a hundred yards long, an old man carves ships – not those that sail, but toys to light up a little boy’s eyes – he slices a wooden stick to open a schooner, ramrod straight mastline piercing the sky, sails taut in the breeze, with ruffled edges.

This man and his craft, hewn for perfection; the cutting and slicing, the gashes on his thumb, the wrinkled wrist scarred, severe with precision to unfurl a thing of beauty.