RESIDENT ALIEN

Hiking up Hill Trail, a red-tailed hawk circles
high above us. *Looking for something dead*, B. says.

Eat my soul, I joke. There are several ways to friend
the foreign: hug the oaks, thumb the poppy, gush

over the French broom, it's 6ft. invasive naughtiness.
When you tire of what's above, look under, says our guide.

Clusters of chanterelle, milk-thistle bundles and the rough
memory of shaving my pubes last-minute in an office loo

for a San Franciscan date who said about the fake
succulents accenting his every surface, *Isn't it better?*

Who has time for water? Would you give up your citizenship
for this— fingernail moon, owl hoots, silhouettes of pine.

After each long glide, the hawk beats her wings restoring
her flight. No matter how I alight, my shadow is in my way.

PREETI VANGANI

Preeti Vangani is the author of Mother Tongue Apologize (RLFPA Editions) & Fifty Mothers (River River Books, 2026). Her poems have been published in Prairie Schooner, Gulf Coast, The Margins among several other places. She holds an MFA from University of San Francisco and teaches in the program.

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