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Minor Planet 2986

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Minor Planet 2986

(2986) Mrinalini. 2525 P-L. Discovered 1960 September 24 by C. J. van Houten, I. van Houten-Groeneveld, and Tom Gehrels at Palomar.

Minor Planet 2986
 was not named for me.
 But I'll take it.
 None of the key chains,
 or necklaces beaded letter by letter,
 or monogrammed license plates,
 or American girl dolls
 bear my name either.
 In class, when all them with two-syllable names
 are already packing up and putting away,
 I'm still dotting i's.
 When you've already paid,
 I'm still giving my order,
 and respelling my name,
 or changing it.
 Minor Planet 2986 was not named for me.
 But when the Dutch astronomer in San Diego saw
 the comet-like planetoid, the main-belt asteroid,
 that would bear my name (well, hers),
 he thought of the dancer he had met
 in Ahmedabad, the lonely physicist's wife,
 and their toddler's primitive mudras
 flashing between Mars and Jupiter,

her scientist father, her artist mother.
He thought of her mother,
how her eyes followed hands,
how he followed her eyes, following hands
overhead, above, at right, below,
the full transit of her body, fixed in space.
How high he was then,
looking away from his telescope,
to be in her orbit.

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Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan is assistant professor of English, Social, Cultural, and Critical Theory at the University of Arizona. A former magazine editor and award-winning essayist, she has published criticism and journalism in international venues including the *New Yorker*, *Public Books*, *openDemocracy*, *Zócalo Public Square*, and *The Caravan*. Recent poetry and creative nonfiction appear in *Kartika Review*, *Popula*, and *Politics/Letters*.