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## Toothpaste

**Romi Jain**

I lifted down the sole toothpaste,  
discovering it on a stony shelf,  
whose corners were the growing colony  
of experienced, strong cobwebs

It held systematic and  
partly disordered things,  
but all unused, all of use,  
all packed, intact,  
except for one--  
the eraser of dirt on teeth

My hands knew their mission  
the eyes were concentrated  
the brain was the guide  
and the mind was patient and quiet

The bent Atlas and the helpless Prometheus  
mirrored on the slim, torn tube;  
And I confirmed the residue  
with dexterous squeezing,  
saving the minutest of protruding particle.

The pre-search reason did make me irk:  
the teeth won't fall, come on, I thought,  
and your breath is not too bad!  
But perhaps, the farsighted imagination  
of a short supply in plane, the logic of a sudden need  
or the anxiety of closeness of strangers-  
the prospective friends-  
justified the frantic search, and of the paste  
he didn't mind the extreme littleness.

I got it why sometimes  
pretty, fresh ladies sit idle;  
experienced ones make it.