

Sipaliwini

I am a scientist.

They told me so with their English in the
dark hours before dawn when I took the
leaf in hand and plucked a sleeping Dendrobatid
jewel from underneath. They gasped and
marveled at the pale hue of my skin against a dripping
drift of ferns, thinking I hide secrets. But I
drop the slick sapphire into a vial and
mark the time – though I did not come here for frogs.

Luscious, delicious. Everything here should have an
'ish' -- so smooth and wet. The landscape rolls off the
tongue like the tiniest drop of dew sliding over a
leaf-lip, each fragile flower snuggled in the arms of a
sepal bassinet. But this is no forest. It is a viridian
ocean of passing lights and fainted glances, where
water and blossom converge in one image, in one moment.

I catalogue the vile and they follow me to
camp amongst the steady trickle of rain. I hear them
laugh when I kneel to search a hollow log and
smile, not minding when they again say
I am a scientist.