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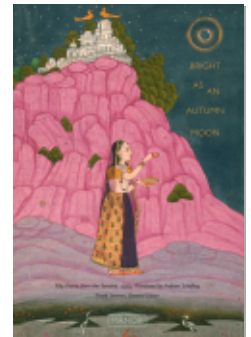
## Her Quick Eyes

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उद्धृतस्तनभार एष तरले नेत्रे चले भ्रूलते  
 रागाधिक्यतम् ओष्ठपल्लवदलं कुर्वन्तु नाम व्यथाम् ।  
 सौभाग्याक्षरपङ्क्तिरेव लिखिता पुष्पायुधेन स्वयं  
 मध्यस्था हि करोति तापमधिकं रोमावली केन सा ॥

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udvṛttastanabhāra eṣa tarale netre cale bhrūlate  
 rāgādhikyatam oṣṭhapallavadalaṃ kurvantu nāma vyathām  
 saubhāgyākṣarapaṅktikeva likhitā puṣpāyudhena svayaṃ  
 madhyasthā hi karoti tāpam adhikaṃ romāvalī kena sā

*udvṛtta.* uplifted  
*stana-bhāra.* breasts  
*eṣa.* this  
*tarale.* flashing, quick  
*netre.* eyes  
*cale.* moving  
*bhrūlate.* eyebrows  
*rāga-ādhikyatam.* passionate  
*oṣṭha-palla-vadalaṃ.* lips like  
 flowerbuds  
*kurvantu.* let them make  
*nāma.* surely  
*vyathām.* unease, distress (for me)  
*saubhāgya-akṣara-pan̐ktikā.* (bv. compd.  
 with *romāvalī*) gorgeous  
 imperishable line

*saubhāgya.* beauty, charm  
*akṣara.* imperishable, unforgettable  
*pan̐ktikā.* a line, a meter  
*iva.* like  
*likhitā.* written, inscribed  
*puṣpā-yudhena.* by the flowerlike bow  
 (of love)  
*svayaṃ.* her  
*madhyasthā.* belly or navel  
*hi.* surely  
*karoti.* makes  
*tāpam.* torment, anguish  
*adhikaṃ.* excessive, much  
*romāvalī.* line of hair above the pubis  
*kena sā.* why, how

Her quick eyes  
and animated mouth  
unsettle me.  
So, of course,  
her lifted breasts,  
full lips—  
soft fruits of desire.  
But why should a  
single wisp of hair,  
stroked beneath her  
navel like  
some unforgettable  
line of poetry,  
reduce me to such  
anguish?



*Saubhāgya-akṣara-pan̐ktikā* means a splendid or gorgeously imperishable poetic line. A pun may lie hidden in *saubhāgya*, referring to the vulva, adding to the poet's charged emotion. The poetic line is literally stroked by the bow (with flower-tipped arrows of Kāma, desire). The image is conventional enough in Sanskrit poetry; nobody would really notice. But in English I thought it would call too much attention to itself and distract from Bhartṛhari's intent.

The *romāvalī* (line of hair running from the navel down) was regarded by Indian poets as a particularly enticing mark of beauty. The word for anguish, *tāpam*, means heat, fever; it is also the term in spiritual traditions for ascetic practice. Bhartṛhari's poetry is always torn between *vairāgya* (renunciation) and *śṛṅgāra* (erotic pleasure). Two of his three collections of poetry have been given those titles.