



Vivan Sundaram, Detail of *Stone Column Enclosing the Gaze*, from the series *Collaboration/Combines*, 1992. Sandstone, acrylic sheet, b&w photographs, mirror, and enamel. 213.36 x 45.72 x 45.72 cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

# CONCERNING THE MEANING MOLECULE IN POETRY

BRENDA HILLMAN

Long ago a man told me, If you write poetry  
keep your subjects small;

i was a tiny skinny girl at that point ...

Much later, i heard a meaning molecule  
in the call of a dove pretending to be an owl in the pine,

a song-speck circling in a thought throughout all time  
(like the man said, *extremely* small!)

traveling from before literature  
through the blue centuries until quite recently

when a radiant instance of the unknown

paused our bafflement but kept  
that little meaning absolutely elusive, & erotic ...

*for AC & NS*